

SEAS NAVIGATOR

A PUBLICATION OF ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON MIDDLE SCHOOL

MNSAA SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION 08



Special Interest

- The first day of school will be Tuesday, September 7th. This is a half day, which means that students will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m. TCAPS **does** provide transportation.
- Our Open House and Ice Cream Social is scheduled for Tuesday, August 31st from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Please gather directly in the gymnasium at 6:30 p.m. for a welcome, prayer, and delivery of general school information. All students and parents are welcome and encouraged to attend.
- Our PTC sponsored Parent Coffee is scheduled for Thursday, September 9th following drop-off. Please join fellow parents with coffee and rolls to celebrate the kick-off to an extraordinary school year!

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NEW DISMISSAL TIME: 2:40

From the Desk of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Principal, Lori Phillips

Fall 2010

Dear Parents,

It is with great anticipation and joy that I welcome you to the 2010-11 school year at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. I continue to 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 as 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 be blessed as our students grow in their love, faith and knowledge.

In July, I traveled with three SEAS staff members to attend the Middle School Level Leadership Conference in Williamsburg, VA. It was fabulous! Although we realized we have much to accomplish, we were grateful to gather that the initiatives and direction we have been

moving toward this past year were not only correct and educationally researched-based, they are simply what is *best* for young adolescence. Two of those initiatives involve the implementation of an Advisory program and Teaming at the Middle Level. Both organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships and are vital to our success. 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 may be taxing at times, but our faith and understanding of what they are experiencing will support them through this most impressionable and rewarding time. 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 SEAS. 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. 31st. We will begin at 6:30 p.m. with a brief meeting to deliver general school information and introduce our wonderful staff and new grade level teams.

I pray that you continue to enjoy these final weeks of summer. In turn, I ask you to pray for our entire SEAS staff as we prepare for this upcoming school year. We know that we are nothing without His guidance; therefore, rely heavily upon it!

Thank you for your prayers and partnership.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,
Mrs. Lori Phillips

New Choir Teacher

We are very pleased and excited to welcome Ms. Amy Colligan to our GTACS staff. Amy will be teaching choir in grades 3-12. She will also be the music director of the annual SF musical, "Beauty and the Beast" in February. We fell in love with Amy's energy and pure love for combining her faith and talents. Aside from Jesus and her family, music rules the world in her life and she desires great things for our program. She stated, "I want GTACS to have the very best music/choral program, 2nd only to Interlochen." With the talent of our students and the support of parents and staff, I believe this can become a reality! Amy will also be responsible for planning the music for all school Masses and will run our choir after school 2 days/week. Sign up for choir at the Open House!

Dates to Remember

Mon., 8/23: SEAS School Office Opens

Tues., 8/24: Course Selection Sign-up is due via email

Mon., 8/30 and Fri., 9/3: SEAS School Office Closed

Tues., 8/31: Open House and Ice Cream Social; SEAS Gymnasium @ 6:30 p.m.

Tues., 9/7: First Day of School (1/2 Day)

Wed., 9/8: Washington D.C. 8th Grade Parent/Student Information Meeting; SEAS Library @ 7:00 p.m.

Fri., 9/10: 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.) SEAS students should report directly to the

Parents Volunteers

As always, we are in need of regular parent volunteers to assist during lunch one day per week or 2 times per month. If you are willing/able, please call Erica Bramer at 631.0913 to sign up. Thank you and God bless you!

Lunch Times

6th	12:05-12:35
7th	12:50-1:20
8th	11:20-11:50

Grading Scale

At St. Francis High School, the administration and an Academic Leadership Team, which was comprised of the department heads, made a recommendation to transition to a 10 point grading scale from their current 7 point grading scale. At the May 2010 school board meeting, that recommendation was voted upon and approved. Below are the reasons for the change:

- The majority of colleges and university admission counselors stated that the 7 point scale does not give our students an advantage. It is noted by some schools that our standard of grading is more rigorous, but it is not factored in systematically.
- The rigor of the school is judged by the quality of the curriculum, standardized test scores, and the students' performance once at the college or university. The grading scale is one piece of information but not the most important.
- 10 point scales are not looked down upon by colleges and universities.
- Of the top ten Catholic Schools in the state, as ranked by Michigan Merit Exam results, we are the only school without a 10 point scale.
- The overwhelming majority of high schools use a 10 point scale. All area high schools are on a 10 point scale.
- Most colleges and universities use a 10 point scale.
- The 7 point system may be hampering our local and merit based scholarships as there is no consideration for different scales.

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 & Social Studies
Tracey Tull — Reading & Language Arts

Nicole DeVol — Religion & Math

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 this tender age. 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's. 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!"

Lunch Pricing

Lunch prices for SEAS students are **\$3.50** 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 may obtain their schedules after the Open House Welcome on Tues., Aug. 31st. 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.



St. Elizabeth Ann Seton . . . pray for us!

Father Bill Lipscomb-School Chaplain

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!

