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Committed to Cultural Diversity



PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Father Elwin Schwab, pastor of the St. Charles Parish in northeast Portland, is thumbs up on plans to move De La Salle North Catholic High School to the parish's former elementary school (above) at Northeast 42nd and Emerson, remodeling and expanding the classrooms to provide a quality private high school in the diverse Cully neighborhood. The move will not impact St. Charles' current operations, including parish offices and the St. Vincent de Paul food bank.

De La Salle's New Home

Diverse high school plans move to St. Charles Parish

BY DANNY PETERSON
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The culturally diverse De La Salle North Catholic High School has signed an historic agreement paving the way for its move from the Kenton Neighborhood of north Portland to the St. Charles Parish, a diverse congregation in the Cully Neighborhood of northeast Portland. It means co-locating the high school to the former

St. Charles Elementary parish school at Northeast 42nd Avenue and Emerson Street. Future work will be needed to remodel and expand the school's footprint to accommodate the high school's curriculum and related activities.

The faith-based prep school was forced to look for a new location when Portland Public Schools decided not to renew a lease for the building it currently uses, the former Kenton Elementary school on North Fenwick Avenue, which expires in June 2021.

De La Salle is focused on providing a high quality high school education to low-income residents and students of col-

or. It enjoys a lower-than-average tuition when compared to other private Catholic high schools in Portland, in part thanks to a unique work-study program.

The St. Charles property includes a former parish grade school that was active from 1950 until 1986. Though its 16 classrooms were used for various community activities since then, that usage has slowed in recent years, St. Charles Parish Priest Father Elwin Schwab told the Portland Observer.

"Suddenly we got a building that doesn't have enough use. So this is going to work really good," Schwab said.

Moving the school into the Cully Neigh-

borhood, one of the most diverse and economically-challenged neighborhoods in Portland is also expected to better position the school to serve families in need.

"Getting more people who don't have opportunities into the system... well hey, that all works together," Schwab said.

St. Charles Church will maintain its current operations, including parish offices for staff members and the St. Vincent de Paul food bank.

The specific terms of the lease are still being worked out by the school and the parish, but they've already signed a letter of

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