



End of School Update - June 2019

As we close out the 2018-2019 school year and look ahead to the 2019-2020 year, we would like to provide updates for Our Mother of Consolation Parish School in the following areas: Catholic Identity, academics, communications, enrollment, and facilities.

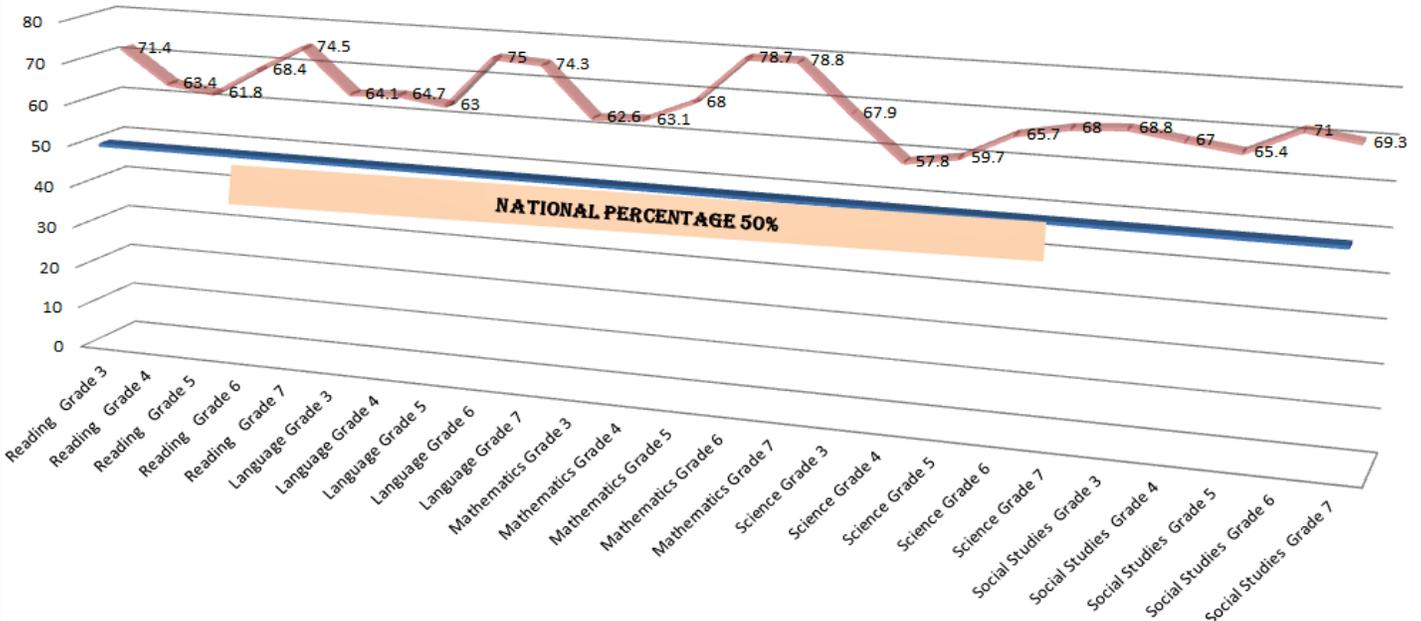
Catholic Identity

This year we welcomed Mr. Paul Cillo in the newly created role of Campus Minister, a position which the Catholic Identity Committee of the Board of Limited Jurisdiction (BLJ) developed, researched, budgeted, and recruited for last year. Mr. Cillo's work in his first year has been outstanding, clearly demonstrating the possibilities this position provides for all members of our community to deepen our

Faith commitments while at OMC. Parent surveys from past years had expressed a special desire to see their children more actively engaged in community service, and Mr. Cillo reports that this year students performed 180 hours of service on 13 different projects. We look forward to more years of great liturgies, retreats, and service opportunities under the direction of our Campus Minister.

Academics

Academically, OMC School continues to perform as a top-tier National Blue Ribbon school. Below is the Mean Curve Equivalent of our 2019 Terra Nova scores. As indicated by these results, OMC finished above the 50 percentile in all subjects for each grade.



Recently, we provided updates on exciting new academic initiatives for next year which include:

- **Math:** A 5th and 6th grade Summer Math Camp with Sister Maryanne.
- **STEM:** The MIT APP Inventor program which is a "Start-up Tech" program featuring marketing, live-time APP creation, business practices, and display.
- **Language:** A Rosetta Stone language program to provide a fully immersive multiple language option for students.
- **Enrichment:** New clubs being established which include a Chess Club, Lego Club, and Robotics club (partnered with LaSalle College High School).
- **ELA & Writing:** 2019-2020 we will be infusing into our 3rd to 8th grade ELA curriculum, a Writer's Matter program coordinated with LaSalle University.



