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**Sr. Borgia Elementary School: Historical Overview and Educational Vision**

***Introduction:***

 Sr. Borgia Elementary School, a Catholic primary school, was established in August 1978 to address the growing student population of St. Maarten in the late 1970s. Its roots, however, trace back much further, highlighting a rich history of community service and educational transformation.

***Historical Development***

* 1910: The oldest section of the building was added to the existing structures, which previously functioned as a hospital, to accommodate the island's growing population.
* 1916: A cistern was added to the new wing.
* 1935: The hospital moved to Front Street; the building remained vacant until 1940.
* 1940-1945: The building served as barracks for the Civil Guards (*Schutterij*) during World War II.
* 1946: The *Sweet Repose*, a home for the elderly, was established in the building.
* 1965: *Sweet Repose* relocated; the building was remodeled to house two sixth-grade classes of St. Joseph College.
* 1976: Pastoor Nieuwenhuis MAVO, which operated in the building, moved to the new Milton Peters College.
* 1978: The building was converted into the *Old Pondside School*, a Catholic primary school.

***Pioneering Leadership***

* **Mrs. Sylvia Nisbeth-Larmonie** served as the first principal, navigating early challenges such as overcrowded classes and accessibility issues.
* **Mrs. Mavis Brooks-Salmon (1981**) focused on enhancing the school's physical and psychological environment, emphasizing reading and the arts.
* **Mrs. J. Greene (1992**) improved the school's infrastructure, including the gymnasium field and *Multi-Purpose Hall*. Under her leadership, the school introduced annual educational trips abroad for grade 6 (group 8).
* **1995:** Hurricanes Luis and Marilyn destroyed grades 3–6. The school temporarily relocated to St. Joseph School, eventually receiving a brand-new building.
* **1997:** The school returned to its original location.
* **1998**: Official reopening and blessing by Fr. F. Paulino. The Catholic School Board moved its office to the Historical Building.

***Key Initiatives and Programs***

* **Kans Project (1999–2003):** Educational and cultural exchange with Sr. Regina Primary School and *Knotwilg* school (Amsterdam), led by Mr. A. Verloop.
* **2004:** Integration of St. Imelda Kindergarten classes (now Years 1 and 2 of Foundation-Based Education).
* **Professional Development:** Ongoing collaboration with *Stichting Ervaringsgericht Onderwijs Nederland* (2003–2006) and participation in National Catholic Educational Association conferences in the USA.

***Language of Instruction Dutch***

***Class Structure:***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Former Name** |
| 1 | Kindergarten 1 |
| 2 | Kindergarten 2 |
| 3 | Grade 1 |
| 4 | Grade 2 |
| 5 | Grade 3 |
| 6 | Grade 4 |
| 7 | Grade 5 |
| 8 | Grade 6 |

***School Hours***

* Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 7:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
* Wednesday, Friday: 7:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

***Educational Vision: The Center School Approach***

Sr. Borgia Elementary School is transitioning to a *Center School Approach*, inspired by a secondary school model. This approach includes homeroom teachers and specialized subject teachers across cycles, fostering:

* Student-Centered Learning
* Holistic Development
* Project-Based Learning
* Community Involvement
* Teacher as Facilitator
* Flexible Learning Environments
* Reflective Practice

***Implementation Phases***

* **2022–2023**: Introduction of the Center School Approach with one teacher per cycle for specialized lessons.
* **2023–2024:** Full adoption of the Center School model. Groups 1 and 2 remain with one teacher; Groups 3 and 4 follow a peer teaching model; Groups 5–8 continue the homeroom-specialist teacher rotation.
* **2024–2025:** Redefinition of the Center School structure. Groups 1 and 2 remain with a single teacher for foundational learning; Groups 3 and 4 implement peer teaching across core subjects.

***Peer Teaching Model (Cycle 1: Groups 3 & 4)***

**Key Principles:**

* Reciprocal Learning
* Collaboration
* Active Learning
* Social Interaction
* Differentiated Instruction

**Benefits:**

* Improved Comprehension
* Increased Engagement
* Enhanced Confidence
* Supportive Learning Environment

Together, the Center School and Peer Teaching models aim to empower both teachers and students, fostering a vibrant, collaborative learning community that prepares students for lifelong learning and growth.