

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



# **OUR STORY**

Formed in 2012, The Omaha Catholic School Consortium is a collaboration of parishes, schools, parents and community partners working together to support Catholic education in southeast Omaha.

Together we can achieve benefits beyond what any one member school can achieve alone.

Our central office provides financial, academic. administrative and marketing support for our five member schools -Holy Cross, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Bernadette, Sts. Peter and Paul. St. Thomas More - helping each school achieve the highest quality academic standards, use of state-of-the-art classroom technology, collaboration among teachers and administrators and financial stability - all to benefit the students we serve.



#### **Mission**

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium provides academic, administrative and financial support to its member 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**

he Omaha Catholic School Consortium is currently in its sixth year. As Chair of the recently reconstituted Consortium board, I would like to share some of the Consortium's accomplishments in its first five years.

The strength of the consortium model is its emphasis on academic excellence, cooperation and collaboration among its constituents; and 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 and business model that makes Catholic education more accessible, affordable and sustainable, especially in urban areas.

Some of our early achievements are:

- Growth in enrollment in the five Consortium schools, increasing by almost 30% in the past six years from 1,401 students in 2013-2014 to 1,817 in the current 2018-2019 school year.
- Two member schools are operating at capacity and others are approaching maximum student capacity.
- Per student cost of education was reduced by more than 10% to less than \$5,000.
- Introduction of new learning methods such as Balanced Literacy and Blended Learning in all five schools to enable teachers to assess each student's learning abilities and then synchronize curriculum and technology accordingly.
- Workshops and programs designed by the Consortium schools are being shared with 12 other Archdiocesan grade schools.
- Dual Language Academy opened August 2018 in cooperation with Our Lady of Lourdes and Sts.
   Peter and Paul. A new bilingual school with classes in both
   Spanish and English for preschool, prekindergarten and kindergarten

students (see also executive director's message for details).

In recent good news, Chris Nelson was appointed by Archbishop Lucas as executive director in April 2018. Mrs. Nelson has 26 years of experience in Catholic education here in Omaha. She served as a teacher at All Saints and St. Patrick (Elkhorn), as principal at St. Mary and Holy Cross, and as professional development coordinator in the Catholic Schools Office. Chris succeeds Donna Bishop, who joined a national consulting firm and will be working with Catholic schools across the country.

The strength of the consortium model is its emphasis on academic excellence, cooperation and collaboration among its constituents; and efficiencies gained from centralized administration and shared resources.

Along with Chris, supporting pastors and parishioners and others, we continue our work to sustain Catholic education in south Omaha. To expand our efforts, we are reaching out to supporters of Catholic education to pray for and contribute to the Consortium, its programs, students and teachers and allow the potential for inclusion of additional Catholic elementary schools into our model.

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.

Chair

John L. Maginn

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**



t is with great pride and humility that I assume the role of Executive Director for our Consortium Schools. I am proud of our schools and am excited to share with you our Annual Report,

that both illustrates who we are today and reflects our commitment to continued growth and development. The 2017-2018 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, St. Thomas More, and Sts. Peter and Paul.

The Consortium schools know the importance of providing an atmosphere of prayer and faith during a child's formative years and want our students to know that their faith is integrated into all aspects of their education and lives. We want them to value diversity, to treat each person they meet with dignity, and to make decisions that are reflective of our faith. Our Catholic faith isn't just taught—it's lived; we are proud to partner with parents in the faith formation of our students.

After two years of planning and partnering with Boston College through the Two-Way Immersion Network for Catholic Schools (TWIN-CS), we were proud to open the Dual Language Academy (in the former St. Stanislaus School) in August of 2018. The Dual Language Academy welcomed 86 students from 24 zip codes; we started with two classrooms of preschool (3 year olds), one classroom of prekindergarten (4 year olds) and one classroom of kindergarten. We plan to accommodate two sections of each of those and add first grade for the 2019-2020 school year. The program goals fall into four categories: bilingualism and biliteracy in English and Spanish, academic achievement, crosscultural understanding (sociocultural competence) and Catholic identity. We are proud to be the first school in the Archdiocese to offer the Dual Language opportunity and the first school program in Omaha to begin that instruction at the preschool level. We will continue our partnership with Boston College and look forward to watching the growth of this exciting new educational opportunity!

