

August, 19, 2011

To All Academy Parents and Students:

I wish to write you and bid you a warm welcome to a new school year. Only a few days remain of our summer break, and Wednesday, August 24 is almost here. I trust your summer has been filled with a refreshing time together as a family, and that you are getting excited about returning to school this fall.

Even though summer has passed by so quickly, I am glad school is almost here. I have missed having you at school as the building has been quite too long, the halls too dark since no lights were needed, and the classrooms too silent and empty! I think it is time for the FCA team to come back to school, join forces together, and launch a new school year. I so look forward to your return on the first day of school. Please look for me as you pull into the parking lot (using the Whittier Street entrance, of course). I'll be the guy greeting you near the main entrance.

Please note these important meetings and times as we approach the first day of school:

Monday, August 22; 6:00PM – Orientation for parents of students in Kindergarten through Grade 5
Tuesday, August 23; 1:00PM – 5:00PM – Elementary Open Classrooms (Meet your teacher, see your classroom, bring in your supplies to ready your desk for the 1st day of school)

Tuesday, August 23; 6:00PM – Orientation for parents and students in grades 6 – 12

Wednesday, August 24 – First day of school for ALL students

Note – Pre-school Orientations will be held the following week with the first day of classes starting after Labor Day.

Please permit me to update you on several other important issues, some of which we will give more details during our Orientation Nights.

We have had a good time of planning and preparation for your return to school this fall. We have freshened up the classrooms, relocated some rooms, cleaned and painted walls, floors and classrooms, to make our facilities as clean and sanitary as possible. It makes me remember how, when I was a child, how my mother would work so hard in cleaning up the house, and preparing for the family to come home for Christmas. Mr. Kerns, Mr. Stevens and their entire crew have worked hard all summer to fix things up for you to come home (come back) to school. We are ready for you to come and visit us for the 2011-2012 school year. "You all come back, ya hear?"

Enrollment is strong for the new year. As I write this letter, we are currently only six students short of last year's enrollment numbers. This being the case, we have several grades currently closed; including grade 2, grade 4, and several of our pre-school classes are full. We thank God for our enrollment this year, and see it as evidence that God has something special for us to accomplish this school year. The enrollment numbers have also strengthened our financial picture this fall. We will be sharing more with you at the Orientation Nights regarding how FCA is now on a good solid foundation and that we are on track to meet our financial responsibilities in the year ahead as the result of conservative restructuring, wise financial planning, and cautious purchase practices.

We have also restructured our upper elementary school. In my last letter, I informed you that we were moving the fifth grade back to the elementary school department in order to create a 4th / 5th grade intermediate department. I am pleased to say we have accomplished this by creating a separate wing for these grades in the 420 rooms' area, so these five classrooms can now be clustered close together in their own separate department. And wait till you meet the teaching staff – you won't be disappointed.

Speaking of teaching staff, even though we reduced the number of our staff through conservative restructuring, which helped our financial stability, we have not had to hire any new staff. Therefore, the veteran teachers of FCA are back to serve you for another school year.

To accommodate our large 2nd grade classes, we have arranged to provide extra teaching assistance to these two classrooms, particularly during core subject times. We will share more details with you at orientation. Please be sure to come.

I also want to alert you to a couple of Fine Arts matters. The fifth grade music program has been redesigned to permit every fifth grader to choose which music area they wish to participate in. Beginning this fall, you may choose to take band, choir, or strings as your required music class. Please discuss this matter as a family and come to school prepared to share your preferred choice starting the first day of school. We are continuing to provide a strings program throughout all grades of FCA. Based on our tuition structure (in light of being sure to cover the expense of our strings program,) we will be charging an extra nominal fee for a student to participate in strings in grades K – 4. The tuition cost in grade 5 covers the cost of the strings option, so no additional charge will be assessed. The same is true for all higher grades strings students (6 – 12).

As you plan to carry in your lunch or purchase your lunch at school, bear in mind that all cafeteria prices have remained the same this year. We have made no changes at all in the food and drink prices. The August and September menus are posted on our web site, so check out our menu often to determine if you which to buy lunch at school. Students in grades K-5 will purchase your lunches through your classroom teacher and students in grades 6-12 will purchase your lunches through the cafeteria cashiers.

We have updated our broadcasting system again for this year. For general announcements to the whole school family, we will use the e-mail system (the same system used for this letter). For urgent announcements, we will use the Honeywell Instant Alert system, which calls your home, or any phone devise, texting device, email device you wish to set up in the system. School closings will be announced using Honeywell, or you can check for school closings on the FCA Website. Please be sure to keep your e-mail and phone information accurate by reporting any changes to the school offices. You have full control of the Honeywell system, so go to our website to find how to customize your calling preferences.

Lastly, I ask you to pray for our spiritual growth this year. Your students are precious, and we want them to love the Lord with all of their hearts and do God's will in their lives. Knowing that the students' spiritual growth is more important than academics, physical, or social growth, let's commit to pray together for our students as they grow in Christ this year. Our spiritual theme verse this year is

II Peter 3:18a. "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ." We trust that by the end of this school year, you will see much spiritual growth in the lives of your children!

FCA is determined to move forward and continue to develop its program. We have set new institutional goals for this year, and have already begun to tackle the task of accomplishing those goals. I have met with our academy school board and our administrative team and we have determined our goals, set our course, appointed our task force leaders, and started working on the goals. We will share more information about these goals at our Orientation nights. Please pray about these goals and be willing to consider serving as members of the task forces that will work together to accomplish these goals.

I must close for now. If you are still reading this letter, I applaud you for doing so! I know it was long, but there was much to share with you. I remain committed to sharing with you often, reporting with you important developments in our school program, and gathering your input from time to time. I hope you will stay in touch with us through the various means available: Website, Superintendent letter, Stakeholder Updates and Reports, and the occasional Stakeholder meetings we will schedule through the school year.

As always, if there is anyway the FCA staff can serve you, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be glad to oblige.

God bless you. See you at orientation night.

Best regards,

Ed Reck