

## A grand ceremony touts Fairmont school

By Kimberly K. Fu/

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell, speaks at Fairmont Charter School's grand opening Monday. (Rick Roach/RRoach@TheReporter.com)

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell popped into Vacaville on Monday to celebrate students, teachers and the community in general at the grand opening ceremony for Fairmont Charter Elementary School.

"People know, if you want to invest in the future, then you invest in education. You have," he told the crowd. "This school really is a model. I've heard about it up and down the state. ... You should be commended."

O'Connell touted the "fully green, fully sustainable" two-story school with its water-recycling capability, solar panels, advanced technology and more.

"All of the students and the staff here will experience this technology through a new lens," he said. "This really is a bright light."

The school, located in the 1300 block of Marshall Road, is an updated version of the "old" school, which was built in 1968. Plans began in 2007, and ground was broken in July 2008.

Looking toward a "green" facility, officials met weekly for a year to develop a school that would serve students and staff for generations to come.

The new Fairmont, which opened on Aug. 13, embodies that, officials said. With features that are at least 30 percent more efficient than minimum state standards, the school has even become the first in Solano to garner a LEED Silver designation. LEED is a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System.

The school cost \$21 million, officials said, with \$15 million from Measure V Local General Obligation funds, \$4 million from development impact fees and \$2 million in anticipated state funds.

On Monday, local and state dignitaries descended on the school to wish students and staff well.

Sixth-graders Tyhesia Celestine and Harvey Guerra led the audience in saying the Pledge of Allegiance, and then a collection of fourth- and fifth-grade students serenaded everyone with a rousing rendition of "You're a Grand Old Flag."

Teachers, staff and honored leaders expressed their joy with the brand-new facility and excitement for the future.

"We're so thrilled to be here," said Fairmont's Principal Rochelle Sklansky, emphasizing the

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increased opportunities for students. "After all, they're what it's all about," she said.

Jay Speck, assistant superintendent of Human Resources with the Solano County Office of Education, agreed.

"The building gives a message: You're important. We care about you. We want you to be comfortable and safe," he said. That message, he said, will speak to future generations, as well.

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