

MAKING THE GRADE

NEWS FROM THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM

SEPTEMBER 2017

A Message from Our Executive Director



Welcome to the 2017-18 school year! As we begin our fifth year together, I want to assure you that we will continue to foster a learning environment where students are eager to learn, respect, value and love one another.

Our schools create a place that helps children to become confident, competent learners and compassionate people who are prepared to be future leaders.

Thank you for your continued support of the Catholic Schools Consortium. Because of your belief in the value of a Catholic education and the continued parish and community support, we have achieved a wide array of successes including:

- An ongoing focus on our Catholic faith and identity. Our schools continue to identify and promote their school charisms and work diligently to provide an atmosphere rich in our Catholic faith.
- A third consecutive year of increased enrollment: 1,815 preschool through eighth-grade students are enrolled for the 2017-2018 school year. This is an increase from 1,420 students prior to the start of the Consortium.
- Continued program development. We are now offering Transitional Kindergarten at Holy Cross and St. Thomas More.

- Newly created Library Media Centers in each building.
- Continued robust professional development: For the third year, our five schools will join together for our Consortium-wide initiative in differentiation of instruction. We strive to meet each student at his/her academic level and help them grow and develop from there.
- Enhanced Technology: \$1.7 million has been spent to increase our infrastructures, the number of student devices, and purchase software to enhance our curriculum.
- The addition of a Dual Language Immersion program at the start of the 2018-19 school year at Our Lady of Lourdes and Sts. Peter and Paul.

We are grateful for the generosity of our 16 parishes that financially and spiritually support us. Thank you for partnering with us for another successful school year!

Yours in Christ,

Donna Bishop

Consortium Executive Director
Archdiocese of Omaha Assistant
Superintendent



New Advancement Director Joins Consortium Team



The Omaha Catholic School Consortium welcomes **Kara Wesely** as its new director of Advancement.

Kara is an alumnus of St. Columbkille Catholic School and Daniel J. Gross Catholic

High School. Kara studied journalism and mass communications at the University of Nebraska Lincoln. Prior to joining the Omaha Catholic School Consortium, Kara was a freelance writer and, most recently, a public relations specialist with Mosaic, a faith-based organization serving people with intellectual disabilities.

A lifelong resident of Omaha, Kara has strong ties to the South Omaha community - her mother is a graduate of Sts. Peter and Paul, her father is a graduate of St. Thomas More and her husband is a graduate of St. Bernadette.

Kara and her husband, Todd, have been married for 11 years. They are the proud parents of Jake, 7, Vivian, 5, and Caroline, 4. In her free time, Kara enjoys spending time with her family.

Arellanes Honored at National Education Meeting



Beatriz Arellanes, Latino School Enrollment coordinator for the Catholic Schools Office, was honored by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) with the Catherine T. McNamee Award. The award

is given for promoting a vision of culturally and economically diverse Catholic schools serving students with diverse needs. Beatriz was honored at the organization's April convention in St. Louis, Mo., for her efforts to promote Catholic schools among Latino families, help them enroll their children and meet other needs. The NCEA convention is the largest private education association gathering in the country.

In addition, Beatriz, along with Patrick Slattery, former superintendent of Catholic Schools, and Shannan Brommer, director of the archdiocese's Stewardship and Development Office, presented on the archdiocese's "Awaken Greatness" marketing campaign, which in its third year, has been credited with boosting enrollment in the archdiocese over the last two years. Beatriz discussed the Latino outreach portion of the campaign.

Congratulations!

Chris Nelson Named to New Position in Catholic Schools Office



Chris Nelson, former Holy Cross principal, is the new coordinator of professional development for the Archdiocese of Omaha's Catholic Schools Office. In this newly created position, Nelson works closely with administrators and

faculty at archdiocesan schools to assist them with implementing best educational practices for the nearly 20,000 students within the Archdiocese of Omaha schools.

"Chris has been an integral part of the success of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium in leading educational initiatives that are being

replicated by archdiocesan elementary schools outside of the Consortium," said Donna Bishop, Consortium executive director and assistant superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Nelson taught grades second through eighth for over 17 years and served as an administrator for 10 years, 6 of which were at Holy Cross.

"I have been blessed to be part of our Archdiocesan schools for the past 27 years and am so proud of the work we do in our schools. I look forward to supporting the Consortium, along with all of the schools in our Archdiocese as we work to provide quality Catholic education to the students of the Archdiocese of Omaha."

Sts. Peter & Paul Alum Receives Inspiring Alumni Award

Samantha Contreras, a graduate of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic School, recently received the Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) of Omaha's Inspiring Alumni Award at its annual CHANCE



Samantha Contreras, center, with her parents at the CSF CHANCE luncheon

Luncheon, June 7 at the CenturyLink Center. A junior at Omaha South High School, Contreras is passionate about photography, criminal investigation, and forensics, and she credits this interest to her experience with the yearbook team at Sts. Peter and Paul. "Our multimedia

teachers helped teach and encourage me through this process and I am so grateful to them for instilling in me this sense of direction in my life," said Samantha.

About 700 people attended the luncheon where Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, an Omaha native who also attended Sts. Peter and Paul school and parish, was the keynote speaker. He talked about the importance of school choice as a way to fight poverty.

