



October 2019

Parents,

Burlington Catholic School is officially finishing its sixth week of school! I truly want to thank you all for your support throughout this transition. The staff and I really appreciate everyone's patience and understanding – we know that this has been a year of change and change can be very difficult. Please know that every change we make is well thought out and with our students' best interest at heart! We will continue to work on more open communication regarding changes within our classes and school.

Over the past few weeks, a few questions have been raised regarding curriculum, instruction, and grading practices. Below is a more detailed explanation which hopefully will answer some of your questions!

Curriculum / Instruction

This is something that the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, in collaboration with the principals and teachers, is constantly reviewing. The staff and I have attended many meetings and professional development days to look at curriculum, more specifically the exit expectations and subject standards, to see where and how each standard could be met by the end of a given year. As we dug deeper into this, we found that certain subjects which were once their own grade on the report card, could easily be embedded into other classes. The rationale behind this is that many of the skills being assessed were already being assessed in other core subject areas and ultimately taking instructional minutes away from those core classes. One specific subject that was evaluated about 10 years ago was technology. Technology standards including keyboarding, Google/Microsoft Office, and some coding were already a part of English-Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science and will continue to be taught at each grade level within the main classroom using the Chromebooks and computer labs. Another area of discussion was Geography. Social studies curriculum is broken up into multiple sections, one being geography. Because geography is a main portion of the social studies standards, all students must be taught geography. For more details on curriculum, please visit <https://www.archmil.org/Education/Curriculum.htm>.

Elective classes in the middle school, allowing for students to have more choices, were also something that Burlington Catholic School wanted to do this year. Unfortunately, being our first year as one school, the staff and I did not feel that there was enough time to give electives the focus it needed to be executed well. This is something we will continue to work on throughout this year with a goal to implement them next year.

Grading

The PowerSchool gradebook is designed to allow for parents to see grades at any time. However, not all grades that you see will impact the overall final grade. Some homework, mini quizzes, and other formative assessments are considered informal. Formative assessments are ***for learning*** and is characterized by direct and constructive feedback. Summative assessments such as mid-chapter quizzes, final tests, projects, discussions/reflections, and presentations are an



assessment *of learning* and are designed to provide evidence of the achievement of standards. Students will have multiple assessment opportunities –and different assessment options – to demonstrate their understanding of the standards. Teachers determine whether a given task is formative (practice) or summative (evaluative) – students will receive feedback on all assessments, some in the form of a grade, some in the form of a narrative. Ultimately, we want the students to learn and grow. Although not all feedback will be in a form of a grade, teachers continue to stress, and we hope you will reiterate at home, that practice is key to mastering any skill! Homework and studying are the practice to prepare you for the final assessment – if you don't practice, you won't be successful.

Report Cards

The Archdiocese report card will look slightly different this year for grades 1st-8th grade. As I mentioned last year, our school year is now broken into three trimesters rather than four quarters to allow for more time in the beginning of the year for teachers to really get to know the students. Our first trimester will end Friday, November 22nd, with report cards going home at conferences on Monday, November 25th or Tuesday, November 26th. However, remember that you can see the progress of your student's grades anytime on PowerSchool.

Thank you again for your continued support and feedback! We are One – please continue to reach out to your students' teachers or me at anytime with questions or concerns. Together, we will continue to make Burlington Catholic School successful!

~Mrs. Berg