

## **Slide 1: Welcome:**

Good Evening! I would like to extend a very warm welcome to each of you here this evening. Tonight is a night where we can celebrate the successes of the 2017-2018 school year as well as look forward to the opportunities in the upcoming school year.

On Tuesday, during the Confirmation Mass, Bishop Perez ended the celebration by reminding us of all we do to nourish our students physically, emotionally and spiritually. He reminded us that the most important table our children eat at is the Table of God. It reminded me of how blessed, privileged, and humble I feel to partner with all of you as parents to allow me personally, and all the staff the gift, to teach them about the Table of God and the ways that they can sit at this table and be nourished. Bishop Perez also told our 8th graders to never forget the many sacrifices that their parents make for them. I am truly thankful, too, for the many sacrifices you make to not only send your child to St. Francis, but to mold them into Christ-like, caring, beautiful children.

This year, though we celebrate many successes, was a difficult one for our community. In our sorrow we were able to lean on each other and let Christ carry us in His arms. I am so thankful for your prayers and your great faith. It reminds me of a quote from our Patron, St. Francis de Sales, "Faith is like a bright ray

of sunlight. It enables us to see God in all things as well as all things in God." In times of great trial, your children, your prayers, and your faith have been a ray of light allowing me to see God. I am so thankful that we can turn to each other, and Christ, to guide us through these times. More than ever this year, I saw our families come together as one and lift each other up. Though I have been a proud member of the Falcon family for the last 3 years, I am especially grateful this year that this family of believers has shown me that with God all things are possible.

Thank you for partnering with me on this journey and for sharing your children with us each day.

Tonight's presentation is meant to be an informative one and to give you a good idea of where we have come so far this year and where we envision ourselves for the future. In the interest of everyone's time, we will not have a Q&A portion this evening. There may be some of you that have questions that are specific to your family or child that I may not touch on this evening. However, you will be able to access a link on the homepage of the website where you are able to ask questions about tonight's presentation, or other information you might be interested in. I will answer each of those individual questions for you in the coming week as best I can.

**Slide 2:**

This year our students focused on Doing Small Things with Great Love. You may have noticed that many of your children's teachers have incorporated this theme into each aspect of their day by asking students to identify adults in the building who have been helpful or influential to them and acknowledging them for their efforts, or to acknowledge a buddy in another grade level and offer advice, words of wisdom, and positive reflections, and finally by completing random acts of kindness throughout the year. These activities have caused our students to be reflective, considerate, and deliberate in their actions. It is our goal to continue these practices, even as we move toward a new theme next year, to continue to enhance the overall positive culture of our school.

This year, students continued to earn Falcon Five awards. It was wonderful to see over 50 students nominated for this award this year. I truly loved reading the notes from our teachers who nominated students for reaching out to friends in need, working hard, demonstrating their love of God and others through their behavior and making a conscious effort to do acts of service for those in our school, as well as those outside of school building who are in need. The efforts of our Falcon Families were able to assist the Akron Rotary Camp, the 8th grade service projects that support Akron's Springtime of Hope and local Community Pregnancy Center, our very own St. Vincent de Paul

food pantry, and most notably, NICU facilities around Akron. I am also excited to announce that our 8th graders have been pairing up with a number of students from other grade levels K-7 to create videos that depict our Falcon Five. Our hope is that by creating these videos we can show people what it means to be a Falcon!

Currently, our Student Council is working hard to install the Buddy Bench on our playground, as well as roll out a program for our students as to how the Buddy Bench can be used effectively. Since our Night at the Races fundraiser, our Student Council has been meeting, researching, and planning each detail meticulously so that this program can be another aspect of positive change for our school. I am proud of our students work with this and am excited to see the final product.

### **Slide 3:**

We recognize that a large part of student success begins with teachers who are constantly developing their craft and working to utilize best practices in their classrooms. We have shown our commitment to that aspect this year by enrolling 1st-4th grade teachers in the same technology integration teacher academy that our 5-8 teachers were enrolled in last year. Currently, all of our specials teachers and teachers in grades 1-8 have been provided with extensive professional development in the areas

of Student Centered Learning, Blended Learning, and Curriculum Formation. I commend our teachers for their diligence in researching best practices for technology integration and coupling them with traditional methods of instruction. I also commend our parents for your partnership as we continue to transition our classrooms, and strengthen our best practices, to provide our students with 21st century learning experiences.

Although we always strive to reach the best result of technology integration efforts, as well as all good educational things here, it is our belief that for lasting, positive and transformational change to happen we need to go slow at first to go fast. We hope, with us, you are able to recognize this is a learning process and that hiccups, especially in the world of technology, become our biggest opportunities for us to grow and learn even more.

