

# St. Ignatius Loyola Academy opens at new location

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

*elowe@CatholicReview.org*

Twitter: @ReviewLowe

Eighth-graders Jordan Turrentine and Julian Arrington were wide-eyed as they took in their new school building.

"It's amazing," Julian said.

"We have SMART boards (in all classrooms) now," Jordan said. "That can make learning more fun."

Julian and Jordan were two of the 75 students – five more than last year – that St. Ignatius Loyola Academy faculty and staff welcomed for the first day of the 2013-14 school year Sept. 3 at its new location.

The tuition-free Jesuit boys' middle school moved from its Mount Vernon location, adjacent to St. Ignatius Parish in Baltimore, about two miles south to the former Catholic Community School in Federal Hill. That building, which had been vacant since 2009, was renovated for the move.

A few hours into the new school year, the school community gathered for an opening assembly in its new gymnasium.

Father Patrick M. Carrion, pastor of the Catholic Community of South Baltimore, and Jesuit Father William J. Watters, the school's founding president and pastor of St. Ignatius in Baltimore, blessed the school community.

"We pray what was begun then (in August 1993)," Father Watters said, noting the school's 20-year history, "continues to flourish here."

After the assembly, students bounded up the stairs to their burgundy lockers before taking their seats in their classrooms, all of which are brand new.

The building is double the square footage of the school's former location. Narrow stairwells and hallways are a thing of the past, and a bigger campus allows St. Ignatius to accept more students, said John Ciccone, the school's president. The school plans to begin accepting fifth-graders in two or three years.

"As the school has grown the (quality of) education we are giving doesn't match the building we were in," said Malena McLaughlin, a science teacher at St. Ignatius. "It (the new building) gives us more opportunities and it matches the quality of the school we are."

St. Ignatius held a ceremony last October to celebrate the renovation of its new school building.

The \$4 million renovation began late last year and was completed in time for the 2013-14 school year, Ciccone said. Renovations included the installation of an HVAC system, air conditioning and an elevator.

In its new location, students, faculty and staff have gained a gymnasium, library, media center and larger classrooms. Large, new windows allow sunshine to stream through.

McLaughlin, the science teacher, has a larger classroom with more than triple the number of lab tables, among other features.

"There's a lot more we can do because of the size of the building," said McLaughlin, beaming as she showed off her classroom. "When you are in a bright, clean, fresh environment, they (students) are going to want to be in school even more."

"They (students) will be revitalized, they'll be motivated," said James Scott, an eighth-grade math teacher, dean of students and director of admissions. "It will become their building. I think it makes a big difference."

The search for a new building took more than a year and included 45 possible locations, the Catholic Review previously reported.

Ciccone doesn't know what will happen to the former school building, which is owned by the Maryland Province, Society of Jesus.

**By the numbers:**

**1993:** the year St. Ignatius Loyola Academy was established

**98:** the percentage of St. Ignatius students who graduate from high school

**75:** the number of students who currently attend St. Ignatius

**11:** the number of months out of the year St. Ignatius students are in school

**2:** the number of classrooms that remain empty in anticipation of the future fifth grade