To continue to meet the educational needs of our students, our focus remains on Balanced Literacy, with an academic goal that students are reading at grade level by third grade. Using this model, blocks of time are set aside for shared reading, read-alouds, guided reading, and independent reading. The goal of a balanced literacy program is to guide students toward proficient and lifelong reading. We continue to use the station rotation model during guided reading time to ensure students are being instructed at their level.

As an additional instructional support, Blended Learning was piloted in our schools during the 2017-2018 school year in our middle school reading classrooms. Much like the name implies, this model blends teacher instruction and online instruction to best meet the needs of each learner. We were pleased to watch the progress of our students in those grades over the course of the year as they worked on reading at literacy skills at their individual level using an online curriculum. This curriculum did not replace teacher instruction, rather supplemented it, as teachers were able to use the data provided by the online programs to help them instruct in small groups over areas that were not yet mastered.

Thank you for being a part of our Consortium schools. To our families, I extend our greatest gratitude for choosing us to partner with you in the education of your children. It is not a responsibility we take lightly. Thank you to the administrators, educators, and staff of our schools; they are a dedicated group of individuals and I am grateful for all they do each and every day to serve our families and students. I would also like to thank our supporting parishes for the financial and spiritual support they provide. We extend a sincere 'thank you' to our donors who continue to help us make a quality Catholic education affordable and accessible to the families we serve. As a Consortium, we will work to be responsible stewards of the gifts entrusted to us. The support and dedication of every single person, from student to community member is what enables us to create a great place for the more than 1,800 students we serve each day!

Sincerely,

Chris M. Nelson

Executive Director,
Omaha Catholic School Consortium

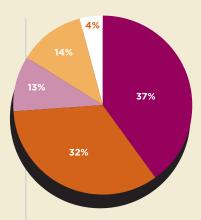
#### **OPERATING STATEMENT**

# for the Fiscal Year Ending 6/30/2018 Omaha Catholic School Consortium

\$7,955,567

#### **OPERATING REVENUES:**

| Tuition and Fees               | \$2,955,180 | <b>37</b> % |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Parish Support                 | \$2,579,856 | <b>32</b> % |
| Financial Aid & Scholarships - |             |             |
| External Sources               | \$1,037,491 | <b>13</b> % |
| Auxiliary Programs             | \$1,077,374 | <b>14</b> % |
| Grant, Development &           |             |             |
| Fundraising Income             | \$305,666   | 4%          |
| * Includes \$150,000 from      |             |             |
| Archbishop's Annual Appeal     |             |             |

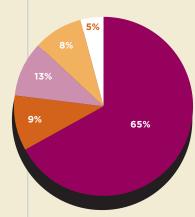


#### **OPERATING EXPENSES:**

**Total Operating Revenues** 

| Total Operating Expenses      | \$8,063,035 |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tuition Assistance - Internal | \$377,881   | 5%          |
| Auxiliary Programs            | \$661,154   | 8%          |
| Maintenance                   | \$1,086,720 | <b>13</b> % |
| Plant Operations and          |             |             |
| General Administrative        | \$727,174   | <b>9</b> %  |
| Instructional                 | \$5,210,106 | <b>65</b> % |
|                               |             |             |

Net Operating Loss (\$107,468)





"Learning and talking about faith every day makes me feel grateful because I know it's not like that at all schools."

Connor Foster, Student St. Thomas More

# ENROLLMENT AT A GLANCE

(based on 2017-2018 school year data)

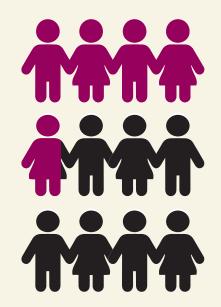
**1,797** pre-school - 8 students

**279** pre-K students

40 percent minority

**89** percent Catholic

percent of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch



42%

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

76%

of 2017-2018 Consortium eighth-grade graduates matriculated to Catholic high schools