Contreras said she believes that because of the Children's Scholarship Fund her family was able to send her and her three sisters to a Catholic school "where I not only received a great academic education but grew stronger in my faith. It was very important to me and my family that I had an education that met our needs."

The luncheon raised about \$310,000 for scholarships to parochial and private elementary schools.

Cardinal Cupich returned to Omaha June 29 to help the Sts. Peter & Paul parish celebrate its 100th anniversary.

COOL NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

St. Thomas More and Holy Cross Now Offering Transitional Kindergarten

St. Thomas More and Holy Cross schools are now offering full-day transitional kindergarten (TK) beginning this school year. The schools are the first in the Archdiocese of Omaha to offer this type of full-day program.

Transitional kindergarten is a two-year program meant to support students who are eligible for kindergarten but are not academically and/or socially ready to be successful in a traditional kindergarten setting. The program also supports children who have just missed the Nebraska age guideline for entrance into kindergarten. Through a combination of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten curriculum, the program's goal is to bring each child to grade-level proficiency by third grade, if not sooner. TK students will participate in all aspects of the school day along with the rest of the student body.

"The benefits of transitional kindergarten positions students for long-term success as they have less anxiety, less need for remedial



services and/or retention," said Donna Bishop, Consortium executive director and assistant superintendent of Catholic Schools. Data has shown that students who have attended TK have higher achievement scores beyond third grade.

Bishop said that TK programs are successfully occurring and expanding in other dioceses throughout the country. The programs are leading to enhancements in Catholic school enrollment and academic gains for those students receiving the TK curriculum.

New Principals Begin Tenure at Holy Cross, Sts. Peter and Paul

Holy Cross School and Sts. Peter and Paul schools are welcoming new principals this school year. Tawnya Mann is leading the way at Holy Cross and Andrew Bauer heads up Sts. Peter and Paul as principal.



Tawnya Mann

Before coming to Holy Cross, Mann was assistant principal, K-8 physical education teacher, technology coordinator and athletic director at St. Patrick in Elkhorn.

She brings 13 years of education

experience to Holy Cross; all her teaching experience has been in Catholic schools. Mann said she believes that Catholic schools are an excellent place to help students build a relationship with Jesus.

In addition to her background in education, Mann spent several years working as the director of operations for a semiprofessional soccer team, and is currently active in coaching high school soccer.

Outside of the classroom, she enjoys spending time with her family; she and her husband, Casey, have four children: Keagan, McKenna, Kellen and Kennedy. Mann said she is looking forward to getting to know the staff, students, and families, and becoming an integral part of the Holy Cross community.



Andrew Bauer

Andrew Bauer, a St. Louis, Mo., native, was most recently a teacher at Marian High School. He taught all levels of Spanish and served as the World Languages department chair. In addition, he worked with Campus Ministry,

advised the Disciplinary Review Board and ran the Student Board program.

Bauer attended Catholic schools his entire life. He graduated from Creighton University with a degree in history and Spanish. He then spent two years as a volunteer teacher in the Magis Catholic Teacher Corps. He holds two master's degrees – one in education in secondary teaching and another in science in educational leadership – from Creighton University. Bauer enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with friends and family. His wife, Ashley, is an art teacher at Marian.

Bauer said he is very excited to be joining the Sts. Peter and Paul community, and looks forward to working closely with the student body, faculty, staff and school families.

Our Lady of Lourdes and Sts. Peter and Paul to Offer Dual Language Immersion

Our Lady of Lourdes and Sts. Peter and Paul schools will offer a new English and Spanish dual language immersion model for the 2018-2019 school year. The model will allow students to learn for a half day in English and a half day in Spanish.

The program will begin in the preschool, pre-kindergarten, transitional kindergarten and kindergarten grade levels. Additional grade levels will be added each year. Dual

immersion subjects will include math, science, social studies, reading and writing classes. The model provides an opportunity for all students to achieve high levels of bilingual proficiency. An information session was held in May at Our Lady of Lourdes School for interested parents.

“This program will ensure students can read, write and speak both languages thus becoming bilingual in the course of their pre-school through eighth-grade formation,” said Donna Bishop, Consortium executive director and assistant superintendent of Catholic Schools. “This cross-cultural model teaches language skills to enable students to succeed in a diverse world.”

Alumni, we want to hear from you!

Attention alumni of Assumption, Holy Cross, Holy Ghost, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Agnes, St. Bernadette, St. Bridget, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary, St. Peter, St. Stanislaus, St. Thomas More, and Sts. Peter and Paul – we want to hear from you! Let us know where you are today and we'll keep you in the loop about what's happening at the Consortium schools. To register, go to omahacsc.org/stay-connected/alumni/.

Support Our Schools

It is through generous support from individuals, alumni, and area businesses that we are able to bring quality Catholic education to nearly 1,800 students. To discover how you can help strengthen our schools by giving the gift of your time, talent or treasures, please contact Kara Wesely, Advancement director at kjwesely@archomaha.org or 402.590.2815.

This is a publication of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium

To submit a story idea contact: Kara Wesely, Advancement director at kjwesely@archomaha.org

Visit our website at: Omahacsc.org

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 all abilities to excel and become faith-filled leaders in service to God and others.

Omaha Catholic School Consortium

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