



# St. Angela Merici Parish School Family Newsletter

August 23, 2009

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20830 Lorain Road, Fairview Park, Ohio 44126 - Phone: 440-333-2126 - [www.samparish.org/school\\_index.html](http://www.samparish.org/school_index.html)

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## Contents with this Family Mail

### One per student:

1. **Emergency Medical Form**
2. **Legal Custody Form**
3. **Emergency Phone Form**
4. **Cafeteria Order form**

### One per family:

1. *Student-Parent Handbook 2009-10*
2. **Handbook Agreement**
3. **Acceptable Use Policy**
4. **Free or Reduced Lunch Application**
5. **Media Consent form**
6. *Arrival and Dismissal Map*
7. *School Room Map*
8. *Cafeteria Procedures*
9. *Bookstore List*
10. *Children's Choir*
11. *Extended Care*
12. *Parent Skill Bank*
13. *Market Day*
14. *Family Mail*
15. *Sunshine Committee*
16. *Family Mass Information*
17. *Sunday School Registration*

**Please return all forms to the school office in your Family Mail Packet by no later than September 4<sup>th</sup>.**

All students whose parents have completed all required forms by September 4<sup>th</sup> will have a Reward Dress Down on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

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## Did you know . . .

**Our school community has 74 new students and 44 new families beginning this school year!**

Dear St. Angela School Families,

**Welcome to the 2009 -10 school year!** Our theme this year is “**Handing on the Faith**” focusing on spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in our world today. Our theme reminds our school community to be a witness in today’s world and to spread our faith to all we encounter. The Good News of Christ is most evident in the daily life of our school community.

St. Angela Merici Parish School is an excellent Catholic parish elementary school in terms of our Catholicity, academics and culture. As parents who have selected our community for the Catholic education of your children, this is no surprise. After a year of analyzing a flurry of multiple measures of data, the OCSAA Self-Study Process clearly demonstrated what parents and staff already knew: we have a great Catholic school. The analysis process celebrates and affirms our school strengths and builds upon these strengths for a bright future of continued excellence in Catholic education. We, as a school community, will continue to maintain and retain current best practice successes while continuing to target key areas to innovate and renovate so we can continue to provide our best for the students.

For students, we will continue to provide the solid basis in faith and academic traditions which St. Angela’s reputation is founded. However, our school will continue to seek out, evaluate and implement new best practices which build upon our established strengths. For this year, we will be: revising recess and lunch schedules which gives us the opportunity to foster student wellness, realign our middle grades (4 – 8) to meet the changing needs of the 9 to 14 year old, expand our technology resources to include web based Accelerated Reader and more Internet based textbooks, implement the new diocesan Language Arts curriculum using research based learning strategies, and launch Edline standards-based progress reports for kindergarten.

For parents, we are providing more opportunities to support your role as primary faith educators of your children. Our new family mentoring program will assist our new families during their first year, and our new Parent Skill Bank provides parents the opportunity to offer their time and talent to the benefit of our students and school through a wide variety of volunteer opportunities including more faith-based and social-justice initiatives.

Working together to weave our tradition of faith and excellence with innovations will provide our students a solid Catholic education in order to hand on our faith to the next generation. Your sacrifices to support your child’s faith formation through Catholic education, blended with our faculty’s hard work and dedication, are a strong basis upon which our students can grow in faith, mind and body.

In Christ,

Mrs. Denise Modic Urban, M.A.Ed.  
Principal

## Building Bridges for Success: **Promoting School and Home Communication**

Providing parents with communication tools to build a bridge between home and school is a priority at St. Angela Merici School. A strong partnership with parents and staff is essential for a successful school experience for each child.

