

St. Mary's School Year Comes to an End as the Building Project Begins

We are quickly coming to the end of the 2009-2010 school year and we have much to celebrate. The month of May has been busy with programs and events to honor student achievement and celebrate student success. Spring music concerts highlighted the musical growth in students throughout the year while the athletic banquet honored the physical achievement of our sports participants. First Communion, May Crowning, and a special mass with the Bishop helped mark our Catholic traditions. And the graduation ceremony on June 9th will honor thirty-eight eighth grade students who will be graduating from St. Mary's School.

Even though the school year will be finished on June 10th, the school will continue with activity throughout the summer. The most noticeable activity will be that of construction workers as they start the building project. The building plans have been developed and contractors are now preparing bids for us to compare. The design is scaled down from the original plans to reflect the current amount of pledges received from the Capital Campaign. We have 1.7 million in pledges from the recent campaign and we chose to move forward with the money available in hopes that we could build more for our money today than waiting until we reached the original goal of three million. Unfortunately, some of the desired parts of the plan will need to wait until we collect more pledges.

The design of the project will include a new entrance on the west side of the school. This entrance will support building security and safety in numerous ways. The main office will be located at this entrance, requiring visitors to check in at the office before proceeding into the building. When students enter and exit the building, they will not need to walk through a parking lot or across traffic to reach the playground. The playground will also receive needed upgrades including, a flat open play area that will be fenced on the west side along Oak Street.

The newly constructed spaced will also contain two preschool classrooms. This will allow us to offer two sections of preschool at a time which has been needed in the past to accommodate the Catholic families in our churches. By focusing on the younger students, we hope to grow the enrollment at St. Mary's School. The original plan was to also build three kindergarten classrooms as part of this addition. That portion of the project will be bid as an alternate and will only be completed if the funds are available.

The existing building will also see a few improvements. New burners will be installed on the boiler system, the fire alarm system will be enhanced, portions of the roof will be replaced, and a new freezer will be added to the kitchen. We realize there are many more improvements that could be made and we will continue to make improvements to the building as the pledges increase.

I want to thank the following people for working on the building committee: Phil Clubb, Dave Mulert, Rich Gerdts, Jay Johnson, Sara Slotsve, Fr. Sauer, and Fr. McGrath. If you have any questions or concerns, please visit with me or one of the committee members. The project will be presented to the Board of Consultants in Winona on June 22. An approval from the Diocese is needed before the project can begin.

Thanks to all who so generously supported the St. Mary's Capital Campaign. With your prayers and support we will continue to educate the children of our community in a Faith filled environment.

Blessings to you and your family,

Mary Hawkins, Principal