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

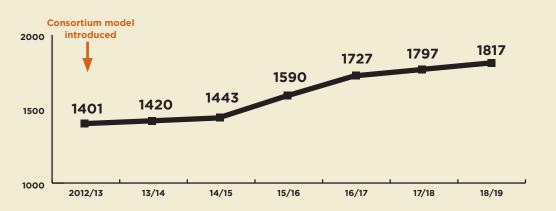
**LESS THAN** 

# \$5,000

tuition collected covers less than half of the cost to educate a student at our schools

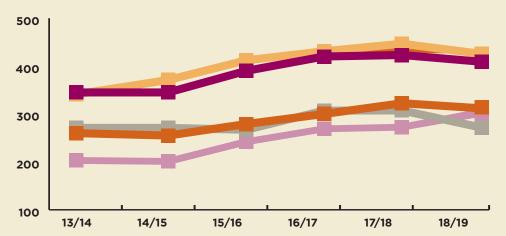
# **ENROLLMENT TRENDS**

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





## **FAST FACTS**

The Consortium team spent the school year making plans for **Dual Language Academy**, which opened in August 2018. Andrew Bauer, principal of **Sts. Peter and Paul**, and Megan Fiedler, principal of **Our Lady of Lourdes**, were appointed as co-principals. Amanda Alvarado was named Assistant Principal of the school. School colors of red and white were set, along with the school mascot as an eagle and school motto: "United in Christ. Unidos en Cristo."

The **Dual Language Academy** is housed in the former St. Stanislaus School building and features classrooms for preschool, prekindergarten and kindergarten students. Students who attend the Academy will become bilingual and biliterate.

Beatriz Arellanes, Latino School Enrollment Coordinator, was honored in April 2017 by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) with the Catherine T. McNamee Award, which is given for promoting a vision of culturally and economically diverse Catholic schools serving students with diverse needs.

# STAFF BY THE NUMBERS

148

"We consider providing our children with a Catholic education as a privilege. St. Bernadette has consistently provided a strong faith-filled environment and challenging academic curriculum for our four children. The faculty and staff at St. Bernadette are more like family and give all students the opportunity to form wonderful friendships and grow in their Catholic faith. The confidence and values that we try to instill in our children are reinforced and exemplified on daily basis by students, faculty and staff at St. Bernadette and for this we are grateful and blessed."

Arman and Cathie Pajnigar



12:1 Student to Teacher Ratio

# **SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS**

**What's cool in our schools? A lot!** Every day something wonderful is happening within our schools. Our students are working in the classrooms and in the community to become faith-filled servants to others. Here are just some of the highlights from the 2017-2018 school year.

#### **Holy Cross**

- Holy Cross completed **year two** of transitional kindergarten (TK). St. Thomas More also offers TK, which is a two-year kindergarten program meant to support students who are eligible for kindergarten but who have either just missed the Nebraska age guideline or are needing additional support to be academically and/or socially ready to be successful in a traditional kindergarten setting. Our principals are proud to offer this environment, which helps best meet the needs of younger children. We are seeing proof inside our buildings that those in this program are prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond, because of the time and personalized instruction they are given in transitional kindergarten classrooms.
- Holy Cross was one school selected as part of the Catholic Charities pilot program that provides licensed mental health providers inside schools, which drew success stories from students and families.
- Literacy remained a top focus for the school, including the "One Book One School" event, which ran for a second year, having each student read "Soar" and incorporate the theme in various ways throughout the year.
- The school started a Robotics Club and competed in competitions across the metro. One staff person received a grant through University of Nebraska-Lincoln to become trained in a new STEM program being implemented for future classes.



 Two fifth grade students at Holy Cross received a Regional Honorable Mention Award from Toshiba as part of the company's Exploravision program, dedicated to science and innovation. The students were the only winners in Nebraska and among only 24 winners in all of North America.

#### **Our Lady of Lourdes**

 Our Lady of Lourdes continues to provide Title and Resource services for students who are not on grade level in reading and/ or math. Resource teachers work with small groups of students to target instruction in the areas most needed. Teachers also focus on study skills and organizational skills.



