

September News Briefs

from Hill-Murray School

Welcome Back!

from Dr. Susan Paul, Interim President/Principal

Welcome to the 2010-2011 Hill-Murray School year! This e-newsletter shares with you some of the most recent news and upcoming events that will greet you and your son or daughter during the month of September. Our regular newsletter, *Happenings*, is published on the first of each month, beginning October 1. We didn't want to wait a full month to begin letting you know what is happening at your school.



Let me first welcome you to Hill-Murray—all new and returning students and their families. I welcome you to another year of great opportunities to learn, in a faith environment you'll find academically challenging and fun. Those of you who are returning this year know that you are attending a school with a supportive community of teachers and students and those of you who are new will soon learn that. And, all of you know that we set high expectations for academics and that you will be asked to work hard and use the multitude of talents you have been given.

Just as I have asked the faculty and staff, my message to students is to ask you to "step it up!" Take charge of your learning by asking for help when you need it, by studying that extra few minutes to really master the material you've been given, and by helping your peers when they need the support. Take time to consider and further your faith development, using the many Campus Ministry resources available to students at Hill-Murray, as well as the ample choices you will have to serve others. We'll help . . . we're all in the learning process together!

This will be a great year and we, the faculty and staff at Hill-Murray, look forward to getting to know each of you personally.

Welcome back.

Hill-Murray 2009-2010 ACT Scores Far Surpass State/National Averages

The latest ACT scores for this last year's graduates are in, and Hill-Murray students have confirmed the strength of the school's academic program. H-M students' composite average was a whopping 25.2, in comparison to the state average of 22.9.

This year, Minnesota registered the highest average ACT scores in the nation. In light of that, H-M student scores are even more impressive. In the last five years, Hill-Murray's ACT scores have risen from an average composite of 23.5 to the current 25.2—almost a full two point increase. During the same period, the state's composite only increased by six-tenths of a point, and this last year, the national composite average actually declined by one-tenth of a percent.

According to Hill-Murray Interim President/Principal, Dr. Susan Paul, the Hill-Murray scores reflect the solid academic program and emphasis on excellence the school fosters. "We've worked hard in the last five years analyzing how we can continuously improve in preparing our students for the rigors of college coursework. The upward trend in our ACT scores confirms that we are on track. Our students are ready for college."

2010 AP Scores Also Exceptional!

How is this for impressive? **Eighty-seven percent of the 2010 Advanced Placement exams taken by Hill-Murray students received a grade of 3 or higher!** Most colleges and universities accept a score of three or higher (on a five-point scale) in granting college credit in a particular discipline, such as history or English Literature. Topping the charts for Hill-Murray in 2010 were the students taking English Language and Composition! All 47 received a rating of 3 or higher. 45 out of 46 students (98%) taking the English Literature and Composition received a 3 or higher! And 44 of 46 students (96%) taking the U.S. History exam received a rating of 3 or better. Overall, 87% of the exams qualified the student to receive college credit.

Hill-Murray students and staff place great emphasis on academic excellence and college readiness. These successful scores surely point to their solid efforts.

“Infinite Campus” Coming Soon

New student management system to include “parent portal” with access for parents and students.

Part of the agenda on the very first day of teacher workshops, and continuing throughout the week, was an introduction of “Infinite Campus” to Hill-Murray faculty. The new online system allows for grading, record keeping, attendance and scheduling for all of H-M students. It will be implemented on the very first day of school.

Infinite Campus also will eventually include access to parents and students, through a log-in/password process, allowing for the viewing of posted coursework, assignments, and real-time student grades. While no firm timetable has been set for parents and students to be able to access that information, Paul Schieffert, the school’s

Infinite Campus, cont. on page 4.

BACK to SCHOOL NIGHT: Wednesday, September 15

Parents: Don’t miss the opportunity to learn more about your student’s academic experience at Hill-Murray. Our doors open at 6:30 when you’ll be greeted and invited to find your way to your student’s homeroom. We ask that you are in your students’ homeroom by 7:00 p.m. Plan to arrive early enough to park – it’s a very popular event!

