

May 2019

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Parents,

As we close the 2018-2019 school year, I want to reach out to all of you to thank you for your feedback and support during the school year. As I mentioned at the beginning of the year, every administrator, faculty, and staff member is here to nurture and support your child, and to that end, we look forward to deepening our partnership with you. The children will always be at the forefront of every decision.

Additionally, I want to review the goals we set last summer, that were driven by the data collected in the Parent Survey. The survey is a significant tool as we set strategic goals, however, in an effort to avoid “survey burnout” I will not send a survey home this summer. Instead, the parent survey will come home to enrolled families this fall, and is part of our Design for Excellence process.

With respect to the goals set for the 2018-2019 school year,

- **A commitment to improve communication. This includes an increase in communication from the administration to two, weekly, electronic communications, that will provide an overview of events as well as reminders of upcoming events.**

We were successful with this goal through the weekly publishing of both *Bernie's Bark*, available every Tuesday afternoon, and *The Friday Update*, available every Friday afternoon. Both communications were delivered by email to all families and were archived on the SJS website, and focused on events, news, and additional information, as well as reminders of upcoming calendar events.

- **An increase in communication from teachers, especially with respect to student progress, with the additional commitment to a 24-hour response time.**

Both the teachers and the administration put a high priority on communicating with

parents, particularly with respect to student achievement. Data shows that a strong partnership between home and school, with respect to student behavior and academic progress, has the greatest impact on both student achievement and school climate. This goal is an ongoing priority.

- **A commitment to further differentiating instruction. Our teacher professional development this year focuses on understanding student performance data and using that data to differentiate lessons to better meet individual student learning needs, and track student progress year after year.**

Reflecting best practices in education, professional development this year included a live webinar with the Marzano Group on identifying priority teaching standards for differentiation; completing differentiated modules on these priority standards, using the Peabody Vanderbilt model for student success; ASDEC workshop on dyslexia and strategies to support struggling readers. In June, teachers will participate in a two-day workshop on multi-sensory math instruction designed to better engage all learners.

- **A commitment to better aligning teachers with their competency areas. This can already be seen in the realigning of science and middle school math.**

By aligning teachers with their competency areas, all students benefit. This was very evident in the science department as we were able to provide an additional, weekly lab time for each grade level. This program will continue to grow for 2019-2020.

- **A commitment to expanding the middle school math program for 2019-2020 to include Algebra 1 for qualified 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, and Geometry for qualified 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2020-2021.**

Planning meetings for the introduction of Algebra for 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are well underway. A parent meeting to answer questions and provide information is also in the planning stages.

- **A commitment to expanding after-school offerings that support**



**STREAM education and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including Lego Club and Robotics as well as continuing the opportunity for math competitions.**

After school offerings did include STREAM opportunities as we saw students participate in robotics, Battle of the Books, Math Olympiad and Math Counts. In Battle of the Books, our students won the lightning round and in Math Counts our students were awarded medals and certificates, and competed at the next level.

- **A commitment to improving the volunteer program to create more opportunities during lunch and recess. (All volunteers who interact with the students must be Virtus certified.)**

Volunteer opportunities were increased through use of Sign-up Genius. Ongoing volunteer opportunities remain for recess and lunch, as well as library. One time volunteer opportunities are numerous and include a variety of needs made available through the PTO and classroom coordinators.

- **A commitment to an increase in opportunities to share our common life in Christ by scheduling a school Mass each week we are in session.**

We expanded opportunities to share our common life in Christ by not only adding Mass every week that school is in session, but we also extended student participation in Stations of the Cross, weekly during Lent, and added First Friday adoration every month. Parents are invited and always welcome.

For the 2019-2020 school year, strategic initiatives will reflect next-level of goals set in the current year, as well as reflect the work to be done on the Design for Excellence.

Again, thank you for your support, and please let me know if you have any questions.

*Rejoice and Be Glad!*

Denise Rutledge  
Principal