• Our Lady of Lourdes school and parish shares a charism of being stewards within our community. This was lived out as the school helped serve the homeless and participated in helping the Stephen Center throughout the school year. The seventh and eighth graders collected money and then prayed a rosary in a service project called, Walk for the Homeless. The school raised more than \$800 for the Columban Fathers Missionary Society. The school community also donated more than 400 blankets and 900 cans of food to go to local shelters. The student council all-school service project benefited the Humane Society, donating

**TOTAL** 

# **SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS**

more than \$1,800 and bins of needed supplies. The seventh graders' marketplace project collected more than \$400 to the Refugee Empowerment Center in Omaha.



- Home & School parent organization was reinstated within the school and more than 8,400 volunteer hours were logged by Our Lady of Lourdes families in 2017-18! Because of efforts in fundraising, the school was able to purchase more 1,800 new books for our teachers to use to teach reading.
- A seventh grader represented Our Lady of Lourdes at the National Geographic State Geography Bee, and an OLL eighth grader earned first place at the Archdiocesan Math Competition. Another eighth grader won second place at the Spelling Bee. An OLL kindergartener also won an art competition for the Nebraska School Nutrition Association Art Contest.

#### St. Bernadette

- Partnering with the St. Bernadette Parish family and P.R.E. students, the school collected 70 shoeboxes filled with toys and hygiene items for underprivileged children with the Boxes of Joy through Cross Catholic Charities.
- The St. Bernadette **Wellness Committee** illustrated ways to stay healthy with a school-wide bulletin board where staff and students shared photos of themselves engaged in healthy activities (social, emotional, physical and spiritual). The school also began a Walking Club before school.

The school increased its Latino
 Outreach efforts to welcome new
 families.

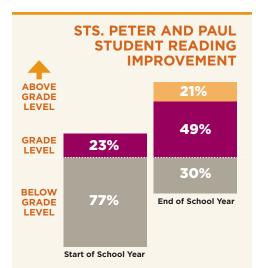


#### Sts. Peter and Paul

• Three eighth graders from Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School were awarded the Charles Schroer Memorial Scholarship - a \$2,500 scholarship awarded to only 10 eighth-grade students in the archdiocese. The award allows them an opportunity to continue their education at a Catholic high school.



- Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic
  Church celebrated its 100th
  anniversary, with Cardinal Blase
  Cupich of Chicago returning to
  Omaha to help the parish celebrate.
  Cupich attended Sts. Peter and
  Paul school and praised the school
  for its efforts toward school choice,
  as a way to fight poverty.
- Sts. Peter and Paul was the first school in the Consortium and in the Archdiocese of Omaha to fully implement blended learning models in kindergarten through eighth grade with Lexia Core5 and Reading Plus.
- Sts. Peter and Paul started a pro-life club with its first chapter of Life Runners. Students met weekly to pray for the unborn and walk/run during the club's meetings after school.



8,000,000
WORDS

#### St. Thomas More

- St. Thomas More began the process of becoming an AdvancEd accreditation school.
- •The school once again saw an increase in enrollment. Including preschool, more than 460 students were enrolled during the 2017-18 academic year.



• St. Thomas More middle school reading teachers joined the other Consortium schools in piloting blended learning. Teachers were pleased to see the growth of the students and increased student engagement through the use of reading rotations at the middle school level.

- St. Thomas More staff completed more than 180 hours of professional development during in-service days.
- The school continued its afterschool offerings and is proud to celebrate these opportunities for students and families: Extended Care, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, Youth Choir, Legion of Mary Jr.; Guitar Tutoring; Piano Tutoring; Wits Clash; Book Bowl; Bible Bowl; STM Athletics.



"In the Angel of God Club, we learn how to be kind to others. It's what I like most about St. Thomas More."

Connor Foster, Student St. Thomas More

"Being able to learn and talk about my faith is important to me because I get to use my faith to help me figure out answers to life questions."

