

Beginning of phase one projects wrap up for I-SS

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Iredell County voters who backed a 2005 school bond referendum can now see some of what their votes and increased property taxes supported.

Phase-one projects were completed at West Iredell High School and Brawley Middle School last week.

Brawley Middle's new sixth-grade academy opened its doors, getting many students out of mobile units and into brand new classrooms.

"It was like Christmas to them," said Jimmie Dancy, the school's principal.

Dancy said the building features new computer and science labs and much-needed classroom space. And, he said, it was completed earlier than expected. The school estimated having students in the building in January.

Amy Bice, the school's yearbook coordinator, said she "loves" the new computer labs. Many of the computers, she said, were donated by the school's Parent-Teacher-Student Organization.

"In the past, we were all on top of each other," Bice said, saying that she couldn't move between rows. Cords were all over the floor and to get to the computers, she'd have to ask students to move away from their desks.

Sixth-grade teacher Melissa Calloway said the new facility is "very spacious, clean and convenient."

Sixth-grader Tori Cortes said that the mobile units "didn't really work out."

"I really like (the new building)... it looks better," Cortes said. Many other students said they were excited to have full-size lockers.

At West Iredell High, a ribbon-cutting marked the opening of the school's renovated cafeteria and kitchen.

The school's kitchen staff now has an expanded preparation area and new equipment to use rather than having to prepare meals at Celeste Henkel Elementary School and ship them over to West as they have been doing during the renovations.

The cafeteria also features new tables, a new serving area and new sandwich and snack bays, said business teacher Katrina Potts. Everything will now be baked rather than fried. Potts and Assistant Principal Ronald Shepherd praised the student body for being so cooperative during the renovations.

"They've been very patient and very respectful," Shepherd said.

The project was completed right around its target date. That impressed Shepherd since work began in late May.

Senior Sarah Yountz said she was packing a lunch during the construction because she didn't want to eat the food being shipped, but she's going to start getting food at school now.

"It was chaos," she said.