



NORTH HILLS REGIONAL CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

800 Avila Court, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

(412) 837-1056

May 21, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we are all aware the 2018/2019 school year is quickly coming to an end. As each of the schools plan their year-end activities and festivities, the NHRCES board is formulating plans and expectations for the 2019/2020 school year. The board is defining objectives to further promote our core values of Catholic identity, rigorous academic programming, and service to the community in our schools. We will also set objectives for continuous improvement in enrollment, cost containment, fundraising and advancement. These are vital to a thriving Catholic education organization. Your continued support, involvement and prayers are major contributors to success. More detail will be provided in future letters.

Below is a summary of initiatives addressed by the board of directors and region staff, faculty and volunteers over the last few months.

Reconfiguration of the Board of Directors

The new parish groupings created an opportunity to maximize the representation on the board by a representative from each of the groupings that make up the NHRCES region. The board expanded from nine members to 13. Rev. James Gretz (Etna/Glenshaw/Millvale) and Rev. Dale DeNinno (Lower Allegheny Valley) are two new administrators to join the board. Christine Mathews Long (Northside 1) is also a new member. There are currently three board openings for which active recruiting is taking place. Representatives are needed from the Bellevue/Emsworth/Franklin Park, Aleppo/Sewickley, and Ambridge/Baden/Conway/Franklin Park groupings. Lay persons with professional experience in education, 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 us.

Enrollment

The enrollment forecast for 2019/2020 school year is very encouraging. As of May 12th, confirmed enrollment for K-8 is 85% of the total from the prior year and 82.9% Pre-K through 8th. At the same time last year, the confirmed enrolled was 78.25% and 71.7% respectively. The total enrollment for 2018/2019 was approximately 90% from prior year. There are 346 students that are in various stages of the enrollment process that are in addition to the totals mentioned above. When these students are completely enrolled the retention rate for 2019/2020 will exceed 96%! Thank you to the school staffs and parents for all your efforts!!!

Open Houses and contact with families whose intention is unknown continue which will further improve the enrollment totals. The positive trend this year is particularly impressive because the graduating 8th grade class is large (168 students). Replacing that many students is noteworthy.

The teachers union contract requires that teachers be informed by May 31st of the potential for displacement due to lower enrollment. Every effort should be made to avoid having to make the announcement by achieving 100% retention by May 31st. Recruitment is a never-ending initiative as enrollment usually continues through the summer months.

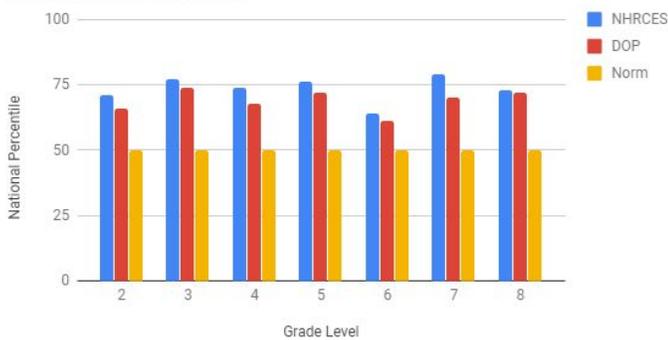
One more comment about enrollment. For the 2018/2019 school year, over \$520,000 was awarded to families in the region for tuition assistance. If you know of families that have not enrolled due to financial difficulties, please encourage them to contact the regional office before making a definitive decision. Additionally, the board is exploring options to expand the amount of funds available for tuition assistance.

Academic Success

The 2018 Standardized Testing Results have been published and we are very proud of our students and teachers across the region.

