

# Why Choose a Preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade School

**Numerous national studies show the advantages of PS-8 for students at all grade levels.** The continuity of teachers, classmates, programs and expectations appears to enhance academic, social and emotional development for students leading to greater academic achievement and improved self-esteem and confidence<sup>1</sup>.



**Carefully designed buddy programs between different grade levels have positive effects on both the younger and the older students.** Working as a team on school and community service projects and creating a personal connection between an older and younger student provides a positive role model for younger children while encouraging empathy in the older students.

**Children don't grow up too fast.** St. Mary's elementary and middle school environment allows students to experience age appropriate activities and events, without the influence and pressure of older students. Sixth, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not "caught in the middle" but take on the leadership role of "seniors." At the same time they can be themselves, often remaining "younger" a bit longer and not as directly influenced by the social pressures common in high school. Furthermore, our emerging adolescents are given the nurturing and age-appropriate support they need for a healthy, confident transition to the high school years.



**By 8th grade, you know your child better as a learner and a person.** In the elementary and middle school years, your student's academic strengths, interests, learning styles and gifts become defined and social-emotional strengths are clearer. These individual characteristics become apparent during pre-adolescence. There are excellent high school choices available in Edmond and the greater OKC area – each with their own strengths and areas of focus. By the time your child is in 8<sup>th</sup>, the best "match" for high school is much easier to determine.

**You child has many leadership and activity opportunities.** The oldest students on any campus assume the mantle of leadership and act as role models for the entire student body. The positive achievements of early adolescents are recognized as culminating events and traditions at St. Mary's.

**As an 8th grader, your child is more involved in choosing the high school that is right for him/her.** During the early childhood years, you, as parents, make the school decisions. A family choice, involving your eighth grader along with the support of the school, is a satisfying and personalized way to choose a high school. In turn, this experience better prepares students for making college choices. St. Mary's students are sought after as high school freshman because they are well-prepared, self-assured, well-rounded and strong moral citizens.



**A change at 9th is good.** Keeping children in a consistent and familial educational environment through the elementary and middle school years is ideal, before allowing them the freedom of a change of venue, new friends and new challenges



for high school. Since St. Mary's ends at 8<sup>th</sup> grade, all of our graduates will leave together offering support to one another. At 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students are eager to experience new friendships and challenges that support their individual interests before college, and are well prepared to make a smooth and confident transition into high school.

**The "St. Mary's Connection" lasts a lifetime.** Students experiencing St. Mary's throughout the middle school years have values and friendships that will define and benefit them throughout their lives.

<sup>1</sup> Rand Study 2006 and National Middle School Association Study