Alex Buescher, Student Our Lady of Lourdes

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## **DONORS**

GIFTS PROVIDED TO THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM FROM JULY 1, 2017 - AUGUST 31, 2018

#### **Annual Fund:**

Oscar and Erica Ahumada

Larry and Connie Almgren

Stephen and Liesl Alvev

Michael W. and Cathy

Ashton

Thomas Babb

Mary Jo Bassett

Andrew Bauer

William and Norma Begley

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Kathie Bickerstaff Donna Bishop

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Bob Stutzman
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Kelly Nystrom Meghan O'Brien-

Gerken Michael Odorisio Katherine Orr

Our Lady of Lourdes
Booster Club

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Arun Angelo and
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Taylor Wiester
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Wilwerding
Ron and Pauline

Brian and Autumn Wurgler Thomas Zadina

Wilwerding

#### **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

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.

#### In-Kind/Designated Gifts:

Daniel Placzek

Oscar's Pizza and Sports Grille Knights of Columbus Council 3019 Red D Plumbing

#### **Corporate (Matching) Gifts:**

Union Pacific Give Plus
Union Pacific Railroad Company

"I love the families and the communal atmosphere of our school. This community-based approach is shared by all the parishes and schools throughout the Consortium; we are many schools, but we all collaborate and share in the same mission."

Andrew Bauer, Principal Sts. Peter and Paul



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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



John Maginn



Sarah Kottich



Tammy Blossom



Jay Vankat



Doug Wilwerding



Chris Nelson



Dr. Michael Ashton



Shannan Brommer

## **STAFF**

We are deeply appreciative of these staff members and school administrators, as well as the dedicated educators and staff at our member schools, who work incredibly hard each day to ensure our school are exceptional and safe learning environments.

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

Chris Nelson Executive Director
Daisy Mora Office Manager
Brandi Diaz Business Office
Hazel Deman Customer Service

Sara Hood Technology Integration Specialist

Blair Bonczynski Marketing and Communications Coordinator

#### **Omaha Catholic School Consortium Administrators**

Tawnya Mann Principal, Holy Cross School

Megan Fiedler Principal, Our Lady of Lourdes School

Lynn Schultz Principal, St. Bernadette School
Andrew Bauer Principal, Sts. Peter and Paul
Gary Davis Principal, St. Thomas More School

Special thanks to Dr. Michael Ashton, Superintendent of Schools, and all other Catholic Schools Office staff as well as to the Office of Stewardship and Development, who support the operational needs of our schools each school year.

# **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Last spring, five eighth-grade students from our schools were awarded academic scholarships to Omaha Catholic high schools. Seventy-six percent of our Consortium eighth-graders matriculated to Catholic high schools and we are very proud of their success!

Class of 2018 Consortium School Academic Scholarship Recipients

#### Erin Buglewicz,

Our Lady of Lourdes
Duchesne Academy of the
Sacred Heart

#### **Natalie Gonzalez**,

Our Lady of Lourdes
Duchesne Academy of the
Sacred Heart

#### Tom Macaitis,

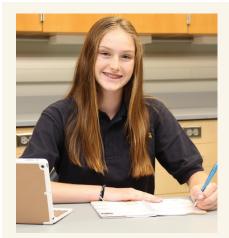
Holy Cross Creighton Prep

#### Kobie Patten,

St. Thomas More
Duchesne Academy of the
Sacred Heart

#### Lilee Surdell-Eichten,

Holy Cross
Mercy High School



"I love Holy Cross very much and it will hold a special place in my heart forever. The friends I made are marvelous and I hope we stay in touch for many years to come. Holy Cross was an academic steppingstone for high school. It did just that. Mercy High School is a college prep school and I believe it will prepare me for college from how much I have learned in such a short time. High school has been hard but with what Holy Cross has given me I am successfully finding my footing."

Lilee Surdell-Eichten



"At my former school, Our Lady of Lourdes, I loved how kind the teachers were and the opportunities we were given to enhance our academics, creativity, and faith through clubs and all-school Masses. It gave me the foundations that I needed for high school at Duchesne, and I appreciate all that OLL did for me."

Erin Buglewicz

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"I love going to a Catholic school because I feel students here receive more opportunities. The teachers and staff prepare us for the difficult things that may happen in life. All the students and staff are so kind and will do almost anything to help each other. Catholic schools teach us that with God anything is possible."

Kayleigh Hofmann, Student St. Bernadette

#### **SHARE IN OUR GOOD NEWS!**

Follow us on Facebook & Sign up to receive our monthly e-news @ omahacsc.org/news



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