

July 14, 2021

Dear Parents and Friends,

It doesn't take long for the summer to pass by, and we at St. Mary's Catholic School have been hard at work preparing for another great school year.

As you all know, this has been a time of growth as well as a time of transition at St. Mary's, seeing an increase in enrollment, as well as the departure of Fr. Leo McDowell to his new assignment in Billings and Fr. Garrett Nelson taking over responsibility for the parish community.

After a long search for a new principal, and not finding the right candidate, we have decided that the best course of action for this year will be to continue to build on our success from last year and run the school as an administrative team. We are pleased to announce that Fr. Garrett Nelson and Mrs. Melissa Beitel will be serving as co-administrators of St. Mary's Catholic School. Fr. Garrett and Mrs. Beitel will be working together closely to ensure the continued academic and spiritual growth of the children of St. Mary's. Communication and availability will be a high priority for them as they take on this role, and they are very excited to work with both parents and students in this capacity.

We are also pleased to announce that due to the increased enrollment at St. Mary's this year, we were able to hire two new full-time teachers, enabling us to have seven individual classrooms for instruction. Teachers in the lower grades (K-4th) have been assigned the following classrooms:

Kindergarten: Cindy McPhie

1st Grade: Anngie Klein

2nd and 3rd Grade: Melissa Beitel

4th Grade: Kate Sorensen

The upper grades (5th-8th) will follow a more traditional "middle school" model so as to better prepare our students for the type of instruction they will receive in the future, as well as to maximize the expertise and gifts of each teacher. Each class will have a "home room." The home room teacher will teach the newly purchased Social Studies curriculum to their assigned class. Students will move from classroom to classroom to

be instructed by each teacher in their particular area of expertise. The arrangement will be as follows:

5th Grade: Zack Knaff (Math)

6th Grade: Cody Harris (Science)

7th and 8th Grade: Elizabeth McPadden (ELA)

We will also continue to have our usual slate of pull-out classes with Trish Hamilton teaching Spanish, Kristy Coate teaching PE, Sarah Newsome teaching Art, and Fr. Garrett teaching 5th-8th grade religion, as well as Therese Fairbanks teaching Pre-school. Elizabeth McPadden will continue her role as director of the Early Learning Center with teachers Sharon Winfrey and Virginia Bush giving daily instruction to our littlest students.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the St. Mary's family, and we look forward to seeing your students this fall.

If there are any questions regarding these arrangements, please do not hesitate to contact Fr. Garrett or Mrs. Beitel. We look forward to serving you and our community!

God bless you, and let us keep each other in prayer,

St. Mary's Catholic School Team