

**Federal Emergency Management Agency**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA)**  
**for the Charles B. Murphy Elementary School Relocation Project,**  
**Hancock County, Mississippi**  
**FEMA-1604-DR-MS**

Interested persons are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is proposing to assist in the funding of a flood mitigation project for the Charles B. Murphy Elementary School in Hancock County, Mississippi.

The former Charles B. Murphy Elementary School, located at 6098 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Pearlinton, Mississippi, comprised of five buildings with ancillary facilities. The school provided public education to 125 students, from kindergarten through fifth grade. The school was located in 100-year floodplain (Flood Zone A9) and was within the surge inundation zone for Hurricane Katrina, receiving up to 8 feet of water in some places. Damages to the school meet FEMA's repair/replacement ratio for the demolition and replacement of the campus.

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the Hancock County School District would relocate the school to a 40-acre undeveloped site located about 33 miles to the northeast on Highway 43, in Kiln, Mississippi. The proposed project site is outside of the floodplain and advisory base flood elevation (ABFE), and is bound to the north, east, and west by undeveloped land and to the south by Highway 43. Primary access to the school would be from the south on Highway 43. A secondary access road would be constructed to the northeast connecting the school to Leetown Road. Approximately 29.6 acres of vegetation would be cleared to construct the school. The school would connect to existing utilities along Highway 43 and a wastewater treatment package plant would be constructed on site for sewer.

The relocation of the school would establish a permanent educational facility to meet the increased demand for public education that was created post-Katrina due to the relocation of many Mississippi residents to the north. Students remaining in the Pearlinton area would utilize Gulfview Elementary School, located approximately 15 miles east of the former Charles B. Murphy campus, once the Gulfview School is rebuilt.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Executive Order 11988, Executive Order 11990, and the implementing regulations of FEMA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Action on the human and natural environment. The Draft EA summarizes the purpose and need, alternatives, affected environmental, and potential environmental consequences for the proposed action. The Draft EA is available for comment and can be viewed and downloaded from FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm> or viewed and copied at the following locations:

- Hancock County School District Office  
Office of the Superintendent of Education  
17304 Highway 603  
Kiln, MS 39556
- Hancock County Public Library  
Bay St. Louis Branch  
312 Highway 90  
Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

The comment period will conclude 7 days after the initial notice publication date of Thursday, July 26, 2007. Written comments on the Draft EA can be mailed or faxed to the contact below. If no substantive comments are received, the Draft EA and associated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will become final. Substantive comments will be addressed as appropriate in the final documents.

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