

St. Paul Schools Begin in Returning to Classrooms

BY DAVINA BELLINGER

AS CLASSES ARE RETURNING to traditional classroom teachings, students are still practicing online school activities at home and COVID-19 guidelines in physical school buildings.

Schools around the country started the process of reopening their traditional learning classes on October 19. Parents and students are concerned about how the transition will be after they have resumed in person classes. There are over three learning stages that Saint Paul public school boards will use in order to make the transition easier on young students.

Katy Read from the *Star Tribune* said, “More than 500 students will return to St. Paul public school classrooms on Oct. 19 in Stage 1 of a hybrid learning program.” Read explains this Stage 1 of learning is about easing students back to the classroom and away from homes once again. It can be hard for students to transition from an online format to an in-person format because they have had to deal with this new and unusual learning style for the last month or two.

The following schools that will start the hybrid learning classes are The Downtown School, Care & Treatment Program, Hospital Program, Bridge View, Focus Beyond, Rivers East, and Journeys. While these teachers are excited to finally welcome in their students, it has also been a stressful time preparing for the reopening of their schools.

There will be over 650 staff members involved in the hybrid learning process within the St. Paul school districts. Each family will be sent surveys about their readiness for the transition of moving each of their children into in person classrooms. More information on these surveys will be on Saint Paul Public Schools web page.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is consistently providing COVID-19 data because statistics show that in detecting buildings with the virus cases have gone up since the start of the pandemic. While this is still going on, the Saint Paul public school board will continue providing online learning services for parents who are still wanting their children to take online classes.

Eric Chaloux of *5 Eyewitness News* said, “SPPS [St. Paul Public Schools] will give families the option to continue distance learning for the rest of the school year if they do not feel comfortable sending their child back to the hybrid platform.” Chaloux states this as many families are uncertain and hesitant about the transition to hybrid learning amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tasmanian Devils Return to Australia

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

AFTER 3,000 YEARS OF living in Tasmania, a large island south of Australia, Tasmanian devils are now being reintroduced to the ecosystem of the Australian Mainland. About the size of a Pommeranian, or Chihuahua, Tasmanian devils are small dog-like marsupials famous for their ferocity and their powerful jaws.

In the 1990’s a type of face-cancer began developing amongst the devil population of Tasmania. This devil facial tumor disease (DFTD) caused the population to drop to 25,000 devils. The intense drop has been quite concerning, as the devils are scavengers, which means they are a crucial part of the Australian ecosystem. This is why scientists are attempting to go all Jurassic Park and prevent the extinction of the Tasmanian devil.

To prepare for the devils’ arrival, Aussie Ark, an animal conservation group, sent a team to fence off a chunk of Eucalyptus forests, remove invasive plants, clear out dead leaves to prevent forest fires, and humanely remove red foxes and feral cats to create a hospitable environment for both the devils and the aforementioned animals. According to *National Geographic*, though the devils do not hunt cats, the cats do not like the devils.

Over two decades of planning and care has been taken in the reintegration of the devils. Multiple recovery organizations have been working together on this project including, Aussie Ark, Global Wildlife Conservation, and WildArk. These groups have been working to choreograph the release of animals into Barrington Wildlife Sanctuary—a 1,000 acre fenced-in National Park.

However, this release is not nearly as simple as it may sound. In March, scientists released 15 devils into Barrington. They used radio-collars to monitor the released animals. They also put out Kangaroo carcasses to help the devils adjust to their new home with a hearty meal. After a few months, the animals were thriving! So, scientists decided it was time to introduce 11 more devils. Tim Faulkener, president of Aussie Ark, says, “They’re free. They’re out there. We’ve got some basic means of keeping an eye on them, but essentially now it’s over to the devils to do what they do.”

The integration has been recent enough that the Australian Bush Fires have not impacted this project, so the devils are continuing to thrive in their new home.

Enrollment Surge at CSP

BY ETHAN LANGEMO

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL sets a high standard for private universities in the state when it comes to education and affordability. The 2013 tuition reset proved to dramatically boost the student population, but the school has been steadily increasing since even several years before that. According to CSP Provost and COO Dr. Eric LaMott, the school recognized that the cost of attendance is one of the most significant factors for families and students choosing higher education. Yet, successful efforts are made to be sure that the education anyone receives at CSP is as high quality as a typical \$30,000-40,000+ private college. Even though students see the cost rising just a little higher each year, they are still paying less than they would have before the reset according to Cision PRweb, a leading online press-release distributor.

According to *StarTribune*, revenue from tuition has increased 66%, despite the reset, which has also cut overall student debt by several thousands of dollars. Taking all of this into account, it is no surprise that CSP has achieved its 14th consecutive year of enrollment growth. Not to mention last year the school experienced its largest incoming class ever—a whopping 351 students, filling up Luther Hall as well as three fifths of Hyatt Village. This year, the total student population will reach 5,200 individuals. This number includes graduate and non-traditional students in addition to traditional students. Concordia, St. Paul plans on increasing this number to a goal of 7,000 students over a period of five years.

It will be interesting to see how the university plans on accommodating more students. The dorm halls are packed this year, and many are on a waiting list to get into Holst Hall. There have not been any whisperings or plans of new living spaces being made, but with the ever-growing on-campus population, it will be necessary, especially if the school wants to reach the numbers they plan. Granted, that extra 1,800 isn’t completely students living in dorm halls, but the number of new students that would be moving into dorm halls would potentially mean new spaces need to be built.

Concordia, St. Paul is constantly on top of being flexible with student needs while still being able to maintain a relatively affordable price. Other private schools are finally following in its steps, particularly with tuition cuts. In order to retain students, many schools considered choices to make cuts to compensate for switches to online classes in the wake of the pandemic. William Kraft, current president of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, recently announced that there would be a \$15,000 tuition cut coming in the Fall of 2021. Schools are taking notice of the benefits of lower tuition and are making use of it. As always, CSP will be ahead of the game.