Communication tools include:

**Family Mail** – Each family received their first Family Mail on Welcome Back Day and will receive Family Mail each Friday through their youngest or only child. The Family Mail envelopes are to be returned each Monday so that the envelopes can be emptied and reloaded. Here are a few reminders for a successful Family Mail program:

- *Family Mail is intended for items of interest to the entire school community not specific individuals. All Family Mail inserts must be reviewed and approved by the principal and **must be submitted no later than noon on Monday before the Friday it is sent home.***
- *Only items for the school office should be returned in your Family Mail envelope. Items for specific teachers should be given to the teacher not Family Mail. Also, Campbell Soup labels should be returned to your child's homeroom teacher not Family Mail.*
- *Please do not decorate the envelope or cover the labels on the envelope except for clear contact paper.*
- *If you lose your Family Mail envelope, contact the school office. Please note that there is a \$3 replacement charge.*

**A special thanks to our Parent-Teacher Connection (PTC) volunteers who coordinate the loading and unloading of the Family Mail weekly!**

**Progress Reports and Report Cards** – St. Angela Merici School provides Progress Reports for each student through the internet Edline Program. At the end of each quarter, each student receives a paper Report Card informing parents and students progress for the quarter.

**Edline** – This internet-based program provides parents with information about grades, assignments, and other tools in a password protected online environment. See the article to the right for more information

**Conferences** – Formal conferences are scheduled twice a year. In addition, conference appointments may be scheduled by either parents or teachers as needed throughout the school year. It is important to schedule conference appointments rather than impromptu conferences so that the teacher can give you his or her full attention during the conference.

**Email** – Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teachers through email since each teacher has a St. Angela Merici email account. Each teacher's email account is linked to their Edline home page.

**Weekly Principal Letters and Newsletters** – On Fridays, parents will receive a Weekly Principal Update Email. To receive this email, make sure you have an email account active with your Edline account.

### **Have your activated your Edline parent account for all of your children?**

*If not, please take a few moments to do so since Edline is an important home-school communication tool.*

*Benefits of Edline include:*

- *Access your child's grades online 24-7 through our paper-free Progress Reports.*
- *View the school's master calendar for dates and times of events.*
- *Receive emails from the school and teachers, including notices when your child's teacher uploads new grades.*
- *Check your child's homework assignments.*
- *Access important school forms.*

**Make sure to link an email address to your Edline account so that you will receive important emails from the school. Please know that your email addresses are not published and can only be accessed by school staff who directly work with your child.**

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### **Have you visited the school website yet?**

*If not, go to the parish website at [www.samparish.org](http://www.samparish.org) and click the school link on the left sidebar.*

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# School News and Updates

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## **NEW!** **Parent Skills Bank registers parent volunteers online**

Rather than completing separate paper forms for each and every volunteer opportunity within the school, St. Angela parents now can indicate their interest in any of the volunteering opportunities available on an online Parent Skills Bank. **All interested potential volunteers need to register with the Parent Skills Bank by August 28, 2009** by:

- See Edline News link on the Edline homepage or
- Go to [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ZbjUEwSfhW1uXRfOXJmAbw\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=ZbjUEwSfhW1uXRfOXJmAbw_3d_3d). Please note that if both parents (or grandparents) would like to volunteer, each adult must separately register in the Parent Skills Bank.
- For those families who do not have Internet access, please contact the school office for a paper copy of the registration.

For the safety of the students, all volunteers must be Virtus Compliant in order to volunteer in our school. The next Virtus Volunteer Training Session at St. Angela Merici is Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm in the Social Hall. To register for Virtus Training, go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) and click the "Registration" link on the left.

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## **NEW!** **Family Mentor Program begins**

Reaching out to the newest parents of the St. Angela Merici School Community with a welcoming spirit is the primary goal of the New Family Mentoring Program. The experienced mentors have been contacting their new families to welcome them to our school community. In addition, the mentors act as a contact person during the first year for any questions the new families may have.

