

A message from Principal Jay Hoffmann:

Usually, when we say Spring Break, we're describing that lovely week in March when the sun comes out and temperatures rise and everyone gets a well-deserved breather from the long dark winter. This year, it's more like, *It's Spring! Give us a break!*

Our weather not only delayed the tulips and other real external signs of Spring, it's delayed the outside portion of our construction project. Monsoons during the summer and blustery winds, freezing temps and heavy snowfall all winter have slowed work on the new wedge in the center of the building that will eventually become the student commons and serve as a link between the athletic end and the academic portion of the building. While outside work has been affected by the elements, our construction team has concentrated on making progress on the other piece of the project which includes inside infrastructure improvements and renovation of the academic areas continues to move along. If you've driven by the school at night, you've probably wondered why the lights were on. Construction crews worked their way around the entire building after the school day replacing sprinklers and wiring, a major component of the renovation. They worked at night to minimize impact on students and interruptions to instructional time.

The next step towards providing well-deserved, spacious, modern, new common areas for students will take place after the Juniors take the Prairie State Exam on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> when we turn our current overburdened student dining room and kitchen over to construction crews. If you've ever visited during one of our very crowded lunch periods, I'm sure you'll agree that this upgrade for our students is long overdue. When students return after the long weekend, they will find that the northeast corner of the Fieldhouse has been converted into a temporary student dining room for the last month of school. With more square footage than the current cafeteria in the Fieldhouse, there will be more seating. We'll be offering a limited menu and options for outside seating once Spring finally decides to appear. The snack bar and additional seating will be relocated to the Metcalf foyer and will be open before school and during lunch periods.

Graduation will take place on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. on the front lawn. The building once again becomes a construction site on Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> when work will continue on the student commons, new media center, resource centers, classrooms and departmental offices. This summer, sole access to the building will be via the McKinley Road entrance with parking available only in the north lot in front of the pool. The back parking lot will become a closed construction site and will be inaccessible to all traffic. Entrance to the academic wing will only be through the center main doors. The doors at the cafeteria foyer and Auditorium foyer will be locked. The Main Office (Room 106) and the Student Service Office (Room 104) both located right off of the Senior Star will be the only offices open. All lockers should be emptied on Friday, June 6 as hallways will be blocked off and unavailable due to construction throughout the core of the building after that date. At the north end, the Athletic Office will be open.

Summer School U.S. History will be held at Deer Path and Summer School Driver Education Classes will be held in the mobile classrooms north of the Fieldhouse. Summer Athletic Camps will be held at the Athletic end and at West Campus, depending on the camp.

We've pushed the start of school back to September 8 next year to facilitate completion of our construction projects. As required by the State, fall sports will begin on August 13<sup>th</sup>. Book Buy and Registration will be on September 2, 3 and 4 at West Campus. First official day for freshmen will be Freshman Orientation on Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>.

When we open our doors to all students on September 8, we'll also be opening a new chapter in the history of LFHS. We'll have a new media center, new cafeteria, new student commons and new classrooms. We'll now be able to provide our ever-evolving, challenging, rigorous educational programs in a facility that truly meets the needs of our students. The building will be a hybrid mixing the familiar with innovations that will advance learning opportunities and experiences. It will provide our students with choices and options that have never been available to them because of space constraints. All of these improvements have been designed with our students in mind. They've had input every step of the way, encouraging us to "go green" whenever possible and contributing ideas for student common area designs. They'll enjoy updated and enlarged library facilities and resource center opportunities as well as additional quiet study areas.

Throughout all of the changes one thing has and will remain constant and that's our kids. This year has at times been challenging and our kids have met the challenges. When we asked them to make the trek outside to the new music wing or for PE, Health or Driver Ed classes, they did so without complaint throughout the worst winter we've had in a long time. When we've had to turn them away from the library because there just wasn't any more room, they found other study options. I can't say enough about our kids. They consistently amaze me with their flexibility and creativity. Most importantly, our Senior Class is to be congratulated on its leadership, intelligence and compassion. Seniors have set the bar high for the student body by their maturity, good example and their school spirit and responsible actions. It's fitting that as we're about to begin construction on a new library, the Publick Room which once served as our first library, was turned over to our senior class as a seniors-only quiet study area. The Seniors made good use of the room, honoring its historical value and treating it with great respect. Their respect of the Publick Room Senior Study will be handed down to future senior classes as one of many positive traditions established by the Class of 2008. Community Service and caring is second nature to our kids and they come by it, as you would expect, by seeing that same kind of behavior in their own families. Our kids continue to seek and find ways to help others through a myriad of individual, club and class projects while maintaining their academic studies, playing sports, music or acting in plays just as you, their parents, are always there ready to work hard to support the LFHS community. You've identified needs and offered support in as many ways as your children have, and you do it cheerfully, tirelessly and enthusiastically.

Change is hard. In this case, it's also dusty, noisy and seemingly endless. But it will end and thanks to the patience and partnership of parents, teachers and staff and most importantly our kids, we'll be starting the school year with a fresh, inviting building. One thing hasn't changed at LFHS. We still have the best kids in the world and as of September 5<sup>th</sup>, they'll have the facility they deserve.

Thanks for all you do and for your continued patience and support. We're all keeping our eyes on the prize. It's all about the kids.

Sincerely,

Jay