

St. Edmond's poised for \$12 million expansion: Capital campaign gifts near \$4 million; classroom wing construction to begin in summer

By Gary Morton
Staff reporter

WILMINGTON — St. Edmond's Academy launched the public phase of a \$6 million capital campaign Sunday that will allow the private Catholic boys' school to add kindergarten through grade three by its 50th anniversary in 2009.

St. Edmond's currently enrolls 268 students in

grades four through eight. Officials expect enrollment to grow to about 375 after the expansion, which the school announced last summer.

The \$6 million will be part of an estimated \$12 million needed to add a classroom wing and renovate current facilities, headmaster Michael Marinelli told potential benefactors and their families during a pres-

entation at the school Sunday morning. The remainder of the money will be financed through a bond issue, he said.

An advance leadership portion of the campaign raised \$3.8 million, 63 percent of the goal, Marinelli said.

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer on the classroom extension, which will wrap around the

school's athletic fields behind the existing building and connect to the school's fine-arts center. The 44,000- to 46,000-square-foot addition will include 14 classrooms, chapel, science center, band room, and field house. The following summer, Marinelli said, the current classrooms, including the science lab and the library, will be renovated. The track and soccer and

baseball fields also will be renovated by the fall of 2006.

"It's a very aggressive building campaign, to be ready by the fall of 2006," Marinelli told the benefactors. "We believe we can do it."

The school plans to open kindergarten and first grade in the 2006-07 school year, add second grade in 2007-08 and third grade in 2008-09. The second and third grades could open earlier if needed, Marinelli said.

"About 50 families already have indicated a significant interest in the primary (kindergarten through grade three) program," Marinelli said.

Drawings by Anderson Brown Higley Associates Inc., a Wilmington architectural firm, gave those attending Sunday's program an idea of how the finished project will look. A computerized version provided a three-dimensional, exterior look as if one were driving around the campus.

"It's breathtaking," said Tom McBride, a 1968 graduate whose youngest son, Billy, attends seventh grade



Architect's drawing shows the entrance to the new classroom wing at St. Edmond's Academy. At far right is a new athletic field house. The wing, scheduled to open in the fall of 2006, will connect to the current school complex at the rear of the Rollins Performing Arts Center (not shown).

at St. Edmond's. Two other sons also attended the school.

Michele Rollins is executive chairwoman for the capital campaign. Co-chairmen are Charles Ciarrocchi and Paul McConnell. The new science facility will be named the McConnell Science Center; McConnell, a real estate developer, contributed \$500,000. A new athletic

facility for the upper grades will be named the Louis J. Capano Jr. Field House. Capano, a real estate developer and a 1965 graduate of St. Edmond's, gave \$1 million.

As part of the fund-raising campaign, St. Edmond's will sponsor a dinner, dance and auction at Deerfield Golf and Tennis Club on April 22.

St. Edmond's is spon-

sored by the Brothers of the Holy Cross, who founded the school and remain on the faculty and staff. The school opened in the fall of 1959 at 1301 Delaware Ave., in the former home of Archbishop Edmond J. FitzMaurice. In 1963 the school moved to its current location at 2120 Veale Road north of the city.

Current tuition is \$9,390 per year.