

GODDARD SCHOOL DOUBLES IN SIZE

Before-, After-Schoolcare Expanded

BY HENRY DOLIVE - JAN. 7, 2011 • THE SUN



Rachel takes delight in a competitive game of table shuffleboard.

EDMOND — Keith May stands just inside the entrance to the new annex at Edmond's Goddard School for Early Childhood Development, located on Western Avenue. He directs a child to his classroom and seems happy as the co-owner of a preschool and kindergarten that specializes in individualized attention to each student.

May, 71, ended a lengthy career in banking seven years ago to become part owner of the exclusive, private children's school on the west side of Edmond.

He and his daughter and son-in-law, Robin and Jay McIntosh, are franchise owners of the The Goddard School®, 17440 N. Western Ave. in west Edmond.

"It is so rewarding to see the growth of these kids," May said as he glanced at his watch, awaiting the afternoon arrival of the before- and after-school students whose public school had dismissed for the day.

"This is sure a lot different from banking."

The school is one of 364 Goddard Schools in the U.S., each individually franchised. A second Goddard school — owned by parents of a former Goddard student — is located in east Edmond, and there are also Goddard schools in Owasso and Jenks.

Entrepreneur magazine has named Goddard Systems, Inc. the No. 1 childcare franchise in the U.S. for eight straight years, and Goddard Systems, Inc. is ranked as one of the Top 200 franchise systems in the world by Franchise Times.

May is excited at the possibilities offered by the newly opened 12,600-square-foot annex, which doubles the school's size, explaining that the additional space offers Goddard teachers more ways to enhance a young child's early education.

With the new annex, Goddard has expanded its before- and after-school care to children up to age 12, offering inside and outside activities and the prospects of a summer schedule that will include minicamps in addition to the regular summer curriculum. This year's summer camp theme will be "The Great Outdoors," carrying out Goddard's policy of spending time outdoors each day that weather allows.

May said the new, 1,300-square-foot gymnasium opens several avenues for education and recreation. The gym with its 8-inch-thick walls also doubles as a tornado shelter for the entire school.



Caleb practices soccer on The Goddard School's outdoor, artificial-surface soccer field.

Besides its use for court games such as basketball, volleyball and four-square, the gym includes an educational climbing wall where students climb to reach individual words, and then assemble the words into sentences.

“(The before- and after-school care) is more fun, but more than just baby-sitting until the end of the day,” said Robin McIntosh, co-owner.

Each annex classroom has a mural painted by art students of University of Central Oklahoma professor Bob Palmer featuring a book from Mary Pope Osborne’s “The Magic Tree House” book series. The two kindergarten classrooms have SmartBoard technology that allows students to manipulate words and pictures on a large computer screen.

The eight-classroom school, opened in 2003, was the first Goddard School in Oklahoma. With the annex, Goddard now has two kindergarten, two pre-K and four before- and after-school classes. Classes each have a maximum of 15 students, allowing for lots of individual attention, May said.

May said the school offers student educational enrichment in a fun environment. Activities include art, music and physical education.

“Those are the areas that are being cut in the public schools,” he said, “so we need to provide them here.”

May and his daughter say Goddard Schools are set apart from other private schools by their high standards and specialized curriculum developed by the teachers themselves, all highly trained in their own specialties.

The School has 16 lead teachers; seven have bachelor’s degrees, three others are completing their bachelor’s; three have associate degrees and two have Childhood Development Associate degrees.

In addition to meeting state licensing requirements, Goddard Schools must meet their own quality review standards that cover health and safety policies and procedures.

Curriculum is based on research by the late Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who was noted for his theory of development. He found that children build knowledge, intelligence, personality and morality through active experimentation with physical and social environments.

The before- and after-school programs include bus service to and from seven Edmond and two Deer Creek elementary schools, including Cross Timbers, John Ross, Angie Debo, Charles Haskell, Washington Irving, Westfield and Russell Dougherty in Edmond; and Prairie Vale and Grove Valley in Deer Creek.

The school is open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and child care is offered at certain times that public schools are closed.

Goddard is licensed for 135 preschool students and 175 children in the before- and after-school program.



Students use the SmartBoard technology to manipulate pictures and words on a large computer screen.