



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL'S

BRICK LOT *Bulletin*

February 2023

From the Principal's Office



Welcome to the second half of the 2022-23 school year! It is great to be back in the building with the students and teachers, who have filled the air with their enthusiasm

for learning, kindness, laughter, and school spirit. The first semester ended in a flurry of activity, especially right before Christmas break. Many thanks to everyone who gave of their time, talent, and treasure to help our students and our community be the best we can be, including Bernadette Gibson and Jennifer Smee (HASA Readathon); Ashley Woodford-Lawson and her team of elves (HASA Santa Shop); HASA volunteers (monthly staff lunches); the Socials Committee (Five Days of Christmas for teachers/staff, Ladies Luncheon, grade-level socials, end-of-quarter teacher/staff appreciation); Scott Mason and Jeff Beshore (band/choir performance, Christmas program); Michelle Antochow, Allyn Rose, and Jennifer Bradley (Geography Club); Jennifer Smee, Sally Weakland, and Maggi Blischak (Power of the Pen); Scott Mason (Book Fair); Debra Landis and Megan Sanford (junior high Science Fair); Robert Dedinsky, Debra Landis, and Megan Sanford (MathCounts); Booster Club and coaches (CYO sports); Knights of Columbus/Tim Sullivan (Keep Christ in Christmas contest), and Keith Johnson (sacrament preparation).

Angel Scholarship Fund

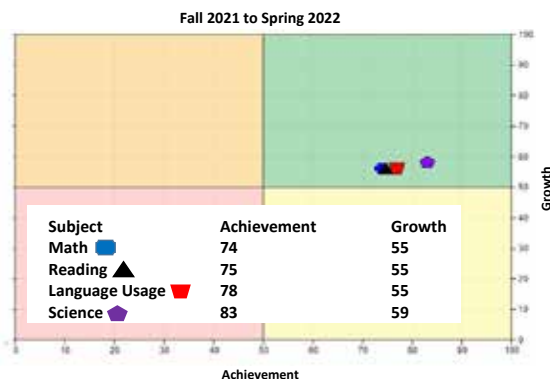
Thank you to everyone who donated to the Angel Scholarship Fund in 2022! This is a new program that allows Ohio taxpayers to claim a tax credit on their state tax by donating to this scholarship fund. As of Dec. 31, \$83,750 in donations to the Angel Scholarship Fund were designated to St. Sebastian Parish School! That is simply fantastic! All of this money

(minus any fees or corrections still being finalized) will be used for scholarships for our families. Already, \$12,200 was designated for this school year, and the rest of the funds are designated for the 2023-24 school year. We hope that this big, positive impact for our families will encourage even more donations for the 2023 tax year! Information on how to apply for an Angel Fund Scholarship will be provided to families soon.

Blue Ribbon School Application

I am happy to report that St. Sebastian Parish School completed and submitted the lengthy application for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program at the end of December. This is the first time we are aware of that our school has achieved test scores high enough to qualify, although we have been just on the cusp for many years. The graphic above depicts these scores. Across all three testing windows (fall, winter, spring) for the 2021-22 school year, our students earned both high growth and high achievement ratings in all subject areas as recorded by the MAP tests (Measures of Academic Progress). Our students scored above 85% of all students taking the test in all four subject areas (math, reading, language, and science). Our school community should be very proud of this!

However, applying for the Blue Ribbon award was no small task, requiring much more than achieving high test scores. The application required a great deal of data collection and input as well as nearly 7,500 words in narrative descriptions! Thank you to all the teachers and staff who worked on the application; it was truly a team effort that resulted in a wonderful showcase of all that is great about St. Sebastian Parish School! I look forward to sharing it with you once we have completed the review process. We should find out in the next month or so if we are chosen to be among the 50 private



schools nationwide to be nominated. If our school is nominated, we would have to wait until September to find out if we are among the winners selected by the U.S. Department of Education.

Weller Update

Weller has progressed nicely over the past year with his training, and after his surgery, he remains a happy and healthy puppy for the most part. Thank you for your continued prayers for him. He really enjoys coming to school to see the students, teachers, and families, and he especially likes morning drop-off, when he eagerly greets the students. Weller has been going to classrooms and performing tricks, and he has been helpful with students who may have been experiencing a difficult time. He has recently successfully passed his AKC Canine Good Citizen class, which concluded with a test of 10 skills. Weller will begin taking his therapy dog assessments in February.



