



Formentera Council president Jaume Ferrer was joined today by the regional minister of education and universities, Martí March, in unveiling provisional plans for a new Sant Ferran primary school. The 2.00pm demo took place in the town's retirees' club and included CiF education councillor Susana Labrador, chief of planning, land use and centres in the Balearics, Antoni Morante, and affiliates of IBISEC, the regional agency in charge of infrastructure and educational services.

President Ferrer spoke enthusiastically about the Palma officials' visit, calling it “the welcome start of a project Formentera residents have long lobbied for”. He voiced satisfaction that the educational community was getting its opportunity to appraise the plans, “an important element to reaching consensus”. Ferrer pointed to a May vote on changes to municipal code as the next step be critical to making sure permits are delivered in time for a summer start to building.

After visiting the existing classrooms this morning, the regional minister reaffirmed the proposed changes represented “a very real necessity”. According to March, IBISEC's planned rebuild involves linking the remodeled school with a new early-learning centre, or “escoleta,” promised by the Council. The project—“a combined effort” that March predicted could be finished by late 2018—“is not only ambitious, but it's also extremely necessary”. March extended his thanks to the Council for its instrumental work in making the project a reality.

The aim of the presentation was to communicate the main features of the plans and ensure input from families, pupils, teachers and neighbours was included in the final product.

Sant Ferran's primary school, with its 284 pupils, occupies a plot of land that doesn't allow for further expansion. Hence the bid to draw up the new plans, which the department of education flagged for priority treatment in its 2016-2023 plan for educational infrastructure.

Characteristics of the school

The draft plans envision a school equipped for two groups of every class (“two-line”) and 450 pupils total. Children would be spread across six pre-primary groups (ages three to six) and 12

sections of primary students (six to 12). The 11,037m² lot, handed over by the Formentera Council, is located on Sant Ferran's outer edges. The administration will build the new escoleta on the adjoining lot, another "two-line" centre with 74 children aged zero to three.

The school, shaped like a hair comb, will be linked to another building housing offices of the administration and the school's canteen. That building, with street access, can also be used to receive pupils in the morning and as a gathering space.

The primary school section of the proposed building is divided into three pavilions, the first of which includes shared spaces like a library, computer lab, teachers' lounge and multipurpose room as well as rooms for one-on-one learning and small groups. The other two pavilions, with central hallways flanked by classrooms on either side, will house the school's 12 groups.

Pre-primary and nursery children will have use of their own play area, a patio that will be separate from primary pupils' playground. The patio will also be a hub for communication between the nursery and pre-primary classrooms. The primary school gymnasium will be located behind these units.

The pre-primary/primary school buildings and the municipal escoleta are €5,810,100.06 and €1,090,345.31 investments, respectively. According to the education department, once under way, the project will be locked into a 14-month time frame.