

THE FIFTH DECADE: 2005–2015

Staff moved into the PAC in the spring and summer of 2005, setting up their classrooms.

On April 21, the community was saddened to hear of the death of Jack Devlin in the USA. From 1964–1989, he provided leadership and direction for the school, serving on the Board and establishing, with Sr. Maeve Shannon, FCJ, the High School. Praise from throughout the community, both in Brussels and from alumni everywhere, honored his memory.

In May 2005, St. John's and ISB co-hosted the baseball ISST; the lions finished second.

There were 67 graduates in the Class of 2005 representing 32 nationalities. Three countries were represented for the first time—Angola, Sri Lanka and Slovakia. The total number of graduates stood at 1,346. The Booster Program sponsored a successful golf tournament that raised over €20,000. At the annual staff farewell in June, Paolo Vivona, a concierge for 25 years, retired, as did Ms. Sandra Carruthers, Ms. Babs Wellborn and Sr. Beatrice Molyneux, FCJ, whose departure was mentioned in the previous decade of history. Ms. Peg Hickey and Mme. Nadine Tyteca were recognized for 35 years of service to St. John's.

On Friday, September 16, 2005, the school hosted a Grand Opening for the PAC. Mayor Kubla, Dr. Doenges and Sr. Barbara officiated at the ribbon-cutting; over 400 guests attended. A brief show by ballerinas and the choir was followed by a champagne reception in the foyer; everyone was free to walk about the building to see all its features. The previous cafeteria had been integrated into PAC as a prop, costume and scene construction and storage site. There was also a new underground car park and a pedestrian bridge linking the PAC to the main building. It was also understood that it would offer an attractive venue for "outside" groups to rent. Two months later, over Thanksgiving weekend, the first production, *The Sound of Music*, was staged in the Cotsakos Family Theater. It was a stunning success, with all three performances sold out. It also reminded everyone of the FCJ legacy of St. John's.

The US government funded several security-related projects at the school—the interior of all exterior windows were coated with a shatter-resistant substance; a public address system was installed throughout the school. The St. John's International Foundation awarded the school a grant for \$250,000 toward the PLUS 40 Campaign.

In sports, the boys varsity volleyball team won the gold medal at the ISST, which St. John's hosted in November. It had won the silver for three of the past four years. Josh Davis (2005) became the first Division I athletic scholarship recipient in the school's history when he accepted an offer from Yale University.

Because of the PAC, the school was able to host two major events in the spring of 2006—in March, the ECIS Early Childhood Conference was here, with over 400 educators from around the world attending seminars. A month later, we hosted the Honor Band and Honor Choir workshops and concert, with more than 300 students and teachers involved and a capacity audience for the culminating concert.

Also in March 2006, in Paris at the boys varsity basketball ISST, St. John's consecutive victory streak of 87 games ended with a loss to Paris. The lions finished in third place.

The Class of '96 held a 10-year reunion May 27 on the campus and was impressed with the campus improvements. There were 71 students in the graduating class of 2006, bringing



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the total to 1,417. Of these 71, 43 earned the IB diploma. One student scored a 45, the maximum possible; this was the second time in the school's history this had occurred—the first was in '98. In May, at the girls Div. II softball ISST at Hillingdon, the St. John's girls won top honors.

In June 2006, Eric Wouters, Peg Hickey, Nina Timar, Jacques Poulin, Carolyn Folland and Ghislaine Querut retired with a combined 175 years of service to St. John's. Erik Wouters, Therese Diegenant, Micheline Berger and Michele Polet were recognized for 40 years of service to the school. Barbara Devlin, widow of the late Jack Devlin, visited the school and attended Family Day, a fund raising project that Jack had started.

During the 2005–2006 school year, the school conducted a strategic planning process that included surveys, focus groups, meetings and weekend retreats. It resulted in the Advisory Board's adoption of a Strategic Plan to guide the school in the next decade. The mission and philosophy were reviewed and slightly modified to reconfirm the intentions of the FCJ.

