

St. Bernadette School

2016 – 2017

Monday, August 29, 2016	Student /Parent Orientation Grades 1-8, 9:00 a.m. – noon No bus transportation
Tuesday, August 30, 2016	Full day of school – busing begins
Friday, September 2, 2016	Kindergarten Orientation
Monday, September 5, 2016	Labor Day Holiday – NO SCHOOL
Monday, October 10, 2016	Teacher In-service Day – No Classes
Wednesday, November 2, 2016	Clerical Day for Teachers – No Classes
Monday, November 7, 2016	Parent Conferences for Grades K-8 – No Classes
Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25, 2016	Thanksgiving Vacation – NO SCHOOL
Friday, December 23 through Monday, January 2, 2017	Christmas Vacation – NO SCHOOL
Monday, January 16, 2017	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day – NO SCHOOL
Monday, January 23, 2017	Parent Conferences for Grades K-8 – No Classes
Monday, February 20, 2017	President’s Day Holiday – NO SCHOOL
Monday, March 27, 2017	Clerical Day for teachers – No Classes
Friday, March 31, 2017	Mandatory Parent Conferences Grades K-2 – No Classes Optional Parent Conferences Grades 3-8 – A.M. Classes
Thursday, April 13 through Monday, April 17, 2017	Easter Vacation – NO SCHOOL
Monday, May 29, 2017	Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL
Friday, June 2, 2017	8 th Grade Graduation
Wednesday, June 7, 2017	Last Day of School – Fun Fair

This calendar includes 2 snow days

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EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS

Wednesday, November 23	Friday, March 31*
Thursday, December 22 *	Wednesday, April 12
Wednesday, March 1	Wednesday, June 7

* Please note this day is not a Wednesday

ST. BERNADETTE SCHOOL
A Middle States Accredited School
2016-2017

Pastor: Father Anthony Gargotta
Principal: Sister Carol Arch, C.S.J.
Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Francine Pochciol
School Receptionist: Mrs. Erin Bozicevic

FACULTY:	<u>Level</u>	<u>Room</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
	3-PS	101	Mrs. Kelly Morgano Mrs. Bonnie Benacquista - Aide
	4-PS	101	Mrs. Cheryl Kopaczynski Mrs. Bonnie Benacquista - Aide
	K	102	Mrs. Jackie Dull Mrs. Kim Yorio - Aide
	1	203	Mrs. Nicole Scarpino
	1	204	Mrs. Carrie Dzuban
	2	205	Ms. Susan Sowa
	2	206	Mrs. Deonna Mathias
	3	201	Mrs. Samantha Rathjen
	3	202	Mrs. Erin Zeigler
	4	207	Mrs. Andrea Imro
	4	208	Mrs. Donna Kozusko
	5	210	Ms. Amy Gavlik
	5	211	Mrs. Lisa Rettig
	6	209	Mrs. Mary Ann Frankola
	6	307	Mrs. Lauren Rullo
	7	308	Ms. Chessa Horomanski
	7	309	Ms. Brittany Werkin
	8	310	Mrs. Jennifer Weaver
	8	311	Mrs. Mary Chase

Auxiliary Teachers:

Art: Mrs. Dianne Campbell
Computer: Ms. Linda Kirk
Music: Mrs. Barbara Groba
Physical Education: Mrs. Lauren Hargis
AIU Reading/Math: Lauren Bergstein
AIU Counselor:
AIU Speech: Darlene Gedes
French: Mrs. Florence Colaianne

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MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. BERNADETTE PARISH

We of St. Bernadette Parish are a Eucharistic Community, created by the Father, nourished by our Lord, and led by the Holy Spirit. We are to be the eyes, ears, hands and heart of Christ, living by his example and sharing the Good News in word and deed.

All members share the responsibility of discipleship according to their gifts and talents and the needs of the parish community. We are committed to fulfill this mission by communicating God's unconditional love to all people.

MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND BELIEFS OF ST. BERNADETTE SCHOOL

The mission of St. Bernadette Catholic School is to enable all children to develop their unique, individual potential by blending knowledge and faith to become the leaders of tomorrow.

St. Bernadette Catholic School is instrumental in educating our young people in a supportive setting. In accordance with our Gospel values our school assists parents in the formal education of their children.

We Believe:

- *That children are the world's most valuable asset.
- *In the dignity and individuality of each student.
- *That parish and parental involvement is essential.
- *In developing a sense of responsibility to the global community.
- *In a faith community that strives to serve all people.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum is consistent with the philosophy of education which recognizes the value of the person. In keeping with students' individuality, the core curriculum provides content and instructional levels based on students' abilities and performances. Diversity necessitates that instruction for all students take place individually or in small groups. In reading and math the sequential and continuous development of skills is based on the Pittsburgh Diocesan Guidelines for continuous growth.

The classroom teacher is encouraged to effectively utilize the auxiliary services available in providing appropriate levels and modes of instruction. He/she is responsible for identifying students in need of special assistance or motivation, and in conjunction with the Principal, arrange for them to be enrolled in either remedial or enrichment classes.

REGISTRATION

During January, parents will be asked to re-register children for the following school year by returning the form sent from the school with a non returnable registration fee of \$100/family which will be applied to the next year's tuition. Registration for students entering St. Bernadette's for the first time is held each spring. Notification of the time and date for registration will be sent out and published in the Parish Bulletin.

Students will be admitted to Kindergarten if they are 5 yrs. old by September 1. 1st graders must be 6 by the same date. Students applying for Kindergarten or 1st Grade need birth and baptismal certificates and a record of immunizations.

DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM

At St. Bernadette School, we value the personal and social development of your child as much as their academic growth and success. Throughout the school year, our school counselor from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit will be visiting classrooms to present lessons based on the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) standards. ASCA standards address the Career, Academic, and Personal/Social development of all students. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your building administrator or school counselor.

AUXILIARY SERVICES

1. Intermediate Unit personnel work with and provide support to students in remedial math and reading. These teachers, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, identify educational needs and design educational interventions and strategies to help a child succeed. Parent permission required.
2. Speech and language services are also provided through Act 89 funding. This is a special service offered to students to enhance communication skills which directly impact social and academic interactions. Parent permission is necessary.
3. A certified counselor provides individual and small group or class counseling sessions to students in grades K-8. Children are referred by parents, principal, teacher, and through self-referral. Individual counseling requires parent permission.
4. Psychological testing is available by parent request or at the recommendation of the teacher in consultation with the principal. Parents make the final decision. Results are formally reported to parents, principal and teachers along with a list of recommendations made by the psychologist. **THIS INFORMATION IS KEPT CONFIDENTIAL** and not shared with anyone without parent permission.
5. AIM program for gifted students provided by the local school district of each child. (Students in the gifted program are responsible for working diligently in St. Bernadette School.)