A special thanks to our mentors for sharing their time, talent and experience to our new families: **Maureen Ashdown, Cathy and Charlie Barendt, Christine Becker, Colleen and Ed DeVenney, Heidi DiGennaro, Kathy Haagensen, Rose Jira, Jodi Krueger, Sarah Lorek, Mary and Mark Molnar, Mary O'Donnell, Paula Nieberding, Dina Picha, Karen Prcela, Kathleen Proctor, Tricia Schultz, Linda Sheehan and Nancy Yantek.**

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## **OCSAA Self Study Update**

St. Angela Merici School has completed the first year of the OCSAA Accreditation Self-Study and has authored an initial draft of the preliminary school improvement plan. The next phases of the process include the Internal Validation by the Office of Catholic Education in early fall and the External Validation by the Ohio Catholic Schools Accrediting Association (OCSAA) in late winter or early spring.

For your information, the quantitative survey results from the beliefs inventories and the perception surveys can be viewed in the OCSAA Self Study and Survey Information folder under Edline Contents (top right section of the homepage).

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## **School Summer Improvement and Maintenance Projects**

The new windows on the south side of the school building have been replaced with proceeds from the Parish Raffle which were earmarked for new windows. In addition to giving the front of the school building a facelift, the new windows brighten the classroom environment while keeping the temperature in the rooms more stable due to the insulation in the windows. A special thanks to all families who sold Parish Raffle tickets!

Other improvement and maintenance projects include:

- Installing a bathroom in the school clinic (to be used by ill children only)
- Moving of the Art Room to the main floor with a new sink in the room
- Adding ActivBoards so that Art and Music now have this important technology
- Painting and staining
- Repairs and maintenance

As you can see, maintenance and repairs are a costly, but necessary, expense to the parish and school. A special thanks goes out to Mrs. Eva Ungureau and her staff for their hard work this summer.

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## **Welcome to our new staff members**

Welcome to the new professionals who will be joining St. Angela's this year.

**Miss Katie Ingrassia.....Intervention Specialist (PSI Special Education)**

**Mrs. Diane Pacella.....Psychologist (PSI)**

**Mrs. Nancy Kekelic.....Speech and Language Specialist (PSI)**

**Mrs. Lisa Bandsuch.....Title I Reading Tutor (Fairview Park City Schools)**

**Mrs. Jianhui Du.....Mandarin Chinese K – 3 (PSI)**

**Senora Marissa Gonzalez.....Spanish 4 – 8 (PSI)**

**Mr. Jason Werden.....Instrumental Music and Band (Music Alliance)**

Currently, PSI is actively seeking a Gifted Specialist to replace Mrs. Brady who accepted a full-time position in a public school district.

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## Recess and cafeteria innovations for student wellness

Based on the recommendations of St. Angela's Wellness Committee and the feedback from students, parents and staff, St. Angela Merici Parish School has launched several innovations on both the playground and the cafeteria to meet our students' needs and promote policies of student wellness. Key initiatives include:

- **Play Zones at recess**, organized by Mrs. Jean Strippoli (our Physical Education Teacher), will provide a variety of physical activities from which students may choose. The goal of Play Zones is to provide safe and non-competitive activities so that all students are physically active during recess. *A special thanks to our Parent Teacher Connection (PTC) for funding this initiative.*
- **Staggered times for recess and lunch** are designed to minimize serving wait time in the cafeteria and to reduce time spent in recess transitions. In addition, our youngest students (K – 2) will have additional time in the cafeteria since it takes the younger students longer to eat than the older students.
- **Increased supervision** at both lunch and recess will include teachers as part of the supervision team.
- **More access to gym** during recess by restructuring the school's master schedule to provide more space (including indoor recess days) for physical activity.
- **New seating arrangements in cafeteria** will promote student acceptance and respect while providing students the opportunity to make positive choices.

