

Coffee with Administration Summary
January 11, 2012

Mrs. Viotti, Mrs. Arnett, and Mrs. Sabo met with parents this morning to present updates and answer questions.

High School

Administration updated parents that high school applications are ready to be delivered for our 8th graders and how most 8th graders apply to multiple schools. Students took the HSPT (High School Placement Test) last week and feedback from parents has been positive regarding how well the students felt they were prepared. Administration stressed the fact that St. Matthew fully prepares our students for the HSPT and outside courses/materials are not needed.

Mock interviews are scheduled for our 8th graders for next week. Feedback is given to the students to help improve their interviewing skills. All students, regardless of which school they plan on attending, are required to go through the mock interview as this is a life skill which each student will need to possess.

The 8th grade portfolios are almost completed which highlight the student's achievements and accomplishments. These portfolios also serve to help as an aid during the student's interview.

Transcripts are due to high schools shortly after students return from Christmas vacation. This is the reason the second quarter for the eighth grade ends one week sooner than the rest of the school. Questions arose regarding the amount of work/projects given over vacation and how a family's time should be used over break. St. Matthew is trying to prepare our students for high school and students in 8th grade should be studying over the break.

Projects

A discussion arose regarding having students complete projects over the Christmas break. Assigning projects prior to a break (i.e. science fair and mission projects) allows for those whom wish to get started early a chance to do so. A suggestion of having target dates for larger projects was presented for those children in the lower grades. Administration agreed this could be a helpful tool to aid with time management. A parent also suggested that the mission project due date be pushed back a week so the project is not due days upon returning from vacation. This would allow students an extra weekend to work on their projects and not feel the pressure to complete their project during vacation.

Feedback on IOWA Test Scores

Administration indicated the school's IOWA test scores in math have improved since restructuring our math program. Each class scores above grade level in math. The scores for problem solving and data analysis are high which are very promising signs. Math scores tend to be brought down due to math fact computations.

St. Matthew continues to have very strong science and language arts scores on the IOWA test.

Confirmation

This is a transitional year since this will be the first time since 1981 that Confirmation will be taking place for students during their 8th grade year. A one day retreat is being planned for our 8th grade students and hopefully this will take place on a school day. Feedback from parents has been positive regarding having Confirmation occur while students are in 8th grade.

Auction

The auction committee indicated a list of needed items the fundraiser hopes to fund, such as science lab kits. Administration explained these science lab kits include all the materials needed for the science labs and that these labs meet the curriculum standard requirements.

A question arose regarding the possible use of online textbooks which students would be able to access for homework. Administration indicated the new textbooks have this capability.

Playground Improvements

Box tops are still needed to help fund the playground improvements. Reminders will appear in the Wednesday emails reminding parents to please submit box tops. Administration indicated they are still waiting to hear from the city regarding approval for our gymnasium project which will have an impact on our playground. A final decision is expected in February.