ADMISSION

St. Bernadette School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

For children entering St. Bernadette School at any grade level (Kindergarten-Grade 8), parents must present a baptismal certificate, birth certificate, and health and immunization records. State law mandates that a child's immunization record comply with current requirements. A registration form and a tuition payment plan form must be completed. The school is open to all students regardless of race, color, national origin or creed. Diocesan policies concerning admission of students from parishes without a Catholic school are followed.

Preschool Admission: St. Bernadette School offers a preschool program for children who reach the age of 3 or 4 prior to September 1. Sessions are held for 3-year-old children each Tuesday and Thursday. Sessions for 4-year-old children are held each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Preschool classes are taught by a certified teacher and aide. Class size does not exceed 16 for the 3-year-old children or 25 for the 4-year-old children. 4 year Preschool can be half-day or full-day. Parents wishing to register for preschool are required to present a birth certificate and a registration fee at the time of registration.

Kindergarten Admission: St. Bernadette School Kindergarten is an integral part of our school program. Any child who will be 5 years of age on or before September 1 will be admitted to Kindergarten. Kindergarten is full-day. New families are encouraged to call the school office at any time to make individual arrangements for a tour and/or registration.

MORNING ASSEMBLY

Students who arrive at school before 8:30 a.m. are to gather in the school library. At 8:30 a.m., they may go to their classrooms. Students should not be wandering the halls. By 8:45 a.m. there should be a study atmosphere in all classrooms.

Parents of little ones should allow them to walk upstairs alone. No parents should be upstairs unless they have an appointment to see the teacher and should sign-in at the office.

Students should be at school by 8:45 a.m. Parents who drop children off in the morning should drive children to the front center door, being careful not to interfere with the many buses arriving at the back door of the school. Students arriving after 8:55 are considered tardy and must report to the office with an excuse for tardiness.

AFTERNOON DISMISSAL

Dismissal will begin at 3:10 p.m. Parents intending to pick up their children should send a note to the teacher in the morning. No child should be pulled out of a bus line. For dismissal, cars will line up in the upper lot following the directions given by teachers. Children being driven home will be dismissed from the front brown doors near the shrine. Cars should not move until instructions are given by the teachers in charge. All drivers are to remain in their cars during dismissal. Students will wait inside the office door if their ride is late. They will then be dismissed from the office door. Parents are asked to be very careful that all children are in cars before driving away.

HOMEWORK

Homework is essential to compliment a good school program. Parents should realize that homework assignments need not always be written but could take the form of reading or research related topics, lessons or projects. Some studying or reading should be done each evening.

Parents are encouraged to take an interest in the work that is done at home. Please check schoolnotes.com for assigned homework. The work should always be checked for neatness, and completeness but not accuracy. If it is review work and the parent does it for the child, then the purpose of the work is defeated. A note on the homework stating that the child does not understand the work would be helpful.

Students will ordinarily be assigned homework Monday through Thursday. Homework on the weekend may be given at the discretion of the teacher. Long-range assignments should be worked on over weekends or free days. The time for homework in the primary level is 20 to 30 minutes; intermediate level is 40 to 60 minutes; Junior High level is 60 to 90 minutes. Questions concerning the amount of homework should be referred to the homeroom teacher.

ABSENCE

When your child is absent from school, call the office in the morning so the school will not expect him/her. Please call again when they are returning to school. The legitimate excuses for a student's absence are illness and the death of relatives. In all instances, a written excuse from a parent stating the reason for the absence must be presented when the student returns to school. Notes must be dated, and will be kept on file for one year. If a child is absent more than one day and is able to do some work at home, arrangements can be made with the office to have the assignments picked up. Please call for work before 11:00 so the teachers have time to get the work ready.

Students are responsible for making up the schoolwork missed. Before school in the morning, siblings in school may go to the classroom to let the teacher know they will be back at the end of the day for their brother's or sister's work. Students not in attendance on a school day may not participate in after school or evening events sponsored by the school.

EARLY DISMISSAL

When possible, dental and medical appointments should not be scheduled during class hours. However, if an early dismissal is necessary, a written note must be sent to the office on the day of the scheduled appointment. Time and reason for dismissal must be indicated. Parents should report to the office to pick up their child and sign the child out with the school receptionist.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Weather related announcements on TV and radio stations regarding Gateway School District closings or delays are always applicable to St. Bernadette School. The radio will not specifically mention St. Bernadette School. However, in case of an early closing, St. Bernadette School time of dismissal will be announced. Please listen to the radio on days when snowstorms are occurring for possible early dismissal.

Any day that we have a 2 hour delay, no hot lunch will be served. Students should eat before they come to school and bring a light lunch and drink to eat in their classroom.

TEACHER IN-SERVICE DAYS

St. Bernadette School will dismiss occasionally at 12:00 p.m. to provide time for teacher in-service. Gateway students will **not** be bused at this time; however, the parents of the students served by other districts will be transported according to the policy set by their district. Penn Hills and East Allegheny school districts do not bus students on teacher in-service days. The dates for early dismissal are on the school calendar. On early dismissal days, car riders will be dismissed to the lower lot at 11:55. Students riding buses will be dismissed from the back door of the school at 12:00.

PARENT CONFERENCES - REPORT CARDS

Parent conferences with your child's teacher are scheduled in November, January, and March. All students in grades 4-8 are to attend the conference with their parents. Written reports to parents indicating your child's progress and effort will be given at these times. One conference may be optional for the parents of students whose academic work and behavior are above average. Sign-up sheet for conferences will be in your child's classroom on Orientation Day. Please sign and mark the date and time chosen on your calendar. Final reports will be given on the last day of school to all students whose tuition and fundraising fee are paid-in-full.

