



St. Gregory the Great Academy

A Ministry of the Church of St. Gregory the Great

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Rev. Michael Hall, Pastor

Dr. Jason C. Briggs, Principal

Mrs. Michele L. Rivera, Assistant Principal

August 26, 2022

Dear St. Gregory the Great Academy Families,

Peace be with you! It is difficult to believe that the festive sounds of the Carnival have already been silent for two months now, and that summer has marched by at a swift pace. It has been a hot and dry summer, and while the grass is not looking green and lush right now around the campus dry grass sure beats snow fences and barricades! I hope that this summer season has brought you refreshment, joy, and a welcomed change of pace for several weeks. We have had a busy summer here at school, and I am grateful to everyone who worked this summer to prepare our school for a successful opening. I am eagerly anticipating the opening of school this year in a few short days, as I am anxious to begin the important work of education that God has called us to. As I have mentioned many times in the past, when I see our students walk through our doors each day, I often wonder what it is that they are dreaming about for the future. It is impossible for me to walk through the hallways these days and see the shiny floors, stacks of books, piles of new supplies, and desks set up for each student and not be filled with anticipation about the new school year. Indeed, the building seems to be sparkling this year. I am not sure if it is extra shiny wax or the lack of hallway barricades and cones – perhaps it is a combination of both! Still even more exciting than these physical things is the knowledge that in a week's time the rooms will be filled with students! The quiet and change of pace that come with summer are nice for a time; however, by the middle of August, it starts to seem way too quiet around here! As the night music of the crickets and cicadas reaches its zenith during these late August evenings, I anxiously await the first day of school.

These days are challenging ones for our students, for you, and our society as a whole. Our nation continues to suffer from caustic disagreement which too often transforms into poisonous words, ideologies, and actions. It is easy to become discouraged, especially when it seems like disagreement so often degenerates into loathing and hate. I think we can all use a reminder that people of goodwill can disagree or see issues from different angles and still remain people of goodwill. So often it seems like individuals hear but do not listen. In light of a world that needs to increase the listening and decrease the noise making, this year's theme, "**God is Wild About SGGA and Our Active Listening**" takes on even more significance when viewed through a global lens. I truly believe that God is wild about our school family. It is not simply by random chance that we are all called to this place; God has put into motion His plan for us to work in partnership. We are incredibly blessed – students, parents, faculty, and staff – to come to this place. God's hand is at work here. I see it in our graduates as they continue their life journeys. I see it in students who come here, learn about the faith, and ask to be baptized or to complete their sacraments of initiation. I see it in our youngest students as they learn the basics of the faith. I see it in the child who needs guidance because not



A 2014 National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence

only is a behavior unacceptable but it is also contrary to God’s plan. The key is that we need to see and listen, not simply hear. Active listening is a challenge for all of us with the many distractions which invade our daily lives. This year, we will focus on listening to each other as well as what God has planned for us.

During the summer, we bid farewell to some staff members. As we returned to our more traditional class configurations and sizes, we bid farewell to Mrs. Julie Boles and Miss Jessica Huth. Also, during the summer Miss Kaitlyn Ford informed me that she would be departing for a position elsewhere. We send each of these individuals forth with our best wishes, and we are grateful for their time at St. Gregory the Great Academy. While we will miss those staff members who will not be returning this year, I am grateful to welcome our newest faculty member, Mrs. Caitlin Kane. Mrs. Kane is a graduate of SGGGA and has had previous experience at the Malvern School and in the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District. She will be our Homeroom 6C teacher and will be working with our 6th and 7th grade students. I ask that you extend Mrs. Kane a warm welcome. Once again, our faculty remains remarkably stable from year to year, which is truly a blessing!

The largest project of the summer, which is still ongoing and hopefully wrapping up soon, has been door replacements in the school and parish center. The preschool entrance has been replaced along with the exterior doors of the parish center classrooms. Still underway are the exterior gym doors. These projects have been funded by a Homeland Security Grant and are being completed at no cost to the Academy or parish. Door 19 on the Academy building has also received needed attention and has been funded by the New Jersey Nonpublic Security Initiative. Another major summer project was the removal of the temporary wall which created the cafeteria classrooms along with a complete repainting of the cafeteria. Perhaps the most time-consuming part of the summer has been returning all of the ancillary classroom furniture, carpets, and other items which were stowed away for the past two years back to their rightful places. It was certainly interesting trying to remember where everything was in the “before times.” I am grateful to everyone who assisted with this major undertaking.

