

BUILDING PLAN UPDATE

Through the last five months, our building plan has taken some fairly significant and important turns. The school, initially slated begin in modular facilities, will have its start in a site-built building, albeit in a unique situation.

The Comal Independent School District has been operating a school, Comal Elementary, on property contiguous to our own, for many years, opening it first as a country school to which their students traveled from surrounding ranches. Now the school district is much more a suburban one, with schools inside distinct housing communities. For this reason, they have planned to close Comal Elementary at the end of the 2009-2010 school year, moving the rest of their students to a new school in Garden Ridge. (The first half moved to Morningside Elementary when it opened in 2008.)

In the fall of 2008, CISD approached JPII to gauge our interest in the property. In the end, through meetings, site visits, public bidding in December 2008, and contract negotiations, CISD and the Archdiocese have signed the contract for the sale of the buildings and 16 acres of land.

The district realized that John Paul II was going to need a space for classes in the first year, in order to fully move forward with the sale. To this end, John Paul II will be able to use one wing of the Comal Elementary school building in the 2009-2010 school year. The Comal Elementary student population is below 400, in a building that has held over 800 students. Further, the school has been built in distinct wings, allowing JPII to have its own entrance, bathrooms, and a main hallway of classrooms that is separate from normal Comal Elementary student traffic. The cooperation between JPII and CISD has been positive as well, and our school will be able to offer all of

CONTINUED ON BACK

The front of Comal Elementary building, as seen from FM 482.



REGISTRATION NIGHT

Registration Night for all accepted students and their families will be Thursday, 26 March 2009, at 6:30 p.m., in the OLPH School Cafeteria. The evening will be a chance to talk directly about the academic school year that approaches for freshmen. Students and parents will submit course selection forms, along with the registration fee (\$250). Among the other items that will be discussed: faculty and staff, four-year degree program, school day (hours) and calendar, Latin and Spanish, RenWeb, liturgies, tuition payment, parent participation, athletics and fall cross country/training, clubs and activities, goal setting for students, summer program, and steps toward college preparation.

NOTE on SOPHOMORES:

The JPII School Council has made the decision to not open the school with sophomores in 2009-10. The group had not yet reached the target goal of 25, and consequently, the council felt that the group would not have been served as they deserved. The school will follow a more traditional model for Catholic school establishment, one grade level per year.

TUITION

Tuition and fees for the 2009-2010 school year are \$6,000. The registration fee of \$250 is collected in the spring. Tuition was set at \$6,500, but all families have been given a Pioneer Scholarship in respect of their willingness to help found the school. Tuition (\$5,500) and a technology fee (\$250) are collected during the school year. Payment schedule options are one-time (\$5,750), two-payments (\$2,875 x 2), or monthly (\$575 x 10 months, July through April).

Other costs borne by families will be fees for participation on athletics teams and clubs (to help cover the costs associated with them). Textbooks are provided, but we will ask families to purchase select paperback editions of books within the great books program. The school will purchase the copies, issue them to students, and then ask for reimbursement.

CORRECTIONS

See page two for explanation of the title correction!



BUILDING PLAN, *continued*

the programs and courses that had been normally planned for freshmen.

One can see how this is a win-win for all involved. CISD receives something back for its asset; they normally would not have seen this, given the rural location and building design. JP II starts in a site-built, school-equipped building. Further, the school includes 76,000 square feet, which was what our master plan had initially seen as the final total square footage once the complete vision was built out. Certainly, there will be renovations and different needs for JP II that will need to be addressed immediately and over the first five years of use; it will also make our first students pioneers even more. However, this was a direction that JP II could see had many advantages over our first plans, and so have pursued them with the necessary diligence and caution. We know that this same caution and diligence guided the decision-making within CISD. Both groups feel that this is a tenable arrangement, and know that through good communication and supervision, we will both have a successful, positive school year.

It is important to note that all appraisers and contractors who have toured the facility see it to be in excellent shape, and the district has pledged to keep it in that condition right up to the transfer.

There are many reasons to be excited and heartened by the start of our school, and this adds to that. *Below we have some images from Google Earth to show the school and the building outline.*



UNIFORMS

The uniform committee met in early 2009 to review different providers and options that JP II has with school uniform providers in the community. The committee narrowed the providers down to two, and ultimately selected Schoolyard in San Antonio. The selection was based mostly on price and service. The company has shown itself willing to work with the school's needs and to minimize the distance issues. The company will have a sizing session in our area in June, and will take family orders that day. They will then deliver those orders to the school one week later, saving families the trip into town. Families will receive a 10% discount on all purchases in the month of June. Further, they will have a web site up for us [they currently have one for OLPH], with which they will have the same procedure (families place an order — they will deliver out to the school within a week, unless it is needed sooner and can then be shipped). At Registration Night, we will have some samples of the plaid for the girls skirt (a blue and gold pattern), along with the other full plan and prices. These will also be posted on the web site with images to view.

CORRECTIONS



The pundits strike! The editor recently received a note from an area scholar noting the incorrect Latin usage of the word *portas* in the former title of this publication. The editor had initially taken the word directly from the full Latin motto, "Be not afraid to open wide the door to Christ." In that quote, *portas* is in the correct Latin form, given its use in that sentence. As intended in this publication, the word is meant to convey 'opening' or 'doorway,' as in this publication is a gateway to learning more about JP II. The editor feels the precision is worth the effort of the change, so welcome to the first issue of *Portae*!