

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

St Sebastian School
Mr. Paul Hohl, Principal



SHORT NOTES

Picture this

Good readers form mental pictures as they read. To improve your child's comprehension, read a book without letting him see it. Then, ask him to guess what the illustrations look like. *Examples:* How are the characters dressed? Is the setting bright or gloomy?

Raising good sports

You can teach your youngster to be a good sport by being one yourself. When you attend a game, clap and cheer for players who try hard, even if they're on the other team. You'll help your youngster learn to be gracious to everyone in the game.

Line them up

Sometimes kids get math problems wrong simply because they haven't lined up the numbers correctly. Try this. Have your child work problems on graph paper, using one box per number. Once she gets used to this system, she'll be able to transfer her lining-up skills to regular paper.

Worth quoting

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."
H. Jackson Brown Jr.

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Name one important thing we have today that we didn't have 10 years ago.

Brian: Me!



Study smarts

Sarah, a fourth-grader, takes a history test at the end of each month. Evan, a first-grader, has a spelling quiz every Friday. Studying is a skill these youngsters will need throughout their years of school. Help your child study effectively with these tips.

Start a habit. Encourage your youngster to treat studying as a daily assignment, not just something she does the evening before a test. For example, she might study 15 minutes every night for a spelling test on Friday. After she finishes her regular homework, she can spend a little time reviewing her notes and handouts.

Tackle textbooks. When your child has a chapter to study, have her "preview" it to increase her understanding. She should glance over headings, graphics, and photos and go to the glossary to look up boldfaced words. *Tip:* If she finds a section hard to grasp, she could read a picture book on the



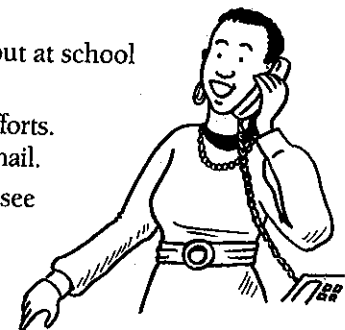
topic. For a science unit on matter, for instance, she could try *What Is the World Made Of?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

Mix it up. If your youngster reviews information in several ways, she'll be more likely to remember it. She might use colored pencils to copy each spelling word or math fact onto a separate index card. Then, she can shuffle the cards and study them in a different order each time. For extra reinforcement, suggest that she spell each word or recite each fact aloud.♥

Parent power

There are many ways you can support your child's learning and school. Here are a few ideas:

- Spend a few minutes every evening looking over handouts your youngster brings home. Fill out forms to return the next day.
- Tell your child's teachers if you can help them out at school or home.
- Make sure teachers know you appreciate their efforts. From time to time, send a thank-you note or an e-mail.
- Contact your child's teacher immediately if you see a problem. Working together will help your youngster succeed.
- Attend conferences, parent meetings, and school events regularly.♥



Let's behave!

Did you know that getting your youngsters to behave can be fun? Try these ideas to encourage better behavior—and cut down on everyone's frustration.

Distract. Being playful can stop misbehavior, especially if it's caused by boredom. *Example:* You're stuck inside on a rainy day, and your kids begin to get cranky. Say, "Freeze! Splash time!" Fill the bathtub, cover the floor with towels, and let them play in the water with cups and boats. (*Note:* Never leave children unsupervised near water.) Or call out, "Pillow time,"



and have everyone gather in the family room for a gentle pillow fight.

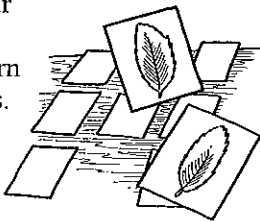
Celebrate. With your children, pick a few behavior goals (get ready for bed without complaining; say "excuse me" when someone is talking). Then, get out a small jar and some marbles. Tell your youngsters they will earn a marble each time you catch them working toward a goal. When the jar is full, celebrate with an extra story every night for a week.

Note: Children often act out to get your attention. Try to spend a few minutes a day playing a game or talking with each child, and you're likely to see better behavior.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Learn about leaves

When fall comes, the ground is covered with red, yellow, and orange leaves. Try gathering them up and using them for learning. This matching game will sharpen your child's memory and help her learn to identify leaves.



Together, collect 10 pairs of matching leaves. Cut out 20 rectangles from construction paper, and glue a leaf to each one. Then, lay them, leaf side down, on the table.

Players take turns flipping over two squares. If the leaves match, the person keeps the pair. If not, the next player tries to find a pair. Take turns until all the leaves have been claimed. The winner is the player with the most pairs.

