



Holy Redeemer Catholic School

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Dear Rocket Families,

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year. Upon revisiting my letter from last year's Back to School folder, I found that much of what we were feeling then is still appropriate now and that it is worth restating. So here it goes. "I don't know that I have the right words to express our feelings about this upcoming school year. I know there is excitement and relief because many of us feel the need for our children to be back in school and back on a regular schedule. But there is also anxiety and frustration over the lack of control of the world around us. Somehow, we will have to embrace and endure all of these emotions as we hop back in the saddle. I just want to reassure you that at Holy Redeemer, your children will be in good hands. We have the most caring and concerned staff you will find. We are committed to doing everything we can to keep our students safe and healthy but also to ensuring they have as normal a year as possible. It won't be easy and there will be bumps along the road. But if we all work together and keep the lines of communication open, we will have the best experience we can." That being said, we have been told by the Catholic Schools Office that we will not be mandating masks at this time. I know that brings many emotions for many reasons. We know that each family must decide what is best for them. However, I would strongly encourage masks as we begin the year. I think it is the safest way to guarantee everyone's health and well-being. I do not wish to quarantine students for up to two weeks and I know that our students are better off in the classroom learning than at home. I also have high hopes that after we get back to school and as the vaccinations continue, we will see a decline in COVID cases again and we will set ourselves back on the path to freedoms that we were beginning to enjoy. We will not take as many other precautions to start the year as we did last year because we want to see and feel a return to normal and we feel that masks are the real key. Therefore, students will not be 6 feet apart in classrooms and they will not be restricted to playing with only their classmates at recess or wearing their masks at recess. We will keep our lunch tables to 4 at a table and we will encourage hand sanitizing and washing often. We hope that our "middle of the road" approach will help us to stay in school safely and still have minimal disruptions for all involved. However, this continues to be a fluid situation and our approach and guidelines could change at any time. We just ask for your patience and support as we continue to navigate this.

Moving along, there are a few updates I want to give regarding new staff. First, many of you may be aware that Mrs. Ziliak, our Kindergarten teacher, had her first baby in July. He is a healthy baby boy named Case Terry and he and mom are doing great. However, it was quickly evident that driving from Ft. Branch to Evansville with a newborn was a lot to handle so when a position opened up at Holy Cross, Mrs. Ziliak was a natural fit. We are blessed to have had her with us and we wish her all the best at her new school and as a new mom. Taking her place will be Miss Jessica McDermott. She just graduated from UE and was going to be the maternity sub for Mrs. Ziliak, but now she will be taking over her own Kindergarten class and she is very excited! Next, Mr. Altstadt and Mrs. Seibert were also doing the long drive from their respective homes of Boonville and Ft. Branch. As both are starting to think about starting families and were able to find positions closer to home, neither will be returning. Mrs. Seibert is expecting her first baby in January and will also be heading to Holy Cross. Cinda Hamilton will be taking her place. Mrs. Hamilton is a veteran teacher and is very excited to join us at Holy Redeemer. Mr. Altstadt is trying his hand at science at Boonville Middle School. Thankfully, we

were able to put Mr. Derek LeDuc in his place. Mr. LeDuc spent the fall semester of 2020 with us as Mr. Altstadt's student teacher so you should see some similarities between what you know and what you see this year. Finally, Ms. Shockley decided she was ready to try her hand at administration and has accepted the position of principal at St. Matthew in Mt. Vernon. She won't be far though as her girls will continue to attend Holy Redeemer and her family will continue as parishioners with us. Please say some extra prayers for her as she takes on this new role. Taking her place is Mrs. Jessica Zavala. She is a Holy Redeemer parishioner and she comes to us from EVSC. She will be working with our resource students and also supporting the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of our students, as well as supporting us in the office similarly to Ms. Shockley. Despite all these changes, I do have one new addition who is not replacing another teacher from this past year, but definitely filling a void. Ms. Devyn Haas will be our new music teacher. She is a recent graduate of UE and has a year of experience subbing at another Catholic school in the Diocese. She is also a product of one of our Catholic schools and is looking very forward to getting to know the Holy Redeemer community. Welcome to all our new staff members!

In the Preschool area, you will also see several new faces. Please welcome Mrs. Emily Wilson, Mrs. Audra Luedde, and Ms. Destiny Sandefur. They are replacing Ms. Thu Thien Suong and Mrs. Probert and also helping pick up some extra hours. Our preschool is full and then some and we have the best group of people helping our youngest learners begin their educational journey. Welcome to all our new faces!

Despite a crazy year, last year had a lot of shining moments, including the recent report about spring ILEARN scores where we learned that as a Diocese, our scores were the second highest in the state. At Holy Redeemer, we had the highest science scores in the state and the second highest ELA scores in the state. Our math and social studies scores were also very high and our combined math and ELA scores were in the top 1% in the state. For those of you that were here last year, you know what a special place Holy Redeemer is. For all of our new families, we welcome you to what you will soon find is a hidden gem on the north side of Evansville. We are excited that our enrollment is up for the second year in a row and we are looking forward to another different, but hopefully less stressful year. I look forward to welcoming you all on Tuesday!

Sincerely,



Andrea M. Dickel, Principal