

First Days: Technology playing heavy role in new Marquette school year

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ALTON - Marquette Catholic High School Principal Mike Slaughter did not believe the enrollment would grow again from 400, but said this school year surprised him.

While it is still too early in the year to give exact student numbers - classes began last Friday - Slaughter said the number is hovering around 412 at this time, and each of those students has an iPad to use for school work. In fact, technology is one of the largest improvements at Marquette, Slaughter said. Besides the iPads, teachers, students and staff are also able to use web-based programs for assignments, tests, quizzes and basic communication.

"This school year has gotten off to a decent start," Slaughter said Tuesday. "We're going high-tech, and there have been a few issues with the new technology. We should have all that taken care of in a few days - a week at most. Before we know it, things will be moving smoothly."

Many of those technology-based issues are being handled by the school's new IT person, Jason Davis. Slaughter said Davis started working at the high school last year, but was only available three days a week. For this school year, Slaughter said Davis has been brought aboard for full five-day weeks, and said the teachers could not be more pleased.

"Our IT person at Marquette is one of our most valuable people around," he said.

Slaughter also said Marquette is constantly "looking ahead," and never "looking behind." To illustrate that further, Slaughter said Marquette has a "totally revamped" computer science program and has even added a new robotics class this year, after hosting a successful robotics camp over the summer.

While students began classes in full on Friday, Slaughter said Tuesday was the school's second full day, because they spent most of Monday late morning and afternoon enjoying the solar eclipse together at the amphitheater. Slaughter said all students joined together at the city's viewing party Monday, and most of them enjoyed it thoroughly.