

September 20, 2022

Dear LS Parents:

I'm so happy to be back on campus again and to be available to the St. Anne's community. Seeing the children is always a blessing for me. I'm particularly impressed by the excitement and energy of our faculty and Mr. Cox, as we journey through this year of transformation.

I'm also excited to have Mrs. Ana Dodson, MA and Doctoral Candidate in School Psychology from UCD, joining me on campus (30 hours a week) this year. A graduate of Colorado Academy and Colorado College, she also worked at Colorado Academy as a Spanish teacher and Learning Specialist. Three years ago, she was a MS Teaching Fellow here at St. Anne's.

We have now begun our classroom curriculum, which was developed over the last 27 years here at St. Anne's. These talks are twice a month and are rotated with Father Al's class. Beginning with kindergarten through third grade, class talks generally focus on managing feelings, the normal ups and downs of friendships, and behavioral development as a positive community member.

In fourth grade, we offer a class series on the developing brain. These classes focus on topics related to cognitive "soft skills" such as executive functioning, emotional well-being and social support. They are intended to provide support, self-understanding, and empowerment for students in this transition year.

Starting in fifth grade, we work as part of the FOCUS Team along with Father Al. Our class talks relate to the emotions and demands of being older, understanding different types of intelligence, and a spring series on media awareness (i.e., looking at images and ideas presented to us in contemporary culture). Topics in this last series focus on increasing general awareness of social media and marketing to children/adolescents, as well as increasing specific awareness around tobacco and body image.

We are also available to do class talks regarding issues in our community and the world around us (the most recent being the COVID pandemic). After consulting with teachers, we decide which grade levels would most benefit from an age-appropriate discussion.

All our class talks come from a brain-based perspective and the three main areas of the social brain: President, Emotional Factory, and the Mirror of non-verbal processing. These concepts are the basis for my book: *Wired And Connected: Brain-Based Solutions to Ensure Your Child's Social and Emotional Success*. Several copies of my book are available in the St. Anne's library. **Click [HERE](#) to view the outline for my lower school curriculum.**

In addition to classroom talks, we are also available to meet with students individually as well as with parents for brief consultations around school and family issues. If you would like to meet with me, simply call Kris Buckley in the main office for scheduling. For Mrs. Dodson, please email her at adodson@st-annes.org. You may also talk with your child's teacher regarding scheduling an individual child visit. In visiting with a child individually or with parents, we do need parents to sign a permission slip prior to our meeting (located in Mrs. Buckley's office and on the website). Mrs. Dodson or I can also email you a copy. Consultations of any extended duration need to be arranged on a private basis.

In closing, it's so amazing to see the children relaxing into school, enjoying the indoor and outdoor spaces, and participating in the many activities which we took for granted in the past, as we return to pre-COVID normalcy. All of us have had a stressful couple of years. If you ever need some support with

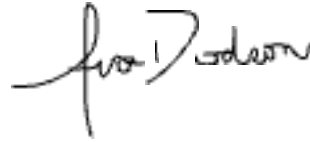
your parental anxieties/frustrations as well as some practical parenting tips, you are welcome to listen to my podcast: *Legit Parenting: Strategies of Actual (Imperfect Parents) to Raise Resilient Families* (available in your app store). We welcome your call should your family benefit from a private consultation or if you ever have questions or thoughts related to our classroom discussions.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig A. Knippenberg', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Craig A. Knippenberg, LCSW, M.Div.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ana M. Dodson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ana M. Dodson, M.A.

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