

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mrs. Petruccio, Mrs. Martinez
Date: March Newsletter

There has been much news coverage about the one year anniversary of the Covid Pandemic. I remember initial reports of a severe strain of the flu, never thinking it would escalate to a full-blown global Pandemic that would close schools and businesses, tax our health care system and take so many lives. I vividly recall that last week like it was yesterday - as usual it was chock full of events- one last basketball game, a Diocesan Spelling Bee that we were hosting, and the St. Patrick's Day Run and Parade. Not wanting to take chances, after many calls back and forth, I decided the safety of the students was more important, and pulled out of all events. We had a PD day already scheduled, and so delved right into google meets. I think a part of me was in complete shock. They couldn't close school for two weeks? Could they? It was a sad day for all of us. Although we continued to teach remotely, I missed the children with their high fives, the warm greetings, the hugs and smiles. I missed collaborating over test scores, goals, and standards with my colleagues. Our parents filled that precipice of void. The parents jumped in supervising the children at home, so we could continue to provide the level of education expected. The unbelievable avalanche of positive emails, notes, and gifts supported me through this uncertain time and I can't thank you enough.

And just when I think I have experienced everything, a new challenge pops up. Last year, I was asked to give the KeyNote Address to Chaminade's Communion Breakfast where I planned on emphasizing that I chose Education because there is nothing more rewarding than seeing a child's face light up when s/he understands a concept! I clearly did not intend to be the Covid Police! I continue to pray daily for the safety of the students entrusted to my care. I pray for the parents or grandparents that Covid claimed, and I pray for the teachers who put their lives on the line each day to ensure your child receives a proper education.

I had to substitute in a few classes while we had District meetings (homeroom teachers need to give their input) and since I love being in the classroom, I look forward to it. It sounds easy, right? I must confess I was swept away teaching the lesson that I simply forgot about the remote learners! I felt so horrible. I am not sure how the teachers manage it all! The teachers must upload the work for remote learners prior to the lesson. They need to engage the students in front of them, while wearing a mask all day! Not only that, the teachers had to institute and train for the new AIS program, i Ready, which will identify and close any learning gap. They took SEL (Social Emotional Learning) classes to help students deal with emotional issues they now face. They even bought their own cleaning supplies when bottles ran dry. I noticed the teachers were using very cute pink and blue rolling carts to change classes, and I knew we didn't have any in the stockroom! Yes, they bought their own.

As a member of the Dept of Education Curriculum Committee, the math textbook will be changing for next year, so teachers will need to update all their math lessons. Even with all these new additions, the teachers report to work with a welcoming smile on their face! Some offices still have not opened their doors! That's why the teachers at SPS don't look at working here as a job but as a vocation. They are here for the right reason- the children. I am sure you heard the sad news that three Catholic Schools are closing their doors this June. My heart goes out to those children, families, and teachers. We are so blessed to have a caring, dedicated faculty!! If you have a moment, kindly re-tweet our welcoming video on your Instagram or Facebook account, so we can keep SPS "Shamrock strong!"

At the 2021 CSAANYS Gathering for Catholic School Administrators, Sister Carol Cimino was the keynote speaker. Sister Carol has held every position in Catholic Education and has met with administrators in the Diocese of Rockville Centre many times. As she spoke about the past year, she stated, "...teachers were

marvelous, we (Catholic Schools) did a great job when schools shut down... nothing short of heroic...(teachers)gave children a school life everyday.”

Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week. We celebrate Jesus’ triumphant arrival in the city of Jerusalem for Passover. The people welcomed him as their king. We know that this glory given to Jesus was short lived. The same people who sang Hosanna came forward for his crucifixion. We are reminded that there will be glorious moments and moments of rejection. Jesus accepted both without any complaint. Pope Francis is inviting us to be filled with hope because we believe in a God who can bring everything back to normal. Optimism is the base of our understanding of life. God will be walking with us into Easter!