PARENT APPOINTMENTS

Special conferences with teachers may be arranged by written communication to them or through phone calls to the office. Teachers may not be disturbed during class time, or during preparation time in the morning before school begins. Parents should not bring their children to the classroom door. Allow the children to walk upstairs alone. No parents should be loitering in the halls. Parents or visitors to the school must present themselves at the office before going to any part of the building. All parent volunteers should stop in the office to sign in. If it is necessary to bring books or forgotten lunches during class time, they are to be marked with the student's name and homeroom number and left in the school office. Students will pick them up there.

Parents wishing to observe a class must arrange an appointment with the teacher at least 2 days in advance. This is to ensure that students will not be having a test during that time.

OPTION "C" GRADEBOOK

Parents may go on-line to monitor your child/ren academic progress. If tuition is not paid, viewing student grades will be blocked.

LITURGY

Students will attend Liturgy once a week. If the total school is attending Liturgy, the Wednesday Liturgy will not be attended that week. The following schedule will be in effect:

Wednesday - 9:30 a.m. - Grades 1,2,3,4
 Friday - 9:30 a.m. - Grades 5,6,7,8

Parents are always welcome at the School Liturgies. Please consult your monthly calendar for dates of Liturgies.

PARKING

There is ample space for parking in the upper or lower lots. Cars should never be parked in the fire lanes around the school. Please do not park in the center spaces in the upper lot during afternoon dismissal. Cars may park in the curb lanes.

OFFICE CALLS

Any messages for teachers and students as well as questions concerning all other school procedures will be handled by the school receptionist, who will be in the office from 8:30 - 3:30 each school day.

If you wish to speak to the Principal directly, she may be contacted at the office any school day at (412) 372-7255. Appointments should be requested in advance.

EXTENDED DAY

Before and after school care is offered from 7:00-8:30 a.m. and from 3:00-6:00 p.m. to students attending St. Bernadette School. Families must register in order for their children to participate. Snacks are provided each day. On early dismissal days the time will be from 12:00-6:00 p.m. On days that school has a 2-hour-delay Extended Day will start at 9:00 a.m. Extended Day is open only on days that school is in session.

MONEY

Any money being collected in the school should be cleared through the Principal. Students may not sell things at school without permission of the Principal.

CHANGE OF PHONE NUMBER OR ADDRESS

Change of phone number or address should be made known to the school office immediately.

WATER BOTTLES

Water bottles may be used in school during the hot weather at the beginning and end of the school year. They must be in the book bags or lunchboxes to and from school. They are not to be used on the bus.

BEHAVIOR

St. Bernadette School Behavior code is based on the belief that young people must learn to deal with each other and with adults in a manner consistent with Christian teaching. This means that everyone is entitled to respect and that behavior in school should reflect our love of God, our neighbor, and ourselves. The following expectations are required for students in Kindergarten - Grade 8.

In general, students are expected to:

- Walk, never run, through corridors, up and down steps
- Be quiet in the halls so that other classes will not be disturbed
- Use proper language
- Respect the property of the school and the property of other students
- Refrain from chewing gum
- Refrain from rough behavior
- Remove hats when entering the school building
- Dress appropriately according to the dress code

In Church, students are expected to:

- Actively participate in Liturgical services by singing responses and hymns and reciting prayers
- Show respect for the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle by maintaining silence before and after services

In the Classroom, students are expected to:

- Observe the classroom rules as presented by each teacher. These are determined by the teacher and students.
- Be responsible for submitting homework on time and in good condition
- Maintain a respectful attitude toward teachers and one another
- Take care of books by keeping them covered and clean.

In the Cafeteria, students are expected to:

- Exercise good table manners and voice control
- Give cafeteria personnel and volunteers respect
- Keep the cafeteria area clean, the tables, chairs and floor
- Take whatever is on the menu including milk unless a doctor's note specifies that juice is to be substituted for milk
- Remain seated while eating

BEHAVIOR (cont' d)

At Assemblies, students are expected to:

- Maintain a respectful silence when others are speaking or performing

On the Bus, students are expected to:

- Follow the regulations established by the school district and the bus driver
- No eating or drinking is permitted on the buses

On the Playground, students are expected to:

- Respect and obey the parent aides
- Play safe games
- Stay in assigned areas
- Promptly line up when the bell rings
- Re-enter the building quietly

Students are expected to put forth their best effort and to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will promote a safe, orderly learning environment. School and classroom rules and expected behavior are explained to the children. Any behavior that causes the learning atmosphere to deteriorate or be disrupted or which infringes upon the rights of others in school will not be tolerated and will subject the student to corrective measures.

Acceptable corrective measure may include but are not limited to the following:

1. teacher/student conference
2. deprivation of privileges, or preferred activities
3. time-out in the classroom, playground or cafeteria
4. after school detention
5. communication with parent via note, telephone call or conference
6. referral to the Principal
7. chronic behavior may be referred to the ESAP (Elementary Student Assistance Program) or the SAP (Student Assistance Program)

Students may not bring whiteout or toxic permanent markers to school. Gum is not to be chewed anywhere on school property, including buses. Students chewing gum in school will be fined \$1.00 for the first offense. Each offense adds another \$1.00. Those passing out gum in school will be fined \$5.00 and required to call their parents.

Students are not permitted to bring radios, video games, tape recorders, walkmans, ipods, MP3 players, etc., to school or on the bus at any time. If students bring such items to school they will be taken and not returned until the end of the school year.

Students are not permitted to have cell phones and/or iPads in school. If it is necessary for a student to bring a cell phone to school for after school events, it must be left in the school office with the student's name attached. Students may pick up the cell phone after school. Use of cell phones is not permitted on the bus.

DETENTION

A student will receive a detention from a teacher/staff member for infractions of school rules and regulations. Behavior that is considered to be of a more serious nature may result in an immediate detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, immediate loss of participation in school-sponsored activities including field trips and graduation activities, or expulsion. These include but are not limited to:

- cheating on test/assignments/etc.
- stealing or damaging property
- fighting, hitting, or other forms of physical violence
- inflicting emotional abuse on another by verbally degrading, shunning, threatening, or teasing to excess
- excessive disruption in the classroom from talking, outburst, throwing objects or other behaviors deemed excessive by school personnel
- use of obscene language or gestures; possession of satanic or obscene books, tapes, or other lewd materials
- flagrant disrespect or outright defiance of any school personnel or staff

DETENTION (cont'd)

- behavior that endangers the safety of others
- leaving the school premises without permission
- possession, selling or use of legal or illegal drugs, alcohol, weapons, tobacco products, etc. on school grounds or at school related/sponsored activities.*
- harassment of another by word, action or electronic media

* Legal Authorities will be notified.

