

September 2, 2025



Dear Parents,

Our first week of school is here, and our hearts are full of excitement and hope for a wonderful year of learning and growth!

Over the summer, our teachers worked diligently to create classrooms that are both orderly and welcoming. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the many parents and families who helped prepare our school—whether through painting, moving classrooms, or tending to our gardens. Your support made today possible, and we are truly grateful!

We are also blessed with new and returning faces who will enrich our students' learning in the specials programs:

- **Gym (PreK–8):** *Reece VanderWulp*, LSSU senior in kinesiology
- **Music (PreK–6):** *Laura Osterhund*, BA in Music and MA in Performance
- **Music (7–8):** *Paul Weber*, St. Joseph's music ministry and school parent
- **Art (PreK–8):** *Theresa Miller*, returning to share her creative talents and art degree
- **Latin (Grades 7/8):** *Fr. Brad Sjoquist*, Pastor of St. Joseph's Church

God is so good!

This year, through the **31n Mental Health Grant**, *Margaret Swedene* will teach the **TRAILS program** (social-emotional learning), helping students build self-regulation skills and fostering a positive school environment. We will also continue the **Education in Virtue program**, focusing on one virtue each week and practicing how it looks in action. Both programs will complement each other beautifully and will be taught in developmentally appropriate ways across all grades, K–8.

At **Parents' Night**, we discussed school security, particularly during Mass at St. Mary's Church. After consultation, the Sault Sainte Marie Sheriff's Department has committed to patrolling the church and school grounds during Children's Mass, remaining until all students are safely back in the school building. Additionally, the pastors have agreed to secure the Portage St. door limiting access to the church to the side entrance facing the parking lot.

School security remains a top priority. Over the years, St. Mary's has invested in cameras, electronic locks, and continually updated emergency response plans in consultation with our Police School Liaison Officer. We regularly practice fire, tornado, and lockdown drills, and all exterior and interior doors remain locked during the school day. Still, this is an ongoing conversation, and I invite you to share any concerns or ideas you may have to further strengthen our practices.

This summer, I was blessed to meet the **Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary** during my pilgrimage to Italy. Their joyful spirit of evangelization—through beauty, service, and availability—deeply inspired me. While I am still discerning how, I hope to bring a piece of their spirituality into the life of our school.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the **Boohoo/Yahoo event** this morning! Another opportunity for fellowship will be our **Back-to-School BBQ** on **Thursday, September 11, at 5:00 PM** in the school gym. I hope to see you there!

Finally, our **virtue of the week is Charity**—the grace that enables us to love as God loves. May this virtue guide us in all we do as we begin the school year together.

God bless, and welcome back!

Mrs. Farney

Prayer for Our Children on a New School Year

Heavenly Father, as our children go back to school, we lift them up to You. Protect them, grant them wisdom, and help them to grow in knowledge and understanding. Guide their teachers and open their hearts to You. Amen.

St. Mary's School Mission Statement

Guided by the Holy Spirit and in partnership with the parents, St. Mary's School is committed to teaching the knowledge of the faith centered in the person of Jesus Christ.

The values and traditions of the Catholic faith are integrated into a comprehensive academic program where each child can develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically.

In a safe, joyful, and diverse environment, St. Mary's School will teach its students the value of their Catholic heritage while respecting the traditions of students of other faith.