Sunday event to mark opening of Brusly Elementary

By CAROL MOORMANN
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BRUSLY — It's like a scene from the movie "Honey I Shrunk the Kids." Now, this feels like home. I'm looking at were temporary buildings.

The water fountains are knee-high, the tiny green chairs stand 14 to 16 inches off the ground and the little desks are made to accommodate the chairs.

Even the sinks and counters in the classrooms are made for use by little kids.

Although some of the furnishings may be small, the red brick building itself is the normal size for an elementary school.

It's all part of the new Brusly Elementary School that, as of Thursday, will be home to students from Kindergarten through third grade.

School officials said the community is invited to an open-house celebration marking the opening of the new school from 3-5 p.m. Sunday at the school, 400 S. LaBauve Ave. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will be at 2:45 p.m., with refreshments and tours following.

West Baton Rouge Parish School Superintendent Beverly Triche said the school is part of a $23.5 million project that called for building a new school and remodeling and renovating 10 others.

"Seven schools, including the new Brusly Elementary, are completed, and there are four schools left to do," Triche said.

"It's an excellent facility that really makes us proud," Triche said. "We are also really pleased and would like to thank the voters for passing the bond issue that allowed us to do all of this work. Our children will have excellent schools and this will enhance the learning environment.

"The last time a new school was built in the parish was 1979, and the last bond issue was passed in 1975. We're really excited in West Baton Rouge Parish."

Principal Melba Honey said Brusly Elementary will teach students in kindergarten through third grade this school year. But next year, when renovations are complete at Lukeville Elementary School, the third-graders will once again attend classes there.

Honey said after all renovations are complete, there will be four schools in the area: Brusly Elementary for kindergarten through second grade; Lukeville Elementary for third through fifth; Brusly Middle for sixth through eighth grades; and Brusly High School for ninth through 12th grades.

Late this week, boxes lined the hallways at Brusly Elementary as janitors took the small chairs out of packaging and placed them in classrooms.

"There's so much space here," Third-grade teacher Sheila Butler said as she directed her children to their destinations. She also said the library is one of the major differences. "I think it's neat. At the old school, we had to line the kids up and walk them outside to get them to a bathroom.

"This is the first year I won't have to paint my room. It's so clean and new. It's never been used. It's like a new car, it still smells new.

"I also like the view. It's a room with a view. Last year all we had to look at were temporary buildings. Now, this feels like home. I'm looking out at cane and corn fields," LeBlanc said.

"I'm also a little overwhelmed," LeBlanc said as she directed her own children, Katie and Seth, exactly where to place some of her boxes.

"Many of the teachers and school workers moving into the new building had recruited family and friends to help get things ready for the first day of school."

"At the other school, I had a converted classroom," George said. "At the old school, we had to go outside to get to different places located in temporary buildings.

"For the first time we won't get wet when we have duty," Butler said.

There is a large shelter in the front of the school where buses can drop off and pick up students. There is a similar broad, covered area at the back of the school that may be used for recess in case of rain.

"It's wonderful and a privilege," Assistant Principal Elwin Crowley said.

"We are having an in-service on that on Monday," Honey said.

Third-grade teacher Anne Wilson, a veteran of 32 years in the West Baton Rouge Parish school system, positions her globe in the new Brusly Elementary School opening on Thursday.

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