May 7, 2015

Dear St. Joseph Families,

This has been a wonderful week…the one that we look forward to all of winter. Students have loved being outside again without heavy jackets. Watching them laugh, play, and smile gives all of us renewed energy and enthusiasm to finish the school year in a very positive way. We still have 45% of the last quarter to complete and we work to keep our students focused academically and committed to doing their best.

May Devotion. On Friday afternoon, the students from kindergarten through grade eight will gather to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. The devotion is in the form of a litany to Mary. This litany is designed to teach the children to recognize some of the titles by which we call Mary. It highlights the important events of her life. As each important event is described, several students enact that event in the form of a tableau (a still-life picture of the event.) At each Hail Mary a student representing each classroom will offer a flower to Mary. At the conclusion of the tableaus, the flowers brought up by the students will be placed on the rail beneath the statue of Mary in the church.

Camp Storer. A letter to parents of fifth grade students was sent home this past week. The letter offers information about the Camp Storer sixth grade educational experience and our need for parent cabin leaders. Please review the letter and return the form that is included with it to the school office as soon as possible. We ask all families of our present fifth grade students to complete the form and return it even if you are unable to offer assistance as a cabin leader.

Warm Weather Uniform Code. Our Uniform Code allows students to wear uniform shorts to school in the months of August, September, May, and June. Beginning May 1, students may choose this option. Please refer to the Dress Code in the Parent/Student Handbook for further details. The Dress Code is also available through our web site.

Teacher Requests. As we think about end of the year procedures, it is a good time to include a reminder about policy concerning special placement requests. The structure and climate of any classroom is very important. When teachers place students in classes, they are charged with creating two to three equal classrooms. They take into consideration student gender, ability, personality, special needs, and scheduling issues. Though it is always fun to be in the same class as a best friend, it is not always going to happen. Expanding friendships is an important part of the socializing process in schools. There are occasionally reasons to ask that a child’s special needs be considered when assigning him/her to a class. These are very rare occasions and are not the same as liking a teacher, having a previous friendship with a teacher, or responding to the community dialogue that says one teacher is better than another. I am asking teachers to follow protocol when they request special placement for a student. Should you, as a parent, want to request special consideration for placement, the request must go to the classroom teacher. Please contact the classroom teacher and with a conference either in person or by phone (not by email) explain...
the special needs your child may have which encourages you to request special placement. A Request Form may be given to you by the classroom teacher asking for a more in-depth explanation of your request. Completing the form and submitting it means that further consideration will be given to the request. The form needs to be returned by May 27. The teacher must ultimately agree that there are special needs that support the requested placement. I regret that requests that come during the summer cannot be accommodated.

**Gym Uniforms:** A few years ago, we introduced a mandatory gym uniform for the middle school. We are bringing that uniform to all grades now with the start of the new school year. It consists of mesh, basketball-length shorts with an SJS logo (the shorts must be two inches above the knee or longer) or SJS logo sweatpants. There is a blue or grey logo t-shirt available, as well. All items are available from Schoolbelles. Students will also have the option of wearing a solid colored t-shirt, or any St. Joseph Spirit-wear, Positive Direction, or St. Joseph sport-related t-shirt. We hope that will help make gym days less stressful!

**Festirama Parking:** Our annual parish festival will take place on May 15, 16 and 17. Our students eagerly anticipate this parish community event. The arrival of the tents and amusement rides does create a distraction that I think we all enjoy! The setup for the festival requires that the school use alternate procedures for bus and car traffic during the pre-festival days and on the Monday following the festival. Look for the map describing details of the Festirama activities and alternate arrival and dismissal information in your Thursday Envelope.

**Easter Seals…Re-Fill That Truck!** This is a reminder that PTO has brought back the Easter Seals truck for all of our spring cleaning discards for one day only, Saturday, May 9 10:00-4:30. They are looking for bags of clothes, shoes, purses, towels, backpacks, throw rugs, sheets…anything cloth-related. We hope to beat our fall profits of $3,700! All profits go toward our new playground debuting August 2015!

**Chromebooks Coming to 5th Grade!** Next year, each fifth grader will receive a Chromebook to use in class. This technology will allow us to better differentiate instruction. It expands what we are able to offer students and prepares them to enter our middle school with increased technology skills!

**Retirements and Staff Changes.** At the end of this school year, we will be sadly saying farewell to some of our faculty and staff members. Though I know that some of this news is known to you, I would like to officially announce it. Retiring from St. Joseph School are:

- Mrs. Susan Creps – Mrs. Creps is a fifth grade teacher. She joined SJS in August of 1987!
- Mrs. Marty Davis – Mrs. Davis is our administrative secretary. Her office is adjacent to mine in the elementary building. She joined SJS in August of 1992!
- Mrs. Mary Jorgensen – Mrs. Jorgensen is a fourth grade teacher. She came to St. Joseph School in August of 2001.
- Mrs. Viv Knapp – Mrs. Knapp is our School Counselor. She joined our staff in August of 1995.
- Mrs. Kelly O’Brien – Mrs. O’Brien is a sixth grade teacher. She joined SJS in 2002. Not only is Mrs. O’Brien a licensed teacher she is also a licensed school counselor. She will be replacing Mrs. Knapp as our school counselor.
- Mrs. Jennifer Britt – Mrs. Britt is a teacher assistant in kindergarten. She joined our staff in 2013.
Mrs. Georgeann McHugh is not leaving SJS but is moving to a new position. Mrs. McHugh (grade three) will join the sixth grade teachers of the middle school. She replaces Mrs. Kelly O’Brien. Of special note is enrollment for sixth grade. Though the number of students we anticipate for sixth grade is less than I would like to see, we are still planning on three sixth-grade classrooms for the 2015 – 2016 school year. Fewer students at a grade level may not help our budget but it does provide an opportunity for teachers to offer greater individualized and differentiated instruction.

Mrs. Nicole Emmenecker is a third grade teacher-assistant. Mrs. Emmenecker will move to kindergarten next year as Mrs. Marianne Lazar’s teacher assistant.

Happy Mother’s Day from the students and staff of St. Joseph School!

Sincerely,

Sally A. Koppinger
Principal