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Ledgewood Construction breaks ground on \$20.3 million Kate Furbish Elementary School

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Brunswick, ME As Brunswick School District continues to pursue improvements for the Brunswick students of the future, the era of Kate Furbish Elementary was ushered in by kindergarten students Callen Sutton and Tallulah Augustine on October 10th. Wearing child-sized white hard hats, and accompanied by Brunswick School District officials, they joined Ledgewood Construction as their youngest construction crew members when they dug into the dirt at the groundbreaking ceremony.

The Jordan Acres School, empty since 2011 after four decades of use, will be demolished and Kate Furbish Elementary will reuse the site, as students return to the grounds their parents grew up on. The new school will replace the 62-year-old Coffin Elementary, as well as absorb students from Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary by providing space for kindergarten through second grade. By restructuring the schools, there will be potential for more learning opportunities and student services at Stowe Elementary.

The team at Ledgewood Construction was able to provide a lower than expected bid thanks to the incredibly detailed plans from PDT Architects. As building committee chairwoman Sarah Singer said, “There was a great deal of concern on the part of the architects and the building committee that the contractors might come back with bids that were over the authorized amount. Given that concern at the advice of and in concert with the architects, we made a list of alternates - that is items that could be removed if absolutely necessary and installed at a later date.”

Despite those worries, Ledgewood delivered a bid that included the full list of alternates, at almost 10% less than the estimated cost. This ensures that no comfort is spared for the children of our community, and that they receive a school that encourages learning and development. It also allows the board to reconsider the budget for furnishings, equipment, and technology in the new school, areas that were reduced earlier in the planning process. This means the savings provided by Ledgewood will turn into better computers, improved furnishings, and even potential sustainable construction elements such as solar panels.

Singer discussed the years of effort put in to get to this point, initiated when Jordan Acres was permanently closed. The new school, she believes, “will allow students to have the experience of a smaller school with the efficiencies of a larger school.” The 70,900 s/f, \$20.3 million school will enhance the learning experience through form and function, with an innovative design utilizing two small wings for classrooms, sharing a central floor with a library, cafeteria, gymnasium, and space for music and art classes.

Named after revolutionary botanist, naturalist, and Brunswick native Catherine Furbish, the design will reflect her love of the native flora of Maine. Her reputation for walking through the woods of Maine, creating her sketches and paintings that are still used today, will be reflected in the theme of forests and paths meandering through the school, complimented by meadow-inspired elements.

Kate Furbish Elementary School is expected to welcome in students for the 2020-2021 school year.

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