

# MARCH NEWS

## THE ST. LOUIS BESANCON ACADEMY THE POWER OF T.E.A.M.

We would like to thank the parish and community members who have donated items from the Apple tree request. Everything is very appreciated.

ISTEP will conclude March 11. I have sent information home to our school families in the Friday envelopes this past week regarding the level of frustration that seems to be taking place all over the state with the new spring format. Just so you are aware of a few details, the new ISTEP is split into two parts (writing and multiple choice). A Social Studies portion was also added for certain grades and Science had been added a few years ago. The Math portion was especially difficult in the applied skills portion. The first half of ISTEP that we just took, will probably account for 25% to 30% of the total score. The tests will not be scored until August and "cut scores" for passing will not be set until the State Board of Education determines how well (or not) students did across the state.

We are preparing this week for our "meatless" spaghetti dinner, carnival and raffle this coming Friday, March 13! Please see any 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student for presale tickets (you save .50 cents per ticket). Tickets are also available after masses. Dinner will include spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, mint and a beverage. We will also have beer and wine available for an additional cost. Several carnival games will keep your kids busy and at 4 for \$1, they can play the whole three hours for a reasonable price. We also have many raffle items, such as a free night at Hampton Inn, \$20 from Applebee's, \$30 from Biaggi's, pizzas from Jim's in Woodburn, pizzas from Chuck-E-Cheese, \$10 from Casa's, clothing from Woodlan Jr./Sr. High and Bishop Luers, a free month at Curves in New Haven, dinner and date night at Regal Cinemas and Applebee's (\$50 value) from Orthodontic Specialty Services, a large framed picture from Anita Bowers, and donations from Robinson's Wrecker, Norb & Clara Sarrazine, Mike Bowers, Dr. Ellison's office, Wal-Mart, National City Bank, Ladybug's, Famous Hair and Bridge Manufacturing. There's something for everyone! Come and enjoy yourselves and have a great time while still supporting our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade as they prepare for their class trip.

My meeting with the new State Superintendent of Instruction, Dr. Tony Bennett, was very enlightening. He is a product of Catholic education and really believes in doing what is best for children. He is supportive of the Scholarship Tax Credit that we have been seeing legislation for and is trying to simplify the bureaucracy associated with the Department of Education.

The Professional Learning Community conference was also excellent. Over 1800 people were present. The main focus: We need to work in collaboration, not isolation in order to improve education. Also, we need to quit looking outside for a "fix." Changes in education will only be productive if they are embraced by the educators who need to commit to the plan and then implement it – do something about it. Teachers working in collaboration, setting goals and forming common assessments strengthens the curriculum, helps problem-solve and increases staff morale. In short, it builds better teachers because they share strategies. We know change is good, but we subconsciously protect "the system." "Too often we give our students answers to remember instead of problems to solve." (Roger Lewin) "If we want all students to learn at high levels, those who teach them must be able to answer the question, 'learn what?' with a consistent voice." (DuFour 2009) When we agree on that, we need to commit to the plan and implement it, as we have already done here at St. Louis this year. "People have built quite successful careers describing the hill, measuring the hill, walking around the hill, taking pictures of the hill, and so forth. Sooner or later, somebody needs to actually climb the hill!" (Pfeffer 2007, in M. Fullan, *Six Secrets of Change*, p. 63)

Christ's Love,  
Ms. Layton