To continue our commitment to academic excellence, the BLJ is forming an Academic Committee consisting of parents, teachers and board members. The Committee will work to support Mrs. Sheetz and our teachers to create unique and high-quality learning opportunities for our children.

In addition to our focus on academics, OMC School is committed to fostering an environment of open dialogue with our

families and values your constructive feedback on the school's performance. We would like to thank the families who took the opportunity to complete our school survey. The results were shared with the Board of Limited Jurisdiction. It is clear from the survey that there is strong support for the wonderful community that we have all created here. A clear majority of families cited the community and intimacy of the school makes OMC special. The surveys also pointed to three main areas of concern for our families: communications, facilities, and enrollment. We are moving to address these concerns.

Communications

Other than general school communications, there will also be a renewed focus on improving dialogue between you and faculty and staff on daily classroom activities and any significant developments with your child(ren).

Further, our electronic communications will continue to include our social media pages, Facebook, and Instagram, as well as our weekly family notes. Starting next year, we will be moving off the My Student's Progress platform and migrating to Option C. This will be an improvement as Option C offers a more user-friendly interface, reliability and



versatility. Further details will be made available over the summer months, please check your email for updates.

The formation of the academic committee outlined above will provide ways for our community to better communicate about and support the rich academic life of our talented students and teachers.



Enrollment

There was some concern over the increase in class sizes in our early childhood education program (Pre-K 3-4 & Kindergarten). We have made a very limited increase in size in Pre-K (3) and Kindergarten (1). The rationale for this increase is based on an analysis demonstrating that to support strong enrollment across the school it is important to keep full-sized classes in the Pre-K. Adding an additional student or two to Kindergarten allows us to account for students who leave in the early years. We would like to assure you that this decision was not made in haste and that there was much consultation with the Board of Limited Jurisdiction Enrollment Committee, and then final approval of the entire Board of Limited Jurisdiction who are focused on keeping the school's overall enrollment and finances healthy over the long-term.

We remain committed to the general rule of class sizes at or very close to 25. We believe that classes at that size offer our students the opportunity to express and receive the personalized attention that is critical to a 21st century education.

Facilities

There has been consistent concern over several years of surveys on the lack of playground and lunchroom facilities. The School Facilities Committee is working to address these issues and this as an opportunity to provide a general update on various projects occurring with the School Facilities.

- **The Learning Commons:**

There are plans this summer to convert the library into lunchroom and multipurpose space. Outdated books and reference materials will be recycled, some of the books will remain in the space for student reading, and others will be distributed to enhance the classroom libraries. Looking ahead the Facilities and Academic Committees will discuss ways to make this a multi-purpose "Learning Commons" space that serves different functions at different times of the school day.

- **Renovation of Front Play Area:**

The play space in the front of school will be completely renovated with a new artificial, soy-based turf. The drainage issues will also be corrected, assuring that grades Pre-K and Kindergarten in particular, and all grades in general, will have a "mud-free zone" for outdoor activities

The future looks bright for OMC School!

throughout the year. This project would not have been possible without the successful efforts and hard work of the Home and School Association who donated \$20,000 to assist with the installation of the turf.

- **Outdoor Learning/Play Area Phase I:** The first phase of the Outdoor Learning and Play space will begin in the area next to the convent, pending the City of Philadelphia providing approval and issuing a permit. The goal of the facilities committee is to have the volunteer-build wooden play structure ready for use at the start of next school year. The Facilities Committee will be reaching out for volunteer builders when the project gets started.

- **Windows and Masonry Work:** The school's energy use, providing natural lighting in classrooms, and the overall state of the physical plant, has been an ongoing project of the parish and the school. This project, which will be completed this summer, has taken four years to complete and cost \$825,000 (Parish \$275,000/School \$550,000).

We hope this update provides insight into where we have been and where we are going. Our commitment to offering each child an excellent education, rooted in the Catholic faith, and nurtured in a strong community environment, is the reason for our existence. We are grateful to have your family as a part of our OMC family, and we ask your commitment, time, and support to continue our mission as a school and as a community.

In de Sales,
Fr. Bob Bazzoli, OSFS - Pastor
Mrs. Patricia Sheetz - Principal



Congratulations to the Class of 2019