



# Welcome to Saint James School!

*There are a lot of exciting things happening for the 2016-17 school year, read all about it!*

We would like to welcome over twenty new families to Saint James School. Many of them came through word of mouth and that is the best advertising! The biggest compliment we receive is the referrals of our families. Many of these parents told me how they searched the Internet, FaceBook, or the various school review sites when they were looking at area schools. Then, when they visited and saw the family atmosphere, respectful students and devoted teachers, it sealed the deal! Thank you for your positive recommendations and for the reviews that you have put online. They make a difference and as Saint James School grows in numbers, we are able to offer more for your children, as you will see!

School will begin at 7:50 a.m. each day. Two teachers will be in the schoolyard beginning at 7:30 each day ready to welcome your child(ren) to school. We can continue to offer before care for those families that need an earlier start time. We hope you can all make the open house and barbecue on Tuesday, August 30th from 5:00-7:00 p.m. This is informal but a great way for students to see their room, their teacher and their friends before the first day of school on Wednesday, August 31st.

We have some new staff members and we would like to welcome Mrs. Christina Binette as our new fifth grade teacher! Mrs. Binette returns to Saint James after running a day care and preschool. She will be a great addition to our staff. She will be working closely with Ms. Karen Belanger who knows that class very well.

Secondly, we would like to welcome Mademoiselle Erica LaBella as our French teacher. Mademoiselle LaBella has over ten years teaching French and Spanish in Massachusetts Catholic schools. She is excited to join our school and comes with high recommendations! She is relocating to Maine and is searching for a room to rent or a small apartment for her and her golden retriever. Please email her or call the office if you know of anything.

And, of course, we welcome back our outstanding staff. They are dedicated and devoted and our school is better because of all that they do each and every day to differentiate instruction taking students as far as they can go and instilling a strong sense of values and service to our students. Saint James School is truly blessed!

Our school will be having an enrichment time from 2:00-2:30. This will be new this year but we believe it will be a positive addition for our students. The Biddeford bus will pick up at 2:05 and Biddeford students can take the bus or stay on days that they have enrichment time. For example, if they were going to stay for choir after school, they would stay on Monday for the enrichment time when choir would take place. During this time, students will have an opportunity to start homework, get extra help from a teacher, have extra reading time, or start an after school activity until dismissal at 2:30. We will also have a new pilot program that will take place at this time. We will have a limited number of Rosetta Stone licenses to offer another language for motivated students. Rosetta Stone offers over twenty different languages that are

taught using the computer so this will be an independent study for students that are seriously interested in learning another language. This will be open to middle school students and a form will be going home at the beginning of the year to assess interest but you can email Mrs. Naimey if you would like your child to be on the list. We also may be seeing if this would be motivational to use in the French classroom. Mademoiselle LaBella will oversee Rosetta Stone. Look for information in your folder on this program. We will be adding more enrichment opportunities as the year goes on.

I would like to congratulate Ms. Peck who received an Arts Grant from Saco Bay Center for Civic Engagement and will use that money to purchase used instruments. These instruments will be used in the fourth grade class to introduce students to the various band instruments and it will give them an opportunity to try these instruments before committing to the band and making a purchase. As we get more donated instruments, we may be able to expand this program.

The school was busy everyday this summer with the sprinkler system installation and you will see the black pipes with red fittings on the walls and the ceilings. The sprinkler heads are orange and are currently not functioning but Maine Fire Protection Systems will continue to work on the installation during vacations and long weekends throughout the year to get the system operational as soon as possible. The pipes are complete in the bottom level and the main floor and they are capped on the second floor. It is on schedule to be totally complete in the summer of 2017.

We are working on an exciting whole school experiment (designed by students) with University of Maine to release weather balloons into the stratosphere. These high altitude balloons will have boxes attached to them. University of Maine will retrieve the boxes so students can see the results. Mrs. Lafrance will work with students to come up with some interesting experiments. We are working with University of Maine to find a date in early September. If the winds are pushing into the ocean, they won't release the balloons so we hope to have good weather for this fun school experiment.

We will be spending all our early release dates this year writing the self-study for NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges). We will be comparing Saint James School to the standards and indicators of "best practices" from NEASC. Any parent that would like to be a part of this and assist in the writing process and provide feedback would be most welcome to join in. Please contact Ms. Anglin or Mrs. Theriault. We would welcome your input!

We continue to offer sports to boys and girls in grades six through eight. We offer girls and boys soccer, indoor track, girls and boys basketball, girls softball and boys baseball. Preliminary interest shows that any student that wants to play will have a team upon which to play. We are looking for a girls basketball coach, are you interested?

We will be creating a First LEGO League team again this year. This will begin early in the school year as the first competition is in November. We will open it up to students in grades 4-8. We offer this at no charge for students but we do have to pay costs associated with this competition. Do you know anyone that would like to sponsor our team?

The computer lab was rearranged to allow for collaboration and for independent work. Ten iPads and seventy five ChromeBooks were delivered to school this summer, thanks to the proceeds of the auction. A couple of staff members went to the Google Apps for Education Summit and we will have professional development throughout the year so that we make the most of this technology. So, as you can see, there are a lot of good things happening at Saint James School!

The teachers have not been able to be in the classroom as the sprinkler was being installed but the school is starting to be a flurry of activity. We look forward to welcoming you back at our Open House Barbecue on August 30th from 5-7 p.m. It is a great way to start the year and meet the other parents and talk to the teachers. You can even get a little business done- We will have gym t-shirts for sale at the barbecue (new dry fit ones and our regular cotton t-shirts), you can get your Fast Direct password (that is where teachers post assignments and you can watch your child's grades throughout the year). You can buy lunch tickets or put money in for before care/after care. Most importantly, it is a great time for your children to be comfortable, see their classmates, their teacher and you can meet other families so don't miss this barbecue and save the date!