



Saint Mary Catholic School

218 W. Washington Street
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
Mrs. Patricia A. McDermott, Principal

301-733-1184
Fax 301-745-4997

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Dear Members of the Saint Mary Catholic School Community:

Welcome to the 2011-2012 school year! I hope your summer has been both enjoyable and relaxing. For me as a parent, summer brings more flexibility in schedules and definitely more time to spend with my family. As a principal, summer brings the opportunity to reflect on the past school year, to plan for the year ahead, to interview and hire school personnel when needed, and to complete construction projects that academically benefit our students. Summer definitely gives me the opportunity to recharge and to get excited about a new year.

And just for the record, I am extremely excited about the upcoming year. My excitement has actually been growing since June 15, when I received notification that St. Mary Catholic School had been awarded a grant from *The Marion I. and Henry J. Knott Foundation* in the amount of \$60,000 for use in expanding, updating, and renovating the elementary and middle school science laboratory. This grant comes after months of an extremely thorough and lengthy application process under the direction of Mrs. Deborah Bockrath. Much gratitude is also extended to Mr. Gary Bockrath, Mr. Dave Moats, Mr. Mike Morrell, and Mrs. Mary K. Barger for contributing to the grant process and science lab renovation project.

In addition to the funding from the Knott Foundation, St. Mary Catholic School received a bequest from the estate of Rose H. Smith to be used exclusively for the benefit of SMCS. Therefore, an additional \$60,000 was used for the science lab. Needless to say, our new science laboratory is absolutely gorgeous and very spacious! The lab will offer our students (especially in the middle school) greater opportunities for meaningful and productive scientific investigations, enabling them to gain the skills required to succeed in today's challenging world and hopefully spark interest in the fields of science. I could actually write pages describing the new lab and all the ways our students will benefit; instead, I highly recommend you see it for yourselves!

I am also very excited that SMCS has officially become a Pre-K to Eight school! Mrs. Jeanie Stark and Sister Aloysius Norman are anxiously awaiting the arrival of their students. The Pre-K program will engage the children in a variety of activities that will develop their spiritual, academic, and social skills. Our Pre-K students will be readily identified by their bright-colored Pre-K uniform shirts!

With the start of a new year, we are welcoming two new staff members, Mr. Nickolas Benner (Gym) and Ms. Liza Wolters (Foreign Language—German) and two familiar faces with new positions, Mrs. Lori Balog (fifth grade) and Mrs. Kim Mentzell (Art K-4 & Reading Resource/Enrichment). Their talents and enthusiasm are definite assets to our staff.

I believe our middle school students will be pleased to learn that they will have gym class twice a week. The additional gym class is in response to our nation's increased awareness to the importance of health and fitness. These topics will be addressed during the gym periods. As for the dress code, uniforms are a trademark for SMCS. Middle school students will be required to wear the correct gym uniform on gym days. Even on gym days students are expected to be neat in their appearance. *Flynn & O'Hara Uniform Company* is our official uniform company. The solid navy mesh gym shorts and navy sweatpants are now available with our SMCS logo. This year middle school students may continue to wear the gym shorts and sweatpants that do not have our logo as long as the shorts and sweatpants "look like" the *Flynn & O'Hara* uniform pieces. For the 2012-13 school year, all middle school students must wear gym uniform pieces with the SMCS logo that are only sold by *Flynn & O'Hara*. Students in grades K-5 will have a two year grace period before the school transitions to the new gym uniform.

Students in grades three through eight will have a new experience with foreign language. SMCS is offering German as the foreign language this year. Students will learn basic vocabulary and phrases as well as gain understanding and knowledge of the culture and country. The intent of the program is to help students appreciate the value of learning another language and to also expose them to another culture.

In this final week of preparations, let us take the time to thank God for all the graces He has bestowed upon us and ask Him to keep Saint Mary Catholic School faculty, staff, parents, and students in His loving care.

As always, I ask for your prayers to the Holy Spirit to give me the guidance and wisdom needed to serve as principal of Saint Mary Catholic School.

May God Bless You!

Patricia A. McDermott