

# Vegreville Observer

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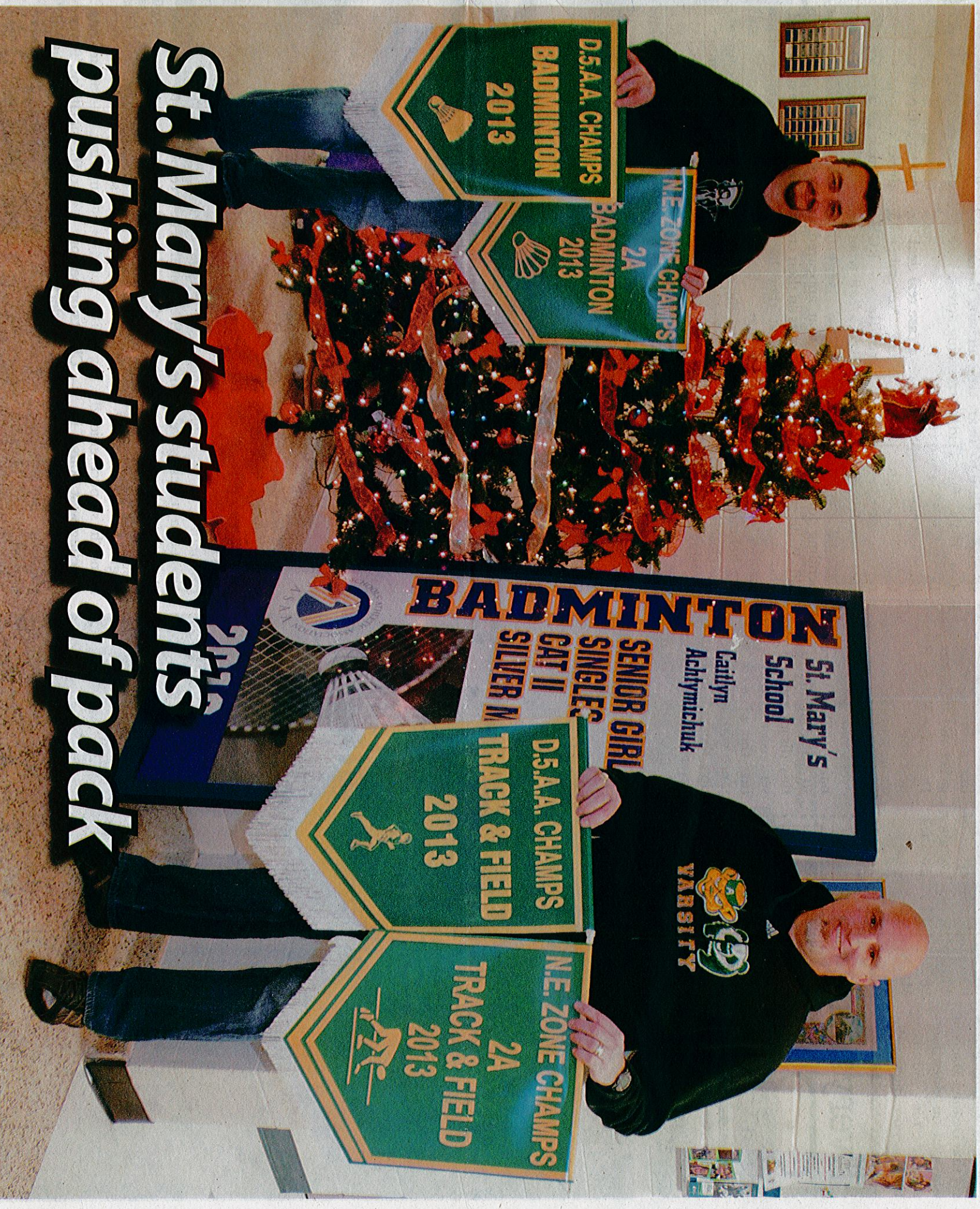
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St. Mary's High School Principal Ed Kucy (right) and track and field coach Chris Manderson hold up this year's haul for both track and field as well as badminton zone and district competitions. All four titles were claimed by the school, and all four titles are repeats. The large framed banner in the center of the photo was earned for the school by Caitlyn Achymichuk, who graduated this summer with a host of scholarships and awards before heading off to university. Kucy recently shared data from Alberta Education that indicates the hard work of students at school is putting them ahead of the provincial averages in many areas, including the transition to post-secondary education after high-school. (Michael Simpson/Photo)