School year 2006–2007 saw implementation of the Strategic Plan. A decision was taken to sell the villa, which housed the administrative and business offices, and relocate them to the main campus. In February 2007, the business office moved to #57 Champs du Roussart. Admissions and the director/secretary moved to the PAC in March in newly created offices. A marketing director was hired and a new staff team—the Community Relations Office—consisting of Admissions, Alumni and Development, and Marketing—came into being.

The Web site was “outsourced” and revamped. A Development Committee was formed to plan an Annual Fund for the next school year.

In November 2006, the school hosted the American Women's Club annual Christmas Bazaar, which attracted hundreds of visitors to the campus for a weekend of shopping. On May 26, 2007, the Class of 1997 held a 10-year reunion on campus. On June 1, the day before graduation, the Class of 1987 held its 20th anniversary reunion on campus. On August 31 and September 1, the Class of 1990 held a reunion on campus.

There were 71 students in the graduating class of 2007, bringing the total to 1,488 graduates. Of these, 45 earned the IB diploma; the average score was 31, and one student earned the top possible score of 45, the third time this had occurred in the school's history. In June, Branán Gary retired from St. John's after 34 years of service; Eric Johnson retired after 17 years of service. Marie-Claire De Cock was recognized for 35 years of service.

In the summer of 2007, the US Embassy approved a grant request from the school to fund the construction of a perimeter fence around the school, the installation of heavy-duty sliding gates and the installation of 16 security cameras. Construction began in October 2007 and was completed in December. The St. John's community was also saddened to hear of the death of Brother Timothy McNary FSB in July in Tennessee. Br. Timothy served on the staff from '73–'76 as the first guidance counselor and later as High School principal.

In October, the director announced that the High School principal, Dr. Nick Miller, and his wife Alison, an Elementary School teacher, would be leaving the school during the Christmas holidays to return to Hong Kong. An interim principal, Dr. Marjan Blok, who was serving on the High School staff, was appointed. In November, Dr. Joseph Doenges, the director, announced that he and his wife Martha, a Middle School teacher, would be retiring at the end of the school year in June 2008 and returning to the United States. ECIS was the consulting firm hired to conduct the recruiting and vetting process for his replacement.

In March 2008, Dr. Blok was appointed High School principal for the next academic year, no longer an “interim” appointment.

In September 2007, the Booster Program sponsored a fund raising golf tournament that raised €12,000. In November 2007, the American Women's Club again conducted its annual Christmas Bazaar on the campus. At the ISST for girls varsity soccer in Vienna, St. John's placed first in its division; girls volleyball placed second; boys soccer placed third; and varsity girls cross-country placed third.

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During the November 2007 break, the Reception office moved from its location at the front of the school—where it had been since the school was built—to a new office in the Performing Arts Center. The creation of this office was funded by the St. John's International Foundation. It also funded the purchase of a new "mixing" board for the theater. Enrollment stood around 900 for most of the first semester, following increased marketing of the school.

In November 2007, Ms. Judith Hoskins, who had been Admissions and Marketing director, was assigned to be the assistant alumni director with primary responsibilities for alumni activities in Benelux. To replace her, the office of Community Relations added two part time staffers to assist with the admissions process. The alumni and development director position was adjusted to one of an independent consultancy whose effort would focus more on US alumni and would be based in the United States. During the Easter break, the first week of April, the house at #55 Champs du Roussart was demolished.

In February 2008, the PTP sponsored a fund raiser, Carnival Gala, at the Sheraton Hotel in Brussels. Approximately €10,000 was raised. A week later, the school hosted the MS/HS Honor Orchestra in the PAC, with over 120 students participating from around the world. Alumni reunions were held in Boca Raton and in Las Vegas that same month. In March 2008, the annual Tom O'Donnell Indoor Soccer Tournament occurred, a fund raiser for cancer research, followed by a mini-reunion. A week later, at the start of the Easter break, the Class of 1998 held a reunion on the campus.

In sports, the new St. John's wrestling team had two members win gold awards at the European Championships for their 32-0 seasons. A St. John's rugby team also premiered; the junior swim team won third place in its tournament, while boys varsity basketball placed second in Division I ISST in Athens. Both JV basketball teams finished first in the JV tournament.

