

# SEAS NAVIGATOR

A PUBLICATION OF ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON MIDDLE SCHOOL

MTSAA, SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION 08



## Special Interest

The first day of school will be Tuesday, September 6. TCAPS **does** provide transportation.

Our Open House and Ice Cream Social is scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 30th. (This is a change from the GTACS News!) We will gather in the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton gymnasium for a welcome, prayer, and delivery of general/new school information. This will be a necessary time, especially for new students and their parents, as we will share expectations and helpful tips to ensure a smooth transition. **All students and parents are welcome and encouraged to attend.**

**Attention 8th grade students/parents:** To save you a trip, we will be having our Washington D.C. meeting directly following the brief presentation (starting at approximately 7:15) in the library.

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## From the Desk of the SEAS Principal, Lori Phillips

Dear Parents,  
It is with great anticipation and joy that I welcome you to the 2011-12 school year at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. I feel extremely blessed to have the privilege of working alongside knowledgeable and faith-filled parents, staff, and faculty who hold high expectations and continue to raise the bar for students and themselves. I continually challenge myself, as well, to grow and place high expectations on students both academically and spiritually. I pray that each person who enters our doors recognizes that our school is an extension of our Catholic Church; a place to be highly revered and cherished. With the help of God and the guiding intercession of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, I am confident that our school year will be blessed as our students continue to grow in their love, faith, and knowledge.

Two Middle School initiatives that were implemented last year were the Advisory program and Teaming. These two driving forces of successful Middle Schools will continue to be advanced and improved upon as we grow into a stellar institution constantly focused on meeting the needs of our students in every realm. Both of these organizational structures foster purposeful learning and

meaningful relationships and we believe are vital to our success in serving our students' needs. Please take the time to further preview these "reinventions" enclosed within this newsletter.

The "Middle Years" are both tender and challenging. Young adolescents are shedding their childhood qualities. They are changing physically, cognitively, actively seeking autonomy, and forming personal identities; all of which are normal, natural, and necessary. Parenting is no doubt challenging at times, but our faith and understanding of what our children are experiencing will support them, and guide us, as they move through this most impressionable and rewarding period. I look so forward to seeing all of your children and being a small part of their lives. Like the desires I hold for my own children, I want the very best for each of your children.

Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts regarding your child's school success. Your concerns, ideas, and positive comments are appreciated and respected. Communication is vital to their success and to our overall growth and sense of community here at St. Elizabeth

## Back to School 2011

Ann Seton. We want to be proud of our school and our students . . . for God's glory alone!

I look forward to seeing you all at the Ice Cream Social on Tuesday, Aug. 30th. We will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a brief meeting to deliver general school information and introduce our wonderful staff and grade level teams.

I pray that you continue to enjoy these final weeks of this lovely summer. As always, I ask for your prayers for our entire St. Elizabeth Ann Seton staff as we prepare for this upcoming school year. We know that we are nothing without His guidance; therefore, rely heavily upon it in everything we do!

Thank you for your partnership and trust.  
Sincerely Yours in Christ,  
Mrs. Lori Phillips

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,  
Pray for us!



When you see our custodians, please thank them!  
Our building shines as a result of their dedication!

## Dates to Remember

Mon., 8/22: SEAS School Office Opens

Tues., 8/23: Course Selection sign-up is due via email to [DKrueger@gtacs.org](mailto:DKrueger@gtacs.org).

Mon., 8/29 and Fri., 9/2: SEAS School Office Closed

Tues., 8/30: Open House and Ice Cream Social; SEAS Gymnasium @ 6:30 p.m.

Tues., 8/30: Washington, D.C. Parent/Student Information Meeting; SEAS Library @ 7:15 p.m. (Immediately following Open House presentation)

Tues., 9/6: First Day of School

Fri., 9/9: All System Mass at 8:30 a.m., St. Francis High School Gym. (Please do not drop your child off any earlier than 7:30 a.m.)

