



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY
WILLIAM L. KINDLER, PH.D – HEAD OF SCHOOL

KEEPING IN TOUCH

August 14, 2008

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Edmund's Academy's 61st year of offering quality educational programs to the students enrolled. I extend a personal greeting to the many new families who have joined the SEA community. We are gratified that you selected our School and professional team as your new partners at this optimal learning time in your child's young life.

Earlier this week, you should have received a mailing from Susan Miller, Associate Head of School, providing you with essential information and instructions necessary for a smooth opening of the new school year. Please read the content, keep it available for further reference, and call the SEA office for clarification on any item. The first day of school on Tuesday, September 2nd will open with an expected level of operation efficiency if all of us follow the guidelines and directions provided.

Now, I am pleased to highlight major changes in place for enhancing our curriculum as we continue to practice the SEA mission, its Core Values, and our commitment to preparing students for their future not our past. As many of these changes affect specific grade levels as well as several of our nine education programs, I will place additional information on the website in the next three weeks. We will let you know by e-mail the posting topic. This approach keeps my letter at a reasonable reading length yet provides opportunity for you to receive extended information.

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES (the parent handbook)

This publication underwent a complete review resulting in numerous revisions of out-dated and eliminated items. The handbook will be sent home with students the first week of school. Please read its content carefully and thoroughly as it truly serves as the guiding authority for both the Home and the School. The major section revised is titled,

Code of Conduct

St. Edmund's Academy's Core Values continue to be at the heart of the institution. Living the Core Values daily by all members of the school community enables each of us to benefit to the fullest the marvelous learning opportunities provided. The Code of Conduct clarifies the support for the Core Values on a day-by-day basis by placing emphasis on the expectations of all members of the

St. Edmund's Academy community. The Information and Guidelines Handbook describes the positive approach to assisting students and other members of our community relate to each other in a positive, constructive manner. These expectations are summarized as follows:

1. All students are capable of behaving appropriately.
2. Misbehavior is a matter of choice.
3. A student will accept responsibility for his/her actions.
4. Teachers have a right to teach without disruption.
5. Students have a right and responsibility to learn.
6. Respect must be shown at all times.

DIVISION ORGANIZATION

The Lower School and Upper School identifications remain for marketing and management purposes. However, the nine programs in our curriculum are now separated into three divisions to better focus on the cognitive, social, self-identity, physical age, and development readiness of our students. Recent child development studies clearly indicate the importance of educators improving their understanding of and programming for changes taking place in these early years. We are poised through our professional development efforts and expanded resources to first identify a child and then make appropriate learning readiness adjustments as indicated.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DIVISION

The Early Childhood Division comprises the PreKindergarten and Kindergarten programs. The designation of the division status recognizes the increasing importance of understanding the needs of young children as they enter formal schooling, and the commitment of the School to meet these needs at the highest level of quality learning opportunities and support services. Three specifics:

1. A third room has been added to the PreKindergarten facilities. The plans for its use are exciting as the teachers are now able to offer additional experiences not possible with the previous limited facilities.
2. In addition, our two full time Prekindergarten teachers visited a Preschool School in Philadelphia for two days last spring to observe their program and to exchange ideas with their peers. Both Preschools will continue to benefit from this form of ongoing sharing.
3. All four full time Kindergarten teachers attended a weeklong Kindergarten conference in July. Being able to participate in workshops and presentations with colleagues at the time they are offered and then to timely engage in follow-up conversations can only benefit the Kindergarten program and children.

PRIMARY DIVISION

Grades 1 through 4 comprise this division. Last school year a complete review of the basic programs was completed under the administrative supervision of the Associate Head of School. Improved clarity and adjustments in the reading, writing, language arts, and mathematics programs will enable teachers to better assess a student's mastery level in each of the fundamental skill sets. Changes in teaching assignments and additional classroom resources further enhance successful learning.

MIDDLE DIVISION

Grades 5 through 8 comprise this division. In preparation for determining changes that best prepare students to enter high school, I spent quality time last fall observing classes and meeting with administrators and educators in the eight schools primarily receiving our graduates ---four independent, two public, and two parochial. I was extremely pleased to learn of the high rating given our graduates for academic readiness, being enthusiastic learners, and relating to others as solid citizens. All schools eagerly welcome a St. Edmunds's Academy graduate. Yet, I also discovered that some of our programs were not keeping pace with changes taking place at the next level. This awareness has resulted in the following changes.

1. A new position titled; **High School Placement Counselor** has been added. The primary purposes are to remain in communication with the high school admission departments on admission guidelines and course opportunities and requirements, and to assist families complete admission procedures for a smooth entry at the secondary level.
2. A student's profile folder in mathematics for students in grades four through six enables us to better understand each student's progress and make program adjustments as indicated. In addition to the information communicated in the regular trimester report card, the profile folder will contain essential data in three performance areas:
 - a. Mastery level assessment in skill sets (concepts, operations, application).
 - b. Reasoning and analytical development level.
 - c. Learning style preferences.

The profile will more clearly define what mathematics skills a student has mastered that can be consistently call upon along with a better understanding of his/her reasoning development and ability to engage in today's mathematics usage. The employment of a highly accomplished, formally trained mathematics teacher provides us with the professional readiness to launch this new profile approach. He will teach mathematics to all fourth and fifth grade students and one section of sixth grade students. He will also work closely with me in coordinating mathematics throughout all three divisions.

COMPUTER EDUCATION

A full review of our computer offerings has taken place. Comparisons with other programs has also influenced a gradual revision in our program. I say gradual because the first major need identified was to change the PC lab, which really restricted the learning space. The new PC lab is located where the

Mac lab was housed. A report on the specifics of program and resource adjustments will appear on the website. Outstanding programs available through CMU, UP, and other institutions will be implemented throughout the year as resource support is in place.

FINAL REMARKS

Recently, I journeyed throughout our facilities with Don Hibar, Maintenance Manager, to see firsthand the accomplishments of our excellent facilities team so far this summer, and what remained to be completed. As of last Friday, the **TO DO** list for the summer numbered 327 items. I am confident all will be finished and that our building and campus will “*sparkle*” for the opening day. In addition, I am thrilled with the new teachers and staff who along with those returning are enthusiastically ready to greet students and families as we join in launching an outstanding year of learning and teaching.

Again, remember that numerous special “Keeping In Touch” reports will be placed on the SEA website over the next few weeks. Each will discuss more completely the major changes highlighted in this letter. Other reports will introduce our new faculty and staff, and give further information to other adjustments for the 2008-2009 school year. Enclosed is a copy of the St. Edmund’s Academy Organizational Chart for the 2008-2009 school year.

We enter the 61st year filled with enthusiasm and commitment to strengthen the home-school partnership, which can only happen when mutual respect, mutual confidence, and mutual trust is shown by our words and actions. A young student came in to say HI last week, and said, “**Dr. Kindler we are going to rock this year.**” My response with a high five, **WE SURE ARE!**

Yours in Peace and Gratitude,

William L. Kindler, Ph.D.
Head of School

