



St. Francis of Assisi Middle School

Principals' Report

Monday, September 23, 2024

Be Joyful----Be Loving----Be Humble----Be Forgiving

KUDOS

We've had an amazing start to the school year at St. Francis, and the collaboration between home and school has been incredible. Everyone is working hard to ensure a successful beginning and an exciting year ahead.

A huge thank you to all of our parents for supporting a smooth transition for their child(ren) and for attending our **Meet the Staff** event on Thursday, September 5th. We were thrilled with the turnout!

We also want to express our gratitude to our parent volunteers who helped with the **Wolves Gear** table during the evening. Your efforts made the event even more special.

Additionally, thank you to all parents for your support of the new government direction regarding **Personal Mobile Devices** in schools. Although we already had established cell phone expectations at St. Francis, expanding the policy to include all personal mobile devices has already had a positive impact on our school's learning environment.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOCUS

School Focus for the 2023-24 school year:

- FAITH: focusing on the word 'serve' in our Faith Theme. Our focus will be to continue to nurture and foster faith in our staff and students throughout the year.
- STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: Newly established Student Engagement Team (SET) Collaborative Groups:
 - Indigenous Education Support
 - Wellness
 - Literacy
 - Numeracy
 - CTF

September Learning Focus:

- Indigenous Education Support: Preparing for meaningful engagement including an art installation with the upcoming Orange Shirt Day and National Truth and Reconciliation
- Wellness: rolling out the implementation of WOLFPACKS - an opportunity for cross-graded student activities; students in groups of 45 with 3 staff members will participate in fun and connection-based activities - this will be launched to our students at our upcoming Spirit Assembly.
- Student Support Model Planning: Know, Understand and Respond to your learner

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

2023-2024 Student Population

- 656 students Grade 6 to Grade 9 (this is a decrease of 64 students from the previous school year)

Grade 6 (5 classes)	Grade 7 (5 classes)	Grade 8 (6 classes)	Grade 9 (6 classes)
145 (7 less)	151 (32 less)	178 (9 less)	182 (16 less)

- Current average class sizes
 - Grade 6 is 29
 - Grades 7 to 9 is 30

Inspired by Christ on a Journey to Encounter, Nurture and Serve.

Staffing

- **40 staff members** in total for this school year:
 - Teachers: 27.0 FTE
 - Educational Assistants: 5.0 FTE
 - Librarian: 1.5 FTE
 - Cafeteria: 2.0 FTE
 - Office Admin Assistants: 2.5 FTE
 - School Administration: 2.0 FTE
- Please join us in welcoming **new** staff members
 - Mr. John Groenen Grade 8 (covering Mrs. VanGrinsven's maternity leave)
 - Mrs. Ni Made 'Dias' Kasi Viswanathan (replacing Carole in the cafeteria)

Student Grade Team Meetings with School Administration

- School Administration met with all students in the first 2 days of school in their classrooms to launch our safe and caring school focus
- The agenda included an introduction of school administration, expectations with Personal Mobile Devices, principles of modesty regarding the dress code and school spirit - GO WOLVES

Presentations

- MADD Canada presentation: Grade 8 & 9 students on Monday, September 16th

St. Pat's / Dawe Run

- Took place on Tuesday, September 17 - very few absent students this year resulting in a high participation rate.
- Results: 18 of our students placed in the top 10 in their grade levels

School Wide Opening Mass - led by 7-5

- All staff and students attended School Opening Mass on Wednesday, September 18th at St. Mary's.

New Students / Staff - Welcome to the Wolf Pack Lunch

- *46 students new to our community participated in a free pizza lunch on Thursday, September 19th*

Extracurriculars

- Volleyball
- Cross Country
- Student Council

Upcoming

- Picture Day (Sept. 25th)
- Spirit Assembly (Sept.26th)
- Orange Shirt Day & National Truth and Reconciliation Day (recognized on Sept.27th)
- National Teacher Assistant Day - help celebrate our Educational Assistants (Sept.27th)

SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Parents often ask how they can best support their child's classroom teacher and the school community. Ask your child specific questions at the end of the day that are framed in a positive manner that promotes a growth mindset. For example:

- What was your favourite part of the day today?
- What did you do during recess?
- What made your teacher smile today? What made him/her frown?
- Who is the friendliest person in your class?
- What are you looking forward to at school tomorrow?
- Tell me about something kind you did for someone today. Did someone do something nice for you?
- Who is someone at school who could use a friend?
- Tell me something that made you laugh today.
- What are you looking forward to tomorrow at school?

Thank you to all families for:

- Communicating respectfully and thoughtfully to teachers - in emails, on the phone and in face-to-face communications
- Supporting your child with their learning goals

Inspired by Christ on a Journey to Encounter, Nurture and Serve.

- Meeting your commitments with transportation & school fees and staying in touch with the office if you need extra time or consideration
- Supporting your child's social-emotional growth: learning the value of good manners, appreciating difference, contributing to the greater good, saying sorry, learning to forgive, working hard and playing hard too, being kind to ourselves and to one another, the power of prayer, giving service to others...

ADVISORY QUESTION

At St. Francis, we value the opportunity to connect with parents during Parent-Teacher Conferences. However, with middle school teachers responsible for up to 180 students, the 6 hours allocated over two evenings in November often limits the number of parents we can meet. To ensure we are making the most of this time and meeting with the parents who most need to discuss their child's progress, we are considering dedicating the first evening to teacher-requested appointments, where teachers specifically reach out to the parents they need to see. The second evening could then offer a blend of sign-up appointments and open drop-in time, where parents can visit classrooms with their child to see their work.



We would love your input on this proposed change.

- **Would this approach meet your needs as a parent, or do you have alternative suggestions for how we can make the most of Parent-Teacher Conference time?**
- **How would you feel about having drop-in time to see your child's progress and classroom environment more informally?**
- **Does this structure give you enough opportunity to connect with teachers about your child's progress?**

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We will be continuing with our week at a glance which is posted on our website, social media and emailed to parents. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to discuss questions or concerns with the classroom teacher or school administration. Teachers welcome parents to contact them directly by calling the school or sending them a message. Please note that if they are teaching, on supervision or unable to take your call we ask that you leave a message and they will get back to you by the next work day. In our commitment to honour family time we will work hard not to send messages after 6:00 PM unless there is an emergency.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

School Council is a means for parents and the community to work together to support and enhance student learning. School Council provides a venue for parents to reflect on their wishes for the broader community of education of its students and to actively participate in giving advice and support to the principal.

Roles that are not to be taken on by a School council include:

- School governance
- Employment issues
- School management
- Listening to complaints.

Thank you to our parents for continuing to work in a team to meet the goals of School Council