



St. Joseph's Catholic School
PK – 8th
Principal Mrs. Jackie Kirkham

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“Academics...Discipline...Service...all in the Spirit of Christ.”

July 13, 2016

Dear Father David, Father Alphonse, Father Kieran, Stakeholders and Supporters of St. Joseph's Catholic School:

I hope you are having a relaxing summer and spending lots of quality time with your family. The start of school will be approaching soon, and activity is picking up around campus. We have several new teachers that will be with us for the 2016-2017 school year that I wanted to tell you about.

Besides having Jill Barteau as our new Preschool Director, we have hired Kelly Burgett (Robert's wife) as our new first grade teacher. Kelly will be working closely with Jill to provide a consistent and quality program for our first graders. She has a Master's Degree in Education, and has been spending time this summer preparing for the start of school. Bridget Mendoza is our new Math teacher with four years of teaching experience. She has an impressive math and science background and a strong passion for teaching. One of her primary goals was to work on a Catholic school campus where she could share her faith and positively impact middle school students. For Language Arts, we hired a teacher with several years of experience and a very diverse background. Besides her degree in Language Arts, Gail Yunk has a Master's Degree in Theology and a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. She comes highly recommended by her past supervisor, and is looking forward to working at St. Joseph's. Finally, one last change is a part-time hire for our Algebra 1 Program. Liana Settanni will be teaching our advanced math curriculum and coordinating with Greg. She is a former Mingus High School teacher, and the wife of Joe Settanni, who both have spent countless hours and resources to help our school. Liana is working with the local high schools to provide a comprehensive curriculum and to see if students can earn high school credit after the completion of Algebra 1. St. Joseph's is very fortunate to acquire such an incredible group of talented professionals.

Below is a list of upcoming dates and events to remember:

July 28th: 8:00-3:30 St. Joseph's Faculty Retreat @ Immaculate Conception

July 29th: 8:00 -4:00 New Employee Orientation @ The Diocese Pastoral Center

July 31st: 12-2pm Back to School BBQ with the Nights of Columbus / Uniform Exchange

Please keep in mind our uniform policy when purchasing school clothes and shoes. Uniforms are an important part of our Catholic Identity, and I appreciate your support in helping to maintain the consistency at St. Joseph's.

A supply list is attached for grades 5th through 8th since these students share teachers. Younger students will receive a list by the first day of class. Recently, I met with the middle school team to address the schedule and classes for next year. The middle school team has unanimously decided to loop the 7th and 8th grade curriculum, so the standards are combined and taught over a two-year cycle. This includes combining 7th and 8th graders for instruction. This has several positive benefits that strongly outweigh any negative ones. I also have extensive experience using this model, and I know it will work well at St. Joseph's. Listed below are some reasons the teachers decided to incorporate this model:

- 1) Better equalization of class sizes (EX: The two classes average 16 students instead of a larger class and a smaller one.)
- 2) The 7th and 8th Standards are designed to be taught together, so it allows better delivery over the 2 years (and a more thorough understanding of the objectives and how they build upon each other)
- 3) Better class balance of the male/female ratios
- 4) Opportunities for students to experience a different cohort group (since many students have been together since kindergarten)
- 5) Opportunities for new friendships and learning styles
- 6) Prepares students for the mixed groups they will experience in high school
- 7) Allows teachers to separate students that would benefit from this change
- 8) 7th grade students have an opportunity to be exposed to higher standards while 8th graders can test out of mastered concepts or remediate those that are needed.

I know this will be a positive change for the 7th and 8th graders. The team has worked hard balancing classes to optimize instruction. As always, the quality of instruction remains top priority. Although there are sometimes initial grumblings, your children will develop new and close relationships with students who share common interests, academic styles, and maturity levels.

As summer winds down, I wish all of you a safe and restful vacation. I look forward to working with you and being involved in the education of your children. Thanks you for your continued support and for choosing St. Joseph's Catholic School. Take care and see you shortly!

Good Bless,

Jackie Kirkham
Principal

*PS: Volunteers are still needed to set up and clean up for our BBQ. We are also looking for help with our uniform exchange & volunteer sign-up lists. Please contact Rolande if you are able to help: (928) 649-0624 Thank You! ☺