

SAINT MARY'S BUZZ

September 7, 2017

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Vol. 1

SEPTEMBER'S VIRTUE: PURITY

Create in them a pure heart, O God, and let that purity of heart be shown in their actions.

Dt. 31:6

OUR SEPTEMBER SERVICE PROJECT:

Bring Drink to the Thirsty: The Heifer Project

WELCOME BACK!

Our first day of school was "smooth as silk" and we are thrilled to welcome new students and returning students (they've all grown over the summer!) back to a year that we hope will be the best yet!

As you read in our end-of-summer letter, we are welcoming Mrs. Debbie Talbot, Miss Alison Pajak, Mrs. Meghann Weis (pronounced "wise") and Mrs. Julie Leong to our full-time faculty. We also advised you in an email that our wonderful Mr. Sean Polen will be transitioning into a new position as the Music Director of St. Christopher Church. Your prayers for an excellent new teacher have been answered, and we are thrilled that Mr. Eric Delagrang will be joining the faculty as our Music and Drama teacher!

AND THE SURVEY SAYS... SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Please find our 2016-2017 School Report Card attached to this newsletter. We are grateful to our 72 respondents, and want to be sure that we share the findings with you. The survey indicated that the majority of respondents feel that we do good work, but we do have some recurring themes and desires which we are endeavoring to address in this school year.

The acronym **CREED** spells our word for the year, and is a reminder to us of those activities and values in which we believe and that we will continue to enrich:

C - Children, Communication, Consistency

R - Religiosity, Reading, Rubrics

E - Engagement

E - Excellence, ELA

D - Differentiation, Discipline

Children, Communication and Consistency:

- We are committed to keeping our focus on the children, and doing all in our power to bring the very best of Catholic education and discipleship to them. Communication will be enhanced with the introduction of the Google Guardian application, used in grades 2-8. Parents who join the program will receive daily updates via email with homework and any class announcements. Grades K and 1 will be publishing weekly newsletters via email to their families every Monday. A more detailed Parent/Student Handbook will be distributed to all families at Meet the Teacher Night, and is also posted on our website. Consistency is assured through training and buy-in on the part of every teacher.

Religiosity, Reading and Rubrics:

- Christ-centered character education and the Middle School EDGE program will be presented monthly on Friday noon-dismissal days. Inclusion of more sacred song, and continuation of our religious field trips at certain grade levels and retreats is planned. Our new reading programs at K-5 are being emphasized through block scheduling and a focus on leveled reading. We also kicked off a “Read Every Day” Reading Challenge at our opening assembly on the first day of school! Communication of project standards and expectations (rubrics) will be disseminated to parent and students in grades 3-8.

Engagement:

- Our wonderful faculty will continue to engage all students with more project-based learning, collaboration, hands-on and interdisciplinary work.

Excellence and ELA:

- Our quality of teaching for learning is paramount. We will continue to focus on the full and appropriate implementation of our enhanced K-8 ELA programs, and are committed to relevant and continuous professional development through our collaboration with BOCES and experts in the field of education.

Differentiation and Discipline:

- With expanded AIS in K-8, split classes in Middle School, and leveled reading in K-5, we will continue to endeavor to meet students at their levels. Lunch detention for incomplete work or behavioral issues will be implemented at the 6-7-8 level.

Our **CREED** is all about Learning, Leading, and Serving, and we pray this prayer in each class, each day:

*Lord, let me **LEARN** with enthusiasm, **LEAD** with humility, and **SERVE** with respect.*

CATHOLIC PRAYER FOR CATHOLIC FAMILIES

The Loyola Press booklet, *Catholic Prayer for Catholic Families*, came home this week for each family. It's a wonderful description of and invitation to family prayer. At the end of the booklet (pages 23- 45) are the words to our traditional prayers, Marian prayers, the Rosary, and prayers of Saint Ignatius Loyola. Please be sure to take a look at this gift from us to you!