The detention will be effective on the date that is indicated on the detention slip. The detention will be for one hour after school. The student will bring home the detention slip that will be signed by the person giving the detention. Parent/Guardian is asked to sign the detention slip and return it to school the next day. Signing of detention form acknowledges that a parent/guardian saw the form. Transportation home from school after detention is the responsibility of the parent. Detentions are cumulative throughout each semester.

SUSPENSIONS**In-school**

When a student receives his/her 3rd detention in a semester, he/she will serve a 3 hour Saturday in-school suspension in service to the school. Parents will be responsible for transportation on the Saturday assigned. Non-appearance on Saturday in-school suspension will result in an automatic one day out of school suspension.

Out-of-school

When a student receives an out-of-school suspension, schoolwork will be assigned to be completed before the student returns to school. Upon completion of the suspension, parents must accompany the student back to school for a morning meeting with teachers and administration to discuss problems the student is having. During the time of suspension, the student may not attend any school-sponsored functions including but not restricted to athletics, dances, etc.

The administration reserves the right to impose an in-school or out-of-school suspension on any student who fails to follow the discipline code of St. Bernadette School. This may apply to a single infraction of a sufficiently serious nature or to repeated violations of the conduct code.

The length of the suspension will vary, and it will be contingent upon the degree of the involvement of the student(s) responsible for the infraction.

If the student is suspended for any of the above reasons, the parent will be notified. Parents must sign the suspension notice and return it to school.

EXPULSION

The Pastor and Principal reserve the right to dismiss any student whose influence is considered detrimental to the best interest of the school or injurious to the welfare of him/herself or of other students.

The Pastor and Principal are the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause.

WEAPONS

No weapon may be brought onto school property, including, but not limited to the school building, outdoor areas, outdoor facilities, or school buses, or to any school related activity. A weapon shall include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nun-chuck stick, fire arm, rifle or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting bodily injury, which is possessed under circumstances not manifestly appropriate for lawful uses which it may have. This includes firearms, which are not loaded or lack a clip or other component to render it immediately operable.

WEAPONS (cont'd)

A person in possession of a weapon on school property violates state criminal statutes and school regulation, and shall be subject to the following discipline and penalty:

1. Parents will be immediately notified.
2. The local police will be called.
3. The student will be expelled.

DRESS

The goal of a dress code is to emphasize neatness and care appropriate to serious pursuits such as learning. Students should be appropriately dressed for school in clothing that is neat, clean, well fitted and modest. Underwear must be worn. Student's hair should be clean and its natural color. Hair should never be in a student's eyes. Boys hair should not be longer than the shirt collar. Body piercing, except for ears, and tattoos are not appropriate for students attending St. Bernadette School.

St. Bernadette School students began wearing uniforms with the 1989-90 school year. Uniforms may be purchased from Schoolbelles (412-630-8481). Parents are not limited to this company but may purchase from any store that carries the same **color** and **style** of articles of clothing. Our uniform pants/shorts/slacks have **no double seams** or **patch pockets**.

UNIFORM FOR GIRLS

Navy/Green plaid, drop waist shift jumper - knee length (Grades K-3)

Navy/Green plaid wrap-around kilt skirt or kick-pleat back and front knee-length skirt (grades 4-8) Shorts or leggings should be worn under skirts.

Navy dress pants with appropriate belt (no hipsters or flares)

Nylons or solid colored socks - navy/white/red crew, knee-highs or tights must be worn with skirts, socks must cover ankles.

Flat dress shoes, black, brown, or navy - no clogs, flip-flops, boots, platforms, or canvas

Dress navy blue cuffed uniform fingertip length walking shorts with navy or black belts (tights should be worn during cold weather)

Make-up may be worn to school in Grades 7 & 8 in moderation. No make-up may be brought to school.

7/8th grade girls may wear khaki slacks

UNIFORM FOR BOYS

Pants - Navy, or khaki twill dress pants with appropriate belt, no denim, jean-like cut or cargo pants, no patch pockets/double seams or riveted slacks

Socks - Navy, black, brown, or white. Socks must cover ankles

Dress shoes - Black, brown or navy. No dark sport shoes, cowboy or logging boots

Shorts - Dress navy blue uniform fingertip length un-cuffed walking shorts with belts

Unisex Items:

Uniform for boys cont'd

Sweaters: Navy or Red V-neck vest, crewneck pullover or V-neck cardigan
Collared shirt or turtleneck must be worn under crewneck pullover sweaters

Blouse/Shirts: White/light blue/yellow/red oxford or Peter-Pan polo-knit
short or long sleeves or turtleneck. No form fitting blouses.
No mock turtlenecks and no ribbed tops of any kind. Shirts must be tucked into slacks, skirts, or skorts.

Picture Day Dress Code/Dress-Down Days

On picture day, students may wear clothes that do not fall under our current dress code. Girls may wear dresses, skorts or skirts which are a different color than dress code. Boys may wear different colored shirt or pants.

No jeans, t-shirts, boots, sport shoes, heels, clogs or sandals without socks are permitted to be worn by boys or girls on picture day.

Jean Days

On jean days, students may wear jeans (no oversized), knee length jean or capris (no cut-offs or overalls) that are in good condition with appropriate tops. Sport shoes may also be worn. Short-shorts may never be worn to school.

UFO Day

We will be scheduling Uniform Free Oppportunity days when students can pay \$2.00 to not wear their uniforms to school. Whatever students choose to wear must reflect our Catholic School Values. Knee-length shorts, shirts with sleeves, socks with shoes, no flip-flops, no boots, and no ripped clothes. If yoga pants are worn, tunic tops must be worn with them.

Dress Code for Field Trips

On days students go on field trips, they are to wear school uniforms. If the place they are going warrants dressing down, students should follow the code for jean day as stated above. Teachers will let parents know if jeans are permitted.

Exceptions may be made for students in Grades 7 & 8.

GYM UNIFORMS (K-8):

St. Bernadette blue monogrammed sweatpants, sweatshirts and fingertip length shorts.

St. Bernadette white monogrammed t-shirt.

White or black socks and gym (sport) shoes. Socks must cover ankles. No platform or heeled sport shoes.

Gym uniforms must be worn to school on gym day.

No loop or dangling earrings on gym day.