When the game ends, visit www.arboraday.org/trees/treeID.cfm. Help your child answer questions about her leaves to learn which trees they came from.♥

Q & A

Bullying: The bystander's role

Q: My child came home from school upset because kids were picking on a classmate and wouldn't let her play with them. What advice should I give my daughter?



A: Tell your youngster that her classmate was being bullied—and that she has the power to help stop it!

There are several things she can do. She could start by standing up to the bully and saying something like, "That's not nice." Then, she might ask the child who is being bullied to join her in a game or school project.

Also, remind your youngster to report bullying to a teacher or other adult when she sees it. Let her know this is not tattling, but a way to help someone who is being hurt. You can explain: "Asking an adult to help a child who is being bullied is like asking the nurse to help a child with a scraped knee."♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Thinking games

Between school, errands, and activities, my family spends lots of time on the go. I decided to use some of it for "thinking games."

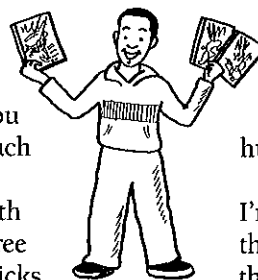
I taught my kids a game my parents used to play with me, called "Would You Rather?" I offer two options and ask which they prefer and why. For example, I might say, "Would you rather live near the beach or the mountains?"

My son came up with a game he named "Three Favorites." Someone picks

a category (outfits, movies), and everyone tells their top three choices. My daughter thought of "What Doesn't Belong?" We take turns naming items and asking the others to explain which is the odd one out and why. The kids especially like this game because there can be more than one "right" answer.

For example, when I named "owl," "ostrich," and "eagle," my daughter said, "Ostrich, because it can't fly." My son's answer was, "Owl, because it hunts at night."

Now they want to play all the time. I'm glad because we're having fun—and they've gotten better at thinking through their ideas.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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JOIN THE FUN!



**Milwaukee
Children's Choir**
Building Noteworthy Character

COME TO "TRY IT" NIGHT

DO YOU LOVE TO SING?

**If so, join us for west side "try it" nights
October 7 or October 15!**



Who are we? Milwaukee Children's Choir (MCC) is southeastern Wisconsin's premier children's choir and *the* place for kids who love to sing! We have hundreds of singers grades 1-12. **WE ARE MCC!**

What do we do? We have choir practice once a week during the school year. We also perform several times a year. Our choir directors use the best teaching concepts and follow lesson plans guaranteed to teach and entertain. **And Mrs. Theresa Witt—a former MCC "star" teacher—has returned to MCC to direct our West Side choirs!**



Who can join? Any child who is in grades 1-12.

Where do we rehearse? MCC has rehearsal sites throughout the metropolitan Milwaukee area. On the west side of town we have rehearsals for children grades 1-3 and 4-8 every Wednesday evening at Mount Carmel Lutheran Church, 8424 W. Center Street. If you cannot attend choir on Wednesdays we have other locations too. And our high school singers all rehearse at the incredible Milwaukee Youth Arts Center.

**West Side
Locations**

Does it cost anything? We need to charge tuition so we can pay our bills! But tuition is reasonable—it works out to about \$15 a week—and we also grant financial aid to those in need.

Where have you seen us before? We sing everywhere! We sing in parks, in concert halls, at sporting events, and with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and other prestigious arts organizations. Come join us!

Want to learn more? Call 414-221-7040. Send an email to membership@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org. Visit us on the web: www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org.



ACT NOW

**CLASS SIZES ARE LIMITED
OPEN ENROLLMENT ENDS
IN OCTOBER**



Milwaukee Children's Choir, 158 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202. (ph) 414.221.7040 (fax) 414.221.7041.
membership@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org

St. Sebastian Education Committee Meeting Minutes for September 22, 2009 and Comment Form

Present: Paul Hohl, Alfred Cintron, Lisa Pieper, Kristen Koch, Joe Viste, Clair Mitchell, Christopher Zollicoffer, Terese Shelledy, Chris Marcoux, Mary Beth McBride-Doyle, Kristina Snapp - Parish Council liaison

Excused: Sherri Walker

Principal's Report

Enrollment as of 9/22/09 is 317 students which is slightly (6) less students than last year's enrollment figures.

Spanish Class – The Spanish program is being expanded to include students in 5th through 8th grade. Spanish class will be mandatory for 5th and 6th grade students and will continue as an elective for 7th and 8th grade students. A parent or the teacher may opt out student(s) from the program if the resource time would better serve the student with regular class work. Janelle Pruhs is presently looking for a textbook for the 7th and 8th grade students and a course on CD for 5th and 6th grade students. The budget will determine the extent of the use of the CD program in the classrooms versus the Spanish staff position.

