

25 August 2011

8th grade parents,

Another school year is upon us, and I am honored once again to be able to spend it here with the St. Mary's community. I am eager to begin the year by getting to better know your wonderful sons and daughters. By creating a community of trust within the classroom, we will all feel confident and comfortable expressing ourselves, learning, teaching, and growing together.

You are the most important part of your child's success so please remain involved. Ask questions, assist with homework and projects when appropriate, come to Mass, be present, and above all else, contact me with any question, small or large, at any time. I can be reached by email or phone, both of which can be found at the bottom of this letter. Though I do value good communication, I don't always feel like inundating people with unnecessary information. I generally update my webpage weekly with brief notes about upcoming events, both curricular and day to day business. Please let me know if you will require these notes on paper and I will try to accommodate you.

I will be teaching religion, social studies, algebra and some electives this year. Religion class will take place at the beginning of the day. We will generally have one graded assignment per week, which will come in a variety of forms including written papers, sets of questions, quizzes, and some art inspired religion projects. Social studies assignments may take more time than religion, but will not be as extensive as the math class. Algebra students will have assignments each day to complete and finish as homework. We will have two or three tests per quarter. Generally, I will assign less homework on weekends to give families more time together. Please check the handbook for official homework policies.

Grading can be such an issue in the eighth grade and I want to invite you to regularly check the website for updated religion, social studies and algebra grades anytime. Online grades are still a bit new and I'm certain we will experience a few more hiccups along the way. Please ask your son or daughter if you have questions as well. I have rarely experienced a student who didn't have a fairly accurate idea of her/his performance.

Our 8th grade OPI trip will take place this year March 12-16. We are going a week earlier than normal due to our accreditation visit the following week. The parents have traditionally taken on the responsibility of fundraising. I will gladly help with the communication and with working the events; however I will not be organizing individual events myself. I want to encourage each of you to become actively involved in the fundraising efforts as this year's trip will be quite expensive (approximately \$415) due to transportation costs. I can unequivocally state that the OPI experience is still worth every penny.

Finally, I want to assure you that I will honor the trust you have placed in me when you entrusted your child to me. Assisting parents in forming young lives is something I take very seriously. My expectations are very high and that may be construed as too tough at times. Through mutual support, your child will realize that we all have her/his best interest in mind. This will be a wonderful year of growth. Let's celebrate!

Blessings,

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