## St. Mary's students pushing ahead of pack

**Michael Simpson**  
*Editor*  
 Strong academics  
 St. Mary's High School Principal Ed Kucy was recently pleased with the results of provincial survey

results that indicate students at the school are pushing ahead of provincial averages in many areas, including following through to post-secondary education after high

school. "I'm extremely proud of our student successes and achievements," Kucy said recently. "We have an incredible staff and school community working together as a team

for student success." According to recently released data from Alberta Education students at St. Mary's are sitting at an 85 per cent completion rate for high school compared

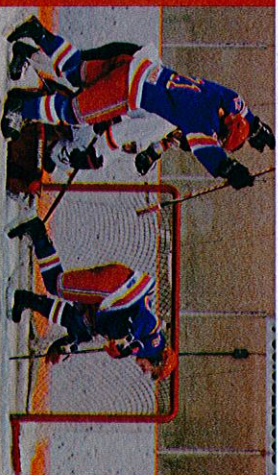
to the rest of the province which is at 74.8 per cent. Nearly three quarters of graduates in the last six years proceeded to post-secondary education compared to just over half throughout the rest of the province. In terms of diploma exams, 83 per cent of the St. Mary's crop are writing four or more compared to 56 per cent

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**Vegreville Emergency Services revives grand ol' Christmas feeling**

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**Rangers have pair of wins against Warriors**

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# St. Mary's students pushing ahead of pack continued continued

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for the rest of the province.

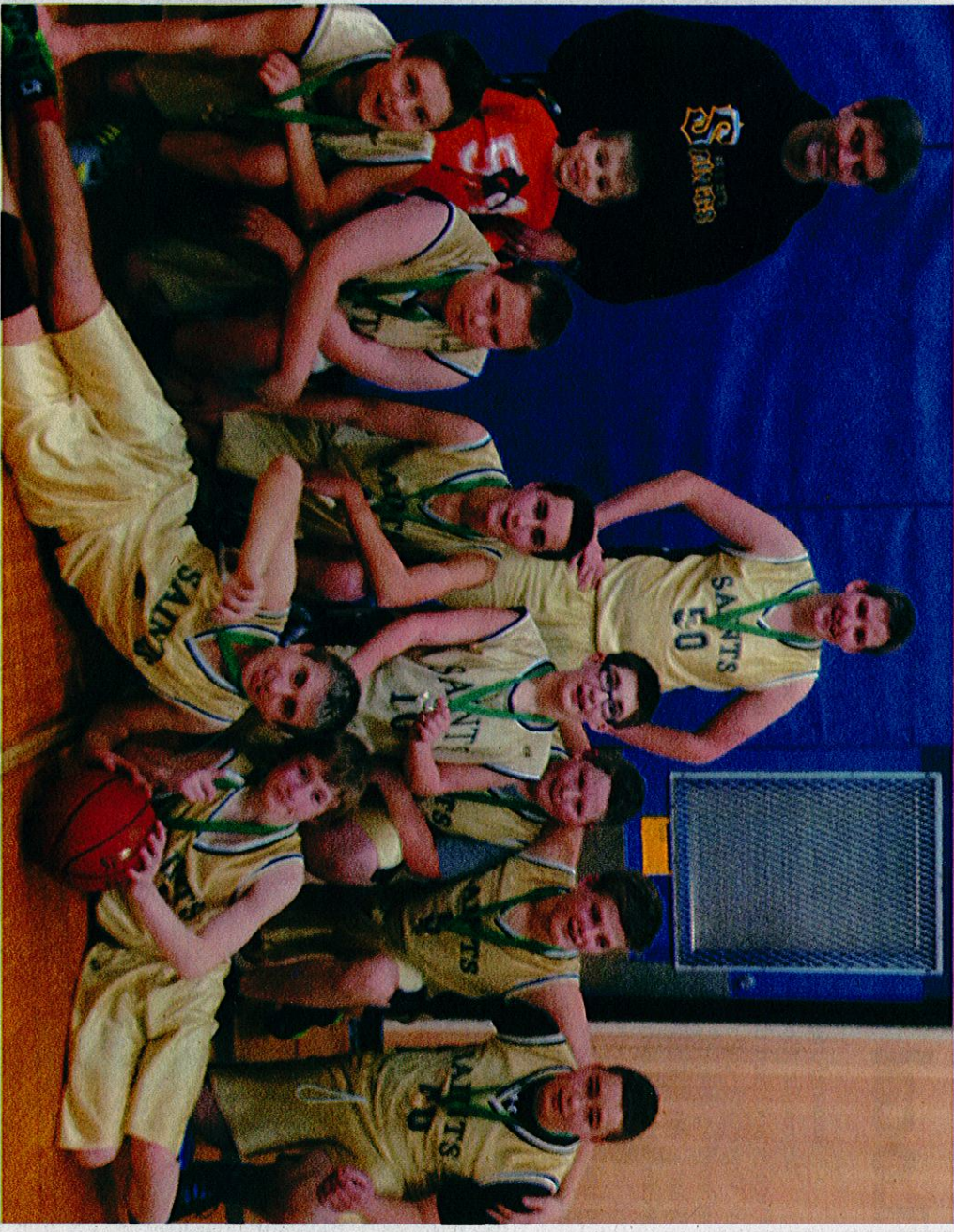
A three-year average survey also indicated that 92 per cent of the St. Mary's community find the school to be a safe and caring environment, Kucy added.

