



Parent Update

- OLM RELOCATION PROJECT -

Feb 1st 2016

Greetings OLM Community!

As promised during last week's announcement, the OLM Board, Administration and Pastors are committed to providing regular updates regarding the status and progress of the relocation project we are now undertaking as a school community. While the format, content and overall length of subsequent communications may vary, you can expect regular updates as we endeavor to keep you all informed of the exciting times ahead.

For this first installment, we thought it useful to address some of the questions and statements posed to board members over this past week.

What are our options?

This question has been posed to many board members and can only be answered at this time by restating our commitment to explore all viable options. Below is a sample of just a few of the more frequently discussed options:

Relocate OLM to a new location of increased size and increased scope of service.

This option has been a very exciting option for the board and administrators to discuss. The outcome of this option would reinvigorate OLM as we know it today. The result would be a regional catholic school drawing students from a wider geographic area and reintegrating our ECC program within the same campus as our Grade 1-8 program. Suggestions of partnering with neighboring schools or parishes could be a component of this option. The board has unofficially nicknamed this option... "The SuperSchool".

Relocate OLM within Guilford or Madison with its current mission and vision intact.

This option presents a reassuring option with the overall feel of a lateral move. We would simply relocate OLM (desks, chairs, and all) to an existing building that would provide the space, resources, and program space we currently enjoy. Although primarily proposed as a lateral move, opportunity still exists to secure a space large enough to reintegrate the ECC, enlarge the specials rooms, and increase offerings in the areas of computer centers, library space, and more.

Merge OLM with another local Catholic School.

This option provides OLM the opportunity of partnership as a means to continue our mission with a similarly oriented neighboring school. This option has received the least attention to date and could not be investigated more completely until news of our eventual move was made public.

Is OLM simply going to close?

This option is not being investigated at this time. We are committed to finding a solution that allows OLM to continue on its mission with existing and new families for many years to come.

Is it possible to find a building that could house a school of this size?

The OLM board, during its strategic planning retreat, began a cursory review of currently available properties, soon to be available properties, and potentially available properties. While we have already been able to identify local options for relocation, we have been unable to investigate these properties in a more formal manner until the news of our move became public. This effort has begun in earnest since last week's announcement was made. We look forward to updating you soon on our progress.

Why hasn't more been done?

After learning of our lease situation in late December, an emergency meeting of the board was called just before Christmas. It was decided that we would inform our community as soon as we possibly could, as soon as we had even the smallest amount of information to offer. As a result, we spent the next 4 weeks meeting with the archbishop, the superintendent of catholic schools, and representatives from the parishes in order to establish an initial course of action. When the decision to continue with catholic education on the shoreline was made, we scheduled the parent session that was held last week. We were unwilling to openly pursue our relocation options before our parents were properly informed of the issue. We simply thought it unfair to allow this news to leak out to families as a result of our real estate searches.

Should we withdraw our children this year?

Of course, this is a question our board liaisons cannot answer for you. Instead, all we can do is reiterate our pastor's message from last week...

The future direction of OLM depends on the commitment of our current community and the commitment of families yet to come to OLM. This is open enrollment season. We as administrators will know our future based on the enrollment of our school. We are committed to business as usual for next 2.5 years. We are hoping we can count you.

Additionally, reports from Sister Carol and Sister Ellen are that more than 25 new families have made serious inquiries for enrollment in OLM. This has occurred before our first open house has even been scheduled, before advertising efforts have been made, before catholic schools week services in our parishes. Clearly the factors that drive families to OLM remain in our communities. Enrollment growth of this magnitude, along with a strong reenrollment from current families, would set OLM on strong footing as we spend the next year arranging our relocation. So we say again, we are hopeful that we can count on you!

In closing let us again acknowledge the unsettling nature of the decision thrust upon us all. Anxiety and fear are expected. In fact, all of us on the board went through the same emotions. However, with the passing of time, the exploration of options available to us, and an energized leadership team, we have turned the corner on these reactionary emotions and are now looking forward to charting a strong course for OLM. Remember, our school is strong because of our families and teachers. We are not in this situation because of declining enrollment or financial difficulty. We have a school ... we simply need a building.

Next week... news on the committee, Vision2018 initiative, timeline, and more...

OLM Board, Administrators, and Pastors