

August 2003

Summer Greetings to all our families!

We're pleased to have you as partners in this educational year. We want to assure you that we will do our best to help your child experience academic, social, emotional and spiritual growth. More than ever, Catholic schools play a crucial role in society. We teach a set of beliefs and values that are a sustaining force for the day-in, day-out struggle against the problems in life. Immaculate is an environment that creates a strong social bond among students, faculty and administration. We strive to actively develop a sense of personal accountability and responsibility. This is a time of high expectations, hard work, good resolution and a little bit of excitement. We look forward to greeting your children as they bring their youth, enthusiasm and curiosity to us.

Our school opening begins on Wednesday, September 3rd for students in grades 5 through 8. There is no school on Wednesday for students in grades 1 through 4. Thursday, September 4th is the first day of school for students in grades 1 through 4. There is no school on Thursday for grades 5-8. On Friday, September 5th, school is in session for all students in grades 1 through 8. All days are FULL DAYS.

Please be sure your children have a bag lunch and a drink. Our Milk/Beverage preordered drinks are not in effect. Dependant upon survey results returned to us, we hope to begin a hot lunch program by the end of October. It is a commitment to nutrition and is a great benefit for your child. Please read the Hot Lunch information carefully and if you have any questions do not hesitate to call the office or email me.

School begins at 8:15 every morning and will end at 3:05. We may have to be flexible with the disrupted traffic patterns caused by the borough construction, so be sure to build in some extra time for your child so that he/she is on time. We appreciate any adjustments to your schedule you have to make and hopefully, the end is near!

Uniforms are to be worn beginning with the first day of school. Summer uniforms are allowed until Monday, November 3rd. On cooler days, uniform sweaters and navy blue sweat pants for gym are worn.

On our calendar summary, you will notice that our conference time has been moved up to the end of October. We have also added Progress Reports for all students at the midway point of each trimester. Our Middle States reaccreditation takes place this year. We will be completing a project on classroom assessment that will culminate in a symposium in November. During this time we will be sharing with other educators and you some examples and highlights of changes and results during this time of learning for both teachers and students. Our hope is to continue the good accomplished in the area of assessment through the combined efforts of many curriculum leaders over the last few years. The area of alternative assessment is particularly valuable. Alternative assessments provide meaningful opportunities for learners to demonstrate academic achievement. The

topic of grading continues to require increased discussion and will enliven and enlighten the conversation about the whats and whys of evaluation.

Curriculum changes in our support materials for this year are focused on grades 6 to 8 with Prentice Hall Mathematics © 2004. Grade 6 will be using an additional grammar component, Prentice Hall Grammar, and will be participating in a 2-part Study Skills Program that begins in September. Ms. Helen McIlvane will head a team of counselors who will be focusing on Note Taking, Test Taking and Organizational Skills. Grade 7 will be using the Prentice Hall Science Explorer in Life Science © 2002. Grades 1 and 2 will be using the new Blest Are We © 2004 published by Silver Burdett Ginn.

In selecting our support texts for our curriculum programs, an important component in our selection process is the integration of technology with the program. To that end, we continue to improve the technology hardware and software accessible to students. Our ICS web page will continue to be updated by our 8th grade students to keep you abreast of development in all areas. Our hope is that before the end of this year, families who wish to will be able to opt out of some of the "hard copy" items in our Thursday communication.

We welcome our new staff member: Miss Megan McHugh. Miss McHugh will be teaching 7th grade reading, including 8th grade ILA and Social Studies. She is Catholic school educated and a graduate of Chestnut Hill College. Miss McHugh's prior teaching experience was in Archdiocesan and private Catholic schools. Her love of Language Arts and Social Studies, along with her interest in Art, creates an enthusiasm for learning that she is looking forward to sharing with her students. Additionally, she distinguished herself at Chestnut Hill in Lacrosse and Field Hockey as an Academic All-American .

Ms. Lai will add a half-day to her schedule so she can be with us three full days a week. We follow the National Standards for Arts Education and this extra time will facilitate our students' meeting the benchmarks more easily.

Ms. Margie Scherzer will be our new Intermediate Unit Counselor and will be with us ever Tuesday. This year all of our supporting staff from the Intermediate Unit will be working out of our building.

Home and School is helping us to begin the year with a fresh paint job in the cafeteria. If you're able to contribute some time to this endeavor, please call the school office and we'll pass your name along to our Executive officers. Look for our Innisbrook Sale, Back to School Night and our Pancake Breakfast in September. Then in October, our parish auction/social "Hooray for Hollywood" takes place. Your help is always appreciated. We depended a great deal on your support last year to make needed capital improvements and our moving forward with our academic goals often depends on our having the necessary funds in place.

As always, we thank you for your support and for welcoming all of us into your children's lives.

Important Reminders:

>> Just a reminder, please remember that in addition to jumpers and kilts, uniform pants, shorts and skorts are to be purchased from our uniform suppliers. The quality and appearance is obvious. It is our uniform code. Uniforms are checked periodically during the school year and infractions are issued for students who are not in compliance. Shoes with soles that don't leave black marks on the floor are a plus in keeping our building clean. Your continued support is appreciated.

>> Our Enrichment Program for grades 1—4 is always in need of volunteers. Enrichment will undergo a format change this year. It will take place in the classroom and will be (with the teacher's direction) more fully integrated with the curriculum. We were fortunate this past year to be able to schedule volunteers on a rotating basis. Whatever time you can give is appreciated! Please call the office if you are able to help and did not fill out a volunteer form.

>> We need Lunch Aids and Substitute Lunch Aids. This is a paid position and an important part of your child's day. Please call the office if you have any questions.

>> Our Library Birthday Book program will continue this year. Look for more information in September. Our Book Fair will take place in the fall and we plan to have it open on the weekend this year.