On the topic of the cafeteria, I am happy to report that the students will be resuming use of the cafeteria, at least on most days. One effect of eating lunch in the tents for the past two years was that many of the students came to enjoy eating outside on nice days. For this reason, I was able to procure 30 aluminum picnic tables which will become our picnic grove behind the school that we will use for lunch occasionally. I suppose that this goes to show that sometimes doing things a little differently can make us realize that new ideas can be enjoyable.

With all of this said, please read on for some more important information.



2022-2023 CLERGY, ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Rev. Michael Hall <i>BA, St. Mary's Seminary and University; MDiv, St. Mary's Seminary and University</i>	Pastor		Returned to SGGA 2020
Rev. Reginald "RJ" Ballacillo	Parochial Vicar		Started at SGGA 2021
Dr. Jason C. Briggs <i>B.A., Caldwell College; M.A., Caldwell College; M.A., Georgian Court University; Ed.D., Neumann University</i>	Principal	Latin 7 & 8	Started at SGGA 2005
Mrs. Michele Rivera <i>B.S., Elizabethtown College; M.Ed. The College of New Jersey</i>	Assistant Principal	Social Studies 8	Started at SGGA 2005
Mrs. Lisamarie Vannozzi <i>B.Psy., College of Staten Island; M.S., Touro College</i>	Academy Counselor		Started at SGGA 2019
Mrs. Mary Lynn Adams	Academy Admin Assistant		Started at SGGA 2000
Mrs. Tracy O'Neill	Academy Admin Assistant/EDP Coordinator		Started at SGGA 2009
Ofc. James Vardanega	Security Officer		Started at SGGA 2018
Ms. Toni Keller	Academy Nurse		Started at SGGA 2022
Mrs. Regina Ratzlaff <i>B.S., Trenton State College; M.Ed., The College of New Jersey</i>	Director of Services; ELA Lab Teacher		Started at SGGA 1998
Mrs. Cheryl Kobren <i>C.D.A., National Credentialing Program</i>	Pre3 Blue		Started at SGGA 1998
Ms. Maureen Smitley <i>B.A., Trenton State College; M.A., Trenton State College</i>	Pre3 White		Started at SGGA 1983
Mrs. Cathleen Sunshine <i>B.A., William Patterson University</i>	Pre4 Blue		Started at SGGA 2003
Mrs. Mary DeRose <i>B.A., Kean College</i>	Pre4 White		Returned to SGGA 2020
Miss Kathleen Holub <i>B.S., Trenton State College</i>	KA	Self-Contained	Started at SGGA 2000
Mrs. Nancy Darrah <i>B.A., Rider University</i>	KB	Self-Contained	Started at SGGA 2007
Mrs. Amanda Mantuano <i>B.A., Rider University</i>	KC	Self-Contained	Started at SGGA 2020
Miss Sloane Lobell <i>B.A., Rowan University</i>	1A	Self-Contained	Started at SGGA 2019
Mrs. Cloe McGilberry <i>B.A., The College of New Jersey</i>	1B	Self-Contained	Returned to SGGA 2020
Mrs. Kara DeBonis <i>B.A., Holy Family University</i>	2A	Self-Contained	Started at SGGA 2018
Mrs. Maureen Satz <i>B.S., Rider University; MBA, Rider University; M.A.T., The College of New Jersey</i>	2B	Self-Contained	Started at SGGA 2020
Mrs. Annabelle Certo <i>B.A., Rutgers University</i>	3A	Math 3; Science 3; Social Studies 3	Started at SGGA 2018

