



Dear Junior High Parents of Saint Margaret Mary School,

I am writing you at this time to provide an update. Today was the first day of my newly formed Junior High Math Program. I intentionally observed the math classes throughout the day today so that I could receive accurate insight on the methods and procedures of these classes. As a result, I am extremely happy to report that the program is moving in the right direction. Both Mr. Hull ( an accomplished Electrical Engineer) and Mr. Desmond (a retired and credentialed Los Angeles Unified School District Math teacher) not only laid out their procedures in discipline and grading, but their lesson instruction was thorough and meticulous. Their approach to presenting a problem so that their students can develop the skills needed to solve a math problem was quite motivating. While sitting in the classroom, I looked around and noticed that the students were captivated and engaged. This is exactly what I was looking for!! All teachers will continue to turn in weekly lesson plans and follow the State Standards. I have lost a bit of sleep mapping this program out, yet it has been worth it. I am determined to provide our children with the best math program in the South Bay and with our current math team in place (Mr. Hull. Mr. Desmond and Mrs. Cindy Campadonia), I believe we can do it! I will continue to monitor the progress of our academic curriculum daily.

In regards to our Science program, I am in the midst of putting all the proper components in place so that the children will be the benefactors. My goal is to create a ‘hands – on’ science program complete with science experiments, field trips and guest speakers. I need a couple more days to set the foundation of this plan into motion however the students will not go without science during this time. They will continue their studies daily in this subject. My future plan (possibly next year) is to build a ‘SCIENCE LAB’ so that all grades (K – 8) can conduct ‘hands – on’ experiments. More exciting news to follow!

Next Monday we welcome Mr. Ritchie as the new Language Arts and 7<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher. Mr. Ritchie and I will be working together in this department so that we may maintain our reputation throughout the South Bay as one of the “**best schools in Language Arts!**” Our student scores are tough to beat. Each year we graduate more students into ‘**HONORS ENGLISH**’ than any other local school. This is due to a *continuum of high quality teaching from grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup>*. I am particularly thrilled to welcome Mr. Ritchie into a department that I personally hold ‘near and dear’ to me. He will bring his exciting new ideas in the area of journalism/Literature to our children. Mr. Ritchie holds a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Journalism and in addition, is a ‘published’ writer. He has written for dozens and dozens of magazines and newspapers such as: L.A Times, Rolling Stone Magazine, L.A. Weekly and Press Telegram to name a few. I am stealing him from his students at El Camino College and I am absolutely thrilled to welcome him aboard!!

Working in parallel to Mr. Ritchie and myself will be Mrs. Cortenbach. Mrs. Cortenbach has an extensive backround in the area of education. She holds a Bachelors and Masters degrees in education and is a Credentialed teacher. She will be working with all grade levels in the area of reading comprehension. Good reading comprehension skills are undoubtedly the foundation to a successful student. As we prepare our students for high school and college, we understand that students without good reading comprehension skills, are at a terrible disadvantage. Mrs. Cortenbach will be working ‘one on one’ and in ‘small group settings’ with students who have scored below average in the area of reading comprehension.

Ok, that's all for now. I wanted to send you this information so you are aware of my plans. While I am aware that there have been many changes, all of the changes have been thought out and are part of a plan to maintain and improve upon the quality of our education. Quality education enables our students to develop all of their attributes and skills to achieve their potential as human beings and members of society. In the words of the Delors Commission (UNESCO, 1996): "Education is at the heart of both personal and community development; its mission is to enable each of us, without exception, to develop all our talents to the full and to realize our creative potential, including responsibility for our own lives and achievement of our personal aims."

Sincerely,

Mrs. Zimmerman

Principal