



OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
CONSORTIUM

HOLY CROSS  
SAINT BERNADETTE  
SAINT THOMAS MORE  
SAINTS PETER & PAUL  
OUR LADY OF LOURDES  
DUAL LANGUAGE ACADEMY

*A Collaboration of  
Parishes, Schools, Parents and  
Community Partners*

# MAKING THE GRADE

NEWS FROM THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM



## ANNUAL REPORT EDITION

2018-19



# OUR STORY

# 2012

**The Omaha Catholic School Consortium was formed as a collaboration of parishes, schools, parents and community partners working together to support Catholic education in southeast Omaha.**

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## 6 SCHOOLS

**Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Thomas More, Dual Language Academy, all helping each other achieve the highest quality academic standards in Christ-centered environments.**

*The Omaha Catholic School Consortium Development Office made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this report. Please accept our apology if we have omitted anyone who contributed to our schools or misspelled a name. If you notice such an error, please notify our office so we may correct our records.*



### **Mission**

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium provides academic, administrative and financial support to its schools to ensure students have access to an exceptional education in a nurturing and culturally unique environment, where they are encouraged to explore their Catholic faith and become Disciples of Christ. We are committed to Catholic education that will thrive in our community for generations to come.

### **Vision**

We will be recognized as a sustainable model for Catholic education with schools that challenge students of many abilities to excel and become faith-filled leaders in service to God and others.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



The Omaha Catholic School Consortium is in its seventh year. As Chair of the Consortium Board, I would like to briefly share some of its accomplishments.

**The strength of the consortium model is its emphasis on:**

- Academic excellence
- Cooperation and collaboration among its constituents
- Efficiencies gained from centralized administration and shared resources

This model is gaining acceptance in dioceses across the United States. It is proving to be an excellent education/business model that makes Catholic education more accessible, affordable and sustainable, especially in urban areas.

Some of the strengths and accomplishments of the Consortium have been:

- Increasing enrollment in the original five Consortium schools, and most recently, the Dual Language Academy, by almost 32% in the past six years, from 1,401 students in 2013-2014 to 1,845 students in the current 2019-2020 school year
- Reducing the per student cost to educate by more than 10%, to less than \$5,000
- Operating at or near capacity at two Consortium schools
- Adopting new learning methods, such as balanced literacy and blended learning, which enable teachers to assess each student's learning abilities and better personalize their instruction
- Adding first grade to the Dual Language Academy, now in its second year, serving 133 pre-school through first grade students, from 24 different zip codes

- Partnering with nearly 300 supporters who gifted \$266,000 to our mission in 2018-2019 alone

Through the leadership of Archbishop George J. Lucas and the Catholic Schools Office, the Archdiocese of Omaha is among the early adopters of this model and other new initiatives in Catholic education. To sustain and expand these efforts, we are reaching out to supporters of Catholic education to pray for and contribute to the Consortium and to support its program, students and teachers.

Please share this annual report with your friends and family as we endeavor to increase awareness and support of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium in the years ahead.

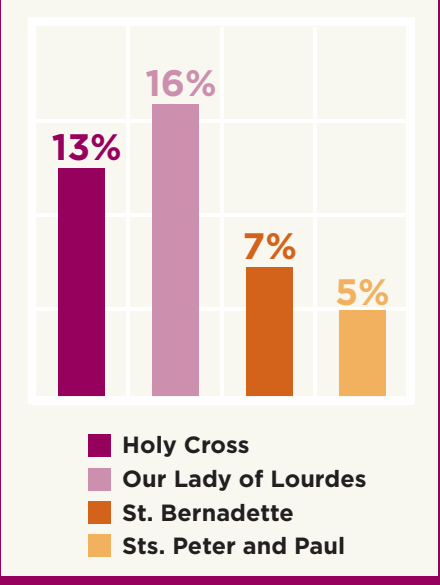
For the Board,

**John L. Maginn**  
Chair



**Achievement increases in reading from the 2017-18 to 2018-19, grades K-8**

*Increase reflects the percentage of students who grew, achieving grade level proficiency using Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarking.*



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**F**riends of the  
Omaha Catholic  
School Consortium

Seven years ago, the Consortium was created in an effort to make

quality Catholic education affordable and accessible to families. That expectation is the foundation of all that we do each and every day. I am proud of our schools and happy to share with you our Annual Report, that both illustrates who we are today and reflects our commitment to continued growth. The 2018-2019 Annual Report contains information about the fiscal accountability and instructional quality of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium schools: Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette, Sts. Peter and Paul, St. Thomas More and the Dual Language Academy.

