



We Are Better Together!

Mother Maria Anna Brunner

Catholic School

Transition News & Notes – Vol. VII

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NEW SCHOOL NAME CHOSEN! *BRUNNER CATHOLIC*

The results of the survey regarding the name of the new school are in. Adults from both St. Rita and Precious Blood selected Mother Maria Anna Brunner most frequently. Based on the survey result, Leadership from both parishes recommended that the name be presented to the parish councils to formally declare the school's new name. Mother Maria Anna Brunner is the founder of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. The Sisters have been the foundation of both schools and continue to provide support. The school will be called Brunner Catholic or Mother Brunner for short.

SCHOOL COLORS CHOSEN! *Red and White*

The 7th grade classes from Precious Blood and St. Rita selected Red and White as the school colors for the new school. The 7th grade was selected to make this decision recognizing the important role they will play as the leaders (the first 8th grade class) of the new school. Red and white were the school colors for St. Rita and Precious Blood separately so it is no surprise that the students selected the same colors to maintain the tradition within the new school.

RETREATS HELD

The retreat for the seventh grade classes was held at Salem Heights. The Sisters met the students at the door and escorted small groups to Grace Hall. Their graciousness set the mood for a wonderful day. After some exercises to get to know their pen pals and all others, the students discussed their anxieties, fears, and questions about the consolidation. Father Ed, Father Bill, Benjamin Darnell, Veronica Murphy, Dan Mecoli, Amy Meyers and Barbara Maloney all contributed to this enlightening discussion. Each segment of the discussion was closed with a litany asking Jesus to deliver the group from their fears. The group ate in the Sister's dining hall, and many Sisters stayed and talked to the students. The Sisters commented on how well-behaved the kids were. In the afternoon, the group celebrated the Liturgy of Hours in the Sister's chapel. The theme for this service was based on Ephesians 4; 1--6, one Lord, one body (the new school theme). The students gave witness to the reading; it was hopeful and upbeat. The students ended the day with an Emmaus walk outside with their pen pal. The walk included a prayer at Mother Brunner's grave.

The 6th grade retreat was similar, but held in the gathering space in Precious Blood Church. Sixth grade parents provided drinks, dessert, and other snack items to supplement our peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. The sixth graders completed

similar exercises about the consolidation. The praise dancers also added to the prayer segment of the day. The students enjoyed playing together outside.

The 5th grade retreat day is planned for Friday, April 16. Weather permitting; the students will have a picnic lunch outside so they will be asked to bring blankets. As with the 6th and 7th grade events, the 5th graders will have “get to know” games as well as a prayer component.

The students continue to write letters back and forth although it is no longer academically required.

SUPPORT TEAM ANSWERS QUESTIONS AND ANNOUNCES UNIFORMS

Will there be events to help students meet one another?

Grades 5-7 are writing pen pal letters and meeting each other at retreats. More details above.

Grades K-4 are writing pen pal letters and will gather for lunch and recess at PB in May.

What are the children feeling?

This is being discussed at the 5-7 grade retreats and in all classrooms when questions are raised. Students are excited about the new school. They have some of the same questions and concerns of their parents, but after spending time with their pen pals, their concerns and possible fears seem to fade away into talking and laughter.

What will the school colors be?

Red and white

What will the uniforms be for the new school? Will there be a transition year? Will we have to buy new uniforms?

The uniform plan has been decided. Details are below.

As we transition, the Support Committee has attempted to use parts of existing uniforms from both schools. By combining parts of the uniforms, costs of new uniforms will be minimized. In order to create a united community and prevent an “us vs. them” perspective and look, the Support Committee recommended discontinuing the use of any logos or printed uniforms representing the separate St. Rita and Precious Blood schools. With this in mind, new red shirts and new gym uniforms with a new logo will have to be purchased. Understandably, this may be difficult for some as is this any change. By giving this information early enough in the year, we hope that parents will have time to plan ahead. The uniform is as follows:

