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## Westlake Academy builds to the future

by [Mark Zeske](#) October 15, 2014 12:00 AM

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An aerial of Westlake Academy's \$10.5 million expansion project. The project includes an athletic complex, three-story secondary building and a multipurpose hall.

The start of the new school year brought several major changes for Westlake Academy, the state's only municipal charter school. In addition to opening three new buildings, the academy provides an iPad for each student.

A \$10.5 million expansion project that began in June 2013 ended in late September with the dedication of the Sam and Margaret Lee Fieldhouse. Westlake Academy athletes now have a weight room with state-of-the-art equipment, showers and locker rooms in a new 8,600 square-foot building that also houses offices and classrooms for physical education.

The athletic complex was the final piece of the expansion project, with the bulk of the work done during the summer months while students were not at school. The project added 39,000 square feet of space to the academy. A new three-story secondary building includes 12 classrooms, flex and office space, and a new multipurpose hall consists of a commercial catering kitchen, portable stage and a traverse climbing wall.

Each classroom in the secondary building is designed with a SMART Board, part of an aggressive technology push by Westlake Academy. Three other SMART Boards, which are interactive whiteboards, were installed, including two in the school's portable buildings, to give the academy a total of 15 campuswide.

In June trustees approved the purchase of 640 Apple iPad Mini tablets. The school had already bought 170 tablets for a pilot program in which it provided an iPad to each student in fourth through sixth grades during the 2013-14 school year.

During the dedication ceremony for the fieldhouse, Mayor Laura Wheat thanked Margaret Lee for her generous donation and presented her with a special mirror, etched with the town and academy seal.

Wheat also recognized others whose efforts made the project a reality, including the Westlake Academy Foundation, Westlake Academy Athletic Club, and the House of Commons. These three organizations, representing a larger group of parents and community partners, donated \$72,750 for a health and fitness package, which included a traverse climbing wall and the weight-training equipment for secondary students.

Steele & Freeman Inc. and Bennett Banner Partners are the managing contractor and architect for the expansion project.

More expansion for the school is planned in 2019 and 2025, at a cost of roughly \$85 million.

Westlake Academy, which opened 10 years ago with 195 students, currently has approximately 800 students and



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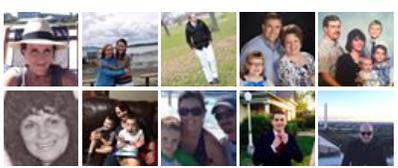
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