Yours in Christ,

Anthony Rohr
Anthony Rohr
Principal

From the STEM Coordinators

Grades K-3, by Susan Vernon

Fall is the perfect season to capitalize on STEM activities, and the primary grades had some exciting adventures during the second quarter! Karen Swartz's 1st-grade students and their 6th-grade buddies worked together in the Innovation Lab to complete several learning activities with pumpkins. Students learned about a pumpkin's life cycle, and then they measured the height, weight, and circumference of pumpkins, counted seeds, and wrote a list of descriptive adjectives. They also conducted an experiment to see if the pumpkins would sink or float. Finally, they carved the pumpkins to make some great jack-o-lanterns! Michelle Antochow's 3rd-grade students used the writing process — brainstorming, drafting, editing, and publication — for the first time in November. They partnered with a peer to edit the essays they wrote on gratitude. Finally, they added a beautifully colored cover sheet. We might have some future editors in our 3rd grade!



Our annual Literature Day was held just before Thanksgiving break for the primary grades. Teachers selected favorite stories to share and paired them with exciting activities. Students traveled to the different classrooms to listen to amazing stories and collect a bag full of great projects! Just before Christmas, all classes used STEM engineering and design skills to create beautiful gifts for their families. Favorites include glass ornaments with a ribbon inside that was cut to the height of each student, a wooden reindeer ornament painted with fingerprints, glass bulbs of glitter, hand-painted ceramic ornaments, and special picture frames. Finally, all the students used their math skills to carefully calculate the price of purchases at Santa Shop, a service provided by HASA. A BIG thank you to all volunteers who served as personal shoppers for our students. St. Sebastian Parish School has the BEST shopping experience ever!

Grades 4-6, by Jennifer Slegus

The 4th-grade students have been busy with many STEM-based activities during the second quarter. Students read the book "Balloons Over Broadway," which details how inventor Tony Sarg was commissioned to create the first Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloons. The students were presented with the conundrum that there was a shortage of helium, but the parade must still go on! They were tasked with creating not only a balloon, but also a device for holding the balloon "afloat" during the parade. After much planning, collaborating, and creating, the students paraded around the building, showing off their amazing creations! The students also learned about the California Gold Rush in a cross-curricular (social studies and geometry) STEM activity in which they created a map based upon John Sutter's Mill in Sacramento, California, during 1848. While creating the map, they explored



different types of lines and line segments, shapes, area, and perimeter. They also completed an integrated Native American unit, learning about Ohio tribes in social studies class and then reading the book "The Sign of the Beaver." They designed slideshow presentations for the tribe they researched and constructed different projects such as replica artifacts, weapons, and scale model homes.

Our 5th-grade classes are participating in a STEM design challenge through the Ohio Energy Project called the MacGyver Wind Lift Challenge. While studying energy and motion, the students are learning about alternative sources of energy. The students created a wind turbine to capture energy from the wind to lift as many pennies as possible. This quarter, 6th-grade students brought history to life by planning, designing, and creating ancient city states. Students built 3D models of ancient city states out of recyclable materials to include the step pyramids, lush gardens, and the city center. Once their creations were brought to life, students presented their unique designs to the class. The 6th-grade classes also completed "Gizmo" activities (virtual, interactive STEM simulations) to learn about renewable and nonrenewable resources. They also researched food pricing to put together a meal for Thanksgiving with given parameters of food requirements and budget restrictions.

Grades 7-8, by Megan Sanford

The school science fair for grades 7-8 was held Dec. 6 in Z-Hall.

All junior high students created projects to demonstrate their mastery of the scientific method and to further research a topic that interests them. The students presented their projects to parents and a panel of judges.

Many thanks to our volunteer judges, including former St. Sebastian science teacher Betty Indriolo; high school science teachers Robert Engels (STVM), Suzanne Maloney (Walsh), Gregory Pero (Hoban), Kylie Riedel (STVM), and Diane Vrobel (Hoban); and Laura Chapin and Tracey Coates, parents with science backgrounds. All of the students did an outstanding job with this event, and awards were presented to the top three projects in each grade. For the list of winners, please see the Students in the News section of this newsletter. Good luck to all those who will compete in the Regional Science Fair on Feb. 11 at Walsh Jesuit High School!

