

Two New Elementary Schools

District Addresses Growth and Future Needs

By Chad Oliver, Chief Communication Officer | Collier County Public Schools

You have likely heard the commercial real estate adage “retail follows rooftops.” For educational providers, “new schools follow families.” To serve our ever-growing community, the *A-rated* Collier County Public School’s Capital Improvement Plan calls for two new elementary schools to open in the next three years. Good news—through strategic planning—we already have the land!

North Naples: The first school will be built on Immokalee Road at the intersection with Moulder Drive. The 22-acre site is approximately three miles east of the Collier Boulevard/951 intersection and 2.5 miles west of the Wilson Boulevard intersection. The school site is located near the Heritage Bay community and across the street from Bonita Bay’s Cypress golf course. This new school will greatly relieve Laurel Oak Elementary (LOE), which currently has 25 portable classrooms. This school year, the enrollment at LOE is around 1,200 students. CCPS projects enrollment will drop to 650 when “Elementary L” opens, tentatively scheduled for School Year 2025-26. “L” is the temporary designation until the School Board selects the permanent name after considering community input. The new school will also meet demand for families near Corkscrew Elementary (CES). CCPS estimates student enrollment at CES will grow to 935 next school year, before dropping to approximately 750 when “Elementary L” opens. At that time, it be the 32rd elementary school operated by CCPS and will have an initial enrollment of approximately 700 students in kindergarten through grade 5.

With appropriate turn lanes and signaling, traffic flow *should* improve on the busy Immokalee Road corridor because children will be attending school *closer* to where they live. Consider the hundreds of fewer parents and school bus drivers who will no longer need to use such a long stretch of Immokalee Road to get to and from LOE. Thankfully, CCPS acquired the land for “Elementary L” in 2006 in lieu of impact fees. This type of thoughtful planning is important for our district to remain fiscally responsible and avoid taking on debt by paying up front for new schools.

Ave Maria: CCPS used the same land acquisition strategy in 2008 to acquire 46-acres in the town of Ave Maria. With more families choosing that area of Collier County, we can justify building “Elementary Q” on Athem Parkway. It will be located on the northern section of Ave Maria, next to North Park and north of the community’s water park. Again, the “Q” designation is temporary. We will make sure parents and community members are informed of the enrollment boundary and school name timelines as we get closer to the opening of the schools. “Elementary Q” in Ave Maria is slated to open in August 2026 for School Year 2026-27.

When “Elementary L” opens on Immokalee Road, it will have been seventeen years since CCPS opened a new elementary school. Eden Park Elementary, Mike Davis

Elementary, Palmetto Elementary, and Lorenzo Walker Technical High School opened in 2008 to keep pace with the real estate boom at that time. Looking ahead, our two new elementary schools in North Naples and Ave Maria will be hubs of connection where academic and artistic opportunities abound. All of our elementary students engage in music classes. Highly qualified, certified teachers use phonics to develop literacy skills and students learn entrepreneurship and engineering while still in elementary school. I invite you to visit our district website (collierschools.com) and follow us @collierschools on Facebook, Twitter (now 'X'), and Instagram to see the many ways our students are achieving excellence. We look forward to opening two new neighborhood public schools that will serve generations of Collier County families.