



St. Bernard School – Laying the Groundwork for Life

Since 1926, St. Bernard School has been not only teaching students in the South Hills a competitive academic curriculum thoroughly based in the Catholic faith, it's been preparing students for life.



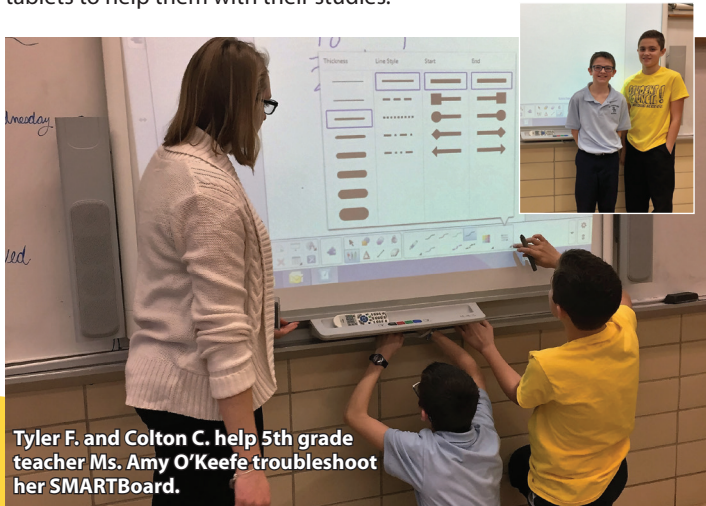
St. Bernard students Paige and Valencia preparing for an upcoming project.

With academic results that put it on the same footing as public schools, parents who desire their children to become lifelong learners as well as devout practitioners of the faith trust St. Bernard School with their children from kindergarten through eighth grade. And while you may imagine classrooms of uniformed children taught by stern nuns when you think of Catholic schools, the modern Catholic classroom couldn't be further from those tired stereotypes.

St. Bernard's Technology Coordinator Diane Veri, for

example, came to St. Bernard's from the private sector where she was teaching business professionals the ins and outs of the hardware and software they needed on a daily basis. Today, she oversees two computer labs, all of the school's Chromebooks that are issued to students, and started the STAR program, which has seen hundreds of students getting more involved with computers and technology in the 15 years since its inception.

STAR stands for "Student Technology Assistance Resource," and STAR students are technology troubleshooters within the school. In addition to Chromebooks for students, classrooms at St. Bernard all have smart boards and projectors – and students in grades 1-3 are slated to get tablets to help them with their studies.



Tyler F. and Colton C. help 5th grade teacher Ms. Amy O'Keefe troubleshoot her SMARTBoard.



Star Team Captains John Paul and Brendan replace a bad cooling fan in a teacher's computer.

"In the beginning, STAR was more of an A/V resource. Today, we have well over 250 computers here and being a private school means you need to take care of and maintain what you have, so we are more self-sufficient," Veri said. "I teach them to take the computers apart, clean them inside and out, and put them back together again. Teachers can call on STAR students to troubleshoot because I teach them how to diagnose typical computer problems."

With 10-12 students on her team throughout a typical school year, Veri said that the STAR program alone sparks an interest in students, and sometimes directs their career choices.

"One of my very first STAR team members is now a tech admin for Peters Township School District," she notes. "So there are students who take it full circle, and the best part about technology is that you can take that knowledge into fields like graphic design, game programming and coding. I'd like to think that what we've been doing with the STAR program is 'STEM' before STEM."

The technology at St. Bernard School is just one facet of the many different ways it helps prepare students for today's modern world within a traditional Catholic education, ensuring that students are every bit as prepared for college as their public school peers.

For more information on St. Bernard School and everything it has to offer, go to the website at stbschool.net online, or call at 412.341.5444. The school is located in the heart of the South Hills at 401 Washington Road, 15216.



Students gather for a Finch robot competition in Mrs. Veri's Instructional Technology Class.