Mrs. Dana Hoover <i>B.A., Gwynedd-Mercy University</i>	3B	Religion 3; English Language Arts 3	Started at SGGA 2017
Mrs. Tracey Mularadelis <i>B.S., Trenton State College; M.A.T., The College of New Jersey</i>	4A	Math 4; Science 4; Social Studies 4	Started at SGGA 2009
Sister Natalie Panas, OSF <i>B.A., Neumann College; M.Ed., Boston University; M.A., Georgian Court University</i>	4B	Religion 4; English Language Arts 4	Started at SGGA 1983
Mrs. Jennifer Gallagher '02 <i>B.A., Neumann University, M.A. St. Joseph's University</i>	5A	Science 5 & 6	Started at SGGA 2010
Mrs. Elizabeth Mills <i>B.A., Providence College; M.S., University of London; M.P.A., Rutgers University</i>	5B	Religion 5 & 6; Social Studies 5 & 6	Started at SGGA 2010
Mrs. Kelly O'Keefe <i>B.S., St. John's University; M.S., St. John's University</i>	6A	English Language Arts 5 & 6	Started at SGGA 2012
Mrs. Maria Lushbaugh <i>B.S., Virginia Tech</i>	6B	Religion 6; Math 5 & 6	Started at SGGA 2019
Mrs. Caitlin Kane '01 <i>B.A., University of Scranton</i>	6C	Religion 6 & 7; Social Studies 6 & 7	Started at SGGA 2022
Mrs. Jennifer Biele <i>B.A., Belmont Abbey College</i>	7A	Religion 7; Science 7 & 8	Started at SGGA 2018
Mrs. Angela Cooper <i>B.S., Trenton State College</i>	7B	Math 6, 7 & 8	Started at SGGA 2019
Mrs. Kathleen Wilson '93 <i>B.A., Rider University</i>	8A	English Language Arts 7 & 8	Started at SGGA 2015
Mrs. Brittany DiGregorio <i>B.A., Richard Stockton College</i>	8B	Religion 8; Math 5, 7 & 8	Started at SGGA 2014
Mrs. Amy Parrotta <i>B.S., The College of New Jersey</i>	8C	English Language Arts 5-8	Started at SGGA 2009
Mrs. Elizabeth Sunkel '03 <i>B.S., University of Scranton</i>		ELA Lab	Started at SGGA 2018
Mrs. Christine Fuccello <i>B.S., Trenton State College; M.Ed., Trenton State College</i>		Physical Education P3-8	Started at SGGA 2005
Mrs. Katherine Larason '03 <i>B.F.A., The College of New Jersey</i>		Art P3-8	Started at SGGA 1915
Sister Barbara Furst, OSF <i>B.S. The College of New Jersey; M.E., The College of New Jersey; M.A., Georgian Court University</i>		Library K-4	Started at SGGA 2013
Mrs. Kristin Bergin <i>B.A., Trenton State College; M.A., Trenton State College</i>		Music P3-8	Started at SGGA 2013
Mrs. Karen Stives '87 <i>B.S., Wesley College</i>		STEM K-7	Started at SGGA 1998
Mrs. Loretta Palmieri <i>B.A., State Univ. of Oneonta; M.S., C.W. Post College</i>		Spanish P3-8	Started at SGGA 2001
Mrs. Kari Huang <i>B.A., Adelphi University</i>		Mandarin Chinese 5 & 6	Started at SGGA 2017
Mrs. Donna O'Malley <i>B.A., Trenton State College</i>		Educational Assistant – Preschool 3	Started at SGGA 2018
Mrs. Erin Wagner <i>A.A., Mercer County Community College</i>		Educational Assistant – Preschool 3	Started at SGGA 2019

Miss Olivia Lukowicz '13 <i>B.A., Marywood University</i>	Educational Assistant – Preschool 3 & 4	Started at SGGA 2021
Mrs. Tanya Beckman <i>B.A., Siena College</i>	Educational Assistant – Preschool 4	Started at SGGA 2016
Mrs. Jeannine Furman <i>B.A., Trenton State College</i>	Educational Assistant – Preschool 4	Started at SGGA 2016
Mrs. Victoria Halloran <i>B.A., Kean University; B.F.A., California Institute of the Arts</i>	Educational Assistant – Preschool 4	Started at SGGA 2020
Mrs. Mary Lou Chopan	Preschool Morning Assistant	Started at SGGA 1998
Mrs. Nadine Cleveland <i>B.B.A., Anna Maria College</i>	Educational Assistant – KA	Started at SGGA 2017
Mrs. Tracy Bailey '94 <i>B.A., The College of New Jersey</i>	Educational Assistant – KB	Started at SGGA 2015
Mrs. Gina Todd <i>B.S., University of Delaware</i>	Educational Assistant – KC	Started at SGGA 2021
Mrs. Katherine Hughes <i>A.A., Brookdale College</i>	Educational Assistant – 1A	Started at SGGA 2014
Mrs. Allison Maffia <i>A.A., Mercer County Community College</i>	Educational Assistant – 1B	Started at SGGA 2016
Mrs. Helena Sharpley	Educational Assistant – 2A	Started at SGGA 2018
Miss Gabriella Price <i>B.A., McDaniel College</i>	Educational Assistant – 2B	Started at SGGA 2021
Mrs. Robin Muccia <i>B.A., Farleigh Dickinson University</i>	Support Assistant	Started at SGGA 1981
Sr. Carolyn Houck, MPF	Director of Religious Education	
Sr. Diana Yodris, MPF	Religious Education Assistant	
Sr. Domenica Troina, MPF	Religious Education Assistant	
Mr. Jason Bonifazi	Maintenance Supervisor	
Mr. Michael Massaro	Maintenance	
Mr. Aaron Jelinek	Night Custodian	
Mr. Cosmo Cavallaro	Groundskeeper	

List current as of 8-26-2022

II. SCHOOL HOURS

School begins at 8:00am for K-8 students, and the late bell rings at 8:05am. Morning supervision is provided at 7:30am. K-8 Dismissal is at 2:30pm except for half-day sessions which will be at 12:15pm. Full-day and morning-only preschool students may be dropped off beginning at 7:30am and should be in their classrooms no later than 8:15am. Morning-only preschool students dismiss at 11:30am. Full-day preschool students dismiss at 3:00pm.