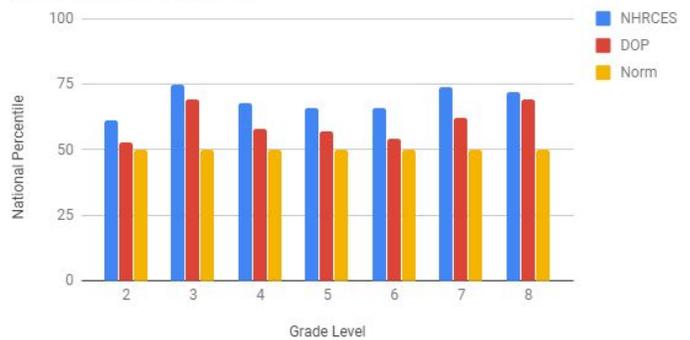
Reading

2018 Standardized Test Results



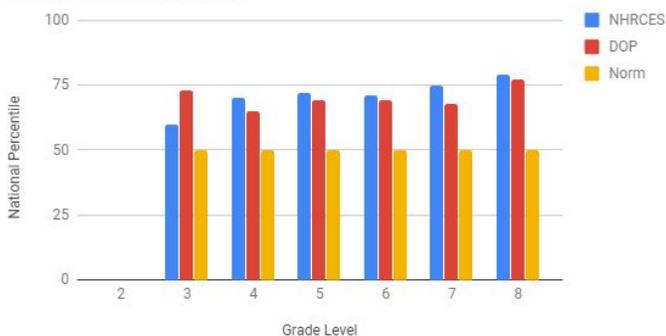
Math Total

2018 Standardized Test Results



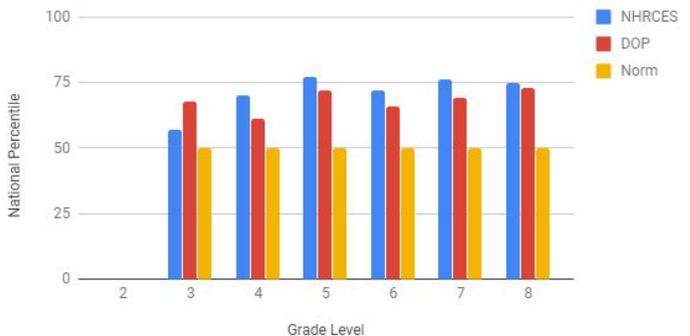
Science

2018 Standardized Test Results



Social Studies Total

2018 Standardized Test Results



Fundraising

Fundraising is vital to the ongoing success of Catholic education and we need to continually get the word out about the importance of investing in Catholic education. If you have ideas or expertise raising funds, please contact the School Advisory Council at your school or the regional office.

Each of the schools are conducting the final fundraising events of the school year. Most of the schools are on pace to meet their fundraising goals. The SAC's and the region staff continue to carefully coordinate events to maximize participation without overlapping dates. The board is investigating fundraising options that will benefit the entire region to enhance the effort and results of each school.

The Gift Card Rebate / Tuition Credit Program is finished for the 2018/2019 school year. 432 families of 942 families in NHRCES schools earned tuition credit in the amount of \$121,716. The average amount of tuition earned was approximately \$282 per family. Multiple families maximized their credits and earned over \$2000. Details on the 2019/2020 program will be available soon.

Personnel & Communication

Our regional administrator, Mike Killmeyer, had a personal objective of making more visits to the schools this year to support staff and interact more frequently with students and parents. Mike's goal was 76 separate visits to collaborate with the building principals to observe the level of student engagement. He has been encouraged by these visits which have been substantiated by the academic results provided above. He has surpassed his goal. The response from the staff has been positive. Mike has gleaned significant personal and professional benefits from his initiative.

In January, the board was briefed on the results of the NCEA Benchmarks Survey Report. A summary of the parents' comments was reviewed and discussed. Most of the comments focused on two main areas; 1. Communication, 2. Curriculum and instruction. Each school developed actionable plans to address parents' concerns and improve overall communication and collaboration.

The principal position at Holy Cross Academy is vacant. Mike Killmeyer has been the acting principal since mid-April. Recruitment for a permanent replacement began immediately.

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

May God bless you and your families!

NHRCES Board of Directors

Matthew Petnuch (Interim President)

Rev. John R. Rushofsky

Rev. Robert J. Vular

Rev. Timothy F. Whalen

Rev. Paul J. Zywan

Rev. James R. Gretz

Rev. Dale E. DeNinno

Anne Monteverde Haus

Jane Ann Regan

Christine Mathews Long

Cc: Very Rev. Lawrence A. DiNardo, Vicar General/General Secretary

Michael Killmeyer, Regional Administrator

Sr. Patrice Hughes, Educational Consultant

Anna Torrance, Esq., Secretary for External Affairs