SPECIAL PERSONS DAY & NOON DISMISSAL TOMORROW

Tomorrow (Friday) is Special Persons Day, and we invite grandparents or other special people to join us for our opening 9:00 Mass, followed by a reception in the gym and a tour of the classroom by your special student ☺! Parents: if your special person is signing your child out for an early dismissal, you must send a note to his/her homeroom teacher giving permission to do so. The second Friday in each month is set aside as a noon dismissal day to facilitate professional development for our teachers. This week several of our teachers will be presenting a turn-key program on Project Based Learning (PBL).

HURRICANE HARVEY RESPONSE

A special thanks to our Operations Manager, *Don Andres*, who has arranged for our excess desks and chairs to be sent to Texas through the Salvation Army. Thanks to all in the St. Mary Faith Community for their support for the victims of hurricane Harvey.

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Many thanks to St. Mary's Montessori Children's House teacher assistant, Miss Rachel Struckmann, who has completed training and is now updating our Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program for our Montessori children. The prayer room will now be used as our special prayer space for the children as they learn about our faith.

FLEXIBLE CLASSROOMS

Thanks to the generosity of our auction attendees and SMS donors, we now have flexible seating in four classrooms: Kindergarten, Grade 3, Grade 4 and Grade 6. Our other classes have been innovative in their classroom set up to provide engaging environments for learning to all the children. Be sure to visit all our classrooms when you come to school for Meet the Teacher Night on September 25th!

TECHNOLOGY SAFETY

On Thursday, September 14th, our students in grades K-8 will be presented with age appropriate safety lessons adapted for the Catholic schools in the area, and presented by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The animated K-2 lesson focuses on rules of online and real-world safety; the presentation for our students in grades 3-5 focuses upon social networking, cyberbullying, and avoiding the use of personal or inappropriate information; the grades 6-8 presentation stresses that online actions may have offline consequences.

FALL INTO CASH!!

Our annual \$10,000 raffle is happening earlier this year and has a new name! *Fall into Cash* (Formerly Snow Me the Money) is St. Mary Faith Community's fundraising cash raffle in support of the school and WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!!

Join us on **Saturday, November 18th, from 6pm-9pm** for the live drawing of the \$10,000 GRAND PRIZE and a fun celebration with great food, drinks and community fellowship!

We will be selling RAFFLE TICKETS at our Special Person's day tomorrow, and sending raffle tickets home to buy or sell very soon!

WELCOME TO THE “MORNING CREW”

As the school year begins, we welcome our new 8th Grade morning announcers: *Gianna Mistretta, Ally Zelazo, Jordan Carlson and Derek Universal*. It’s their job to lead us in prayer as we begin the day, and keep us informed of going and comings!

CELL PHONE POLICY

Our new parent/student handbook (which you’ll receive in hardcopy on 9/25, and which is already on the website) states that:

“Cell phones are to be used by students only after school hours, and must be “off” during the school day. Any Elementary children (Grades K-5) must stow cell phones in their backpacks, and Middle School children (Grades 6-7-8) will stow cell phones in teacher-designated locations for retrieval at the end of each day.”

We’ve instituted this policy to eliminate the inappropriate use of cell phones during the day and while on bathroom break. Any child who has an emergent need to contact parents during the day should come to the office for permission to call home.

SUCCESSFUL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Please circle your calendar for **October 16th or 17th** when Frank Donaldson will return to Buffalo to discuss the roles of pastor, principal, board members, teachers, and parents in the success of their Catholic elementary school. There will be two opportunities for stakeholders to hear Frank’s presentation:

- Monday, October 16th from 6-8pm in the cafeteria at Our Lady of Victory School
- Tuesday, October 17th from 9-11am at the Newman Center in Amherst

More information about Frank Donaldson may be found at <http://www.ispd.com/meet-ispd/team-members/>.

HSA UPDATES

A special HSA Information Guide and an HSA Event Guide will be coming home tomorrow!