Our Consortium students are blessed to be educated in schools that help them to see God's grace and presence in their lives. **Together with families and our parishes, we create communities where we unite in our desire to live the vision of our Archdiocese: Encountering Jesus, Equipping Disciples and Living Mercy.** As our students see the signs of God's grace around them, they become instruments of His grace and are able to share His love in their classrooms, families, neighborhoods, communities and beyond. We want to create students who learn so that they can make a difference in the world around them.

As this report will illustrate, we are working diligently to be efficient and effective stewards of every dollar we receive. One of the markers of success for us is our cost to educate; it is under \$5,000 to educate a student at a Consortium school. Our development efforts are increasing to help support the gap between our operational revenue and expenses. We will continue to grow in our development efforts and are grateful for the support of Children's Scholarship Fund, the Latino Scholarship Fund and

our parishes who help us meet the needs of our families. The need for financial aid is very evident in our schools - 44% of our students receive assistance, helping make tuition more affordable for our families.

I am proud to report that our newest school, the Dual Language Academy (DLA), had a fantastic first year! We added first grade for the 2019-2020 school year and are celebrating a 63% growth in enrollment; 82 students ended the 18-19 school year and 130 students are currently enrolled. This summer, the DLA staff spent a week of professional development with Boston College and other dual language schools across the United States. We anticipate the continued growth and success of this school.

Thank you for being a part of our mission. To our families, I extend our greatest gratitude for partnering with us in the education of your child(ren); we are honored to work with you in this great endeavor. I pray in gratitude for the administrators, educators and staff, who give so much to the communities they serve. Thank you to our supporting parishes for the financial and spiritual support you provide our schools. Thank you to our donors who help us make Catholic education affordable and accessible to the families we serve. We recognize that it takes many to make our Consortium a success, and we are so very grateful to each and every one of you!

In service,

**Chris M. Nelson**

Executive Director,  
Omaha Catholic School Consortium

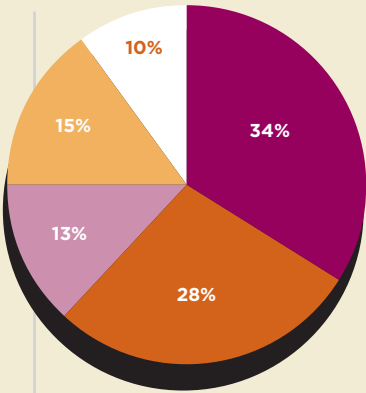


# OPERATING STATEMENT

for the Fiscal Year Ending 6/30/2019  
Omaha Catholic School Consortium

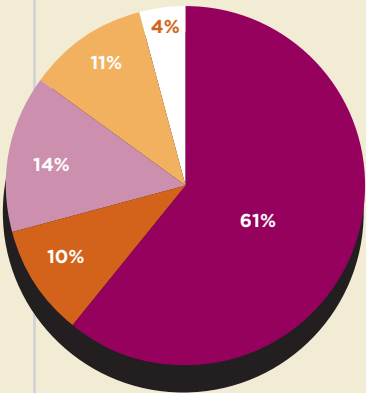
## OPERATING REVENUES:

Tuition and Fees	\$3,115,334	■ 34%
Parish Support	\$2,559,116	■ 28%
Financial Aid & Scholarships - External Sources	\$1,162,050	■ 13%
Auxiliary Programs	\$1,318,159	■ 15%
* Preschool, Extended Care, Cafeteria & School Events		
Grant, Development & Fundraising Income	\$891,222	■ 10%
* \$515,527 in Ignite the Faith requests		
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$9,045,881</b>	



## OPERATING EXPENSES:

* Instructional	\$5,492,467	■ 61%
* General Administrative	\$920,578	■ 10%
Plant Operations and Maintenance	\$1,233,935	
Auxiliary Programs	\$1,030,048	■ 14%
Tuition Assistance - Internal	\$358,518	■ 11%
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$9,035,546</b>	■ 4%



**Net Revenue** **\$10,335**

\* Ignite the Faith Funds used for technology upgrades & Dual Language Academy start up.



