



Contact: Shamier Bouie
(504) 558-1785
sbouie@thehrhardtgroup.com

ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD WILL POSTPONE AUDUBON CHARTER SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT

*DEQ's Rejection of Swing Space Plan Nullifies the Annunciation Site
as a Two-Year Temporary Alternative*

NEW ORLEANS – June 15, 2011 – After failed attempts to arrive at an acceptable mitigation plan with the LA Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), the Orleans Parish School Board announced today that it will postpone its Audubon Charter renovation project until further notice.

Audubon Charter was scheduled for a two-year comprehensive renovation at its Broadway school in accordance with the School Facilities Master Plan. In order to accommodate the school, the School Board had arranged for a replacement site, known as a swing site, in the Lower Garden District on the block bounded by Richard, Constance, Orange and Annunciation Streets.

The Annunciation site was selected after an exhaustive search for space in the Uptown area. Because of soil contamination that was previously mitigated at nearby Annunciation playground, the School Board ordered soil samples as part of its due diligence. When that study indicated significant levels of lead in the soil, the Board took steps to outline a mitigation plan, developed by noted scientist, Dr. C. Paul Lo, who has experience in the area. Following a meeting of Audubon parents on May 25, concerned parents contacted LDEQ, which in turn called for meetings and communication that resulted in suspension of the project.

School Board President Lourdes Moran said student safety is her highest priority. “Unfortunately, LDEQ’s recommendation would not allow the charter operator to meet its projected August opening. Therefore, it made the project impossible to begin at this time. The School Board will review its process for all projects scheduled for Orleans Parish. We will continue to identify a suitable location that is safe for our school children.”

The School Board will continue to search for sites in other areas of Orleans Parish, such as Algiers and eastern New Orleans, for possible swing site uses.

Orleans Parish School Board

The Orleans Parish School Board is committed to creating the nation's best school system by utilizing creative, innovative 21st century programs to produce graduates of unparalleled quality and thereby improving the lives of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds. The mission of OPSB is to provide quality learning environments that promote *academic excellence* and engage the family and community in the support of student achievement.

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