



May 2023

Dear Families and Stakeholders,

We are proud to present our 2022-2023 State of the School Report. This report is an overview of all the wonderful things happening in our school this year, as well as some of our plans for the future! Please take some time to read through it, and reach out with any questions.

Mission Statement

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.

Financial Report

The estimated cost to educate a student at St. Mary's School will be \$5,775 for the 2023-2024 school year. The following areas are the ways in which St. Mary's is funded.

Tuition:	First Child	Grades K-6	\$2150/year
	Second Child	Grades K-6	\$1800/year
	Third Child	Grades K-6	\$1525/year

Preschool: Little Saints Preschool tuition rates will increase by \$50 for each option for the 2023-2024 school year:

5 full days:	\$450.00/month	
5 half days:	\$250.00/month	
3 full days:	\$300.00/month	available for 3-4 year old program only
3 half days:	\$175.00/month	available for 3-4 year old program only

Financial Investment: The Church of St. Mary will support the school with \$160,000 for the 2023-2024 school year, plus we will be receiving \$70,000 from the Endowment Fund. An additional \$125,000 is budgeted from our auction proceeds. The School Board and Leadership Council are working collaboratively to raise our staff salaries to 80% of the public school's salaries. In the 2023-2024 school year, we will be at 73%. St. Mary's School administration meets with the School Board and Leadership Council monthly to discuss the operations of the school, including budget and financial projections.

Donations: We are blessed to receive many donations from companies and individual people throughout the year to help St. Mary's School balance our budget.

Financial Report-continued

Catholic Foundation: The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Saint Cloud was established on August 17, 2000 to serve its parishes, Catholic schools, organizations, Catholic families, and individuals throughout the Diocese of Saint Cloud through endowed funds. Money is raised for these scholarships through the Bishop's Annual Appeal and the Bishop's Annual Golf Fundraiser. Through this foundation, we receive donations from:

Stearns County Endowment Fund	\$948
Great Technology Giveaway	\$1200
Living the Promise Scholarship	\$1631 (scholarship and tuition assistance)
Living the Promise Grant	\$1900 (Used for classroom libraries)
Annual Appeal	\$4675 (June 2022)

Stacy Meyer Scholarship Fund: The Stacy Meyer Scholarship Fund was started in memory of Stacy, a former St. Mary's Catholic School parent, who passed away in May of 2019. The 2023-24 school year will be the fifth year the Stacy Meyer Scholarship Fund is available to families who qualify for financial assistance. This scholarship fund was started with the generous gifts of Stacy's family, friends, and community members who were touched by Stacy's giving nature. We continue to accept donations to keep the fund available for years to come.

Sponsor a Child: The Sponsor A Child program is for anyone who would like to make a contribution towards the education of a student attending St. Mary's Catholic School. The contribution could pay for a student's tuition monthly, quarterly, or the entire year. The students selected to participate in this program will be based on financial need. The name of the student recipient will be kept confidential. All contributions will be used strictly for the education of the students at St. Mary's Catholic School and are tax deductible. If you are interested in sponsoring a child, contact the school at 256-4257 or anelson@smsmn.org, or use your Sponsor A Child envelope in the collection at Mass.

Fundraisers: We are very thankful and grateful for the support of our families, parish, and community in raising funds during our fundraisers.

Fundraiser	Amount Raised in 2022-2023
Freeport Golf Classic (It was not able to be held, but FSB still contributed to each of the three parochial schools.	\$4,500
Marathon/Prayer-a-thon	\$27,797
Catholic Schools Breakfast	\$6,133
Auction4Education (including raffle)	\$154,400
Harry's Pizza	\$21,928
Extra Programs that generate revenue	Amount Received in 2022-2023
Pop Cans	\$1,112 (as of 3/20/23)
Coborn's More Rewards	\$1,371
Arvig	\$2,383

SMS\$4Kids: The total program rebate for 4/1/22 - 3/31/23 was \$8,961. St. Mary's School profit was \$5,202 after expenses (not including \$3,354 that was given out in tuition reimbursements and other miscellaneous program expenses.) The **SMS\$4Kids Program** ("SMS Cash for Kids") is a wonderful program used to raise

Financial Report-continued

funds for the school as well as help **reduce your tuition commitment**. The best part about the program is there is **NO ADDITIONAL COST** to the people using it. If you or someone you know would like to start using **SMS\$4Kids**, please contact the school at 320-256-4257.

