



St. Ferdinand School

Easter Season, 2024

Dear St. Ferdinand Parish Family and Alumni,

Easter Blessings to you from the of St. Ferdinand School Community as we finally enter SPRINGTIME!

In this post-pandemic society, a quality Catholic education amidst our often-tumultuous, ever-changing, increasingly secular society is so important right now with regards to the formation of the next generation of Catholic citizens who will bring about productive change to the world. One's positive sense of self; ethics; kindness; traditions and truths of the Catholic Faith; strong academics; and confidence – developed in partnership with school, home, and church – prepares students for success in high school and beyond.



Coming up on its 90th Anniversary in existence, what is St. Ferdinand School like these days?



Our rigorous, standards-based, Pre K – 8 curricula, taught by our outstanding and caring faculty – most of whom hold Master's degrees - has enabled students to thrive in our welcoming, joyous, respectful, educational, modern, Catholic-faith-based environment within class sizes about 40% smaller than at Chicago Public Schools.

An emphasis on technology and expectation of tech competence are demanded in the 21st century world. At St. Ferdinand School, iPads and Chromebooks are integrated into lessons starting in preschool, complementing the traditional curricula, making for a rich classroom experience. In addition, students spend time in the newly-installed STEM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics) Lab, where problem-solving skills are honed through inventing, circuit wiring, coding, and building.

Of course, the fundamentals still make up the bulk of St. Ferdinand School students' education. Reading programs grounded in high-quality literature and writing programs that reflect research, expository, persuasive, and narrative forms make up the Language Arts curriculum. Math lessons focused on concepts ranging from fact memorization, algebraic problem-solving, and supported logical reasoning are taught alongside science inquiry, social studies history, religion fundamentals, and social-emotional regulation skills. Differentiated learning in major subjects – as well as through additional learning assistance and enrichment programs - meet the needs of the diverse learner population. Spanish and even Polish (at the preschool level!) languages, music theory, creative art, physical education, and technological basics round out the students' engaged learning days. All in, St. Ferdinand School creates well-rounded students who are prepared for success in high school and beyond – socially, academically, and religiously.

Also, we've continued to grow our enrollment each year during these post-pandemic times, when other Catholic schools have, unfortunately, dropped in numbers and have had to close their doors. **In fact, over the past 3 years, our enrollment has increased by 30%!** This is a testament to the reputation St. Ferdinand School has of being a fine elementary school in the near-northside Chicagoland community.

At a recent, 2nd Annual All-Class Alumni Reunion during a St. Ferdinand Parish Fish Fry Friday, alumni again remarked how bright, modern, and updated the school building was. Many also stated it made them so happy to see their alma mater in such a good, thriving condition.

In short – through a partnership of students, parents, teachers, administration, alumni, generous parishioners and a continuous success story almost a century in the making - St. Ferdinand School continues to be a thriving, joyous, service-outreach-oriented, stable place of strong, updated academic and religious learning - - - won't you help to make sure this legacy continues?

Will you consider helping a St. Ferdinand School student in financial need?

The need for support and generosity from friends such as you to supplement the cost of a quality, Catholic, St. Ferdinand School education has never been greater.

Our parents are hardworking and mindful of the many advantages of a St. Ferdinand School education.

Yet, many of our families live paycheck to paycheck. Some of our families are still feeling the effect of having been affected financially by the pandemic: jobs eliminated, hours cut – and even more so by the removal of tax-credit scholarships at the state level.

Roughly 75% of our students receive some type of financial aid. The sources – through the Archdiocese of Chicago, Big Shoulders, or other philanthropic organizations - help many, but not all, of those who apply and desire to become a part of the St. Ferdinand School family afford the tuition. Each year, discounting tuition based on individual circumstances of a family is what is needed out of necessity to keep children enrolled in St. Ferdinand School; the act of “discounting” for school families requires the school to supplement the eliminated but budgeted money through other means.



We want to ensure that this excellence is obtainable for many students – both now and in the future.

Would you please consider a donation to the St. Ferdinand School Annual Scholarship Fund Drive? Your gift can both help to make a real difference in students' lives, as well as to ensure that every student continues to excel here. Any amount will make a difference in the life of its recipient!

If donating by credit card, please use this QR code to access our donation portal:



*Or, if paying by check is preferred, please make it payable to **St. Ferdinand School** and place **in the collection basket with “School Fund Drive” in the Memo line and on the outside of the envelope; there is also a School Scholarship parishioner envelope for Apr 28.** Or, please mail in your donation to: **3131 N. Mason, Chicago, 60634.***

I am so proud and blessed to be working with and leading this amazing school community. I wish you a happy, healthy spring – and extend an invitation to you for a personalized tour of the joyous environment and academic excellence experienced everyday at St. Ferdinand School.

In God's grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erin Boyle Folino". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Mrs. Erin Boyle Folino, M.A., M.Ed., Principal