

# St. Mary Catholic School in Mayville Adding Fifth Grade, Expanding to Lomira



**St. Mary in Lomira will be the new home for next year's fourth and fifth grade classes from St. Mary in Mayville.**

SUBMITTED

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As the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) continues to receive a lot of attention, St. Mary Catholic School in Mayville demonstrates the opportunities the program is helping to provide as they announce the addition of fifth grade in the 2026-2027 school year and sixth grade in 2027-2028.

Over the years, with Principal Mary Yauck's dedication and perseverance, enrollment has continued to grow. This year, St. Mary's has 75 students and anticipates over 90 next year. As a result, third grade was added, then fourth, and now fifth.

However, the original goal was not just to continue adding grades, but to expand the school building itself to provide a Catholic education through eighth grade and grow the childcare. "It's still a dream of ours, there's no doubt about it, to have a Catholic school through eighth grade, centrally located, to serve our community and the surrounding communities, but we

have to get pretty creative about fundraising and strategic planning before that happens," Yauck admitted.

Yauck added, "The time for expansion is now based on parent wishes and support, the growing enrollment, and the inability to offer Catholic education to our community after fourth grade."

The school and parish worked diligently to find a way to meet the demand driven by the parents desiring to keep their children at St. Mary's.

It was Father Nathaniel Miniatt who considered all the existing buildings now available for use, thanks to the establishment of the Dodge East territory in June 2024, a community of parishes (St. Mary, Mayville; St. Andrew; St. Theresa; St. Mary, Lomira; Sacred Heart; and Sons of Zebedee, SS. James and John) served by Miniatt, Father Mark Brandl, and Father Zachary Galante. He recommended the school building in Lomira, which has been closed since 2010 but has been maintained and utilized for other purposes.

"We couldn't wait any longer. So we had to figure out how we're going to make this happen," said Yauck. "There couldn't be a better alternative to being able to add on here and waiting than to utilize the building in Lomira. It is beautiful, big, and will meet all our needs for a middle school. I got the same feeling walking into the Lomira school as I did when I first walked into the Mayville school; I'm home."

The current third and fourth grade students will be the first fourth and fifth grade students to occupy the school in Lomira next year.

There will be two full-time teachers working side by side to meet the needs of each grade. As of right now, the current fourth-grade teacher, Alexia Weber, is committed to teaching again next year, so a fifth-grade teacher will need to be hired. There will be a secretary working in Lomira, as well.

"The safety of the kids is huge," added Yauck. "So, we are installing a new security system with locked entryways, cameras, and PA system," Yauck explained. The system will allow for communication between both buildings in real time. In addition to safety, things like busing and hot lunch will also be provided.

The schedule for the week will be unique as students will attend school in Lomira Monday-Thursday, then rejoin the rest of the school in Mayville on Fridays in order to attend Mass, participate in specials like music and art, and have a day connecting with the other students. "I don't want it to feel as if it's two separate entities, it's still St. Mary's...I just don't want that separation feel," said Yauck. "I want it to continue to have that family atmosphere and that family feel, so that's what we're going to do."

"There are so many options to make this work, to watch it grow, and to make it... what is needed in the community," Yauck said. "This is a project that, because of how strongly I'm committed to Catholic education, I want to see it through, start to finish, whatever that may be, however long that may take."

Yauck continued, "The long-range goal of having a middle school through eighth grade that would be in our community would not even be a thought...If we did not have the tremendous support from our parents, the parish, and then the choice program (WPCP), which was

adopted four years ago.”

“The funding that private schools are now receiving is allowing us to increase the quality of education that our kids are receiving,” Yauck stated.

It has been the increase in the quality of the education St. Mary’s is providing and the ability to retain outstanding teachers that has inspired families to request the addition of more grades through middle school.

The growing funding has also allowed for an increase in teachers’ salaries, which in turn increases retention and allows them to remain competitive with the quality of staff they can provide.

“All of our teachers are licensed or in the process of,” Yauck shared. “If not currently, they at least have a bachelor’s, and are going through a development plan that will allow licensure through DPI and meet all requirements of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

The ability to provide quality tools, technology, and more to meet the educational needs of the students has increased, as well.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has strict requirements for its schools to hold them accountable in providing an excellent Catholic education to all students. The accreditation process is what holds them accountable.

“That accreditation cycle holds us responsible for maintaining that quality education,” explained Yauck. “If we fall below any of the benchmarks or standards within any of those domains, we are required to create goals and review those goals annually to make sure that we achieve and reach those benchmarks, so that our children are across-the-board, across the archdiocese, receiving an education that we can all be proud of.”

The school is also mandated to provide information on the current curriculum.

An assessment process is required by the state of Wisconsin and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. “Our students participate in i-Ready testing three times a year. We do use that to assess our students, find out where they’re at and create our educational goals based on outcomes,” Yauck said.

“The support that we get from our parents, parish, and choice (WPCP) is the reason that we are able to expand and have this dream of continuing education, Catholic education through eighth grade,” Yauck concluded. “It’s exciting!”

For families interested in having their children join the fourth or fifth grade classes next year or learning more about St. Mary Catholic School, there will be an open house at St. Mary’s in Lomira on Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 4-6 p.m., where you can tour the building, meet the staff, and ask any questions.