



ST. JOSEPH

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Building Wisdom and Faith Through Service to God

August, 2019

Dear St. Joseph Catholic School Parents-

Welcome to the start of a brand new school year! I hope you were able to share a joy-filled, albeit hot, summer with family and friends.

Along with welcoming you back to school, I want to update you on our strategic initiatives for the school year. Calendar updates, introduction of new staff, and information regarding the Design for Excellence reaccreditation process will be delivered in separate emails.

Last year, I was able to send out the parent survey during the summer, and from that survey, I analyzed the data to identify strategic goals for 2018-2019 school year. As indicated in my year-end letter, we were successful in meeting all our goals. This year, we are working on the timetable set for the Design for Excellence, and the survey will not be shared with parents until October. Therefore, this year's strategic initiatives will focus on continued improvement on last year's goals, but will also include new areas that were identified during last school year.

To that end, we have identified the following initiatives:

- Strengthen our school's Catholic identity by increasing the number of service projects for students.
- Create a more inclusive learning environment by increasing the number of resource staff, including special education teacher, reading specialist, resource instructional assistants, and adopting a collaborative teaching model called "push-in."
- Further develop our differentiated instruction initiative. Last year, our teacher professional development laid the ground-work to develop differentiated lessons, this year we are positioned to further individualize instruction to meet student learning needs.
- Establish a strong collaborative professional learning community among the professional staff at SJS. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are a proven approach to school improvement and a best practice.
- Effectively utilize student performance data to drive decisions regarding investments in instructional programs and technologies.
- Continue to expand the middle school math program for 2020-2021 to include Geometry for qualified 8th grade students.

These strategic goals reflect our increasing emphasis on building inclusive classrooms, and meeting individual student needs, while at the same time holding all students to high standards of

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achievement. Restructuring the resource department so that teachers “push-in” ensures support for all students, and fosters a collaborative learning environment that promotes individualized and differentiated instruction. Success in these goals will be measured objectively through SCANTRON standardized testing results.

As always, parents are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer to the extent your schedule permits. To that end, the Office of Child Protection requires all adults who will have substantial contact with youth to be compliant in the Child Protection Program. This involves a background check and a Virtus Seminar attendance. The Diocese now has the background check registration online at https://secure4.arlingtondiocese.org/OPCYP_Application/. Paper applications are no longer accepted. To find a Virtus Seminar please go to virtus.org. You may attend any seminar in the Arlington Diocese. If you have any questions, please call Beth Covert at (703)880-4357.

Finally, each year, with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, our school community embraces a scriptural theme that provides a framework for our school’s faith based activities and formation efforts throughout the school year. This year the theme is “***Welcome one another ... as Christ welcomed you,***” (Rom 15:7) which reflects our commitment to our inclusive community, and extends last year’s message that growth in holiness is something that we do “as a community, side by side with others.” (Papal Exhortation ¶ 141)

Please let me know if you have any questions, or if I can be of further assistance.

Welcome one another ... as Christ welcomed you! (Rom 15:7)

Denise Rutledge
Principal- St. Joseph Catholic School