



St. Michael Elementary School

New Experiment: The Archdiocese would like longer school days than we currently have in order to meet the minutes of instruction established by the state. Since we can't do that after school due to the dismissals of the three schools within blocks of us, we are asking everyone to be willing to try to get their child to school and in their homeroom by 7:45. We will pray at 7:50 and start school at 8:00. We also need all the time we can get because of all our new courses this year—computers, art, Spanish courses. We would like not to have to take our any of these courses, if at all possible. That is one way you can help us.

August 13, 2008

Dear Families,

Have you spent your weeks with your child(ren) racing through each day, wondering how the summer could have fooled us? In fewer than two weeks, your child will enter the place called "school." There will be a great deal of NEW faces and EXITING learning opportunities. In some cases, students will be able to choose from the new; in other situations, we all will try together to gain confidence.

I am very excited about the teachers and all of my support team who will be sharing their enthusiasm with their children. Please welcome Ms. Katie Fannon who will be the lead teacher in pre-school this year. For those of you who would like to hope for a rebate from the Chicago Public Schools, Ms. Fannon should be able to receive her early childhood certification from the state of Illinois—no small issue. As yet, we are searching for a teacher aide with 30 credits to join Ms. Fannon. We are so happy to have Mrs. Callahan in Kindergarten where she will continue her studies to become an Early Childhood Specialist who will serve some schools in Chicago who need help. Mrs. Arnold in Grade 1 spent the summer running as a programmer of Old Town School of Folk Music. In addition to her certification as a theatre major, she decided to go back and get her elementary license so she could reach more children in her world of theater. Mrs. Graves, a new 2nd grade teacher is from the Inner City Teaching Corps, a well known and prestigious group of men and women who decide to give two years of service in any number of ways. Because her background was in teaching, she will be in love with the children and the way they will learn with her on their side. It is a joy to know that Ms. Schmieder will be returning after teaching 3rd and 4th grade so successfully. It was a great one and so will this year be equally as enjoyable. She will be a great partner to Ms. Graves. The thing I love about Ms. Schmieder is that she always said, "Yes" last year. So, that is a very exciting Prek-Grade 2 level team.

Those of you who know our 3rd grade teacher—Mrs. Stell—who was expecting in August, gave birth to a little girl whom they named Maddy.. She is lovely with red hair. Mrs. Stell will be on Medical Leave until January. I am utterly delighted to let you know that Mrs. Cristina Sanchez will be taking on third grade. We are glad that she was willing to say yes to this opportunity. At the 4th grade level is our dear Sister Jeanette who is our "Go Green" master who sees to it that we save our tin and cardboard boxes used in the classroom as well as all paper used during the day. The students have come to make so many students and adults far more conscious of the world around us and what we must do to save the earth. Mrs. Grankowski will be holding down the fort in Grade 5 again for this year. She attended one of the great seminars at the Museum of Science and Industry and found it to be the catalyst for so many new ideas. Such is the delightful intermediate level.

Academic Excellence in the Catholic Tradition

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<http://www.stmichaelsouthshore.org>



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New to us in the science program in middle school is Ms. Ansted. She is utterly filled with ways to make science a part of our lives—no time to miss a moment of her teaching. She also will be teaching 8th grade American History and Reading in 6th grade. She is just so excited, and so am I. Her mother has taught for 22 years, and this year, they are both teaching from the same text. What great sharing. Ms. Ansted is a hands-on teacher who truly engages her students in some deep and intriguing thinking. One of her colleagues who is a 6th grade homeroom teacher who will teach Grades 6-7 and perhaps some pre-algebra along with 6th and 7th grade Social Studies which she just loves. Hopefully, that will be infectious and she will be preparing a group of scientists to work on the big questions that trouble us in our world today. I know so many of you know Ms. Agnew because she is a faithful computer communicator to the parents of students in her class. She is avid about what she does and exposes her student to challenges well beyond what they are now thinking. This summer I sent her to a World Music Drumming course in San Antonio, Texas where she learned to drum, sing, use movement, play other percussion instruments with an exciting group of educators. We are now the proud owner of about 22 drums—big drums and small drums, utterly beautiful instruments including a number of xylophone. She will teach drumming to 3 classes each quarter. She will also teach the teachers how to teach drums to children of all ages in school. Perhaps you would like to join us sometime. Actually, we will have a little program some evening that will include you in the process of making music. Mr. Glover, our music teacher, will be returning for a day and a half this year and will work jointly with Ms. Agnew. Mrs. Deborah Appiah is a magnificent computer teacher who will create researchers with integrity. Our art, Spanish, and gym teacher will come from the Fran Center soon (we hope). Our long-standing employees—Mrs. Sandoval, Mrs. Lopez, Mrs. Castro, Mrs. Botello, and Mrs. Quinones—continue to say “Yes” to serving St. Michael School. It is very good to have individuals who carry the history of our community.

This year we are going to have **Orientation for Parents** after school gets started. This will give teachers a chance to see what support they would like from you, what great study habits they are gaining, what they will learn in their religion program this year with a brand new book and teachers who will continue to learn as much about our Catholic faith as possible. You will get to see some of the ways we spent our grant money this year. PreK and Kindergarten will be meeting together in Mrs. Callahan’s room in the Annex from 6:30-7:10 on Tuesday, September 2nd. The other levels—Grades 1 and 2, Grades 3,4, and 5 and Grades 6,7, and 8) will be in their classrooms on Wednesday. There will be two sessions that evening that you may attend—6:15-6:55 and 7:00-7:40. Please leave your child(ren) home, if possible, so that you can concentrate on the conversation that will go on.

There will be no hot lunch on Monday, the first week of school, when we dismiss at 12:30. There will be hot lunch on Tuesday and from thereon for returning students who received free or reduced lunch last year. All other students must bring their own lunch or order it. They will be given hot lunch forms on the very first day. The sooner you send them back, the sooner they will be approved.

Oh, no uniforms until I announce the date for wearing them. We expect them to look respectable. Girls—no tight shirts or bare skin, no short shorts for boys and girls both, no jewelry like hoop earrings or acrylic nails, no flip-flops or sandals for safety sake. Thanks for your help.

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