



Incarnation Catholic School

June 20, 2010

Dear Incarnation Catholic School Community,

I hope this correspondence finds you doing well and thoroughly enjoying summer vacation. Happy Father's Day to all ICS Dads as well as fathers everywhere. I pray that this is a day of blessing for you and your families. May all dads use our Heavenly Father as their model, guide, and inspiration as they seek to live out this incredibly important vocation.

I write to you today to update you on some of our progress so far this summer.

ENROLLMENT

Despite being a bit behind where we were at this point last year, enrollment forecasts for the 2010 – 2011 school year are only a bit below where we finished the 09 – 10 campaign. While many circumstances factor into this drop in enrollment, we believe that this will only be a one year dip. For those of you who attended Mass at Incarnation this past weekend you would have had the opportunity to hear me speak about our school. I have also started a blog in an attempt to allow the community to "get to know me" before I officially take over as Principal. I encourage you to check it out, become a follower, and forward it to your friends and family: <http://icscatholicedu.blogspot.com/>. I also hope to contact those families who have not yet re-registered in an attempt to sway and accelerate their decisions. I pray that these initiatives will have a positive impact on next year's enrollment.

Incarnation Catholic School is a great school and I hope to emphasize its strengths while working to improve those areas in need of some attention. This spirit of continuous improvement will allow us to excel in all that we do. This, in turn, will attract more students.

BUDGET/STAFFING

With a drop in enrollment comes a concurrent drop in revenue. Therefore, budgeting for the 2010 – 2011 school year has presented some challenges. Of course, the quality of education given to your sons and daughters will be maintained (and hopefully improved throughout the year). While all teachers' contracts will be honored, we are not in a financial position to retain all of our support staff from this previous year. Furthermore, even with last year's enrollment, Florida Catholic Conference standards would not require that we have any full- or even part-time teacher assistants. Therefore, I was forced to make some difficult decisions in retention of staff. Unfortunately, we will only be able to keep three part-time assistants: Mrs. Whipple, Mrs. Coulman, and Mrs. McMahon. For next year they will help to assist grade levels (Primary, Middle and Junior High) instead of individual classes. For lessons in our younger grades that would necessitate another adult, teachers will collaborate with their grade level partner. This cooperative opportunity will have a synergistic effect. Not only will teachers put their minds together to design and execute lessons, they will gain a deeper respect and appreciation for the work and expertise of their colleague. A finalized schedule for our three part-time assistants has yet to be completed, but we will be sure to account for the needs of the various grade levels as we strive for an efficient use of our personnel.

I thank those many teacher-assistants who will not be returning next year for their many years of dedicated service to ICS. They were extremely gracious in accepting this unfortunate news and some even offered their services on a volunteer basis. I hope that it will only be a short time before we need them back to assist the classes at our school. Should we have a drastic increase in enrollment over the summer we would look to fill the positions with those staff members we were not able to retain.

In some other news, Mrs. Claudia Dyer has decided not to return to ICS in the fall. We thank Mrs. Dyer for her faithful work at ICS and we wish her the best of luck in the future. Luckily, I was able to replace Mrs. Dyer with Mrs. Stacy Kynes. Mrs. Kynes comes to us having taught Junior High math at Christ the King in the late 90's and early the 2000's. She has a master's degree in accounting and will finish coursework in education this summer at USF. She is also a Salesian cooperator (a lay person who has dedicated his/her life to following the charism of St. John Bosco) and has sponsored a math club at CKS the past two years for Junior High students. In addition to teaching in our ICS Junior High math department, Mrs. Kynes will also teach 2 sections of 6th grade religion. I am confident that her energy and enthusiasm will be a great addition to our faculty.

I also welcome Mrs. Rhonda Carrier to our faculty as our new technology teacher. Mrs. Carrier brings over 30 years of teaching experience to our school with about 20 of those years being spent as a teacher of technology. She has taught in both the United States and overseas, has an extensive knowledge of both integrating technology into the classroom and curriculum mapping/unit planning, and has a master's degree in science. I look forward to working with Mrs. Carrier and to tapping into her expertise as Incarnation Catholic School formulates a vision for technology for next school year and beyond.

I have yet to hire a music teacher for next year although I have been busy conducting interviews. I will continue to interview candidates until I feel that I've found the right fit.

We are also in need of an extended day coordinator for the upcoming year. Please spread this word and forward any potential leads you may have (for this or music). Again, I will interview until the right person comes to us.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Dr. Martin Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, argues that the main difference between optimists and pessimists is how they explain setbacks to themselves. Optimists see the setbacks as temporary, limited in effect, and have a clear understanding of their responsibility for or control over those setbacks. Pessimists, on the other hand, consider the setback to be permanent, far reaching, and entirely their own fault. The setback for the pessimist is debilitating; for the optimist it is merely a bump in the road.

Furthermore, Dr. Seligman concludes that optimistic people are more successful than pessimists. This, in turn, leads to either greater optimism (and success) or pessimism (and failure).

With these concepts in mind, I am asking all of us to become optimists. Whichever path we choose, optimism or pessimism, will ultimately become our reality. Therefore, we must choose wisely. We must choose to act instead of react. We must choose to become problem-solvers instead of problem-spotters. We must choose to become up-standers instead of by-standers. We must choose to achieve excellence instead of just accepting mediocrity.

I know which path I will choose; I invite you to travel along with this path with me.

I once again thank you for this opportunity to be your Principal. I truly look forward to journeying with you, your children, and our teachers this fall and beyond.

In Christ,

Mr. Michael Zelenka

*Inspiring life-long learners,
Challenging each individual to develop spiritually,
Striving to serve each other and the community as we prepare students for the future.*

www.icstampa.org/

5111 Webb Rd. * Tampa, FL 33615 * Tel: 813.884.4502 5111 * Fax: 813.885.3734