



August 20, 2009

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to school! All 583 students have gotten off to a very smooth start. I am always excited about the hope and possibilities a new school year brings. I am so happy and thankful to be returning to St. Peter's as Principal. As I have said to many on several occasions, this community is blessed with so many gifts—a sustaining faith, caring parents and teachers, a beautiful facility, plentiful resources, and most importantly, the precious gifts that are your children. Let us make a pledge as parents and educators to keep their best interests at the heart of all our decisions this year!

#### Themes for 2009 - 2010

Pope Benedict XVI has declared June 2009 to June 2010 as the Year for Priests. The Year for Priests coincides with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St. John Vianney, a 19<sup>th</sup> century parish priest who transformed the lives of villagers in France through his example of holiness, his celebration of the Mass, his teachings, and his ability to touch people's souls in the Sacrament of Penance. St. John Vianney described priesthood in this way, "The priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus". As a school community, we will be making a special effort to honor Father Cook and Father Rocha this year. Every month one grade will "adopt" them, offer spiritual support by praying for them, and show our appreciation by inviting them to participate in a special activity. Each day our afternoon prayer will be a prayer for vocations so that we may pray daily to be open to God's call in our lives and in thanksgiving for the gift of our parish priests. We are also focusing on the theological virtue of hope this year with our school theme: Hope is the Key. As Catholic educators, our primary goal is to help our students in their journey to heaven. Hope serves as a bridge to eternal life. We know that Jesus is the source of our hope; through His death He opened the gates of heaven so we may experience the hope that rests in His kingdom. The display case in the hall by Mrs. Kovac's office will again display class projects that have resulted from our school-wide study of the virtue of hope.

#### What's New This Year

In addition to all our ECLC and Kindergarten students, we welcomed many new students in grades one – seven:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Savannah Nixon and Lauren and Leah North
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Alex Danzo, Brendan Kiefer, Koby Baker
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Aiden Jensen and Chloe Eyerman
- 4<sup>th</sup> Tonnae Bradley Tommer
- 5<sup>th</sup> Madalene Lopez
- 6<sup>th</sup> Sarah Cigas, Hannah Eyerman, and Kai Patrick
- 7<sup>th</sup> Brennan Dial and Logan Murphy

The community has made these students feel very welcome. I know you, as parents, will experience that same welcoming spirit at SPS.

We have made some positive changes to the schedule this year that we, as educators, are very excited about. We were able to increase instructional time in all middle school classes by having seven periods a day rather than eight. The health curriculum will be absorbed into religion, science, and physical education classes as appropriate to accommodate that schedule change. In addition, we have established a school-wide, half hour block of time for teachers to focus on remediation or extension of curriculum and skills. This additional "Explore" time and the use of differentiated instruction strategies will provide teachers the ability to better reach and teach all levels of learners. You will hear more specific details about how your child's teacher is utilizing the Explore time at Back to School Night on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Last, but not least, teachers in grades K – 8 are utilizing new resources for religion and language arts instruction. Again, your child's teachers will educate you about these wonderful new resources with you at Back to School Night.

### Handbook Review

Please take the time to review the policies and procedures in our school handbook. Information to pay close attention to as we start the new year includes:

\*St. Peter's Mission and Philosophy

Our testament of who we are and what we will be about as a ministry of St. Peter's Parish.

\*Parent-Teacher Covenant

This allows us to resolve issues in a productive, respectful manner and keep the lines of communication open!

\*Attendance Policies

Remember that students arriving before 7:45 AM must report to Extended Care to be properly supervised; likewise, unless students have other arrangements with teachers, students who remain at school after 3:30 p.m. must report to After-School Care

\*Safety Issues

Please follow the traffic procedures for drop-off and pick-up! The ECLC lot is reserved for staff and parents of ECLC students! Please do not park on Holmes south of Meyer Blvd. Cross intersections where our crossing guard is stationed. The safety of all of our students is our utmost concern. It's great that so many students are riding their bikes to school; please review bike safety rules with your child—helmets and locks are a must for safety!

\*Uniform Dress Code

Ensuring that your child comes to school in uniform allows the teachers to focus on instruction!

Thanks in advance for familiarizing yourselves and your children with the policies and cooperating with them, which does so much to strengthen the home and school partnership!

Many of our faculty attended classes, conferences, or workshops this summer to hone their instructional skills or learn new strategies to better meet the needs of all learners in the classroom. My next newsletter will contain my annual installment of "How I Spent My summer Vacation", by St. Peter's staff. I would also like to highlight any outstanding accomplishments students achieved over the summer or any special programs students attended. Please send me an e-mail if your child deserves to be bragged about in the Principal's Newsletter. I know there are some out there that do!

### Asbestos Management Plan

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) and EPA regulations require me to notify you annually of the availability of the school asbestos management plan which is available in the Parish Office for review.

St. Peter's is in compliance with all asbestos requirements.

I hope to see you all at Back to School Night on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. This adults- only evening will begin with a general meeting in the gym at 7:00 PM, followed by classroom presentations from teachers, and end with refreshments in the Garden Room.

Janet Spallo, Principal