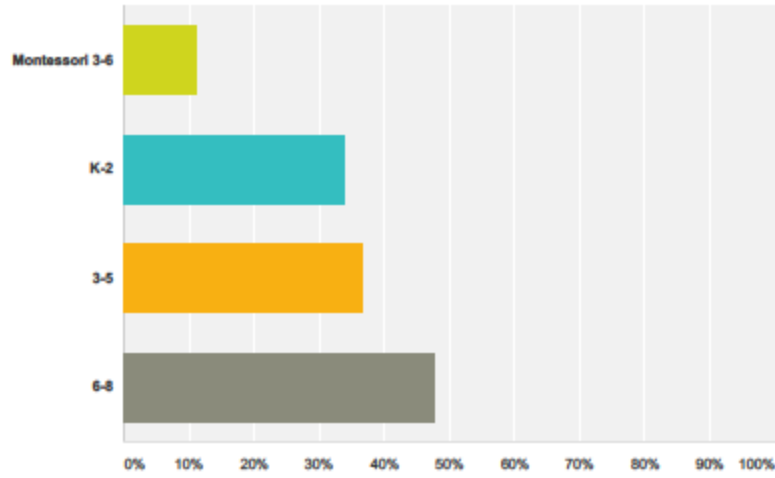
UP AND COMING AT SMS ☺:

- Noon Dismissal and Teacher Meetings.....Friday, September 8
- SPECIAL PERSON DAY.....Friday, September 8
- Band Recruitment Assembly for Grades 3-8.....Monday, September 11
- Technology Safety Presentations for Grades K-8.....Thursday, September 14
- \$1 Jeans Day for our Faith Community “Cow Project”.....Tuesday, September 19
- T.G.I.S. Party at Santora’s @ 7:30 p.m.....Friday, September 22
- MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT for ALL Parents @ 6:30 p.m.Monday, September 25
- Grades 6-9 BACK-TO-SCHOOL Dance from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.Friday, September 29

HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND!

Q1 Your child(ren)'s grade level(s)

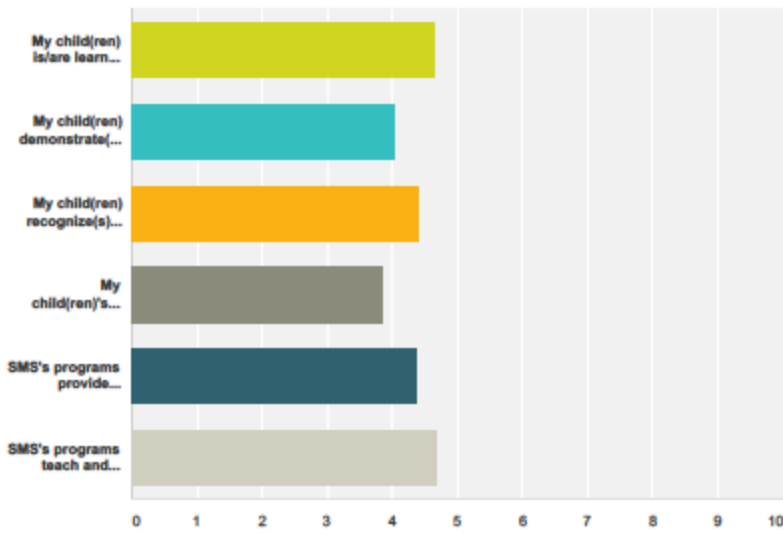
Answered: 71 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Montessori 3-6	11.27% 8
K-2	33.80% 24
3-5	36.62% 26
6-8	47.89% 34
Total Respondents: 71	