## Lunch Duty

As always, we are in need of regular parent volunteers to assist in the dining hall/outside one day per week from 11:15-12:25. If you are willing/able, please email Holly Schurg at [hschurg@gmail.com](mailto:hschurg@gmail.com) to sign up. Thank you and God bless you!

## Grade Level Expectations

Sixth grade is a year of transition; making friends and making good choices. Classes switch for differing content areas and organization is a key to their individual success. Students begin to explore leadership opportunities within the school culture.

Seventh grade is a year of independence and fine tuning organizational and listening skills. Students have acclimated to middle school and they handle the changing of classes with ease. They begin to grow in their focus on academics and continue to need social/emotional support in order to embrace the demands of their intellectual needs.

8th Grade is a year of continued growth and independence as they prepare for the rigor of high school. Their actions and deeds are watched closely by their younger peers and they begin showing their spiritual maturity and social/emotional growth. As leaders, they enjoy Christian service both on and off campus.

## Middle School Teaming

Interdisciplinary teaming is defined as a group of teachers from different subject areas who plan and work together and who share the same students for a significant portion of the school day. This teaming approach is intended to create a context that enables students and teachers to know one another better and allows teachers to better support and understand the educational needs of each student. Teams generally focus on creating coordinated lesson plans, share and discuss student progress, design and review common assessments, share and discuss solutions to challenges, and integrate subjects around a central theme or idea. This cohesive atmosphere has proven to be a vital component of strong Middle Schools across the nation. High functioning teams enjoy great rewards for their collaborative work; the greatest coming in the form of student achievement scores and personal growth for all.

Throughout your child's elementary career, you have heard us refer to grade level teams (i.e. 5th grade team). In these *teams*, although teachers spent time together sharing, planning and organizing curricular and assessment practices for their individual students, at the Middle School these teachers will also share their *students* and become stronger advocates for your child.

Below is a listing of teacher teams and the core subjects they will teach:

### 6th Grade Team:

**Patty Brady** — Math & Social Studies  
**Tammy Soto** — Reading & Language Arts

**Carol Erickson** — Science & Social Studies  
**Raelynn Stein** — Religion & Language Arts

### 7th Grade Team:

**Becky Callery** — Science & Math  
**Tracey Tull** — Language Arts & Reading

**Kammie Richardson** — Religion & Math  
**Carl Scholten** — Social Studies & Reading

### 8th Grade Team:

**Nancy Martin** — Religion & Social Studies  
**Leslie Summers** — Reading & Language Arts

**Tim Shrift** — Math & Science

## Advisory

With so many negative influences impinging on the lives of our children outside of school, it is more important than ever that every young adolescent be a part of a peer group where real concerns and issues can be addressed. Advisory is not an independent activity, serving only affective needs; it is an integral element in the school's program to advance the overall development of each student. We want our students to learn at high levels, behave appropriately, learn life's lessons through personal experiences, and trust they have God and many other advocates to turn to. Advisory will give our students this priceless gift. Students will report to their Advisory Teachers each morning at 7:50-8:20. Teachers will design lessons catering to the needs of their grade level. They will focus on specific topics, such as: Orientation of Students, Goal Setting, Organizational Skills, Study and Skill Reinforcements, Conferences regarding Grades/Assessments and Self Advocacy, Building Group Identity and Belonging, and Christ-centered activities to promote our community here at St. Elizabeth, as well as the broader community. What a great way to set our students up for success and start the school day — organized and feeling a part of a special "team"!

### Shuttle Service

If you wish to use the SEAS Shuttle this year, a check for \$250 per student made out to TCAPS needs to be sent to Cindy Weber in the Business Office. If you wish to have your child ride the regular neighborhood bussing, you must fill out an Enrollment for Transportation form (available at [www.gtacs.org](http://www.gtacs.org)). You may reach Cindy by calling (231) 995-8425 or email at [cweber@gtacs.org](mailto:cweber@gtacs.org).

