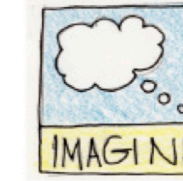
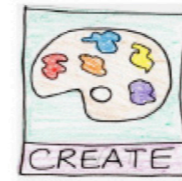




St. Mary's classrooms are blending technology with small group instruction.

Photography: Benjamin Margalit



that they would need the training and supporting resources to apply the learning principals from the Discovery Hall to the classroom.” Says Shannon Reinstatler, 5th grade teacher, “The Teacher Academy gives teachers the constant support, professional development and resources needed to successfully implement this best teaching practice.”

A Storied Past of Looking Ahead

The call for innovation has long been a force at St. Mary's, which dates back to 1860. Throughout the decades this

“little engine that could” has added onto its existing building with a new wing for early childhood education that features large, open classrooms, and built an indoor playground with jungle gyms, rock climbing walls, slides and bridges to keep students active year-round.

While looking forward has always been at the forefront, looking inward is just as important. Every child's spiritual formation is lovingly nurtured here.

Principal Carner says that in this family-like environment the teachers and administration ensure that “each

child feels loved and valued.” Each teacher strives to provide small group and individualized instruction to ensure personalized learning.

Supporting a strong lineup of core curriculum to achieve academic excellence, the list of extracurriculars is extensive—from Spanish for all students to music, band, drama, computer lab, ski club, math club, science club and Power of the Pen team.

Says Nancy, “The ultimate mission of what we do here is to show children a path to working with others, serving

others and serving the Lord. Our passion and love drives them to succeed on those levels.”

St. Mary's Catholic School is located just off Bagley Road, at 265 Baker Street in Berea. In addition to before and after care, the school offers a summer camp program. School tours can be arranged by calling 440-243-4555. Affordable tuition payment plans are available. Visit the website at SMSBerea.org.

St. Mary's Catholic School leads the area by offering forward-thinking learning initiatives for students and staff.

learning for teachers to implement the best instructional practices at all grade levels.

A Platform for Progress

Principal Andrew Carner and Pastor John Singler believed that for the school to thrive going forward, a foundation needed to be laid for a more engaged, individualized learning environment. They brought in Nancy Kaesgen as Director of Development to brainstorm a plan. As a former principal at the school for more than 30 years—and mother to former SMS students and grandmother to current SMS students—Nancy brings a unique perspective to the table.

She knew they needed an expert to sculpt the vision so they hired Lealynd Tuskan, an education coach at Epiphany Management Group, which is a consulting firm that advises schools on how to adopt true 21st century learning environments. Lealynd will also serve as the Teacher Academy adviser, which provides ongoing support for staff to develop instructional best practices with

Full

technology.

Together the team devised a blueprint of change on a wide scale level.

The next step to turning dream into reality was finding the funding for the projected \$500,000 investment into curriculum and facilities, which will be in place by the time students return to school in the fall of 2017.

“Rather than raising tuition or conducting fundraisers, we approached a small pool of extremely generous donors who made this happen,” Nancy reports.

Hands-On, Collaborative Learning

The STEAM Discovery Hall will provide 10 hands-on learning stations for students at all levels to hone critical thinking and problem-solving skills in interdisciplinary projects. An emphasis will be placed on emerging technologies.

For the distinctive design of the hall, the team brought in local mixed media collage artist Kim Dettmer. She plans to use a variety of natural and industrial elements in her design.

A few of the interactive stations, which will change as needed, include LEGO Robotics, Pixar in a Box, Magic Modeling Clay, Magnificent Mosaic Masterpieces, Crime Scene and Construction Zone.

“In the library wing, which was originally erected in 1996, we are integrating technology on every level, from a large smart screen to purchasing



St. Mary's STEAM Discovery Hall and Library will provide 10 hands-on learning stations for students at all levels to hone critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

500 new books, a 3D printer, 3D ink pens, a virtual reality Google table, e-books and new collaboration spaces,” says Nancy.

“With this student-centered model, we are blending technology with small group instruction,” says Lealynd. “Our goal is for students to shift from being consumers of content to being creators of content.”

Sending Teachers Back to School

“We have a diverse staff of educators, some of whom have been here two years, and some who have taught for 25 years,” says Principal Carner. “We recognized

STEAM Ahead



OPEN HOUSE

Visit St. Mary's Catholic School on Sunday, January 29, from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. View the new library and plans for the STEAM Discovery Hall. Tour classrooms, enjoy refreshments and speak with the teachers, students and families who make St. Mary's so special.



As these kindergarteners work on their Chrome Books, teacher Virginia Dober says, “The Teacher Academy is giving me the tools I need to meet the educational needs of each of my students.”

St. Mary's Catholic School in Berea is blazing new trails by introducing a technology-rich STEAM program and plans for a bigger and better learning environment.