

Dear St. Anastasia Families,

Welcome to the 2019-20 school year! In just a few weeks we look forward to greeting you back to campus in person on **Wednesday, August 28th** for the first day of school. For those of you who will be joining our St. A’s family for the first time, allow me to extend a digital hug and a big Aloha! I hope that your summer vacations have been restful and fun, and that everyone is ready to get back into the rhythms of learning. As you might be able to guess, I spent time with the big and little kids in my my niece and nephew—my Ohana—in Hawaii this summer, swam in the warm blue waters of the Pacific Ocean, hiked the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, and joined with educators from all over the country at Loyola University of Chicago to discuss school discipline reform. As we enter a new academic year as a Catholic school community, I look forward to bringing back with me the joy of family, community and the welcome spirit I shared with new and old friends in so many different settings across our country.

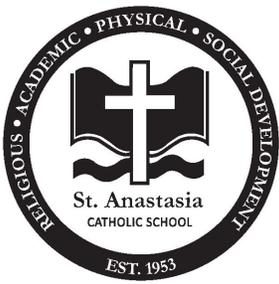
For the 7th consecutive year, we are thrilled to note that St. Anastasia Catholic School has been voted the “Best Private School,” by the readers of *Hometown News*. Please be sure to pick up a copy of the August 1 issue (pp. 31 & 34) at many local Westchester and Playa del Rey businesses.

While our families have been enjoying the restful peace of their favorite summer vacation spots, we have been busy at school preparing for your return, renovating classroom spaces with funds donated from last year’s successful ball, attending professional development workshops, meeting as a staff to revise our handbook and student conduct policies, and expanding our academic programs. I am excited to let you know that the very popular and successful science enrichment program, PS Science, will be growing from Grades 1-3, to support our Kindergarten through Grade 4 curricula this year. We are very grateful to have been awarded a grant from SoCal Gas and the LAX Coastal Education Foundation to provide for some of this expansion. Kudos also go to members of our Consultative School Board development team for helping to make this possible. In addition, we are in the final stages of working to bring PlanetBravo to our school. PlanetBravo is a local technology education company that provides instruction, curriculum and support to over 30 schools throughout Los Angeles. Their summer tech program is the largest in the city, serving over 2500 students annually. The school year curriculum provides foundational technology skills, including careful reflection about digital citizenship and responsible use of technology. Each of our classrooms has now been painted and refreshed, including new white boards and display walls in most rooms. Several classrooms have received upgraded smart projectors and other technology.

With the joy of new beginnings, we also note with sadness the passing of Audrey Griffin, Mrs. Melinda Hage’s mother, and Phyllis McGann, who was a St. A’s School alumni parent and the sister of Mrs. Linda Schmidt. Please pray for the repose of

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school@st-anastasia.org



their souls and for the well-being of all families who have been touched by loss this summer.

The heart of our academic program and indeed our school is our people. Teaching is a vocation, not just a career, because good teaching requires a gift of oneself that cannot be compensated. Our returning faculty and staff members begin this school year with a renewed sense of purpose and dedication to making a difference in the lives of our students. Please join me in welcoming them back to campus. As we start the new school year, please also welcome to our community several new faces on our teaching staff.

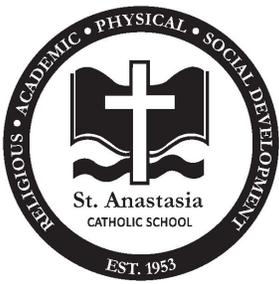
Mrs. Jennifer DiPaolo joins the Junior Kindergarten team as an instructional assistant. Mrs. DiPaolo has been active as a parent in the St. A's community for the last thirteen years, along with her husband Michael who recently completed a term of service on our Consultative School Board. She served as a volunteer and substitute on the JK team last year, so she knows the curriculum well. She holds two masters degrees from UCLA in Public Health and Education. She has previously taught in elementary schools in San Diego and Los Angeles, in addition to working in the public health sector.

