

May 11, 2009 (The Brunswick News - McClatchy--- Construction of the Golden Isles Career Academy may come in hundreds of thousands of dollars under budget.

In fact, it may come in as much as \$1 million under budget, predicts Howard Mann, acting superintendent of Glynn County public schools. Cost of construction was initially estimated at \$19.5 million. Mann said proper management by The Facility Group helped the school finish on time and garner some savings.

The facility at 4404 Glynco Parkway, a partnership between the school system and Glynn County, is scheduled to open in August, at the beginning of the new school year. The Brunswick and Glynn Development Authority donated the land for the school.

"The projections on some portion of the construction came under budget," Mann said. "(The Facility Group) did a good job getting quality subcontractors in there for a better price."

There have also been more than a single pair of eyes on the project. After some controversy over the general contractor hired to build the school, the Glynn County Board of Education contracted the Gude Management Group to keep it posted on construction and costs.

The finishing touches are being put on the school. Water fountains are working, the floors are waxed, the landscaping is finished and the post-construction punch-list is all but completed.

Career academy CEO Andy Lundell says the project is finished for all practical purposes.

"Right now, we're into the organizational part of this, making sure everything works inside the building," Lundell said from his furnished office at the school. "Now it's up to us, as a staff, to make everyone's dreams a reality."

Lundell said any minor problem at the facility has been fixed, save for a small leak in the roof, which was being addressed by the contractor Friday. Other items on the punch list included floor and wall tile replacement, repainting some areas and the installation of kitchen equipment in the culinary arts workroom.

Machinery and equipment from both Brunswick High and the academy's college partners, Altamaha Technical College and College of Coastal Georgia, began arriving earlier this month and will continue once high school and college classes are done for the summer.

A large greenhouse for the horticulture and agriculture career pathways was also completed last week.

While career academy officials are pleased with the preliminary number of students interested in the career and technical offerings, counselors and registrars at high schools are still processing student requests and finalizing schedules.

That process must be completed at the high school level before the academy can determine how many students will attend in August and the exact courses the academy will offer.

Lundell said it could take two or three more weeks for the registrars to coordinate block schedules between the high schools and the [career school](#).

"Looking at the number of blocks students have requested, registration is significantly more than we expected," Lundell said. "But right now we don't know the actual, unduplicated student requests."

A goal of 500 total students was set by Ralph Gornto, director of high school programs for the academy, when the enrollment process began last year.

Gornto said some of the most popular 18 career and technical offerings at the school are the new programs like cosmetology, health care science, broadcast video and criminal justice.

Traditional programs like collision repair also have substantial interest, he added.

"We're bringing students out here that haven't had the opportunity to get out here to tour while there's still an opportunity to do schedule changes," Gornto said.

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