Budget: Our operating budget income for the 2022-2023 year was estimated at \$536,000. The estimated income for 2023-2024 is \$636,525. The \$100,000 increase in income is from an increase in Parish financial investment, tuition, and fundraising efforts. The expenses for the 2022-2023 school year are expected to be \$607,025. Expenses for 2023-2024 are estimated at \$648,680. This information reflects our school budget as of April 30th. The complete school year budget runs from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023.

Enrollment

Projected 2023-2024 Enrollment (as of May 1, 2023)

Little Saints	25
Kindergarten	10
1st grade	17
2nd grade	15
3rd grade	13
4th grade	16
5th grade	12
6th grade	21
Total K-6	104

Registration is still open for the coming school year. If you know of anyone who might be interested in having their children attend St. Mary's School, please have them contact the school for a visit.

As a means of promoting continued increases in enrollment at St. Mary's School, and to reward existing families for their efforts in promoting our school, an Enrollment Referral Incentive Program will again be offered for the 2023-2024 school year. Any current SMS family whose outreach and referral efforts result in a new family registering their child(ren) at St. Mary's School for the 2023-2024 school year will receive a credit of \$100 in May of 2024 for each new family they refer.

Curriculum and Instruction

- St. Mary's staff researched a new religion curriculum this year and will adopt the Discover curriculum next school year for grades one through five.
- We were fortunate to use EANS (Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools) funds to hire Northshore Coaching and Consulting to provide us with individualized instructional coaching for our teachers. Teachers have the opportunity to work on individual skills they would like to focus on to improve their teaching. We are also able to provide summer tutoring at no cost to parents and a workshop on executive functioning at our fall workshop.
- We continue to discuss ways to optimize our teaching with our newly adopted math and reading programs.
- We spent the year researching science programs that best fit our philosophy. We will be moving forward with the Mystery Science curriculum.
- We will be adopting a new social/emotional learning program next fall called 2nd Step. The program helps students build social-emotional skills including nurturing positive relationships, managing emotions and setting goals so they can thrive in school and life. This program was made possible through our Schulze grant.

Curriculum Report- continued

- We continued our enrichment program once a quarter called "Power Hour." Teachers focused on designing a lesson that introduced life skills while also incorporating academic learning, personal skills, and teaching to the whole child.

Faith Development and Dedication to Service

Throughout the year, our students have many opportunities to develop a strong faith and learn to serve others. These are a few of the activities our students participated in throughout this past school year that reflect our dedication to service and reaching out beyond the walls of our building.

- Students connected with residents at Pine Villa through cards, projects, and visits this year.
- Students prayed daily for those whose prayers we collected from our Marathon/Prayer-a-thon.
- Students collected socks for area shelters during Advent.
- Students collected money for the Melrose Food Shelf, Fr. Schwieters and Fr. Ohmann, Simply Love International, and Food for Thought during Lent.
- 3rd grade students represented SMS in communicating via videos with Simply Love International, a non-profit organization founded by Erin (Meyer) Cannon, an alumnus of SMS. The organization focuses on the idea of building sustainability for families through education, community development, and simply loving the children who live at Global Orphanage in Tanzania.
- Students prepared baskets with treats and notes of thanks to our ambulance workers, police officers, and firefighters in our community who give their lives daily to protect and take care of us.
- We continued to join St. Mary's parishioners to pray the Rosary.
- The Living Stations continue to be an annual form of prayer the students share with our Parish community.