In 7th-grade classes, students have been learning about the different components of weather (temperature, wind speed/direction, humidity, precipitation, visibility, and air pressure) and how to measure them. Students have also been learning about predictions and how to connect evidence, explanations, and observations to conduct logical and knowledgeable analysis. In science class, 8th-grade students have been studying plate tectonics, seismic activity, and the Earth's geologic time scale. Students were tasked with building towers that could withstand an earthquake to demonstrate their understanding of earthquake-resistant engineering processes. Additionally, students made their own fossils using plaster and clay and practiced carbon dating techniques with M&M candy. Before Christmas break, students learned about chemical reactions and crystals while making snowflakes out of Borax.



Students in the News

Power of the Pen

Congratulations to the following students who participated in the Jan. 7 Power of the Pen district tournament: 7th-graders Sadie Borges, Abigail Coleman, Noelle Keso, Frances Knauer, Christine Sturm-Poth, Henry Thomas; and 8th-graders Lydia Chivers, Marcus Chuba, Louisa Dennée, Charlotte Gilbert, Allison Raita, and Julia Rea. The 7th-grade team won first place, with top-12 individual honors earned by Abigail Coleman (3rd place and Best of Round) and Frances Knauer (8th place). Julia Rea earned 2nd place overall among all 8th-grade competitors. Five of our 7th-graders and three 8th-graders qualified to compete in the regional tournament. Way to go, Terriers!



Read-A-Thon

Thank you to all our teachers and families for your fabulous support of the annual Read-A-Thon! This year's Read-a-Thon was a huge success, raising \$14,729 and logging 131,034 minutes read! The overall school top earners were Frances Knauer and George Knauer, who raised \$575 each, and Grant Coleman, who read 2,200 minutes! The top grade-band earners and readers are as follows: grades K-2: Charlotte Conrad raised \$310, Levi Dunn read 1,132 minutes; grades 3-5: Aubrey Coates and Maxon Girard-Toth each raised \$400, Charlotte Ryan read 2,189 minutes; grades 6-8: Talen Bills raised \$299, Gage Caruthers read 1,250 minutes. These students received individual prizes, and several classrooms earned a PJ party, a movie and popcorn party, a pizza party, or dress-down passes for being the top earning and top reading classes. Special thanks to teacher Jennifer Smee and HASA for all their hard work on this fundraiser!

Junior High Science Fair

Congratulations to the following students who won awards at the school's junior high science fair on Dec. 6. In 7th grade, top awards went to Abigail Coleman (first place, "Hydroponics-Best Growing Medium"), Tyler Considine (second place, "Ice Ice Baby"), and Jordan Large (third place, "Insuline, Food, and Blood Sugar, Oh My"). In the 8th grade, top honors went to Julia Rea (first place, "To Be or Not To Be Organic"), Jane Porter (second place, "Leaven Heaven"), and Isaac Sullivan (third place, "Gone With the Wind").



"Keep Christ in Christmas"

The Knights of Columbus held their annual "Keep Christ in Christmas" poster contest again this year, and a record of 120 posters were submitted for judging. Congratulations to the 2022 winners Angelina Gerbick, Teagan Taffi, and Adeline Trenor.



All Saints Model UN

Congratulations to the St. Sebastian students who are members of the All Saints Model United Nations team that competed at the Henri Pell Junod Jr. Middle School Conference at John Carroll University Dec. 11-12: Abigail Coleman, Hunter Jopperi, John Jopperi, Owen Lawson, Giovanni Nonno, Will Tober, Owen Ziemann, and Peter Zografakis. These students have worked hard since September to study international issues and expand knowledge of political, historical, economic, and sociocultural issues affecting the United Nations member states. The team earned top honors at the conference, and the following students earned awards: Sadie Borges (Superior), Abigail Coleman (Honorable), John Jopperi (Excellent), Will Tober (Superior), Owen Ziemann (Excellent), and Peter Zografakis (Honorable).



Geography Bee

After several weeks of Geography Club meetings, in which students from grades 5-8 studied maps, learned more about the world around them, and played learning games with geography questions, students put their knowledge to the test during a final competition on Dec. 14. The competition for grades 5-6 lasted 14 rounds, with Simon Borges and Ryan Senko going head-to-head for several rounds before Ryan was crowned champion. Hunter Jopperi won the title of Geography Bee Champion for the grades 7-8 group! Congratulations to all!



High School Placement Test Scholarships

Congratulations to all of our 8th-grade students who earned four-year scholarships to one of our local Catholic high schools based on their outstanding scores on the high school placement test. Scholarship awards from St. Vincent-St. Mary High School were earned by Louisa Dennée, Giovanni Nonno, Will Tober, Julia Rea, and Owen Ziemann. Out of approximately 260 students who took the test at STVM, Julia was among the top five high scorers! Scholarships from Walsh Jesuit High School were earned by Louisa Dennée and Julia Rea. Earning scholarships from Archbishop Hoban High School are Giovanni Nonno, Julia Rea, William Tober, and Owen Ziemann.

