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J.M.J.

December 16, 2021

Dear St. Joseph Families,

This letter is being written on behalf of the faculty and staff of St. Joseph's School. As we approach Christmas, we wanted to call to mind the Mission Statement that we pray with your children every morning, "We, the family of St. Joseph School, build up the Kingdom of God as we work together in faith, knowledge and loving service." Over the past two years we have truly lived this mission as we have faced many challenges together. We have been so grateful and blessed by the outpouring of support that we have received from you during this pandemic.

Going into the 2021-2022 school year we had all hoped and prayed that it would be much closer to a "normal" school year. Unfortunately instead, it has presented new challenges daily. This year we have had to be flexible in dealing with quarantine guidelines which have affected the number of students we have out weekly, trying to find the best ways to support families and students when they are out due to quarantines, inconsistencies in staff due to shortages of subs and ever changing mandates for both our school and personal lives. As we have been working our way through these challenges, one thing has not changed. We remain committed to making the daily lives of our students as normal as possible.

We realize how hard this year has been for our school families as well. Throughout this last semester there have been communications involving faculty, staff and parents letting us know the frustration, anger, sadness and even fear that some of our families are feeling is very real. We all have different views during this pandemic. It is crucial that we acknowledge this fact with respect and courtesy. Yet, like all strong families, we believe that if we remember what is truly important and focus on that, we can overcome anything together and come out stronger and wiser for it! **In our school family we always put our children first.** Please be assured no matter what our personal or political beliefs are towards this pandemic, we are passionate about our vocations, which is to ensure that our students receive the best educational experience possible.

In the spirit of this Advent Season, when that first Holy Family was created, we humbly ask you to help us come together stronger than ever before. Please trust that just as our faculty, staff and administration are committed and legally obligated to follow all current guidelines and best practices in Educational Curriculum and Instruction, we likewise are doing the best we can to follow all federal and local mandates to ensure the safety of your children in regards to this pandemic. We must continue to support one another through trying times that are totally out of our control. Just as Isaiah reminds us, the coming of the Messiah is a time of peace to which all of us are called, "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion shall browse together, and a little child shall lead them." Together, let us follow the lead of this Child, the Prince of Peace. Please pray for us as we finish out this first semester, and know you are all in our constant prayers as well.

In Christ,
Faculty and Staff of St. Joseph School