



St. Francis Central Coast Catholic High School

Principal's Newsletter

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Keith B. Mathews, President and Principal

To SFCCCHS families:

A Time of Renewal

Summer is a time of renewal in school settings. For a campus, it means painting and planting and polishing; it means spruced up gymnasium floors, repaired fencing, and office and classroom shufflings. For educators in a Catholic school, it means a burnishing of one's commitment to the unique ministry that strives, at once, to educate to a college experience, to build the kingdom of God, to engender in our students a fuller awareness of their own spirituality, and to nurture a vibrant campus community. So it is that several of our staff members have undertaken summer seminars that inspire them anew to this mission and that sharpen their skills towards its realization.

In June, as I do every year, I attended a week-long session at Don Bosco Hall in Berkeley that brought educators together from various Salesian works in the Western Province. Also in attendance from St. Francis were Mr. Park Paxton, Development Director, and Ms. Andrea Nicholson, Director of Student Activities and a teacher in our theology department. The program is called SES—Salesian Education Seminar, an annual conference designed to educate more fully to the maintenance of Salesian identity on our high school campuses. Sprinkled throughout the week were presentations on the history and vision of St. John Bosco; as is typically the case, I came away with a renewed zeal for the educational process as articulated by Don Bosco and an ever-increasing admiration for the man. He was, indeed, a visionary about institutions that mean to serve youth.

What it means to be a Salesian can be described variously, and a fuller explication of Salesian identity in a high school setting is undertaken with regularity in this publication and in various meetings throughout the year. This summer, however, I have been particularly drawn to this characterization, drawn regularly when we Salesians get together: Salesian works display an abiding affinity for the young and their concerns. Certainly, all schools are—or should be-- so highlighted; but Salesians, by intentional design, mean to measure their works by the degree to which they are in touch with the concerns and interests of youth and the degree to which they respond with loving care to the challenges faced by young people. And so it is that, to a greater degree than in some other settings, we gear all that we do to the educational mission of being fully present to our students in their journey towards adulthood.

In the middle of the 19th century, St. John Bosco observed, when talking about what makes a successful educator, that it was not enough that one loved one's students; the students must know they are loved. It should be noted that decades of educational research during the late 20th century reveals that the number one factor in student success, more than school funding, demographics, or other indices of differences in schools, is this: whether the students believe their teachers care about them. It is my observation that what highlights St. Francis is the unique joy that enriches our school days. It is at once trite and true: students like it here, and they like their teachers. Most significantly, students know their teachers like them. By personal experiences, by countless anecdotes, and by objective survey, we know that our students see the genuine, abiding, personal-yet-professional fondness we have for them.

A contemporary college prep high school needs a focus on academic achievement; and so it is that so much of what we do here is concerned with classroom performance, test scores, and the like. Similarly, a full-fledged high school must undertake a wide array of extracurricular offerings for the full development of its students; thus do we place such a priority on activities that build the social community here at St. Francis. But our self-measurements, as a Salesian school, must begin and end with the extent to which we accompany with heartfelt concern the young entrusted to our care.

Welcome to the Class of 2014 and their families: The families of incoming freshmen were included in the mailing of May's newsletter; but this newsletter marks the first of your freshman academic year and the beginning of an exciting and growth-filled four years as a Shark! A frosh class of 66 students swells the ranks of the Sharks!

Welcome Home, Fr. David! Fr. David Purdy, SDB, has rejoined the Watsonville community and will be working with the school this year. As a result of provincial assignments made by Fr. Tim Ploch, Fr. David has taken residence at Our Lady Help of Christians Parish, effective July 1, 2010.

Fr. David has a rich history here at St. Francis. Most recently, he served as the school's President from 2000-2003. Under his direction, the first development efforts were undertaken; the Board of Directors first took shape; and the first of the campus building projects was launched. He left St. Francis in 2003 as a result of being appointed Provincial for the Western Province. For the next six years, he lived and worked in San Francisco (and throughout the Province) as the Provincial. Fr. David reports being "ecstatic" that his turn as Provincial is done and he may return to more localized concerns.

His primary duties will be to assist the school in the following capacities:

- As the campus Chaplain. Fr. David will work with Campus Ministry and serve as a spiritual guide in all that we do. Working with our CYM, Mr. John Marheineke, Fr. David will oversee campus liturgical celebrations. In addition, he will assist with other functions of Campus Ministry as his schedule allows.
- In institutional advancement. Fr. David will work closely on special projects with Mr. Mark Paxton, Director of Development, as we continue to build a community of support for the school. Fr. David's roots in Watsonville run deep; he knows all of the original donors among our community who were instrumental in the building of St. Francis.
- Most importantly, as an ongoing, vibrant Salesian presence on campus. Fr. David intends to be on campus daily, serving as a consistent, visible Salesian presence to the students and the staff.

Fr. David will be around the campus this summer, and then he will be a daily presence once classes begin. He will also be attending various of our pre-year staff events. Please join me in welcoming Fr. David back to St. Francis.

