



Nourishing the Human Spirit ~ Mind, Body, and Soul ~ Through Jesus Christ

Dear Students, Parents, and Families:

My name is Joseph Schmidt and it has been my honor to serve as the principal of the middle/high school for this school year. Seven years ago, when I joined the Laker family, I never would have thought at that time that I would have the opportunity to lead such a dedicated group of students and staff.

Over the past six months, the general theme at LMC, specifically at the middle and high school has been change. Changes in leadership and staff have brought about new ideas, new events, and new energy to the middle and high school. One thing that will never go away is our dedication to our mission: Nourishing the Human Spirit - Mind, Body, and Soul - Through Jesus Christ. In every decision or change that we make, this mission, and our dedication to providing the very best Catholic and Faith-centered education, will always be at the forefront.

One area that we have worked to improve is the sense of community and spirit in the middle and high school. While the two schools are separated by several flights of stairs, one area that we have needed to address is a sense of school spirit. The week of Homecoming, as well as the upcoming week of Winterfest were two areas that we have targeted to really spread the sense of community between Lake Michigan Catholic Schools as a whole.

As I said repeatedly during Homecoming, it is not just Lake Michigan Catholic High School's homecoming - it is all of Lake Michigan Catholic's Homecoming - from TK to 12th grade and beyond. For the first time since I have been involved with LMC, we did not just have the high school hallways decorated, the entire building participated. Before the annual powderpuff game, we had the first middle school flag football game - over ½ the middle school participated. Looking forward we have continued to push towards that sense of community with new events, such as the 8th grade's Night of Writing Dangerously and the Middle School Pre-exam Activity Night.

As important as community is, we continue to focus on the growth of the academic education that we are able to offer our students. Through working with the middle and high school staff, one area that we have really focused this year is to train our teachers in the use of data and differentiation. Already, we have set nearly ½ of our teaching staff to professional development that focuses on the teaching of more rigorous classes or the use of using data to inform instruction.

By using the NWEA Map test data that we collect three times a year from our middle school students to inform our teachers' instruction, we will be able to differentiate the lessons and instruction to continue to

help the students struggling in a subject area, while also look to continue to push the students who are excelling to their full potential.

In addition to this training, the Berrien RESA has agreed to come and observe our instruction to offer areas where we can continue to improve. This will begin in the middle of February and we will be able to use their input and advice to continue to help our student receive the very best education possible.

Moving forward, we are excited to announce that we will be making a push to provide our high school students a path to graduate with a higher number of college credits. Next year, I am proposing that we increase the number of our Advanced Placement (AP) Classes. Currently, we offer our students AP opportunities in the form of AP Calculus, Biology, and Literature. Next year, I am proposing the addition of an AP US History class, and AP Language class, and an AP Physics class. By allowing students to begin taking AP courses as early as 10th grade - with teacher recommendation - we will be able to provide our students an opportunity to, should they take advantage of it - to graduate with as many as 18 college credits without ever having to leave the campus.

Secondly, I am proposing the renovation of our current meeting room - Room number 226 - into a classroom STEAM level experience. Without much effort, we can renovate that space into one that will provide our students opportunities to work with equipment and instruction designed to push our students in the skills required in the 21st century. STEM is more than just the new “buzz word.” It is an opportunity for our students to develop skills that are now valued more than ever. By providing an environment designed for multiple classes to collaborate and integrate instruction, our students will be pushed to grow in areas we have only been able to tap into.

This initiative will impact each student at the middle and high school level and allow our teachers to expand their curriculums and instruction beyond their own subject matter, but into areas where more project-based, integrated learning can occur that will help our students grow in more than just Science, Tech, Engineering, Art, and Math, but in collaboration, creativity, and strengthening our students to better compete in today’s global workforce and economy.

It is a very exciting time to be a member of the Lake Michigan Catholic family. With continued improvements in the areas that can be improved, all while keeping the mission of “Nourishing the Human Spirit - Mind, Body, and Soul - Through Jesus Christ” at the center of every decision made, the future of Lake Michigan Catholic Schools is strong and will continue to work to provide the very best academic and faith-filled education possible.

Thank you and God bless,

Joseph A. Schmidt
Lake Michigan Catholic Middle and High School
Principal