

## Hopes for schools put to test in N.O.

**'Quick Start' picks are expected today**

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By Darran Simon

They envision transforming shells of buildings into innovative schools, community centerpieces focusing on technology or science or the nation's civil rights history. Seventeen community groups have submitted proposals to be part of state Superintendent Paul Pastorek's "Quick Start" plan to start renovations or new construction on five new district sites by December. The plan aims to spark new construction and show progress before the completion of a larger master plan in 2008.

Pastorek plans to announce the five sites today. He envisions that most of the work will be new construction, with one located in each of the five City Council sites. Today, the state-run Recovery District operates 34 schools and oversees 27 independent charter schools; the Orleans Parish School Board operates five schools and oversees 12 charters; the state Department of Education oversees two additional charters. But those schools still haven't caught up to student demand, and many remain in temporary locations, some in modular buildings that ultimately will be phased out. Some 33,000 children attend school in New Orleans compared with about 56,000 before the storm.

"We've got some holes in the city where there aren't schools and there are kids," Pastorek said.

Under the ambitious timeline announced in late July, Pastorek encouraged neighborhood groups to submit proposals explaining why their site should be included in the plan. Though Pastorek gave them less than a month to cobble everything together, some groups produced elaborate proposals with graphics and architectural drawings.

Pastorek said officials would judge the submissions on factors such the availability of money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other sources; the potential for future campus extension; the historical or cultural value of a location, and whether that could present building delays; and a connection to the Unified New Orleans Plan or Office of Recovery Management target zones.

In addition, Pastorek introduced competition into the selection process in hopes of getting community groups to rally around their neighborhood schools and bring private money to the table.

Close to 50 Recovery District sites are eligible, and Pastorek may choose totally different sites than the ones community groups have proposed. Ultimately, the choices must take into account the rapidly shifting demographics of the city. The proposals include three for schools that are seen as integral parts of the redevelopment of three public housing developments: C.J. Peete, Lafitte and St. Bernard.

Another comes from a foundation started by Ruby Bridges, who as a little black girl in a bright white dress walked into William Frantz Elementary to integrate it during the civil rights era. The Bayou District Foundation, which is involved in the \$230 million renovation of St. Bernard, is proposing a public charter school on the campus of Vorice Jackson Waters Elementary, 3800 Cadillac St., and Edward Phillips Jr. Middle -- which is not a Recovery District site. The two schools are on adjacent tracts of land.

Bayou District is talking to KIPP New Orleans, which has had success operating two New Orleans charter schools and opening a third this year, to possibly run the school, according to the proposal.

"We think that bringing a quality school into that neighborhood, and having it anchor it and really be the center of that community, will jump-start that area," said Gerard Barousse Jr., managing director of the Bayou District.

For one site, the former Andrew J. Bell Junior High at 1010 N. Galvez St., two groups submitted competing proposals. One is from KIPP New Orleans, which pitches an open-enrollment elementary school and a middle school at the site.

The other comes from Providence Community Housing, a nonprofit organization working to redevelop Lafitte. The group proposes a school serving students in prekindergarten to grade eight as part of the larger plan to develop the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane-Gravier neighborhoods.

The Ruby Bridges Foundation hopes to see a elementary charter school at the site where she made history on Nov. 11, 1960, to "reintegrate the school," which, like most New Orleans public schools, over time reverted to an almost entirely African-American campus as white families fled the system for suburban and private schools.

The school would have a civil rights archive and a curriculum centered on social justice and civil rights, according to the proposal.

"This is a way for one school to begin to teach history exactly the way it happened," said Bridges, founder and chairwoman of the Ruby Bridges Foundation.

Another proposal from a historic school comes from the District C Education Committee that seeks to reopen L.B. Landry High, the city's second-oldest black high school, founded during segregation.

"Landry is a cornerstone of the Algiers community," said Darryl Williams, a 1975 Landry graduate and an administrator at John McDonogh Senior High.

The Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association seeks to have the Alfred Lawless High site redeveloped into a charter high school. Michelle Sakayan, a lead architect of the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa, is a partner in the organization's vision. "We're bringing in a new model, a new sense of community involvement," said Patricia Jones, executive director of the network.

