

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Dear Parents,

As I write this newsletter article we are on the verge of **Catholic Schools Week**. The theme this year is **Catholic Schools: Good News in Education**. We look forward to this celebration of an important part of our Catholic heritage. More than ever, our society needs a generation of youth who are raised and educated with strong Christian morals and values; values that are used as the foundation of leadership for many years to come.

As we move into the second semester of the year I want to communicate a few important thoughts to you on a variety of topics.

School Calendar: This year the school calendar has raised more questions than usual about how we arrive at our annual school schedule. First of all, we enter calendar discussions with the diocese with the intention of providing a calendar that will help us to stay true to our mission of providing a first rate education for students in spirit, mind and body. We are also guided by the state of Michigan school requirements as well as the standards of our North Central Accreditation organization.

We begin with the requirement of 1098 instructional hours for our students each year. The number of instructional hours is calculated using a state formula for full days, half days and exam days. The high school schedule varies significantly from the elementary schedule because of exams, testing days and other unique programs that require partial school days. For these reasons the high schools are in school more days (ex. starting before Labor Day) but have a similar number of instructional hours. Some public high schools that have less school days than Catholic Central may be using professional development hours towards their 1098 hours (which is allowed by the state) or may have a longer school day than we do.

As we look at next year we face these same scheduling challenges. One option that we are discussing is the possibility of extending our school day. For example, a 3:00 p.m. dismissal would add 20 minutes to each school day which equates to about 60 hours of instruction over the course of a school year. A change like this would give us much more flexibility with our school calendar but has other implications, especially with transportation and after school activities. Your feedback on this is welcomed.

Tuition Assistance and Scholarships: In light of some recent conversations that I have had with parents I wanted to clarify how our tuition assistance and scholarship programs work. First of all, tuition assistance is available to any family who fills out a PSAS application and qualifies for assistance based on family income and other financial factors that affect a family's ability to pay tuition. Athletics or other extra-curricular success is not a consideration when determining need. Currently, approximately 1 in 4 families that attend Catholic Central or West Catholic receive tuition assistance. Over \$900,000 in aid was given out to families who qualify. The PSAS forms are currently available in the school office and it is important to note that **the priority deadline for applying is March 16, 2007**. To be considered for the Bishop's Scholarships applications should be received by this date. March 16th is the first round cutoff, parents may still apply after this date but funding is limited.

In addition to the tuition assistance program in 2005 the Catholic Secondary Schools of Grand Rapids began a **Minority Scholars Program** that gives scholarships to minority students based on academics. To qualify, a student must have and maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA and be a student of good moral character. Athletics or other extra-curricular success has never been nor will be a consideration for this scholarship. Applications for current eighth graders are available through the admissions office.

I look forward to a wonderful second semester as we work together to provide your children the best spiritual and educational experience possible.

Yours in Christ,

Steve Passinault

FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Sno-Shuffle Dance is February 17, 2007 from 8:30 p.m. until 11:30 p.m. Students are to arrive no later than 9:30 p.m. This dance is semi-formal. Everyone is to be in dress shoes. Ladies are to have modest necklines and dress lengths.

Congratulations to all students who have made the Honor Roll. These students and their parents should be proud of this achievement.

The **National Latin Exam** will be held the week of March 12, 2007, as will the National Latin Conference. Each year Catholic Central students are recognized for their outstanding results. Recent results—58 awarded honors in the last 2 years.

Just a brief reminder about Spring Break and school attendance: I am asking for your support of our policy requiring all students to be in school prior to and immediately after scheduled vacations.

Absences: Remaining informed of absent students' whereabouts is of importance in our commitment to students' safety and well being. Therefore, on the day of absence we ask that a parent/guardian call the attendance office (233-5812) by 10:00 a.m. Messages may be left on the school's voice messaging system.

When a student becomes ill at school we ask that they come to the office to call home so that we know they are ill and can tend to their needs. Students are not to use their cell phones at any time while in school, including when they become ill.

