



NORTH HILLS REGIONAL CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Nurturing Catholic faith, academics and service.

Office of the Regional Board of Directors

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November 22, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Prior to the start of the current school year, the NHRCES Board and regional staff conducted discussions regarding the most important objectives to ensure that momentum will continue to build as we entered our third year. Some considerations include: What more can be done to help our students and school families develop a deeper personal relationship with Jesus? How can we better communicate the achievements of our students and faculty? What steps can be taken to inform our community of the value our schools provide the North Hills region and beyond? What are the immediate and longer-term initiatives to keep tuition as low as possible and enrollment growing during a challenging time for our Diocese?

God's work is being done every day in all our schools. Jesus' presence can be seen and felt in many moments by our students and staff. Our students are demonstrating academic excellence. They are learning life-enriching lessons through extracurricular activities and acts of service to live the Catholic faith now and throughout their lives. We all know the lifelong impact this has on students and school families. The board is striving to develop action plans to better publicize the significance of Catholic schools to our communities. Having Catholic schools within our community should be a priority for our parishioners and neighbors. We must work collaboratively to regularly enlighten our parishes and neighbors of how Catholic Schools make a difference and deserve their support. Your continued involvement, generosity and prayers are major contributors to the success of our schools.

Board of Directors

We are happy to announce that eight of the ten parish groupings within the region have representatives on the board. The newest board member is Jeanne Riley from St. James Church in the Aleppo/Sewickley grouping. Jeanne attended Catholic schools throughout elementary and high school. She earned a BA in Sociology and a MsEd K-8 from Duquesne University. She is a retired teacher and principal with experience in both public and Catholic schools. Jeanne received a Golden Apple Award in 2007. Jeanne currently spends much of her time volunteering at St. James Parish and School. For more than 15 years, Jeanne has been heavily involved in fundraising, recruitment and retention.

As of this writing, representatives are being sought from the Bellevue/Emsworth/Franklin Park and Ambridge/Baden/Conway/Franklin Park groupings. Lay persons with professional experience in marketing and advancement are needed to augment the professional backgrounds of current board members. If you know of people from these groupings that would be excellent board members, please encourage them to inquire about joining the board.

Personnel

This new school year we were excited to welcome two new principals to NHRCES. Their experience and enthusiasm will continue to nurture a climate that focuses on the development of Gospel values, healthy self-esteem, and academic excellence within our NHRCES schools.

Mrs. Moira Regan Edmiston was appointed Principal of Blessed Trinity Academy. Her extensive experience as a classroom teacher started at the Winchester Thurston School in Pittsburgh, followed by 10 years in San Francisco at two different schools as a teacher and leader. Most recently she served as a Middle School Director and 5-7th grade teacher at the Lowell School in Washington, DC for 10 years. Mrs. Edmiston has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Education and a Master's degree in Educational Administration. She is focused on building a strong team to ensure a productive partnership between teachers, students and parents; educating and supporting the leaders of the future.

Mrs. Patricia Osekowski was appointed Principal of Holy Cross Academy. Mrs. Osekowski was the principal at Saint Patrick School in Canonsburg for the past two years where she was a teacher for nine years prior to her appointment to principal at the school. Mrs. Osekowski has a Bachelor's degree in Special Education and a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in mathematics. Her emphasis is to continue to enhance the traditions of the faith-filled community of Holy Cross Academy. Mrs. Osekowski will be utilizing her experience and leadership skills to achieve academic excellence in a highly collaborative and goal-oriented manner.

Please welcome these new instructional leaders to our community. Feel free to contact them with any questions, concerns or ideas you would like to share!

New NHRCES Business Manager and Office Clerk

Amy Condosta started as the region's new Business Manager on October 21st. Amy has been involved with St. Scholastica Parish and CDTCA in some capacity over the past 17 years. 11 years ago, Amy became the bulletin editor for the parish bulletin and eventually accepted the Business Manager position for both CDTCA and St. Scholastica. Since April of 2018, Amy continued to work as a part-time bookkeeper for St. Scholastica handling all the accounts payable, payroll and personnel functions while working full-time in the accounting department for a medical practice. Amy is excited for this opportunity and is thankful to be working for NHRCES.

In addition, as support for both the Regional Administrator and the Business Manager, the board has approved the hire of Amy Kreutzer to assist on a part-time basis. Her role will continue to develop as the needs of the region continues to grow.

