



ST. EDMUND'S ACADEMY

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

KEEPING IN TOUCH

June 11, 2010

Dear Parents,

St. Edmund's Academy has officially closed its 62nd year of providing its education programs to 288 students. This number of students is the highest in 26 years. The year has been completed with numerous student and curriculum accomplishments, and a number of needs have been identified that require earnest attention before the opening of the 2010-2011 school year on August 31, 2010.

First, I want to thank the 140 parents who completed the Communication Survey in May. The Communication Task Force will meet in June to discuss the results. Each member has received the detailed data. You will receive a communication this summer on what you told us, and where additional improvements will be made entering the new school year. Members of the Task Force are: Jennifer Muse, Pippa Robinson, Sarah Drake, Amy Mullins, Lucy King, Beth Harbist, Susan Miller, and Bill Kindler. I am very appreciative of the time, effort, and intensive attention this group provided beginning last summer and continuing throughout the year. The team listened to past concerns and suggestions, implemented several changes, monitored informal responses throughout the year, and designed the survey for the formal assessment.

St. Edmund's Academy is very busy this summer. We are intensely involved with eleven major initiatives to strengthen the Institution, its Missions, Core Values, and programs. The life of SEA is always "a work in progress" and in keeping it fine-tuned with all of the internal and external forces impacting its balance, we must keep vigil and apply resources wherever and whenever needed. The most important focus of our summer effort is in the area of Social Health. Following this letter is a special communication on the six Social Health Initiatives receiving comprehensive attention this summer. Please read carefully. We have already been in communication with many community members regarding these initiatives, which are the outcome of a two-year study and numerous planning sessions. You will receive updates during the summer on these and all other initiatives.

Other major initiatives well underway include:

- a full review of academic awards and recognitions,
- a full review of graduation protocols and procedures,
- official implementation of the employee Performance Assessment Program (PAP),
- analysis of the NAIS Faculty and Staff Satisfaction Survey conducted in March,
- the launching of the two year St. Edmund's Academy Accreditation Self-Study for the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS) and the Middle States Association of Elementary Schools (MSA) in preparation for the 2012 full-scale evaluation by both accrediting organizations.

Also, there are many additional routine projects in all departments receiving full attention to sustain and improve where needed the normal operations and integrity of St. Edmund's Academy. Thank you for your continuing partnership and support. We need it more than ever. Enjoy a wonderful summer.

Sincerely,

William Kindler

St. Edmund's Academy
Social Health Curriculum

Initiatives for the 2010-2011 School Year

In all of our publications, throughout our admission visits and tours, as an essential component of weekly Chapel through the Chapel Talk, the Commendation and Lead Student recognitions, and in the daily implementation of the curriculum, we speak on the importance of living the Core Values. We say, "At the heart of the school lie six core values. These values flow from our mission and guide all that happens here. Character formation and intellectual preparation are woven into the experience of the students on a daily basis and these core values serve to remind **all members of the community of the expectations that hold for all.**"

Throughout the past two years, there have been an increasing number of issues, incidents, and observations on the part of many in our community (child and adult) that indicate that the actual teaching, learning, and practice of the Core Values daily is diminishing as the "sparkling" component of that which truly makes St. Edmund's Academy so special. Following numerous discussions and assessments with many constituents individually, in small groups, and in class level conversations, it is timely and necessary to restore the shine and return the credibility to this most important anchor of St. Edmund's Academy ---the Core Values.

These initiatives have been carefully designed to provide opportunity for all members of the community to be reminded of and to be better models of the values and expectations for common civility that is essential to understanding and living daily the Core Values.

- A. Adopt a bullying policy that supports the Mission and Core Values of St. Edmund's Academy. The policy will be guided by the Pennsylvania regulations on bullying, NAIS and PAIS standards, and well-recognized anti-bullying programs. The policy will be monitored consistently using a specific code of conduct process for each of the three divisions; Early Childhood (PreK I, PreK II, K), Primary (grades 1-4), and Middle (grades 5-8).
- B. Implement a comprehensive Code of Conduct for the Early Childhood and Primary divisions with progressive levels of consequences appropriate to the naturally emerging capacities and distinctive learning for children at these grade levels. The primary source for determining the developmental indicators is YARDSTICKS: Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14, 3rd Edition by Chip Wood. Complete a full review and revise where appropriate the Middle Division Code of Conduct.
- C. Develop a systematic program for teaching the Core Values in the Early Childhood and Primary divisions with both teacher and students engaged in identifying and modeling behaviors associated with each value. Incorporate components of Core Virtues - a literature-based program in character education within the Early Childhood and Primary divisions. Continue to expand the literature

approach to the Core Values through a focus on understanding empathetic relationships in the middle division.

- D. Expand the Social Health Program to the fifth and eighth grades. CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) will continue as the foundation approach to the course. Mrs. Janice Beyer, a Licensed Professional Consultant and a SEA Upper School parent, has been a highly effective advisor and adjunct teacher in the 6th and 7th grades pilot social health program the past two years. We have asked her to continue in this role with the expansion of the program to the fifth and eighth grades, as well as to provide her professional expertise in the other social health initiatives.
- E. Provide professional development workshops to the faculty and staff on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as part of the School's monthly in-service and professional development through the work of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning). "Our mission is to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education. We envision a world where families, schools, and communities work together to promote children's success in school and life and to support the healthy development of all children. In this vision, children and adults are engaged life-long learners, who are self-aware, caring, and connected to others, and responsible in their decision-making. Children and adults achieve to their fullest potential, and participate constructively in a democratic society."
- F. Offer seminars to parents on relevant Social and Emotional Learning topics that are designed to strengthen parenting skills and strengthen the home-school partnership. In addition to CASEL, the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring will provide direction in developing sessions by divisions that have identified social and emotional developmental indicators at each level.