

March 26, 2010

Dear Parents of St. Andrew's Episcopal School:

The heart of any school is its faculty. At St. Andrew's, we are blessed to possess a dedicated, talented, and dynamic team of educators, committed to caring for and educating your children.

With each passing year, every faculty at every school across the country experiences change that can be at once unsettling and exciting. I write to you today with news of School staffing changes for 2010-2011.

I will begin with the bittersweet news of faculty departures. After an illustrious teaching career spanning twenty-seven years at St. Andrew's, middle school math instructor **Joyce Sampler** will retire at the end of this school year. Mrs. Sampler's impact on the fabric of St. Andrew's has been profound, as a teacher, role model, and counselor to hundreds 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. We wish Mrs. Sampler the very best and thank her for her remarkable service to St. Andrew's.

**Betsy Fowler**, our History Department Chair and 6<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher, will also retire at the end of the school year. Ms. Fowler's teaching career spans over fifteen years, including excellent service to Coast Episcopal School, St. George's Episcopal School, and to St. Andrew's School for the past two years.

**Liz Amoss**, our English Department Chair and 7<sup>th</sup> grade advisor, will leave the school at the end of the year in order to spend more time with her two teenage boys. Mrs. Amoss has served St. Andrew's ably in the past several years, first as a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher and then as a Middle School writing instructor.

**Matthew Shelton**, our art instructor, soccer coach, and communications assistant, is leaving New Orleans this summer to pursue a master's of fine arts from Virginia Commonwealth University. Mr. Shelton has made numerous contributions to the St. Andrew's community, including meaningful service to the School's Diversity Committee.

We wish Mrs. Sampler, Ms. Fowler, Mrs. Amoss, and Mr. Shelton the very best in their new endeavors.

In the spring of 2006, just six months after Hurricane Katrina, the St. Andrew's School Board voted to expand St. Andrew's from a PK-grade 6 institution to a PK-grade 8 institution. In 2009, the School graduated its first 8<sup>th</sup> grade class, and in just two months, we will gather to graduate our second 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

Any change as monumental as the addition of two new grades, thus altering the composition, curriculum, and character of a school, takes years of transition and development. Our middle school is growing and getting stronger each month.

While St. Andrew's may be new to the middle school business, the School is firmly committed to its new PK-8 grade structure. We celebrate our commitment to the Decade of Childhood, offering

families ten years of continuous education. Our nurturing and faith-based PK-8 environment allows children, particularly our older students, to be surrounded by other children, as opposed to high-school students. We also provide the advantage of delaying the high-school selection decision until 8<sup>th</sup> grade, when a child's identity is more fully formed.

In light of the School's commitment to its new Middle School program, as well as the preceding faculty departures, I am pleased to announce the following changes, which will go into effect in August of 2010.

First, we will be expanding our Middle School from grades 6 through 8 to grades 5 through 8. This expansion, which will increase Middle School student numbers from 15 (this year) to approximately 32 (next year), will allow for a more logical grade grouping and improved curricular integration.

Grades 5 and 6, the introduction to the School's new Middle School program, will be structured primarily as a contained classroom environment, with a homeroom teacher responsible for language arts, social studies, and math in grade 5 and language arts and social studies in grade 6. Mr. Norman, our talented Science Department Chair, will continue to specialize in science instruction for all students in the new Middle School (grades 5 through 8). We will, of course, continue with department specialists for religion, foreign languages, athletics, art, music, library, and technology.

Grades 7 and 8, the culminating years of the St. Andrew's experience, will be structured as departmentalized (specialized) teaching environments. Students in both grades will have a dedicated advisor but will "travel" for virtually all classes to subject matter specialists. We feel that this is both an age-appropriate learning environment as well as excellent training for the high-school and college experience.

A byproduct of the departmentalized focus of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades is the adjustment of Chinese as a foreign language offering solely for those two grades. Thus, all of our students will receive instruction in Spanish from grades PK through 6, with an option of continuing Spanish or beginning Chinese for grades 7 and 8.

I am pleased to announce the following staff changes to accommodate our new Middle School:

**Allan Woodard**, who has ably served St. Andrew's for three years as both a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and history specialist, will serve as the School's new History Department Chair and 8<sup>th</sup> grade humanities instructor. Mr. Woodard will serve as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade advisor and will teach 8<sup>th</sup> grade English, 8<sup>th</sup> grade history, and 7<sup>th</sup> grade history. In addition, Mr. Woodard will serve as the School's new Dean of Student Life, working with me, Mother Estes, and the entire St. Andrew's faculty to promote a positive student environment, particularly within our new Middle School.

Mr. Woodard came to St. Andrew's in 2007 with over thirty years of teaching and administrative experience, having served as a division head for both a Lower and a Middle School, as a grade PK-8 Dean, and as a director of admissions. We are so fortunate to have an educator with such a vast range of experience as Mr. Woodard to serve the School in this vital new capacity.

**Nancy Jaynes**, who joined St. Andrew's in 2008 as a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, will serve as the School's new English Department Chair and 6<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom teacher. Ms. Jaynes will teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade language arts and social studies, as well as 7<sup>th</sup> grade English. She will also serve as the School's student council coordinator and continue as the community garden coordinator.

Ms. Jaynes brings over twelve years of teaching experience to her new capacities at St. Andrew's, including several years of teaching English and social studies at the middle school level. Ms. Jaynes' undergraduate study of both English and history make her an ideal candidate to teach the humanities to our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.

As a result of the movement of Ms. Jaynes and Mr. Woodard from 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, respectively, the School is conducting a national search for new faculty members to teach those two homeroom classes. I can assure the entire St. Andrew's community that there has been no shortage of candidates for those positions; in just one week of posting the vacancies, we have received dozens of applications from highly qualified instructors both locally and nationally.

In addition to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade homeroom positions, we will be hiring a new Math Department Chair, to teach math to students in grades 6 through 8, as well as to serve as the 7<sup>th</sup> grade advisor. We will also be hiring a new art instructor to replace Mr. Shelton.

For all vacancies, the School will be conducting several rounds of interviews, including candidate visits and the teaching of sample lessons. I ask for your support as we recruit and hire the best new faculty members possible for our fine school.

To accommodate the increased class sizes of our new middle school grades, the School will be moving grades 3 through 6 to the second floor of Parish Hall and grades 7 and 8, including a dedicated Middle School Science Lab, to the second floor of Kimball Hall. This summer, we will be conducting interior renovations in order to prepare for these new classroom configurations.

I expect this new configuration will serve our needs well for up to two years, at which time the School will need to embark on a more substantial facilities renovation project and associated Capital Campaign. Please mark your calendar for **Thursday evening, April 22**, for a presentation from me and Jeff Stolier of WDG Architects and Engineers on the School's long-term campus plan.

I hope you share my excitement over the current and future developments at St. Andrew's School. We look forward to a strong finish to 2009-2010 and continued growth for 2010-2011. We are encouraged by next year's enrollment projection of 160 students, 18 more than this year.

None of this, of course, would be possible without our first-rate faculty and highly supportive parent body. Thank you for all that you do, and I hope to see many of you this Sunday at the playground dedication and Middle School fair.

Yours,

Mason Lecky  
Head of School