



September 3, 2009

Dear Parents,

I was so happy to see so many of you at last night's Back to School Night. Thank you for the support and appreciation your attendance demonstrated to the teachers. Your attendance also showed your children the importance you place on school and the concern you have for their spiritual and academic growth. As I said last night, ours is a partnership that should be based on mutual trust and the premise that we have the child's best interests at the heart of all of our decisions. Let's strive to work together to keep that relationship between home and school and parent and teacher a strong, positive one!

As promised, I want to let you know of the many summer staff development opportunities our dedicated staff took advantage of this summer:

*Mary DiGiovanna, sixth grade math teacher, attended a math problem solving workshop offered at Webster University.

*Mary Groshong, eighth grade math teacher, attended the math problem solving workshop at Webster and one entitled "Creative Mathematics."

*Third grade teachers, Anna Edwards and Dorothy Starnes, attended a math workshop on how to utilize centers in the classroom through the Federal Title 1 program.

*Rose Schneider took advantage of a math workshop sponsored by the Kauffman Foundation on problem solving utilizing Singapore Math.

*Tina Wendling took a class on reading and language development in the content areas and attended a "Theology of the Body for Teens" workshop.

*Molly Wholey attended a 3rd and 4th grade conference sponsored by the Bureau of Educational Research.

* Dianna Youngblood, Dorothy Gregory, Karen Smith, Mary DiGiovanna, Jenny Courville, Anna Edwards, Tina Wendling, Kristin Griffin, and I attended the Midwest Conference on Differentiated Instruction in Chicago.

*Charlotte Jett, Katie Jett, Dorothy Starnes, Kate Stilley, attended the "Professional Learning Communities at Work" conference in Denver. Angie Meyer will be attending the PLC conference in a few weeks.

*First grade teacher Annette Ruiz attended a "Guided Reading without Centers" workshop in June.

Most of these opportunities were funded with federal monies and will further our "big picture" staff development goals of working collaboratively to improve student learning in all grades and all subject areas.

I also wanted to share some exciting opportunities that some of our students had this summer as well.

*Eighth grader Weston Elder attended the Duke TIP Academy for Summer Studies for Academically Gifted Students held on the KU campus. He participated in a three-week class titled "Mathematical Problem Solving" along with students from all across the country. Weston was offered this opportunity as a result of qualifying for the Duke Talent Identification Program and the State Recognition he earned after taking the ACT last school year.

*Daniel Schulte, seventh grade student, participated in three karate tournaments this summer and placed at all of them. On August 15, he won all five of the events he competed in at the Midwest Open Tournament in Kansas City and all four events and the Grand Championship for advanced students at a tournament held right before school started in Joplin, Missouri. Daniel will be participating in three more tournaments this fall and will be going through a series of tests to earn his Black Belt in Karate. He will be the second youngest student at his dojo to ever test for a Back Belt, which is quite an accomplishment.

Please don't hesitate to make me aware of your child's accomplishments outside of school so that the entire school community can celebrate their successes!

If you haven't done so already, please take the opportunity to review the policies and procedures in the school handbook and reinforce them with your children.

Pages 10 – 11 regarding attendance policies would be especially timely to review as we try to proactively prepare for the spread of the H1N1 virus. We are cleaning surfaces regularly, promoting frequent hand washing with warm water and soap, and teaching children to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue or their sleeves when coughing or sneezing. We ask that you reinforce these practices at home and that you do not send children to school with any flu-like symptoms. Students should be fever free without the use of fever reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school from an absence.

I have already noticed many violations of the uniform policy such as skirts that are too short, bike shorts and leggings with lace on them being worn under skirts, boys' hair that is too long. Please review pages 15 – 16 in the handbook regarding the uniform dress code and make sure your children are compliant so that instructional time is not wasted on addressing these infractions.

In closing, I want to welcome fifth grader Cameron Kiefer to St. Peter's School. I mistakenly left him off the list of new students in my previous newsletter. I also would like to ask you to keep Jackson (grade 3) and Lauren Brackney (kindergarten), and their mother Ruth in your prayers. As many of you know, the children's father, Mitch Brackney, died last Friday. A private service is being held tomorrow in Lincoln, Illinois, in celebration of Mitch's eternal life with Jesus. The children's classmates are preparing for their return to school next week, and we know they will appreciate our support upon their return to our community. The Family Ministry has set up a calendar for those who would like to provide meals for the family. Mitch's family has graciously asked for memorials in Mitch's name to be dedicated to St. Peter's School, as this was a place he dearly loved. Again, I know the family will be grateful for your support and prayers through this difficult time.

Enjoy Labor Day weekend, summer's last hurrah!

Janet Spallo, Principal