The Herald

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Lifting Up Students and Steel

MCA families are in for a treat upon arriving to school on Tuesday after spring break. The walls to our new high school building are now in place, making it easy to see how the new high school classroom building fits in with the MCA facility. Obviously, this is a major milestone in the building project. Currently, temporary steel braces are holding the walls in place until the permanent beams are fitted into place across the top of the structure. This structural steel should be in place before the end of the month. Once this step is completed, work will begin on the interior– carpentry and framing, followed closely by the HVAC, plumbing, electrical wiring, and low voltage wiring, which will all be completed before finishing touches are made in August. The building pad and parking areas for the new gymnasium are well underway, and outdoor lighting, cabinetry, flooring, paint, furniture, sky lights, paging systems, and even telephones are being selected.

Finishers work during the night to create the walls. One person guides the pipe pouring cement into the wall forms, as another uses a vibrating machine to settle the concrete and remove air pockets.

Upon our return from spring break, all MCA students will get to "make their mark" on the project. One of the large steel i-beams will be placed safely on the ground near the back playground, and each grade level has a scheduled time for students to sign their names on the beam, which will be lifted into place later this week.

The "lifting up" of the steel beam with all our student names is symbolic of our desire to lift up our students to seek universal truth, goodness, and beauty. We lift them by maintaining our delivery of a robust, liberal arts curriculum, continuing our principle-based discipline grounded in love for each individual and respect for the corporate good, as well as a belief in redemption and growth. We lift them up to become intelligent, virtuous citizens of our nation and to become the best person they can be, no matter where their future aspirations and plans may take them.

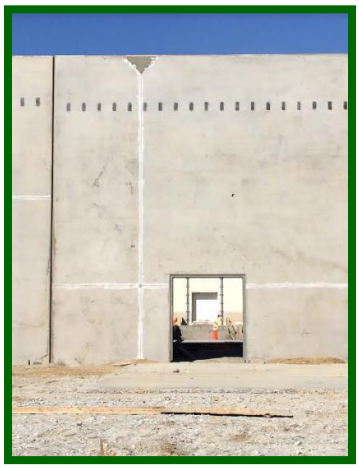
As we reach this milestone in our building project, we want to thank you, our parents and families, for making this a reality. Without you, none of this would be possible. We are also greatly appreciative of our visionary Board of Directors, our faculty and staff, Omega Construction, local and state institutions that have helped approve the development of our project, and the many other organizations and individuals that have helped get us to this point.

The final “call back load” of concrete is pumped into the last empty wall form. Much care and precision is used to order and mix the proper amount of concrete to prevent waste. Samples are taken from the different loads of concrete and then hardened and tested under extreme pressure to ensure the concrete is always mixed to proper specifications so it will withstand the weight of the roof and be as safe as possible for our students. The forms holding the concrete walls are literally bolted to the concrete floor pad to ensure there is no movement of the forms during the pouring or curing process. The hundreds of bolts, along with the forms, are removed once the walls are fully cured.

Once the walls are firm enough to support weight without making indentations, which is only about an hour after pouring, workers use a “riding trowel machine” to smooth the walls and ensure that they are exactly the same thickness at any given point.

A giant crane lifts the wall panels one by one into place and holds them as workers secure them in place. The crane for moving the walls is so large that it arrived at MCA on four trucks, and it required a smaller crane to help assemble it.

Wall panels are held in place by steel poles that are anchored to the floor. These will be removed when the steel beams are in place across the top of the building.



Above: A view from the end of the new building looking through to the existing high school building. Left: The side of the new building as seen from Old Springs Road