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Ground broken on \$112m Taunton school project - Gilbane provides program mgmt.

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A ceremonial groundbreaking recently marked the start of construction of the city of Taunton's new middle school. While project supporters looked on, city and state officials dug in and broke ground to commemorate the project's official start of construction. The planned additions and renovations will address critical issues including overcrowding and out-dated facilities.

Ceremonies also included a ribbon cutting for phase I of the project, a new artificial turf sports field and new running track at the Taunton High. The track and field replaces the existing field and track which have deteriorated over their 32-year life. The construction at the track and field took place concurrent with the planning for the middle school construction.

The new middle school will accommodate up to 550 students in a 60,000 s/f, three-story facility addition to the high school. The Parker Middle School addition will allow the school to function independently, providing all the required program areas, while the central heating plant and other services will remain shared. The high school renovation portion of the project will include significant renovations within the existing high school facility, including all required code upgrades, reconfiguration of spaces to meet the school's program, new roofing, replacement of some windows, all new electrical systems, a new fire protection sprinkler system, a new entry to the school, abatement of any remaining asbestos in the building, and renovation of the HVAC systems. Completion of the Middle School addition is expected for the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. The High School renovations will continue until 2011.

At just over \$112 million anticipated project cost, the undertaking is the city's largest construction expenditure to date. Gilbane Building Co. of Boston is providing program management services for the project, including construction oversight and coordination. Prior to beginning construction, Gilbane assisted the city with planning for the multi-year, phased modernizations, specifically focused on addressing the challenges of working in an occupied facility and maintaining a safe learning environment for students, staff and faculty. The project architect is Design Partnership of Cambridge, and the construction management for the project is a joint venture of Bacon and Agostini Construction Cos.

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