



September 16, 2019

Dear Parents,

Thank you for joining us at Back to School Night (BTSN). It was a positive evening with many optimistic comments from parents and staff.

As stated in my BTSN presentation, we are moving to STREAM, incorporating the arts into our program. This will not take away from science or mathematics, just the opposite, it will enhance the sciences and mathematics. This year three teachers are invited to work with Portland Public Schools in forming a full leadership team to begin developing a complete STEAM Transformation Plan. This program will guide Saint Francis Catholic School through an in-depth science experience over two academic school years. This program will professionally develop teachers to integrate subjects to develop the whole child.

At all grade levels the piloting of three mathematic series is taking place this school year. In grades sixth through eighth ALEKS is being used. ALEKS is a Web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system. ALEKS uses adaptive questioning to quickly and accurately determine exactly what a student knows and does not know in a course. ALEKS then instructs the student on the topics he/she is most ready to learn. Students progress at their own pace and one-to-one assistance or extra practice is available.

The Pre-K is running smoothly. We have nine students enrolled and are pleased to announce that we have hired an instructional assistant for our Pre-K class. Mrs. Sarah Cordell joined our staff on Monday, September 16th. She comes to us with a wealth of experience and expertise. A native Oregonian, she grew up in the Donald/Aurora area and attended La Salle High School. She obtained her Bachelor's degree from Southern Oregon University and her Masters in special education from Portland State University. She taught for seven years in the Gresham-Barlow school district in a K-5 self-contained special education classroom. We are very excited to have her join our team.

We were happy to have local Catholic high schools, St. Mary's Academy, Jesuit, Central Catholic, LaSalle, and Valley Catholic, visit our seventh and eighth graders last week. Each school represented their community very well. It was nice to see two Alumni, Ella Bowman from Central Catholic and Lucy Langer from Jesuit present to fellow school mates. They both were well spoken and poised.

This week we began STAR testing. All testing will be completed by Friday, September 27. This year the students will be tested in three window periods, September, January, and May. Teachers will notify parents when assessments will take place. After each window, a parent letter will be sent home informing you of your child's/children's diagnostic scores in mathematics and in reading.

With 1:1 Chromebooks available for middle school this allows our newly donated touchscreen Chromebook cart to be dedicated to our elementary school. Elementary teachers are excited to integrate more technology in their classrooms allowing their students to experience the interactive educational programs. Thank you to the anonymous family for their considerate donation. With the help of Gray Wolf, the implementation was seamless. The classroom teacher will be reviewing a technology contract with each grade level before allowing students to use devices. In addition, parents will be required to sign the contract before Chromebook devices are released to students.

During Wednesday Mass there is a new protocol that was put in place for the safety of the students, faculty, and staff. We will lock the church doors during the school Masses. Mrs. Brown or I will be in back of the church if someone shows up late for Mass. Our number one priority is safety.

Thank you to Mrs. Brown for reaching out to PGE for an energy audit through their Energy Efficiency Outreach Program. They referred Mrs. Brown to Smartwatt with the Energy Trust of Oregon. Through their program, St. Francis Parish and Catholic School received upgrades to the lighting. The upgrade is valued at \$25,563.19, costing St. Francis \$2,551.96. This a tremendous discount, thank you again Mrs. Brown.

Keep up the positive energy and thank you for all your support. St. Francis community is a special place, and I feel blessed to be a part of it.

God bless,

Ms. Gonzalez
Principal