Maintenance Projects

St. Mary's School, along with the Leadership Council, continue to collaborate to develop a budget for large maintenance projects.

- Much of the focus for maintenance was on the current heating system within the school. Sixteen heaters have been ordered, with an installation date expected in early August.
- New flooring and blinds are being installed in the Kids Time and Art rooms.
- Within the next 5 years, the roof will need to be replaced. The estimated cost as of right now is somewhere between \$200,000- \$300,000. Repairs will be made annually to maintain the roof until it can be replaced.
- All the windows and doors are also original to the building, lacking the modern energy efficiencies that updated windows and doors would have. In the future, we will also need to update these items.

Successes

- The Schulze Grant Challenge we received this past year was used to enhance some of our academic programs and market our school.
 - It was used to pilot different religion, science, and social/emotional curricula.

- We hired a marketing coordinator and bilingual liaison, which enabled us to connect more with our alumni, connect more with our Hispanic families, and showcase the positive things going on at SMS.

Accreditation

MNSAA (Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association): The Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA) has renewed the accreditation of St. Mary's School for the eligibility period of 2020 to 2027. The mission of MNSAA is to be a facilitator in improving the quality of nonpublic education in Minnesota through the accreditation process. Part of the improvement initiative that MNSAA requires of St. Mary's School is to produce a Strategic Plan that includes objectives, action steps, and a timeline. Progress on our Strategic Plan is reported to MNSAA on an annual basis. Our full Strategic Plan can be found on our website and SchoolSpeak.

There are 4 main objectives in our Strategic Plan we continue to work on yearly.

- Objective 1: Using Hearts, Hands, and Voices, St. Mary's Catholic School will be a community of academic excellence.
- Objective 2: St. Mary's Catholic School will provide a safe, functional, and attractive learning facility.
- Objective 3: St. Mary's Catholic School will remain financially viable into the future.
- Objective 4: St. Mary's Catholic School will communicate effectively with stakeholders to increase enrollment and retention of students in the school.

Successes:

- We examined our current science curriculum, analyzing and aligning it to the MN standards. Through our research, it was determined to purchase a new science curriculum that entailed more hands-on activities and scientific thought processes.
- We investigated a new religion program and decided to implement a program called Discover starting in the fall of the 2023-2024 school year.
- We continue to work on identifying funds to support the maintenance plan of the school.
- We continue to connect with our alumni and find ways to engage them in the day-to-day life of SMS.

SMS Information

Endowment Fund: The Endowment Committee meets quarterly. As of March 2023, the Endowment Fund has reached \$1,353,576. Of this amount, \$870,143 is principal. As of May 2023, the Endowment Fund has given a total of \$516,000 to the school.

Lunch: Because of the new universal school meals bill passed by MN legislation, all lunches and breakfasts will be free next school year. We were not a part of this program before this year, so our lunches would not have been free if we would not have made this change. Melrose Area Schools (MAS) has accepted us to be a part of their School Nutrition program. This means we will now get our meals from MAS, and lunch will be free for at least the next two years. Lunch will be picked up from MAS and served at SMS. A special thanks to Cornerstone Catering for working and serving lunch to us for the past years. We have greatly appreciated their flexibility and willingness to serve our lunches.

In the past, title services have been tied to free and reduced lunch patrons. It is not clear how title services will be determined going forward.

Alumni: Stay connected with everything SMS has to say at <https://mailchi.mp/3596b1349d3c/sms>

St. Mary's Facebook Page: St Mary's Catholic School - Melrose

St. Mary's Instagram Page: @smsmelrosemn

St. Mary's School Website: www.smsmelrosemn.org

I look forward to continuing to build on the foundation established by stakeholders and working with you to continue the tradition of excellence. If we can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here for you.

Sincerely,

Autumn Nelson, Principal

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.

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