

Principal's Update – March 2010

Dear Parents,

Friday, March 5, 2010

As we enter the month of March, I think it is safe to say we are all looking forward to the upcoming spring weather and the opportunity to once again go outside and enjoy the fresh air. Speaking of opportunity, I recently finished reading the book Outliers: The Story of Success, by Malcom Gladwell. For those that have read the book, you will remember that Gladwell attributes one's success to individual ability while also arguing that the opportunities granted to individuals throughout their lives play an equal, if not greater role in their ultimate success.

One of Gladwell's subjects is Bill Gates of the famed Microsoft Corporation. Gladwell talks about how Gates, while no doubt intelligent, curious and disciplined, benefited enormously from the opportunities he was granted at a very early age, opportunities his current competitors did not have. According to Gladwell, Gates had access to computers and computer code writing during his early adolescent years in 1968. At that time, access to computers was especially difficult to acquire, but due to a series of fortunate circumstances beyond his control, Gates was able to gain such access, and the rest is history.

Gladwell's premise is that because Gates had this access, he had a distinct advantage; one that allowed him to practice and hone his craft long before any of his future competitors. So you ask, what does this anecdote have to do with Saint John's and with my son's education?

Simply stated, like Gates' access to computers before anyone else, we feel that our students have access to some of the brightest educators and the most rigorous academic programs offered in the region. Moreover, we also believe that by being immersed in the Saint John's community, our students have direct access to the moral and ethical underpinnings that will hopefully help distinguish them from their contemporaries later in life.

The point here is rather direct. In much the same way Gates had access to a computer long before his rivals did, your sons have access to a Saint John's education, one that is certainly different from and distinct from other available options. Yet, as Gladwell points out, and Gates also illustrates, taking advantage of this access is crucial. After all, would Gates be enjoying his current status if he did not spend hours upon hours honing his computer skills at a young age? I think we would all agree that he would not.

So just as Gates took advantage of his access, I ask our parents to encourage their sons to maximize the advantages associated with a Saint John's education, advantages that other students, in other schools may not enjoy. Also please remind your son(s) that taking advantage of this access is crucial. For if they do not, the Saint John's education that they have access to will become nothing more than a wasted opportunity.

Thanks for reading, and please see a listing of important items below, including important calendar dates for the 2010-2011 school year.

Sincerely,

Jacob A. Conca PhD
Principal

Student Work Ethic: Parents, please be sure to remind your son(s) of the importance of finishing the year in strong fashion. This is especially important for our seniors. To help in this endeavor, I share with you a quote from an article recently published by the *National Association of College Admission Counseling*. The article is titled NACAC Admission Trends Survey: Why Colleges Revoke Offers of

Admission, and it noted that, “In 2007, 35% of colleges and universities revoked an offer of admission.” In those cases where college admission was revoked, 68.7% of the responding institutions cited “Final Grades” as a reason; 25% of respondents cited “Disciplinary Issues” as the cause for revocation.

While we will certainly remind our students of the value in working diligently through the end of the school-year, we ask that parents do the same. In this way we will help ensure that our students end the year in positive fashion, both academically and behaviorally.

Redbook: As many of you know, Saint John’s annually publishes the “Red Book,” a listing of students by name and town. This book is especially helpful in arranging carpools, contacting a classmate for missed homework, parent communication, etc. If you did not pick up a Red Book at the start of the year, please know that they are available in our main office.

Daily Bulletin Access: As many of you are aware, Mrs. Fitzgibbons in the Dean of Students office posts our daily bulletin online each day. The bulletin contains information on upcoming school events and can be accessed at www.stjohnshigh.org. For those who are interested, simply click on the link titled “School Life” and select the “Daily Bulletin Tab” to find out what is happening at Saint John’s.

Quarter 3 Interim Report Cards: Grades for the 3rd quarter interim closed on Friday, February 26, 2010. As a reminder, the interim identifies a student’s grade in each course, at the mid-point of a given quarter. 3rd quarter interims were emailed home on Friday March 5th, 2010. Please be sure to sit with your son and review his academic progress. If necessary, reach out to his teachers, counselor or academic dean (Dr. Morse is the Academic Dean for students in grade 9; Mrs. Depasse for students in grades 10-12) with any questions. To access these individuals you can utilize the school’s main phone number, 508-842-8934.

Junior Career Night: The Saint John’s Junior Career Night will be held on Wednesday, March 24, 2010, beginning at 6:45 pm and ending with refreshments in the Salem Student Commons at approximately 8:30 pm. **Our junior students are required to attend this event** and the **school dress code** is in effect during the evening. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Depasse if you have any questions. Mrs. Depasse can be reached at 508-842-8934, ext. 232 or jdepasse@stjohnshigh.org

End of 3rd Quarter: Grades for the 3rd quarter will close on Friday, March 26, 2010. 3rd quarter report cards will be mailed home by Friday April 2nd, 2010, if not before.

Class of 2014 (Incoming Freshmen): The Office of Admissions will host an informational night for all incoming families on Tuesday, March 30, 2010, beginning at 7PM. For more information, please contact the Office of Admissions at 508-842-8934, ext 266.

Bishop’s Holiday: Please know that there will be **NO SCHOOL** at Saint John’s on Monday April 5th, 2010. The reason being that at a recent school-wide liturgy, our celebrant Auxiliary Bishop Rueger, awarded the Saint John’s community a “Bishop’s Holiday,” resulting in a day off from school. Hence there is no school on Monday April 5th, 2010.

2010-2011 Calendar - Important Dates:

September: 3rd, First day of Classes

November: 24th – 26th, Thanksgiving Break (No School)

<i>December:</i>	20 th – 31 st	Christmas Break (No School)
<i>February:</i>	21 st – 25 th	February Break (No School)
<i>April:</i>	18 th – 22 nd ,	April Break (No School)
<i>May:</i>	13 th , 22 nd ,	Last day for Seniors Graduation (class of 2011)
<i>June:</i>	3 rd , 6 th , 7 th , 8 th , 9 th ,	Last day of classes for underclassmen Final Exams Final Exams Study Day – (No School) Final Exams (Last day of Finals)

Thank you for reading and certainly feel free to contact any of us with questions regarding the above items. As a reminder, the main phone number for Saint John's is 508-842-8934.

Respectfully,

Jacob. A. Conca, PhD
Principal