

March 3, 2016

Many of you have already heard that Chris Arnold, Principal of St. James/Seton School has decided to retire at the end of this school year. I have been talking with her concerning this decision for several weeks because the renewal of contracts for principals are always renegotiated at this time of year. Within another six weeks the teacher contracts for Catholic schools are then renewed. She has done a wonderful job for the school over the 43 years that she has been connected with St. James and St. James/Seton. The last few years have been the most amazing in that we have been able to start a pre-school program for the school, go through a lot of new government regulations concerning cafeteria set-ups, and have produced tremendously successful graduating classes. What has impressed me is that she handled these challenges while dealing with the illness and death of her mother and while fighting cancer herself. Her return to good health was a real blessing. But as she reaches retirement age this year she has decided to listen to what her body has been telling her these past months and move toward retirement so she can rest, enjoy a new grandchild, and enjoy some free-time. I am very happy for her.

The work that she has done as a teacher, vice-principal, and then principal has been a real blessing for the school. I know that there are many students who owe a great deal of their success to her hard work. We will miss her. I personally am praying that she will be able to enjoy many happy and joyful years of retirement. She deserves them.

It also happens that the school's assistant principal, Paulette Theisen, has decided to accept a different position within the Archdiocese. I know that she has been approached by people from several different institutions in the past two years and at this time feels that she is ready to accept the challenges of this new opportunity, which will be announced soon. She has been with the school for four years and has been a real blessing in the work she has done to help with teachers and students. But most of you are more aware of her work with development, which has helped with tuition assistance, starting the pre-school and is now helping to upgrade the computer lab. There have also been countless other improvements in the school's workings in areas of the facility and electronic upgrades in that area of computers that is so important for our children in their preparation for the world they are stepping into.

That fact that these two jobs are changing at that same time is not a total surprise. This is the time for contracts to be renewed so changes happen. The good news is that there seems to be very few changes coming up in other positions of staff or teachers over the summer. As pastors overseeing the workings of the school, Fr. Tom and I will be working with the Catholic Schools Office to find the best way to fill these open areas of our school staff. The first step is already finished in that we are now advertising for the position of principal. The second step will be to screen candidates. Part of this process will be handled in conjunction with the CSO because there are four other schools in the Archdiocese that are also seeking principals. It is that time of year. We will then assemble an interview team to find the best fit for this job. Deciding what the best route for finding a replacement for vice-principal will be done in conjunction with the hiring of the principal since that person's skills will dictate what they want and need for assistance.

I ask that each of you pray for these two wonderful people as they leave and pray that we find the best possible replacements to keep our school ready to provide a great Catholic education for the children of our parishes and our area.

Fr. Frank Baumert