

Dear Families of St. James School,

My name is Elyse McAteer and I am excited to be joining the St. James School community as your principal for the upcoming academic year. I am honored to be serving the families of St. James and look forward to continuing the traditions of faith, service, and academic excellence.

I began my journey in Catholic education as a K-8 student at Plainfield Catholic School. I attended Plainfield High School and completed my BS in Mathematics at the University of Saint Joseph. I received both my MA in Education and 6th Year Educational Leadership Certificate from Sacred Heart University. I spent the last nine years teaching mathematics in Plainfield Schools and the past twelve years coaching multiple sports across all grade levels. I am an active member of St. Andre Bessette Parish in Plainfield. I have enjoyed all of my experiences in education both through teaching and coaching. I am thrilled to bring those experiences to St. James and build upon them in this role.

My educational philosophy has been shaped by my experiences in the classroom as well as my faith-based upbringing. I believe very strongly in providing a safe and welcoming environment where successes are celebrated and struggles are acknowledged as growth opportunities for students. Thomas Edison said it best when he stated, "I have not failed. I just found 10,000 ways that won't work." Every child should feel safe in school to learn and grow. I believe wholeheartedly that our staff is committed to supporting our students as they grow in knowledge and faith throughout their time here at St. James School.

We have been working hard over the summer to prepare the school for our students and families and look forward to welcoming you back. New Chromebook computers and carts were purchased for grades 1-4. Facilities upgrades to the cafeteria ceilings as well as hallway and classroom ceilings were completed. Plans for increased technology implementation in the classrooms are rolling out along with professional development opportunities for our staff. We have also begun to develop a three-year strategic plan for school improvement. We are working hard to prepare for a safe and healthy school experience for students while returning to as much "normalcy" as possible. For example, students will attend art class in the art room, and library lending will take place in the library again. Our music program will include recorders this year and we look forward to the sounds of children singing in our school again. The pandemic has taught us much. I am committed to utilizing those lessons to bring 21st century learning opportunities to the students of St. James, while continuing to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of illness within our school.

At St. James, our students are encouraged to become life-long learners who serve God and others. Partnering with families to support the school's mission will allow us to meet the needs of each child. Father John and I are grateful for the opportunity to educate your children and for your choosing to support Catholic education. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me as my door is always open. I look forward to meeting you all throughout the coming school year, and wish you all the best.

All the best,

Elyse K A McAteer
Principal