

# 'Leadership skills we'd like to see from all scholars'



When Stalin (pictured) met Anthony in Ascension Catholic Academy's summer program, Anthony had just immigrated from Ecuador. During those six weeks of the Summer Language and Math program, they talked a lot and became friends. Their friendship continues into this school year and has become much more: Stalin has taken it upon himself to translate for Anthony and to help him learn English.

"It's very natural for him to translate for Anthony," middle school teacher Jessi Weakley said. "It's such a sign of maturity that he does it without being reminded."

It is also a great example of seeing the problem, owning the problem, one of the cornerstones of St. John Paul II's Top 20 Program of social-emotional learning. It is the type of behavior we are encouraging in all scholars.

"Helping Anthony feels pretty great," Stalin said. "I get the feeling that I'm just doing the right thing."

Mrs. Weakley has seen great improvement in Stalin, a 7th grader. He has been working with a volunteer tutor twice a week in math, and Stalin recognizes that he has changed.

"I used to not get math, but now I do," Stalin said. "I feel pretty smart! I'm also starting to do my work every single day. It feels good to be doing it."

Growing, maturing and learning. Stalin is a model of all three.

Mrs. Weakley agrees: "He shows leadership skills that we would like to see from all of our scholars."



## GROWING and LEARNING

Fall 2018



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Dear Friends,

It's been a fantastic start for me at JPIL. Every day, I am reminded of the importance of our community and how we are all working together to ensure that our scholars will be rooted in faith, prepared for high school academic success and possess the necessary social-emotional tools to thrive.

Our teachers are using new classroom setups to work beautifully with our new blended learning and station-based instructional models. Our scholars strive daily to meet their individual learning goals. One volunteer recently remarked how impressed she is by the constant one-on-one teaching between scholars, teachers, and volunteers — a key goal of ours. I am inspired as I see many examples of teachers, staff, and volunteers investing their hearts into fostering the potential that lies within our scholars. The Holy Spirit is at work at JPIL!

Our Learner Profiles is another strategy we are using to help our scholars be successful, and it helps provide students with a strong sense of responsibility for their learning. The Learner Profile brings together all of a scholar's data, including academic goals, in one place. The profile also includes a log of behavior issues and parent touchpoints. This scholar "snapshot" helps us serve the whole child, alerting staff to any issues that may affect learning.

Improving communication with families is also a central strategy for our community this year. In addition to weekly newsletters, social media updates, and family folders, all teachers are using the ClassDojo app to let families know what is happening in class.

Thank you for the many ways you support the scholars at St. John Paul II Catholic School! Remember that you are always welcome to visit our school, join us for weekly mass or schedule a tour to learn more. It is a privilege to partner with you.

Blessings,

Tricia Menzhuber, Principal



## GROWING into a classroom for every grade

Our enrollment continued rising, with a 4% increase over last year. We have 124 scholars enrolled. Since the 2015-16 school year, when we had 94 scholars, our enrollment has increased a whopping 32%!

We were thrilled to be able to offer a classroom for each grade level this year, discontinuing combined-grade classrooms.

We hired three talented teachers: Genevieve Broche in 1st Grade (shown at left), Mattie Potthoff in 2nd Grade and Betsy Peloquin, who worked at JPIL last year as a Teach for Christ aide, in 4th Grade.

## GROWING socially and emotionally

As part of our commitment to serving the whole child, we prepare our scholars to handle their emotions and make good decisions. We have a new scholar Code of Conduct this year that builds on the principles of the Top 20 Program we introduced last year. After each monthly all-school rosary prayer, we recognize scholars who exemplify a tenet of the Top 20 Program.



## GROWING instructional skills through blended learning

We are thrilled to be one of five Minnesota schools chosen by The Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) at the University of Notre Dame to implement its Higher Powered Learning program. ACE educators are working this year, the first of the three-year partnership, with middle school teachers Jessi Weakley and Christine Linsmeier. They are learning best practices for using blended learning in classrooms. Blended learning combines traditional classroom instruction with online work tailored to each scholar's individual learning goals. What makes blended learning different from just using iPads or computers in classrooms is that data is at the center. Data mined from assessments and from the online tools helps teachers bring every scholar forward in his or her learning. In years two and three of the partnership, Mrs. Weakley and Mrs. Linsmeier will help coach other teachers at JPIL in use of the program.