By April 2008, the governing structure of the school had been revised to comply with appropriate statutes under Belgian law regarding ASBLs. The new configuration included the General Assembly of the ASBL, consisting of FCJ sisters and parents and former parents. It meets twice a year and has overall responsibility for governing the ASBL, the legal entity that represents St. John's in Belgium. All General Assembly members must be approved by the FCJ. In addition, there is a Board of Directors selected by the General Assembly that acts on behalf of the General Assembly. It also consists of FCJ sisters and parents—at least half of the Board of Directors must be FCJs or individuals representing FCJs. The Board of Directors appoints an Executive Committee to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school. Also in April, enrollment stood at 922 students. On April 23, the Executive Committee met with staff and parents in separate sessions to answer questions on a variety of issues related to policies, budget, remuneration and governance. At the meeting, it was announced that a permanent new director had not been found; an interim director, Dr. Tom Walters, would be appointed for the 2008–2009 school year, and the search would continue for a qualified, permanent director. The PTA changed its name to the Parent Teacher Program.

At the spring ISSTs, St. John's won gold in track and field for the first time. Girls softball also won first place in its division. St. John's hosted the golf ISST. On May 24, the class of 1993 held its 15th anniversary reunion on the campus (breakfast and campus tour).

On June 7, 2008, 75 seniors from 30 countries and 7 religions graduated. The total number of graduates was now 1,563. It was the largest graduating class to date. Four countries were represented for the first time—Samoa, Uruguay, Guatemala and Eritrea. The IB results included 47 students earning the full diploma; the highest score was 44, with the average score being 32. For the first time, the graduation speaker was a St. John's graduate himself—Yazan Kopty (2002)—who had been the student speaker and Student of the Year when he graduated. He was also the student speaker when he graduated from Duke University in 2006. He was also the youngest graduation speaker.

On June 15, the PTP hosted a farewell picnic for Dr. and Mrs. Doenges, attended by several hundred parents, staff and students.

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At the annual staff farewell on June 20, 2008, Pauline Dicken (28 years service), Therese Diegenant (42 years), Martha Doenges (9 years), Joe Doenges (10 years), Judith Hoskins (39 years) and Michele Polet (42 years) retired. Marc Vansteenbeeck and Pat Dickinson were honored for 25 years of service.

In the summer of 2008, C-level of the Elementary School was renovated, resulting in a new center hallway, office layout, classrooms and an expansion of the Elementary School library and an incorporation of the computer lab with the library. Technology was enhanced with the installation of over a dozen ceiling-mounted projectors in various classrooms; Activ boards, white boards, as well as new printers and software also were added.

The school year 2008–09 brought an historic win when the track and field team won not only the team ISST gold, but also both boys and girls first places.

The annual gala was held at the Chateau de la Hulpe and raised nearly €20,000 that was divided among the parent groups for assigned projects.

Adrian Bowcher, formerly financial director at TASIS England, was appointed as the new business manager when Rick Katherman retires due to health problems. He unexpectedly passes away in October 2008 after complications following surgery.

Enrollment remained around 930 students throughout the year.

Retirees that year were Jack Lyons and Branan Gary.

In 2009–2010, Dr. Walters continued as interim director for one more year, with Dr. Thomas Hawkins being announced as the new director from summer 2010. Dr. Hawkins spent eight years at the International School of Beijing.

The annual Gala was held at the beautiful Palais de Plume and raised more than €20,000 for the refurbishment of the MS/HS library.

The High School play was *West Side Story* and sold out its three performances.

Wi-Fi access points were installed throughout the campus to allow wireless access for students and staff members.

The tennis team won the ISST tournament and was promoted to Division 1.

Three long-time staff members retired: Middle School principal Mandy Macleod, High School English teacher Patrick Tobin and resource manager Mary Macgowan. A party was held for each retiree with a special surprise speaker. For Mrs. Macleod, the speaker was Marilyn Harper, a former St. John's staff member. For Mrs. McGowan it was Eric Johnson, who retired from St. John's only a few years before, who reminisced about their years together. Former parent and International Olympic Committee member Mr. Hein Verbruggen flew in to speak at Mr. Tobin's retirement.