Mrs. Laura Remington joins our junior high teaching team as our new science teacher. Like Mrs. DiPaolo, Mrs. Remington is also a St. Anastasia school parent. She is excited to become a full-time member of the parish and school community where she has served as a parent volunteer and active parishioner for many years. Mrs. Remington began her career as an educator in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, where she taught multiple subjects to grades one through eight, with a primary emphasis in Mathematics and Music. In 2003 industry called and Mrs. Remington moved to an engineering career at The Aerospace Corporation, where she has been working in Systems Engineering with satellite systems. Mrs. Remington is looking forward to combining her love of education with her recent work in STEM disciplines, to offer her students innovative and engaging experiences across the Science curriculum. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies and Masters in Education in Child and Adolescent Literacy from Loyola Marymount University, where she concurrently earned her CLAD teaching credential and specialized Reading certificate.

Mrs. Clare Thomason joins our junior high team this year as our 7th Grade homeroom teacher, teaching language arts, religion and social studies for middle school students. Although she is new to our community, her family has several longstanding connections with St. A's. Mrs. Thomason completed her bachelor's degree in English at Boston College. After graduating, she received a masters degree in student affairs from UCLA and her teaching credential and masters degree in Education from LMU. She comes from a family of educators and has a

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passion for teaching. Mrs. Thomason spent the last five years at St. Paul the Apostle School teaching 6th-grade language arts and history. She lives in Westchester and is thrilled to now be a part of the St. Anastasia community! When she's not teaching, she loves spending time with her husband and her two small children, John (20 months) and Mary (2 months).

Mrs. Susie Soriano, who was our 7th Grade homeroom and language arts teacher last year, will be moving to the 5th Grade homeroom this year. Mrs. Soriano has decades of teaching and administrative experience and will be a great addition to our 5th Grade team. We also recently learned that Mrs. Handal, our Vice Principal, has decided to step back from her full-time position at the end of August to focus upon several family projects. Although she will not be full-time at St. A's, she will continue to support the overnight travel experiences she has pioneered for St. A's, and will assist me with special projects during the year. As we look for a full-time replacement for Mrs. Handal, senior faculty in the school community have stepped forward to assist me with our academic program and we are currently searching for administrative assistance. Mrs. Tracy Mayhue, who has served as a coordinating administrator of our Social and Emotional Learning program, recently decided to move to Texas with her son to pursue a family opportunity there. We are in the process of transitioning some of her role to current staff, and are also reaching out to partners in the Social/Emotional learning community to continue support for our RULER program.

In case you have not been made aware of this important information for the start of school elsewhere, please note the following dates and times regarding school hours in the first weeks:

Junior Kindergarten:

- JK starts promptly at 8:00 AM every day
- Regular JK hours: 2:30 PM dismissal (M-Th) 12:00 PM (Fri)
- Wed – 8/28: 9:30 AM dismissal
- Wed/Thu – 8/29-30: 10:30 AM dismissal
- Mon 9/2: Labor Day – no school
- Tue-Fri – 9/3-6: 12:00 PM dismissal

Kindergarten:

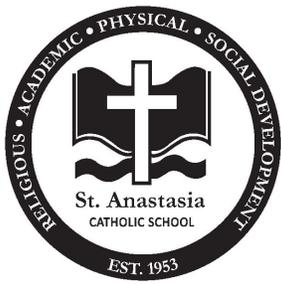
- Regular school hours begin Tues. 9/3
- Regular start: 7:45 AM every day promptly
- Regular dismissal: 2:30 PM (M-Th) 12:00 PM (Fri)
- Wed – 8/28: 9:30 AM dismissal
- Wed/Thu – 8/29-30: 10:30 AM dismissal
- Mon 9/2: Labor Day – no school

Grades 1-8

- Start promptly at 7:45 AM every day
- Regular dismissal: 2:50 PM (M-Th) 12:15 PM (Fri)

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- Wed-Fri — 8/28-8/30: 12:15 PM dismissal
- Mon — 9/2: Labor Day — no school

All parents, new and returning, are invited to a **St. A's Welcome Coffee**, sponsored by the PTO on **Wednesday, August 28th from 7:45 - 9:00 AM**. Come join us in Pastor's Plaza for an opportunity to (re)connect and enjoy some good conversation.

I hope that each of you will enjoy the remaining weeks of summer, and I look forward eagerly to seeing all of you on campus for the start of School on August 28th.

God bless,
Dr. Colvert
Principal

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