

St. Mary's Church
30 Bartlett Street | Westfield, MA 01085

October 19, 2011

Dear parents and families of St. Mary's Schools,

In 1898, St. Mary's parish began a great tradition of Catholic Education. The 150 children enrolled in the first year were taught by five Sisters of St. Joseph. Originally opened as an Elementary School, secondary grades were added in 1899 as Nellie Roach insisted that she wanted to graduate from St. Mary's High School. In 1903, she did so. In 1915, things had grown to the point of adding on a third floor to the current Elementary School. In 1963, Monsignor Shea bought the Trade School which became St. Mary's High School. In 1979, we opened the Kindergarten program. In this new millennium great effort has been put into receiving accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (achieved in 2004 for the Elementary School and 2006 for the High School). In 2007, we added a Preschool for 4 year-olds and we are currently looking into adding a program for 3 year-olds for the fall of 2012. It is time to go back to our roots and open an exciting chapter in the future of our schools.

We write to share our hope at the prospect for reuniting our schools under one name. St. Mary's School be a comprehensive pre-K through 12th grade school of excellence. We have seen great benefits in attending Mass together, 8th graders taking Algebra classes at the High School, sharing athletics across the campus and having High School seniors volunteer as aides in the Preschool and Afterschool Program. As we move forward we see great benefits in becoming one, once again.

Our mission is to provide an education that reveals Christ in a loving, safe, faith environment while we continue to light the way to the future. This has always been our mission and we will continue to do this as one.

There will be many challenges as we move forward. We hope to take this academic year to discuss and research the benefits in the areas of Mission, Academics, Student Life, and Administration. Discussions will take place within our faculty, school boards, and parent organizations. We have already spoken with the Diocesan Schools Office and N.E.A.S.C. concerning our wishes and hopes for the future. Both groups have offered their support and resources.

Following this year of discussion and research, we hope to introduce any "obvious changes" and provide funding for continuing education (teacher certification, administrative models, etc.) in the fall of 2012. In the fall of 2013, our hope would be to unify the administration, and institute other significant academic / athletic / etc. changes; in effect becoming one school. In the fall of 2014, we will begin our two-year process for accreditation that will take place in the fall of 2016.

There is a long road ahead of us. Gratefully, we have seen the strength and devotion of our faculty, the loyalty and commitment of our families, and the support and encouragement of our parish. Together, let us grow as one.

Sr. Christine Lavoie

Fr. Brian McGrath

Mrs. Nichole Nietzsche