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Sutton

Ceremony kicks off \$62.4M school project

SUTTON — With 18 modular classrooms already sitting nearby, the groundbreaking ceremony for a \$62.4 million school reconstruction project was held yesterday morning.

The project entails a new high school, middle school and renovations to a core building located between the two.

About 60 local and state officials, students and teachers, as well as Katherine Craven, executive director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, attended yesterday's 30-minute event. Included in the audience was former Superintendent of Schools Cecilia Di Bella, who was closely involved in the planning of the new facility, officials said at the ceremony.

The MSBA is paying \$29.8 million of the project, and Ms. Craver said she hopes the new and renovated schools will be a model for others across the state.

In an interview after the ceremony, School Building Committee Chairman Wendy M. Mead said the first phase of the project calls for razing the middle school. Seventh and eighth graders will attend class in the modular classrooms, which she said has better equipment and plumbing than the middle school. Sixth graders at the school will go to the elementary school while they await the opening of the new middle school scheduled for the winter of 2013. Students at the new high school will move into the modular classrooms when the middle school students move out after about 18 months, Ms. Mead said. Work is scheduled to start in 2013 on the core building, while the new high school is scheduled to open in 2014, she added.

The 182,000-square-foot project has the new high school being built around the Stephen C. Romasco Gymnasium at the existing high school. The new high school and a performing arts wing would be built to the south and east of the new high school, with a courtyard in the middle.

TLT Construction Corp. of Wakefield is the general contractor for the project designed by Flansburgh Architects of Boston.