



St. Mark's Catholic School Vision

St Mark's Catholic School is dedicated to educating student disciples in body, mind and spirit, through the collaboration of families, community and the Church.

Our Mission

St. Mark's Catholic School is a ministry of St. Mark's Catholic Community that fosters academic excellence, rooted in the Catholic faith, and Christian values.

Letter from our Pastor

Dear friends and families of St. Marks School:

This coming weekend, the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time, brings us a reminder of how each of us are valued by God and called to follow Him.



In this fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we are presented with the call of the initial 12 Apostles.

Jesus made His way North after learning of John the Baptist's arrest.... And Jesus begins to offer his public ministry to the surrounding region.

Matthew gives us the details about Jesus walking along the Sea of Galilee, sees Andrew and then Peter and subsequently James and John.....calling each of them by name and asking them to follow Him.

Dear ones..... If you are reading these words in Scripture or attending a Catholic Mass or other form of Christian expression, then be assured that this invitation applies to you as well. Through Christ's merits and not our own, we are called into relationship with Him. We are called by name to follow Him.

With that great privilege comes great responsibility. Called by name to follow him and baptized into the Faith, we bear the responsibility of being His presence with all those we encounter in our day-to-day lives. This is especially true for those of us who receive the Blessed Sacrament through Holy Communion. We are literally carrying the real presence of Christ in us out into the world. His real presence within us gives us the capacity to not be overly distracted by the anxieties of the world. Rather, Our Savior expects us to live our lives in accordance with His teachings. Our willingness to follow Him, receive Him and then share Him with all we meet, may be that very divine encounter our Father God has created in order for all the world to come to know his Son.

Let us continue to lift each other up, acknowledge Christ's presence among us, and strive to be His presence in the world.

God bless you all,

Fr. John

Letter from our Principal

Dear St. Mark's Families,

I pray you had as productive a week as we did here at school. Our students have been busy taking MAP Growth assessments and IXL diagnostics, presenting projects, and engaging in so much meaningful learning.



We are excited to usher in Catholic Schools Week beginning this Sunday with Mass at 8:30 a.m., hosted by our second and third graders. Following Mass, please invite any friends or family members to join us for our Annual Open House from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m., led by our awesome Student Council members.

Throughout the week, Student Council has planned fun dress-up days, and our students will participate in a Religion Bowl within their Saint Families. Please be sure to check the flyer below for all the happenings!

We are also kicking off our Family Make a Change Challenge, with all funds collected being donated to the Kizito Family in Haiti. Click the [here](#) to learn more about Sister Paesie's incredible mission. The Saint Family that collects the most change will earn a family party of their choice.

As we celebrate Catholic Schools Week and all that makes St. Mark's such a special place, we are also beginning to plan ahead and prepare for registration for the 2026–2027 school year. Information regarding tuition and the registration timeline will be shared in next week's Friday Facts, so please keep an eye out for those important details.

Thank you for the trust you place in us each day by entrusting us with your children. Your continued support, partnership, and belief in our mission mean more than words can express. We are truly grateful to walk alongside you in the formation of your children—together, we rise.

We can't wait to celebrate Catholic Schools Week with you!

Donna Gordon



Policy Highlight

Inclement Weather

- Students will remain indoors when temperatures fall below 20°F, including the wind chill ("feels like" temperature).
- During inversion conditions, we monitor AirNow.gov daily. If air quality reaches the purple (very unhealthy) range, students will remain indoors.
- Please be sure to send students to school with appropriate winter clothing, including coats, hats, and gloves, when weather permits outdoor recess.

Thank you for your partnership as we work to keep our students safe and healthy during winter weather.

Together We Rise



SAINT MARK'S
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

As mentioned at Back-to-School Night, one way we can live out our theme "**Together We Rise**" is through open communication. To support this, we've introduced the **Rise & Share Google Form**.

Rise & Share Google Form

Here's how it works:

- If you have a question or concern and prefer to share it through the form, Mrs. Gordon will check responses every morning.
- If you'd like a reply, you can include your contact information, and Mrs. Gordon will respond as soon as possible.

