

# Class of 2010

## Grade 8 Information

If your child is planning on attending a public school, no entrance exams are necessary. The North Andover High School Guidance Department contacts SMS every year to visit our students and talk about what the high school offers. They will also provide flyers for orientation nights and tours.

If your child is planning to apply to a catholic school, he/she must register to take the catholic school entrance exam:

- November 14
- December 12
- **Register** to take exam at a Catholic High School
- Register to take the test prep class offered at SMS
- Attend SMS High School Fair Night on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8p.m.

If your child is planning to apply to an independent school (Brooks, Philip's Academy, etc...), he/she will need to take the SSAT:

- Consult each independent school for further information and search the internet for more information

**School website:** [www.saintmichael.com](http://www.saintmichael.com) has a link just for 8<sup>th</sup> grade information. We update it regularly for you. In addition, there are links to the local schools which our students apply to.

### **Tips for applying to schools:**

- Some schools require an interview. Consider scheduling that earlier in the fall.
- Consider getting involved in community service. Check out the opportunities with our own St. Michael Parish Youth Office and school office. Our students will perform school community service at the Fall and Spring Clean-Up Days.
- Start a portfolio of your best work, report cards accomplishments or awards. They make a good addition to your Admission Packet.
- Some schools require recommendations. Don't just include teachers; consider coaches, dance instructors, art instructors and music teachers.
- Each school has its own criteria for acceptance. It is usually done by looking at several different areas including a student's middle school grades, standardized testing results, high school entrance exam, recommendations, school transcripts, involvement in extracurricular activities and community service. Be sure to ask about the criteria when you visit their Open Houses.
- The more planning you do ahead of time, the less stressful this experience will be. Keep in mind that St. Michael School has a wonderful reputation and all of our students are well prepared. Nearly all of our students are accepted into their first or second choice of Catholic high schools with many placing out of basic courses and into honors and accelerated programs.

### **Process for applying to High Schools:**

1. Visit an Open House and pick up an application (many schools also have applications on-line)
2. Take the Catholic Schools entrance exam and/or SSAT
  - a. Scores are **never** sent to St. Michael School, we have no way of knowing how your child scored
3. Complete the school's application for admission and return to high school with fee, if applicable. If writing an essay, be sure it is checked and double-checked by a parent.

Your application is the first chance the admission's office gets to know who you are. Spelling and grammatical errors would not reflect positively on you.

4. Set up shadow days/interviews, if applicable. When you "shadow" at a high school, we require a parent's note telling us the date, school attending and whether you'll be at SMS for a portion of that day. If you attend a high school "shadow day" it does not get marked as an absence at SMS. We must have the note from a parent informing us of the shadow day in order for you not to be marked absent. Students are responsible for all missed work on a "shadow day."
5. In your application packet, there is a school transcript form. The student information on this form must be completed by a parent and then signed by a parent. Then, have your child bring the transcript form directly to Mrs. Gosselin. If you apply on-line, please be sure to download the transcript request form and deliver it to Mrs. Gosselin. That form is the only way she'll know you applied and that school requires your academic records.
6. If the school requires a recommendation from the administration or a teacher, please forward those forms to the office as well. Include with transcripts and recommendations, a stamped envelope (letter-size, not large brown envelopes) for each school.
7. The staff of St. Michael's mails out all recommendations and transcripts before the deadlines to assure that the paperwork arrives on time. We remind students that if we receive a request for recommendations/transcripts, we require much time to complete them. *Please do not leave things to the last minute. We will not be responsible if your transcript/recommendation arrives to the high school past the due date if you do not give us ample time to complete them.*
8. Recommendations are always mailed directly to the schools and not given to the students to send in with their applications.
9. Once the paperwork is mailed in, the staff of St. Michael's **rarely** hears back from the high schools unless a piece of a child's transcript package is missing. We are never told who is accepted, rejected or waitlisted. We solely rely on students and parents to tell us the news.

**One of the most important things about your child's 8<sup>th</sup> grade year is information and communication.** The staff does their very best to be sure your child receives notification regarding all events, but that doesn't mean that you will actually receive it. Please speak with your child regarding his/her responsibilities this year. Each 8<sup>th</sup> grader has his/her own personal mailbox which assures the teacher that the information was distributed to your child. Also, check the school website for updates on the grade eight link. We will do our best to email parents with information regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

**Student Questionnaire:** Each student will receive a questionnaire from Mrs. Gosselin to complete and return in September. The answers to the questions help the teachers and administration complete recommendation forms. All students, even those not applying to schools, must complete the questionnaire.

**Important Dates:**

Grade 8 Overnight Retreat- February 11-12 (St. Basil Retreat Center)

Spirit of Boston- May 26

May Procession- May 28

Canobie Lake Park- first week in June

**\*Tentative:** Graduation Dinner June 8, 2010 at 5:30pm

Graduation June 10, 2010 at 7:00pm

\*Due to possible snow days the dates for graduation events may change.

**Things the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents must decide to sponsor/not sponsor:**

- **Graduation Reception:** For the past years, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents have sponsored a Graduation Reception immediately following Graduation. The reception has been held in the Parish Hall and has been an opportunity for the graduates and his/her families to gather for pictures and to share some light refreshments. This reception is not organized by the school and it is not funded by the school. *For the past years, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents invited the 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents/students to lend a hand at this event as servers.*
- **Memory Book:** For the past couple of years, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents made a “Memory Book” for the students. This did not take the place of the school-sponsored yearbook. If any parents are interested in putting this together, a sample may be provided. The “Memory Book” is not funded by the school and supplies may not be ordered through the school.
- Please plan on coming to school on September 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30p.m. to discuss these events. This meeting will be held in the gym 30 min. before the 7p.m. Open House already scheduled. At that time, parents can informally meet to decide if they want to sponsor the events and they can select chairpersons and start making lists of those who wish to volunteer.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year with the Class of 2010! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Mrs. Gosselin.