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## New School Construction Update

As we head into the final days of our final year at our Blaine Campus, the students and the staff are excited to wrap up this year as we look forward to our big move. The school staff have been highly committed to delivering our characteristic great education to every student even as we spend an inordinate amount of time and energy working to complete the construction of our new campus. The teachers have stepped up to provide months of detailed input into the design of the new school, help recruit and interview new staff, and capture the programs and traditions that make us so successful. The office staff have upgraded our processes and systems to recruit and enroll more students, support more families, on board more staff, and manage a bigger facility. And the leadership team has been working tirelessly, 7 days a week, to bring it all together: a vision, a building, a curriculum, and a faculty that will continue to deliver outstanding results. Believe me when I say they all deserve our deepest gratitude for effort far above and beyond the normal call of duty. Please give them a high-five when you see them.

The new school construction is progressing at a dizzying pace. The entire shell is up and the roof largely completed over all areas. The 3-story academic wing started having internal walls, electrical, heating, plumbing and flooring installed as soon as it was covered earlier this year. The classrooms, breakout spaces, and hallways are really taking shape. Below are some pictures from recent weeks (things change every day).

The gymnasium floor slab was recently poured. The final section, the central common area, will have the floor slabs poured over the next week or so, and the parking lot will be paved in a couple weeks. Then the internal construction teams will start to migrate out of the academic wing to work on the staff offices, common areas, music rooms, and kitchen.

We remain on schedule to have the teachers start moving into their classrooms in late July and welcoming students on the first day of school, August 15th (and August 17th for Kindergarten). As you may know, we did have one problem with the sub-contractor who was providing our outside walls. This problem caused about a month delay in getting the outside shell finished. The unfortunate and unavoidable result of this delay, despite some truly impressive parallel-path "stacking" of many subcontractors since then, is that our gymnasium and auditorium won't be complete until September/October time frame. We continue to work aggressively with our general contractor to reduce this delay as much as possible.

Meanwhile, we will have a couple wonderful new things to help alleviate the delay of the gymnasium: a new soccer field and a graded walking/running path around the pond! In addition, the Capital Campaign is going very well, raising funds for the playground (which could not be paid for with construction bonds). We will be asking the community to pitch in to help assemble the playground on August 4th and 5th.

Finally, let me address one reality of human nature. When I toured a beautiful new school like St. Croix Prep, with all its amazing features, I couldn't help but think to myself "I wonder why they didn't do this, or that, or the other thing? It would have been simple to just do that during

construction..." Let me tell you, I had not the faintest appreciation for the constant - and countless - trade-offs and decisions that must be made to bring a school into reality. We have a hundred masters to satisfy, including the needs of our students, teachers, staff, Ham Lake, Anoka County, the state of Minnesota, the federal government, the EPA, the disabilities act, OSHA, our bond budget, our authorizer, and on and on. Even harder are the trade-offs we must make to maximize the features of our new school on a fixed budget. Do we add more sound proofing over there, or put nicer lighting over here? We can't afford both. Do we pay extra to make it look nicer, or just focus on pure functionality? Both are important in making a school we'll all be proud of, and there are no easy answers.

We look forward to sharing the new school with you, and the story about how we arrived at what we believe is the most impressive campus possible for the time and budget we had. You're going to be amazed. And if you see something you would have done different, it will be fun to talk about it.

[Ross Meisner](#)

President, DaVinci Academy Board of Directors



The base of the grand staircase.

This will be the central hub of the school and a great place for kids to read or sit and chat.



The auditorium will be able to seat over 400 people!



View of the school from Bunker Lake Boulevard.





The gymnasium - You can see the doors to the locker rooms on the far side of the picture.

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