THIS NEWSLETTER CONTAINS A LOT OF INFORMATION, AND THE LENGTH OF THE NEWSLETTER CAUSES IT TO BE TRUNCATED.

LOOK FOR THE LINK AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EMAIL THAT SAYS "VIEW ENTIRE MESSAGE" TO EXPAND THE EMAIL, OR [CLICK HERE](#) TO VIEW NEWSLETTER ON OUR WEBSITE.

Spirituality Spotlight

Upcoming Dates

1/25- Sun: Student Sponsored Mass presented by 2nd & 3rd grade @ 8:30am

1/28- Wed: All Schools Mass hosted by the 8th grade

BE THE LIGHT CHALLENGE

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. " Matthew 5:16

Complete 12 Light filled actions and turn in your form to be entered into the prize drawing.

Let's all Be the Light! Spread kindness, help others and have fun making our school a brighter place!

The school Family with the most participation will earn a special treat!

Signed forms due
January 29th

FINAL WEEK!
FUN PRIZES!
DON'T MISS OUT!



Be
the
Light

Student Spotlight



Logan bought SIX Who Would Win books with his \$25 Christmas Reading Challenge prize money!! What a fun surprise for the 3-day weekend.

Lion Pride Recognition

		LionPRIDE						Practice MAKES Saints	
		CLASSROOM	HALLWAYS	LUNCH ROOM	PLAYGROUND	BATHROOMS	CHURCH		
P PERSEVERANCE <i>Every Day - Every Time</i>	Be Prepared Be On Time Be On Task Be Present	Be Timely Be Courteous Model Good Behavior Walk Slowly	Use Your Manners Be Patient Wait to be Excused	Be Safe Obey the Rules Play Fair Share Space & Equipment Be a Good Sport	Throw Away Trash Keep it Clean Flush Toilet Wash Hands	Be Engaged Pray, Not Play Behave Appropriately			
R RESPECT <i>Others, Self & Property</i>	Be Positive Listen to Others Be Prompt Follow Dress Code Care for School Property	Be Quiet Keep Your Hands to Yourself Keep Clean	Clean up Messes Share Space Eat Only Your Food Keep Voices Low Keep your Hands to Yourself	Use Kind Words Use Equipment as Intended Keep Your Hands to Yourself	Give Others Privacy Use Appropriate Volume	Listen Attentively Enter and Leave Quietly Treat Church Materials with Care			
I INTEGRITY <i>Honesty in All You Do</i>	Be Honest Be Accountable Do Your Own Work Set & Meet Goals Honor Due Dates	Do the Right Thing Respect Posters & Displays	Use Manners Don't Be Wasteful Pay for Purchases	Notify Staff if Problems Arise Follow Staff Directions	Return to Class Promptly & Quietly Report any Inappropriate Behavior Use at Appropriate Times	Be Kind Be on Time			
D DISCIPLESHIP <i>Following Jesus' Example</i>	Support Others Cooperate with Others Be Honest Share Christ's Love	Help Others in Need Say Thank You to Our Custodians	Sit by Those Sitting Alone Engage in Appropriate Conversations	Encourage Others to be Kind Be Inclusive Lead by Example Help Others When Needed	Use Only as Needed Report Supply Shortages Clean Up After Yourself	Be Reverent Actively Participate Be Involved Show Appreciation			
E EXCELLENCE <i>Strive for Success</i>	Do Your Very Best Work Challenge Yourself Learn Beyond the Classroom Ask Questions	Set a Good Example Greet People Politely	Follow Cafeteria Rules Use an Inside Voice	Solve Issues in a Peaceful Manner Line Up on Time Stay in Assigned Areas	Use During Non-Instructional Times Report Problems to an Adult	Be the Best Version of Yourself Follow Dress Code for Mass			

SAINT MARK'S
—CATHOLIC SCHOOL—S

Congratulations to this week's winners:

Connor L, Ly P, Marley N, Zach B, Lochlan M, Logan L, Andrew F, Adalaine C, Gabriella C, Blair K, Aleena D, Hendrix M, Graham L, Peter B (2), Adam P, James W, Caroline S, Marcus B, Greta W, Gaby P