Students are expected to attend all classes and to be on time. Any absence, regardless of the reason, will prevent the student from getting the full benefit of the course. This time of year we understand that many illnesses have lingering effects, even after a student has been cleared to return to school and that these may hinder their attendance. In the case of unavoidable absence, a student may make up missed work up to 9 days per semester. Beyond that, school requests that you notify us of any on-going medical issues that we can be privy to. Accordingly, absences can result in lower grades due to missed tests, assignments and exercises, and due to the failure to enter into the classroom learning process.

This spring we will be having a "lockdown" drill during the school day. According to House Bill 4460 (Act 197, Public Acts of 2006) *requires schools (K-12) to perform 2 drills in which occupants are restricted to the interior of the building and the building secured appropriate to an emergency such as a hazardous materials release (shelter in place) or intruder on or near premises (lockdown).*

Tom Maj

Assistant Principal

FROM THE GUIDANCE OFFICE

Later this month, Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors will be choosing their courses for next year. Each student will be given a revised Curriculum Guide for 2007-08, with thorough descriptions of course offerings, prerequisites and requirements for graduation.

We ask that you review this guide and your student's choices carefully, taking into account your student's past academic achievements, goals for post-secondary education, and areas of interest. For most courses, teacher or departmental approval is required. Your signature will also be required on the course selection form, and your student will meet with his or her counselor to finalize choices.

Because we plan our staffing needs and master schedule based on student course selections, we cannot stress enough the importance of making these choices wisely. We will not be able to accommodate requests for schedule changes in the fall, and students are not permitted to drop a course once the semester has begun. Students need to be aware of the demands of the higher level courses and be willing to make a year-long commitment to these classes. Catholic Central is rightfully proud of its academic reputation, and we intend to challenge our students in order to insure their solid preparation for college.

It is also important that you understand that in the area of elective courses, a student will need to agree to alternate choices, in case there are scheduling conflicts with the required courses.

If you have questions regarding course selections, please do not hesitate to call or email the guidance counselor who works with your student.

Academic Strategies Workshop

During the 3rd Quarter, an Academic Strategies workshop has been offered to students in any Study Hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The workshops include information about learning styles, note-taking techniques, test preparation, time management, reading and writing skills and communication with teachers. Students must see their counselor to participate.

Testing Information

Juniors typically choose to take the ACT in either February or June, when it is offered at Catholic Central. This year, the ACT will be a required test in conjunction with the Michigan Merit Exam (formerly, MEAP) on March 13, 14 and 15 at Catholic Central. Registration is free and completed with the tests during the school day for all Juniors. For those interested, various test preparation workshops are available. Please check daily announcements as well as the Guidance page on the Catholic Central website for further details.

Seniors who have earned the Michigan Merit Award will receive a letter from the State of Michigan asking about the student's college choice. The Merit Award money will be sent directly to the college. The final opportunity to re-take the MEAP will be in April and further details will be posted on the Guidance webpage.

West Michigan College Fair will be held on Tuesday, March 6 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Devos Place. For more information, please visit www.nacacnet.org.

ATHLETIC NEWS

The Tradition Continues! The strength of our Catholic Central community is the singleness of purpose through 101 years. Thank you for your continued support. Help us challenge and expand the Spirit, Mind, and Body of our youth.

Think **Spring!** Sign-up for spring sports will be February 22 during lunch periods at school. Announcements will be made. Practices begin on March 12. **Your student must have a physical exam, dated since April 15, 2006, on file in the athletic office before they can participate in tryouts or practice.**

Summer Planning: Catholic Central coaches will not schedule any school-related athletic activity from **June 30 to July 8, 2007**. No conditioning drills, no camps, no open gym—nothing! Facilities are closed.

Athletic schedules are available at www.grcatholiccentral.com. Go to “Sports”, then “schedule”. Information regarding MHSAA state tournaments is available at www.mhsaa.com. Take advantage of these information sources.

Cougars join the Ottawa-Kent (OK) Athletic Conference?? A final vote has not been completed, however, if we are invited to join the OK Conference it will not change anything until August 2008. The August 2007-June 2008 school year will follow City League schedules and procedures.

