



Our Lady of Victory School

Where Teaching Is Caring

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May 25, 2021

Dear OLV Families,

This school year has been memorable in so many ways. We worked together to complete an entire school year while managing a pandemic! I am so proud of the work our staff did this year as they changed up routines, lessons, and celebrations under a new set of guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Teachers had to fluctuate from teaching in person to a classroom, at home while in quarantine, and to students at home for various reasons. We welcomed Mr. Marc Stratton to our custodial staff and Mrs. Nina Clark as our music teacher this past fall. They have been great additions to our OLV family.

This spring we will graduate our largest class of 6th graders in my 7 years here. This class was in Kindergarten when I became principal in 2014. These 16 students, the majority of them have been here since Kindergarten, have led the student body through this school year by rolling with the changes and making the best of each situation while still making great memories. Enrollment was strong again this year at 113 students K-6 and 43 preschool students.

With restrictions on spacing, we celebrated mass together with just our 2-6th graders this year. We look forward to welcoming our Kindergarten and 1st graders back next fall. Mrs. Clark directed the Christmas program that had each classroom recorded and then edited together to present a whole school program. Many grandparents and family far away appreciated this opportunity to experience the program for the first time. During Catholic Schools Week, we made adjustments as needed and still had a fun filled week. Some of the highlights were the school family tree, the Living Rosary, the scavenger hunt, and the letters from our loved ones. Some of these will become CSW traditions!

This school year hot lunches were provided to students at no charge to the families. We have been informed that this will continue into the 2021-22 school year. All families can continue to access free summer meals by going to the website <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>. Put in your location to find the nearest Summer Food Program site and serving times.

We were able to conduct MAP testing with students in grades K-6 three times this year. We are pleased to see that most students have made expected gains this school year. In our K-3 classes, we implemented a new reading curriculum, Read Well, that explicitly teaches students how to attack unknown words. Teachers are seeing impressive reading growth in their students. Students at all reading levels are excited about their reading time and are enjoying books as they are making sense of the letters within them.

As we look ahead to the next school year, we are happy to see our enrollment numbers looking strong. We currently have a waiting list for Kindergarten in the fall. If we are able to return to our typical classroom limit of 24 students we will be able to enroll all those wanting to attend. Our preschool program is also seeing high demand for enrollment spots. We continue to be blessed with quality staff and families that make Our Lady of Victory School a wonderful place for students and adults. A short survey on the year was emailed to families this week. Please take this opportunity to give us your feedback on this past year.

Registration meetings this summer will be held in late July instead of August like in years past. We will walk you through the online registration at in-person meetings on July 21, 22, 27 and 28th. You received a letter with more registration details this past week. If you have questions over the summer, the office can be reached by phone at 218/736-6661 and leave a message or email to tzierden@ffolv.org. We will have limited office hours over the summer as well but phone messages or emails are the best way to set up a face to face meeting if it is needed. Scrip cards are still available over the summer as well, please give us time to get them together if possible.

Each summer, MNSAA, the group that accredits our school, asks us to send out a “State of the School” letter to families informing them of the progress we have made towards our School Strategic Plan goals this past year and plans for the future. Below you will find our current School Strategic Plan with notes on the progress that was made towards the objectives this past school year and the plans for the future.

OLV’s current School Strategic Plan (SSP): MNSAA requires that each school have a vision for their future and that they develop a plan to guide their improvements. Our current SSP was written during the 2016-17 school year as part of our Accreditation process and is in place for the next six years. This is an update to the strategies of the current plan that we are working on.

Objective 1: OLV will attract new families and retain current students

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a marketing plan to attract new families and engage alumni

Status: During 2020-21, we used articles in the Parish newsletter to reach out to the parish community.

Strategy 2: Develop a plan to keep tuition affordable

Status: This is the first school year when families could use their scrip rebate from last year to reduce their tuition expense. This helped 19 families reduce tuition by over \$2000.

Strategy 3: Develop scholarship options for Non Catholic Students

Status: The Endowment Board will continue to offer scholarships to all students regardless of religion. This will continue to be monitored in the future.

Strategy 4: Establish Barton Tutoring service for students with Dyslexia

Status: All students in K and 1st grade are screened according to Standardized benchmarks. There are currently 15 students K-6 working within the tutoring program. Moving forward, we will continue to train tutors to service our enrolled students.

Objective 2: OLV will maintain a safe, attractive learning facility that accommodates growth

Strategy 2: Expand facility to accommodate school growth and storage needs

Status: In 2019-20, the Building Enhancement Committee was formed. They secured a consultant and architect to work with. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all work was put on hold until meetings could resume in person. They met again in person in May 2021 to restart these processes.

Objective 3: Consistent communication for student success

Strategy 1: Utilize a Student Information System for centralization of information, record keeping

Status: During the summer of 2020, a contract with JMC was signed to utilize their student information System. Registration was done online in the fall of 2020. Staff and families are continuing to learn how to use it to its fullest.

Objective 4: Attract and retain quality staff

Strategy 2: Review compensation packages to ensure a just wage for all staff

Status: We were able to offer teacher contracts this spring that reflected the goal of getting to 80% of the public school.

Strategy 3: Establish a thorough listing of job posting and candidate search avenues

Status: We have gathered a list of various job posting sites and other ways of getting the word out about job openings. Depending on the nature of the opening, different options are more successful.

In closing, I hope each of you is able to make wonderful memories with your children and families this summer. It has been a wonderful but challenging year. Give yourself grace and make time to relax and renew yourself. My mom always said that each year goes faster than the one before... this seems to be holding true. Each stage of life has unique and special things to celebrate and enjoy. Find the joy in each of these stages, do not wish it away, it does go by fast. May God’s love and mercy continue to shine down on each of you.

Tonya Zierden, OLV Principal