Students must have sweatshirts to wear over to the Lourdes Center for gym on gym day. 7th and 8th graders only may wear St. Bernadette hoodies for gym.

Dress Code Infractions

Students who do not dress according to the uniform code will be subject to receiving demerits. The following are some infractions that would warrant a demerit:

1. no belts on pants having belt loops
2. skirts shorter than knee length/no tights or knee socks with skirts
3. shirts not tucked in (tee shirts may be out on gym day as long as logo on pants is visible)
4. oversized clothing - any clothing which is more than one size larger than what the child wears
5. clogs, boots, high heels, platforms, sport shoes
6. shorts that are not fingertip length
7. socks that cannot be seen - not covering the ankles
8. hair that covers the eyes and boy's hair longer than the collar.
9. Camis and any undergarments should not be seen.

Students in Grades 1-4 (5 demerits), Grades 5-8 (3 demerits), who receive said amounts of demerits in a semester will receive a detention. At the end of the report period in January, all demerits from the first semester will be forgiven. The detentions received through dress code violations are subject to the same guidelines as noted on the detention page.

BOOKS

Students are expected to take good care of books issued for their use, and will be billed for serious damage to texts or library books. They must have a book bag or plastic bag to transport books between home and school. Textbooks must be covered. Law requires that an official form be signed by parents of non-public school students requesting the use of textbooks that are property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. That form is the last page of this booklet. Please sign and return the form to the school immediately. Lost textbooks and workbooks will be billed at the cost of the present publisher's price. Defaced or damaged books that are useable will require a \$20.00 fee.

LIBRARY

The school library is staffed by parent volunteers. Children in kindergarten may borrow one book for two weeks or a video for one week; children in grades 1-8 may borrow one book for two weeks and a video for one week **OR** two books for two weeks. Although there is no charge for overdue materials, children are asked to be conscientious in their responsibility to return books or videos on or before the designated date. Overdue notices will be sent when an item is not returned within a week of its due date.

If the item is still not returned, a phone call to the parents will follow. If a child loses or SEVERELY DAMAGES a book or video, parents will be notified of the cost of replacing the item. Parents are responsible for ensuring that the bill is paid.

BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY

St. Bernadette School Library offers a selection of books that may be purchased and dedicated to a special person for any occasion: birthday, anniversary, communion, graduation, or just a way of showing you care. These books will be marked with your dedication and will be placed in the school library for all children to read and enjoy. In this way, your special person or persons will be continually remembered. Donations range from \$10 to \$20. Books for this program may be purchased by contacting the school office at (412)372-7255. This is a great way to show your love and support for our school library.

Tuition

If a family is not registered in the parish upon enrollment in the school, the family should register immediately and begin supporting the parish.

To qualify for participating member of a Catholic Parish rate, children must be baptized and the family must be registered in a Catholic parish. The family must be practicing the Catholic faith through regular Mass attendance and regular use of the parish envelope system.

Payment of tuition is over and above that which should go to the support of the Church in the Sunday collection.

**Participating Member of
a Catholic Parish****Non-participating Catholic
and Non-Catholics**

1st child (K-8)	\$3850 (10 pmts \$385/mo)	\$5200 (10 pmts \$520/mo)
2nd child (K-8)	\$2650 (10 pmts \$650/mo)	\$4900 (10 pmts \$1010/mo)each add.child
3rd child (K-8)	\$1900 (10 pmts \$840/mo)	
4 th child (K-8)	\$1050 (10 pmts \$945/mo)	

During the school year, tuition bills will be sent home with the oldest child in school or e-mailed to those who request it. Payments may be sent to the school, or put in the Sunday collection at Church. Checks should be made payable to St. Bernadette. Bills will be sent out monthly June through April. In order for us to pay our bills it is most important that you are current with tuition payments. Reports will not be given to students if we have not received 4 payments before November conferences, 6 payments before January conferences, and 8 payments before spring conferences. If tuition is not current, you will not have access to Option C.

If tuition is not paid in full by June 1, students will not receive report cards. When transferring, records will not be sent on to the next school if tuition is outstanding.

Students will not be able to continue attending school if parents do not receive their child's report card. Payments may be made (A) Monthly - 10 payments or (B) Paid in Full by Sept. 1. If tuition is paid in full by September 1, the amount owed is \$50 less than the amounts listed above.

- * All families will receive a contract in June with the first tuition invoice. Please fill it out in full and sign the contract and return it with your first tuition payment due by **July 10**.
- * A non-refundable registration fee of \$100 per family will be charged in January during the registration process. This fee will be applied against the total tuition billing in June.
- * Any child whose family has not made their first two tuition payments by the start of the school year, will not be admitted to the school.

If a family belongs to another parish and is active in that parish, the family will pay tuition charged to parishioners. The parents must have their Pastor sign a verification form that must be renewed yearly.

Lack of finances need not be an obstacle to enrollment in St. Bernadette School. The Bishop's Education Fund, Scholastic Opportunity Scholarship (SOS), and St. Bernadette Parish have monies available for educational grants to those families with demonstrated need. Information and the necessary forms will be sent to families in February. Please call to request one.

Recipients of financial assistance from St. Bernadette will be required to make timely payments for their portion of the tuition. In return for tuition assistance, volunteer service will be expected from the parents receiving assistance according to the amount of aid received.

FUNDRAISING

The Diocese of Pittsburgh Catholic Schools Office recommends that 10% of the total school operating expenses should be raised by fundraisers.

Every family is being assessed a \$500 fundraising fee which can be paid by:

- a.) purchasing gift certificates yielding at least \$500 profit.
- b.) paying the \$500 fee in monthly or yearly payments.
- c.) statements are sent in August, December, and April. Anyone who chooses to purchase certificates and does not make the \$500 by March 31 will be required to pay the difference in April.
- d.) Grocery certificates/Sprint and Market Day purchases are the fundraisers that the Diocese permits us to give back to families fundraising fee.

PTG FUNDRAISING

The only other sources of fundraising monies going into the budget are the money raised by the 250 Club (\$13,000) and money the P.T.G. gives (\$29,000) to the school each school year. This money is made in a variety of ways. Every family is encouraged to participate in these fundraisers because every child in the school benefits from the money raised.

The P.T.G. sponsors the following for the school children: Welcome Back Night in September, Windy City Players, movie nights, Singing and Swinging with Santa, Halloween, Christmas and Valentine parties, Catholic Schools Week activities, Father-Daughter Dance, Mother-Son Picnic, Book Fairs, 8th Grade Graduation Reception and the end-of-the-year Fun Fair.