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of the parents for your partnership as we incorporated some of these curricular changes into our classrooms. I recognize that change can be a very scary thing, especially when it affects your children on a daily basis. I feel that without your constant collaboration, partnership, support and trust, we would have not been able to implement so many necessary changes to our instruction and curriculum. I have also appreciated each parent who brought their questions, comments and concerns to my office. It was a pleasure getting to know so many of you on a one on one basis and working hand in

hand with you to ensure that your child's learning experience is the best it can be. Please know that my door is always open and my willingness to discuss any question you may have is always present. On behalf of myself and our faculty, we appreciate your partnership, your patience, and your diligence in helping us to do the very best for our students.

**Slide 4:**

Some other ways that we are striving to establish lasting, positive, and transformational change is through our increased focus on Academic Rigor and Excellence. We continually review our Master Schedule to allow the best scenario teaching and learning to take place.

Some important areas that we have focused on include common planning time for teachers, a specials schedule that is developmentally appropriate for learning styles, and class times and sizes that allow our students the opportunity to promote authentic and individualized teaching and learning. The professional learning communities that our teachers participate in allow them to increase communication among the teaching team and gain insight on student needs. This time is integral to ensuring that there is consistency and continuity within our teaching teams.

Understanding what a benefit this time is for our entire school community, we are committed to a Master Schedule that allows for these professional learning communities to take place on a daily basis.

As an addition for the 2018-2019 school year, we have decided that the 3rd and 4th grades will be self contained among grade levels. Meaning, our 3rd and 4th graders will no longer switch between 4 core teachers. Rather, there will be one teacher for 3rd grade Math and Science and one 3rd grade teacher for Language Arts and Social Studies. The same will happen for 4th. Even though our 3rd and 4th grade students and staff have managed the current schedule well, shown tremendous growth on MAP scores in Math and Reading, the staff and I have reflected on the number of transitions in the day, where our 3rd and 4th graders are at developmentally in terms of organizational skills, and best use of our educational time in grade levels where we are still introducing brand new math and have decided that 4 places to go and 4 core teachers is not what is best for our students. We hope that you will see this as another way we are committed to creating the best learning atmosphere as possible for our students. At this time we have not decided which faculty members will fulfill which roles. We will be sure to communicate this to you as soon as we are able.

## **Slide 5:**

In an effort to be more effective within our professional learning communities, as well as to focus on the most important information, teachers have been collecting different types of data at each grade level in data binders that will follow students with them to the next grade level. This year we were able to include the MAP scores of our students. The MAP assessment has allowed us to gain insight on the growth and progress of each student and adjust our instruction on a more regular basis to provide the best individual programming for each student. These data binders, in conjunction with our MAP assessment scores, are a part of a larger focus on providing quality professional development for all of our staff K-8 in researched-based assessment practices as well as best instructional strategies. I am proud to announce that all of our Math and Language Arts teachers, as well as 90% of the remainder of our staff have attended professional development sessions this year to learn how to read, analyze and apply MAP scores.

Though we have seen significant improvement of student scores from Fall to Winter we have noticed that oftentimes low scores correlate to rushing through the test. Each set of test results indicates your child's time. When reviewing your child's results, please be aware of this.

Currently, I am pleased to announce that over half of our students in each grade are scoring High Average or High in both areas of Reading and Math compared to other students their age level.

If you have any additional questions about the data provided, or if you would like a deeper look into your child's MAP scores, please schedule an appointment with your child's homeroom teacher.

**Slide 15:**

This year St. Francis de Sales participated in year three of a six year process through the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association. In the first year of the process our faculty and staff completed a number of activities to help us arrive at both a Catholic Identity Goal and an Academic improvement goal that was supported by data. These activities included looking at IOWA and Writing Proficiency data from the past 3 years, creating Math assessments that focused in on key areas of opportunity for our students, analyzing the Mission and Belief statements of our school, and completing an organizational effectiveness survey regarding the management of our building. I am happy to say that the process was a successful one for St. Francis de Sales and we have been officially accredited until

2023.

The first success was the creation of our Catholic Identity Goal. Our ACRE tests, taken by our 5th and 8th grade students, demonstrated that our students are very well versed on the Catholic teaching and doctrine but do not always live that out in places such as the cafeteria, the playground, or in their daily interactions with each other. In an effort to decrease some of these instances our goal will be to have students put their faith into practice by implementing the **Disciple of Christ-Education in Virtue Program**.