# ENROLLMENT AT A GLANCE

(based on 2018-2019  
school year data)



**1,817** preschool -  
eighth grade  
students

**49** percent  
minority

**86** percent  
Catholic

**40** percent of  
our students  
qualify for  
free or  
reduced  
lunch



**44%**

of Consortium students receive  
tuition assistance (all families pay  
a portion of their child's tuition)



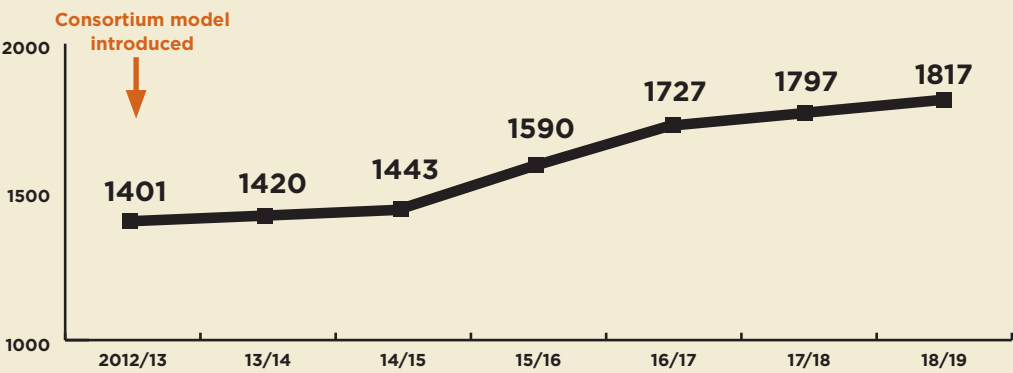
## COST TO EDUCATE PER STUDENT (K-EIGHTH GRADE)

**\$4,602**

Generous donors help cover  
the gap in tuition and the actual cost  
to educate each of our students

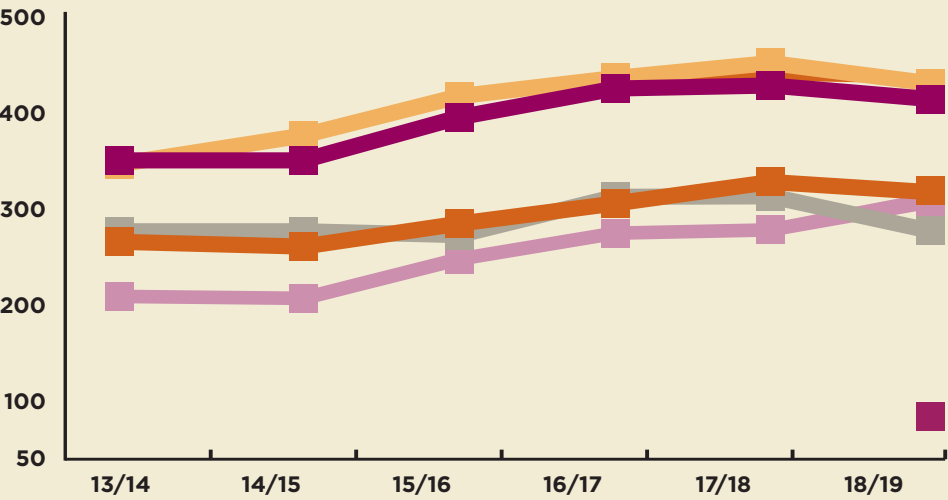
# ENROLLMENT TRENDS

## ENROLLMENT TOTALS - ALL CONSORTIUM SCHOOLS (PRE-SCHOOL THROUGH 8TH GRADE)



## BY SCHOOL

- Holy Cross
- Our Lady of Lourdes
- St. Bernadette
- Sts. Peter & Paul
- St. Thomas More
- Dual Language Academy



# SIX REASONS TO LOVE THE CONSORTIUM

- 1 Six-school network**  
Six-school network serving a culturally diverse student body from more than 50 zip codes across the Omaha Metro Area.
- 2 Faith formation**  
Students at our schools are not just numbers, and they're not lost in a crowd. Our teachers get to know and care about each child, and we walk with them on their faith journey. We constantly strive to form students who bring Christ to the world.
- 3 Differentiated (and data-driven) instruction**  
*Proven Academic Excellence*  
We understand that not all students have the same needs when it comes to learning. Through blended learning, an initiative now in year three, classroom teachers can view student achievement data and proactively modify their instructional approach and lesson plans based on who is in the classroom. This allows us to personalize the educational experience and cater to individual needs versus teaching everyone in the same way, in a large group.
- 4 Qualified and committed teachers**  
Our educators have both solid educational backgrounds of their own, as well as real-world experience to help them form your children into leaders in the classroom and in the community. Our educators also spend hundreds of hours each year participating in professional development opportunities to continue to grow and learn in their vocations.
- 5 Service-Minded School Communities**  
All of our schools are involved in many different service projects throughout the year. Developing care and concern for others (ie, living mercy) is core to our faith and our curriculum.
- 6 Family-feel**  
Our schools plan many events for parents and families to connect throughout the year. We encourage families to introduce themselves, get to know each other and create friendships with others from their school, as well as all the other Consortium schools. Collaboration is what we're all about!