Money is raised for the above by the following fundraisers: Walkathon, Gala (each family is strongly encouraged to buy or sell 2 Gala tickets), Basket Bingo, Max'n Erma Days, Sarris Christmas and Easter Candy Sale. Every family is encouraged to help raise the funds by participating in the above. Please do your share by helping. Families cannot receive any rebates for participating in these fundraisers as regulated by the Diocesan auditors.

MAGAZINE SALE

Each Fall the school has a magazine sale. The money raised through this fundraiser is used to help pay for field trips and speakers. Individual students benefit by receiving small prizes for participating. Each class benefits from the sales made by the students in that class.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is provided by the Gateway, Penn Hills, Penn Trafford, Woodland Hills, Franklin Regional, Kiski, East Allegheny, and Plum school districts. Safety and conduct codes will be enforced. Drivers are responsible for students while being transported. A series of repeated violations may necessitate the suspension of a child's bus privileges. Parents will be notified if a child's bus suspension is imminent. Parents are to emphasize safety and good conduct -- especially the use of proper language.

The school will follow Gateway's Transportation Code as stated below. "Offenses for which school transportation privileges may be suspended: Violation of rules of conduct that jeopardizes the safety of students. The following offenses may result in a student's temporary or permanent suspension of bus privileges:

TRANSPORTATION (cont'd)

1. Committing physical assault upon other students, school employees or other persons.
2. Using profane or abusive language.
3. Acting in an insubordinate manner, or showing flagrant disrespect to the bus driver or school employee.
4. Willfully destroying property of the transportation company or the property of other individuals.
5. To recognize that the bus driver is the exclusive authority on the bus/van when no other school employee is on the bus/van.
6. Not to jeopardize the safety of other students.
7. To stand in an orderly manner in a single file line without pushing to board the bus/van.
8. To board the bus/van safely, be seated promptly, remain seated, and depart in a safe and orderly manner at his/her assigned stop.
9. Not to distract the bus/van driver's attention from his/her duties by any disruptive behavior.
10. ONLY permitted to ride the bus/van on which they are assigned.
11. Not permitted to bring animals on the bus/van.
12. Not to put any body part out of the bus/van window.
13. Not to throw any item/article inside the bus/van or out of the bus/van window.
14. Not to get involved in fighting and/or disorderly conduct. Students who participate in such conduct may be faced with police involvement and charges.
15. Not permitted to stand and/or move freely from seat to seat while bus/van is moving.
16. Required to identify themselves when asked by any adult to do so (including the driver and monitor).
17. Not permitted to eat or drink while on the bus/van.
18. Reminded that any violation of the rules established by the Transportation Policy may result in the student's loss of his/her bus/van riding privileges.

Any child riding a bus other than the one assigned is not covered by insurance. Bus drivers may refuse to drive children not assigned to their buses.

Any child who is not to take the bus home on a particular day must have a note from his/her parent or the child will be put on the bus.

Questions related to any bus schedule or the policy must be directed to the Gateway School District Transportation Office at 412-373-5729.

MUSIC

St. Bernadette School students attend music classes twice a week. Fundamentals of music are taught as well as learning songs for Liturgy. Students in grades 3-8 may cantor for school liturgies. During the year, our students perform in programs before Christmas. All students are expected to participate in the school and evening performance. Any student who does not participate in the evening can expect a drop in their music grade for that semester.

INSTRUMENTAL/BAND

Instrumental music lessons are offered for students in Levels 4-8. When leaving for music or band lessons, students should begin to prepare to leave 2 minutes before the lesson. Students are responsible for making up schoolwork missed during band and lessons. Band concerts are presented twice during the year. The cost for lessons is \$34 a month for 1 student per family, \$48 a month for 2 students per family and \$58 a month for 3 students per family.

GYM CLASSES

All students are required to take physical education class. A doctor's excuse is required if a student will be out for any length of time (more than 2 weeks).

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

School volunteers are an important part of the educational program. Parents and friends interested in giving of their time are encouraged to offer their services. Volunteers fall into six categories: classroom aides, librarians, clerical aides, lunchroom aides, typists, homeroom parents. All volunteers must register on the Diocese of Pittsburgh Database by going to www.diopitt.org, scroll down to "Database Application", and the access code is "Protect".

All volunteers must receive all clearances and take necessary classes.

PARENT-TEACHER GUILD

The purpose of the organization is to bring into closer relation the Church, the home and the school, and further a spirit of cooperation in mutual efforts of providing Catholic education to children. All parents are expected to become active members of the P.T.G. and participate in the activities. Annual membership dues are \$5.00. You will receive a school directory when you pay your dues.

Throughout the school year, the P.T.G. will continue Santa Shoppe, Book Fairs, and Christmas/Easter Candy Sale. All of these are optional but encouraged. The money raised is used to provide many "extras" for all our students...school assemblies, Christmas Party, Fun Fair Day, new Library books, etc. Last year, \$29,000 was given by the P.T.G. into the regular school budget.

Written suggestions, ideas, and comments are always welcomed and can be submitted to any of the officers.

HOLIDAY PARTY POLICY

The P.T.G. Board will decide and purchase the treats given to the children for holiday parties in grades K-8. No additional food or drink may be sent in for certain rooms. The homeroom parents must be in contact with individual teachers to see in what way the teachers wish help with the party. Parties do not exceed 40 minutes. There should be no more than two parents (without younger children) in the classroom helping with the parties.

PARTY INVITATIONS

Students may not pass out invitations during the school day for parties held after school hours unless an invitation is given to every child in the class.

PARISH BULLETIN

Any parent who is not a member of the parish and wishes to receive a Parish Bulletin may do so by sending a note to the office.

HEALTH SERVICES

The following services are offered throughout the year:

Dental Exams:	Students entering school for the first time Kindergarten, grades 3 and 7
Physical Exams:	Students entering school for the first time Kindergarten, grade 6
Audiology Screening: Height/Weight Screening:	Kindergarten, grades 1, 2, 3, and 7 Kindergarten through grade 8
Vision Screening:	Kindergarten through grade 8
Scoliosis Screening:	Grades 6 and 7
Muscle Balance and Color Perception:	Grade 1

Kindergarten health histories must be sent to the school office before the child is admitted into the school.