III. OPENING MASS

We will have our traditional mass to open the school year on Friday, September 9, 2022, at 10:00am. Parents are welcome to attend.

IV. STUDENT INSURANCE

All students in St. Gregory the Great Academy are covered during school hours and on school-sponsored trips under the Diocesan plan. This is an “excess plan,” and pays above what the child’s primary insurance does not cover.

V. UNIFORMS

A. Shoe Policy: **All students in Grades 1-8 are required to wear black oxford type, Sperry, or Mary Jane shoes.** The shoes are to be **BLACK** and **NON-SCUFF!** **Any shoe that is not entirely black or that is backless, healed, or clog-like is prohibited.** Sneakers are to be worn by students in Grades 1-8 on Physical Education Day. Kindergarten is to wear sneakers every day since they are wearing the Physical Education uniform all five days each week. There is no uniform policy for Preschoolers; HOWEVER, please be sure that all preschoolers are wearing sturdy sneakers each day. Dress and decorative footwear is not safe to run around in each day.

B: Grades 5-8: **Remember that the knit/polo shirts are NOT an option in Grades 5-8 for summer or winter uniforms.** For Grades 6-8 (NOT Grade 5), the blazer is an option for summer uniform (September, May, and June) and is mandatory **and must be worn EVERY DAY** (except for physical education day) when winter uniform begins on October 3, 2022. For Grade 5, the blazer is an OPTION at all times of the year.

C. **The summer uniform may be worn through Friday, September 30, 2022.** Please refer to the Family Handbook for the guidelines. Also, we will be depending on you to support us in our efforts to ensure that our students are well-groomed and in the uniform that is appropriate for a Catholic school setting. If you need to purchase uniforms, please visit our website for the link to Flynn and O'Hara uniform company. Remember that used uniforms are available through the school store at the price of \$3.00 per item.

VI. NOTICES/CALENDARS

There are TWO important places that you should refer to regularly for information. One is the “Forms and Docs” section of the website. This is your clearinghouse for links to online forms and flyers and other important documents. The second important place is the “News” section on our homepage, where updates regarding items posted to Forms and Docs will be posted. Bookmark [FORMS AND DOCS](#) now!

VII. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Because of the number of food allergies and sensitivities among our student body, it has become necessary to develop and enforce clear guidelines as to the types of “treats” that will be acceptable for birthday celebrations. **The ONLY acceptable FOOD items that will be permitted for classroom birthday celebrations**

are pretzel nubs, fruit or vegetable trays, snack packages of pretzels, or snack packages of goldfish crackers. Any parent in any grade who wishes to send a treat for the class for a child's birthday MUST contact the teacher at least 48 hours prior to making arrangements. The teachers have specific responsibilities they must carry out before distributing any food in the classroom. ANY OTHER TYPES OF TREATS (donut holes, cupcakes, candy, cakes, etc.) will NOT be distributed and will be returned home.

VIII. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Please be advised that St. Gregory the Great Academy operates under procedures outlined in our Crisis Manual. Information will always be shared with parents on a timely basis; however, please remember that necessary steps to contact emergency personnel and to secure students always takes priority over distributing information. Our crisis procedures are NOT public information and are shared with the appropriate authorities. This includes plans for both securing the student body on campus and off campus. My primary method of communication is via email, and the emergency notification system is reserved for true emergencies and weather closings/delays. We will also be using the School Messenger emergency notification system for critical notices this year.

IX. EBOARD

This year we are reinstating the use of the E-BOARD for student homework assignments. E-BOARD is a web-based program that allows teachers the ability to post homework to one central place for parents and students to easily be able to access. Please see the information in this packet under a separate cover. **The E-BOARD is NOT meant to be a replacement for students writing down their homework as instructed by their teachers; it is meant as a tool for PARENTS to double-check and confirm that what their children have written down is complete and correct.** Depending on the grade level, if parents allow children to rely solely on the E-BOARD and do not reinforce the need to take responsibility for writing assignments down as expected, this will create a bad habit of irresponsibility that will be very hard to break as they grow older.

A new school year brings promise, hope, and excitement. Mrs. Rivera and I look forward to our journey together this year with each of you. On behalf of Fr. Mike, the parish clergy and staff, and all of us at St. Gregory the Great Academy, welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! We are so glad that you are here!

May peace and every blessing be yours,



Jason C. Briggs, Ed.D.
Principal