

THE FULL CURL



Thoughts from the Director of Schools

Dear Parents:

Announcements

- **We have raffle tickets for sale in HIPOW.** The raffles include a chance for a new Jeep Compass (valued at roughly \$37K), two round-trip Alaska Airlines tickets, and a 50/50. Please consider not only buying a ticket, but also selling some as well.

Kudos

- A big thank you to Anne Weaver and her mom for taking the time to meet with me and share their collective wisdom. I'm happy to say I'm sleeping much better
- A big thanks to Matt Gray for taking a vested interest in my Podcast project. We hope to tape our first podcast this week.
- A big thanks to Ronnie Bennett for volunteering to help in HIPOW!
- A big thanks to Patrick Chapman for his willingness to help me on my visit to Portland and share his knowledge.



This past week I had the pleasure of talking with all of our students, grades 7-12. I found the conversations to be very enjoyable and productive.

I had a couple of goals in mind going into these meetings. First, I wanted our students to know these schools exist for them. These schools are not here for me or our teachers. Everything we do is about making this the best education and the best experience possible for the students who attend. The students are at the top of the pyramid.

I also wanted to acknowledge that our school is different, but at the same time, explain the *why* of our being different. We talked about dress code and more rigorous academics. We talked about Mass. I talked about our standards and expectations and the value of accountability. I made sure the students understood that our teachers and staff know that asking a teenager to get excited about dressing better or having more homework is likely to be challenging.

I understand that our students, by and large, are not going to bed every night and looking at going to school the next day as if it were Christmas morning. However, I did hope to create a sense of pride in knowing we do things at a different level than other schools. Our students — or more likely their parents — have chosen a tougher path. I'm sure our students would be happier if they could dress any way they wish and had less homework. However, we must all choose between what is right and what is easy. By choosing a tougher path, our students sacrifice some happiness today for happiness later in

School Needs

- We could use way more **volunteers in the HIPOW office!**
- **We could use about 1 million Alaska Airline miles** to help with a variety of travel needs at the school. The miles would help with HIPOW packages, **but also help to possibly provide an opportunity for our students to travel for school related items, such as faith-based Jesuit Retreats.**
- **Patty Walter, who heads up the Development Office in HIPOW, could use a volunteer who wants to work about 5-10 hours a week on some special projects.** If you are interested, let me know and I will put you in contact with Patty. Patty is so great to work with, I considered taking on the position, but Mrs. O said I had enough going on.
- **PTO would love to have more folks who are interested joining their organization.** Info on how to join is in this week's column if you are interested.
- **HIPOW** is also looking for auction items!
- **Mrs. Wallace is always looking for quality substitute teachers.** Please notify her if you are interested.

life. I am confident that when they are adults, our students will have life skills not everyone possesses: the ability to do what is hard, and also the ability to do the hard things very well.

I also want to acknowledge you as parents. In a world where I see more and more parents who are only concerned with their child's immediate happiness, you have chosen to challenge your child and in doing so, create greater potential for success and happiness. This is uncommon among parents today and I hope you know how appreciative we all are for your willingness to not only challenge your child, but to sacrifice financially to do so.

There should be some comfort in knowing we are not alone in this journey. Jesus encouraged his disciples to "strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter, but will not be strong enough" (Luke 13:24). Make no mistake about it, at the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks, your child is being prepared with a strength that will ultimately allow them to walk through that narrow door.

I made sure our students understood that we need them to love being here. If we as a school are not winning with our students, we aren't winning. By empowering our students and making them feel as if they are integral to our school's success, I am hoping they will take a more active role in helping us prosper. To help facilitate this feeling of empowerment, I asked if they had ideas on how to make our school better and their experience better.

The older students, especially the juniors and seniors, lamented the pervasive level of lethargy they feel among other students. Older students sense a desire within their peers to do less. I explained my belief that this is a societal problem, the residue of COVID, when people were encouraged to stay home and do nothing. I do not think we can discount how damaging that strategy was to young people. While I do believe this is consistent among young people in all schools, it does not have to be the case at the Catholic Schools of Fairbanks.

So, how do we fix it? How do we get our students involved and willing to do more?

Students were consistent in their desire for more community activities. I'm all in on more fun activities involving the student body, provided we can do so and still continue to provide the best education. This will be done through Magis Houses, which I will talk about in another edition. We will have assemblies moving forward on occasion and I envision a potential girls volleyball team v. staff game in the not too distant future. In essence, we need to make this happen.

Our students all agreed that a larger student body would enhance their experience. I talked about our need for students to be, along with parents, our greatest advocates. I encouraged students to communicate how special this school is to friends. I let them know

MCHS Sports Trivia

TRIVIA QUESTION:

No trivia question this week.

RULES

To win the trivia contest, you must give me the answer IN PERSON. Emails, texts and phone calls will not suffice! Remember, only one guess per household. The first person to correctly answer the trivia question will win an MCHS T-shirt.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

Congrats to Gracie Turiel who identified Lila, Zinna and Adalia as the three nieces of our new athletics director, Abe.

SMALL PRINT

The spouse of the Director of Athletics, parents and STAFF who work directly inside CSF are not eligible for participation in The Full Curl trivia competition for 24 hours after the emailing of The Full Curl.

that if they can get them in the door, I'll do my best to make sure we can get them into the school. Currently we have 340 students at CSF. My push will be for 375 by the time we hit the 2025 school year.

I heard students suggest a better, more consistent and involved student section at games. I had no problem getting my arms around this idea and have actually worked with our new athletic director, Abe Siddall, to resolve this problem. Today, an order was placed that will secure a nice, long-sleeve t-shirt for every child in grades 7-12. The shirt will have the FAMILY logo on the front and on the back, the following logo:



We will ask for \$5 per student for the shirt (they cost \$15), but we will give the shirts to all students regardless of whether they can pay. These shirts will then get students who wear them into all volleyball and basketball games for free.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the students. So much so, I anticipate checking in with them again prior to the holidays or in the dog days of January to see what kind of progress we are making. We must empower our students and ensure they know they are heard. A student body who feels heard and valued can only be a good thing.

Robert Frost spoke of a road less traveled. Our students have chosen that road. Their road requires a greater level of discipline to traverse. And while it may be less traveled, there are many who have traveled it before and their stories are tales of greatness and excellence. Those who have taken this road are always willing to lend a hand and help those willing to make the sacrifice. There is a bond between the those on the road, and those who have taken the same road — an unspoken bond of love and support. It's a link that can never be broken.

Our students have chosen the road less traveled . . . and I have great confidence they will be better for it.

