



Our Lady of Grace

Catholic School



Wednesday, August 20, 2008

The building is filled with a buzz! Teachers are working hard in their rooms, Kindergarteners are being screened, and the sounds of saws and hammers fill the air! What a difference a few months can make.

I am so excited about the learning environment being created by our teachers. When classes start on Tuesday, our students are going to be surrounded by a highly qualified faculty and staff in a building that continues to be tweaked and molded to fit the needs of OLG.

Our summer has been filled with moving furniture and boxes, running computer and phone wires, hanging chalk-boards and white boards, installing walls, crucifixes, flags, pencil sharpeners, shelves and so much more. While great strides have been made much remains to be done. We will begin the school year with two cafeteria serving lines (allowing us to serve the entire school in only 90 minutes), but we will not have the kitchen remodeled. The plans and permits have been approved but we want to ensure that the construction which needs to be completed happens during a time that is least intrusive to our learning community. We feel confident that the breaks up to and including Thanksgiving break will allow us the opportunity to complete this project.

The modular units that will eventually house our Auxiliary services and our music program are in the process of being set. Our music teacher will travel from room to room for a week or two and some of our student services will be provided in alternate locations. The two modulares we are moving here are phenomenal spaces for us. Our music program is not only going to have storage for all the incredible instruments we have amassed but they are going to be able to have a full sized classroom and a full sized music lab. The lab will be the space in which our students will get to experience the joys of music. I am really excited about seeing this program in action!

The library is coming along great. All the cutting and pounding is music to our ears! For the first couple of weeks, the librarians will be busy setting up shelves, cataloguing books and creating an inspiring space for the students. Look for a permission slip to come home allowing us to take field trips across the parking lot over to the Public Library.

Included in all of our preparations has been training in "OptionC" our new student management system. With OptionC attendance and lunch count will be done via the computer. OptionC also provides the functionality necessary to post

our grades on-line as well as assignments. We will also utilize OptionC to assist with tracking behavioral issues. Eventually, we will have all teachers posting their grades weekly so you can be informed regarding your child(ren)'s performance. There is a lot to learn and the implementation of these aspects of the program will take time. We are going to ask teachers to utilize the tool off-line and get used to it prior to our beginning to post grades on-line. Our initial goal is that by mid first quarter some of our teachers will be posting grades on-line. We hope for full implementation of the grade book and homework functions by mid second quarter.

Also on the docket this summer has been substantial work in the area of our school safety plan. This plan encompasses every aspect of our communal life together. We have consulted with a variety of experts and we will have new evacuation routes posted in each room along with comprehensive school safety procedures. Part of our school safety plan is ensuring the safety of our students to and from school. We have revised the drop-off and pick-up procedures that were given you in the summer packets. Please go to www.olgcs.org and click on "Parents" where we will post an updated drawing of the entrance and exit procedures. Your patience is requested as we will, I am sure, need to revise these procedures further once we get a sense of the number of students arriving on the bus and those being transported via the car line. One safety issue that we must insist upon is prompt drop-off procedures. Please have all of the supplies your child needs for the day in the car with you (not in the trunk) so that he/she can exit your vehicle without you having to get out. Also, we may not have parking spaces available for parents to park and walk their students into the building. Busing and traffic flow are a bit unpredictable at the beginning of each new school year; however, our situation makes it nearly impossible to predict the best traffic flow pattern. IT IS THE PROFESSIONAL OPINION OF OUR RESOURCE OFFICER AND THE CHIEF OF POLICE THAT WE BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR NOT ALLOWING FOR LEFT TURNS OUT OF OUR PARKING LOT FROM 7:40AM-8:00AM AND FROM 3:00PM-3:20PM.

Do not forget about the skating tonight and tomorrow night (see www.olgcs.org) for details. Also, please be putting together a plan for you and your family to facilitate a quick and smooth drop off here at school. I hope to see you all Sunday between 6:00-8:00 when you can roam the halls and students can familiarize themselves with the building.

Peace,

Mike Johnson
Principal,
Our Lady of Grace Catholic School