

Dear St. Mary Families,

Welcome back! I truly hope you had a wonderful summer. I know I was able to escape to Wyoming for a few weeks to see family, fish, and camp. And of course I found time to play plenty of golf as well. The school year is special because we have the chance to restart every year. Very few other professions have similar opportunities. We are lucky to have the summer to relax and reflect and come back in August with new ideas and renewed energy.



## Kicking off the 2018/19 School Year

We are so excited for the 2018-2019 school year. We are poised to welcome more than 10 new students into our k-8 classes and are set up to have the largest kindergarten class in close to 10 years. As tradition, our back to school picnic will take place after the 10:30 mass on August 26 at the school. All families are welcome and encouraged to come. School supply drop off, however, will not occur on that Sunday. Instead, school supplies can be dropped on Monday from 9-11, 1-3, or 5-7. This will give students, teachers, and parents a better opportunity to connect before the school year. Additionally on that Monday both Voigt and Knapton Knots will have music displays set up in the gym for students to try out and rent instruments for band and orchestra. Classes for all 4k through 8th grade students will begin on Tuesday, August 28 with 3k starting on Wednesday August 29. Another notable change is that picture day will NOT be on the first day of school. Picture day will be Friday 8/31, which will avoid the need to navigate gym class on picture day. Additionally, students will have a dress of choice day for picture day this year. We are still accepting registrations for the upcoming school year. If you are interested or know a family who may be interested, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

## Staffing for the 2018/19 School Year

Last year we said goodbye to Mrs. Fredericks and Mrs. Vriezen. More recently, Mrs. Venable and Mrs. Gilmore decided it was time for them to retire as well. Although they will be missed, we are excited to bring aboard new teachers who will continue to provide a high quality education for our students.

- **Sarah Hodge** will be joining us as our art teacher for the 2018/19 school year. Sarah graduated from Carleton College with a Bachelor of Arts in English and the University of Michigan with a Master of Arts in English and Education. She has taught students in Detroit, Michigan, Brookfield, Wisconsin and most recently at UW-Rock County. She has, and will continue to work part time at Goelzer's in early childhood education and has a son who is starting 6th grade at St. Mary's.
- **Gina Diece** will take over our music position and is job sharing with St. Joe's in Fort Atkinson. She joins us after teaching in the public system in Ft. Atkinson since 2005 after graduating from UW Whitewater. She is most well known for her work with the show choir and will help ensure our

### Upcoming Events:

8/26: Back to School Picnic after 10:30 mass

8:27: School Supply Drop off (9-11, 1-3, 5-7)

8/28: First Day (P4J -8th)

8/29: First Day for 3k; School Mass (8:15)

8/31: Picture Day; Dress of Choice Day

9/3: Labor Day - No School

9/5: Student-led mass - all are welcome! (8:15)

9/6: 8th Grade Kayak Trip

9/20: Back to School Parent Night (6:30pm)

10/14: Steeple Chase

tradition of wonderful musical experiences. She has a daughter who will be attending St. Joe's and enjoys baking, sewing, and reading.

- **Sierra Pursley** will be stepping into our 4th grade position. She has done some subbing in our building and most recently worked at ABC Learning Center. Originally from Illinois and graduating from UWW, she brings some wonderful ideas and is excited about working with our 4th graders this year.
- **Amelia Bakke** will be moving into 5th grade, as Ms. Calvagna will transition down into second grade. Amelia is a UWW graduate and joining us after teaching and mentoring experiences at Kennedy, Edison, and Van Buren. In her words: *Learning must begin with motivation and inspiration. Students deserve an educator's passion for both the subject at hand and learning as a whole. In choosing to become a teacher, I have made the commitment to myself and my future students to be the best academic, personal, and ethical role model I can be.*
- **Sara Fraser** will be joining us as our 3k teacher next year! Sara completed her degree at Blackhawk Tech and UWW and has teaching experience at St. John Vianney and St. Williams. She brings a lot of variety to the 3k program and emphasizes social and emotional needs of young children.

## **Tuck Pointing and Physical School Update**

Led by Dan Kessler, the school went through a tuck pointing process this summer to help reinforce some structural aspects of the building. This undertaking was the result of decades of building use that allowed water to eventually seep into the building, particularly on the third floor. This project will ensure the structural stability of our school for years to come. It provides us with the confidence to embark on new paint and other interior improvements. We also removed several trees from the grounds that had roots that were threatening the structure of our parking lots and the foundation of the buildings. Over the summer, an independent group came in to assess our facilities and we received solid high scoring marks on the physical condition of our campus.

## **Playground Upgrade**

Thanks to the support of our parishioners, school families, and community friends, we raised close to \$15,000 for a playground upgrade. To help ensure this money is utilized effectively, Home and School has created a committee to oversee the process. While no plans are definite, some ideas include eliminating the gravel to replace with rubber, adding a grassy space, and increased equipment or games for the students. Thank you to everyone who donated - we are excited for this opportunity.

## **Interior Painting**

Last spring we approved a quote from a vendor to repaint the hallways and lockers in the school. Unfortunately, we were unable to schedule for this summer and have had to postpone. We look to paint the hallways a crisp white and the lockers St. Mary Blue sometime in the next 12 months to complete a new design in the school now that the tuck pointing is complete.

## Working Together

We are so grateful you have entrusted your kids with us this school year. Ultimately, the success of your child is a collaborative relationship between all of the influences in your child's life. As you know, your role as a parent cannot be understated. The most important thing you can do is invest in your child's education. Read with them. Do homework with them (although not for them). The success of your child here at St. Mary's begins when your child wakes up at home each morning. Eating a healthy breakfast and providing healthy snacks in addition to tending to their mental and emotional needs are paramount. In order to facilitate this partnership between school and home we are excited to announce a series of Parent Outreach Nights. We will hold these monthly and look forward to an increased partnership this year. Our first night will be Tuesday 9/18. This will be our back to school night and all are welcome, especially newer families to the school. We will give an overview of the school year and review our expectations as well as going through FACTS and teacher ease (including learning how to look up your child's grades). We look forward to seeing you there!

As many of you know, our school excels when we have volunteers step up to make our events great. We expect a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer time from each family enrolled in our school. **To get things started, we ask for you to complete the following survey of volunteer opportunities that will be available throughout the school year:**

<https://goo.gl/forms/VFPuaSug13yqr9in1>

## Stay Connected

We want to connect with you as much as possible and there are things you can do to help us out!

1. Follow us on Facebook (@StMarySchoolJVL) and Instagram (st\_mary\_school\_janesville )
2. Check your email! If you do not have an email from me via TeacherEase, let me know! That means you are missing out on email blasts that get pushed out.
3. Keep track of your Wednesday Folders! Our administrative professionals work very hard to ensure essential paperwork gets sent home every other week. Please help us out by getting both the folders and paperwork returned.

In Christ,

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