There are optional but important meetings from 6:00-6:45 PM:

- ▶ 7th Grade Parents in the Staff Lounge, Main Entrance
- ▶ Freshmen Parents in the Auditorium, Main Entrance

These meetings will be finished by 6:45 in plenty of time to find your classroom.

Nancy Lynch, Taher, Inc. Food Service Director will be in the Café, starting at 6:30, to answer any questions you may have about our food service program.

You’ll receive a copy of your student’s schedule in homeroom. You’ll be able to follow our daily schedule, meet each teacher, and gain valuable information about our curriculum and our course expectations. You’ll also get a chance to shop for Hill-Murray apparel in the Trading Post, learn more about membership in the Mothers and Fathers Clubs, as well as talk with Taher staff members about our food service in the Cafeteria. Refreshments are available, compliments of the H-M Mothers’ Club.

The last period of your student’s day ends at 9:00 p.m.

Board of Trustees’ Lafeber Details Search Process for New President

Hill-Murray Board of Trustees Vice Chair Kevin Lafeber addressed faculty and staff in an early session of workshops on August 24. He was there, he explained, to inform them about the process that will be undertaken to find a future president for Hill-Murray.



Board of Trustees’ Kevin Lafeber spoke to H-M staff

“This will be a thoughtful, diligent process that will take six to twelve months,” he said. He will lead a search committee, yet

to be formed, that will have as its goals a smooth transition in leadership, and the assurance that the next president will have as his/her focus the school’s mission, values, and long-term plans.

The process he outlined will start with a careful review of the school’s identity, core values, and mission, as well as its strengths and areas for improvement. “We’re fortunate to recently have done a lot of that work. So we’re in good shape to begin the process,” he said.

The search committee will also be looking to the future. “We’ll look at where we want to be in three, five . . . ten years from now as an institution,” said Lafeber. “Then we’ll determine who can get us there . . . what attributes, skills and competencies are needed in a president to lead us there.”

The process will be thorough, he said, engaging a diversity of constituents—students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and other friends of the school. “All of them will be asked to participate in helping us define what we need in our leadership.” The search committee will eventually recommend a candidate to the Board of Trustees, who will make the final decision.

Lafeber thanked the staff for its support and the current leadership. “It’s nice to be confident that we have strong leadership in place,” he said. “We’re fortunate.”

Link Crew Mixer for Freshmen on September 3.

Parents of Freshmen Invited to Separate Event at Same Time!

The lower gym will be rockin' on September 3 when the Hill-Murray Link Crew hosts the first social event of the school year, the Link Crew Mixer. Exclusively for freshmen, the dance caps off a week of orientation activities led by the "Crew," all intended to help ease the transition to a new school for this year's ninth grad students.



- ▶ Friday, September 3; 7:30-9:30 PM
- ▶ Lower Gym
- ▶ Cost: \$5.00

Freshmen, don't miss this blast of an evening! There'll be fun DJ music and an evening to hang out with new and old friends in your class. See you there.

PARENTS OF FRESHMEN: PIONEER PARENT EVENT!

You're invited to an event for you . . . at the same time as your son/daughter is at their mixer. This is a great chance to meet other Pioneer parents, see some fun pictures from the first week of school for the freshmen, enjoy a lovely dessert buffet, and hear from Paul Bernabei, an educator, writer, and lecturer who will speak about raising healthy teens in the new millennium. He is the co-author of 3 books: Top 20 Teens, Top 20 Educators, and Top 20 Parents.

- ▶ Friday, September 3; 7:30-9:30 PM
- ▶ H-M Commons and Chapel
- ▶ Cost: Free
- ▶ **Please RSVP by Thursday, September 2**
(Kathy Malone: 651-777-1376 or kmalone@hill-murray.org)

Drop off your son or daughter and join us. See you there.