The board wishes to thank Andrea Vescio for her contributions as the original business manager for the region. We wish her the best of luck with her new endeavor with the Extra Mile Foundation.

Enrollment

Enrollment for the 2019/2020 school year is 93.05% of enrollment from the prior year. See the table below. This number is particularly impressive because of the extraordinary size of the graduating class from last year – 168 students. Had the size of the class been closer to normal, enrollment would have been about 97% of the prior year. By comparison, the total enrollment for 2018/2019 was approximately 90% from the prior year.

	Blessed Francis Seelos Academy	Blessed Trinity Academy	Christ the Divine Teacher Catholic Academy	Holy Cross Academy	St. James Catholic School	NHRCES
Pre-3	24	6	5	13	7	55
PreK	36	12	17	32	15	112
K	44	14	17	33	6	114
1	25	10	13	25	16	89
2	27	9	25	33	10	104
3	26	22	13	28	20	109
4	25	18	27	32	20	122
5	39	23	19	35	21	137
6	28	21	20	47	20	136
7	41	21	27	24	14	127
8	38	13	20	27	16	114
PK-8 TOTAL	353	169	203	329	165	1219

Academic Achievement

Each fall, the Diocese of Pittsburgh administers standardized testing to all students in grades two through eight in Math and Language Arts. Grades five through eight complete Science and Social Studies tests as well as the Math and Language Arts.

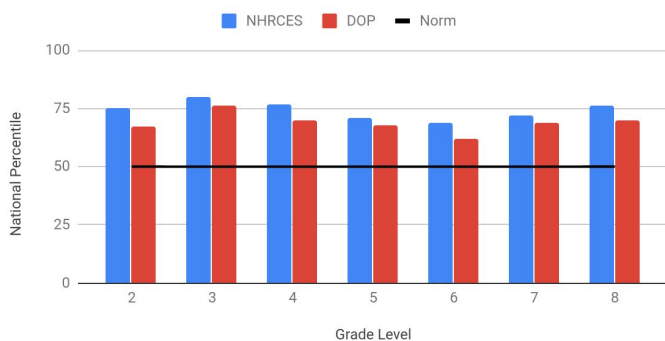
The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) is a nationally administered set of exams designed to assess the abilities of students. These assessments measure achievement in several important content areas including vocabulary, word analysis, reading, listening, language, mathematics, computation, social studies, and science. The ITBS help determine how students are performing on nationwide standards.

The Iowa Assessments help teachers identify a student’s strengths and areas that may need additional emphasis. The Iowa Assessments also measure student growth and progress in the content areas assessed from year to year. The assessments produce information that enables sound decision making and provides a focus for teachers and administrators to evaluate instruction.

We are very proud of our talented students and dedicated faculty. Through their efforts and our outstanding parent support, the NHRCES students are far outpacing their peers on this widely given, standardized test.