Enrollment was around 900 throughout the year. Students of several new nationalities joined the school, bringing the total number of countries to 62.

A farewell concert for Dr. Walters was held for parents and staff, with a performance by High School student and outstanding violinist Jae-Eun Lee.

In 2010–2011, Mr. Ben Kestner took over as Middle School principal, he held the same position at Brandenburg International School in Berlin.

The teaching staff was increased in Middle and High School to decrease class sizes and adjust to the change in demographics. Three new classrooms were created in Middle School and High School added two classrooms.

The boys soccer team won the ISST and was promoted to Div 1, which made St. John's the only international school in Belgium to have all its sports teams in Division 1.

The High School musical *Grease* sold out all four performances. The Gala was held at the Concert Noble in Brussels and raised €20,000 for the PAC projector and the Learning Commons.

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Alumni Harriet Burgess and Anastasia Psaltopoulos were hired as receptionist and purchasing officer respectively.

A focus on bringing state-of-the-art technology into the classrooms brought netbooks for staff and students.

Enrollment was stable around 900 throughout the year.

Dr. Marjan Blok was appointed deputy director for the 2011–2012 school year, and a new High School principal was appointed. A new strategic plan was developed for the next five years.

The year 2010–2011 began with a new Director, Dr Tom Hawkins, a new Middle School Principal, Ben Kestner, and the decision to have a new position of Deputy Director to begin in the year 2011–2012. This position will be filled by Dr Marjan Blok, presently High School Principal and a new High School Principal will be recruited.

The new Director made plans for new programs, enhancing and developing a clear, consistent school-wide curriculum and developing promoting best teaching practices through staff development.

A major work of this year was to prepare a strategic plan for the school. The strategic planning involved the entire St. John's community. The plan, to be implemented beginning 2011, was drafted by a task force of 22 and the outcome focused on 6 strategic areas—teaching and learning, students, staff, organization and management, marketing and communications and finance. Each area was defined by goals and strategies.

In Elementary School, the curriculum development continued with focus on the areas of music, art and physical education, and detailed preparation was completed for the introduction of a Dual Language program to begin in Pre-Kindergarten in September 2011.

In Middle School, because of the numbers enrolled, 10 new teachers began and 2 new language rooms and a new science lab were created to accommodate this increase. Additionally, staffing in Support Services was also increased. Technology development saw all 7th and 8th graders having one-to-one netbooks and a new management information system installed for staff. In curriculum development, current practices were reviewed with focus on key competencies needed for a 21st century world. These competencies are: Self-assessor, Creator, Contributor, Communicator, Collaborator, Explorer and Thinker, and they will provide the framework for development of the curriculum in Middle School.

High School opened with a record enrollment of 333 and, as in Middle School, additional staff was hired to cater for the increased numbers. The pre-IB program was successfully implemented and an SAT prep unit was introduced for 10th grade. Additionally, several new subjects were offered: Environmental Studies at IB level and Dance, Graphic Design and Ceramics as electives.

For the students, highlights included excellent IB and AP results, two students reaching the final of the Belgian "Math Olympiad," High School students taking part in ULB math challenge and achieving the first three places in the Chemistry Challenge of the Belgian Chapter of the Royal Society of Chemistry. The boys Soccer and Track and Field secured first places in the ISSTs.

Information technology, under the direction of IT manager Jean-Louis Cornez and his team, made great strides in the year 2010–2011. Teachers already had netbooks, and this scheme was extended for all 7th, 8th, 11th and 12th grade students. Netbooks carts were also made available for 6th grade students, and in January 2011, netbooks were given to 9th and 10th grade students. State-of-the-art interactive boards were installed in classrooms and a new MIS system—Blackbaud's Education Edge—was adopted and implemented.

Being accredited by the Council of International School and Middle States Association requires that St. John's has to undergo an evaluation every 10 years, and the preparation for this time consuming task began in April 2011 to continue in the next school year.

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An important aspect of St. John's is the number and variety of service projects the students are involved in, and these continued successfully across the school.