Q2 Faith, Social and Moral Questions

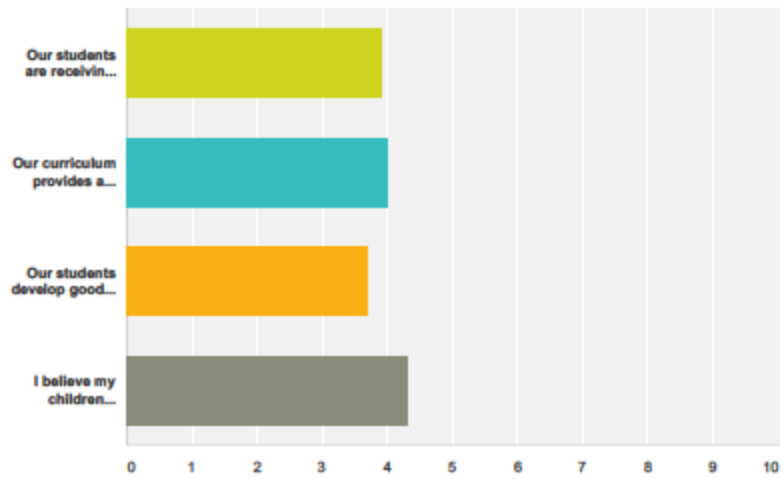
Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



	Not At All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
My child(ren) is/are learning and demonstrating Catholic Christian values.	1.39% 1	0.00% 0	5.56% 4	19.44% 14	73.61% 53	72	4.64
My child(ren) demonstrate(s) a good sense of self-discipline.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	27.78% 20	40.28% 29	31.94% 23	72	4.04
My child(ren) recognize(s) and respect(s) differences in backgrounds, cultures, etc.	1.39% 1	1.39% 1	6.94% 5	36.11% 26	54.17% 39	72	4.40
My child(ren)'s classroom(s) are bully-free zones.	2.78% 2	5.56% 4	26.39% 19	33.33% 24	31.94% 23	72	3.86
SMS's programs provide effective and long-lasting moral training for students.	0.00% 0	1.39% 1	11.11% 8	36.11% 26	51.39% 37	72	4.38
SMS's programs teach and emphasize the presence of Christ in our lives.	0.00% 0	1.39% 1	2.78% 2	22.22% 16	73.61% 53	72	4.68

Q3 School and Academic Questions

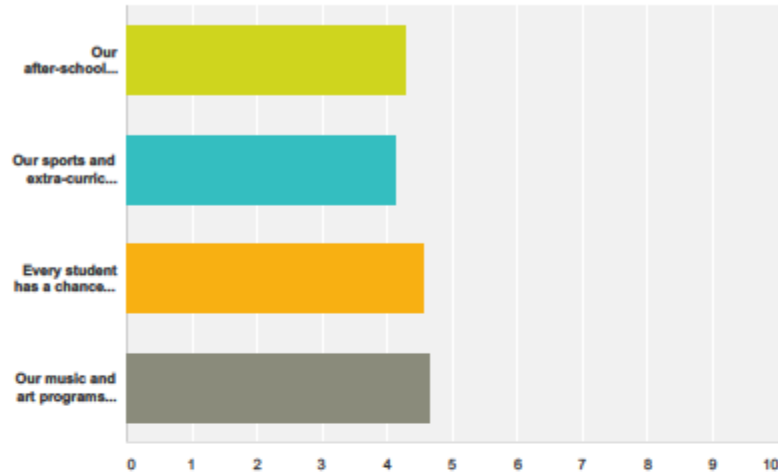
Answered: 71 Skipped: 1



	Not at All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
Our students are receiving a superior academic education at SMS.	0.00% 0	2.82% 2	32.39% 23	35.21% 25	29.58% 21	71	3.92
Our curriculum provides a learning platform equal or superior to public school.	0.00% 0	8.70% 6	20.29% 14	31.88% 22	39.13% 27	69	4.01
Our students develop good study habits, preparing them well for high school and college.	2.86% 2	7.14% 5	32.86% 23	31.43% 22	25.71% 18	70	3.70
I believe my children benefit from the STREAM program at SMS.	1.45% 1	1.45% 1	14.49% 10	27.54% 19	55.07% 38	69	4.33

