



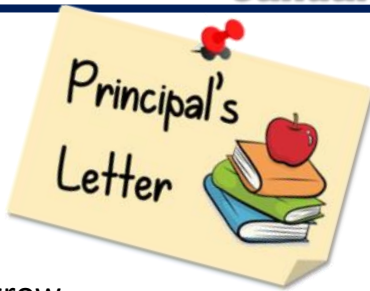
BOBCAT BUZZ



January 2026



Happy New Year!
I can't believe we are at the halfway point for this school year!



Students continue to grow in mind, heart, and spirit each day!
Enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year is almost here. There are great incentives for early enrollment! Don't forget to enroll your SMCS Bobcat! If you have questions or concerns about enrolling, please schedule a time to speak with me.
Happy New Year!



Mrs. Halbardier



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Time	Activity
Jan. 6-23		MAP Testing Window
Jan. 12	6:16 pm	5th Grade Parent Meeting
Jan. 14		Enrollment for returning students begins
Jan. 19		<i>MLK Day—No School</i>
Jan. 23	5:30-7:30 pm	Jr. High Social-Cargill Hall
Jan. 24	After 10:15 and 12:00 Masses	Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser for 8th Grade D.C. Trip
Jan. 24-25	All Masses	School Mass— Students speak at all Masses
Jan. 25-31		Catholic Schools Week
Jan. 27		SMART Families Digital Well-Being Program for Students
Jan. 28	6:15 pm	100 th Day of School Texas Education Freedom Accounts Online Meeting
Jan. 29		Move Up Day
Jan. 30		Mid Term Parent Mass and Open House
Feb. 6	12:15 pm	<i>Conferences Early Dismissal-No Aftercare</i>
Feb. 7-8	All Masses	1st Weekend Mass

FIRST SUNDAY MASS



Students who attend any Mass in person wearing full dress uniform will earn **free dress the following Monday.**

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Saturday and Sunday Jan 24 & 25	Monday Jan 26	Tuesday Jan 27	Wednesday Jan 28	Thursday Jan 29	Friday Jan 30
Pulpit talks at every Mass. Spaghetti dinner Sunday after 10:15am and noon Masses.	Students dress like teachers!	Pep rally, Spirit dress. SMART Families program for students.	100 th day of school. Texas Education Freedom Accounts online meeting.	Move-Up day.	Mass with Parents (students sit with class). SMCS Open House after Mass.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

We will be selling SMCS Spaghetti Dinner Tickets at all Masses! The dinner is scheduled for Sunday, January 25 and will be served after the 10:15 and noon Masses. It is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and proceeds benefit our 8th Grade D.C. Trip! Tickets are \$10.00 each and include spaghetti, salad, dessert and drink. Families may eat in Cargill Hall or get their meals to go the day of the dinner! Get your tickets! It's for a great cause and the Knights make DELICIOUS spaghetti! The dinner also kicks off Catholic Schools Week!



ST. MARY GOLF CLASSIC

St. Mary of the Expectation Catholic Church invites you to join us for a fun day of golf and fellowship. The tournament will be held on March 23rd at South Shore Harbour Country Club. All proceeds from the event benefit St. Mary Catholic School. There are many opportunities to get involved for [golfers](#), [sponsors](#), and [volunteers](#). THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



5TH GRADE PARENT MEETING

There will be a meeting in the school library on January 12th at 6:15pm for all 5th grade parents. We will be discussing the transition to Junior High as well as giving information and answering questions regarding the upcoming trip to Camp Kappe.



TEXAS EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNTS ONLINE MEETING

On Wednesday, January 28 at 6:15 pm SMCS will host an online meeting regarding the new Texas Education Freedom Accounts. A Teams link will be emailed out in advance of the meeting. Visit the [official website](#) to learn more about this opportunity.