Missing Documents: Some students have not submitted forms required for their attendance at St. Francis. If that is the case for your student, it is critical that this be addressed prior to the beginning of classes. ***Please note: your student may not attend classes until each of these forms has been submitted.*** Beginning August 18, 2010, any student whose file continues to lack these forms will be required to sit in the main office, not attending classes, until the forms are submitted. Please help us with this critical detail of your student's attendance.

Please see the attachment related to this announcement.

Frosh Orientation: All incoming freshmen are required to attend Freshman Orientation, scheduled for Monday, August 16, 2010, from 3 PM until 8 PM. Freshman should report to campus by 2:55 and should **be in complete daily uniform**. Bring your academic schedule, as one of the activities will be to practice moving from period to period throughout a simulated day.

At least one parent/guardian of each incoming freshman should attend the latter portion of Freshman Orientation. Your student's success at St. Francis will be more likely the more informed you are about the school, and the evening session is designed to educate parents and students to the school's expectations. **Parents/guardians should arrive by 5:30 PM and plan to stay until approximately 8:00 PM.** A modest dinner meal will be provided by the St. Francis Association to all parents and students prior to a presentation by the administration.

Reminder: First Day of School: Classes begin for all students on Wednesday, August 18, 2010. The precise schedule is included in the enclosed flyer. The day will begin at 7:50 with homeroom. Friday, August 20, 2010, will also have the same special schedule for the year's first rally.

Also enclosed is a listing of the Daily Schedules for 2010-11.

Please see the attachments related to this announcement.

Back-to-School Night: Parents are urged to join us on Tuesday evening, August 31, 2010, at 6:30 PM, for Back-to-School Night. This is an opportunity for you to meet each of your student's teachers. You'll receive a class schedule for your student in the general assembly in the gym that begins the evening. **Please note:** the evening is designed for parents; students should not attend.

Save the Date: September 11, 2010: Sports Foundation Annual BBQ and Auction: Each school family will be receiving an invitation to the annual St. Francis Sports Foundation BBQ and Auction, this year scheduled for September 11, 2010, at 2 PM. This yearly celebration brings together the greater community to enjoy a sumptuous meal at the gorgeously appointed home of Sam and Terri Wright in the Casserly Foothills of Watsonville. Come join us and support the single largest fundraiser for the athletics programs here at St. Francis. Proceeds fund a variety of athletic endeavors, including the outstanding loan for the completion of the outer fields complex, as well as the radio broadcasts of Sharks football and basketball games. And this year, the BBQ and Auction itself will be broadcast! Come join us for a joyous time with Sharks supporters!

Book Ordering: Remember that textbooks for SFCC courses are available at efollett.com, the official provider for the school. A link to efollett.com may be found on the school's website (www.stfrancishigh.net). Also be reminded that you may purchase books anywhere you see fit, so long as the ISBN number matches that required for the course.

Summer Reading: Students are reminded that they will be tested on their summer reading selections during the first few days of school in August.

Welcome to New Staff: We welcome to our staff Mr. James Watson, who will serve as the school's IT professional. His primary duties will be to administer to the school's computer needs and to maintain the computer lab. He will be also working closely with Mr. Vic Suarez to implement the school's computer curriculum to all students. Many students know Mr. Watson already, as he is also the school's head swimming coach and the husband of Jennifer Watson, Athletic Director.

Senior Retreat Opportunity: Kairos: Once again this year, seniors will be invited to participate in *Kairos*, a three-day retreat experience. The *Kairos* program is undertaken at many Catholic high schools throughout California and the nation, and it is pivotal in a senior's spiritual and personal development.

Because the retreat involves three days and two nights away from campus, it is not mandatory; however, we strongly urge every senior to set time aside in his/her schedule to attend. The dates have been set: Sunday through Tuesday, December 5-7, 2010. The retreat will begin around noon on Sunday and conclude on Tuesday early evening. Seniors attending the retreat will miss classes on Monday and Tuesday; those not attending will be required to attend school, as usual.

The retreat will be held at Koinonia Conference Center in Watsonville. Specifics about costs, transportation, and other matters will be articulated in senior theology classes.

Oh—*Kairos* is an ancient Greek word meaning “divine time,” as opposed to *kronos*, “human time.”

Going Green: A Change in the Calendar for School Year 2010-11: In an effort to reduce the use of paper, the school will no longer be sending home a complete school calendar for the year. Instead, it is posted on the school's website for download (on our website, go to "for parents," and click on "event calendar"). The advantages are these: starting this year, the calendar has color features, and most of you have a color printer at home that will enable you to download and print a color copy for your use.

Checking Grades on Edline: The school contracts to provide students and their families with the on-line opportunity to regularly review grade performance. Teachers are required to update their grade records twice a month, and parents and students can review those grades by logging on to the link on the school's website. Returning families that have activated Edline accounts will continue using the user name and password created last year. Incoming freshmen and new students will be provided with instructions and an activation code at an orientation to the computer lab conducted the first few days of classes. Call Mr. Vic Suarez, Academic Vice Principal (ext. 203), with questions or problems.