Weekly Calendar

Sunday, January 25

Catholic Schools Week begins

8:30 a.m. Student Sponsored Mass presented by Grades 2 & 3, all students wear uniform to Mass to be recognized

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. CSW Open House at School

Tuesday, January 27

St. Mark's Graduates attend BK invited to Alumni Breakfast

Wednesday, January 28

10:00 a.m. All Schools Mass @ St. Mark's Church

Friday, January 30

Spirit Day

7:00-9:00 p.m. 7th/8th grade TVCS Dance @ St. Ignatius

Upcoming Events

Sunday, February 1

Mr. Bazhinov's birthday

Monday, February 2

National School Counseling Week

Tuesday, February 3

6:30 p.m. Foundation Meeting

Wednesday, February 4

8:30 a.m. Student Body Mass presented by Mrs. Lee's Kindergarten class

Dinner Auction Class Projects displayed in entry

Friday, February 6

Teacher Inservice - No School

Progress Reports in FACTS FamilyPortal

Mrs. Schuette's birthday

Saturday, February 7

5:30 p.m. St. Mark's School Dinner Auction at Bishop Kelly

Home & School



ST MARK'S SCHOOL

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24 -- 7:10PM

Allen Americans @ Idaho Steelheads

Idaho Central Arena, 233 S Capitol Blvd, Boise ID 83702

**DISCOUNTED PRICE OF \$25 BUYS YOUR TICKET AND
DINNER**

(Double R Ranch Hot Dog, bag of Lay's Chips and a small Pepsi product)

** to receive your food voucher, please visit the Information Booth behind section 117**

FOR EVERY TICKET PURCHASED THROUGH THIS LINK, \$5 WILL GO DIRECTLY BACK TO YOUR SCHOOL!

TO PLACE AN ORDER:

Go to: <https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/stmarks65>

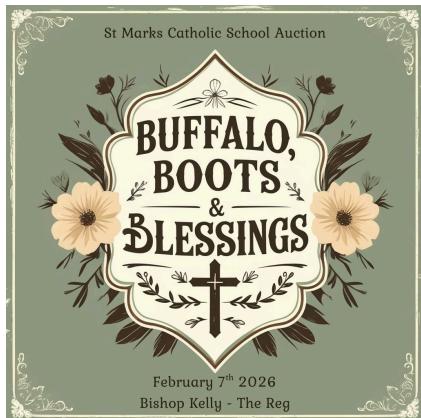
CLICK "GET TICKETS" AND SELECT YOUR SEATS

CLICK "CONTINUE" AND ENTER YOUR CONTACT AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

YOU WILL BE SENT INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO ACCESS YOUR TICKETS THROUGH IDAHO CENTRAL ARENA'S
TICKETMASTER ACCOUNT MANAGER

*****TICKET ORDERS MUST BE PLACED AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE EVENT OR SUBJECT TO
AVAILABILITY*****

KARL WINKS 208-472-3363 KARL@IDAHOSTEELHEADS.COM



Dinner Auction Volunteer Opportunities

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0944A4AB28A6FBC34-61227870-2026#/>

Each family must volunteer 6 hours for the Dinner Auction to help make it a success!

Tickets are limited, so we encourage you to purchase early!
Purchase tickets here:

<https://stmarksschoolauction.maxgiving.bid/about-us>

On Wednesday, February 4, come to the entry of the school to see this year's Dinner Auction Class Projects display.

**SAVE THE
DATE**

Daddy Daughter Dance

Theme: Candy Land
When? Sat, April 11th
Time: 6:30-8:30pm
Where? St. Mark's School Gym



Volunteer Opportunities

TO VOLUNTEER IN ANY CAPACITY AT ST. MARK'S SCHOOL,
YOU MUST TAKE A LIVE SEW CLASS AND PASS A BACKGROUND CHECK.



Parents and students are encouraged to bake items for the library bake sale. Parents receive Volunteer Hours and students may earn Community Service Hours.

