

Concordia Academy-Bloomington

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 2, 2009

1. Why is Concordia Academy-Bloomington closing?

In April 2008 the Council launched *Crossing Today. Building Tomorrow.*, a campaign to raise \$500,000 in gifts and pledges and to enroll 125 students for 2008-09. Each member of the Council fully expected that the school would continue.

While the Concordia Academy Executive Council still believes in the importance of the school's ministry, the Council made its decision to close CA-Bloomington based on several successive years of low enrollment and budget shortfalls. For the four school years from the fall of 2004 through 2008, the Concordia Academy Association of Schools has backed lines of credit for the school totaling nearly \$900,000, in addition to fundraising a total of \$615,000 during the same period. Our enrollment for 2008-09 is 105 in grades 7-12, compared to 121 in 2007-08. Given the school's capital debt of \$2.3 million, an enrollment of at least 175 would be necessary to operate the school in the black.

Based on projections for enrollment, fund-raising, and future operating expenses, the Council knew it had the fiduciary responsibility to make this difficult decision. In May school leadership fully expected that CA-Bloomington would be open into the future. Since that time, the economic environment has changed dramatically, further impacting Concordia Academy-Bloomington's outlook for the future.

2. Will the school continue to operate through the end of the academic year?

Yes, Concordia Academy-Bloomington will be open through the entire 2008-09 school year. We will strive to make this year the best academic experience possible for students. Most importantly, we will look to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His guidance, peace, and nurturing for our community.

3. Lutheran High School also had financial difficulties and low enrollments. Why didn't the school close then?

In December 2004 the Lutheran High School Board of Trustees approached Concordia Academy and asked if CA and the St. Paul Lutheran High School Association would take over the administration of the school. At that time the Lutheran High School Board felt they had no other option besides closing.

4. Why was this decision made so early in the year?

After reviewing the economic outlook for the school, the Council received advice from our lenders, auditor, and LCMS and District officials that closing the school, though difficult, was the best decision. The Council understands that students, faculty and staff need the advance notice to be able to make arrangements for next year. We knew the closure of CA-Bloomington needed to be communicated as soon as possible.

5. How much was raised in the campaign *Crossing Today. Building Tomorrow*?

Last spring, the school conducted a fundraising campaign with a goal to raise \$500,000 and increase enrollment to 125 students. Our enrollment for 2008-09 is 105 in grades 7-12, compared to 121 in 2007-08 and twenty short of our goal. The fundraising efforts yielded \$182,000 in gifts and pledges falling short of its goal. As a result, five full-time and part-time staff were let go last spring, a move that reduced expenses by \$175,000.

The campaign exceeded the expectations of many people. Before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, the campaign had raised \$102,575, which was applied to the -\$396,000 shortfall for 2007-08. Since July 1, 2008 we have received \$48,000 towards the effort, including over \$5,000 raised at the Garage Sale on August 9. At this time we are still anticipating pledges for over \$31,000 to be paid by June 30, 2009; those

funds and all CA-Bloomington annual fund gifts go directly to operational expenses for the school. Even with recent gifts and anticipated pledges and gifts, CA-Bloomington will still end the year with an expected shortfall in excess of -\$275,000.

6. How was the larger Concordia-Bloomington community notified of this decision?

Families unable to attend the parent meeting on October 8 received a letter and a copy of the FAQs by mail. Personal letters were mailed to donors, association pastors and principals, and synod and district officials. Another letter about the decision was sent to the remainder of the CA-Bloomington mailing list on October 20. Members of the Executive Council personally contacted the most recent members of the Lutheran High School Board of Trustees. The delegates and pastors of the Association learned more about the decision at their regular meeting on Thursday, October 9, and the larger association community received details in the November issue of the *Spectrum*.

7. What will happen with any funds raised this year? What about funds restricted to school organizations?

For us to have a successful year, the continued financial support by the school community will be just as important as ever. It is imperative that we meet our obligations, including payroll, benefits, and mortgage. For this reason CA-Bloomington will continue with its fall and spring appeals for the Annual Fund. Those gifts will be directed to the normal operating expenses for the school.