One of the more elaborate proposals came from New Orleans College Prep, which has partnered with the Hoffman Triangle Neighborhood Association and others to propose rebuilding John W. Hoffman Elementary, 2622 S. Prieur St. New Orleans College Prep, a new charter school temporarily housed in Sylvanie Williams Elementary, proposes to move its existing school into a permanent home in the Hoffman Triangle neighborhood.

The school aims to tap into federal tax credits designed to redevelop poor neighborhoods. "I think we've proposed a very pioneering funding strategy that should set us apart," said Ben Kleben, the school's founder and director. "We're optimistic."

# LOBBYING FOR SCHOOLS

Locations where community groups want to see renovated or new schools built



**1 Andrew J. Bell Junior High, 1010 N. Galvez St. (2 proposals)**

► KIPP New Orleans proposes an elementary and a middle school – both open enrollment – on the site that would serve close to 1,000 students on the 3.5 acre property. The charter school would offer a college prep program. KIPP operates three schools in New Orleans and plans to open three more schools by 2010 and serve about 2,500 students. KIPP will use its fundraising connections to find alternative sources of money.

► Providence Community Housing, the nonprofit involved in the redevelopment of Lafitte public housing complex, proposes a school on the site serving students in kindergarten-to-grade eight. The school is an integral part of a larger plan to develop the Tremé/Lafitte and Tulane-Gravier neighborhoods. Enterprise Community Partners, Providence's partner in the Lafitte redevelopment project, has applied to the Gates Foundation for supplemental financing and would seek to use new market tax credits, a federal subsidy to spur development in low income areas.

**2 Bienville Elementary, 1456 Gardena Drive**  
Advocates for Science and Math Education – the governing board of New Orleans Charter Science and Math High – propose an open-enrollment charter high school at the Bienville site starting with a ninth grade and adding a grade each year. New Orleans Charter Science and Math High School - East Campus would house 300 to 350 students offering a science, math and technology concentration. Students would have to take four to five science and math courses to graduate. Class sizes on average would hover around 18 and students can obtain science summer internships. Administrators will seek financing from the Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education, a nonprofit organization that supports their current school.

**3 Stuart R. Bradley Elementary, 2401 Humanity St.**  
The Lower Gentilly Neighborhood Association proposes expanding Stuart to pre-kindergarten through eighth grade and following a college prep curriculum. The school would have a math, science and computer technology focus.

**4 Charles J. Colton Middle, 2300 St. Claude Ave.**  
Ann Marie Coviello, a school librarian, proposes a regional magnet pre-kindergarten to eighth grade school serving children around St. Claude Avenue and in Faubourg Marigny, Tremé and Bywater. The school would have unspecified selective admissions criteria and be operated by the Recovery School District. Still seeking additional community donations and money earmarked to restore historic sites.

**5 Paul L. Dunbar Elementary, 9330 Forshey St.**  
Save Our Schools, NOLA along with several organizations including Hollygrove Neighbors Association and Carrollton-Hollygrove Community Development Corp., propose an elementary school. The campus would start with pre-kindergarten to fifth or sixth grade in the 2008-09 school year, launch a Head Start program thereafter and expand to grade eight, ultimately serving 420 students. Could either be recovery district-operated or independently-operated as a charter. Additional sources of money could come from the Ford Foundation, Capital One Community Development or the 21st Century School Fund.

**6 William Frantz Elementary, 3811 N. Galvez St.**  
The Ruby Bridges Foundation proposes a 250-student charter school serving kindergarten through fifth grade, and possibly expanding thereafter. School would house a library and civil rights archive. The foundation would use its partnerships with corporations, celebrities and others to find additional sources of money.

**7 Jean Gordon Elementary, 6101 Chatham Drive**  
International School of Louisiana, 1400 Camp St., proposes housing its pre-kindergarten through fourth grade classes at Jean Gordon to ease the burden at its overcrowded Camp Street home.

**8 John W. Hoffman Elementary, 2622 S. Prieur St.**  
New Orleans College Prep, the Hoffman Triangle Neighborhood Association and others propose an open-enrollment, 750-student charter middle and high school. School would have a school-based health clinic and a community center. The charter school would also become the home of New Orleans College Prep, which is temporarily sharing space at Sylvania Williams Elementary. New Orleans College Prep has partnered with Building Hope, a Washington D.C. foundation that provides technical and financial assistance to charter schools with facilities needs, to develop a financing plan – including the use of new market tax credits – and identify other sources of money.

