

## News from Dripping Springs ISD

[www.dsisdtx.us](http://www.dsisdtx.us)

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### **DSISD TO OPEN TWO NEW SCHOOLS**

It's been a decade since Dripping Springs ISD opened a brand new school, but this fall two schools (at one location) will open their doors. Sycamore Springs Elementary and Sycamore Springs Middle School will welcome approximately 1,600 combined students on August 23, 2017. Students will be greeted by approximately 150 staff members, serving in instructional, support and administrative positions.

The last DSISD school to open was Rooster Springs Elementary in 2007. At that time, the district changed its grade configuration so that all elementary schools served students in Pre-K through fifth grade.

The opening of Sycamore Spring Middle School marks the first time that DSISD middle school students will not be at a single campus.

The campus is a unique design that connects the two schools, yet allows them to operate as separate schools with separate principals. Some spaces are shared, like the kitchen, administrative workspace, and Center for Learning and Innovation. The cafeterias connect but have a movable wall in the center that will be closed for day-to-day operations. The connectedness of the schools will create opportunities for student and staff collaboration, mentoring relationships, and easy transition for students taking subjects at a higher grade level.

Kristen Ray is the new principal of Sycamore Springs Elementary and Dan Diehl leads Sycamore Springs Middle School. Assistant principals are Tami Ballard at SSE and Karen McCollum and Steve Novickas at SSMS.

"Sycamore Springs Elementary is a beautifully designed facility," said SSE Principal Kristen Ray. "I am confident that great things will happen as we serve our students. As a faculty, we are committed to working in a collaborative, empowering facility that lends itself beautifully to personalized learning for all stakeholders."

Sycamore Springs Elementary and Sycamore Springs Middle School are designed to fit into the natural landscape. In fact, the design was created in a way that incorporated the change in elevation on the site into the layout of the building. The schools have many green features like rainwater collection, a geothermal heating/air-conditioning system, and landscaping that – in a majority of the areas – uses a native Texas seed mix that won't require irrigation once it is established.

Principal Diehl also is enthusiastic to get the year started. "We are thrilled to embark on this new adventure and build a Legacy with our Sycamore Springs Middle School families and community," he said. "Every day we will strive to inspire innovation through exploration and discovery."