- PANTS/SHORTS: Navy and/or khaki uniform styled with inside pockets
- SHIRT: Short or long sleeve polo style shirts with a school logo (logo to be determined)
- JUMPER/SKIRT: Plaid jumper (grades K-4) and a plaid skirt (Grades 5-8) (Plaid fabric to be determined)
- SKORT: Navy and/or khaki skort (French Toast brand)
- SWEATER: Long sleeve, cardigan, V-neck sweater
- SWEATSHIRT: With school logo
- FLEECE VEST/FLEECE PULL OVER: With school logo
- GYM UNIFORMS: Tee-shirt and/or sweatshirt with logo, shorts and sweatpants with logo

The recommendations bring together great traditions from each school. It has been many years since Precious Blood has had a plaid jumper or skirt. What a great additional option for the girls. Also, gym uniforms were a tradition at PB at all grades and in the upper grades at SR. Now, students in all grades will enjoy the comfort on the days they have physical education classes. The navy and khaki pant colors draw upon colors currently used at the two schools: SR – Navy, PB – Khaki. The uniforms with the new logos will allow the students to proudly represent the new school and create a sense of community.

FINANCE AND FACILITIES UPDATE

The Finance and Facilities continues to meet weekly to address the needs of the new school. Based on current enrollment figures of 398 plus kindergarten, the current school building at Precious Blood Parish can house all of the students with use of some under utilized areas.

The team has been reviewing all of the equipment, furnishings and books at both schools and determining which pieces to move from St. Rita's campus to Precious Blood campus. In addition, the team has been discussing financial support from both parishes. They have completed a recommendation that will go before both parish councils.

Below are answers to additional questions that were received.

Is there a financial benefit to the merging of the schools?

Yes, there are some financial benefits to the merger. There is a level of fixed costs necessary to operate a school. The more students attending a school, the further that fixed cost is spread over all students, thus keeping tuition in the affordable range and the school a viable ministry.

What will happen to the St. Rita school building?

St. Rita will continue to explore options for others (e.g. charter schools) to utilize the school building. In the meantime, other Catholic schools currently pay St. Rita for use of the gym and we expect that to continue. Precious Blood currently uses the gym free of charge and that will continue.

How far into the future has the consolidated school budget been forecast?

The consolidated school budget has been forecasted through Fiscal 2012.

Will there be transportation to and from school?

Students can be transported to and from school by bus or car. For families that live in Northmont, Jefferson Township, or Dayton Public Schools district, busing to the consolidated school at Precious Blood will be provided. Students from Brookville or Trotwood districts must provide their own transportation.

For students who need to be dropped at school before 7:30 AM or stay later than 3:00 PM, there will be a before and after school program.

ACADEMIC UPDATE

We are excited to announce that classes in computer/technology will be taught next year in grades K-8. The students will learn programs such as Word, Excel, Power Point, and more. This instruction will give our students the building blocks needed for success in high school as well as our modern world. This is an area of the curriculum that we have the capabilities to do well. The Academic Committee reviewed the Catholic Education Collaborative (CEC) survey to help guide the decision process. Chaminade Julianne High School requires that freshman pass a computer test or take a semester long computer class. Offering the computer/technology class at the new school will give our students a leg up in high school.

For at least the first year of the new school, foreign language will not be part of the regular curriculum. The committee will continue to explore how a foreign language might be provided in the future. This decision was based on the recognition that offering a foreign language in all grades presents challenges as we welcome new students at all grade levels. This challenge is one PB faced and was addressing prior to the planned consolidation and is not a reaction to the consolidation. Already, Spanish was not being offered to all students at PB depending on each student's overall academic needs.

Accelerated or Honors Math will continue in grades 8 and will be added for grade 7 according to the each students needs and capabilities. The Math teacher and the Principal will look at the OAA, Terra Novas, and grades to determine the eligibility of each child.

A textbook committee is formed from among the teaching staff of both current schools. The teachers will choose the textbooks and educational programs for next year.

The Academics Committee is also working with local universities (Wright State and UD) to plan for a gifted program (based on current best practice in the field) for the fall and assistance with professional development for teachers.

MASCOT TO BE DECIDED

Student leaders in both SR and PB selected 5 potential mascots for the new school:

- Barracudas
- Bull dogs
- Cougars
- Saints
- Tigers

Each class room voted on a mascot of their choice. The new mascot chosen is: **Bulldogs!** The support committee or representative will find an artist to design a mascot symbol.