



December 18, 2023

Dear Lower School Families,

We're thrilled with how well the school year has gone thus far and look forward to an exciting spring after a reenergizing Christmas Break! As always, we appreciate the opportunity to partner with your family on this educational journey.

We're sharing this letter with you to announce some exciting news. **The K-2 playground is getting a facelift!** While we have enjoyed the equipment and swings that were installed into the current facility in May 2021, we've been assessing the need for some upgrades based on student, parent, and staff feedback.

Here's why we're taking this next step:

1. Our **K-2 enrollment has increased by nearly 40%** since moving into the current K-2 facility. In the fall of 2020, we had 141 K-2 students. We now have 193.
2. We've been observing the use of the space since moving in and have invited a playground consultant to help us assess our current space. We all agree that **we need to offer more focused, purposeful, and developmentally appropriate activities** in the playground area, particularly with the increases in enrollment.
3. We want to **enhance the attractiveness of this space** for our current and prospective families.
4. Some of you have read the book *The Coddling of the American Mind*. Jonathan Haidt, one of the book's co-authors, is releasing a new book in April called *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. In advance notice of the book and in a recent podcast, Haidt stresses that we need to return to **an emphasis on allowing our kids to play and independently explore to help them mature into competent, thriving adolescents and adults.**

Consequently, we have been working with some parents and the playground consultant to create a new design that should enhance the children's playtime experience.

Here are the improvements you can expect in addition to keeping the equipment we already have in the playground:

1. **A major new freestanding net climber** – This is the centerpiece of our upgrade. It is a large vertical play piece for climbing and sliding that can accommodate numerous children simultaneously. This piece promotes imagination, facilitates communication, enhances physical endurance through climbing challenges and balance exercises, and offers much more. This will be secured over mulch to allow for a natural, softer surface.

2. **Soccer goals** – We will have a designated space for soccer games in the playground. This will be complete with actual soccer goals at either end of the playing space in the fenced-in area. As many of you know, we have a good bit of soccer activity now. This approach will help facilitate that for our students.
3. **Outdoor tables and umbrellas** – The addition of four round tables will create space for outdoor learning for classes to enjoy the fresh air and nice weather. The tables will have portable umbrellas to provide shade on hot and sunny days.

The plan is to have all these upgrades **completed by the end of Spring Break** if the weather cooperates.

We always have been blessed with a generous community of families and friends. In order to make these upgrades a reality, **we need your help financially to make this happen**. We would love to engage the Lower School classes in giving, especially the K-2 classes, since they will be the beneficiaries of this equipment. **We welcome the children to contribute to the cause**, so they feel that they've been a key part of this project. We will be setting up jars in each classroom so they can drop coins in them. We'll be announcing a contest among the classes soon.

To generate more excitement for the project, we will be featuring some special celebrations that will include school leaders kissing a pig, working from the roof, and being slimed by the kids. More on that later!


If you are interested in donating any amount, particularly as you're considering year-end giving, you may do so in the following ways:

- **Go to our website** at www.worthingtonchristian.com. At the top of the homepage there is a banner with a "Give Now" button on the right. Simply click there and follow the instructions for giving.
- **Mail a check** to Polly Shoemaker at 6675 Worthington Galena Rd., Worthington, OH 43085.
- **Call Polly** at (614) 410-4231.


All gifts are tax deductible.

We are looking forward to our playground upgrades and appreciate your consideration of giving to make this happen. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to either of us.

Merry Christmas,



Mike Hayes, EdD
Head of School



Nanci Griffith
Lower School Principal