### Lunch Pricing

Lunch prices for SEAS students are \$3.30 again this year. Parents may begin funding their child's lunch account at any time. Checks may be made to GTACS, and sent to Karen Spencer; GTACS Dining Services at 123 East 11th Street, Traverse City, MI 49684.

### Student Schedules

After course selections are made, student schedules can be generated. Students will obtain their schedules after the Open House Welcome on Tues., Aug. 30. More details will be given on Tuesday evening! Get your schedules and FREE ice cream!

(please see below)

### Weekly Mass

Our weekly Mass will continue to be held every Tuesday morning at 10:00 a.m. We are so blessed to have the opportunity to praise and thank God for all that He *is* and all that He *does* in our lives. Please feel free to join us when you can. We are excited to welcome Father Cotter to Christ the King and to GTACS. We are so thankful for our new shepherd!

### Father Bill

What a blessing it is to have Father Bill in our building again this year! Father's presence and joy brighten our environment here at St. Elizabeth's. Not only does he teach specific Religion lessons to our students, he demonstrates the perfect "friend". Each student that passes him by in the hallway or sees him at lunch, feels his genuine care for them and they come to know that he is there for them as a confidant and confessor.

### Counseling Services

As we continue to be developmentally responsive to your child's needs both in and out of the classroom, we are blessed to have the services of Ginny Newman, our school counselor. Mrs. Newman works closely with our teachers and parents to ensure a successful school year for our students. Her door is always open! What a blessing she is to all!

### Seton Learning Center (Reading/Math)

Betsy Charron will again be supporting our struggling students in Reading. With the help of our TBA Educational Consultant, Kathy Sinnard, we implemented a solid Corrective Reading Program to assist in addressing the needs of these particular students. Our spring data verified that this program indeed helped our student achievement and growth in this area. Mrs. Charron works closely with classroom teachers and closely monitors student growth through varied assessments.

We are grateful to offer support to our struggling Math students as well. Mr. Jim Prince works particularly with Math teachers and helps students with their individual skill deficiencies. He, too, will be closely monitoring student growth in math and will work in small groups for more intensive learning. Jim's past experience as a former classroom teacher and principal help him meet his students needs both as their teacher and their champion.

### Enrichment/Exploratory Opportunities

Every solid Middle School provides enriching opportunities for students to gain exposure to and experience non-curricular activities. Due to the confinements of our school day, our students will choose from a variety of options to meet their individual needs. Each year we try to address our time issues and continue to explore the best ways to serve our students; exposing them to broad activities while expanding on their growing talents. As a result of studying and researching other schools who have quality Arts programs, students may choose from the following options:

- Option A = Band/Performing Arts/Choir
- Option B = Art/Computers/Rosetta Stone/Guided Study

Guided Study will only be available for those students whom we have identified as needing extra academic support. The school will determine who will be placed in this support class. Other study hall opportunities may be provided for all.

Please respond to the **Course Selection Sign-up** that will be sent home via email **next week** to indicate which option you would like for your child. **The deadline for sign-up is Tuesday, August 23, as TCAPS will need this information to plan for teaching responsibilities.** We appreciate your timeliness on this matter and thank you for your understanding.

In addition to the above mentioned, Band/Choir students may also opt to participate in the **Rosetta Stone Foreign Language Program.\*** Again, please indicate by checking "yes" or "no" regarding Foreign Language (Rosetta Stone) on your child's Course Selection Sign-up.

*\*This 45-min. time block will be taken out of your child's P.E./Health class. Although this is not ideal, our staff feels that it is a solid compromise and would tamper least with student/teacher schedules. Band/Choir students who do not elect Foreign Language will continue to enjoy Physical Education/Health 5 days per week.*

### **New Staff Member**

Mr. Carl Scholten was hired in June to join our 7th Grade Team. Carl is originally from Glen Lake, a graduate of Petoskey High School, and a graduate of Hope College. We are blessed that his northern Michigan roots drew him “home”. Carl is extremely passionate about teaching our youth and will make an incredible impact on our St. Elizabeth Ann Seton students and staff. He will be teaching all of the 7th grade Social Studies and 2 sections of Reading. Thank you in advance for giving him a warm GTACS welcome! May God bless you, Mr. Scholten!

