

Dear Wildcat Community,

I'm using my end-of-semester community message this year to share with you an update regarding some major facilities improvements ahead for The Academy. As you may remember me sharing last spring, The Academy's Board of Directors created a Futures Committee about two and a half years ago to undertake the work of establishing a vision for the next phase of the school's facilities development. With our Main Campus building nearing 20 years old, it was time to consider updates and upgrades that would keep our school competitive for years to come. The outcome of the Futures Committee's work was The Academy Facilities Master Plan, which was completed in the spring of 2023. If you are interested in learning more about this process and the final report the Committee produced, you can [read that document here](#).

Since finalizing the Facilities Master Plan, we have put a lot of work into figuring out how to make the goals included a reality. We followed a vision-based decision making process grounded in the school's 3 Navigational Stars – Prepare, Explore, and Empower. Starting with Prepare, we wanted to ensure, first and foremost, that we were investing appropriately in our core instructional mission to prepare kids for academic success. Our process then moved on to consider how implementation of the Facilities Master Plan could also support our other two Navigational Stars – Explore and Empower – by enhancing opportunities for students to pursue their strengths and passions. This directed our attention to Performing Arts, Postsecondary Workforce Readiness, individualized student supports, and Athletics. We made sure all of these could be accounted for within the work ahead of us.

Furthermore, our Finance Team went through a process of creating budget projections to ensure the sustainability of our current efforts over the long term, including recruiting and retaining a high quality staff, adequately developing our facilities, leaving room for other ongoing improvements, and maintaining healthy financial reserves. Once we concluded how much the school could responsibly afford to spend, we started the process of securing financing to fund this work. We closed on a related facilities loan last month.

All of these efforts have set us up to begin construction work this summer. Coming renovations of our existing space at Main Campus will accomplish three important things: 1) a redesign of the current Summit space to build new performing arts classrooms for Band, Choir, Orchestra, and Theater ([see image here](#)); 2) a new High School Student Supports space to accommodate our expanding offerings for academic, behavioral, and mental health services ([see image here](#)); and 3) an expanded kitchen that will increase our serving capacity to keep up with the implementation of free school meals for all ([see image here](#)). This renovation work is scheduled to be completed over the summer and ready for students and staff to occupy at the start of the 2025-26 school year. Given the project schedule that is currently set with the contractor, we are hopeful that the renovation work will not have any impact on students and teachers during the school year.

The project will also include addition work at Main Campus to bring new space for classrooms, offices, and bathrooms on the secondary side of the building (see images for [downstairs](#) and [upstairs](#)). This will allow us to provide adequate work space for a growing staff, house all 6th-8th Grade Middle School classrooms in the same hallway, increase student services offerings, and improve traffic flow through the building. Moving 6th Grade over to the Middle School wing of the building will also free up space on the Elementary side to accomplish many of the same things for those staff and students as well. This addition project will extend into the fall semester with the goal of being completed and ready for use in

the second half of the school year. Given that project schedule, construction work will obviously continue while students and staff are in the building. The plan is to complete the loudest and most disruptive work over the summer and reach a point by the start of the school year where the construction zone is completely walled off and separate from any part of the building being actively used by students and staff. School administration will work closely with the contractor to minimize disruptions and ensure a safe learning environment.

Following these renovation and addition projects, we are also developing plans for an upgrade of our Athletics facilities. The exact details and start date of this phase of the Master Plan are still being determined. More information will be available soon.

I will finish by acknowledging that, given how much newer the North Campus facilities are than our Main Campus, there is not the same current level of need for wide scale updates. That will likely change 5-10 years down the road, at which point further facilities updates can be considered. In the meantime, we will continue to make smaller scale improvements to North Campus facilities through annual budget allocations. Examples are expected to include:

- Playground maintenance & improvements
- HVAC maintenance & improvements
- Technology replacements & upgrades
- Classroom replacements & upgrades
- Safety projects, etc.

We will continue to share more detail about this planned work this spring as the project start date gets closer.

Warm Regards,

Brent Reckman
Executive Director