News and Notes

Student Council Canned Food Drive and Toy Drive

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Thanksgiving Food Drive to benefit the Good Samaritan Hunger Center. The donations collected provided over 650 items for those in need. Many thanks also for the donations to the Toy Drive to benefit Children Services and the Ronald McDonald House by providing Christmas gifts for local children. Thank you to our Student Council members for coordinating these two great service projects!



Five Days of Christmas

The Socials Committee spoiled the faculty and staff again this Christmas season with the "Five Days of Christmas." Each day faculty and staff were treated to something special, including beautiful handmade cookies, Target gift cards festively displayed in red stockings on a Christmas tree, a delicious lunch catered by Hamad's on Main, baskets of snacks galore, and coffee! On the last day of the week, members of the Socials Committee visited each faculty and staff member to give them a gift of appreciation! Thank you to the Socials Committee for organizing this special week for the faculty and staff and for always working to show our faculty and staff how much they are appreciated!



Santa Shop

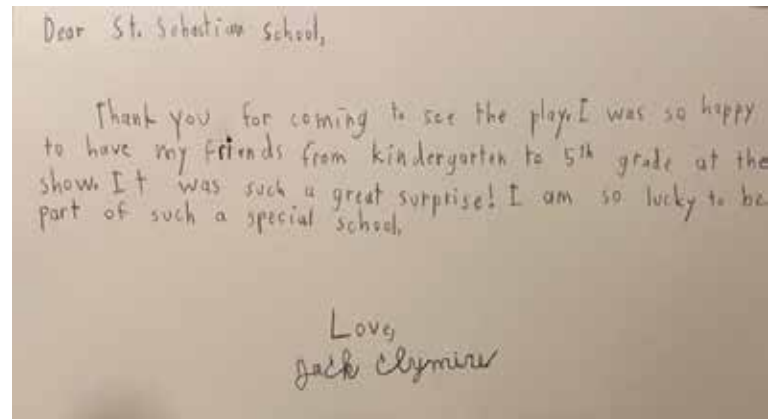
Santa Shop was once again a huge success! The students had a wonderful time shopping for their loved ones and getting into the Christmas spirit. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped students choose and wrap the perfect gift. Thank you to HASA and especially Ashley Woodford-Lawson for all your hard work on Santa Shop!

Zwisler Hall Project

Work continues on the Zwisler Hall project to overhaul the audio and lighting systems. The main audio system is installed and fully operational. All the stage lighting has been replaced. In fact, all the lighting has been replaced except six overhead lights that will soon have new LED lights that allow for varying colors. A new speaker unit was installed above the stage in the large circular area that used to house the stained glass rose window (the window was moved in 1999 when Z-Hall was renovated). Kudos to facilities manager Mike Zimmerman for his expert work to enlarge the circle and reupholster it! The enlarged circle now also holds speakers for the new schoolwide PA system, which solved both an aesthetic and construction issue! Major funding for the audio-visual updates was provided by proceeds from the paddle raise at the 2022 St. Sebastian Spectacular, while the new PA system is being paid for by a grant the school received last year. We look forward to showing off the renovated space during several Catholic Schools Week events, including Open House, the Spelling Bee, Pastries with Parents, and Terrier Trivia!

"Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells!"

In December, our K-5th-grade students went to the Magical Theatre Company in Barberton to see the play "Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells!" Congratulations to 5th-grade student Jack Clymire, who delivered a great performance in the role of Herb. It was Jack's first time acting on stage, and he was thrilled to have his teachers, Principal Rohr, and more than half of the school show up to support him! The whole Clymire family is grateful for the outpouring of support from the school, so Jack made sure to write a personal thank-you note to the whole school.



A Spectacular Evening in Paris: Feb. 11

A Spectacular Evening in Paris is just around the corner! Please join in our school's largest annual fundraising event on Feb. 11! You will be treated to a fantastic, French-inspired sit-down dinner, catered by the phenomenal Rafael Vaccaro of Vaccaro's Trattoria. This year's guests have three great choices for their main course: beef bourguignon, salmon velouté, or eggplant timbale. In addition to a delicious meal, guests will enjoy live music, an open bar, a signature cocktail, fabulous silent and live auction items, and a wonderful evening with friends in support of our school!