Emergency procedure cards are updated as necessary by stopping at the school office.

Those entering Kindergarten or 1st grade for the first time are required the following immunizations:

HEALTH SERVICES (cont'd)**Grades K-12**

- 4 doses of tetanus (1 dose after 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of diphtheria (1 dose after 4th birthday)
- 3 doses of polio
- 2 doses of measles
- 2 doses of mumps
- 1 dose of rubella
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella or written statement from physician/designee indicating month and year of disease or serologic proof of immunity.

Grades 7-12

- 1 dose of tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis (Tdap)
- 1 dose of meningitis vaccine (MCV4)

Immunizations received since the close of school in June should be recorded on each child's health record. Parents should send a note regarding this also.

Students are not to be in school while having contagious diseases. Students sent home from school for these reasons must have a note from his/her doctor before returning to school.

St. Bernadette School will follow the same medication policy as exists in the Gateway Schools. All medicine must be kept in the office. Teachers do not administer any medication.

ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS

When students' health needs make it necessary for medication to be taken during school hours, sound medical practice and State Law indicate certain procedures must be followed.

Only essential prescribed medicines will be given at school. The parent or guardian will assume full responsibility for any medication sent to school. Pre-planning will permit most medications to be administered at home. Medications must be administered by a certified nurse; however, the administration of over-the-counter medications is also governed by state law, which forbids a school nurse to administer any medication without a physician's or dental written order. In the absence of the nurse, medication may be administered by the building principal or his/her designee.

Procedures for the administration of medications:**A. All Medications**

1. A physician's or dentist's written order must accompany each medication, including over-the-counter medication, along with a signed Gateway School District medicine permission form.
2. Prescriptions must be packaged according to current pharmacy standards and in properly labeled pharmacy containers.
3. Over-the-counter medications must be in the manufacturer's original container and be labeled by the parent with the child's name, dosage to be taken and the time to be taken.
4. All medications are kept in a locked cabinet.
5. Medications not in compliance with the above policy cannot be given and will be returned to the parents.

B. Injectable Medications

1. Medications to be given by injection will be given only by the school nurse or by the child if he/she has been properly instructed.

2. Injectable medications must comply with the policy issued for oral medications.

AHERA

Pursuant to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA), our school was inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector. A Management Plan was developed and submitted to the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education. A copy of our Asbestos Inspection Report and Management Plan is on file in the administration office of our school.

Asbestos ceilings were removed from St. Bernadette School in 1987. Our school is re-inspected by a certified AHERA Inspector every three (3) years.

Our maintenance and custodial staff has received two (2) hours of Awareness Training and will conduct a periodic surveillance twice a year in the months of December and June.

STUDENT LUNCH TIME REGULATIONS

No student may leave the school grounds unless accompanied by a parent or with written parent permission and approval by the principal.

Students will eat lunch in the Lourdes Center Dining Hall. While eating, students are expected to remain seated. Each student is responsible for cleaning up after him/herself. Any food that is dropped or spilled should be picked up by the child responsible. All trash must be placed in the barrels provided. Any class who does not clean up after themselves may be kept in the following day during playtime following lunch.

Student lunch times are as follows:

11:25 - 12:00 Grades 1-2
 11:45 - 12:20 Kindergarten
 11:55 - 12:30 Grades 6-7-8
 12:25 - 1:00 Grades 3-4-5

Please purchase lunch cards at \$33/10 lunches (cash price of \$3.50/lunch is discouraged). Please make checks payable to "St. Bernadette School". Cost of milk is 50 cents. You may purchase milk cards for \$13.

Before leaving the building, students may use the restrooms. They may not re-enter the buildings except for an emergency.

After 15 minutes, any child who has finished eating and cleaning up after themselves will be dismissed. No food may be taken outdoors.

The designated play area is the bottom parking lot. Students are not permitted on the wall or on the hillside between the parking lots. Such restrictions are for the students' safety. The specified play area is the only place with adult supervision. Students are to respectfully listen to and obey the adults who are overseeing their play.

When the bell rings, students will line up and use the steps by the Lourdes Center. Teachers will meet their classes and take them upstairs quietly.

Students will not be permitted out in the snow without heavy shoes/boots and hats during the winter months.

If a student has returned to school after an illness and it is necessary for him/her to remain inside during the entire lunch period, a note must be written by the parent/guardian requesting this permission. The student should bring a book and sit at one of the tables in the lunchroom. On rainy or extremely cold days, students in Grades 1-8 will return to their classrooms.

NO STUDENT IS PERMITTED ON THE SECOND OR THIRD FLOORS OF THE BUILDING AT LUNCH TIME UNLESS HE/SHE IS WITH A TEACHER OR HAS EXPRESSED PERMISSION FROM THE OFFICE.

Lunchroom Supervisors

Lunchtime playground supervisors are needed daily from 11:15 to 1:00. Four willing and capable parents will be hired by the administration to work each day. They will receive a \$7.00 tuition credit each day they work. Those wishing to work must be able to commit themselves to the program weekly for the total school year. Please call the school office (412-372-7255) if you are interested in working.

SCHOOL SAFETY

St. Bernadette School adheres to the policies as promulgated by the Diocese of Pittsburgh in regard to Substance Abuse, Child Abuse, and School Security. The entire book of policies is available in the school office.

ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

St. Bernadette Athletic Association (SBAA) provides athletic opportunities for the youth of St. Bernadette School. The association sponsors developmental and competitive sports in the following areas: coed cross country (grades 1-8); coed soccer (grades 4-8); boys and girls basketball (grades 3-8); girls cheerleading (grades 1-8); coed track (grades 1-8); girls volleyball (grades 4-8).

The association is self-supporting and receives no financial assistance from the Parish or School. Funds are generated primarily through registration fees and various fundraising activities such as a spaghetti dinner, Lourdes Center concession stand, and basketball tournaments. All families with children participating in the program are expected to actively help with the fundraising activities.

All registration and additional SBAA information is available on the athletic website at <http://magster.org/sbaa>. The SBAA email address is sbaasabers@hotmail.com.

Students dismissed from school before lunchtime for medical or dental appointments, IF RETURNING TO SCHOOL THAT SAME DAY may participate in team activities that same evening.

Students dismissed from school after lunchtime for medical or dental appointments would be able to participate that evening.

