

Oh No, Not Another Staff Development Day!



Do you ever wonder what teachers do during the days when we don't have kids at school? We give those days nice sounding labels like "staff development" or the label that is even more impressive sounding, "professional development." Well, those days actually get filled up pretty quickly. As I work on next year's calendar I really am having a difficult time getting everything I want to do to fit into those days. Here is a quick overview of what we plan to use those days for next year.

The thing that will take up the most days next school year is the School of Faith. This is a class put on by the archdiocese in which all of our teachers are required to participate. This will take 10 half-days. These need to be held once each month, but we don't control the scheduling of them. We have input, but not control.

So then the question becomes what do we do with that other half-day? If we have School of Faith for teachers in the morning should we have classes for kids in the afternoon, or vice-versa? I think that would make it more difficult for parents getting their kids to and from school. I also wonder how much we would actually accomplish in that half-day that students are here. So our plan is to use the other half-day for teacher staff development in math. For those teachers who don't teach math, I am trying to arrange staff development that will benefit their classroom teaching as well.

At the beginning of the year I have 4 ½ days for teachers before the kids come. Of those days, ½ day will be School of Faith and two days will be staff development training in math. The two days that are left will be for teachers to get ready for the kids. Oh but wait, we have other meetings scheduled for those days, too. So, I guess teachers will have maybe a day to get ready for the kids. However do they get it all done? You guessed it. They come in nights and weekends and the days before their contracts start.

As the year progresses, we aren't doing staff development training every single one of those monthly half-days. When it's the end of the quarter I try to give them that half-day to work on their grades. Then there are also times when we need to meet to analyze our assessment results so that we can improve instruction. Most of our other committee meetings are held after school because there is no other time for them.

As the parents of students in our school, I want you to know what we do on those days when your kids aren't here, and you either have to find someone to babysit or make other arrangements in your schedule. It certainly isn't our intent to inconvenience you, but in order for us to improve as a school we have to continue to learn new and better ways to serve your children. And that takes time.

Yours in Christ,
Jim Makey, Principal