



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY

WILLIAM L. KINDLER, PH.D – HEAD OF SCHOOL

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Dear Parents – Grades 4,5,6:

This letter focuses on the St. Edmund's Academy 4-6 grades mathematics program for the 2008-2009 school year. I begin with specifics and close with comments regarding mathematics teaching and learning opportunities we are ready to include as students demonstrate readiness.

Mathematics Standards are the foundation of the program: United States, Pennsylvania, and independent school standards guide the scope and sequence of the program. The questions guiding the program:

1. Are we preparing our students mathematically to enter high school courses appropriate to their readiness to perform successfully regardless of the system they enter (independent, public, parochial, home schooling, and cyber-schooling)?
2. Are we providing students with learning opportunities appropriate to their mathematics skills and developmental understanding that actively engage their learning while sustaining their enthusiasm about mathematics of the 21st century?
3. Are practical, classroom-tested strategies for organizing, implementing, and managing guided math groups implemented and reviewed regularly?
4. Does the assessment process give clear, concise, complete, and accurate information on each student that assists with teaching direction and supplemental support where indicated?

TEACHERS

Mr. Chad Erbrecht teaches all 4th and 5th grade students and one section of 6th grade and is St. Edmund's Academy's new Mathematics Coordinator. Mr. Bob Tucek teaches the second 6th grade section as well as all mathematics courses in 7th and 8th grades.

STUDENT CLASS PLACEMENT

To start the 2008-2009 school year there are two sections for each grade. Information used to place students:

1. Previous grade's report card information
2. Teacher recommendation
3. Data from the 2007-2008 school year ERB CPT4 test (Quantitative Reasoning and Mathematics Skills)

The integration of the information from these three sources produced the initial class lists. High consistency among the three indicators exists. Mr. Erbrecht, the teachers consulted, and I have greater

confidence in each student's placement based on the high correlation among the three information indicators.

In addition to the above, students in these grades are taking the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test - Eighth Edition (OLSAT) today, Thursday, September 4. Mr. Erbrecht is administering the test during the mathematics class. The OLSAT is a highly respected and used test to measure abstract thinking and reasoning ability. It assesses a student's ability to cope with school learning tasks, to suggest her/his possible placement for school learning functions, and to evaluate her/his achievement in relation to the talents they bring to the school learning situation. The OLSAT data will be the fourth source integrated to finalize the class placements.

We know that to learn new things, students must be able to perceive accurately, to recognize and recall what has been perceived, to think logically, to understand relationships, to abstract from a set of particulars, and to apply generalizations to new and different contexts. Therefore, this year a mathematics mastery profile will accompany the student's trimester report card beginning with the second trimester. The profile provides essential information on the level of skill mastery at the close of the second and third trimester. The data highlights the student's mastery level in mathematics concepts, operations, and usage, and secondly the degree of readiness and consistency the student demonstrates in abstract thinking and reasoning ability when applying the concepts and operations.

1. Beginning mastery – the student is beginning to demonstrate basic understanding of the concepts, operations, and usage being taught. Performance indicators that learning is taking place is based on completed homework, class participation, and quiz/test performance.
2. Moderate mastery - the student demonstrates "ownership" in concepts and operations, but remains inconsistent in usage and application.
3. Mastery – the student consistently performs accurately and is able to use the learned skills in extended opportunities (enrichment).

TEACHING MATERIALS

The Mathematics series – Addison Wesley will continue as the base text. Numerous supplemental materials will be implemented as mastery assessment guides. This is the last year for the present text series. Numerous mathematics series are being reviewed, but seasoned mathematics educators and researchers recognize the importance of exposing today's student to multiple learning modalities and approaches. St. Edmund's Academy endorses this position and will act accordingly.

COMMENTS

When searching for effective instructional practices in mathematics, all of us who work with students clearly recognize that one size does not fit all. Meeting the diverse needs of all our students is a major challenge. This is also true with this letter to you. Some will shake heads wondering why I included so much educational "jargon," while others may be disappointed that you did not hear all that you had hoped to hear. I recognize both positions and those in between. This is an earnest work in progress. I feel that the addition of Mr. Chad Erbrecht and his expertise is a major step that needed to happen. Yet, Mr. Erbrecht is new to St. Edmund's Academy and needs time to establish a routine in our community. If you have questions regarding the content of this letter, please address them to ME, not to Mr. Erbrecht. If your questions are class related to assignments, etc., please communicate directly with him.

Additional communication will be provided, as the program unfolds. We remain committed to doing the best for our students, which you and we want and you expect. Thank you for your partnership --- sustained on mutual respect, mutual confidence, and mutual trust.

Bill Kindler