

Chalkboard

By

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I must be a slow learner. This August will make the 48th opening of school for me- as a student, or a teacher, or an administrator. Like the other 47 times, there is the sense of both excitement and apprehension of the unknown.

For the second time in my fourteen-year tenure as your school superintendent, this school year will see the opening of a new school facility. The first was the middle school back in the last century- back in 1995. This year, some 11 years later, the very youngest of our students, those in grades kindergarten through the second grade, will begin school in a new, modern facility. If you attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday of this week, I hope it gave you a sense of pride and accomplishment in how some of your tax dollars are being spent and whom they are being spent on.

Our district has invested, over the years, several of your dollars in providing a safe environment for the students to attend. Let me try to chronicle Gentry's building program since I was a senior at Star City High School- a Jr./Sr. High School in 1972, (now the Intermediate School) a new high school in 1980, the Gentry High School Auditorium and Intermediate Multi-Purpose Wing in 1982, a free standing classroom addition at the elementary school in 1986, the Gentry Middle School in 1995, a classroom addition to the middle school and a VoAg Building in 1999, the Middle/High School Cafeteria in 2001, the 12 classroom addition to the high school in 2005, and finally the new Primary School in 2006.

That list states what I believe to be the fact of the matter. That fact is that the citizens of Gentry want the children of their community to have a good environment in which to learn. More important than just buildings, the citizens want the children to get a good education.

Today it makes me smile to think that I was starting the First grade at about the same time the buildings were being built in Gentry that the new Primary School is replacing. Both the old Primary School "wing" buildings and I are showing some signs of aging. Maybe we both can be renovated but that is a story for another time. Enough philosophizing.

Did you read the story last week in the *Courier-Journal* that had the new traffic flow map for the school site on Pioneer Lane? As you know, now the high school, the middle school, and the new Primary school all

share that site. One of my friends suggested to me that it was initially a little confusing to understand. So, for those of you that like written directions rather than a picture, here is the plan in writing. Note that these instructions are for Pioneer Lane traffic approaching the school site from the north side of the site.

High School parents will do what they did last year. They will enter the site at the drive by the practice field, circle around the parking lot, and unload at the gym lobby entrance to the high school.

Middle School parents will now go to the second middle school drive to enter. At that drive they will turn north and unload at the main entrance to the middle school or in front of the cafeteria building. After unloading they will continue north in the drive in front of the high school and get back on Pioneer Lane with the high school parents. Alternately, when they enter the second drive to the middle school, instead of turning north in front of the middle school they can go west on the new Primary School drive and unload behind the middle school where the students usually congregate on the grassy area. If so, they will have to re-enter the Primary School traffic, continue south in front of the new Primary School, and exit back on Pioneer Lane by the cemetery.

Primary School parents will also enter the second middle school driveway entrance and go west on the new Primary School driveway. They will unload under the awning at the front of the building and continue around the loop and enter Pioneer Lane by the cemetery.

Bus traffic will enter the site with high school parents at the drive by the practice field and continue west until they turn south on the drive that runs between the back of the high school and the front of the bus garage. No parent or student vehicular traffic will be allowed in that area as middle school students will be unloading in that area.

High school students who drive to school will follow the same procedures as last year. They will enter the same drive as the high school parents and then park in the student parking areas.

I would ask that all parents and students coming to the Primary/Middle/High School site use extreme caution. The first few days are going to require patience from all motorists until the new pattern becomes routine. I thank you all in advance for your understanding and willingness to make coming back to school a safe and pleasant experience for everyone.