

June 17, 2020

Dear Parents:

A special welcome to our new parents. I thought new families would appreciate learning how we ended our year and what exciting things to look forward to this summer and next year!

This year was quite a ride. Collectively we salvaged what could have been a disastrous ending and turned it around to a very productive learning experience for all involved. Please note, I didn't say an ideal learning situation, but a valuable one none the less. I am so proud of every teacher, staff, parent and student for journeying with us. I know it was not always easy, there were challenges all around. I took great responsibility and care that we were entrusted to pilot the academic course for our students through this pandemic. Proudly I can say we were quite successful. I did love the emails about parents expelling their own kids, and wanting to know where they go for detention...I couldn't believe how often kids snacked though out the day and I shared the horror of navigating how to upload assignments, doubled grocery bills, late night projects, and seeing way more than I ever wanted to on ZOOM. Honestly though, the greatest take away from this experience is that the walls, bricks, desks, and address of 212 Lawrence Street does not define us. WE are St. Monica School, the families, the students, the teachers, and the staff. We are a community united in learning and love of Christ. That is pretty awesome in itself. I am so proud of each every one of our students. The love for St. Monica School was shown in all its glory at our end-of-the-year Victory Parade. We had all of our staff and most of our students attend that parade and it was an unbelievable event! The school spirit that permeated that day was amazing and showed everyone what St. Monica School is all about.

There is though an unsung hero that kept me on my toes every day. She recreated her office while working remotely, supported the entire staff by keeping on top of many of the procedural aspects of running a school. Mrs. Tully was "on duty" all the time. I would call her in the early morning and she would still be accessible late evenings when I would get one of my crazy ideas!! She mastered ZOOM, Google Meet and so much more!! Mrs. Tully was the queen of the webinar--- something I have found I have no patience for -- anything over thirty minutes I am zoned out!! But not Mrs. Tully, she would be taking copious notes and was ready when I missed a detail. St. Monica School is a better place because of Mrs. Tully's dedication and commitment to excellence. We are so fortunate to have her.

I am sure everyone is getting excited for the summer...and along with that comes...summer assignments and supply lists. I am purposely not posting these until July 1<sup>st</sup>. I want to make sure everyone takes a well-deserved break, without the burden of summer work on the forefront after just finishing a challenging year. It also gives me some extra time to go over the assignments and supply lists to make sure they are well-aligned and ready to go. Once they are posted, Mrs. Tully will send out a memo so everyone is aware. Our private parent Facebook Page will be deactivated as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, so please make sure you "Like" our school page, **St. Monica School Methuen**. Here is the link to our page:

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Monica-School-Methuen-107181296011459/>

Don't forget our virtual Scholastic Book Fair is available all summer. Please look for assigned summer readings there. Here is the link to the Book Fair:

<https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bookfairs/cptoolkit/homepage.do?method=homepage&url=stmonicasch2>

All report cards have been sent out. If you have not received your child's report card, please contact the school business office, Kera Mansour, 978-686-3311, to make payment arrangements so we can release your child's report card.

We are moving forward with the expectation that we will open in somewhat of a traditional manner on September 1<sup>st</sup> for Grades 1-8 and September 8<sup>th</sup> for Preschool and Kindergarten. There may be some procedural changes such as how we enter and dismiss from the building, mobility within the building, etc. – but nothing is definitive yet as the directives coming out from the Department of Education, Archdiocese of Boston and the Department of Public Health have been very fluid. As each phase is entered, standards are shifting. Once those are firm, my guess is by early August, everyone will be made aware. I want you to know that the safety of our students is paramount. We are taking every precaution possible. I have already ordered enough PPE supplies that would cover us for even the strictest of policies if implemented. We do know the criteria will change and there is always the possibility of shifting back to remote learning at some time. However, I am confident we will enter well-prepared and ready to rise to the challenge.

I do want draw your attention to a couple of things. If students will be required to wear masks, they will need to bring two masks to school every day. Those masks will be the parents' responsibility to provide. I am hoping they will be optional by late summer but, of course if parents choose to have their child wear them, that is fine too. Also, we are hearing the disinfecting wipes will be hard to get a hold of. If you happen to come across some- please consider stockpiling for your child's class– they are the easiest and safest way to keep things extra clean throughout the day.

St. Monica School has also established a COVID-19 Team that will be examining all procedures and protocols. We will be putting an action plan in place that will be made available on our website in August.

Now for some exciting news. Next year all students from Kindergarten through grade 8 will be using Chrome Books. Each classroom will be outfitted with a secure charging cart and each student will be assigned their own book to access Google Classroom and other digital curriculum during the school day. Their Google accounts will be available at home as well which will be a benefit if we have to rely on remote learning again. Google Chrome is available on iPads as well Chrome Books or laptops at home. Students will no longer be required to bring in an iPad in grades Kindergarten to 3. The Chrome books will be able to access Superkids as well as other supportive curriculums. This is an exciting time for St. Monica School.

All good things need to come to an end, and we gave Miss Lumb quite a sendoff. Thank you to everyone who donated, participated in the parade and sent well wishes. I know she was overwhelmed. So, I took full advantage of her emotional state and got her to volunteer from time to time on some of her favorite SMS activities. It will be great to have back in a different role! Sadly though, Mrs. Piskopanis will not be returning next year. We wish her and her family well in their future endeavors. We were very blessed to have her part of our team, be it for a short time.

The school will be open regular hours until July 2<sup>nd</sup>. After the 4<sup>th</sup> of July will have summer hours. These will be posted once they are finalized. Our regular hours will return again August 1<sup>st</sup>!

I hope everyone has a safe and healthy summer. Please remember to pray for one another.

In peace,

Mrs. Henderson