



I am very happy to inform you of some exciting new enhancements to our curriculum at St. Michael School. As you know, St. Michael School prides itself on its rigorous and challenging curriculum. We have well qualified teachers who care about their students. Our graduates excel in high school and beyond. We have standardized test scores that are well above the national averages.

But, as a school, we also continue to look for ways to improve, to make our school and curriculum better for our students. To this end, we are instituting a Catholic Classical Curriculum.

What does this mean? We will begin by further integrating our faith into all of the academic subjects. A Catholic education must be more than just Religion class and weekly liturgies. A Catholic worldview must permeate everything we do and teach. Our mission guides us to form our students in our faith and lead them to become disciples of Christ.

Our curriculum will become integrated and historically based. The students will study the great ideas of Western Civilization with Christ as the center. Democracy, science, art, and literature will provide the impetus for understanding how the past influences and unifies our culture. We will utilize great classical literature and primary sources so the students will be able to discern the original intent of the writers and the truths of the documents.

The curriculum will have a strong emphasis on language. We want the students to be able to think well, write well, and speak well. Reading, writing, phonics and vocabulary will be emphasized. The study of Latin will begin in the early grades and continue through grade eight. As the basis of all the Romance Languages, Latin study is beneficial not just to the acquisition of these languages but also to the teaching of logic, grammar and vocabulary.

Age appropriate methods of teaching will be utilized. In the early grades children are ready and able to memorize and be taught large amounts of information. This stage is referred to as the "grammar" stage. The "logic" stage begins as students approach the middle school years. Here students' ability to reason develops and so we teach logic and reasoning skills. Students will learn to debate and think critically, evolving reasoning skills to aid them not only in math and science, but to excel in life as they encounter problems and decisions.

This is not a change as much as a way to enhance what we are already doing. The classical model of education was the model of Catholic education until the first half of the twentieth century. It is proven to produce some of the highest SAT scores of any curriculum. It prepares students not just for high

school, college or a career, but to become lifelong learners who are informed, engaged and faith-filled members of society.

We are very excited about this new direction for our school. We will be the first school in the Diocese of Norwich to become a Catholic Classical School, a model that is not only attracting schools throughout the country, but is attracting students back to Catholic education. Catholic education has provided strong leaders throughout its history. We believe that Catholic education and this model in particular, are important for the future of our faith and our country.

If you would like more information about these exciting new enhancements, or about St. Michael School, please feel free to contact me at the school 860-599-1084; or by email dmessina@stmichaelschoolct.com

God Bless,

Doris S. Messina
Principal