MASS INFORMATION

Week	Class Serving as Altar Servers	Class Serving as Gift Bearers	Class Serving as Lectors
Jan. 16	6 th Grade	Mrs. Gilmore's Pre-K 4 and 8 th Grade	6 th Grade
Jan. 23	5 th Grade	Mrs. Brummett's Pre-K 4 and 8 th Grade	5 th Grade
Jan. 30	8 th Grade	Mrs. Wright's Pre-K 3 and 8 th Grade	8 th Grade

SAFE HAVEN ONLINE TRAINING



All adults who have regular contact with students including those eating lunch on campus, visiting the classroom, volunteering at school, driving for field trips, etc. are required to have Safe Environment training every 5 years. Access it at [CMG Connect](#).

MORNING PRAYER

Jan. 12-16	8 th Grade
Jan. 20-23	7 th Grade
Jan. 26-30	6 th Grade



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

January 17

Mrs, Ellison



THANK YOU

... Christmas Shoppe Volunteers!
 ... All that donated to the Care Facilities- SMCS visited 2 and donated to a 3rd. Over 300 people were given gifts and cards for Christmas!
 ... Coach Derek, Coach Lopez, and Coach Butler for a great basketball season!
 ... All the volunteers that helped with Christmas crafts, projects, and parties!
 ... Deacon Russ and Mr. Osterberger for speaking at Mass

RESOURCES

ParentsWeb (FACTS, grades, lunch ordering)
stmy-tx.client.renweb.com/pwr
 Teacher's Friday Letters
<https://www.stmarylc.org/academics/newsletters.cfm>
 St. Mary Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/stmarylc

TEXAS EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNTS

Starting in the 2026–27 school year, Texas Education Freedom Accounts, having up to \$1 billion in funding, will help families cover educational expenses for students in PreK through 12th grade.

What is Texas Education Freedom Accounts?

Texas Education Freedom Accounts provides state funds that families can use for things like private school tuition, homeschool curriculum, tutoring, therapies, lunch, transportation, technology, and more.

Who can apply for Texas Education Freedom Accounts?

All Texas students are eligible to apply. However, funds are limited and will be awarded based on a lottery system within income categories, with priority given to students with disabilities and those from low-income households.



How much support will Texas Education Freedom Accounts provide?

Most awarded accounts could be funded between \$10,500 and \$12,500 per year
Students with disabilities could get up to \$30,000 annually

When can Families Apply for Texas Education Freedom Accounts?

Applications open in early 2026, and funds will be available for the 2026–27 school year. More information to come.

Texas Education Freedom Accounts Eligibility Guidelines

There are four categories of prioritization for applicants:

1. Students with a disability (defined by Texas Educ. Code Sec. 29.003) whose family income is at or below 500% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) - see chart below.
2. Children whose family income is at or below 200% of the FPG.
3. Children whose family income is between 201% and 500% of FPG
4. Everyone else, depending upon available funds. Students who move from public schools will be prioritized over currently enrolled private school students in this category only.

How is the money made available to families?

Transfers into Texas Education Freedom Accounts will be made on July 1, October 1, and in April. If a child enrolls in the program after the beginning of the school year, the amount transferred is prorated based on the date of enrollment.

TEXAS EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNTS

What is required of parents whose children have been given Texas Education Freedom Accounts?

Parents must agree to:

- Spend program money only for eligible expenses
- Share child's assessment results with Odyssey
- Not sell an item purchased with program money and
- Notify the Odyssey within 30 days of child enrolling in public school, graduating high school, or otherwise becoming ineligible to enroll in public school

What can Texas Education Freedom Accounts be used for?

Approved educational expenses like:

- Tuition and fees
- Curriculum and learning materials
- Private tutors and therapists
- Transportation and meals
- Technology (limited to 10% of funds)

Texas Comptroller's webpage: [Texas Education Freedom Accounts Program](#)

Want to stay informed? The Comptroller's office has made it easy for different stakeholders to stay in the loop as implementation of the program progresses by setting up a number of email lists - click on the one(s) for which you wish to receive updates:

• [Join the parent/student outreach list](#)

[Join the education service provider or vendor of educational products outreach list](#)

