



## Mid-March Madness

March 11, 2018

The first point following the opening paragraph of the Aquinas Academy mission statement reads, “Accordingly, the mission of Aquinas Academy is ... To serve parents in carrying out their fundamental responsibility to ensure the moral and intellectual formation of their children”. When the school was undergoing preparation for the initial accreditation by Middle States in 2007, the high school students at that time took notice of that wording and commented on the fact that our mission is to serve parents. In essence, they were asking, “What about us? Aren’t you here to serve *us!*” That opened a very enlightening discussion with students about the very essential role of parents in the education of their children; and the school’s role to provide assistance in that very noble vocation. We are all in this together, and we take special note of the fact that parents are the primary educators. You know your children best, and we understand the importance of working with you for the good of your children.

Parents certainly wish to see their children grow in independence as they progress through from year to year, and it becomes challenging for parents to know how they can best support their child’s academic independence. Striking the appropriate balance of support goes a long way in building independence, confidence, and the skills necessary for students to become the active principle in their own education. Consider these guidelines:

Early elementary: K through 3

- Encourage your son/daughter to read to you on a regular basis. This may be a selection for class, or a book of his/her own choosing. Take turns on pages, modeling fluency and expression.
- Help students develop regular routines for approaching homework. Sit down together to organize the work and put completed homework in a folder where it can most certainly be found at school the next day.
- Check the homework, helping to clarify any concepts not yet mastered.
- Practice basic math facts on a regular basis – and make it fun!
- Establish a routine method of studying for upcoming tests.

Upper elementary: Grades 4 and 5

- Be sure your son/daughter has a quiet place to study. By this age, he/she should be able to work more independently. However, it is still helpful to look over the work when complete, identifying the errors your child should go back and correct. Allow the student to make the corrections, offering assistance only if needed.
- Encourage independent reading, asking your son/daughter about the story or material they have read.

- Monitor the manner in which your son/daughter organizes class notes. Offer organizational assistance as needed.
- Help to pace longer term assignments/projects. Establish short term check points for accomplishing longer tasks.
- It is still helpful and appropriate to help with test preparation by reviewing study guides and checking for understanding.

#### Middle School: Grades 6, 7, and 8

- There is much more notetaking required of students in these grades. Periodically check to see the manner in which your son/daughter is organizing notes. Check them for completeness and neatness.
- Offer to help with test review.
- Ask appropriate questions to be sure that homework is complete, but you should no longer find it necessary to check all of the work.
- It is helpful at this age to proofread any writing assignments, helping your son/daughter to identify errors in grammar or form. It is also helpful to discuss organization of thoughts and clarity.

#### High School:

- Students should be fairly independent at this point regarding daily work.
- It can be helpful to make sure they study on a consistent basis rather than just the night before a test.
- It can be helpful to offer to read any papers. Grammar and usage errors can often be caught if a student reads the writing out loud to himself/herself or others.
- There are many opportunities for lively discussion around the ideas and topics discussed in class. Remain interested in what your child is learning.

The end goal is good habits and independence in learning, thinking, problem-solving, and writing. It is a process – but when parents and teachers support the work of learning, students take pride in their accomplishments and form good habits!

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in an email earlier this week, **enrollment contracts for 2018-19 are in the Backpack.** Parents are required to review all contact information as part of the re-enrollment process. Please be sure to do so – **especially email addresses.** Note that after March 26, re-enrollment fees increase by \$50. The financial aid process may also be completed and the information and necessary links can be found under the Admission tab on the website. Should any family wish to discuss re-enrollment for 2018-19, please email or call to schedule an appointment with Mrs. Mitros.

<sup>2</sup> **There will not be Mass this Wednesday, March 14,** as our Celebrant has a funeral Mass. **There will be Stations of the Cross for the entire school this coming Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, at 2:25 in the Chapel.** All are welcome to attend.

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<sup>3</sup> **On Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, the second graders will have their First Communion Retreat Day.** Please keep them in your prayers as they prepare to receive the Sacrament in their parishes in the weeks after Easter.

<sup>4</sup> **The National Latin Exam will be given this Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup>,** for students in grades 7 through 12.