### 2009 – 10 Recess and Lunch Schedule

10:50 – 11:30 am .....	Grade 6 Recess/Lunch
11:00 – 11:40 am .....	Grade 5 Recess/Lunch
11:10 – 11:50 am .....	Grade 4 Recess/Lunch
11:20 am – Noon .....	Grade 3 Recess/Lunch
11:30 am – 12:10 pm .....	Grade 7 Recess/Lunch
11:40 am – 12:25 pm .....	Kindergarten Recess/Lunch
11:50 am – 12:35 pm .....	Grade 2 Recess/Lunch
Noon – 12:45 pm .....	Grade 1 Recess/Lunch
12:12 pm – 12:54 pm .....	Grade 8 Recess/Lunch

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## Redesign of Intermediate and Middle School Teams

**Intermediate (Grades 4 and 5) Team** - Providing continuity of care for our students ages nine through eleven over a two-year period is the goal of our new realignment of grades 4 and 5. During these two grades, the curriculum becomes more challenging for our students so our goal was to create a nurturing learning environment for the students to grow and learn with the same teachers over a two-year period.

**Middle School (Grades 6 – 8) Team** - The challenges of our middle school curriculum, coupled with the challenges of meeting the dynamic needs of the emerging adolescent, were two key factors in the redesign of our middle school team. Our students in grade 6 will be given the opportunity to transition into grades 7 and 8 over the course of the year to ease the adjustment to the rigors of our college preparatory junior high program. Also, several classrooms have been relocated so that our students in grades 6 – 8 have their "own area" in the school building. ***In addition, students in grades 6 – 8 will have individual class schedules that they will be responsible for following during the school day in order to help prepare them for high school class changes.***

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## NEW! Web Based Accelerated Reader for 2009 – 10

Beginning this fall, St. Angela Merici will be using the web-based version of Accelerated Reader. Benefits of the web-based version of Accelerated Reader (AR) include:

- ✓ Access to all AR tests available rather than a limited number of individually purchased tests.
- ✓ Online listing of all available books can be viewed at home or at the library through Internet access.
- ✓ Online parental access to your child's AR account in order to monitor your child's progress (what tests were taken and test scores).
- ✓ Students will be able to take AR tests in their classroom in addition to the technology lab and library.

St. Angela staff is currently installing the new program. Once web based AR is operational, students and parents will receive information on access to this new program.

***A special thanks to our PTC for funding the initial set-up and first year fees for this program.***

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## NEW! Language Arts Curriculum

St. Angela Merici School will be implementing the diocese's new Language Arts and Reading graded course of study with new textbook adoptions next school year. Although the diocese's curriculum was strong and effective, the Diocese of Cleveland revised the Language Arts and Reading curriculum as part of the revision cycle as required by the Ohio Department of Education to include new state standards while integrating current best practices. Reading and Language Arts teachers collectively spent hundreds of hours in evaluating, discussing and building consensus on the textbook adoptions in order to determine what series would best meet the needs of our students. Funding for the new series was provided by the State of Ohio Auxiliary Services.

**Grades K – 5: Macmillan McGraw Hill's 2009 Treasures Reading Series** The 2009 Treasures Reading and Language Arts series provides our teachers and students with the best practices outlined in the National Reading Panel's recommendations, which is the current "gold standard" in reading instruction. Other key highlights on the series include:

- Assessments (unit tests and weekly quizzes) focus on the vocabulary and skills learned rather than memorization and recall of story facts. Also, there will be one assessment rather than individual assessments for each language arts "subject" (i.e. fewer tests for students).
- Rather than learning the language arts (reading, phonics, spelling, grammar and writing) as separate subjects, the students will explore and learn reading and language arts skills in an integrated manner (i.e. *the phonics skills learned in phonics will be used in reading, spelling and English*).
- Resources to meet the needs of all learners, including special education and gifted, are available with this series.
- In addition to the textbook, leveled reader small books and large trade books (i.e. novels) are a part of this series.
- Development of a full-range of genres is included along with reading skill development for the content subjects of science and social studies.
- An online full textbook will be available for students and families.

**Grades 6 – 8: Prentice Hall's Writing and Grammar Series** The Prentice Hall Writing and Grammar series for grades 6 – 8 will be used in Language Arts (English) this year. This series provides current best practice resources to develop students' skills in both writing and grammar through integration of these key skills in English. Highlights of this series include:

- Rubrics for writing assignments, in addition to examples of student writing samples, are included in this series.
- Grammar and writing conventions are explored throughout the text with ample practice and examples, in addition to correlations to the writing segment.
- An online full textbook will be available for students and families.