Undue Influence: In these days of “schools of choice”, Charter Schools, and Home Schools we ask each member of community to be aware of the issue of “undue influence” regarding student-athletes. The Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) Handbook, Rule 1, Section 10, states:

“The use of undue influence for athletic purposes by any person or persons, directly or indirectly associated with the school, to secure or encourage the attendance of a student, or the student’s parents/guardians as residents of the district, shall cause the student to be ineligible ...for a maximum of one year.” The school and/or coach can also be punished.

If you believe a student or family is interested in Catholic Central, please direct them to the Principal’s Office or the Guidance Office. Do not contact a Catholic Central coach, and by no means may you suggest or offer any incentive to a student or family.

Thank you to all the students and parents who have contributed to an atmosphere of “*Good Sportsmanship*” at our contests. As Cougars, we understand that the value of interscholastic athletics lies in preparing our students for a positive role in their Faith and their Community. Good Sportsmanship includes loud and boisterous cheering for **our team**. Banners, posters, etc., in good taste, are welcome at our events. Sportsmanship does not include disrespect toward officials or opponents.

FROM THE CAMPUS MINISTER

Each year we end the month of January with Catholic Schools Week. The theme this year is **Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education**. The Liturgy Planning Class planned the events for the week, emphasizing the national theme by adapting it to each day of the week. Monday was “Catholic Central: The Good News in Education.” This day was an introduction to the week and a reminder of all the wonderful accomplishments of our school. We also participated in the Diocesan Catholic Schools Mass at the Cathedral. Tuesday’s theme was “Catholic Central: Our Faith is Good News.” On this day we celebrated Mass as a school with Bishop Hurley. Wednesday celebrated our staff with a dress down day for them and a treat during first hour. The theme for the day was “...Our Staff is Good News.” Thursday was the Fine Arts Assembly and the Good News about the Arts. Friday’s theme was “... Our Students Are Good News” and we appreciated the students with a dress down day, treat bags and a student vs. Faculty Basketball Game at night. The Athletic Department offered free or reduced admission to all home events throughout the week and liturgy planning provided us with “Music in the Halls” during 10 minute break each day!

At the end of the semester we once again total student service hours. Our students have now documented 14,724 hours of service for the time period from June 1, 2006 to Jan. 30, 2007. The individual totals are posted outside my office. Students can check them by grade level. I am always humbled by the busy lives our students lead and their ability to still find time for others. Numbers are not our focus in this program, but they help us to realize that our students (your children) are making an impact as Christ in the world.

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent is February 21. We are still looking at projects for Lent. Last year we gave to projects in Honduras, Africa and Vietnam. In the recent past, we have tried to use international causes for Lent, but nothing is decided for this year. If any parents have connections to some project or need that you would like us to consider, please email me at kathiewalsh@grcss.org.

We will offer our All-School Lenten Reconciliation Service on March 13, students will have the opportunity for individual confession on March 14 through Religion classes, Stations of the Cross will be on March 28 and we will celebrate Easter on Easter Thursday, April 12.

For those who look forward to StarSearch, our annual Talent Show sponsored by Peer Ministry, **applications for auditions will be available the first week of March. Auditions will be March 26, 27, 28. StarSearch is May 11.**

CSS Special Events Office

CACHE AUCTION NEWS

The 2007 “Fiesta--South of the Border” CACHE Auction is beginning to take shape. The decorations are being planned and made, Benefactor tickets (with the chance to win the Grand Prize of either a 200 Pontiac G6 Convertible or \$20,000 CASH) are being sold at a rapid rate and catalog descriptions are being written for all gifts that have been given.

***We are still in need of a number of additional gifts.** If you normally give an auction donation through a Gift-Giving party and have not done so this year, we would ask that you consider donating something for our Silent or Oral Auction. If you have never given a gift to the CACHE Auction, now is the time to start!! We

would love any donations for our Home Furnishings, the Pantry, Recreation and Leisure Student Shop and/or the Gift Certificate Shops.

*Donation slips are available in the school office. Attach the donation slip to your gift and drop it off at either the WC Office, CC Office, the Catholic Secondary School Office (660 Burton SE) or call 233-5985 to arrange for pickup. All donations (or at least a description) should be received by February 12 for inclusion in our catalog.