**LOVE**  
YOUR CONSORTIUM  
SCHOOL?

LET US KNOW AT  
[OCSC\\_COMMUNICATIONS@OMAHACSC.ORG](mailto:OCSC_COMMUNICATIONS@OMAHACSC.ORG)

**"I love the Dual Language Academy because of the strong sense of community, diversity, and multiculturalism. I am so pleased to see that teachers and staff embody the same values that are used to shape and inspire the students to grow and be better each day."**

*Agnes Lenagh, parent*



# SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

**As accredited and approved schools, our Consortium schools all engage in the practice of Continuous Improvement.** We are constantly looking at data, evaluating what the data tells us, setting goals for growth, and then evaluating the success of our progress. Balanced literacy remains a focus in our schools, in an effort to guide students toward proficient and lifelong reading. We were pleased to watch the progress of our students over the course of the year as they worked on reading at their individual level using the online curriculum provided through blended learning. These and other academic initiatives make every day exciting in our schools! In addition to an excellent education, the Consortium schools know the importance of providing an atmosphere of prayer and faith, and we integrate faith into all we do.



**CONSORTIUM STUDENTS WORKING IN OUR BLENDED LEARNING SOFTWARE GREW AN AVERAGE OF 1.5 YEARS.**

## Dual Language Academy

- The school opened its doors August 2019 inside the former St. Stanislaus School, with 82 students in preschool through kindergarten. The **DLA** has seen significant growth in student enrollment for the 2019-2020 school year, with 130 students.
- Just after the school year ended, staff attended Boston College's TWIN-CS Summer Professional Development Academy and are excited to implement new practices, especially for the new first grade classroom.
- **Dual Language Academy** families donated 150 pounds of canned food and non-perishable foods to the Juan Diego Center as well as participated in Lenten service projects to help those served by Emergency Pregnancy Services. Even for our young learners, it is important to demonstrate how to live mercy and be kind to others in our community.



- When the school was opened, it was considered a "program" by the Nebraska Department of Education, but the **DLA** is now an approved school, and it's the first bilingual school in Omaha to serve students as young as three years old.
- Students spent half or more of their days immersed in a Spanish-speaking environment, and in just one year, experienced incredible academic outcomes.

**Watch in action by scanning the QR code to see a video of a four year old recognizing and reading words in a second language.**



## St. Bernadette

- **St. Bernadette** finished second place (representing Nebraska) as part of a national Big 10 ReadingPlus Challenge - just one of many 'wins' as a result of blended learning.
- Fourteen students earned scholarships to area Catholic high schools.



# SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

- **St. Bernadette** won first place among 26 schools at the 2019 Nebraska Robotics Expo, held at the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum.
- The 272 students at this school benefited from certified teachers who have a total of 275 years experience.
- After every school Mass, students and teachers prayed the following prayer together. Besides Mass, rosaries, other prayer services and assemblies, small groups of students from every grade level took turns each day leading the school in prayer over the intercom.

## *Almighty God*

*We give you our school.*

*We give you all the teachers and staff who work here,*

*We give you all the children who study here.*

*We pray our school would be a place of great discovery, adventure and creativity.*

*May it be a place where we love to learn and where we learn to love.*

*A place where everyone is respected and all are deeply valued. We ask all of this through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

## Holy Cross

- **Holy Cross** served 414 students in preschool - eighth grade, including a large middle school, with 162 students fifth through eighth grades
- This school continues to be recognized for its dedicated staff, small classrooms sizes, diverse student population and meeting student needs, according to a parent and student survey in October 2018.
- **Holy Cross** eighth graders were intentional about loving their



neighbors and dedicated time to spend with residents at the Douglas County Care Facility. This was in addition to other school-wide retreats and reconciliation services.

- All 31 third graders participated in a weekly rosary service with parishioners.
- Each classroom at **Holy Cross** has a prayer corner and place to study the Saints.

## St. Thomas More

- **St. Thomas More** expanded its Latino Outreach efforts, adding a bilingual Mass, and the school increased its Hispanic family engagement through the new Madrinas program.
- **St. Thomas More** served 432 students in preschool through eighth grade, 87% of whom are Catholic.



