

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, “What are you doing for others?”
Martin Luther King Jr.

Dear Armatage Families,

Morning Drop off by Door 15

Recently, I received two letters from parents’ concerned about the drop off situation by door #15 in the morning. With permission, I am printing an excerpt from one of the parents.

“It is my opinion and observation that the parking/traffic flow/child drop off on the Door 15 side of the building has become **dangerous to students, parents, and vehicles**. I think it is creating safety issues, if not also increased liability risk.

Mr. Kenny is doing everything he can to manage the situation, but it is an awfully big area for him to manage by himself. He is making sure that kids crossing the parking lot/drop-off exit on the sidewalk are able to safely do so, while directing traffic out of that lot in coordination with traffic on Russell and 57th, and working to keep people from parking on the corner, a particularly bad place to park. I am a big Mr. Kenny fan, but he is one person and there is too much mounting for him to manage.

There are a number of issues that are compounding the problem on that side of the building, which I observe to include the following:

1. Parents/cars park and drop-off or park and walk-up from 57th Street. These parents have apparently determined that they have a better system than the parking lot and drop-off system that has been developed next to the park on Russell.
2. 57th is not a wide street to begin with, but in the morning it has residents parked there (who have every right to be

there and appear to park almost exclusively on the South side of the street), cars pulling in and out of spaces against the curb on both sides of the street, doors opening into the street with adults and children exiting into the street, students/parents crossing 57th (some at the 57th and Russell corner and some other places), and now as of this week a dumpster on the South side of 57th making the passage even tighter.

3. The roads are bad from the weather and the light is still not out so it is dark, neither of which are the central issue but both of which make it worse.

4. Parents/cars still dropping off on the corner of 57th and Russell (despite Mr. Kenny's efforts). This creates a pinch on that corner of traffic flow and results in only a single lane of travel for a corner that has two directions of travel. Further, with all the other cars parked there, it is difficult for those going north on Russell and then west on 57th (the manner directed by Mr. Kenny to avoid issues on Russell) to see what's coming.

5. The result is a chaotic scene and an overly narrow channel for traffic, including cars that are using the system set up next to the park. I have now seen a number of near misses of all varieties in this area.

The other parent who contacted me back in December is trying to get the City of Minneapolis to help with this problem, but so far, no new ordinances have been created.

To this end, I am asking for your help with this ongoing and dangerous problem. I want to ensure that our students and families are safe during drop off in the morning and to this end, we need the following procedures to be adhered to:

- Please enter at the south end of the parking lot and form a single file line heading north toward the parking lot.
- Please have your child/ren exit the car on the right side of the vehicle facing the park board.
- Upon exiting the parking lot, **please turn right** and go to Sheridan Ave.
- Please do not park on Russell and have cross the street
- Please do not park between the cones that are set up from approximately 7:15 – 7:35 a.m.

As a reminder, if Mr. Kenny, the cones and signs are not in the parking lot, door #15 is locked and you need to drop off your kids at door #5.

In advance, thank you for your help in keeping our students safe.

Construction

Last week, I met with district personnel to discuss and work toward solidifying details of the project before it goes out to bid in February. It seems like a long time coming, but the final adjustments are being made and by early spring ground breaking should be under way.

Budget

Last Tuesday, principals were informed that preliminary budgets for the 2017 – 2018 school year will be distributed in mid-February. At this point in time we have no indication of whether or not there will be an increase from this year's allocation.

In this week's Wednesday envelope, there will be a brief survey that will seek your opinion about the prioritization of monies. Staffing decisions are based on several factors including but not limited to:

- Classroom teachers & prep specialist allocations (i.e. Art, music, p.e., and science) are based on student enrollment
- There are positions the district deems required in order to run a school (i.e. principal, secretary, special education, engineers, food service)

- There are positions funded by discretionary dollars (i.e. Associate educators, Testing coordinator, Technology Specialist).

Your input will help determine where discretionary dollars will be allocated. Please send the survey back to school by Thursday, February 16th.

Professional Development

Next Monday, there will be no school as staff will be participating in professional development. Our school focus this year is around Reader's Workshop. We are continuing to learn new strategies to implement during writing time.

As we continue our work around equity in education, we will also discuss several chapters from the book, A Good Time For the Truth by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. The book is, "A call for us to listen and learn about one another's real lives in Minnesota." Staci Owens, 4/5 teacher and Sarah Hasebroek, Instructional Specialist will be leading this professional development session.

No School

A reminder, there is **no school** this Friday, January 27th and Monday, January 30th.

Have a wonderful long week-end.

Joan Franks, Principal