



THE ACADEMY OF SAINT MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE

BRIDGES

WWW.STMATTHIAS.ORG ❖ JANUARY 15, 2021



A NOTE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

Many events of the past four years and certainly those of the past few months have convinced me more than ever of the importance of an education that is based on truth, principles, and knowledge. The mission of St. Matthias and all Catholic schools to form disciples of Christ as well as informed, decent, and service minded people is critical to the growth and healing of our nation. The violence and insurrection at our nation's capital, the most recent of many shocking and horrific events in just the past year are vivid reminders that there is much work to be done. Our children, indeed, all citizens need to know the truth about injustice, racism, and all forms of assault on the dignity of the human person. Our children need to be taught the history of our nation, its moments of triumph, the courage and conviction of its heroes and all that we have accomplished in the name of democracy and freedom. They also need to know the truth about our nation's failures to uphold the truths on which we were founded and the egregious disregard of the Gospel values that many espouse but fail to live. Racial bias remains a serious problem and is a direct legacy of American slavery and our failure to deal with the history of racial injustice. I am grateful that our school leadership, beginning with Cardinal Wilton Gregory, is committed to providing all school leaders and ultimately all teachers, with cultural sensitivity training where we are challenged and supported to confront our own prejudices and cultural bias. Most importantly, people of all races and backgrounds are engaging in important and meaningful conversation.

The students of St. Matthias, past and present learn that all people are created and loved by God. All people have a unique and valuable purpose. They learn that the earth is a fragile and precious gift from God that requires respect and nurturing for the good of all. They know the teaching of St. Paul who in holy scripture reminds us that when one of us suffers we all suffer. They are taught that we are linked through our common kinship as children of the One God. Recent events demonstrate that our nation needs a proliferation of Catholic and faith-based schools in a time when nearly 500 Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the country are in danger of closing due to the financial fallout of the pandemic. On this national holiday in remembrance of the vision and sacrifice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. we are proud that our students learn every day that in Dr. King's words, "Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that." With the power of the words, life, and grace of Jesus and the through prayer and knowing God, our school exists to form children into adults and citizens who bring light to their world through the power of love.

In honor of Dr. King and out of love for our children, let us all commit ourselves to more fervent prayer, more perfect example, and more tireless effort to be people who seek and work for justice through love and a more perfect union.

Mark Your Calendar

Out of Uniform Week for grades 1, 2 and 5 for 100% participation in the IXL Winter Challenge!

Monday, January 18

MLK Holiday
SCHOOL CLOSED

Tuesday, January 19

Welcome Back
PK, Kindergarten and Pod

Wednesday, January 20

Drama Club
2:15 - 3:00 pm

End of Quarter 2

Thursday, January 21

HSA Executive Committee
Meeting 6:30 pm Zoom
All are welcome

Friday, January 22

Mass Cancelled

Parent Portal Closes at Noon

SURVEY RESULTS

Not surprisingly, most of our families who responded to the survey are more comfortable with continuing distance learning for their children. 73% of St. Matthias parents submitted the survey. 58% want to continue to keep their children in remote learning, while 42% are willing to send them into the building. We will be working on plans to gradually open classrooms and prepare for concurrent learning while we await the vaccine for our teachers. 58% of the parents reported that they are satisfied or extremely satisfied with the remote instruction that we are providing, while more than half of the 40% of families who are somewhat satisfied report that their children are struggling to stay focused and complete work in the virtual environment. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be reaching out to these families. Of course, the teachers will continue to learn and create ways to further engage and support their students. There is always room for improvement and our teachers are committed to lifelong learning and doing whatever they can to best serve the children.

For the parents who did prefer to have their children in the school building this is where we are: PK and Kindergarten students are returning on Tuesday, January 19. We also have a very small group of older children in Friendship Hall. Expecting more children in the future, we will begin school for all these students at 8:00 AM with drop off beginning as early as 7:50, and dismiss at 2:30 PM, Mondays-Thursdays and at Noon on Fridays. Distance learning will continue a modified schedule for the PK and K children who remain home.

Families who indicated a desire to have the children in school are welcome to send them to school on Tuesday, the 19th to distance learn in Friendship Hall. We hope to move these children and others to classrooms sometime in February. However, please email the principal (pschratz@stmatthias.org) indicating your decision to have your child in school on Tuesday, so that we can have a place ready for him or her.

RE-ENROLL TODAY

Enrollment for the upcoming school year is underway. We are very grateful to those families whose children are now on the roster for 2021-2022. All students in grades PK3-7 must be re-enrolled by March 15 unless their parents have informed us in writing via email that they are not returning. The first incentive drawing will take place on February 15. In addition, families who re-enroll by then will receive one volunteer service hour. Please help us for plan and recruit wisely by enrolling your child(ren) as soon as possible.

SCANTRON TESTING

Testing will continue next week with students in grade 4 taking the reading test via Zoom. Due to the size of the class, half will take it on Tuesday and the reminder on Thursday.

IXL WINTER CHALLENGE SUCCESS

Over the Christmas break our students have answered thousands of questions in math and reading. They have clocked hundreds of hours of practice time! Their teachers and principal are so proud of them! Grades 1,2, and 5 had 100% of their students participating in the IXL Challenge. Congratulations to those classes who will be out of uniform all next week. Thanks to those parents who encouraged and supported their children's achievement. The teachers will be reviewing this data as well as the mid-year Scantron data to inform and differentiate their instruction. Stay tuned for the February Challenge! To date, our students have answered a total of 160,890 questions. This is two times the recommended IXL goal. Our hardworking students have spent 1,372 hours practicing and achieving their learning goals. Keep up the good work!

DO YOUR PART

Please support our Home and School Association and spread the good word about our school by ordering a Yard Sign. Please see the attached flier for additional details. Ordering a sign earns your family one volunteer service hour and the gratitude of our school community!