

Happy Friday Everyone!

We have had a crazy week! Who knew March would bring 2 snow days! I hope you all had some quality time together! I was able to rest (as much as possible with a 3yr old and 13yr old) and am finally starting to get over this fabulous cold! Today is St. Patrick's Day! As if you couldn't tell with all the green. The kids were great and our staff half day was devoted to professional development. The teachers had a lovely lunch and then our speaker, STREAM Director Jean Comer, came in to talk about interdisciplinary units (not just lessons). The teachers were all ears and came up with wonderfully creative units that will be implemented this year and some even planned for next year. They had to work in teams to come up with the units - and work they did! I am so proud of them! I cant wait for you to see these implemented in the classroom with the students.

In 2 weeks NYS will start their ELA testing. The tests will be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (28-30). There is so much anxiety and hype around these tests. There are pros and cons. The original idea behind the tests was to be used as a benchmark only so teachers can assess possible strengths and weaknesses, in conjunction with the students work throughout the year. It would allow teacher collaboration, where classrooms that were doing well could share their teacher tools for success, because every class is different. This is how it is used in the Catholic Schools and how we use it here. These tests were never meant to be a force behind "ranking" schools or children for that matter. How can you fairly rank schools or classes that have different communities, services, enrollment, socioeconomic statuses etc.? Its like trying to rank your children. Are there some teachers that don't always teach - yes. Are there some kids that don't do well with tests - yes. Are there some tests that do not adequately show a child's strengths and weaknesses - yes. However, it should not be one test that decides these things. Neither should the grade on these tests be used to state that your child is academically in trouble or to place your child in special classes or to accuse teachers of not doing their job. The tests should be used to collect data and to look at strengths and weaknesses, keeping in mind that the test has questions above their grade level, and has embedded field test questions. It should be used as a benchmark only to inform teaching. I ask you as a parent, please do NOT let your child's score on this test define their ability or the teacher's ability. Your child is so much more than a 1-4 on the NYS test. If you stress about it, work them up over it, or demand perfection, it will effect them. Remind them that no matter what they receive on this test, you are proud of them. Remind them that they need to try their best and show what they know. Remind them that it is only a test - and has no bearing on moving forward or upwards. If you decide to have your child take the test, please make sure that they are prepared just like any other test - a good night's sleep and a good breakfast, as well as some encouraging words. If you decide that you don't want your child taking the exam, please be sure to send in a letter (form letters can be found on line) that states what tests you do not want your child to take and your signature. Please make sure they have a book to read while the rest of the class takes the test. The choice is fully yours as parents. You must weigh the pros and cons for your family. I wanted you to be aware how it is used here - so that there is no confusion with the public districts and what they have to do. Remember that the best picture is the big picture - because it shows the whole child - not just a piece.

Honor Band: Congratulations on our students chosen for the Honor Band. The It is a concert done together with the other area catholic schools. It is at Mt. St. Mary's in Kenmore at 7pm on March 18th. It is a free concert! If you are looking for something to do, go and show some support for our students.

Education Tax Credit: As the NYS Legislature discusses approving a budget, please make sure they know you want Education Tax Credits included in the final budget. I encourage you to click the link provided (<https://www.votervoicenet/BroadcastLinks/-mNBBJZM54SbhVMzhsYrGw>) The suggested email is prewritten and will be sent directly to your specific legislators once you enter your address. The entire process takes about 3 minutes. Thank you for making sure this important request is sent out. Now is the time to put this into action!

5K Update: The 5k meeting has been changed from Monday 3/20 to Thursday 3/23 @ 6:00pm!

Have you met Father Dave Richards?: Father Dave is a priest at Queen of Heaven in West Seneca. I had to pleasure of getting to know him after he had been ordained, while we were both at St. Greg's. He has an uncanny way of connecting with young adults. If you haven't checked out his "IN A WORD" segments on youtube, try now. They are short (like 5 minutes) and to the point. They are great discussion starters too! Check them out!

In a WORD – Prayer with Fr. Dave Richards

<https://youtu.be/UgnWu5nbxqw>

**I believe that is it for now! See everyone on Monday!!**

**Peace,**

**Mrs. P**