



TRUST AND VALUE...AND VALUES

Times are tough. Who can you trust? The guys on Wall Street who came up with derivatives? Ummm . . . maybe . . . not. GM? Ummm . . . jury's out. The feds busily doling out \$700 billion hot off the government presses? No comment.

Actually, "the survey says" that there are organizations that people do trust, especially when times are tough. What are those organizations? NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and not-for-profit institutions. Why do they trust them? These organizations are altruistic. They have clearly stated and well-focused missions. They have non-duplicitous agendas. They have no bloated bureaucratic structures. They have the metrics to prove their effectiveness. They do good for society. Sounds like St. Mary's to me.

As we head into a new year when we are all watching how we spend our dollars, it's nice to know what St. Mary's is doing for its students and for its families and for society.

What do you get for your investment at St. Mary's?

Let's start with an actual 180-day school year with serious classes, six hours of instruction everyday, and just a single half-day, on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. This is opposed to Oregon's shortest school year in the USA (and one of the shortest school years in the civilized world) with numerous half-days and early release days – a catastrophic short-changing of our children and a result of governmental and educational bureaucracies getting together to mismanage a once decent system.

What else do you get at St. Mary's?

How about 17 AP courses and the only school in the region to offer four foreign languages, including Chinese, and take them up to the AP level?

How about teachers with humane numbers of students to teach so that they have the time to work one-on-one with them and make sure they are learning? St. Mary's teachers have on the average 85 students versus the 160 to 200 students public school teachers have.

How about an everyday focus on morality, spirituality, community service, and the common good?

How about an organizational structure that directs the school's resources wisely, doesn't waste time and money, and one in which all administrators teach classes, are easily approachable, and respond quickly and openly to questions and concerns?

How about proven metrics? St. Mary's actually tracks its alumni and knows that 86% of them complete their college educations, earn degrees, and enjoy success in life. St. Mary's students far outpace local, state, national, and international averages on valid tests: the IOWA, PSAT, SAT, AP Exams, and the ISA.

How about timeless values and the very best of a traditional curriculum –along with cutting edge programs such as Mandarin and 3D Studio Max, and interesting electives such as Entrepreneurial Leadership, Aikido and many others?

Yes, times are tough and one must invest wisely. We who work and teach and coach here at St. Mary's are fully invested in the success of our students. And our families can make no better investment than to give their children access to the excellence found at our school. This is a smart investment that will yield huge dividends in the bright and happy future.