

Principal's Update – November 2009

Dear Parents,

Monday, November 9, 2009

I hope this version of the Principal's update finds you and your family well. As many of you know, Friday (11/6/09) represented the close of quarter one. As I walked the halls of Saint John's this past Friday, many of our students were keenly focused on tests, quizzes and labs. The end of the quarter is routinely filled with such activity and this past Friday was certainly no different.

The end of the 1st quarter, also coincides with the onset of the winter months, and for most of us this means a retreat indoors until spring. This is especially true for our students, as they now have limited opportunity to engage in outdoor activities.

Yet despite our collective migration indoors, it is vitally important for our students to stay involved in afterschool activities, especially during winter. Involvement in such activities (extra-curricular clubs, campus ministry programs, drama/arts productions, athletics, etc.) can provide significant benefit to our students, from both an academic and social perspective.

Academically, research has shown that students who engage in activities outside of the classroom typically have stronger organizational skills, solid study habits, better time management, and greater focus in comparison to their peers who do not participate in such activities. In short, the routines and structures created by engagement in activities outside the classroom, assist students in acquiring the aforementioned skills. Once learned, these skills can often lead to greater academic performance.

Second, involvement in activities outside the classroom also helps students and their peers create and maintain viable support systems. When you think about this point, intuitively it makes sense. The student who engages in an activity that both he and his peers enjoy, is more likely to establish lasting ties with those peers, especially when compared to students who do not engage in such activities. These ties allow students who share common interests, to develop healthy social networks rooted in that interest. Such networks are crucial to our students, as they can now rely on their peers (in addition of course to their parents, teachers and administrators) during times of stress.

As we enter the upcoming winter months, I therefore ask our parents to encourage their son(s) to get involved in one of our many clubs, activities or programs. A complete listing of our extracurricular programs can be obtained from the Dean of Students office or by contacting Mr. White at 508-842-8934 ext. 222.

As always, thank you for your continued support and partnership as we collectively work to prepare your son for future success. Enjoy the upcoming Veteran's Day holiday and may I now direct your attention to some important items below.

Sincerely,

Jacob A. Conca PhD
Principal

End of Quarter 1: As mentioned above, the 1st quarter closed on Friday, November 6th, 2009. First quarter report cards will be placed in the mail by Friday November 13th, 2009, if not before. Please be sure to sit with your son and review his academic progress this past quarter. If necessary, be sure to reach out to his teachers, counselor or academic dean (Dr. Morse for students in grade 9; Mrs. Depasse for students in grades 10-12) with any questions.

Parent –Teacher Conferences: As indicated on our school calendar, parents will have the opportunity to converse with their son's teachers according to the following schedule:

Monday 11/16/09: Parents with Last names A-I
Wednesday 11/18/09: Parents with Last names J-Q
Monday 11/23/09: Parents with Last names R-Z

Each evening begins at 6pm and parents can expect to have a few minutes with each teacher. Parents who desire longer conferences (beyond 5 minutes), should contact the teacher directly to make such arrangements.

H1N1: We continue to monitor the spread and impact of the H1N1 virus, both locally and here on campus. In particular, we continue to take the necessary precautions as outlined by the Center for Disease Control and local agencies. Those school-wide precautions include:

- Routinely cleaning of all areas of the school, paying particular attention to high traffic areas (bathrooms, water fountains, locker-rooms, classrooms, etc)
- Having hand sanitizer available for faculty and students, while simultaneously encouraging proper hygiene,
- Routinely reminding students to:
 - Avoid contact with anyone exhibiting signs of a cold or flu
 - Wash hands with soap/water or use a hand sanitizer
 - Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes

As a reminder, for those that do become ill with seasonal flu or H1N1, we recommend that you:

- Promptly inform Saint John's by calling the Dean's office at 508-842-8934, ext 221.
- Drink fluids, get plenty of rest and eat healthy foods.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Most importantly, stay home so as to avoid infecting other people. Students should be fever free, without the aid of fever reducing medicine for 24hrs prior to returning to school.
- Contact your primary care physician for further instructions.

While a few of our students have become ill with flu-like symptoms, we remain vigilant and have paid close attention to our school-wide attendance rate. Those numbers remain strong and, more importantly, consistent with our historical data. Over the last two weeks we have averaged approximately 97% attendance each day. Should you have any questions regarding the H1N1 virus and Saint John's, please contact the nurse's office at (508) 842-8934, ext 288.

Thanksgiving Break: School will close on Wednesday 11/25/09 for our Thanksgiving break and reopen on Monday 11/30/09. Saint John's wishes all our community members a happy and enjoyable Thanksgiving.

Holiday Bookstore Sale: Please note that our annual Christmas Bookstore Sale will be held on Saturday, November 28th, 2009, and again on Saturday, December 12th, 2009, from 9AM-1PM in the Salem Commons. Be sure to stop by the sale and purchase the latest Saint John's items in time for the holidays.

From The Dean's Office: A reminder: if you son is absent or tardy, parents must call the Dean's office before 10AM on the day of the absence/tardy to inform the school. Furthermore, on the day of return, the student must present a signed parental note to the Dean's office, explaining the absence/tardy. The Dean's office can be reached at 508-842-8934 ext 221.

School Cancellation/Delays/Early dismissal: With winter weather approaching, it is important to remind all of our **School Cancellation, Delayed Opening and Early Dismissals Procedures**.

Announcements for school cancellation, delayed opening or early dismissal will be made via the following media outlets:

<u>TV</u>	<u>Radio</u>	
Channel 4	WBZ 1030	FM 104.5
Channel 5	WRKO 680	FM 100.1
Channel 7	WTAG AM 580 and FM 94.9	FM 98.9

Channel Fox 25

WGFP 1310

We will also utilize the Saint John's website, www.stjohnshigh.org, our automated phone call out system and/or our automated email system to notify our school community in the event of a change in school hours. More information can be found on page 22 of the Student and Parent Handbook.

