

***MISSION STATEMENT:** Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are dedicated to providing a Catholic education ensuring educational quality for all families willing to enter into a partnership to develop each child to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential.*

Published June 15, 2010
Deadline for submissions to this newsletter is Thursday @ 11:00 a.m.
Please email information for the SF newsletter to Kathy Hunt at khunt@gtacs.org
Please email information for system-wide distribution to Maureen DeYoung at mdeyou@gtacs.org

Christ – Above All Things

Good Parents:

Thank you for allowing us to help educate your sons or daughters.

I end this academic year full of gratitude as there has been much progress at Saint Francis. Attendance at adoration and chapel Masses was at an all time high. The presentations by Jason Evert and Christopher West further assisted our faith growth. Our drama production, band program, and our athletics teams had outstanding years. Teachers continued to deliver high quality instruction that allowed our students to achieve. For example, our focus on ACT paid off as we raised our composite score over last year with significant jumps in math and science. Further, the religion department set goals for the yearly ACRE test which measures knowledge of the Catholic faith. The results showed increased achievement as our average was 10 points above the national average for Catholic schools. For the above we are thankful to you, your children, our teachers, and remain mindful of the goodness of God.

There is one change that we need to communicate. At the May board meeting, the decision was made to change GTACS from a 7 point grading scale to a 10 point grading scale. Below you will find an explanation of the change.

Saint Francis High School and all of GTACS have used a 7 point grading scale for many years.

7 POINT GRADING SCALE

Percentage	Grade
100 - 95	A
94, 93	A-
92, 91	B+
90 – 87	B
86, 85	B-
84, 83	C+

82 - 79	C
78, 77	C-
76, 75	D+
74 - 72	D
71, 70	D-
69 - 0	F

The administration and Academic Leadership Team, which is comprised of the department heads, recommended a transition to a 10 point grading scale effective for the 2010 – 2011 academic year.

10 POINT GRADING SCALE

100 - 93	A
92 - 90	A-
89 - 87	B+
86 – 83	B
82 - 80	B-
79 - 77	C+
76 - 73	C
72 - 70	C-
69 - 67	D+
66 – 63	D
62 – 60	D-
59 – 0	F

Rationale:

This discussion began last school year when Mrs. Maday approached me with the concern that our 7 point scale was decreasing our acceptance rate into colleges and universities and limiting merit-based scholarship opportunities. Research began and our findings are listed below:

- 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.

The argument against:

- Some would argue that the changing of the scale connotes a decrease in the standards of our institution.
- Whatever the scale that is used, the teachers will adjust to their standards; that is, the assignments will be more difficult and or the standard used for grading will get more difficult.

During the time of investigation, I spoke with eight different educational institutions including top universities, colleges, and Catholic high schools about this change. I became convinced of the necessity of changing the scale. The Academic Leadership team voted to recommend the 10 point scale to the School Advisory Board. I also want to thank the parents who did their own research and presented their valuable findings to me.

Since approval, I have had several people ask if the grading scale would be retroactive. The answer is that it will not be retroactive. That is, the new grading scale will begin the next academic year. The decision was made, with input from the faculty that it is unsound to change the standard or scale after grading has taken place. As a teacher grades any given piece of student work, the teacher often has the standard of “A” work in mind and points are frequently awarded accordingly. The transcript will note the two different scales and which years the student had each scale.

The most gratifying part of this investigation was to hear how highly our students and Saint Francis is thought of by admissions counselors. The head of the department of admissions of a major university declared that we are in the top 5% of all high schools. He again was referring to the quality of our curriculum, our standardized test scores, and our students’ performance once at the university.

Peace and summer joy,

Erick Chittle

Need Christian Service Hours?

Volunteers are needed for Saint Francis Vacation Bible School, Tuesday – Friday June 22-25, 9:00-12:30 AM. Help with crafts, snacks bible story, games or crew leaders. If you can help please, call Beth Hicks @ 947-4620 ext. 247 or beth@sfparish.org.

Parking Passes

Seniors can still turn in their parking pass for a \$20 refund to the office and a check will be mailed.

Lights, Camera, Action! Television & Film Production (Taught by Mrs. Coburn) If you are interested in taking this course, please e-mail Kathy Hunt by the end of this week.

Ever wonder how the film industry started? Or how TV Commercials are made? How about what it takes to produce the news, or create a full feature film? Well, here's the class for you. "Lights, Camera, Action!" is a "hands on" course that introduces students to the world of Television & Film Production. Students will have an opportunity to explore many fun aspects of film production, such as Claymation, making Zoetropes, creating Cartoon Cells as well as creating the St. Francis TV News and Events viewed within our school.

Actively enjoy creating story boards, write scripts, work in groups and develop the necessary skills to produce commercials, news stories, short films and various engaging projects. Video Production introduces students to the structure, content, theory and technical aspects of commercial video production, television broadcasting as well as the film industry.

The history of film will be reviewed, from the early beginnings of silent films, into animation production and analysis of the present day computer generated graphic films. Project critiques and Film reviews will enhance each students understanding of film and video production and the time and skills needed to succeed in this ever-expanding industry. Thanks, Debra Anton Coburn