Lunch Room Volunteers

NEXT WEEK'S LUNCH HELPERS

Monday (26)—

Tuesday (27)—

Wednesday (28)—NO HOT LUNCH SERVED

Thursday (29)—

Friday (30)—Kretschmer

St. Mark's offers a healthy, delicious hot lunch to students and staff **EVERY FULL DAY OF SCHOOL!**

4 LUNCHROOM HELPERS ARE NEEDED EACH DAY from 10:45-12:45 to serve lunches and clean tables in the lunchroom. Volunteers are given a free lunch.

Please come into the School Office and sign up in the black "lunch" binder, call (208) 375-6654 or [email](#) to volunteer.

News

If your child is ill and will be absent from school, please email schooloffice@stmarksschoolboise.com or call the office at 208-375-6654. If you do not call or email by 9:00 a.m., you will receive an email asking to confirm the absence.

Catholic Schools Week

Sunday, January 25 - Friday, January 30

Open House is Sunday, January 25 from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the school. Tours by Student Council, discussions with teachers and staff and registration information available. Please share with your family and friends, you are our greatest marketing tool.



ST. MARK'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK



JANUARY 25th - JANUARY 30th

Sunday

Celebrating our Parish Staff
8:30 am School Mass hosted by 2nd & 3rd grades
Please wear your school uniform to Mass.

9:00 – 1:00 – St. Mark's School Open House

Monday

Celebrating Our Families
Acknowledging sacrifices and dedication to send us to a Catholic School
Dinner Auction Dress Up – Buffalo, Boots & Blessings
Dress in western attire or school uniform. Jeans and sweats are allowed.

Tuesday

Celebrating Our Students
Exemplifying Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Discipleship & Excellence
Pajama Day!
Jeans and sweats are allowed.

Wednesday

Celebrating Our Catholic Community
Celebrating and Acknowledging our fellow Catholic Schools
10:00 am School Mass with All Catholic Schools at St. Mark's
Dress in Mass Uniform.
All students must bring a sack lunch. No hot lunch provided.

Thursday

Celebrating Our Faculty and Staff
Showing appreciation to all of our teachers and staff members
Trading Places Dress Day
Students dress like staff members and staff members dress like students.

Friday

Celebrating Vocations
Celebrating and Acknowledging our Priests and Deacons
Dress in school family colors that were assigned at the Advent retreat.
Jeans and sweats are allowed. See Friday Facts for color information.

St. Mark's Saint Families 2025 - 2026

Saint	Color
St. Mark's Lion	lilac
Guardian Angel	white
St. Mark the Evangelist	red
St. Teresa of Calcutta	light blue
St. Gertrude the Great	lime green
Holy Eucharist	hot pink
St. Patrick	green
Our Lady of Lourdes	blue
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	black
St. Kateri	brown
St. Michael	turquoise
St. Joseph	orange
Sts. Perpetua & Felicity	purple
St. Joan of Arc	gray
St. Thomas More	lemongrass
St. Francis of Assisi	teal
Blessed Virgin	light brown
St. Thomas Aquinas	yellow

Homeroom teachers will send home reminders as to which saint family your student/s belong to.

**Because of All Schools Mass on
Wednesday, January 28,
there will be NO HOT LUNCH.
All students must bring a cold lunch.**

TOGETHER...



WE CAN MAKE (A) CHANGE!



**CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AND
SUPPORTING SISTER PAESIE
AND THE KIZITO FAMILY**



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community

**ST. MARK'S SAINT FAMILY
CHANGE CHALLENGE!**



**SAINT FAMILIES WILL BRING IN CHANGE
JANUARY 20TH - JANUARY 27TH AND
DEPOSIT IN YOUR SAINT FAMILY'S JAR.
JARS WILL BE LOCATED BY THE FRONT OFFICE.**

**THE FAMILY THAT COLLECTS THE MOST MONEY
WILL WIN A PIZZA LUNCH!**

**ALL CHANGE WILL BE TAKEN TO OUR ALL SCHOOLS MASS,
COMBINED WITH OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS,
AND BE SENT TO KIZITO FAMILY HAITI - USA.**



Congratulations to Pilar McGirr. Out of over 800 entries, she came in third place in the state of Idaho in the VFW's Patriots' Pen essay competition.

