



# State of the School

2018-2019



## Academics



- Accelerated Reader – piloting in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. It is an independent reading practice which helps students grow their reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. Students take ownership of their reading and learning and become much more independent. Will expand to other grades next year.
- Our Resource Program continues to adjust and grow to support all students. We have added Math Resource this year.
- Enrichment – This new half hour period at the end of the day allows us to meet new Archdiocesan time requirements for math instruction. Other topics covered during this period are organizational skills, test-taking and note-taking skills, HSPT prep, Latin Roots, and independent reading.
- Our Student Assistance Team, made up of Resource teachers and classroom teachers, is formalizing its procedures to increase communication regarding students.
- We introduced *Responsive Classroom* this year. It is an evidence-based approach educators use to create safe and joyful learning communities where students develop strong social and academic skills and every student can thrive. Mrs. Woo attended the week-long training over the summer and then trained our staff. You may have heard your children talk about our Morning Meetings and Monday assemblies.
- We continue to utilize educational software in the classrooms to help differentiate instruction. Some of the programs we use are IXL, BrainPop, and A to Z Learning. These programs offer thousands of leveled resources in multiple formats covering multiple areas to support teachers in delivering effective, personalized instruction.
- Our focus this year has been true differentiation in the classroom to reach all learners where they are, on level, above grade level, or in need of extra help. Our goal is always working toward helping students acquire a deeper understanding of each content area.

- Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders were successful in their high-school acceptances this year. All 27 were accepted at multiple schools: Brookwood 1, DeMatha 2, Gonzaga 2, Good Counsel 11, Holy Cross 16, St. John's 17, Visitation 4.



## Extra-curricular Activities



- New Drama Club – After weeks of practice, the students have learned about the art of stagecraft and are now preparing to put on their first production in April. Details coming soon!
- Our Science Club continues to grow. This year they were able to view Mars and the Curiosity Rover using virtual reality goggles from NASA. Then they developed a Mars base/habitat and crew that would go on the first explorations. The students used the math they are learning in their respective classes, such as fractions to indicate food ratios and dimensional analysis.
- Art Horizons continues to allow students to learn new art techniques and express their creativity.
- The Student Council has sponsored events throughout the year and has helped raise almost \$400 for the IHM Retirement Fund
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders participated again this year in DeMatha's annual Academic Classic quiz bowl.



## Facilities Update



- Yearly, our school has multiple health and safety inspections, mandated by County and State regulations. These include lead testing, asbestos inspections, fire inspections, fire alarm tests, kitchen hood inspection, boiler inspection, and general facilities inspections. Montgomery County AfterCare and Pre-School inspections require many additional areas of compliance, for both the facility and personnel. We are in compliance in all areas.
- You may have noticed that the building has all new lights in the hallways, every classroom, bathrooms, offices, and gym. These new lights are energy efficient and better for students. There are also new lights on the outside of the building. We attained grants to help offset the cost of the lights.

- Thanks to the generosity of parishioners and parents at the Gala and other donors, we will be able to purchase new, much-needed classroom furniture this spring and summer.
- The new cafeteria tables are a hit with the students. They can relax in a different environment than their classrooms, particularly on rainy days when they can't go outside for recess.

## Professional Development

- The Catholic Coalition for Special Education (CCSE) is offering workshops based on their philosophy of including students with developmental disabilities in Catholic schools. SJE hosted the first two workshops, which all our teachers attended. The first workshop topics were "Assistive Technology and Communication for All Students" and "Maintaining High Expectations for All Students." The second was "Evidence-Based Practices for Differentiation and Inclusion."
- Area Catholic High Schools sponsor subject-specific seminars for Middle School teachers to help the teachers prepare students for high school. SJE Science and Language Arts teachers attend.
- The Archdiocese's Catholic Schools Office (CSO) sponsors classes and workshops throughout the year for both teachers and administrators. They also offer classes during the summer.
- The CSO sponsors two Collaboration days each year. Teachers from the Archdiocese gather with each other to share strategies and learn new techniques to better serve our students.
- Conferences and workshops offered by outside agencies are offered throughout the year and are attended by SJE teachers and administrators. The topics range from "Math and the Brain" and "Techniques for Success" to "Kids in Crisis: How to Recognize the Warning Signs and What to Do."
- Archdiocesan teachers are required to have 65 hours a year of Professional Development.

## School Health & Safety

- The Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) has adopted a new safety protocol for its schools. A.L.I.C.E. (Alert. Lockdown. Inform. Counter. Evacuate) training was provided to school administrators in the fall. ADW has suggested a timeline for implementation which includes teacher, parent, and student training by the end of the year. More information will follow.

- On April 2 and 4, the Lions Club will be at school to offer eye and hearing screening to our students. They are providing this service free of charge.
- We have three medication technicians at our school who are trained and state-certified to dispense medication to students. We also have a delegating nurse who oversees all our medical records and makes sure our health room and procedures meet County and State regulations.

## Catholic Schools Office

- The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) provides resources to its schools, including educational opportunities for teachers and administrators, financial aid to parents, and safety and legal advice for schools.
- The CSO spearheads all accreditation for its schools. Each school must submit assurances each year to maintain its accreditation. Re-accreditation takes place next year, so the CSO will conduct school classroom visits this fall.
- The CSO conducted a Technology Survey earlier this year to set a baseline for school technology standards. SJE met all the standards.

## Honors

- SJE, along with 10 other schools, will be honored at the CCSE annual Spring Benefit for being a "Trail-Blazing" school for educating children with intellectual disabilities.
- Tribute 21 has given our school two generous grants this year for our commitment to educate children with Down Syndrome.

## Future Plans

- We know once parents enter the school's doors, they always fall in love with the children and our school. We just need to bring more people in our doors! To this end, we are trying to market our school in a more visible way. This year we created our new webpage, advertised in area stores, created new signage on Georgia Avenue, created yard signs for Open Houses, and upped our presence on online search engines. But our best marketing comes from word-of-mouth, so keep spreading the good news about our school!