- The school was home to the inaugural winner of the Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic Schools Office Community Service Challenge. Fourth grader Eliana Lee won \$1,000 to bring her idea --creating "blessing bags" for homeless in our area--to life.
- The dedicated staff at the school completed more than 180 hours of professional development on various topics.
- **St. Thomas More** continued the process of becoming an AdvancEd accredited school, joining Holy Cross and St. Bernadette.

## Sts. Peter and Paul

- **Sts. Peter and Paul** has one of the largest and most active Liferunners Clubs in the area. Students continue to meet weekly after school to pray and walk/run for the unborn during the meetings.

"The teachers at Sts. Peter and Paul are very understanding, have high expectations for their students, and are very helpful. One of my favorite memories was the preparation for First Communion back in second grade. I still enjoy attending Mass with my friends and teachers."

*Johanna Hernandez, fifth grade student*

"I attended Holy Cross since preschool. My mom and her siblings graduated from Holy Cross and it was exciting to be able to follow in their footsteps. My favorite thing about Holy Cross is being a part of such a close community and getting to know everyone personally, and carrying on these relationships forever"

*Emma Elsasser, Alumna*

- **SPP** enjoys 23 certified teachers with an average of more than seven years teaching experience.
- **SPP** started regular adoration in the 2018-2019 school year; students in fourth through eighth grade enjoyed spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament to build their relationship with Christ. The school also started a new tradition of focusing on the Saint of the Day during morning announcements, where students are challenged to apply the lessons of holy lives in their own lives.
- The school also started its own newscast, which allowed students to gain valuable skills in journalism. The newscast is played every two weeks in the classrooms.



MORE THAN  
**28,210**

VOLUNTEER HOURS  
WERE LOGGED BY  
SCHOOL FAMILIES  
DURING THE 2018-2019  
SCHOOL YEAR

## Our Lady of Lourdes

- On the school's feast day this past Spring, students made prayer rocks for the school grotto to celebrate, and Fr. Pietramale spoke to the entire school about the importance of prayer. Plus, as part of the school's charism to be prayerful, groups gathered once a month before school to pray the Rosary.



- Six graduating eighth graders received academic scholarships to local Catholic high schools.
- **Our Lady of Lourdes** students saw continued success in local and regional academic competitions: eighth graders earned first place in the Book Bowl for the second year in a row; a fifth grader wrote a fictional story that won second place in the Virginia Frank Writing Contest sponsored by the Friends of the Omaha Library; and three students created artwork that was showcased at ArchOmaha Unite in June 2019.
- Staff here not only completed more than 200 hours of professional development, but initiated their own service project, collecting and donating more than 2,600 diapers during the Advent season.

# SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE SUPPORTERS

GIFTS PROVIDED TO THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM FROM JULY 1, 2018-JUNE 30, 2019

## Annual Fund:

Anonymous (11)

Oscar Ahumada and Erica Medina

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Dorothy Nelson



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Robert and Rosemary Nelson  
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Susan Noler  
Notre Dame Sisters  
Fr. James Novotny  
Meghan O'Brien Gerken\*  
John and Juliann O'Connor  
Rosemary Odean  
Mary Jane O'Donnell  
Michael Odorisio  
Donald Ojeski  
Mary Ondracek  
Our Lady of Lourdes – St.  
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Our Lady of Lourdes Booster  
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Our Lady of Lourdes Home &  
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Terence and Mary Zach  
Michael and Lori Zadina  
Thomas Zadina  
Steven and Mary Zahler  
Jennifer Zielinski

**\*Those who have  
supported our mission  
every year**

**OMAHAGIVES!  
= \$5,310**

**156 New Donors  
this year, with first  
time gifts totaling  
more than  
\$81,000**



# SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE SUPPORTERS

GIFTS PROVIDED TO THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM FROM JULY 1, 2018-JUNE 30, 2019

## Tributes:

### In Memory of M. David & Arlene Steier

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Arlan and Carla Arens  
William and Melinda Bechaz  
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Patrick Steier  
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Gary and Ann Thomsen  
George and Margarita Wanek

### In Memory of Joseph Hermanek

Right At Home

### In Memory of Barbara Ann Gilsdorf

Thomas and Penny Gilsdorf

### In Memory of Marlene Bolita

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James and Maureen Stary  
Wilfriede Urlaub