Update on Grade Structure – The latest feedback on the K5 and 3rd grade class structure is positive. Mr. Hohl will continue to provide updates on these classes.

eNewsletter – The response to the electronic weekly newsletter has been good. There are 13 families who have requested hard copies. Carrie Pruhs is the new webmaster. The school handbook has been added to the site. Parents are instructed to review it, print out and sign the acknowledgement statement and return it to the school office. The annual registration packet may be added online as well.

Health Update – The City of Milwaukee hosted a seminar for school administrators to provide guidance in managing the H1N1 flu outbreak. The Flu Policy at school calls for a child with a temperature over 100 degrees and one other symptom will be sent home. A mask will be provided for the child until they go home unless they are experiencing breathing problems. The maintenance team will disinfect the classroom. All teachers have focused on prevention habits. One area of concern was the shared communion wine at Wednesday mass. According to policy of the archdiocese, it is the pastoral staff call.

AED Machines – The funding is in place to purchase 2 defibrillators—one for the school and one for the church. There will be two rounds of training for some staff members and volunteers.

Math Computation Enhancements – The school will introduce 3 computer programs to help students improve their math computation scores. These programs will be used in math class, computer class and independently.

Character Education – The program kicked off with the introduction of a new discipline policy and form for reporting incidents. The process was explained to students in grades 1-4 and then 5-8 in the gym. Teachers followed up with additional information in the classroom.

Counselor/Social Worker Position and Title I – Response to a one day/week counselor/social worker position was very good. The review team, consisting of Paul Hohl, Alfred Cintron, Joe

Viste and Melanie McCauley, reviewed 20 resumes. Additional stimulus money funded the Title I position for a year which allowed for adequate funding for the counselor/social worker position. The Title I funding covers the NESE part time reading position staffed by Linda Maigatter and the full time math position staffed by Kathy Kirkpatrick.

Collaboration Issues – There may be changes in the involvement of the cluster of schools for collaboration issues. School participation in cluster activities and enrollments has changed in several schools due to additional open enrollment seats in some of the suburbs. Seb's is the only school in the cluster that enforces a Choice % cap.

Committee Connections

Kristina Snapp is the new Parish Council liaison to the Education Committee. The Parish Council Planning Meeting scheduled for October 3rd has been postponed.

The Home and School representative was not available.

2009-2010 Goals and Work Groups

- **Best of Class** – The main goal is to continue to research and recommend ways to be the best school we can with the resources available and retain our excellent faculty members. This committee will continue to monitor the new model in the K5 and 3rd grade classrooms. Also conducting research to nominate teachers for academic excellence. A new area of interest is the structure and curriculum of middle school math instruction since we contracted our math levels from 3 to 2 several years back. Possibilities include an IB program and other extracurricular enhancements. The Arch Exemplary School status is also a goal. Paul will be attending a meeting soon on this process and provide information. Members include Clair Mitchell, Kristin Koch, Sherri Walker, Mary Beth McBride Doyle and Terese Shelledy.
- **Marketing and Promotion** – The main goal is to continue to improve marketing the school to new families and the community. Open House is scheduled for January 31, 2010. The curriculum guides will be updated and possibly posted to the website. There are new Arch web tools as well as other ways to market St. Sebastian to the community and potential students. Members include Joe Viste, Lisa Pieper and Chris Marcoux.

Work group chairs and subcommittee members and assignments will be finalized at the next meeting. Lisa, Clair, Chris and Joe volunteered to contact new families to answer any questions they may have. The school office will provide contact information. Home and School mentors families can also be used to coordinate efforts. Dana Biasi can provide the list of mentor families. Terese will conduct exit interviews with families who did not return to St. Sebastian this year.

New Business

A concern was raised about the level of participation in recycling at the school. All paper is recycled on Fridays. There are designated cans throughout the facility for cans. The school also participates in a scrap metal drive periodically. The garbage is not picked up by the City of Milwaukee. The Parish contracts with a private company that determines the level of recycling.

Remember, the Education Committee would like to have ad hoc members to add their expertise or voice to our subcommittee/work groups. If you are interested in any of the above topics, please contact members of the work group or subcommittee.

Next meeting: October 27th at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Chris Marcoux

As always, if you have any comments, return them to the School Office-c/o Education Committee. If you would like a response, please include your name. Thank you.