This year teachers and students have been working on learning the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit and an accompanying Virtue. So far they have learned all of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as well as the Virtues of Fortitude, Prudence, Hope, Faith, Charity, Temperance, and Justice. Students were given a pretest on these gifts and virtues earlier in the year and will take a post test at the end of April. I will be excited to share their growth with you in the coming weeks.

In the 2018-2019 school year we will begin the Disciple of Christ Virtue Program.

Our next success was the creation of our Academic Improvement Goal. This goal will focus on increasing student's

competency with regard to communication skills. At the end of the 4 year implementation of this goal it is our hope that our students will have shown growth in vocabulary acquisition and use, close reading strategies that will improve their understanding of informational text, writing skills to demonstrate their knowledge, as well as a focus on presentational skills.

In this first year, students have worked to learn Critical Vocabulary and teachers have worked to implement Marzano's 6 step Strategy in their teaching. The Critical Vocabulary that students have been working on so far this year is Compare, Contrast, Describe, Retell, Identify, and distinguish.

**Slide 16:**

Teachers have shown a series of videos created by Mrs. Goshe as well as created word walls in their classrooms. Each teacher, including our Specials, have incorporated these words into their lessons. It is our hope that by becoming more familiar with these words it will improve student comprehension, test taking, and overall knowledge of what is being asked of them.

**Slide 17:**

The Diocese of Cleveland has partnered with My Student Survey in order to implement surveys to our teaching staff, students in grades 4-8 and parents. The purpose of this survey is

to give valuable feedback to the individual school as well as comparative feedback for schools within the Diocese. Each survey will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. Teachers in our building have already completed the survey and students in grades 4-8 will complete the survey on Monday, April 16. We are asking for your cooperation to complete the parent portion of the survey by April 30. Your answers are valuable in helping us to make St. Francis the best school community we can be!

**Slide 17:**

We are happy to announce that our Summer Reading and Math exercises that students completed last year were a success! Because of a very generous family, we will continue to utilize IXL for our Summer Math exercises and into the school year next year. We will not utilize the MyOn Reading program like last year but will provide students with reading goals to avoid the Summer Slide. Please look forward to additional information about regarding this to come home in the last two weeks of May.

Though not quite as extensive as last year, we will be under construction again this year. We are moving forward with plans to renovate the Lower School Restrooms. Thanks to the generosity of the entire St. Francis community we have raised

enough money to complete this project over the Summer.

We have also considered some infrastructure enhancements to increase the safety of all students in our building. Over the past weeks since our Safety meeting we have met with a number of folks to analyze different aspects of the safety in our building. One important aspect is a PA system that reaches every room and hallway in our building. We have chosen a company that would be able to complete this for us and have submitted a request to the Diocese of Cleveland to complete this \$35,000 project. Our next steps to increase the overall safety of our students is to plan a technology meeting for parents as well as one that considers the mental health of our students.

I am excited to announce that we will have a very healthy enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year. We anticipate 288 students in grades K-8 as we welcome 21 new transfer students, 36 students in our Kindergarten and 36 students between our Preschool and Pre-K programs.

Finally, I wanted to take a moment to thank Dan Reynolds for all he has done as FFN president for the past 3 years. He has consistently volunteered his time, helped us to make wonderful memories for our students, and worked hard to advance the mission of the school through our parent group. Next year, we are excited to welcome a new group of officers to the FFN under

the leadership of Charlene Maas. Each parent is automatically a member of the Falcon Family Network and we invite you to attend our meetings and get involved! FFN meetings are generally held the 2nd Wednesday of each month. Meeting notes can be found in the Weekly eblast if you are unable to attend. Though the officers play a large role in our FFN, I would like to acknowledge all of our parents for all the things you do to volunteer and support our school including the hours you have spent working in the cafeteria, car rider line, getting our library time up and running for the little ones, staff luncheons, class parties and gatherings, SCRIP cards, and more. You truly make St. Francis de Sales a special place.

**Final Slide:**

I can confidently say that I am looking forward to the 2018-2019 school year. I believe it will be one of our most successful years yet. We have a staff that is committed to our mission, vision, collaboration, professional development, and most importantly, our students. We have parents that are committed to a strong partnership and open communication that help us to create a positive learning experience for our students. And we have a very supportive Parish that wants to see the continued success and growth of our school.

I hope that tonight you leave feeling well informed, open to a collaborative partnership with your child's teaching team, and above all else with the confidence that your children are truly loved, cared and prayer for by each and every member of our school community. I am so thankful for your support and for being a part of my St. Francis family.