

March 31, 2016

TO THE EDITOR:

After years of planning and months of construction, the new Silas Willard Elementary School will be open for students on Monday, April 4, 2016. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the taxpayers of District 205 for supporting the construction of this building and for giving future generations of Silas Elementary students the opportunity to learn in a new, state of the art building.

The list of those that need to be thanked is long. Russel Construction and our architects Cordogan Clark and Associates, Phillips and Associates and Klingner and Associates are certainly at the top of the list. The representatives from each of these firms were outstanding to work with. Thank you to all of the tradesmen who worked on the job. Union workers built this building and we are proud of that.

I want to thank the members of the Historical Society for making sure that Ronald Reagans legacy as a former Silas student was properly memorialized.

A tremendous amount of assistance was given by many groups from the District and the community on Monday and Tuesday of this past week. A huge thank you goes to the members of the Bethel Baptist Church and to the Bethel Baptist Missions Team for their tremendous efforts on these days. Students from Knox College assisted as did students from Galesburg High School National Honor Society. Many Silas parents also helped. Farmers Insurance donated treat bags for the Silas teachers. Thank you to everyone for your tremendous help!

I also have to thank the custodial and maintenance staff of District 205, as well as our technology workers. This past week has been hectic and stressful as we have moved from Old Silas to New Silas. Our district staff has gone above and beyond to make this move this week and to make sure that New Silas is ready to receive students on Monday.

The Silas teachers are to be thanked as well. We asked them to do an almost impossible task this week...pack up their rooms and then unpack them and get things ready for students....in 7 days! Being the professionals they are, they accomplished the task. Their new building and their classrooms will be ready for students on Monday.

I also have to thank the Silas Principal, Tiffany Springer and her assistants, Libby Zaiser and Jane McGee. Months of planning and organizing have been put into this project. Plans for this move began last September. In addition to all of the normal day to day things they must deal with, they took on this huge task to make this move happen this week. The move could not have gone smoother.

Certainly, the Boards of Education, past and present, are to be thanked as well. Decisions like the ones that were made to bring this dream to reality are never easy, often unpopular and often criticized. The past Boards made the decision based on what they felt was in the best interest of our students, our staff and the community. Thank you to each of them.

On Saturday, April 2, 2016, from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm both Old and New Silas will be open for visitors. Old Silas will be open for those who wish to take a stroll down memory lane one last time. New Silas will be open to give all of Galesburg a glimpse into what education in District 205 is going to look like in the future. Some old school furnishings will be available for sale in the gym of Old Silas, as will bricks from Old Silas. The public is invited and encouraged to attend the Saturday, April 2, 2016, Open House.

Finally, I respectfully request that everyone be more patient than ever with us next weeks as we work out the final details of the move, temporary play areas for the children and as our contractor finishes up the work needed to be completed. The new Silas site and the old Silas site are still construction areas so please be extra cautious while in these areas.

Again, thank you to the entire District 205 community for supporting this project. Monday, April 4, 2016, will truly be a wonderful day in Galesburg. The future for education in Galesburg is bright. We truly appreciate the support of the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ralph Grimm".

Ralph Grimm
Superintendent