

July 14, 2011

To: Smitty

From: Monty Aldrich

THOUGHTS FROM THE UNIT OFFICE...

Yes, we will have Pre-K this year! We were recently notified that our grant application has been approved by the Illinois State Board of Education. This program was again in jeopardy and the grant process became competitive this year. To obtain more information about the program, contact the elementary office at 665-3393.

School will begin for students on Wednesday, August 17 with a full day of school. Prekindergarten classes will also begin on that day. Prior to that, Monday and Tuesday will be teacher institute days.

Registration will be on August 2 and 3. If you did not pick up a packet on July 19 or 20, you will need to do so immediately at either office. You will need the packet completed before attending registration.

Our school emergency notification system has been with School Reach for the past three years. We have changed contracts and will now work with Alert Now. This will provide many changes with those being called. We will now only allow two phone numbers to be entered in order to cut down on the callbacks and overuse of the system. There will be a station at registration that will explain the changes and take new information for the coming year. Again, there may be times when the notification system does not work so our primary notification for media will be WNOI radio station 103.9 in Flora.

The high school roof project is now, for the most part, complete. There are a few remaining repairs and items to correct. Hopefully this will provide a good roof for the life of that building. The parking lot project is going smoothly so far. The crew poured concrete on the two hottest days of the year and is continuing to seal the asphalt portions of all lots. In addition, a new entrance at the high school where bus traffic is heavy will be completed before school begins. Please be patient as the crew will have several areas blocked off periodically. Hopefully the battle of North Clay vs. Potholes will be concluded.

The grade school office is taking on a complete renovation. This is being done for security reasons, and to improve confidentiality. Before, any parent/guardian, visitor, etc. could basically walk in and possibly pass through without being questioned. We've always done this on the "trust" system, but unfortunately times have changed. Drop off/pick up procedures will be dramatically changed. All persons entering the school will now go through a specific door and be greeted for further help. Entering beyond that point will require an appointment or authorization. The drop off for all to bring kids to school will end at that point. All other doors in the building will be secured and a plan is

being developed for further security. We are not doing this to lock you out! We are simply taking measures necessary to keep prior and future incidences from happening. We do not share that plan with anyone for the security of all involved.

I would like to address confidentiality as I have before. One of my pet peeves is the fact that people sometimes stick an ear in when it shouldn't be and transfer information overheard either in an accurate or inaccurate manner. I address these items with our employees and expect that they follow it at all times. The scoop on confidentiality goes like this: Employees have access to student/family information on a "right to know" basis. For example, if you give us information about a concern or threat, medical information, etc., only staff members who might be affected shall be told. Those particular staff members should not share with any colleague who does not have a "right to know". Yes, I know this has been violated but the most important thing to remember is that we have to be informed to enforce discipline with this.

I also have concerns with visitors, parents/guardians, etc. who may be in the school building and abuse this. Please, if we have a staff member who is on a phone call, private conversation, or somehow exposing any written documents, do not invade this privacy. Please allow our staff to speak and listen on phone calls without eaves dropping. If someone is in a meeting, do not walk in, stand by the door where you can listen, etc. This is first and foremost good manners to refrain, and more importantly ethical. Other items to address includes calling the school office and/or staff member and cutting loose with profanity. We often get this and I will assure you that I have instructed our staff members to respond by stating, "When you can talk in a respectable and ethical manner, you may call back".

Scheduling or calling ahead for a meeting or a need is always best. This includes all offices. There are times when people come in here and expect to see me "on the spot". While I most always accommodate, there are times when I either have to be somewhere quickly or am involved in something that I cannot easily stop. I understand urgencies and emergencies, but I want my time to be as efficiently used as possible. Putting someone on the spot because you are upset and seeking an advantage puts staff members on the defense. Again, if our staff treats you poorly, I would expect you to report it to the administration.

We have what is developing to be one of the top school districts around. I would challenge most districts to be where we are in caring for kids. I expect professionalism and respect from our entire staff and nothing but the best in educating. There is always room for improvement but I'm proud of what we have and how we do things. If you ever feel differently because of the way you or any student has been treated, please let us know so that we can fix it.