Meet the Hill-Murray Board of Trustees

Speaking for the entire Hill-Murray School Board of Trustees, I want to welcome you to a new year! The Board's broad role is to ensure that the school's mission is the ongoing focus for all components of a Hill-Murray education. We are pleased and proud to serve a school with such a rich Benedictine tradition and a proven record of academic excellence. We, as a board, also feel fortunate to be blessed with an outstanding administrative team, led by Interim President/Principal Dr. Susan Paul. We are confident that Hill-Murray will continue to be a leader in middle and high school education for the entire metro. Have a great year.

Dan Steichen, Chair, Hill-Murray Board of Trustees

2010-2011 Hill-Murray Board of Trustees

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New On-line Payment Option for Food Service

Taher Food Service is pleased to introduce the implementation of an on-line payment service, beginning on September 1, 2010, called e-Funds for Schools. This optional, user-friendly service offers various options for parents/guardians who choose to make on-line payments for lunch purchases.

For complete information on this new option click the link below.

http://www.hill-murray.org/files/hillmurray/files/Online_Payment_info.pdf

FAQ: Hill-Murray's New TADS Billing System

This year, Hill-Murray has contracted with TADS to administer its billing services. Here are some answers to frequently asked questions about the new system.

Q: Can I make my payment directly to Hill-Murray?

A: Yes, payments can continue to be dropped off in the Business Office or mailed to the school.

Q: How do I see the detail of my charges and credits?

A: Once you are logged in, choose the "BILLING" tab. Any information noted in blue font may be 'clicked' on for further details.

Q: Can I use my Visa to make a payment?

A: No, TADS accepts MasterCard, Discover and American Express. TADS was unable to make acceptable arrangements with Visa to accept their cards. Families also may opt to provide their bank routing information to pay automatically, mail in checks to TADS or the school, or pay by cash at the H-M Business Office.

Q: If I have questions, who do I call?

A: Our Business Office continues to serve our families. Nancy Perrault, our student billing staff person can be reached at 651-748-2413. Our office hours are 7:00 am to 3:30 pm Monday through Friday. For assistance outside of our regular office hours, TADS can be reached until 6:00 pm Monday through Friday at 1-800-477-8237 or 612-548-3320. Their fax number is 612-548-3326. Email is info@tads.com.

Infinite Campus, cont. from p.2

new Chief Information Officer, who is directing the implementation and training process, says that parents and students can expect access in early fall. So it won't take long!

Infinite Campus will usher in a new generation of technology that will further the link between teachers, students and parents--all of the participants in the educational process. Look for more information from Hill-Murray as the implementation process continues.



Mr. Rose & Ms. Fitch learn more about "Infinite Campus" at teacher workshops

Meet the New Staff Members



Paul Schieffert
Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Paul Schieffert joins our staff as the Chief Information Officer (CIO), providing leadership in information technology. He brings with him nineteen years of Catholic school experience as a teacher and administrator, having served as principal at Mary of Lourdes in Little Falls and at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud. He holds an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Saint Mary's University and has done graduate work in Educational Administration at St. Cloud State University. Paul has also co-developed and facilitated an online e-course in Theology for the Diocese of St. Cloud.



Molly Bye
Guidance Counselor

Molly Bye comes to our Guidance and Counseling Department as a non-public counselor from the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Stout and her Masters in Education in Guidance and Counseling, K-12 from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. She brings experience in the public school setting and has served, as well, at Presentation and Transfiguration Schools and at Mounds Park Academy.



Linda Strahan
Learning Coordinator

Linda Strahan is our new Learning Coordinator. She brings with her eighteen years of experience at Saint Bernard's School where she served as Director of Special Education. She enjoys a wealth of experience in K-12 education as a teacher trainer and mentor, especially in the area of differentiated instruction. Linda earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Child Psychology – Early Childhood Education from the University of Minnesota and has a Mini-MBA Certification in Non-Profit Business Management and a Master of Arts in Special Education and Instruction from the University of St. Thomas.