On a sad note, Brother Michael Corry, who was High School Principal from 1976–1984, passed away in March 2011.

This year closed with bidding farewell to those staff members who were moving on and celebrating retirements, including three long-time teachers: Andre Turner, Micheline Berger and Françoise Peres.

Themed "Making an Impact," the school year 2011–2012 saw the implementation of the strategic plan which had been completed last year. The focus for this year was teaching and learning to develop curriculum, instruction and learning, and the year began with 885 students enrolled.

Dr Marjan Blok began in her new role as Deputy Director taking responsibility for implementing the strategic plan goals on curriculum, as well as leading the work on accreditation school-wide. Mrs Debbie Brooks, formerly Secondary Principal in the International School of Helsinki, was appointed High School Principal.

The re-accreditation process is both lengthy and time-consuming as well as being beneficial to the school, and when re-authorization was granted following the team visit and the written report, there was good cause for celebration.

The new Board Governance Structure was put in place this year with core committees drawn from all areas of the school community. Additionally, a campus master plan was developed to outline what would be possible for the school in years to come.

In Elementary School, language acquisition was the focus for the year. The dual language program began as planned in Pre-Kindergarten and proved so popular that it will be expanded by having a second class in Pre-Kindergarten next year and extended to Kindergarten, too.

Middle School opened with a record number of students. The key competencies initiated last year continued to provide the curriculum framework with plans made to add more course choices for next year. Big Ideas Week was introduced, giving the students opportunity, in teams, to explore cross-curricular connection. All 6th graders, like 7th and 8th graders, now have netbooks.

High School enrollment was 321 this year, and 58 seniors took the full IB diploma. With a pass rate of 96.6 percent, St. John's far exceeds the world average pass rate. For the 46 students who took AP exams, results were equally impressive.

In the Middle School/High School library, there was a new full-time Information Literacy Specialist as well as a full-time head of Library and Information Services.

Highlights for the students were the hosting of ISST girls' basketball and the tennis, and over the year, St. John's was the second most successful ISST school. St. John's also gained second place in the 11th Annual international Forum, the theme being Development and Corruption. The Economics team participated in the Generation Euro Students and was one of only six teams to make it to the final round, taking second place overall. The High School musical, *Fame*, was a great success, as always.

This year, St. John's hosted the AMIS international Honor Orchestra and Senior Choir festival.

There are now more than 200 laptops in school, numerous interactive whiteboards, the new Hub offering information to students and parents, a new Web site, online admissions and re-enrollment, to name some of the technologies available. An additional staff member was therefore hired for IT. In the Business office, a new Head of Accounting and a new Head of Human Resources were hired.

TEDx Kids came to St. John's again this year, as did the cancer fund raiser Relay for Life. Several of the Elementary School teachers became published authors writing 9 of the 18 Springboard books.

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During this year, Sandra McCordall, Joy Gillman, Jacques Van Heiningen and Karen Roche, all long time faculty members, retired.

After a successful 2011–2012 academic year, we completed that year receiving the Council of International Schools and Middle States Association accreditation letters, giving the school the expected full re-accreditation. Additionally, the school was awarded re-accreditation from the International Baccalaureate Organization for the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Diploma Program (IB). Some of the suggestions from the accreditation were included in the plans for the year as was the continuing work with Sister Margarita Byron and the Board on the new governance Charter and the implementation of the goals of the Strategic plan. To commemorate Marie Madeleine d'Houët, the foundress of FCJ, several St. John's administration and 50 FCJ sisters met with Houët family members to place her remains in a permanent resting place at Eglise St. Dominique in Paris.

In Elementary School, curriculum development continued with a focus on Math and Science. The Dual Language program begun in Pre-Kindergarten in 2010–2011, extended to Kindergarten in 2011–2012 and this year in 2012–2013, continued into 1st grade. There were also two projects planned and prepared to offer both a program for those children age 2½ and a *garderie* for childcare for before and after school. These would be ready for introduction in 2013.

In Middle School, the new curriculum choices of Robotics, Media, Technology and Global Citizenship were offered to give students new experiences and more choice of subjects.