Seton Learning Center Betsy Charron will again be supporting our struggling students in Reading and Language Arts. Last year, with the help of our TBA Educational Consultant, Kathy Sinnard, we implemented a solid corrective reading program to assist in our 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 this year to our struggling Math students as well. Students will be closely monitored and this special time will help students with their individual skill deficiencies in a smaller group setting if/when needed.

Enrichment/Exploratory Opportunities-Important Course Selection Information

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 (in the past) had to "choose" one area of interest over the next. At this age, we believe that this practice has been unfair to our students and have come up with a few creative options to help solve this issue and not force our students to choose a path of passion at such a young age. Although we cannot extend our school day for all, we can provide transportation for those that desire additional time/focus in the music department. Transportation will be available for all students wishing to extend their day back to the SF campus. Please know that this will not interfere with athletic practices. All athletic practices will begin at/after 3:35. Students who are not involved in Band/Choir and are participating in a sport will attend study hall until 3:20 if they are on SEAS campus.

During the school day, students will enjoy 35 minutes of "Specials" per day. These specials, called "Rotation Classes" (rotate each quarter), will consist of Art, Computers, Math Technology, and Performing Arts. Band students have two different options. Please preview this section carefully and respond to the **Course Selection Sign-up** that will be sent home via email **next week**. The deadline for sign-up is **Tuesday, August 24th** to allow for scheduling and transportation arrangements. We appreciate your timeliness on this matter and thank you for your understanding.

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| Option 1 | Rotations (art, computers, math technology, performing arts) during the school day 5 days per week |
| Option 2 | Band during the school day 5 days per week |
| Option 3 | Rotations during the school day 3 days per week/Band during the school days on alternate 2 days per week PLUS Band 2-3 days after school, dismissing at 3:30. (Grades/assignments will be adjusted to accommodate individual student schedules) |

Choir and Foreign Language will be more accessible to each interested student this year. Choir will be held 2-3 days per week on alternating band days **AFTER SCHOOL**. Please see pg. 4 for details and our new program offered this year for Spanish and other Foreign Language opportunities (beginning late fall). Sign up for Choir and Foreign Language will be available at our Open House.

Foreign Language

All students will have the opportunity to participate in an exciting Foreign Language program later this fall. As the needs of our students are changing, we want to provide a program that caters to their individual skill capabilities and challenges them appropriately. Many of our incoming 6th graders have participated in 7 years of Spanish class. All 6th graders will be given the opportunity to continue that instruction using Rosetta Stone for the Classroom. If your child signs up to participate in the Spanish program, they will have access to lessons here at school (1-2 days per week) and at home (minimum of at least 2 lessons completed per week). Parents will need to purchase a microphone for home use if you do not currently own one.

7th and 8th Grade students may choose to either participate in Spanish or another Language of their choice. This is a self paced, skill-based curriculum that will give students the necessary exposure to foreign languages. Please note that once a student signs up for a particular language, they cannot change to a different language any time throughout the year. If your child chooses Foreign Language, they will be expected to complete 1-2 lesson(s) here at school and 2 lessons at home. Again, parents will have to purchase a microphone for home use.

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 it is our hope that ALL students attend. 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. We are working diligently to incorporate a service/mission type experience for our traveling students which will only enhance the trip and further open the hearts of our students. A parent/student informational meeting has been set for Wednesday, Sept. 8th to provide more details and offer continued fundraising opportunities. Many of our students raised more than half of their cost over a 5 month period last year. We are grateful for our wonderful fundraising coordinators (Kelly Fitzpatrick and Kelle Krcmarik) who have been working diligently to provide opportunities for our current 8th grade students. If you have questions or ideas, please feel free to contact one of these helpful women!

7th Grade Parent Coordinators are Carol Johnson and Cindy Walerych. We are still in need of 6th Grade parent volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Denise Krueger. The sooner we fundraise, the sooner the trip will be paid!

Shuttle Service-Departure time is 7:25 a.m.

The SEAS/St. Francis Shuttle is now full with a waiting list. Those on the waiting list will only be able to ride in the afternoons if there are seats available. Otherwise, they are guaranteed a seat on a designated IC Shuttle. Lists will be available at the SEAS Open House. Both IC Shuttles are nearly full with just a few seats open. If you signed up for a shuttle and you no longer need your seat, please let Cindy Weber know so it can be made available to another student. Call 995-8425

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, for example school community, parish life and church community, and human services in the greater community. 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.

After completing service hours, students complete a *Christian Service Hours* form which can be downloaded from the GTACS website.

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!

Extracurricular Activities Our extra-curricular activities allow your middle school student to expand in 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!

Hats Off to our SEAS Custodians! When you see our custodians, please thank them! **Mark Anderson** and **Greg Robinson** have worked *extremely* hard this summer and our building shines radiantly as a result! We are so blessed to have employees with servant's hearts. May God bless them for their good work, humility, and their love for Jesus and this school!

The Difference is Prayer