Q4 Extra Curricular Questions

Answered: 70 Skipped: 2



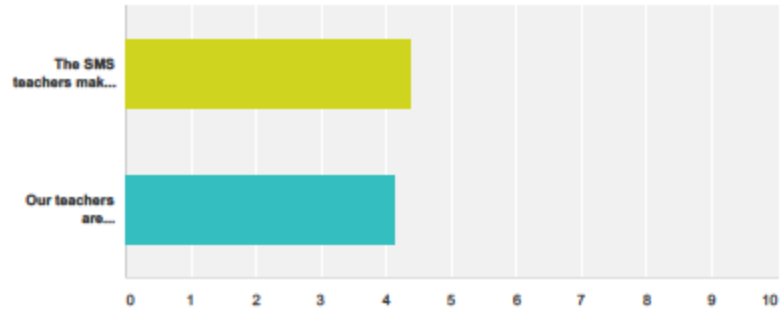
	Not at All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
Our after-school programs provide helpful learning alternatives and energy outlets.	1.52% 1	3.03% 2	13.64% 9	28.79% 19	53.03% 35	66	4.29
Our sports and extra-curricular activities meet/exceed my expectations.	2.94% 2	1.47% 1	10.29% 7	50.00% 34	35.29% 24	68	4.13
Every student has a chance to participate in extra-curricular activities.	2.94% 2	1.47% 1	1.47% 1	23.53% 16	70.59% 48	68	4.57
Our music and art programs are appropriate for the size of our school.	0.00% 0	1.45% 1	4.35% 3	23.19% 16	71.01% 49	69	4.64

Q5 Are there any additional curricular/extra-curricular programs that you would like to see implemented at SMS?

Answered: 15 Skipped: 57

Q6 Teacher Questions

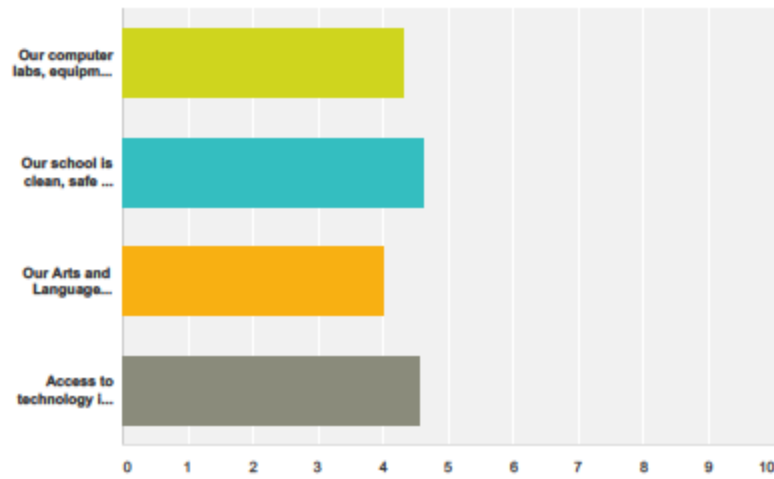
Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



	Not at All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
The SMS teachers make a positive difference in my children's lives.	2.78% 2	0.00% 0	11.11% 8	27.78% 20	58.33% 42	72	4.39
Our teachers are well-qualified and prepared to instruct and guide our students.	2.78% 2	0.00% 0	22.22% 16	33.33% 24	41.67% 30	72	4.11