As in past years, the event will raise money for tuition reduction for all our students as well as for investments in technology and in our school's endowment. This year's paddle raise is dedicated to funding updates to our school library, with new tables and

chairs, new storage, improved teacher space, and a new smart board/screen for better presentations. This will create a collaborative space where every student, from preschool to junior high, can learn and explore.



"A SPECTACULAR EVENING IN PARIS" HIGHLIGHTS

TUITION RAFFLE: **Three lucky families** will win tuition credits for the 2023-24 year (1 full-tuition prize, valued at \$4,600 and 2 half tuition prizes, valued at \$2,300).

BOURBON BASKET RAFFLE: Don't miss your chance to win a basket overflowing with premium, hard-to-get bourbons.

SILENT AUCTION: Many fun and unique items will be up for bid, including one-of-a-kind classroom art projects that parent Katie Pirie has coordinated.

LIVE AUCTION: The live auction will include fabulous vacation homes, cherished priest dinners, coveted travel packages, exclusive front-row pews, cool electric bikes, full orthodontic treatment, and a few other fantastic surprises!

This year there is a new twist on the Spectacular Tuition Raffle, with one winner receiving credit toward full tuition next year, and two winners receiving half tuition. Winners do not need to be in attendance, so whether or not you are able to come to the event, make sure to purchase some raffle tickets! Back by popular demand is the Bourbon Basket Raffle. This bourbon basket is stocked to the brim with unique and hard-to-find bourbons, all displayed in a half barrel that will also go home with the lucky winner!

The silent auction is also brimming with good things, including great packages for fabulous family fun, dinners on the go, fine dining, exciting arts experiences, super sports tickets, lovely décor, school spirit swag, and even the opportunity for your child to spend the afternoon with everyone's favorite member of the St. Sebastian community, Mr. Rohr's dog Weller!

Co-Chairs Erica Gerstenmaier and Colleen Tate have planned a wonderful evening with the help of many, and they are excited to join you at this event in supporting our beloved school. This year marks the 19th year of the school's largest annual fundraiser. It's not too late to be a part of Spectacular! Tickets may still be purchased online. And, if you are interested in making a donation, becoming a sponsor, or volunteering, please contact Erica at egerstenmaier@gmail.com or Colleen at crtate4512@gmail.com. Your support is truly appreciated!

Information is also available on the school website at www.stsebastian.org/school/st-sebastian-spectacular.

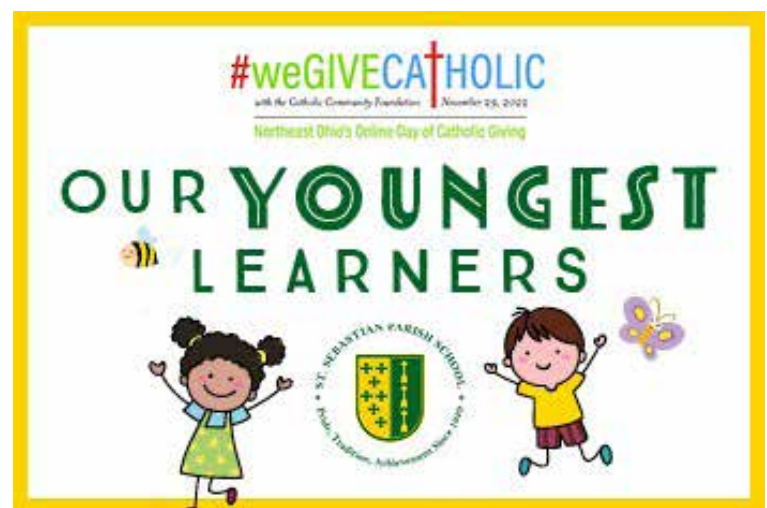
#weGiveCatholic 2022

Over \$13,000 Raised!

What a fantastic community we have at St. Sebastian Parish School! Thanks to your support, the 2022 #weGive Catholic effort raised \$13,076 for the replacement of the activity tables and chairs in the kindergarten and preschool classrooms. THANK YOU!

Change Bandits Bring In Over \$2,200

This year, in addition to the online giving campaign, the school held a "Change Bandit" competition, which yielded over \$2,200 in change (and bills)! Thank you to everyone who emptied out their piggy banks and searched their couch cushions! Congratulations to the preschool classes, which brought in the most change and were rewarded with doughnuts and cider.