[Click here](#) to download the February Monthly Calendar.

[Click here](#) to download the February Lunch Menu.

Hello 2026 Eighth Grade Parents -

The yearbook is one of our favorite school traditions! Students anticipate reliving the school year through candid photos, student portraits, and event highlights. In just a few months, your child will be bursting with excitement to review the yearbook! Our yearbook staff is hard at work creating this memorable book, and we have two unique sections dedicated to 8th graders!

Following the tradition of past years, we would like to include a baby picture of your 8th grader. Please submit a baby picture of your child to Mrs. Schuette (nschuette@stmarksschoolboise.com) no later than Friday, February 6th. This can be done by scanning the baby picture or taking a clear photo of it before emailing. If you are unable to scan or email, feel free to send in an actual baby photo to school. We will return the photo to you when we are finished with our baby picture pages. Please label the photo.

The other tradition of past years is creating a Personal Display of Affection (PDA) or ad for your 8th grader. This is a way to support our school and recognize your child as they are about to graduate. This is completely optional, but imagine the surprise when your child finds a personal message from you!

Jostens is our yearbook company this year. If you would like to place an ad for your child, you will create your ad through their website. Their program is very user-friendly. Payment for PDA ads is also done exclusively through Jostens.

We have included ordering instructions below. Previous yearbooks are available in the school office for your viewing if you would like to see examples of PDA ads. All PDA submissions must be received no later than Friday, February 6th.

Thank you for supporting our school! If you have any questions, please contact our yearbook advisors, Mrs. Schuette (nschuette@stmarksschoolboise.com) or Mrs. Lynch (slynch@stmarksschoolboise.com).

Step 1: Visit www.shop.memorybook.com

Step 2: Login if returning or new users click 'Register' to create an account using school code: **251067M**

Step 3: Buy a yearbook PDA ad through February 6, 2026

Parent ad options:

\$25.00 - 1/8 page ad

\$50.00 - 1/4 page ad

100.00 - half page ad

200.00 - full page ad

Art Website

featuring art from Mrs. Arentz's and Ms. Hatfield's art classes

Click on this link weekly to view student works of art

<https://sites.google.com/stmarksschoolboise.com/smk8thart/saint-marks-school-art>



Click on the poster to download the entry form

INFORMATION KNIGHT



MONDAY, JANUARY 26TH, 2026

BEGINNING AT 6:30 PM

IN THE CARLEY CENTER AT BISHOP KELLY

Information Knight is a fun and informative evening for any interested students who will be entering the 9th – 11th grades in the fall of 2026. The night begins in the Carley Athletic Center with a brief presentation about our school. From there, prospective students and their families will be introduced to current seniors, who will lead small group tours of the school. On the tour, participants will have the opportunity to hear from teachers in each department. The evening concludes with an activity fair where students can learn about the many ways to get involved at BK.

RSVP HERE:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdp24IFRI_SQLcd4Cwc0JzEV09dVDPhqu0kZQnDijguTkacqw/viewform

We hope you'll join us to learn more about BK! If you have questions about New Student Information Knight, or the admissions process at Bishop Kelly, please contact our Admissions Director Angela Calovich at (208) 375-6010 or acalovich@bk.org.

Applications for the 2026/2027 school year are now open! Click here to start:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfyGVdwwJTUCHWJiu8leF9K7xs2YMHOfZhvTdzLqy8rUlu0Dg/viewform>

BUY TICKETS TODAY!



BASQUE KNIGHT

Sunday, February 1, 2026

5:00pm-8:00pm

Bishop Kelly High School "Reg" Gym

\$20 for Adults

\$15 for students (11-18) & Seniors (65+)

Menu

Baked Butter Cod

Fish Soloma or chicken

Chorizo & Vegetable Paella

Salad w/ Grandma Epi's Salad Dressing

Dinner Rolls

\$5 Hotdogs, chips and dessert (10 and under)

Soft drinks, beer, wine & Kalimotxos available for purchase

*Our Basque Dancers will perform twice this year!

