



St. Michael Elementary School

January 26, 2010

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.

--William Arthur Ward

Dear Families,

As we grow closer to Catholic Schools Week, we celebrate YOU for your belief in Catholic Education for your child(ren). Thanks to those of you who were able to take the time to give us some feedback on your child's education here at St. Michael. Several themes came up over and over again. One is best described in the following words:

- **"It is so important to teach them about GOD not only at home but at school through their studies and interaction with other children as well as their teacher's and staff."**
- "I love the fact that they go to Mass during the week and always have God present."
- **"Most important to me...continuing my child's faith in God on a daily basis."**
- "St. Michael reinforces the morals, behavior, integrity, structure and faith in oneself and God that we have instilled in our sons."
- **"Nor only is it important to get a good education, it is also very important to receive a spiritual one as well. We felt that at St. Michael's School she could excel in both."**
- "Learning to keep faith in the Lord will help my child to endure any crisis life dishes out. A Catholic Education reinforces the morals set by parents at home by teaching the love of God and spreading that love to others."

The other theme revolves around new curriculum materials and ways students have been motivated to learn as a result. The following words were particularly delightful.

- **"My child is always telling us about the new things he is learning...from music, gym, reading to Mass. I love the idea of the reading programs and the hands-on Mass. We are very excited about everything."**
- "Pre-Algebra has been extremely helpful for my daughter. During her summer program, she displayed very strong knowledge compared to her other classmates."
- **"A mi me gusta el programa de los tanbores y el marinba y me gusta el programa de coro de campanas."**
- "Everyday math seems to be working for my daughter. The curriculum implements math in everyday situations—ads from newspapers which demonstrate weight, volume, mass—so children can be aware of measurement skills they will need throughout their lives. I like the way they ask children to explain how they solve math problems."
- **"Third grade has been a challenging year for my child. Nonetheless, the third grade curriculum has exposed her to so much that even though she finds it difficult at times, she seems excited about learning (thanks to her teacher, who, by the way, has done a superb job!"**
- "My daughter loves her music class drumming."
- **"My child loves going to centers, and I would enjoy seeing more of those activities in preschool."**
- "Social Studies has made my daughter realize how important the past is and is more interesting to her than in the past."

Monday of next week will be TWIN DAY; however, it is dress down for all—even those who don't have a TWIN.

Academic Excellence in the Catholic Tradition

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Weather Bug School: St. Michael School is soon to become a Weather Bug School through WGN. They will install the Weather Station here and the data we generate will provide WGN meteorologists with data they use on television. We will have access to a piece of software called **Achieve** that will have 250 interactive lessons for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. Our school will personally receive any safety alerts from WGN about the weather. Some of our students will actually appear on television. John Whitenight, the head of the program, will be getting back to me with further details. This is an opportunity to engage students in highly interactive learning that makes a difference in the community.

This is a revised list of extra-curriculars being offered now or soon to start. They include the following:

- Mexican Folkloric Dancing
- Sacred Music Choir
- Xylophone Classes
- Student Government
- Crocheting
- Scrabble
- Brain Games to support Brain Education
- Bead Making
- Science Experiments Club
- Hand Bells
- Pre-Algebra Classes
- Spanish Classes
- Tech Deck Competition
- Art Club

Special thanks to Ms. Schmieder in Grade 2 who wrote a grant that will fund two basketball standards for our playground! The group who will be making this opportunity possible for us also does a great deal of work with Big Shoulders and their efforts to provide playground activities. Hopefully, the weather will be kind to our playground space once they arrive.

Thank you for your candy orders. Fannie May candy bars will be ready to pick up on Monday once you have paid for your order. Money can be sent in on Monday to Mrs. Sandoval, and candy will be ready after school for pick-up. Catalogs for other products you may be interested in selling will be sent out with packets on Tuesday of next week. We will run the sale until February 15th. If you feel, at any time, that you would like more candy, please let us know since we may need to contact our supplier for additional candy bars.

We welcome...Dr. Eileen Quinn-Knight from St. Xavier University who comes monthly to observe our teachers teaching Everyday Math, Middle School Math, and Pre-Algebra. She then coaches teachers in ways to be even more effective and then instructs them in best practices in math teaching after school. This is the second year that Dr. Knight has been serving as a partner in learning for us. She is Professor of Math at St. Xavier and instructs all teachers preparing to graduate from St. Xavier with a teaching degree. .

CONGRATULATIONS TO MS. BRIDGET AGNEW who has been named Educator of the Year by the South Chicago Chamber of Commerce this year. Those of you whose students have been in Ms. Agnew's class would admit that she accepts only the best from her students in middle school writing and literature....and that she has been the pioneer in the changes in music—the drumming and xylophone program, hand bells and sacred choir. We are so blessed by her connections in the community that she passes on to her students' parents. An amazing teacher!

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