

New concrete area provides students with more seating options at lunchtime

The usual struggle for picnic tables during lunch should decline as students utilize the new seating area between the cafeteria and the auditorium.

By Brian Gould
Reporter

Lunch is no longer a time to socialize but rather a battle of students trying to find places to sit. However, this year new steps have been taken to help reduce the struggles for tables and benches during lunch.

After the walkways were completed, the construction around campus was temporarily finished. The first day of school held a surprise: a new construction project was underway at Grimsley.

Last year, the area between the cafeteria and main building was a place where students could eat and enjoy lunch with tables and trees, which provided shade. However, according to the administration, flash flooding resulted in the need for a new design of the area.

During the second half of the 2002-2003 school year, students were not permitted to eat lunch between the cafeteria and main building. Many did not want to be in that area because the ground was saturated with water, and the overwhelming accumulation of mud created a burden for students attempting to mingle during lunchtime.

A newly renovated cement seating area, the addition to the grove was originally designed to eliminate flooding that occurred repeatedly in Mr. Zaruba's classroom under the auditorium.



The new concrete seating area, completed at the end of September, provides extra seating for students at lunchtime. New picnic tables are scheduled to be added soon to provide even more space to eat.

As a result, this seating area also beautifies the campus.

Some students doubt the new area is adding to the beautification efforts because of its simple yet blunt look.

"I think the new seating area is a waste of money...It's not even that pretty [and it doesn't] make Grimsley more beautiful," said sophomore Julia Berkelhammer.

The project also created concern because of its cost. Budget cuts have already affected faculty, staff, and students, so the question arises as to why the amount of money spent on the new area did not go toward funding other school projects essential to learning.

Mr. Gasparello emphasizes that the funding was not taken out of the budget provided for the educational needs of students and that the initial budget was reduced by approximately \$30,000.

The purpose of the area is to help reduce crowding in the cafeteria and the grove. However, as winter approaches and the weather becomes colder, an increasing number of students will be eating in the cafeteria and not outside.

For the three months out of the school year when the cafeteria becomes the center of eating and socializing, the new area outside will likely not be used.

"Outside isn't the problem [for me], it's during the winter that the overcrowding in the cafeteria is a problem," said sophomore Lauren Dunning.

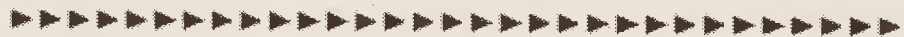
As of now, the area in between the cafeteria and main building is open to students tired from the constant battle of fighting for tables during the lunchtime gathering.



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School violence

Continued from page 1

The administration and members of the counseling center at Grimsley have also been in contact with parents and leaders within specific communities. This effort is to help understand the disputes and to prevent them from coming to school.

However, the principal emphasizes that the faculty and staff cannot guarantee total security and safety.

"As long as we continue to enjoy the freedom our students presently have, there will always be a risk of someone exploiting these freedoms, but we take our job of enforcing boundaries most seriously," said Gasparello.

Until social and economic problems can be resolved within communities, tensions will most likely be a factor at school. However, this year's administration is taking special precautions to ensure every student has the safest learning environment possible.

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