### **8th Hour**

As we continue to support students in the areas of responsibility and good character, we will be instituting an “8th hour” on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday after school. All students that receive a detention or have an unexcused, missing assignment must attend 8th hour (the following day/session) from 2:45-3:45. Further, your child may miss athletic practice or club meetings. Please also see our school handbook for additional information on homework tips/guidelines (pg. 5) as well as your Team’s beginning of the year letter outlining the grade level Late Work Policy.

### **8th Grade Washington, D.C. Trip/Parent Meeting**

One of the highlights of 8th grade is our Washington D.C. trip through Christian Discoveries, a national touring company. This educational “field trip” is phenomenal and tied directly to our 8th and 9th grade curriculum. Learning about the history of our country through a Christ-centered lens, puts everything together for our students as they begin to develop a deep love and appreciation for our country and its founding fathers. This past year we were able to incorporate a service/mission type experience for our traveling students which only enhanced the trip, and further opened the hearts of our students. Many of our students raised more than half of their cost over a 5 month period last year. Fundraising coordinators for the class are Carol Johnson and Cindy Walerych. These women have helped provide opportunities for our current 8th grade students and with your help, will coordinate fundraising opportunities this year. If you have questions or ideas, please feel free to contact Carol, Cindy, or Nancy Martin—our staff coordinator.

Attention all 7th and 6th Grade Parents: We are still in need of parent volunteer coordinators. If you are interested, please contact Denise Krueger to learn more about this role. The sooner we fundraise, the sooner the trip will be paid!

### **Pat Lackie Memorial**

A special Memorial will be celebrated in the front garden outside our St. Elizabeth Ann Seton building on Friday, Sept. 9 to honor and remember a cherished teacher, Pat Lackie. Please join us if you are able! The ceremony will begin at 2:00 p.m.

### **Christian Service**

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Middle School is a community centered in Christ. As Christ did, we lead and encourage students to extend themselves into the community through our Christian Service Hours Program. This program promotes Christian attitudes toward service in a variety of situations. We make available to the students a variety of possible projects which will enable them to become involved. In addition, they can independently, with the guidance of their religion teacher, choose an appropriate project within our community. The complete objectives and requirements may be found on pgs. 3 and 4 of our student handbook. After completing service hours, students will complete a *Christian Service Hours* form which can be downloaded from the GTACS website.

### **Uniforms**

The wearing of a Catholic School uniform helps students identify with St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Middle School, and reflects the unity we share in our love for Christ. Not only do our students take individual pride in their cleanliness and neatness, they do so reflecting this unity as a community. It is the collective responsibility of all (parents, students, and staff) to ensure the uniform applies to each student. In addition to uniform parameters, **please note that hair is to be clean and neatly groomed, out of the eyes, and (boys) off the collar.** Please help ensure that the uniform is respected and held in the highest regard by reviewing pgs. 16 and 17 in the Student Handbook. Thank you for your support in helping us focus on your child’s academic and spiritual growth.

### **Jean Days**

In remaining consistent within our school system, our students will continue to enjoy Jean Days on the third Friday of the month. Students may choose to wear typical Gladiator Spirit wear attire or a suitable shirt/top of their choice. Please guide your students in wearing appropriate clothing that reflects our Christ-centered environment. If at any time your child’s attire is in question, they will be asked to change into uniform clothing provided in the office. Thank you!

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

Our extra-curricular activities allow your middle school student to expand their individual interests. Some of the extra-curricular activities at SEAS include: Builder’s Club, Choir/Praise Choir, Spelling and National Geography Bees, Odyssey of the Mind, and Math Counts. Athletic opportunities include basketball, football, volleyball, cross-country skiing, cross country running, downhill ski clubs, track, tennis, and wrestling. Please watch for more information in the SEAS Navigator!

*The Difference is Prayer*