Catholic Schools Week 2023

SAT.-SUN. JAN 28-29 CELEBRATING OUR PARISH

- **All Weekend Masses** will pray for students, families, & staff
- **9 a.m. Mass** will feature a special Family Blessing by Fr. Valencheck, families may go from Mass right to Open House
- **Open House, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** come visit your teachers and classrooms.

MON., JAN. 30 CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY

- **St. Sebastian Spirit Day** — St. Sebastian/Terrier tops with uniform bottoms and shoes.
- **Akron Snow Angels** collection begins, runs Jan. 30-Feb. 3.
- **Camp Damascus** morning worship sessions
- **Living Rosary** in church, 1:45 p.m.

TUES., JAN. 31 CELEBRATING OUR STUDENTS

- **Crazy Sock and Hat Day** (wear with school uniform)
- **Pastries with Parents** — Come to Z-Hall for doughnuts, sponsored by the Foundation, beginning at 7:30 a.m.
- **Student Council Attends CSW Mass** with Bishop Malesic at St. John's Cathedral at 10 a.m.



WEDS., FEB. 1 CELEBRATING TEACHERS, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS

- **Wacky Wednesday** — dress down in mismatched clothes (school appropriate, tennis shoes OK, no Crocs/sandals).
- **HASA Teacher Appreciation Lunch**
- **Grade-Level Buddy Activities**

THURS., FEB. 2 CELEBRATING OUR FAITH AND FAMILIES

- **Dress-Up for God Day** — wear your Sunday BEST! (No jeans or tennis shoes.)
- **School Mass**, 9:30 a.m.
- **Spelling Bee** in Z-Hall — grades 1-3 at 8:10 a.m.; 4-6 at 10:30 a.m., 7-8 at 12:30 p.m., families are welcome to attend.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3 STUDENT SPOTLIGHT DAY

- **Dress Down Day** for Everyone!
- **Principal Treat** for Students
- **Terrier Trivia** — Grade groupings of 1-3, 4-6, 7-8 in Z-Hall at 1 p.m., families are welcome to attend.

SAT.-SUN, FEB. 4-5 CELEBRATE FAMILIES

- **Feb. 4: 50th International Festival:** Zwisler Hall, 5-9 pm.
- **Feb. 4-5: "Church of the Home"** — share quality time together to celebrate the unique gifts of each family member.

SCHOOL CALENDAR AND IMPORTANT DATES

SAVE THE DATE

- First Communion Retreat Day ~ April 1
- Easter Break ~ April 7-14
- Father/Daughter Dance ~ April 22
- 8th-Grade Trip ~ May 3-5
- First Communion ~ May 6
- May Crowning Mass ~ May 11
- Pass It On Mass ~ May 25
- Last Day of Preschool ~ May 26
- No School, Memorial Day ~ May 29
- 8th Grade Last Day/Clap Out ~ May 31
- Last All-School Mass ~ June 1
- Last Day of School/Graduation ~ June 1
- Camp Invention ~ June 5-9
- Drama Camp ~ June 12-16
- Vacation Bible School ~ June 26-30

FEBRUARY

Catholic Schools Week	January 29-February 4
International Festival	February 4 (Saturday), 5-9 p.m.
Early Dismissal — Teacher Professional Development (no aftercare)	February 9 (Thursday), 1 p.m.
St. Sebastian Spectacular	February 11 (Saturday), 6:30-10 p.m.
Parent/Teacher Conferences	February 14, 16 (Tuesday, Thursday)
No School, Teacher Professional Day	February 17 (Friday)
No School, Presidents Day	February 20 (Monday)
Ash Wednesday Mass	February 22 (Wednesday)
Confirmation Practice	February 27 (Monday), 7-8 p.m.

MARCH

8th-Grade Confirmation	March 3 (Friday), 7 p.m.
Spring Music Program	March 9 (Thursday)
No School, Teacher Professional Day	March 10 (Friday)
HASA Meeting @Byrider Hall	March 16 (Thursday), 3 p.m.
End of Third Quarter	March 23 (Thursday)
No School, Teacher Professional Day	March 24 (Friday)
Foundation Scholarship Mass	March 30 (Thursday)
First Communion Meeting (parents & students)	March 27 (Monday), 7-8 p.m.
Kindergarten Screening	March 27-28 (Monday, Tuesday)

Questions or Suggestions?

Please email Anne Dennee, newsletter editor, at Anne@DenneeFamily.com