

Memo to: Parents and Guardians
Memo from: Sr. Margaret Mancuso
June 8, 2020



What a beautiful weekend we had! I hope you and your family were able to spend some time outdoors whether walking, biking, gardening, or just enjoying nature in your yard. These days we need more than ever to see the light in the darkness and the blessings amidst the challenges.

Progress Reports

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Nazareth Elementary School provided instruction through Distance Learning for the entire fourth quarter marking period of the 2019-2020 school year. This form of teaching and learning required modifications to previous ways of assessing and reporting.

Purpose of the Report Card

- to document student efforts and progress
- to inform parents of student progress
- to communicate student progress to future teachers, giving them a reference point on potential strengths and needs

Student progress and reporting for the fourth quarter has followed a modified process during the closure of schools. Modifications were due to the reality of virtual education during this time and in fairness to all students given their family schedules, circumstances, and ability to participate in distance learning classes. We wanted no students penalized for situations that may have been outside of their control during this time of closure.

After multiple discussions at our faculty meetings over the last two months, it was determined that a narrative report will be the best way for teachers to show your child's end-of-year progress. In an effort to provide relative and meaningful feedback to each family, the teachers will complete a narrative report for each child in K-6 showing content taught and student progress toward the learning goals during the Distance Learning period. No fourth quarter grades will be given nor final averages.

The narratives will be included with the year's report card going home. A copy of the narrative will be in each student's file, and one will be included with student records sent to other schools when students move on, such as our sixth graders.

Preschool teachers will use the usual end-of-year progress reports. There will be some areas of learning and growth not able to be assessed from afar at this time.

Again, we thank you for all the support you have given the teachers and your children during this Distance Learning period. We recognize it has not been easy, but we have been so pleased with the progress students have made. The lessons will remain on Google Classrooms and teacher web pages so review, practice, and catch up can take place over the summer.

Staff Changes

Each year there are changes on our staff, and the 20-21 school year will have a few, too.

- As many of you know, this was *Mrs. Strowe's* last year. She is retiring at the end of June. While she looks forward to some relaxing time with her family, more opportunities to help at her church, and time to continue her mission work, she will be around to help us out now and then, too. We thank Mrs. Strowe for all her work with our younger children through her years at Nazareth as an early childhood/primary teacher and most recently as an AIS teacher for K-2. She has also blessed our children by her involvement with after-school activities – tutoring, Scouts, and Science Club. Her presence among us has been a gift in so many ways.
- *Sr. Melissa Gernon* will be moving from one Nazareth to another! She will be furthering her own education at Nazareth College as she continues to work toward certification in art therapy. Sr. Melissa hopes to be able to help at Nazareth Elementary now and then, perhaps during her semester breaks. This was a bittersweet decision for Sr. Melissa has loved teaching preschool and second grade at Nazareth. She has also been generous with her time in helping at school events, running clubs, and leading school-wide programs. If your child has had Sr. Melissa as a teacher, you know how creative she is with her lessons. We wish Sr. Melissa the best and have no doubt that she will be very helpful to others through her art therapy.
- *Sr. Mary Jo Flynn* has decided it is time to look at serving in other ways. She will no longer be coming three days a week to care for our children as one of our school nurses. We thank Sr. Mary Jo for her years of service to the children and families of Nazareth. We wish her well as she pursues other options in the coming year.

Due to the social distancing and school closure mandates, we cannot come together as a staff right now to say farewell to these wonderful women. We look forward to the day when we can celebrate their lives and thank them for their gifts to Nazareth in person. In the meantime, we wish them the very best and say a big **THANK YOU** for being a part of our Nazareth family and for touching our lives and the lives of our children and families in so many ways.

Filling Positions – We will be advertising soon for a Grade 2 teacher. Mrs. Switalski will be taking over the AIS teacher position for K-2, and Mrs. Adkins will be moving to First Grade. We will be watching the PK3 enrollment numbers closely over the next month. Sr. Marlene Pape will be returning to Nazareth three full days a week as our head nurse, and Ms. Kathy Knope will be back for two full days with us.

Updates

Our **Core Planning Committee** for the reopening of Nazareth is meeting weekly via Zoom. It is comprised of administration and teachers. Others on the staff have volunteered to be on subcommittees. If needed, we will be reaching out to parents during the summer and/or fall.

The focus at our last meeting was on the important tasks at the end of June.

Week of June 22 – All teachers will work at school this week. This will be the time for them to pack up student belongings, work on reports and records, and clean rooms to get them ready for summer maintenance. *Strict social distancing and safety guidelines will be in place since schools are still under closure.*

June 25 and 26 – These will be the **parking lot drop-off and pick-up days** for families. We are dividing the families alphabetically for health and safety reasons, to avoid a traffic jam, and to make the collection process go smoothly. Mrs. Kunz will let families know the schedule next week.

In preparation, please gather all the items that belong to Nazareth. We will be marking class checklists when items get dropped off – textbooks, Chromebooks, library books, recorders, guitars, dulcimers, and any other items that belong to the school. After items are collected, you will receive a bag with your child’s personal items from their desks and lockers.



Looking Ahead

June 18 – 5 p.m. – A safe, short, and simple recognition of our Sixth Graders will take place in the school parking lot. This is for *immediate family only* and all will remain in their cars, except the students. Details and directives will be coming home to the Sixth-Grade parents. Have you seen these wonderful students highlighted daily on our website and Facebook page? Very special!

June 19 – This last day of school will be *Field Day Fun for Families*. Do check out the ideas Mrs. Andolina has sent home (also available on our website and Facebook page). There are many great activities to try as a family! Send her pictures, comments, or videos if you can. Families will be united in activities though apart!

A Jubilee Celebration

For those of you who attended Nazareth Academy, you will remember Sr. Cora Marie Mitrano. This year she is celebrating her 75th Jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph! In 1952, she began teaching at her own alma mater, Nazareth Academy. She touched the lives of so many and saw generations of families graduate in her 62 years there.

Sr. Cora Marie now resides at our SSJ Motherhouse where she keeps busy through prayer, helping on special projects, and staying in touch with Academy alumnae. We say *Congratulations* to Sr. Cora Marie!

If you wish to send her a card, her address is: 150 French Road, Rochester, NY 14618



“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” Nelson Mandela

Let us continue to stand united in prayer, words, and actions as we individually and communally do our part to work towards peace, reconciliation, healing, and justice for all people. The COVID-19 pandemic, the death of George Floyd and numerous others, and the peaceful protests calling for an end to racism have profoundly impacted all our lives. We cannot ignore our emotions on many levels. Let us not miss this moment in time; let us be a part of the movement for personal and systemic change in any ways we can.

We hold one another in prayer and love during these challenging and changing times. We are all in this together as we push for change now that will ensure a just and peaceful future for our children.

“As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

Nelson Mandela

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela

