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Pickens opening new schools

Students will return to class Aug. 21

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The school year in Pickens County will start with new schools and new initiatives to help more students reach graduation.

Aug. 21 will be the first day for students in the School District of Pickens County, and teachers' first day will be Wednesday, said Superintendent Kelly Pew.

A little more than 16,000 students are expected this year, which is similar to enrollment numbers from the last few years, Pew said.

Five new schools opened with the start of the 2011-12 school year — Liberty High, Pickens High, Dacusville Elementary, Chastain Road Elementary and the Pickens County Career & Technology Center — along with others that received renovations, and now a few more will join their ranks.

Pew said new Daniel and Easley high schools will open with the start of school, and Liberty Middle has moved into the former and now-renovated Liberty High.

The renovations and new schools are part of the district's $374 million building program.

In Anderson District 1, the first day of school for students will also be Aug. 21.

Almost 9,400 students are expected this year, which would be a slight increase over the approximately 9,200 students the district had last year, said Jane Harrison, spokeswoman for Anderson 1.

"We have seen some growth with people moving into the area in existing housing and some houses being built," Harrison said.

She said work is nearing completion on a Wren school sidewalk project, which includes the addition of new sidewalks, medians and parent drop off lanes.

The new Powdersville High School, which opened with the start of school last year with ninth and 10th grades, will also have 11th grade this year, Harrison said.

In 2013-14, the school will have students in all four grades.