Students dismissed early at any time of the day for any other reason (social engagement, lunch, beauty treatment, etc.) would not be allowed to participate that evening.

Students dismissed early at any time of the day for a family death/funeral would be exempt from this regulation.

Maintaining good grades is the expectation of all students who attend St. Bernadette School. Teachers provide many opportunities for students to receive good grades. All students are capable of maintaining a "C" in all of their subjects. Starting two weeks after the beginning of each report period students and parents will be notified if a student cannot play sports because of low grades. Each Monday a list of student names who do not meet the guideline of a "C" grade will be given to coaches and those students will not be allowed to participate for that week. If the grade is raised by the following week, students may resume participation. If the grade is not raised, they will continue to be suspended until the grade in question improves. The student will be notified of academic suspension by the Principal. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of academic suspension by email.

Coaching opportunities exist for any interested parent. Those who volunteer must attend the Diocese sponsored "Protecting God's Children" seminar, register on the Diocese database and obtain appropriate clearances. SBAA coordinates with the Parish Religious Education Director to ensure all volunteers follow the Diocese of Pittsburgh mandates.

TUESDAY EXPRESS ENVELOPE

Each Tuesday, the family envelope will be sent home with one of your children. We would appreciate you taking the contents out and returning the envelope to school the following day. Please enclose anything you wish to send back to school. The envelope is very sturdy and is intended to last the entire school year. Thanks for your cooperation in returning it each week.

If you wish to send any flyers out to all parents, please make sure you send it to the office by Friday so it can be copied and enclosed in the Tuesday Express envelope.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

School lockers are the property of St. Bernadette School. The use of lockers is a privilege, not a right. Students shall have no expectation of privacy therein as the school retains the right to conduct both announced and unannounced locker searches. Discovery of illegal materials in a school locker may result in discipline up to and including expulsion and/or referral to appropriate authorities.

**Guidelines for "Internet Use Policy" Implementation and Practice
Grades 1-8**

This guideline is established to ensure understanding and application of St. Bernadette School Internet Use Policy. St. Bernadette School reserves the right to amend these guidelines at any time. It is understood that the administration of St. Bernadette School will inform parents/guardians of any changes made in these Guidelines via the school's monthly newsletter. ***Students' parents and/or guardians are required to review these guidelines with their child(ren) and complete and return the attached parent-guardian consent form.***

This guideline includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

1. Information and news from a wide variety of sources and research institutions
2. Public domain and shareware software of all types
3. Access to any educational institutions and libraries

Etiquette

1. Appropriate language is expected in all messages
2. Anything pertaining to illegal activity is expressly forbidden
3. Do not reveal access information, personal or otherwise
4. Do not disrupt others' use of the internet access
5. All users should remember that deleted materials can be retrieved.

The following actions, which are not inclusive, are considered unacceptable actions by the administration of St. Bernadette School:

1. Placing unlawful information on the Internet
2. Using the Internet for non-school related activities
3. Sending messages that are likely to result in loss of the recipients work or systems
4. Using the Internet for commercial purposes
5. Using the Internet for political lobbying that does not support the expressed philosophy and tenets of the Catholic Church
6. Sending or receiving copyrighted material without permission
7. Plagiarism
8. Using Internet access to send or retrieve pornographic material, inappropriate file text, files dangerous to the integrity of the system, violent or threatening material or messages
9. Circumventing security measures on school or remote computers or networks
10. Vandalism
11. Falsifying one's identity

Dear Parent or Guardian:

State legislation authorizes the loan of textbooks and instructional materials by the Secretary of Education to children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 in nonpublic schools. Our school is now in the process of requesting the specific textbooks and materials to be loaned to your child(ren).

It is required, however, that a parent of each child attending the nonpublic school individually request a loan of textbooks and instructional materials. We are asking you to sign the following form, date it, and return it to school **immediately**.

Thank you for your continued assistance and cooperation.

CERTIFICATE OF INDIVIDUAL REQUEST
FOR LOAN OF TEXTBOOKS
AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

I hereby request the loan of textbooks and instructional materials in accordance with Pennsylvania School Code of 1949 for my child(ren) attending St. Bernadette school.

Date _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

This program is available only to Pennsylvania residents.

I have read this handbook and I am familiar with the policies of St. Bernadette School. My signature is acknowledgement of receipt of this handbook and our family's willingness to abide by these policies.

Student/s Signature _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

The Diocese of Pittsburgh and the Common Core

There has been a great deal of conversation about the Diocese adopting the Common Core Standards. Numerous questions have been raised regarding those standards and their relevance to Catholic education, particularly in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Our educational standards have always been aligned with national standards based on our Catholic beliefs and faith. The review of the Common Core Standards by the Diocese of Pittsburgh means that we look at those national standards as a measuring tool for what all children across the United States are expected to minimally know and learn academically at the end of each grade level.

Our standards have always been built on higher expectations for all students at each level based on our Catholic faith. We ensure there is an alignment of our curriculums as to what all students should know with state standards, national standards and common core standards. We then expand upon these standards in light of our faith.

I can understand the interest in the Common Core and the misconceptions this may create. We have always provided the best, most rigorous and most authentically Catholic education for all the students we serve using the best instructional practices available. As Catholic private schools we are at liberty to use the benefits of the Common Core and avoid any political entanglements with the State and Federal Governments.

Many of the negative comments that have been made about the Common Core Standards are not implemented in the Catholic schools of the Diocese. We determine our own curriculum and what texts and literature we use in our classrooms.

We use Nationally Normed Assessments that do not link to a specific curriculum or set of standards. These assessments link to National Standards recognized by the organizations of the “National Teachers of English” as an example. They are not criterion referenced such as the PSSA or Keystone Exams. We may use our own Keystone-like exams in the future to ensure that our students can exceed any in the state. But we see these assessments as minimum measures rather than measures of competence. We take advantage of all formative assessments so that our teachers receive feedback to improve instruction and to provide our students with a classically instructive, college-ready curriculum.

Our students are not required to take the state electronic or paper and pencil assessment. Our students’ individual data and results are not shared with any government organization for data tracking. The proof of our approach is that 100% of the students who stay enrolled in Catholic High Schools graduate. Fully 94 % of these graduates go on to attend 4-year colleges, including some of the most prestigious colleges in the country.

Our Catholic Schools have a long-standing reputation for academic excellence. Most important, we have a proven record for passionately forming and awaking the Catholic faith within our students.