

Viking Community Members,

I will start out by saying, "Isn't great to be a Viking!" It is that time of the year again, the time to return to school. It seems that every summer goes by a little faster than the year before. I hope that you had an opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends. I will begin by congratulating the students, staff and community on the "Excellent" rating the school achieved for the 2009-2010 school year. This is an achievement the entire community should be proud. I want you to know that being "Excellent" doesn't mean that we will become content; but rather it is motivating us to improve even more.

Education plays such a major role in preparing our students to be successful in the global society. It is our job to promote and challenge our students to reach their full academic potential. To achieve this, we must continue to challenge our students by annually raising the levels of expectations and standards by which they are rated by. This philosophy will help keep us from ever becoming content with our current achievements. Utilizing this philosophy will help us provide every student with a quality education, which will prepare each of them for his/her future.

Leipsic Local School has moved to a middle school philosophy, which will consist of grades 5-8. The administration has spent many hours looking at the different grade configurations that are demonstrated throughout Ohio. The grades 5-8 configuration is the one we felt would provide a quality education for our students in this difficult economy. This will be a dramatic change for the 5th and 6th grade students, due to the more structured schedule. The middle school schedule will consist of a nine-period day that begins at 8:10a.m. and ending at 3:03p.m. Due to the more structured schedule, the 5th and 6th grade students will no longer have a recess, but I have implemented three gym classes for them a week. Also, the students will have time after they complete their lunch to run around and exert energy.

I will be implementing a Middle School National Honor Society this school year. Only 7th and 8th grade students will be eligible to participate in this prestigious club. Mr. Boyd has graciously volunteered to be the advisor for this group. This will provide us an opportunity to raise the level of expectations in the middle school as well. This process will start by selecting 8th grade students, who have met the established criteria, during the first nine weeks. Once the 8th grade students have been selected, the other 7th and 8th grade students who have met the criteria will be selected at semester time. In implementing the Middle School NHS, a G.P.A. must be implemented for the 7th and 8th grade students this school year due to it being one of the criteria items in the selection process. This will also help to smooth the transition between middle school and high school. The students need to better understand the impact grade point averages have in their high school career. Too many times the freshmen and sophomores aren't concerned about their G.P.A.'s until they become seniors and aren't eligible for certain scholarships.

I would like to remind the students, parents and community members of some of the important rules/policies the students must abide by. In preparing our students for their futures, it is important for each of them to understand there are certain expectations that will be placed on them and it is their responsibility to meet them. If those expectations aren't, in the real world, there will be consequences. Becoming an individual that is accountable will better prepare our student to be excellent contributors to our society and that is something we can be very proud of.

The first item involves the semester grading system, which implies the student must pass both semesters to earn full credit for a year long course. If a student only passes one semester, of a yearlong class, he/she will only earn 0.5 credits and must retake the failed semester the following school year. This is an especially important topic for seniors because they must pass both semesters of a yearlong course to be eligible to graduate.

The second item involves the +/- scale, which was implemented last school year to help provide a more accurate display of a student's achievements. This +/- scale is used in calculating the student's grade point average (G.P.A.). This more descriptive scale provides us a more accurate alignment of the student rankings.

A third item involves unexcused absences. If a student earns a 6th unexcused absence, in a semester, he/she will automatically fail the semester. In order for Leipsic Local to provide a quality education to a student, the student must be in attendance daily. I understand there are times a student must be absent, but every time a student is absent he/she will be missing information learned on that particular day. When a student does miss, it is the student's responsibility to make-up his/her assignments.

A fourth item involves the possession and/or use of cell phones at school. The school acknowledges the fact that students have cell phones, but the cell phones must not be kept on person. The student can keep his/her cell phone in his/her locker or out in his/her vehicle, but they aren't to have it on them. If a cell phone is heard or seen during the school day (8:00a.m.-3:03p.m.), the student will have consequences for his/her actions. This rule was established due to the safety issues cell phones bring to a school setting and that is why the consequences will be more severe.

The fifth item involves the dress code, which must be addressed in every school across America. It is important the students recognize that a school is a place of learning rather than a place to make a fashion statement. It is important that the students abide by the policy found on p.26-27 in the student agenda.

This sixth item involves report cards and how they will be distributed. The middle/high school will not provide/mail hard copies of midterms, nine weeks grades, or semester averages. To help save paper and postage, we are posting those reports on progressbook for you to access. If you don't have Internet access, please contact the school and we will mail you a hard copy of the report.

The seventh item involves the senior project, which is a requirement for a student to earn a Leipsic diploma. Every senior must successfully complete a senior project for him/her to be eligible to graduate from Leipsic. The senior must select an advisor and work with him/her throughout the process. It is the senior's responsibility to complete the assignments on time. Information regarding the senior project can be found on the school website under the High School title.

The last item involves the student parking issue we will have throughout this 2010-2011 school year. Due to the construction of our new building, we will have a very limited number of student parking spaces. We currently have 124 students in grades 11-12 and we only have 67 student parking spaces to work with. The seniors will be given first consideration for parking stickers, which will be purchased during the first few days of school. The First Christian Church has graciously given permission for students to utilize their parking lot. Students need to be considerate of this donation and respect their property. The Methodist Church has contacted the school to inform us, due their activities, they wouldn't be able to permit student parking during the school day. The students will not be able to use St. Mary's parking lot either, due to this area is assigned as the parent pickup area for students not riding the bus. I am providing you with this information for you to understand the difficulty there is in finding a solution to the issue. Your patience and cooperative attitude will be greatly appreciated in this issue.

I am proud to be a part of the Viking community and I am looking forward to the upcoming 2010-2011 school year. This school year will bring new challenges and opportunities for us to take advantage of. As the new school is being constructed, there will be many distractions/conflict that will occur, but let's keep in mind the final result. The new building will provide us with a state of the art environment for our students to be educated in. It is a great time to be a Viking!

In Education,

Michael L. Bute
Middle/High School Principal