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## Online Textbook Resources Available to Students

***Concerned about the weight of students' bookbags and what to do when a textbook is forgotten for a homework assignment? St. Angela Merici has been acquiring online textbooks and resources with our new textbook adoptions to help ease these concerns over time. Beginning this school year, students have many more options for online textbook resources.***

### **Online Interactive Textbooks**

- Treasures Reading (K – 5) **NEW!**
- Prentice Hall Mathematics (6 – 8) **NEW!**
- Prentice Hall Writing and Grammar (6 – 8) **NEW!**
- Social Studies Grade 5
- Social Studies Grades 6 – 8 **NEW!**

### **Student Express CD Rom**

- Civics (grade 8)
- Music (K – 8)

### **Online Audio**

- Vocabulary Workshop (6 – 8)

### **Online Resources**

- Mathematics (K – 5)
- Treasures Reading Activities and Leveled Reader Database (K – 5) **NEW!**
- Social Studies companion web site (6 – 8)

***Your child's teacher will provide you with information in August/September for those online textbooks and resources available to your child.***

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## NEW! Online Kindergarten Progress Reports

Beginning this year, parents of our kindergartners will be able to access progress reports on Edline. The revised kindergarten standards-based progress report is aligned with the new curriculum and will provide parents with great detail on their student's progress in relationship to the curriculum. In addition, information on student progress will significantly increase from the twice a year report cards previously used.

**Upcoming school events for the first two weeks of school include:**

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Sunday  
August 23<sup>rd</sup>

- **Welcome Back Day (Cafeteria: 9 am – Noon)**  
*If a family cannot attend Welcome Back Day, arrangements for the first Family Mail and homeroom assignments may be made beginning Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> by contacting the school office at 440.333.2126 or [school@samparish.org](mailto:school@samparish.org).*

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Monday  
August 24<sup>th</sup>

- **New Family Orientation (Social Hall Seminar Room: 7 pm)**  
Parents of new students should attend this informational session. Please RSVP regrets only to [school@samparish.org](mailto:school@samparish.org) by noon on August 24<sup>th</sup>. Come find out about our school for a smooth beginning of the school year and to meet some of our New Family mentors at this meeting.

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Tuesday  
August 25<sup>th</sup>

- **Open House, K – 8 with a parent (Noon – 2 pm) NEW!**  
Students, along with a parent, may come into the school from noon to 2 pm to meet their new teacher and drop off supplies during Open House.

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Wednesday  
August 26<sup>th</sup>

- **First Day of School, grades 1 – 8**  
Welcome to a new school year! School begins at 7:45 am with drop-off beginning at 7:30 am. Students are to be dressed in school uniforms beginning on the first day and should have all supplies.
- **Kindergarten Orientation, 9 am – 11 am REVISED!**  
Both the kindergartener and one parent are to attend this two-hour session which begins at 9 am.
- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**

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Thursday  
August 27<sup>th</sup>

- **First Day of Kindergarten**
- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**

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Friday  
August 28<sup>th</sup>

- **Opening All School Mass, 1 pm NEW!**  
**All are welcome to join us!**
- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**

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Monday  
August 31<sup>st</sup>

- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**

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Tuesday  
September 1<sup>st</sup>

- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**
- **Parent Band Meeting (SH: 7 pm) Tentative**

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Wednesday  
September 2<sup>nd</sup>

- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**
- **Curriculum Night (Gym: 7 pm)**

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Thursday  
September 3<sup>rd</sup>

- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**
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Friday  
September 4<sup>th</sup>

- **Students are to pack lunch or plate lunch is available.**
- **Grandparents Day, Kindergarten, 9 am – 11 am**
- **All forms due in school office today.**

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Monday  
September 7<sup>th</sup>

- **No School – Labor Day**

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**For a complete listing of school events, check the Edline calendar regularly.**