<sup>5</sup> **Please plan to attend our speaker, Dr. Eugene Gan on Thursday night, March 15, on the topic, "How Much is Too Much: Techniques for Parenting Amidst our Media Technology Culture". The presentation is at 7:00 in Rhodora, and babysitting will be available.**

Dr. Gan is also author of "Infinite Bandwidth: Encountering Christ in the Media"  
<http://www.emmausroad.org/Infinite-Bandwidth-Encountering-Christ-in-the-Media-P11268.aspx?afid=32>

Handbook and practical help for parents, teachers, catechists, new media producers and consumers. You may click the link to order!

Note that while our speaker series is free and open to the public, **there will be a basket for any donations to help defray the cost of this presentation.** We believe this topic is timely and worth the investment in bringing in a speaker who is an expert on the subject. We are grateful for any donations!

<sup>6</sup> **This Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, will be the third quarter dress down for Charity.** Grades 8 – 12 will vote on the Charity to receive the donation on Monday. For \$2, students may dress down – and may even wish to be wearin' the green in anticipation of St. Patrick's Day. The charity will be announced in advance via email. Students may dress comfortably – but as always, all rules of modesty apply!

<sup>7</sup> Aquinas Academy administers the **Iowa Test of Basic Skills to students in grades 2 through 8 each spring. Lower school will be taking these standardized achievement tests NEXT WEEK, March 19 – 22. Middle school will be taking the tests the following week, March 26 – 28.** We will do our best to make up exams with students who are absent. However, if a student misses more than two days of testing, it may not be possible to make up those tests. Please try to avoid unnecessary appointments and absences during these days.

<sup>8</sup> While the 2018-19 school calendar is being finalized, please know that **the first day of school will be Tuesday, August 28<sup>th</sup>!** Full Calendar coming soon!

<sup>9</sup> **Congratulations to Jillian Mercer, who won the Aquinas Geography Bee, and whose written test has now qualified her to compete in the state Geography Bee to be held on April 6<sup>th</sup>.**

<sup>10</sup> Thanks to the support of the many fundraisers sponsored by Vivat Vita – including Cakes for Life – **the pro-life billboard is officially up and looks great! It is at the intersection of Neville Rd and McKnight Rd. Look for it on your right side as you approach the city.**

Speaking of Vivat Vita: **The Vivat Vita Pro-Life Club will be holding its pro-life t-shirt sale during the week of April 9-13. Buy a shirt to wear on Wednesday, April 20, the Annual Pro-Life T-shirt Day!** T-shirts will be sold for \$8 each, and all proceeds will benefit Vivat Vita.

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<sup>11</sup> **Attention Grades 8 through 12: Please save the date! The Aquinas Academy high school spring dinner-dance will be on Saturday, April 28th from 6pm-10:30pm at The Great Hall.** This is a high school event but the entire 8th grade is invited as guests of the high school. Invitations with further information will be mailed out soon. Please see the attachment today for dance guidelines for all students.

<sup>12</sup> **The Fine Arts and Campus Ministry Committees will be hosting a talent show and fine arts night Saturday, March 17th from 7-8:30 in the gym. All are welcome to attend, and all proceeds will go to Catholic Hospice.**

<sup>13</sup> Greetings, Members of Aquinas Academy-- START SPRING CLEANING EARLY!

**We are in need of gently-used purses that are no longer in use to be donated to the LeadersNow International annual fundraiser, "Purses and Pairings".** LeadersNow International is an organization that empowers and guides young women to become strong leaders in today's society through character development, positive self-presentation, and service to others. Many members are girls in grades 6-12 who attend Aquinas Academy!

The event will be held on April 7, 2018. During the next few weeks a box will be placed in the lobby of the high school building for any donations during the months of February and March. Flyers for the event will also be available as well for anyone interested in attending. Put the purses to good use and donate!

Thank You,  
Members of LeadersNow International Chapter PA010

### **Mark your Calendar:**

**March 23 – Clerical Day at the end of the third quarter – NO SCHOOL. After-Day is Open.**

**Friday, March 23 and Saturday, March 24 – PETER PAN – MIDDLE SCHOOL PRODUCTION  
7:00 in the Rhodora! FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!**