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Randy Placek

### In Memory of Don & Darlene Ducey

Marjie Ducey

### In Memory of Joan & Richard Bader

Janet Haney

### In Memory of Mike Mendenhall

Mary Mendenhall

### In Honor of the Mr. & Mrs. Jim Jandrain, Mr. & Mrs. James Bacome, and Mr. & Mrs. Mike Sheehan Families

Steve and Mary Boyles

### In Honor of Raymond & Marcos Robles

Dolores Terwey

### In Honor of Bridget Eckel

Jeff and Melissa Eckel

### In Honor of Sam & Kai Berglund

Allen and Jamie Berglund

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Terry and Pauline Pesek  
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VIA CHECK TO OUR MAILING ADDRESS LISTED ON THE BACK

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George J.  
Lucas**



**John  
Maginn**



**Dr. Sarah  
Kottich**



**Tammy  
Blossom**



**Jay  
Vankat**



**Chris  
Nelson**



**Dr. Michael  
Ashton**



**Shannan  
Brommer**

## STAFF

Our team works incredibly hard each day to support our schools in their efforts to create exceptional and safe learning environments.

### **Omaha Catholic School Consortium Staff**

Chris Nelson	Executive Director
Abby Skradski	Director of Advancement
Chris Feuerbach	Business Manager
Dayana Rodriguez	Business Office
Brandi Diaz	Business Office
Hazel Deman	Customer Service
Sara Hood	Technology Integration Specialist
Blair Bonczynski	Marketing and Communications Coordinator

**"Our family loves St. Bernadette because of the small town atmosphere, where families put in their efforts for the well-being of everyone else and the school and parish. It's a place where our kids feel support and our strong Catholic values are emphasized. It's like home."**

*Kelly Linder, parent*

# ADMINISTRATORS

**Our administrators have a collective 94 years' experience in Catholic education. We are deeply appreciative of these school administrators, as well as the dedicated educators and support staff at our schools.** Special thanks also to Dr. Michael Ashton, Superintendent of Schools, and all other Catholic Schools Office and Stewardship and Development staff members, who also support the operational needs of our schools each year.



**Dr. Don Ridder**  
**Principal, Holy Cross School**

We welcome Dr. Ridder for the 2019-2020 school year. He most recently served as president of Norfolk Catholic.



**Lisa Linquist**  
**Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes School**

We welcome Mrs. Linquist as the principal, coming to us from St. Robert Bellarmine, where she was a teacher for many years.



**Amanda Alvarado**  
**Principal, Dual Language Academy**

Ms. Alvarado worked as a teacher at Sts. Peter and Paul prior to joining the team at the Dual Language Academy. She served as assistant principal during the 2018-2019 school year and is now principal.

**"The shared family-school commitment to building community in our new school, now offering first grade, is truly a representation of being 'United in Christ.' Families are an important part of our success with our enrollment, sharing their stories and experiences with others. As for academic highlights, we have seen it in all our young learners. From coming in without knowing Spanish to being able to read Spanish syllables and words."**

*Amanda Alvarado, Dual Language Academy Principal*



# ADMINISTRATORS

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All school principals are Catholic and in partnership with the pastors, serve as models of faith to their communities. Our leaders are highly qualified and supported in their work.

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**Lynn Schultz**  
Principal, St. Bernadette School

Mrs. Schultz has been the principal here 9 years and has been in education for the past 28 years. Her favorite part of working at St. Bernadette is seeing God in every student, family and faculty member.



**Andrew Bauer**  
Principal, Sts. Peter and Paul School

Mr. Bauer is fluent in Spanish, and he has spent his entire 10 year career in Catholic education.



**Gary Davis**  
Principal, St. Thomas More School

Congratulations to Mr. Davis as he marked his 20th year serving in Catholic education!

**"I always want to go to St. Thomas More."**

*Lorenzo Litton, 1st grade,  
St. Thomas More*

# FAITH FORMATION



**A key differentiator of the Consortium is our unique structure, which includes the financial and spiritual support of 13 different priests and 16 different parishes across Omaha. Their gifts to our collective mission mean so much to so many.**

## Our Supporting Parishes:

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

**Holy Cross Catholic Church**

Holy Ghost Catholic Church

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church

**Our Lady of Lourdes** – St. Adalbert Catholic Church

St. Andrew Kim Taegon Catholic Community

**St. Bernadette Catholic Church**

St. Bridget – St. Rose Catholic Church

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

St. Mary Catholic Church

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church

St. Peter Catholic Church

St. Stanislaus Catholic Church

**St. Thomas More Catholic Church**

**Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church**

## Celebrating Sacraments from this past year

- **St. Bernadette:** 22 first communicants + 26 confirmandi + 1 - 4th grader baptized on Holy Saturday!
- **Sts. Peter and Paul:** 47 first communicants + 22 confirmandi
- **Our Lady of Lourdes:** 33 first communicants + 36 confirmandi
- **St. Thomas More:** 45 first communicants + 44 confirmandi + 7 students baptized!
- **Holy Cross:** 35 first communicants + 31 confirmed + 2 students baptized!