**9 Langston Hughes Elementary, 3519 Trafalgar St.**  
Nola 180, the nonprofit charter management group that founded and operates the newly launched Langston Hughes Academy, proposes building a new school on Hughes' original Trafalgar Street site. The charter school currently shares space at the renovated Thurgood Marshall Middle on Canal Street. Contractors demolished the Hughes building this summer. Hughes serves more than 100 fourth and fifth-graders and plans to expand to kindergarten

through fifth grade in the 2008 school year. The new building would allow expansion to eighth grade. Nola 180 will team with Building Hope to develop a financing plan and find additional sources of money.

**10 Mahalia Jackson Elementary, 2400 Jackson Ave.**  
The Early Childhood and Family Learning Foundation, the nonprofit arm of the an early childhood and family learning center planned in Central City, is seeking help to pay for the roughly \$7 million renovation of Mahalia Jackson. Center would house a library, mental health clinic and other services. The foundation wants to provide year-round education and social services for up to 250 neighborhood children from birth up to age 5. Alternate funding includes insurance, sale of Orleans Parish School Board property, money from the Office of Recovery Management and Global Green USA, a national environmental organization

**11 John F. Kennedy Senior High, 5700 Wisner Blvd.**  
The International School of Louisiana proposes redeveloping the site to allow the charter school to ultimately serve students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 over the next five years. Charter school would eventually serve up to 1,350 students. Currently the International School serves 470 students in kindergarten through grade 7.

**12 Thomy Lafon Elementary, 2601 Seventh St.**  
Urban Strategies, a St. Louis nonprofit involved in the development of the C.J. Peete housing complex, proposes a school that could possibly serve pre-kindergarten through grades 6 or 8. School would serve up to 500 students of former families of the housing development and surrounding neighborhoods. Partners in the project include Tulane University, Lusher Charter School and the Housing Authority of New Orleans. Urban Strategies proposes moving the school to the front of the complex off Louisiana Avenue, which would enable the Housing Authority of New Orleans to use the Seventh Street location. Sources of additional money include donations from foundations and philanthropic organizations, in addition to new market tax credits.

**13 Lake Area Middle, 6026 Paris Ave.**  
Gentilly Civic Improvement Association's education committee proposes building Gentilly High Tech High School on the site in the Oak Park neighborhood. Open-admissions school would ultimately serve up to 600 students and house a library and fitness center. The organization seeks a quasi-charter agreement to have the school jointly operated by the Recovery School District and a university. The association would seek additional money from philanthropic foundations and may be eligible for federal Community Block Development Grants.

**14 L. B. Landry High, 1200 Landry St.**  
The District C Education Committee proposes rebuilding Landry to house 700 to 800 students. Landry would be operated by the Recovery School District.

**15 Alfred Lawless High, 5300 Law St.**  
Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association and Generation Schools Network to propose a charter high school serving 80 to 120 students per grade. Classes of 40 will be team-taught by four teachers to reduce the student-to-teacher ratio to 1-to-10. School could be an extension of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Charter School for Science and Technology on Caffin Avenue. Offers a library, community garden, health center and career-focused electives such as construction management and culinary arts.

**16 Vorice Jackson Waters Elementary, 3800 Cadillac St.**  
Bayou District Foundation proposes a public charter school serving 700 or 800 children in kindergarten to eighth grade on the sites of Waters and Edward Phillips Jr. Middle, 1200 Senate St., located on adjacent tracts. Possible partnership with KIPP New Orleans to run the school. Could follow the Knowledge is Power Program model, and possibly feature a math and science component and a hospitality industry focus. School would be community center and campus would house an early childhood learning center and a YMCA. Bayou District, which is part of the redevelopment of the St. Bernard housing development, would raise additional money through a \$40 million national fundraising effort to handle the education, housing and recreation portions of the entire \$230 million renovation of St. Bernard.

**17 Andrew H. Wilson Elementary, 3617 General Pershing St.**  
Broadmoor Improvement Association proposes a charter school serving students in kindergarten to eighth grade at the Wilson site. Wilson, which is part of the larger Broadmoor Education Corridor – would enroll up to 700 students. Edison Schools, a for-profit management company, would continue to run the new Wilson school. Wilson is temporarily housed in the former McDonogh 7 Elementary site, 1111 Milan St. Additional money would come from the Broadmoor Improvement Association, which would establish public-private partnerships, and the Clinton Global Initiative, a partner in rebuilding the school.