5:30pm and 6:30pm

Click on this link to purchase your tickets - https://host.nxt.blackbaud.com/registration-form/?formId=2a09ed64-5b37-4c7f-af35-81fe449bde71&envId=p-K_Fo5SXxM0msiGTrCY1dSg&zone=usa



My name is Jay Noller, and I am Director of Football Operations at Bishop Kelly High School. This spring, Bishop Kelly will be hosting a Flag Football League designed to provide students with a positive, development-focused opportunity to stay active, build football fundamentals, and compete in a structured, high-energy environment.

The league emphasizes skill development, teamwork, and sportsmanship, and is open to athletes who are interested in learning the game in a fast-paced, supportive setting. All sessions will take place on the Bishop Kelly campus and will be led by experienced coaches.

For more information for you and your families, please provide/visit the following link: <https://www.nextlevelsports.com/Default.aspx?tabid=1037441>

Thank you for your continued support of student-athlete opportunities in our community. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional details.

*Go Knights!
Sincerely,*

*Jay Noller
Director of Football Ops
Varsity OLB Coach
Bishop Kelly High School
4A State Champions 2025, 23, 15, 14, 13, 10, 05, 04, 1994
(208) 241-4845 Cell Phone
(208) 375-6010 Main Number*

TVCS Events/Sports



Click here for the TVCS athletic schedule.

Preschool Happenings



Here is a picture of our preschoolers in what we call, "Prayer Position". Before we pray, we sing prayer position, prayer position, prayers are talking to God. Right hand up, in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit and then the Helper of the Day gets to choose our prayer. We pray often for our school, our church and for our families.



Church Connection

If you would like to receive the Parish Newsletter [text BOISESTMARKSNEWS to 42828](#) to sign up OR [Click here](#) to sign up.

Notes from the Nurse

Guidelines for Keeping Sick Students Home

Please keep your child home if they are experiencing:



- **Fever:** If your child has a fever of 100.0°F or greater, has body aches, new onset headache or looks or acts sick, they may be infectious. Students should be fever-free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medications, before returning to school..
- **Vomiting and/or diarrhea:** If your child has vomiting and/or diarrhea within the last 24 hours, they should remain home to prevent the spread of illness
- **Congestion or Runny Nose:** If your child has new congestion or runny nose with a fever, they should remain home until a 24 hour resolution of the fever.
- **Sore Throat:** If your child has a sore throat and fever, or a severe sore throat with difficulty swallowing, they should remain home. If diagnosed with Strep throat students may return to school after taking prescribed medication for 24 hours. If your child is unable to swallow liquids or food, contact your doctor immediately.
- **Cough:** if your child has a new cough with fever or persistent cough with vomiting, please keep them home until the fever has resolved. If she/he has difficulty breathing, call 911.
- **Contagious Diseases:** You should keep your child at home if they might spread a contagious disease to other children. Please inform the school if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease such as chicken pox or impetigo. Your child may return to school after taking prescribed medication for 24 hours or their healthcare provider has cleared them to return.
- **Head lice:** Treatment is required before returning to school. The school nurse can provide education regarding treatment and control of head lice as needed.
- **Pinkeye/Conjunctivitis:** Students may return to school after taking prescribed medication for 24 hours or if cleared by a provider.

**STUDENTS MAY RETURN TO SCHOOL 24 HOURS AFTER RESOLUTION OF FEVERS and
VOMITING/DIARRHEA WITHOUT THE USE OF SYMPTOM REDUCING MEDICATION**

Always seek medical advice for any concerns and contact your primary care physician with any concerns.

Thank you for helping to reduce the spread of illness!

St. Alphonsus School Health Nursing Team

Through the St. Alphonsus School Health Program, Mrs. Lewchenko-Colin, our school nurse, is at St. Mark's on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and Mrs. Placido, CNA, SASHP Assistant is here on Thursdays.