Our five original schools celebrate an all-school Mass weekly, and the **Dual Language Academy** students visit St. Stanislaus each week to learn about all the different parts of Mass.

## SPOTLIGHT STORY

**All because of their preschooler's experience at St. Bernadette, a family of four has now joined the Church - and then encouraged three more members of their extended family to also become Catholic, and they joined during the Easter 2019 Vigil. More about the Rodriguez family on the [lovemyschool.com](http://lovemyschool.com) blog.**



## Building Communities of Faith

We continue to focus on providing encounters with Christ for our staff, students and families. The 2018-2019 school year was quite the faith journey. Enjoy a few examples.

- **St. Thomas More** teachers have seen such powerful experiences in School of Faith that they've begun a voluntary, after-school bible study for teachers.
- **Holy Cross** hosted the first all-school retreat in April 2019: One Heart, One Fire led the day of spiritual and community growth.
- The **Dual Language Academy** celebrated its first bilingual family Mass, at St. Stanislaus during Catholic School's Week (January 2019). Fr. Scott Hastings, Vicar for Clergy for the Archdiocese of Omaha, presided. A family potluck followed Mass to continue the fellowship. This school truly learns and worships as a community of believers.
- **St. Bernadette** hosted an Ablaze with Fr. Michael Voithofer, associate pastor of St. Gerald Catholic Church, and it was such a success that they are planning another for the 2019-2020 school year, which will include a family night of prayer, worship and Adoration.
- **Our Lady of Lourdes** invited their school community (parents, staff and students) once each month to join them in praying the Rosary in the morning before school.
- **Sts. Peter and Paul** staff begins every day with a group prayer just inside the front doors. Gathering together in prayer creates a stronger teaching community as they support one another's intentions and needs.

"My husband's faith and involvement has strengthened the most, significantly, as our kids have entered school. He was raised Catholic and attended Creighton University but as he started his career, he moved for jobs a couple times each year, so he never took the time to find a parish. After we got married he took a position that would allow us to reside in Omaha and he started attending Mass more regularly with me. As our children were born, attending Mass each week became more important to him and as they entered school he has become involved in many areas of the school & parish."

- Michelle Arlen, parent

Teachers at our schools enjoy 24 hours of catechesis, reflection and small group discussion about their faith during the course of each school year. The program, formerly known as "School of Faith," now called "Evangelium Institute," gives teachers a chance to refuel, refocus and deepen their understanding of Catholicism - all to benefit the students we serve.

"The major focus of the Evangelization Institute is for each teacher to fall in love with (or more deeply in love with) Jesus and the Church. This means that they would become lifelong disciples who are committed to daily prayer and evangelization and the Sacramental life of the Church. Therefore, within our schools our goal is that this transformation of evangelization is modeled and taught by every teacher so our students learn to love Jesus and become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ."

- Dr. Don Ridder, Holy Cross principal

# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



## Motivation from Mrs. Fanciullo

### Congratulations!

On September 20, 2018, Stacey Fanciullo, teacher at **St. Bernadette**, was honored as the Metro Elementary Educator of the Year at the 41st Annual Archbishop's Dinner for Education. Stacey was the night's keynote speaker on behalf of all of the year's honorees. Below are excerpts from her powerful speech that night:

I am completely convinced of the extraordinary value of a Catholic school education to the students. But I can't speak firsthand about those benefits. I have actually never been a student in a Catholic school. I went to a public school and a Lutheran college, and I'm grateful for my education and the religion that was mine for much of my life. My plan was to teach music at public high school. And I did that for two years until God steered me toward Omaha and into my first Catholic school job at **St. Thomas More**.

At my first Catholic school, I heard the priest and teachers telling children that it's God's strength we should believe in, God who is all powerful, and that we can do only very small things, but with God all things are possible.

**In a Catholic school, you can talk to your students about your faith. My students evangelized me.**

I get so much support and strengthening of my faith from the Catholic school family.

Besides teaching Catholic school students and being married to one, I'm also the mom of one; my son Jake graduated from **St. Bernadette**.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you for this honor, thank you for all you do for Catholic schools."