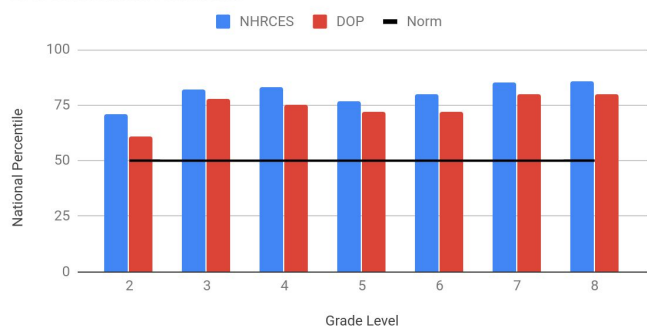
Reading

2019 Standardized Test Results



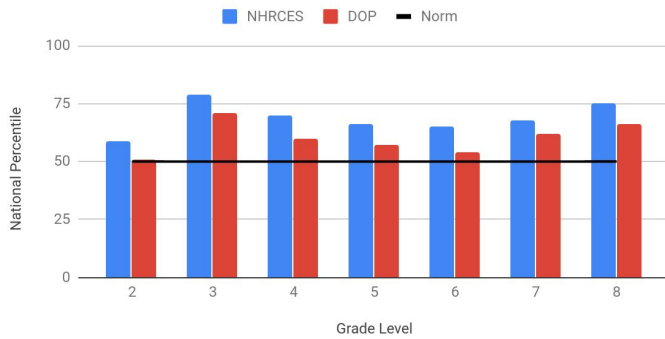
English Language Arts

2019 Standardized Test Results



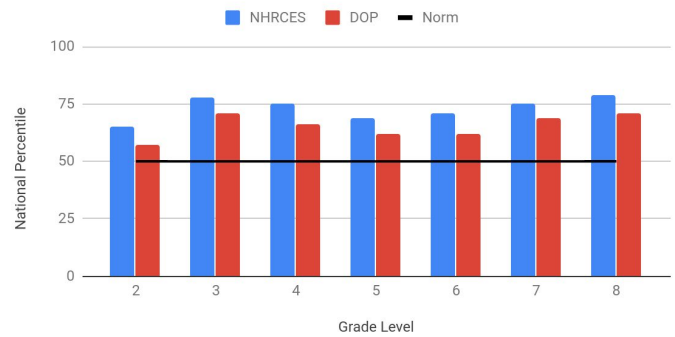
Math Total

2019 Standardized Test Results



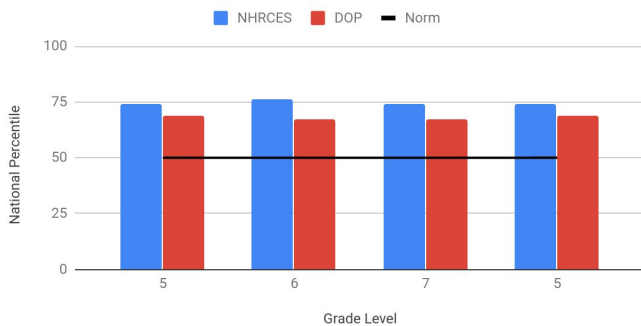
Core Composite

2019 Standardized Test Results



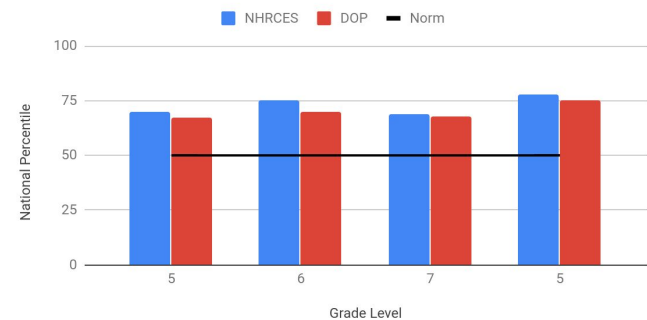
Social Studies Total

2019 Standardized Test Results



Science Total

2019 Standardized Test Results



While we are proud of these high test scores and celebrate the hard work of our students and teachers, we also realize that standardized test scores are just one of many factors we can use to judge how effectively we are realizing our mission and vision. We also consider to what extent students are drawing closer to Christ, how students are treating each other and co-existing in a Christian community, the degree of parent/guardian involvement and much more. The report above in no way diminishes the importance of these other considerations. These results reinforce our continuing focus on excellence in education for all our students.

Finance, Fundraising & Advancement

Year to date, the region is operating within budget. Cost savings initiatives are under constant consideration. For example, prior to the current school year, renegotiation of copier contracts resulted in significant savings for the schools and regional administration.

Tuition, fundraising, and subsidy from the parishes are the only sources of revenue. Keeping tuition as stable as possible is dependent on primarily two factors; enrollment and fundraising. Maximizing enrollment enables each school to most efficiently utilize staff and facility expenses. For example, a classroom that can accommodate five additional students cost the same as one that is at capacity. The tuition from the five additional students will contribute to lowering overall tuition or reducing the fundraising objective. Methods to improve the advancement efforts at each school and throughout the region must be deployed to minimize tuition increases.

Fundraising plans are in full swing at each of the schools. Finding methods to derive maximum results from each fundraising effort is a priority of the region. Coordination of activities has improved each year. The board is seeking expertise to initiate the most effective programs. If you have ideas or expertise raising funds, please contact the principal or School Advisory Council at your school or the regional office.

Thank you for your prayerful support of Catholic education. Your commitment is setting a course for extraordinary results for academic excellence, spiritual development and acts of service to others.

May God bless you and your family!

NHRCES Board of Directors

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