***Invitations to the CACHE Auction are available in the Main Office.** Due to the increasing costs of printing and mailing, we are inviting current CC/WC parents to the Auction via parent newsletters. Anyone who has attended the auction in the past, anyone who has attended a Gift-Giving party or who has given a donation will receive an invitation in the mail. By handling our invitations in this manner, we will save the cost of mailing to 1,000 invitations to our current families. We apologize for the seeming informality of this decision, but hope that you understand and appreciate our need to keep expenses in check.

*Please plan to join us at the "Fiesta" CACHE Auction on Saturday, March 10, 2007. We guarantee a great time! Get a group together and fill a table. The Aquinas College Fieldhouse can seat 600—it would be great to fill it up with supporters of Catholic High School education.

*Setup of the Auction will take place on Thursday, March 8 beginning at 8:00 a.m. We treat you to coffee and donuts and lunch. If you would like to help, please call 233-5985 or email cachecss@hotmail.com. Many of you have already signed up to volunteer, you will be contacted.

FINE ARTS INFORMATION ~ WINTER 2007

As part of Catholic Schools Week, the Fine Arts Department invites you to a celebration of our student's creative gifts. "The Good News in Education" includes over half of our student population in arts class. Our award winning Musicians, Actors, Artists and Writers will share their talents in an evening production. Please join us at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, January 31st.

Instrumental Music News ~ Congratulations to the 26 Band students who participated at the District Solo and Ensemble Festival on Saturday, January 20th! They represented Catholic Central very well by preparing and performing solos and/or ensembles in front of a judge and receiving good ratings. Ten events received a Division I (Superior) rating and have the opportunity to advance to the State Festival in March. The following students earned a Division I rating: Michael Alfaro, Kaitlin Barth, Kayley Eadie, Betsy Grant, Bill Grant, Rachael Graves, Brittany Hamlin, Meghan Hoop, Phillip Le, Gare Sartore and Brie Williamson. Congratulations!

Upcoming Dates: District Band Festival - March 1 (location to be announced); St. Patrick's Day Parade - March 17 in Conklin; State Solo & Ensemble Festival - March 24 at Hudsonville; Bandtastic Celebration! (grades 5-12) - March 27 at CCHS Gym.

Art I & II Semester Project Exhibition Art work is currently displayed in the hallway outside of both Art Rooms (101 & 201), in the Main Office trophy case and in the CC Media Center.

Senior Retrospective Art Shows - Our Art IV students will display an overview of their CC Art experience. Week of March 27 - Jackie Endres, Christine Vicari & Leah Williams. Week of April 10 - Andrea Deja, Joe

Militio, Dave Polanic & Matt Underhill. Week of April 17 - Emily Evers, Molly McMullen, Steve Olejnik & Jake Regan. Week of April 24 - Sarah Fricke, Erin Golder, Katie Jones & Lauren Menapace. Week of May 1 - Chaela Farley, Hannah Marko, Ana Prindle & Lauren Tietema. Week of May 8 - Betsy Cordes, Sara Rainbolt & Ty Zdanciewicz.

Mark your calendars: *"Into the Woods"* ~ Spring Musical ~ March 14-17 ~ Performing Arts Center at Aquinas College.

Welcome to Nina Croll! Nina is student teaching in our Choral Music Program from Aquinas College.

The **Choral Department** is having a great year. With nearly 200 students in four choirs, we are working hard to maintain a strong tradition of vocal music here at Catholic Central. Here is an update of some beginning of this semester:

Congratulations to Quyen Dinh, Michael Eardley and Nic Wise who will be representing our school by singing in the 2007 All-State Choir at the Michigan Music Conference - January 27, 2007.

Concert Choir will sing for the kick-off to Catholic Schools Week with a mass with Bishop Hurley on January 29, 2007.

Our Choirs will be singing Motown music & pop hits of the 1970's at the Fine Arts Celebration, January 31, 2007.

Quyen Dinh, Nic Wise, Michael Eardley, Kelsey DeWitt & Michael Jacobs will be participating in the Solo & Ensemble festival at GVSU on February 17.

Capella Choir is collaborating with Lacks Cancer Center to create a video featuring the choir singing Palestrina's Stabat Mater to be broadcast throughout the hospital during Lent.

Concert Choir and Capella will be competing in the regional Choral Festival in Allegan, March 2-3, 2007. Please consider coming out to support us at our competition.