Funds in restricted accounts, such as Boosters, PFA, Student Council, and so on will also be directed towards various school needs. We will share options with leaders of these groups for possible designation of the funds.

8. What will happen with the endowed scholarship funds?

Over the 45 years of operations at LHS/CA-Bloomington, the school has been blessed by the generosity of donors who have established endowed scholarship funds. There is currently about \$60,000 in those funds. The CAO, along with members of the Executive Council, will meet with those donors, as much as possible, to determine their wishes for designation of the funds, either to a future endowment fund or to operating expenses.

9. What will happen to the building?

We have a beautiful facility at CA-Bloomington, particularly with the addition of the Dan Reuss Gymnasium that was completed in 2005. The Executive Council has accepted a brokerage contract with NorthMarq, a local commercial real estate firm. NorthMarq has extensive experience in working with school properties and non-profit organizations. As much as possible, showings of the building will take place after regular school hours. We have also requested that signage not be erected until after school is out for the summer.

If surplus funds remain after a sale of the building and repayment of all debt, the Council has discussed designating the funds for scholarship endowment. No final decisions have been made.

10. Will the association congregations remain in the association?

The Concordia Academy Association of Schools is a voluntary organization of congregations. Each congregation will be able to make its own decision about remaining in the association and supporting the school ministries in the association.

11. Does Concordia have plans to start another school in the Minneapolis or South Metro area?

While the Association and the Executive Council have no concrete plans to start another school in the metro area, we will always be open to exploring those options. The Concordia Academy Association of Schools will continue in its mission to develop and sustain exemplary Lutheran schools.

Lutheran schools across the nation are facing the same challenges. Currently, Concordia is participating with a task force within the Minnesota South District of the LCMS that is exploring options for new models of Lutheran schools.

12. What about Lion's Gate Christian Academy?

Lion's Gate Christian Academy is a new K-12 Lutheran school that will open in the fall of 2009. While the new school will not have any direct affiliations with Concordia Academy, CA and its Executive Council support the efforts of the new school and continue to pray for its success. More information about Lion's Gate can be found at www.newlutheralschool.org.

13. Are there laws in place that affect us with regard to the closing of a parochial school?

CA-Bloomington is owned and operated by the Concordia Academy Association of Schools, which is incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota and is a 501(c)(3) under the Internal Revenue Service. Because the Association still operates Concordia Academy-Roseville, there is no need to dissolve the Association or the IRS tax status.

14. How will the Association support the faculty and staff?

Concordia Academy-Bloomington has a faithful, talented faculty and staff that have given many years of servant leadership to the school. All faculty and staff will remain under contract and will receive regular salary and benefits through the end of the fiscal year, along with a monetary bonus and extension of health benefits for staying through the end of the year. We will assist staff as they seek new positions by providing additional time off for interviews, letters of recommendation, and other personal assistance as needed. If there are staffing needs at CA-Roseville, the CA-Bloomington teachers and staff will be among the first considered for those positions.

15. Will school events and programs for the remainder of the year remain unaffected?

Our goal is to make the 2008-09 school year the best experience that we can for our students. At this time, we plan to complete our schedule of activities and events for the remainder of the year. You can expect to hear more about special events planned for students and the larger CA-Bloomington community as we celebrate the legacy of this school and praise God for the ministry.

16. How will the school help families in the transfer process?

We know that our students in grades 7-11 and their parents face many decisions as they prepare to choose a new school for 2009-10, and we will strive to do everything we can to make a smooth transition and closure for students and parents for the next academic year. A meeting was held for parents and their students in grades 7-11 on October 28 to provide specific details of the transfer process and to share information about a tuition-reduction package for students that wish to transfer to Concordia Academy-Roseville.

At the same meeting, parents and students of the Class of 2010 received information specifically related to graduation requirements and college planning, as well as information about the Post-Secondary Enrollment Option.