"It's not only academics however," Kucy said. "Student leadership is strong. That starts right in grade 7 where we have a variety of clubs, sports teams and organizations where volunteers and staff work together to make sure students are happy and successful. From there, the feeling of self-confidence leads to a sense of family and community, a sense of responsibility for oneself and others."

Kucy said the extras that the school does help to build that community. Special things like jersey day, the MODEL Project and supporting the snow angels program which recognizes volunteers who clear sidewalks for people who can't clear it themselves. As well, students in high school have entered into a peer mentorship program with students from St. Martin's school where they head over to the elementary school once a week at recess as

part of the "Positive Playground Initiative" that sees the high school students leading activities for the elementary students that helps teach them to prevent conflict and encourages positive play. Competitive athletics

In the athletics department, St. Mary's students proudly clinched their fifth consecutive track and field league championship in a row and their second district championship in the same category at the 2A level. Individual students have also made strong showings at provincials as well, Track and Field Coach Chris Manderson said. Having coached the track and field teams for the past eight years, Manderson has seen an average of four or five students each year competing provincially, and watched them excel. "We've had four provincial banners added to our rafters in the last six years," Manderson said. "When it comes to track, the kids have really bought in. When I started coaching eight years ago we had four or five kids competing. Now we get about 50 or 60 kids each year. There are already two or three kids in the weight-room getting



The St. Mary's Jr. Boys basketball team recently defeated Vegreville Composite High School's Jr. Boys in the gold medal game by a score of 55 to 38 at the EIPS (Elk Island Public School) annual preseason tournament held this past weekend (Dec. 12-14) in Sherwood Park. Other teams that competed were Lamont, Fullertonvale, Fort Christian, and John Paul II. (Photo Submitted)

ready for next spring. The track and field kids work hard and want to succeed; it's a matter of pride for them." In badminton, Coach Jim Salsbury, who is also now the Acting Assistant Principal, has had tremendous success with his students, claiming 10 zone championships in a row, and four consecutive district championships. Another silver medal went to the school this year after Caitlyn Achymichuk had a strong performance in badminton in her final year at St. Mary's before heading off to university this fall.