



SMS WORD

Spreading the word...
how we **LEARN, LAUGH, BELIEVE, & SUCCEED.**

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

WHAT'S NEW AT SMS IN 2025

WCEA: After 40 years with MNSAA, SMS has switched to WCEA accreditation, as directed by the Diocese of St. Cloud. Already accredited, SMS is now undergoing a 15-month self-study for re-accreditation to identify strengths and growth areas. According to WCEA, Catholic School Accreditation assesses a school's Catholic Identity and educational quality. It involves a self-examination to identify successes and areas for improvement, ensuring the school meets student needs and remains viable. It includes:

- A periodic self-study of school programs
- A path for ongoing improvement
- External validation of internal assessments
- Assurance to parents and institutions of the school's authenticity

We embrace this challenge to reaffirm our mission: *St. Mary's Catholic School is a faith-filled community that illuminates the teachings of Jesus by using our hearts, hands and voices as Christian witnesses while striving for academic excellence.* **LEARN. LAUGH. BELIEVE. SUCCEED.**

TCIT: TCIT (Teacher-Child Interaction Training) is a professional development model that enhances teacher-child relationships and boosts teachers' confidence in managing challenging behavior. It:

- Improves academic benefits for preschool to second grade
- Strengthens teachers' relationship skills and management techniques
- Supports all children's development, including those with special needs

Mrs. Wolff, our TCIT coach, continues to work with our classroom teachers to integrate this model into their teaching. One teacher is coached to implement TCIT each year.

SCIENCE OF READING: In 2023, Minnesota passed the READ Act, a \$90 million investment in literacy to address and implement learnings from the science of reading. This Act requires all Minnesota schools to train their teachers in the structured literacy approach. SMS teachers have begun the years - long training process and are eager to apply this in the classroom.



A WORD FROM MRS. NELSON



The month of October invites us to take a moment to reflect on the beauty surrounding us and to express our gratitude for the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. As the leaves begin to change color and the weather cools down, we find ourselves immersed in the rhythm of daily life, cherishing the gifts God provides through the wonderful people we encounter at school.

We are truly thankful for the chance to be part of the lives of all the children at St. Mary's School and for your continuous support of our school community. It is our heartfelt wish that every child feels and believes they are blessed, valued, and loved by everyone around them.

SMS ALUMNI FAMILY HIGHLIGHT

What brought you to SMS? What made you stay at SMS?

I was the principal at St. Ann's School in Wadena, but we wanted to be closer to our families. Father Tom Meyer was the pastor of St. Ann's; his brother Leo was a trustee at St. Mary's. Sister Rosemary Hubesch was a first grade teacher at St. Ann's, her brother Father Vincent Hubesch was the pastor at St. Mary's. Larry Foley was the superintendent of the Wadena School District; his brother Mike Foley was a member of St. Mary's School Board. These individuals knew who I was before I interviewed. I was fortunate to be offered the position. In our move to Melrose we could not find housing. We moved into the front part of the convent with our new baby for the first three months until we found a home to rent. We enjoyed meals with the sisters. They loved playing with our baby. People who came to the house were always a little surprised when one of the sisters would be holding the baby when they answered the door.

Both of our daughters attended St. Mary's School. We felt Melrose was a safe, healthy community to raise a family. Eventually we rented a home from Mary Ann and Urban Primus. Mary Ann introduced us to many of the people of the community. She was like our mother. In time Butch Haider built us a house and we called Melrose home.

How did the school environment change over the years you were at SMS?

During my time at St. Mary's I was blessed to work with some awesome pastors: Father Vincent Hubesch, Father Robert Kieffer, Father Ralph Zimmerman, Father Vince Lieser and Father Marvin Enneking. Each of these priests were very supportive of St. Mary's School. It made my job a lot easier. I was also blessed with excellent teachers and an awesome support staff. These individuals were very generous with their time, talent and treasure. Family minded, we served as an extension of our school families. I am thankful to say I was part of this group.

We are celebrating 60 years of Catholic School Education at St. Mary's. However Catholic Education has been a part of this community for over 100 years. The Catholic Faith has and continues to be strong. Father Hubesch always told me our Catholic School is a primary mission of the parish. He felt this so strongly that during his time in Melrose we did not charge tuition. Father felt everyone deserved this education. It was a responsibility of the parish to provide this education for our families. It was a responsibility of the families to send their children to the Catholic School.

What is your favorite memory from SMS?

Celebrating school Masses was the greatest benefit I had at St. Mary's. Singing and praying at these celebrations was so rewarding. Greeting the children at the front door every morning was a highlight of every school day. I enjoyed the lunchroom and playground supervision. This is where I was able to meet each child personally. I loved working at the school breakfast. The dinner we served at the Auction for Education gave me an opportunity to meet our community. It was a heartwarming evening. Even when the auctioneer sold me the garbage pickup for \$500. That was memorable. ;)

I am so thankful for my experience at St. Mary's School. We have an awesome parish community. I pray that the opportunity for our children to attend St. Mary's Catholic School will last forever.

Bob Doyle - SMS principal from 1979 - 2017



Bob Doyle at his last Mass as Principal with his wife Marilyn, Bishop Kettler, Father Marv, and Father Mitchell

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **SMS Marathon/Prayer-a-thon:** October 3rd-Pledge/prayer envelopes are available at school and the table in the church gathering space. Students collect pledges for walking and praying for the needs of our community throughout the school year. The most rewarding part is hearing from people we're praying for - "thank you for praying for my family", and "I see my prayers answered".
- **Harry's Pizza Fundraiser:** October 8th-22nd. Contact a SMS family or the school at 320-256-4257 to order. Pizzas are \$12 each; flavors include 4-Meat, Breakfast, Cheese, Chicken Alfredo, Chicken Bacon Ranch, Deluxe, Pepperoni, and Sausage.
- **Grandparents Day at SMS:** Wednesday, October 15th. All-school mass is at 8:30am. Grandparents of SMS students are invited to a program and lunch following the mass. Invites will be sent to SMS families to register for the event.

SMS HISTORY

FROM THE ARCHIVES: The inaugural SMS faculty meeting took place on Monday, August 30, 1965. Here are some key highlights from that gathering; notice how certain aspects have changed significantly over the years, while others have remained consistent!

- "Sister Giles (principal) welcomed new members to the faculty, expressed the wish for a good year as the result of unity in our school. Sister warned us that there will be open house in the Fall and again in the Spring, but as of now we need not worry about the Spring one!"
- "Mrs. Blenker told the faculty about her workshop in Duluth this summer; the lunch program is no longer called hot lunch but school lunch. Mr. Hertzog will provide ten girls to serve lunch and two boys to wash the dishes. Lay teachers will pay a quarter a day (for lunch), the same as the children."
- "Plan on spending about five dollars per pupil for the year; general expenses also come from this."
- "Mr. Lahr gave hints on how to use the overhead projector and how to care for it."

*Illuminating the teachings of Jesus with our **HEARTS, HANDS, and VOICES!***