17. Does CA-Roseville offer the same program as CA-Bloomington?

Concordia Academy-Roseville, like CA-Bloomington, is committed to the dual mission of spiritual growth and academic excellence. The school offers a similar comprehensive, college-preparatory academic program as CA-Bloomington and, with the exception of the two-year foreign language requirement, has the same graduation requirements. Over 90% of CA-Roseville's graduates go on to post-secondary education. This year Roseville has 404 students in grades 9-12.

Parents of students interested in shadowing at CA-Roseville may contact Marilyn Mick, Director Admissions, at 651-484-8429 ext. 136 or by e-mail at marilyn.mick@concordiaacademy.com. You can learn more about CA-Roseville on the web at www.concordiaacademy.com. Need-based financial aid is

available and association tuition credits are extended to all families that are members of association congregations.

18. Is CA-Roseville financially stable?

Concordia Academy-Roseville is projected to end the 2008-09 year with a budget surplus. The school faces the same financial and enrollment challenges as other non-public schools, but has strengthened its financial position through re-financing and aligning staffing with enrollment.

19. Will my student's new school enrollment for 2009-10 still be considered a transfer by the MSHSL?

The Minnesota State High School League Board of Directors has approved a transfer plan for students in grades 9-11. Students may transfer to any non-public school in the area or to any public school a sibling has previously attended and maintain varsity eligibility if CA-Bloomington receives a copy of the acceptance letter from the new school by March 31, 2009. After March 31, students will maintain their varsity eligibility only if they transfer to Concordia Academy-Roseville or to the public school in their attendance area. Copies of acceptance letters should be forwarded to Dan Maser, athletic director at CA-Bloomington. Transfer students may play "C" level, freshman level, or junior varsity athletics with any penalty on eligibility.

The Minnesota State High School League website is at www.mshsl.org. The League handbook can be downloaded from the menu bar at the top of the web page.

20. What if a student transfers before the end of the year?

According to the High School League, students that transfer schools mid-year without making a change of district residence lose a year's eligibility for varsity sports. Mid-year transfers are, however, allowed to participate in junior varsity or "C" team sports.

21. What if we need school records in the future?

For the remainder of this school year, all school records will be managed at Concordia Academy-Bloomington. After July 1, records will be moved to the Association Office in Roseville. Students or alumni needing copies of transcripts or other school records should request them through the Association Office at 651-484-8429 ext. 107 or contact the Association Office at info@concordiaacademy.com. There will be no charge for sending transcripts. Academic transcripts will be maintained as permanent records. Health records and cumulative records are kept on file for seven years.

22. Who will coordinate alumni activities? Who will be the alumni contact?

Over 1500 Lutheran High School and Concordia Academy-Bloomington graduates cherish their relationships and connections to their high school. The Association Office staff will be the primary contacts for alumni. We will continue to support alumni by providing support for class reunions and by reporting alumni news and activities by e-mail and through the *Spectrum*, the association newsmagazine.

23. Will students and families have opportunities to participate in planning celebration and year-end activities?

This year we will celebrate nearly fifty years of ministry at our school. A committee of students, staff, alumni, and parents has been organized to plan activities to celebrate the legacy of CA-Bloomington and Minneapolis Lutheran High School. The tentative plan is to host an All-School Reunion (for LHS and CA-Bloomington graduates) on Saturday, June 6. A Service of Thanksgiving will be held on Sunday, June 7, at the school.

24. What is the mission and vision of Concordia Academy-Bloomington?

The mission of the Association is “to develop and sustain exemplary Lutheran school to prepare students for lives of faith and service. The mission of the school is “to provide Christian learning opportunities that invite spiritual growth while nurturing academic excellence.” The strategic plan for the Association can be found at <http://www.lutheranhighschool.com/lhsnews/index.cfm>.

25. How can I get more information?

Additional information about year-end activities will continue to be available on the school website at www.concordiaacademy.com and in the *Spectrum*. Parents can expect regular communication through e-mail. If you have questions regarding specific issues, feel free to contact Chief Administrative Officer Lynn Henry at 651-484-8429 ext. 119 or at lynn.henry@concordiaacademy.com.

The Executive Council has also established an e-mail address for additional comments or questions: council@concordiaacademy.com.