

State of the School Letter November 2017

Hello to the Saint Paul the Apostle family.

As School Board President and Principal of the School we are thrilled to share with the community the first **State of the School** report. We have been hard at work since August as a board, parish to achieve our strategic focus of **improving our enrollment and identity**.

This year our enrollment preschool-8 is 205 with 130 families. St. Paul's graduated fourteen students in the spring of 2017, ten of which were the last child of the family. Thirteen families, new to our school this fall were given Welcome Scholarships from the diocese. Nine preschool families were retained from last year and are currently in either our Early 5's program or in Kindergarten. A total of approximately \$29,611 was given out in tuition assistance by St. Paul's.

Our Identity is focused around academic excellence and service to the community. Our students continue to have high academic performance, shown in the MAP's Test RIT scores. As the only standardized test that students in grades 2-8 take the RIT score is an estimation of a student's instructional level and measures progress or growth of the student. The first column gives the average RIT score for the class and the second and third columns show where St. Paul's is in relation to both the diocesan and national averages.

Some additional changes to our academic program include:

- The hiring of a new junior high science teacher who also works with teachers at the elementary level and allows for daily hands-on lab experiences for students in grades K-5.
- We are continuing the partnership with VanAndel Institute for teachers grades K-5 in the area of Science.
- The Lucy Calkins Writing program has been implemented in grades K-8 with outstanding results.

Community Service Relationships.

- Students have been visiting Beacon Hill, Raybrook and Porter Hills.
- Second graders have partnered with Lacks Enterprises and will help sort and pack up donated items for the Veteran's at Christmas
- Third grade continues to knit caps for premature babies at Spectrum hospital. They will also be starting up their Pizza Lunch business, proceeds from which will be used to purchase materials for Easter baskets to be delivered to Catholic Social Services and St. John's Home.
- The fourth and fifth grade are continuing their partnership with the Lions Club. Students are helping to clean eyeglasses which are then sorted by prescription and shipped to missions in Central America.
- All students are writing to and praying for the diocesan seminarians.

We have been collecting personal care items for the food pantry during the month of November.

As a school we have aligned with The Diocese of Grand Rapids' new strategic plan for all the schools: Bridging Faith and Future four Strategies for success (<http://www.dioceseofgrandrapids.org/schools/Pages/Catholic-Schools-Bridging-Faith-and-Future.aspx#.WhLSUIZrzUK>).

1. Catholic Culture and Mission
2. Programmatic Excellence
3. Affordability and Accessibility
4. Stewardship and Sustainability

With this alignment, we have launched 12 committee's of the board, parish and school to assist in achieving our strategic focus of enrollment and identity. Each committee has established measurable goals for the year. The description of these committees and their goals are shared in the attached report. We are sharing these with the community to be transparent of the work we are doing and hope to inspire others to help us to achieve our collective strategic focus.

We know that it is not just one person's actions and leadership that makes organizations thrive, it takes a collective team who are willing to share their time and talents. We are blessed to have many talented individuals at our school and parish to help us achieve our goal.

We will be updating our progress through the year and look forward to sharing our continued successes with you.

Blessings and Grace to our St. Paul's Families,

Lori Salva
Principal

Lorissa MacAllister, PhD
School Board President