Q7 School Resource Questions

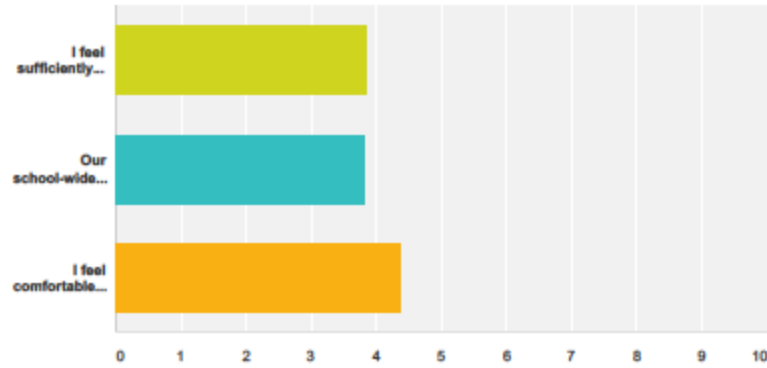
Answered: 71 Skipped: 1



	Not At All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
Our computer labs, equipment and classrooms provide a challenging and enriching learning environment.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	17.65% 12	33.82% 23	48.53% 33	68	4.31
Our school is clean, safe and well maintained.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.45% 6	22.54% 16	69.01% 49	71	4.61
Our Arts and Language programs meet the needs of children.	1.47% 1	5.88% 4	23.53% 16	29.41% 20	39.71% 27	68	4.00
Access to technology is important for each classroom.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.45% 7	23.88% 16	65.67% 44	67	4.55

Q8 Communication Questions

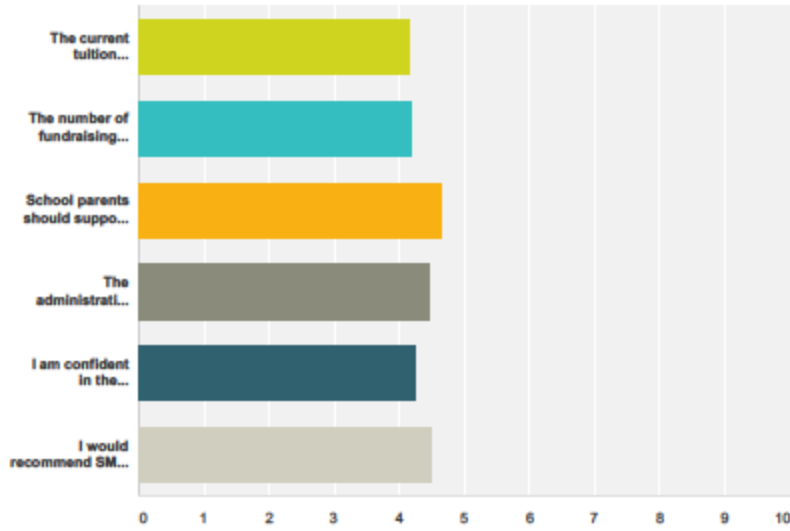
Answered: 72 Skipped: 0



	Not At All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
I feel sufficiently apprised of events/needs/issues that impact me and my children.	4.23% 3	9.86% 7	19.72% 14	26.76% 19	39.44% 28	71	3.87
Our school-wide communication is effective.	4.17% 3	8.33% 6	22.22% 16	31.94% 23	33.33% 24	72	3.82
I feel comfortable dealing directly with my child's teachers.	2.82% 2	1.41% 1	14.08% 10	19.72% 14	61.97% 44	71	4.37

Q9 Financial and Enrollment Questions

Answered: 70 Skipped: 2



	Not At All	(no label)	Somewhat	(no label)	Yes, Definitely	Total	Weighted Average
The current tuition structure is fair and reasonable for the services being provided.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.71% 18	32.86% 23	41.43% 29	70	4.16
The number of fundraising programs and events is appropriate.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18.57% 13	44.29% 31	37.14% 26	70	4.19
School parents should support school events and activities.	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.80% 4	24.64% 17	69.57% 48	69	4.64
The administration supports and facilitates the mission and growth of SMS.	0.00% 0	1.43% 1	10.00% 7	28.57% 20	60.00% 42	70	4.47
I am confident in the long-term future of SMS.	2.86% 2	2.86% 2	15.71% 11	25.71% 18	52.86% 37	70	4.23
I would recommend SMS to others.	0.00% 0	1.43% 1	12.86% 9	20.00% 14	65.71% 46	70	4.50