Notes from the Counselor

Don't Shoot the Teacher! From Love and Logic v3.2

Some children are conditioned to underachieve before they even enter school. Their teachers and parents often spend years of frustration trying to get them to reach their potential. They are often disappointed by these bright children who seem to want to achieve, but just can't seem to put out the effort necessary to succeed. It almost appears as if they have learned to avoid the very thing they need to do to be successful learners. It is so easy to blame the school. These statements from frustrated parents are not uncommon:

"If only the teacher could be more understanding."
"The school just doesn't have the necessary discipline."
"If the school would just go back to the basics ... "

In reality, many learning-related problems do not start in school and cannot be cured with more discipline, more understanding on the part of teachers, or more time spent on the basics. School improvement efforts should be directed toward the achievement problems that are created by the school. However, no amount of change in the school system will solve the underachievement problems that start in the home.

There are a number of family patterns that condition children to become underachievers. **Sylvia B. Rimm, Ph.D.**, author of ***Underachievement Syndrome***, lists 15 different achievement problems that can be traced directly to attitudes and beliefs that children develop before they ever meet their first teacher. These attitudes and beliefs are the products of relationships the children have had with their parents.

Let's look at one of these situations. But first, we must recognize that the problems we create for our children are usually born out of our love for them, and the fact the none of them ever arrive at our doorstep with an instruction manual!

We therefore tend to look back on how we were raised, saying to ourselves, "I hope to continue what was good about the way I was raised and correct what was bad." But we usually overcompensate and change what was not good into something opposite - but still not so good.

Many people who experienced a lot of pain as a child devote their adult lives to insulating their own children from pain. They later learned that this just caused different kinds of problems for their children. In other words, they traded bad for bad.

Consider the following situation in which one parent had to struggle for what she got as a youngster. As an adult, she is dedicated to making sure her child does not experience the same pain. Her husband believes it is best for children to earn what they get. These differing opinions provide the potential for a family pattern that could lead their child to become an underachiever.

In this type of family, the child usually figures out how to get what he or she wants. This first requires a visit with Dad. "Daddy, I need some more money because my allowance ran out," pleads Rachel. You can

guess what this type of father answers: "That's sad. You'll have to wait until Saturday for your regular allowance or find a way to earn some money."

Next, Rachel goes to mother: "Mom, look how mean Daddy is! He won't help me!" Mother, who is dedicated to making sure Rachel experiences no pain, finds herself saying, "Now, now. Don't worry. Daddy's just tired and doesn't understand. I'll get you some money, but be sure not to tell him."

I am sure this mother is hoping to show that she is loving, concerned, and a good friend. The sad truth is that the foundation for underachievement has just been laid. Yes, the child may see mother as loving, but a devastating lesson has also been taught: you don't get what you want through effort. You get what you want through manipulation.

You can be sure this attitude will be firmly set by the time the Rachel goes to school. You can guess what the youngster will think when the teacher says, "Here's some schoolwork. It will take some effort on your part to learn it." This poor child will think, "No way! Effort is not the way to get what you want. There is always an easier way."

It won't be long before Rachel explains her poor grades to her parents by saying, "Look how mean the teacher is. She just doesn't understand!" This may seem so sincere that we soon find she has manipulated both parents into joining her against the school and teacher. The child now has more power than either the parent or the teacher.

The parents are often confused-first blaming the school, then blaming the child, then blaming the school, all with no success in getting the child to live up to her promise.

All kinds of ideas are used to get the child to put out some effort. They include daily reports from the school, more homework, rewards, punishments, school conferences, labels such as "learning disabled," and even special education classes as a way of explaining the problem.

None of these work because they are not the reasons behind the child's lack of effort and achievement. The problem is solved when both parents understand the need for a consistent set of expectations for their child. "We both want the best for you and know this will come from effort, not from manipulating one of us against the other."

These parents need to get into the habit of sticking together and supporting each other when confronted with, "Look how mean your spouse is!" They might try saying, "I can see how it looks that way to you. I do hope you get it worked out."

*Do you feel guilty when you say "no" to your children?
In the next article, find out why "no" doesn't have to be a four-letter word.*

Have a great weekend,

Joe Lipetzky Psy.D.

Dr. Joe Lipetzky, our school psychologist, is at St. Mark's on Monday and Friday morning.
Sarah Lynch, our school counselor, is at St. Mark's on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

St. Mark's School | 7503 W. Northview St. | Boise, ID 83704 US

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