Do you want to support the Arts at Catholic Central? Attend a concert ~ View the Art Exhibitions ~ Help cover the cost of the Fine Arts t-shirts ~ Encourage your student to take an Art class.

If you want to learn more about any of our programs or events, please contact our staff: Mr. Dennis Rybicki - Choral Music (dennisrybicki@grcss.org); Mrs. Ann Reinhard - Instrumental Music (annreinhard@grcss.org); Mrs. Kathie Walsh - Drama Instructor (kathiewalsh@grcss.org); Mrs. Kris DeYoung - Visual Arts (krisdeyoung@grcss.org); Mrs. Sara Olson - Visual Arts (saraolson@grcss.org).

The Brian Bush Award:

Below you will find a link for the nomination form for the Brian Bush Award.

Every year, Catholic Central, with the support of Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bush, offers The Brian Bush Award to a member of the Freshman Class. This award is given annually to a freshman that exemplifies high Christian ideals, has experienced positive academic growth, sees Christ in others and appreciates family. This award was

instituted for the 1989-90 school year in memory of Brian Bush, who passed away in 1989 during his freshman year.

This award is considered an honor to those who receive it because it recognizes those characteristics that Brian lived by during his time here at Catholic Central..

If you would like to nominate someone from the Freshman Class (Class of 2010), please use the enclosed form and return it to Catholic Central by Friday, March 16, 2007. A committee of freshman teachers will review all nominations and choose the winner who will be announced at the Honors Convocation in May.

[Brian Bush Award Nomination Form](#)

St. Thomas Tuition Raffle:

St. Thomas Tuition Raffle tickets are on sale now through February 8th. There will be one prize awarded on February 10th. Prize is good for tuition to any Grand Rapids area Catholic School, including CC & WC, up to \$5,500, or you may choose the cash prize of \$3,000. Tickets are \$5 each or 6 for \$25. Contact Amy Bocian at 559-8803 to order tickets.

Campbell's Labels For Education:

We Care is collecting Campbell's Labels for Education. Instead of the whole label, only the UPC codes are needed for credit. The Main Office has a collection box, so you can drop them off or send them in with your student. Please see the link below for product UPC's that are included in the promotion.

<http://www.labelsforeducation.com/eligibleproductsEN.aspx>

R.E.A.L.I.T.Y Check '07

Saturday, March 10 * 7-9:30 p.m.

South Christian H.S. Auditorium

Tickets are \$5 or \$3 for groups of 10 or more

Featuring Aimee Short ~ Aimee Short is the Founder and Director of BreakDown International, a youth centered organization that she started in Tucson, Arizona when she was 21 years old. This peer-to-peer performance outreach team uses drama, hip-hop dance, music, motivational speaking/spoken word and video/media to bring the message of sexual abstinence until marriage to teens in a way they can relate to and respect. With over 10 years experience speaking to teens about abstinence Aimee has a unique way of connecting and relating to youth. At 27 years of age Aimee is young, energetic, and a dynamic speaker. Her real life experiences and stories connect with audiences and teens are drawn in by her youthful edge.

And Musical Guests ~ The Andrew Kluck Band; plus new skits by R.E.A.L.I.T.Y Drama Team

Order your tickets now! Call Amanda at 532-2300

**Amanda will also be speaking at an All-School
Assembly at Catholic Central on Friday, March 9th.**

Grand Rapids Youth Commonwealth

Charity Basketball Game 2007

Mercantile Bank of Michigan vs. G.R.P.D.

The Grand Rapids Police Department and Mercantile Bank of Michigan will host a Charity Basketball game at Catholic Central High School. The date will be announced soon. The charity basketball game is to raise funds for the Grand Rapids Youth Commonwealth. The Grand Rapids Youth Commonwealth is a non-profit organization that provides much needed recreational and educational activities for the youth in Grand Rapids. The goal of the Youth Commonwealth is to reduce juvenile delinquency by assigning police officers to youth centers, a resident camp and neighborhoods to build relationships with the area's children.

Please join us for an exciting community event with activities for the family. Ticket prices are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. Commemorative game t-shirts available for \$10.