

News from the Principal/CEO

Welcome to West Catholic for the 2020-2021 school year! Through these unprecedented times, we hope you have enjoyed some rest and time with the family. There is no doubt we are entering one of the most unusual school years in recent history. Rest assured, we evaluate and adjust daily to ensure we are doing our part to walk with you in your student's education. In preparation, our virtual Back-to-School Packet is full of important information to help prepare your student(s) for the first day of school, which begins with two full days of orientation on Wednesday, August 19 and Thursday, August 20.

Earlier this summer we said goodbye to a few staff members. Sue Armstrong, longtime assistant athletic director and assistant facilities manager, retired. We are thankful to Sue for her dedication and wish her all the best. Murray McGready, social studies teacher and swim coach, has also retired. We appreciate all of Murray's service and look forward to having him come back to substitute teach this year. Todd Peters, director of admissions, is moving on to new endeavors. He and his family are heading to Arizona. Join us in wishing Todd and his family the best of luck on their move. Ryan Corcoran, ESL & Religion teacher and director of the international program, has gone to St. Thomas the Apostle to become the assistant principal – please congratulate him if you have the opportunity. Becky Armstrong, athletic trainer, has also moved to a new opportunity. We are thankful for her service and dedication to our student athletes and coaches.

Joining us this summer/fall are:

Chris Schaub, Theology Department. Chris comes to us from Lake Leelanau where he has taught theology and science at St. Mary Lake Leelanau since 2004. He holds a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in Education from Aquinas College. Chris will also have a daughter in the building this year.

Jason Hickey, Social Studies. Jason received his BA in Secondary Education with a major in social studies and minor in physical education from Adrian College. He is also a West Catholic alum from the class of 2015. We are excited to have Jason back as a faculty member.

Rachel Sherma, ESL and English Department. Rachel holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Phoenix and Masters in Education from the University of South Florida. Rachel has experience teaching in many parts of the world, including Japan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and, most recently, in San Antonio, TX. Rachel will be working with ESL students, teaching three courses and assisting with the international program.

Kirsten Herich, Director of Admissions and International Coordinator. Kirsten has a Bachelor's degree from Davenport University and is graduating this month from a Masters in Education program at Framingham State University. Kirsten brings five years of experience as a college admission director and three years of teaching experience in China.

Cam Burns, Assistant Athletic Director. Cam has a Bachelor's degree in sports management and human resources from Davenport University. He is a 2013 graduate of West Catholic, and we are excited to have him back at WC.

Ryan Vogel, Athletic Trainer, & Adam Stoyanoff, Strength and Conditioning Coach. Ryan holds a Bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University and a Master's degree from University of Detroit Mercy. Adam holds a Bachelor's degree from Albion College and a Master's degree from Bowling Green State University. Both Ryan and Adam come to us from The Center For Physical Rehabilitation (CPR),

West Catholic's new partner in helping to ensure our students' health. Ryan Vogel will also be our certified contract tracer for COVID-19. Please give them a warm welcome!

In regard to West Catholic's Governing Board, in June we said goodbye to John Brechting and Mike Dorato. John served on the board from 2009-2020, and Mike from 2015-2020. We are grateful to both men for their service and dedication to West Catholic! Joining us are Duane Kluting, Doug Mileski, Dr. John Frey and Tania DeVries. Please welcome them.

Important notes

We have made a major change to our daily bell schedule for classes. It is going to take some getting used to for the students and staff. The full schedule for the year will be pushed to all student and staff iPads and used as the lock screen photo.

We have three response plans developed per Governor Whitmer's executive order 2020-142. Plans will be available on the website, www.grwestcatholic.org, upon approval from the board, the Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools and the state.

We will continue our very popular supper program through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. These meals will be free to our students and available in sack form for our extracurricular teams competing off-site. We are also adding a free breakfast program through the State of Michigan for all students. Our lunch program continues as before. Rest assured we will be taking all the safety measures needed to make sure our students are safe.

Our annual Open House is currently being modified to meet the requirements of Governor Whitmer's orders on the number of people in a location. Presentations for athletics, college and career planning, and parent and student technology have been created and will be shared. Lots of "how to's" coming your way!

Thanks to generous donors, alumni, parents and an incredible facilities staff, students will be able to enjoy many upgrades to our campus that were accomplished this summer. More doors in the building have been replaced and keyed by an electronic key FOB, providing state-of-the-art safety for your students and convenience for our staff. We have new ceiling tiles and lighting in several rooms, including the media center and theatre room. The wall between the computer lab and yearbook classrooms has been knocked down in order to accommodate more students in those classes. After COVID we anticipate the open space will better support the learning environment. I would like to extend a special thank you to our maintenance team that has worked diligently over the summer to ensure that teacher's classrooms are not only clean but set up in a manner that will allow students to maintain social distancing when school resumes. Thanks to their efforts, students will be able to safely attend classes in-person. Their hard work is greatly appreciated!

Thank you for placing your trust in us. We are honored to be able to walk with you on the journey through the teenage years. Rest assured, we will do our best to provide a dynamic, excellence-driven Catholic education as we work towards the formation of Disciples of Christ who will live their earthly and eternal lives as humble servants of God.

God Bless and enjoy the rest of the summer!

Cynthia Kneibel
Principal/CEO