



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Congratulates New St. Mary's Elementary School President

JACK M. MARTINS July 12, 2013

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Reverend Monsignor John. J. McCann, pastor of the Church of Saint Mary has announced that effective immediately, Mrs. Grace M. Cavallo has accepted the appointment of president for Saint Mary's Elementary School in addition to her role as president of Saint Mary's High School, thus creating The Schools of Saint Mary.

“Three years ago, I approved a new leadership model for Saint Mary’s High School with the appointment of a president and principal at its helm. I have witnessed how this model addressed the ever-increasing complexity of administering to a quality Catholic school by sharing the responsibilities of leadership between two highly qualified administrative Catholic educators dedicated to the mission of Catholic education”, said Msgr. McCann.

This has been a strategy that has worked extremely well for St. Mary’s High School. The collaboration and team effort of President Grace Cavallo and Principal Jonathan D. Kramer has strengthened the school community and has provided joint leadership enabling the school to flourish on many levels.

According to Msgr. McCann, “Saint Mary’s Elementary School now embraces the President/Principal model with Dr. Celeste M. Checchia continuing to lead the Elementary School as principal and Mrs. Cavallo extending her role as president of both Schools. As evidenced by the success of the President/Principal model in the High School, St. Mary’s Elementary School will also benefit from professional expertise focused on the strategic development and advancement of the school, in concert with academic leadership.”

The Schools of Saint Mary will be a continuum of education aimed at preparing students for success in elementary school, high school, college, and beyond. The Schools will remain separate but many opportunities will emerge for cooperative learning experiences, student mentoring, faculty partnerships and professional development, technology and science integration, athletic and service programs, and other curricular and co-curricular experiences.

The campus culture of The Schools of Saint Mary will be one where all can and should contribute to the energy and vitality of learning within a faith-based community. This partnership will enhance and enlarge the identity of St. Mary’s as a Catholic school

community with high standards and expectations, academic excellence, innovation, and student enrichment.

In response to her appointment, Mrs. Cavallo stated, "I firmly believe in Catholic education and as with any worthwhile organization, strategic thinking becomes a critical component in advancement. The President/Principal model has served Saint Mary's High School extremely well since its implementation and has effectively positioned Saint Mary's as a competitive, highly sought after Catholic secondary school. I look forward to working closely with Dr. Celeste Checchia as we embrace the President/Principal model for Saint Mary's Elementary School."

"There has been no secret ingredient in making this model of leadership successful", said Mrs. Cavallo. She credits the success to their dedication, hard work and innovative thinking that inspired them in their collaborative work in leading the High School forward to a vibrant future. "I am excited about taking this leadership role to a new level with being appointed the President of The Schools of Saint Mary. Providing a Nursery through Grade 12 program creates a very distinctive position for us in offering a continuum of learning for our school community. The possibilities for collegial work across campus, use of the facility, and sharing of programs opens many more opportunities for students to benefit from across all grades and in all aspects of school life."

When asked why this model and why now, Mrs. Cavallo said. "The answer is simple. The demands on a principal are numerous, ever growing and challenging. To know that I can be instrumental in focusing on mission, long term planning, fiscal management, alumni affairs, board leadership, and development simultaneously while our principals use their time and expertise in responding to the critical day to day needs of the school is priceless. This affords Dr. Checchia and Mr. Kramer the opportunity to advance instructional programs and teacher supervision while building relationships with the students and parents. This new

model is essential and a gift to our entire school community.”

In moving to the President/Principal model of leadership, Saint Mary’s joins other Catholic schools across the country in bringing greater value, innovation, expertise, and cost efficiency to the educational experience. With this visionary development The Schools of Saint Mary will be a more formidable institution, recognized for its seamless, integrated mission and programs of academic, personal and faith formation.

The Church of Saint Mary has been committed to Catholic education for over 80 years. Throughout this time, the support and commitment from so many has enabled the Elementary School and the High School to be an integral part of the mission of the parish. Saint Mary’s remains committed and steadfast to this vital role in the evangelization of young people and partnering with parents in this sacred work of their children’s faith formation and academic preparation.