



Academic Excellence

As a Catholic school, it is important for us to hold true to all that Catholic schools have done best, continue to provide our students with strong foundational skills, while blending in today's best instructional practices and integrate technology in a way that supports this learning.

Next year in grades Kindergarten through 5 we will implement guided reading. In Kindergarten through grade 2, Super Kids will continue to be used to build foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and reading fluency. Whole group instruction will be provided for these skills and guided reading small group instruction will build upon these skills and reading comprehension.

In grades 3-5, we welcome the Scholastic Guided Reading bookroom to our school. This collection features 1,040 book titles, all authentic literature in all genres. Our teachers will select books for small group instruction from this collection and all teachers in our school will have access to use these texts in their classroom. They will continue to use Voyages in English and Vocabulary Workshop to round out the English Language Arts experience.

The Daily 5, which is a classroom management structure, will be implemented in grades K-5. Our students will learn about the five literacy tasks which will help them grow as readers; read to self, listen to a story, read with a partner, word work, and writing. Our students will begin the year growing their reading stamina and teachers will strategically launch these tasks and practice them with their students so that during guided reading time all students are engaged in meaningful literacy activities which will allow them to grow as readers.

We will focus on teaching our children that reading is thinking and familiarize them with the ideas of metacognition and schema (background knowledge). Our students will learn that they need to think while they read so that they can understand the text. They will learn to listen to their thinking voice and ignore their distracting voice.

Teachers in grades K-8 will teach these reading strategies and use the same words to name them so that the students continue to build skills within each of these strategies every year. We never stop learning to read! Our goal is to develop students who are strategic readers and can interact with all text types.

While we will use small group reading instruction to build skills, whether guided reading or literature circles, we will utilize whole group reading instruction to immerse our students in complex text. This gives all students the opportunity to be challenged with difficult text, learning to persevere with the guidance of the classroom teacher.

In grades 6-8 we will continue with three sections of Math. In eighth grade, we will have sec-

tions of Geometry, Algebra, and Pre-Algebra. Math and Science classes will each be one hour in length next year. This hour will provide us the opportunity to go deeper with our students and allow them opportunities to experience the application of the concepts learned.

We are moving toward a STEM approach in these classes. Instead of STEM being a separate entity, these projects and ideas will be a part of the regular classroom experience, allowing our students to explore a topic through a variety of perspectives.

Also in grades 6-8, we will have three sections of a blended Language Arts and Social Studies block. This class will be 90 minutes in length and class sizes will not exceed twenty students. This will allow us to provide a more personalized learning experience for our students as well as an avenue to explore concepts in an interdisciplinary way.

For each trimester, in each grade level, we will develop content in Social Studies, connect literature to those ideas, and engage our students in connected writing experiences. We will study one writing genre a trimester and embed grammar content into those writing units as well as provide explicit vocabulary instruction through Vocabulary Workshop.

We are also working to expand our Spanish program. Our fourth-grade class next year will be the first class which will have Spanish two days a week all year long in grades 4-8. So, when this class enters junior high in two years, Spanish will not be a single term class but all year long. In grades 4-5 these students will complete one Spanish book of study and then complete a second in junior high.

We integrate technology into our daily school experience to support and enrich the classroom experience. In grades 6-8, students each have their own Chromebook. Students in grades 4-5 begin to learn about Chromebooks and do so in a shared model. Our youngest learners in grades Kindergarten through 3 have access to iPads as each grade level shares a cart.

Our students participate in physical education 2-3 days a week depending upon grade level and junior high students also have health class for one trimester.

To round out our co-curricular experience, we are fortunate to have a beautiful art room and a music program which grows our students in their understanding of concepts and performance.