*Mrs. Stacey K. Fanciullo*

*Music/ Art/ Drama*



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT

## Rita T. Starr Memorial Scholarship and Technology Fund

Rita was passionate about helping the less fortunate, mentoring women in technological careers and assisting St. Bernadette with their technology needs. Upon her passing in 2019, Rita Starr left a substantial gift to the Consortium in her trust.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, the Consortium will choose a number of scholarship recipients who will benefit from this memorial scholarship based on their demonstrated need. Additional funds will be directed to various technology projects at St. Bernadette.

**WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO THE STARR FAMILY AND LOOK FORWARD TO ENSURING RITA'S GENEROSITY AND LEGACY CONTINUES.**

# CONSORTIUM PROJECTS



**THE CONSORTIUM PARTNERED TO SHARE COSTS ON THE FOLLOWING RENOVATIONS TO OUR BUILDINGS**

**ST. BERNADETTE CAFETERIA  
RENOVATION**

.....

**HOLY CROSS PARKING LOT RESURFACING**

.....

**DUAL LANGUAGE ACADEMY FIRE  
SPRINKLER INSTALLATION**

We are **committed to continuous improvement** at all of our buildings in the coming years as well.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Sean Callahan

*Sts. Peter and Paul Class of 1995*

Callahan has covered Nebraska football since 1999. He currently is the publisher of HuskerOnline.com, which is a part of the Rivals.com network. In addition, he reports for KETV Channel 7 (ABC) in Omaha, along with Big Red Radio 1110 KFAB in Omaha. Callahan also serves as a sideline reporter for NET and a recruiting analyst for their weekly Husker show Big Red Wrap-Up. He has covered every Nebraska road and home football



game since 2000. Already author of one book, called, "100 Things Nebraska Fans Should Know & Do Before They Die," he is the process of putting together a second book for next year about Scott Frost coming back to Nebraska.

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**A TWO-TIME NEBRASKA SPORTSWRITER OF THE YEAR, CALLAHAN GREW UP IN OMAHA AND GRADUATED FROM STS. PETER AND PAUL IN 1995.**

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He and his wife Lisa currently reside in Lincoln with their two daughters Kit and Carly.

## Enjoy our Q & A with Sean



### WHY DID YOU LOVE CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

.....

I loved the culture and community of Catholic schools. I was surrounded by so many like-minded people and great teachers that pushed us to be better. So many people I grew up with both at Sts. Peter and Paul and Gross Catholic High School have gone on to have great success, and I believe the culture and environment we grew up in played a big factor.

*"My third-grade teacher Ms. Brennan is one I'll always remember. I still sing the Schoolhouse Rock songs in my head when I multiply numbers."*

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU HAVE FOR A STUDENT/FAMILY CONSIDERING A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?



.....

The biggest thing I'd say is you are going to be surrounding yourself with very like-minded people who want to succeed. The smaller school settings also offer more opportunities. We started our daughter in Catholic schools (in Lincoln) and have loved every minute of it so far. Most importantly, she has, too.



## HOW DID YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?

.....

One thing I'll always remember is how our teachers used to give us free reading time once during the week. I used to bring Sports Illustrated Magazines with me to school on those days starting in fourth and fifth grade. That helped me develop my passion for what I do now ever more. I would tell the teachers, "I brought this with me to read, because it's what I'm going to be doing some day."

## CAN YOU TELL US A FEW MORE UNIQUE FACTS ABOUT YOURSELF?

.....

My grandma Janet Moriarty attended Sts. Peter & Paul and my grandpa Charles attended St. Mary School (Omaha). My dad attended St. Joan of Arc and Archbishop Ryan High School in Omaha. Catholic schools run deep in my family and I was blessed to carry on that tradition, and now our daughter is as well.

I have a twin sister Maureen Gregor who attend Sts. Peter & Paul (and Gross Catholic) with me.

I grew up just two blocks from Sts. Peter & Paul and we were able to walk to school every day. So many great families lived in the neighborhood when I grew up. I was even married by former Sts. Peter & Paul pastor Father Don Shane.



"I really enjoyed my years in elementary school and was blessed to continue my Catholic education right across the street at Mercy. My years in Catholic school have really helped me grow in my faith and have given me a solid foundation for the tricky teenage years now, and the challenges that may face me in the future. I attended Holy Cross when the Consortium was founded and I got to see firsthand how successful the transition has been for the future of Catholic education."

*Emma Elsasser, Alumna*

## SHARE IN OUR GOOD NEWS!

Read our blog and sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter at [omahacsc.org/news](http://omahacsc.org/news)



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OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
CONSORTIUM

4501 S 41st Street  
Omaha, NE 68107  
Phone: 402.590.2810

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