

To: St. Mary's Elementary School, Berea, Ohio

Re: Gratitude for a premier school

Dear Principal Carner,

At first, it might seem unusual for a retired public school art teacher to be applauding the efforts of a private Cleveland Catholic Diocese school. But when an educator sees excellence, no matter where, it should be appreciated and acknowledged.

Currently, as an Adjunct Instructor & University Supervisor for Baldwin Wallace University, I have had ample opportunity to be in many schools in my almost nine years of being at BW. As I supervise my students and teach my classes, I look for caring, content-strong, creative teachers, with outstanding facilities and supportive administrations. All this I have found at St. Mary's Elementary School.

My ties to St. Mary's go back decades, to when Nancy Kaesgen was first named principal there. Nancy brought me on board to help her teachers integrate the arts into their curriculum and then maintained contact, always promoting her beloved school. In 2016, she again included me in the planning and design of the remarkable Discovery Hall. Even the artists who created and installed the exceptional art displays, Kim and Jeff Dettmer, were included in her comprehensive vision – all the while keeping the needs of St. Mary's students front & center.

Now, I annually bring my BW future teachers to visit Discovery Hall to see the possibilities of true standards-based arts integration. They invariably come away with an appreciation for what "could be" and a wish that they too could have had a Discovery Hall in their own schools as kids.

As my involved colleagues, Dr. Chad Malcolm and Eileen Wallace, will agree, our field experience placements with dedicated teachers, like Virginia Dober and Sandy Aversano, always have a greater chance of success with them as mentors.

In conclusion, a decades-long friendship with the visionary Nancy Kaesgen (who also makes those visions come true) has resulted in an appreciation for all St. Mary's has to offer – and continues to offer to this day. Thank you for including us, and our students, in your journey towards excellence.



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