Students and parents should note that, again this year, each teacher will post his/her homework assignments for each course on Edline. This will enable parents and students to monitor better ongoing requirements of each course. Each teacher may use a different method—e.g., some will post a calendar, some will list homework in the "news" portion of the class Edline page—so students and parents will need to familiarize themselves with the Edline page for each course.

SFA Largesse: Each of you, as a parent of an SFCC student, is a member of the St. Francis Association, the parent group that assists the school with fundraising activities and that serves as a social coordinating agency for school parents. The single largest activity of the SFA is the annual St. Francis Festival, held on the last Sunday in April. As a result of the funds generated from SFA efforts, the following items have been recently underwritten in part by the SFA: (1) repainting of the locker rooms and restrooms around campus (2) the dinner provided to incoming freshmen and their parents at Frosh Orientation; (3) refinishing of the gymnasium floor; (5) improvements and repairs to the existing fencing on Bishop Ryan Field; (6) a sizable contribution to the operating budget of the school to maintain lower tuition rates for 2010-11. Thank you all for your efforts on behalf of the school.

Revised Student-Family Handbook: The 2010-11 Student-Family Handbook is available to students and families by the following methods: (1) Each student will be provided with a Student Planner on the first day of school. Within this planner is the complete Student-Family Handbook. (2) The handbook may be viewed and downloaded from the school's website. (3) Complete copies of the handbook are available for review in the Main Office.

Concerns over Skirt Lengths: Female students be advised: the rule about skirt length will be enforced fully this year: the hem of the skirt may be no higher than 4" above the knee. This will be a particular focus of the Dean of Students this year; so order your skirts according to the skirt length rule. **Again this year:** a student will receive one warning; a second violation results in a detention; a third violation and the student will be sent home for the day.

Important Clarification Regarding Law Pertaining to Provisional Drivers: The State of California limits the driving privileges of provisional drivers (drivers under the age of 18, or within the first year of their having a driver's license). Of importance to SFCC families is the provision that prohibits a student from driving other students.

The school's attorney has advised the school that the language of the vehicle code is clear: a provisional driver may not drive with anyone under the age of 20 in the car; a provisional driver may not, then, be the driver of a carpool headed to school, or to a game or other school event, *except* when all the riders in the car below 20 years of age are his/her immediate family members. This exception allows a student to drive his/her siblings to-and-from school but only with a note signed by the driver's parent. A provisional driver must be able to show a note from a parent should he or she be stopped by law enforcement personnel.

It should also be noted that, the spirit of this law is consistent with the directive stated in the Student Family Handbook:

Students Driving with Students: SFCC students are not authorized to travel together with a student as a driver to a school event. The event supervisor must instruct each student that if he/she drives to or from the event, he/she may take no other student with him/her. Students may travel with adults authorized as volunteer drivers; they may not travel with students as drivers (other than themselves).

By a wide margin, teenage automobile accidents occur most often with groups of teenagers in the car. Because of this, and because of the law that prohibits it for provisional drivers, event moderators will never authorize team members, club members, etc., to ride together to a required event with a student driver. When they are functioning as a part of a directed activity (e.g., as a part of a team), students will be instructed not to travel together with a student driver.

For your information, the text of the relevant law can be found on the California DMV website (www.dmv.ca.gov).

Supplemental Student Accident Insurance: Forms and information on supplemental insurance will be available in early August; contact the school office if you wish to obtain these documents for the purchase of supplemental insurance for your student.

Fall Sports Tryouts, etc.: Fall sports teams begin workouts and tryouts at the dates and times listed below. Please be reminded that a student may not participate in a tryout or workout until the Emergency Card/Medical History form has been submitted to the school (the blue form that was sent to you in late April), as well as the signature portion of the Department of Athletics Participation Regulations.

- **Men's and Women's Cross Country:** The first date for practice will be on Friday, August 13th. Meet at St. Francis at 10 am for practice and an overnight camping trip in Mt. Madonna. Contact Head Coach Ramona Young for more information at ramona23@rocketmail.com.
- **Women's Tennis:** Please attend an informational meeting on August 18th at lunch (11:40am) in the gym. Practice begins on August 18th at Rio Del Mar from 3-4:30 pm. Contact Head Coach Bill Finch for more information at Billfinch1@aol.com.
- **Football:** The first day of practice will be August 13th from 9-11am on the football field. Contact Head Coach Joe Gregorio for more information at gregorio@stfrancishigh.net.
- **Women's Volleyball:** The first day of practice will be August 13th from 9-11am in the gym. Contact Head Coach Scott Akimoto for more information at scottakimoto@yahoo.com.
- **Women's Cheerleading:** The first day of practice will be after the start of school. Please listen for more information on the daily announcements. Contact Head Coach Mabel Rodriguez for more information at mab.rodriquez@sbcglobal.net.