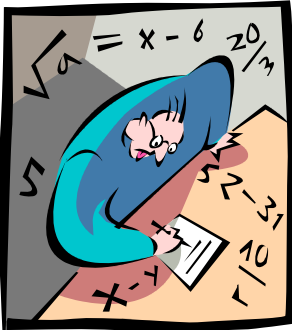


December 7, 2006

Dear Families,

Short is sweet. And since this is the time of year for sweets, I'll get right to it!

ITBS TESTS



Included in today's packets for grades 1-7, you should find the parent copy of our recently complete Iowa test of Basic Skills. This is our annual early assessment that helps us not only gain insight into individual and class progress, but also helps the teachers chart out emphasis areas for the remainder of the year.

In reviewing the results, I came away feeling that, for the most part, they were a fairly good representation of what we know about the great students we have. Each teacher receives a more detailed breakdown of areas of strength and weakness and so far, they tend to concur with my analysis.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call your child's teacher. They should be able to help walk you through the results. It is important to remember that this test is a snapshot not only of their progress against a normed sample of students nationally, but also indicative of their skill and experience in taking these kinds of tests. Until we get a track record over time, it is hard to say that this one result represents the entire picture, nor a child's potential. That is why our high schools look at test results as only one of many records when determining acceptance. (Hint for the future... The factor that carries the most weight in whether or not parish school 8th graders are accepted into our Catholic high schools: the high school admissions office annual call to the elementary principal for a recommendation.)

SMS BAND?

Also today there is a flyer from Marc Collier, band director at Eastside Catholic HS, soliciting interest in starting an all-eastside performance ensemble. If it were to happen, practices are slated to be here at St. Mad's. I have experienced these opportunities from our Catholic high schools as generally good quality and worth the effort. Marc says that all levels of skill are welcome. Take a look and if interested, e-mail him for more information.



HOT LUNCH

The hot lunch order form included last week is due back in the office **NO LATER THAN TOMORROW, FRIDAY, DEC. 8**. After that time, we cannot accept any additions or changes for the period of time the form represents. If you have **ANY** questions, call us **ASAP!**

REGISTRATION

Can you believe it? We're already getting the forms ready for 2007-2008 registrations! We expect to have the re-enrollment packages out to you before the Martin Luther King holiday in mid-January. Returning families will have first crack at registering returning

students and new siblings up until Monday, Feb. 5. At that time we open enrollment to everyone and it all becomes first come, first served. That could very well be an issue this year as we expect to be limited in classroom space until 2008. At more details become available regarding costs and fees, I'll get them to you for your financial planning.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION MASS

Don't forget – you are welcome at our holy day Mass tomorrow, Dec. 8 at 9:00am. Since it is a feast day, we expect there will be a number of parishioners joining us. If you wish to sit close to the students, you may want to arrive a bit early. Emerald Heights Academy students and families will also be present as they normally attend Mass here on Fridays.

Also... You may have noticed our daily Advent observance in the mornings outside the classrooms. As we grow into a school with larger numbers of older students, we'll be adding more liturgical and program events – just like a grown-up school! This year, we're trying it first thing each morning outside. It is quick and painless (even in the rain). Feel free to stay and participate.

Don't let the holiday preparations wear you down. Enjoy your weekend!

Dan