The Arts and Sports programs continued to flourish with an outstanding production of *Bugsy Malone* as well as participation in the High School production of *13*. Additionally, the Middle School Girls Honor Choir Festival was hosted in St. John's, making optimum use of the theater's facilities and equipment. In Sports, many students participated and competed successfully in a variety of disciplines. TEDx Kids was also hosted in school, giving the Middle School students the opportunity to put to use skills learned in the new Media course.

In High School, the year began with 322 students. All 75 12th graders met the required High School graduation criteria. Of the 63 students who took the IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma, 63 scored more than 40 out of a possible 45. 30 percent of our students gained a Bi-lingual IB Diploma. 49 students from grades 10, 11 and 12 took the AP (Advanced Placement) exams, and of these, 35 percent scored a perfect 5. For the first time the DELF (Diplome d'études en langue française) was offered to determine the progress of the students in French. 35 students took the test and all passed.

The High School curriculum is now articulated centrally. The electronic grading system was extended, and parents and students can now track progress and grades in each subject. The Advisory Program was enhanced and extended. At the one-day United Nations learning simulation in Leiden, nine students prepared to represent Zambia at the Model United Nations in the Hague. Additionally, as one of 5 invited schools, St. John's sent a team of 12 student representatives as Ministers of Denmark, Norway and Germany to take part in the Model Nato. St. John's Economics team took part in the Generation Euro Students Award, a competition about monetary policy. This was organized for the first time last year by the European Central Bank and Euro area national banks. 1,800 students participate and St. John's bettered their second place win last year by winning the competition this year.

At the fall ISSTs (International Schools Sports Tournament), the girls volleyball team won bronze, the varsity boys won silver and the boys volleyball team won the Division 1 championship. At the winter ISSTs, JV girls swim team were third, and at the spring championships, the baseball team won silver, the softball team won silver, JV girls won gold in track and field, and in tennis the Tewes-McCoy brothers won gold and in mixed doubles and girls singles silvers were won.

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The Middle School ISTA (International Schools Theatre Association) festival was in London, and the High School Honor Orchestra festival was in Shanghai, the High School Honor Vocal Jazz was in Kuala Lumpur and the High School Honor Women's Choir was in Dubai.

The Greene Gallery was inaugurated this year.

Long-term staff member Michele Stacquet retired this year.

2013–2014

This year opened with 170 new students being welcomed to school. Doug Lowney began as Middle School Principal, replacing Ben Kestner who left for the US with his family at the end of last year. The focus for the year was to continue implementing the goals of the strategic plan, as well as plan the events which would celebrate the 50th anniversary of the school next year. There was also a new Business Manager hired, Maurizio Menache. The property adjoining the school, 90 Drève Richelle, was incorporated into the Campus Master Plan and the renovation of the sports locker rooms was completed.

In Elementary School, curriculum review continued as did the extension of the Dual Language program. As of next year, this means that the Dual Language program will be offered from pre-kindergarten through Grade 2. Timbertots began as planned, taking in two and a half year olds for the first time.

In Middle School as mentioned, Doug Lowney began as Principal.

In High School, IB success continued with 96% pass rate and AP exam results were similarly high. St. John's hosted the Senior Math competition with 180 students in attendance. Two of St. John's students won the gold and bronze medals. The first ever Theory of Knowledge Encounter for International School students was hosted by St. John's this year. Five High School students were awarded the Duke of Edinburgh International Award and five High School students featured in a documentary film about World War I.

At the ISSTs just before the summer of 2013, the softball team and the baseball team won silver medals and the track and field team was 3rd overall with many individual medals won. At the ISSTs in the fall, the cross country team came 2nd in division 1, the boys' soccer team took the silver medal and the girls took bronze.

Once again, school hosted TedxKids and the Relay for Life.

This, the 49th year of St. John's, was a difficult year for the school—not least because of the tragic and very sad passing away of several of the faculty's close family members. We did, however, close the year with everyone bidding a fond farewell and wishing all the best to Johanna Bambridge, Elementary School principal, as she moves to take up a new administrative position in Paris, and Anja Coenen, who retired after spending many years teaching in St. John's.