Preparing Scholars, Leaders, a Grace
Diocese of Knoxville
Catholic Schools
Annual Report 2019

The Most Reverend Richard F. Stika

Dear Friends,

I often think when parents enter the Catholic school for the first time with the hope of enrolling their child, deep within their hearts, they hold the secret desire to see Jesus. To the 3000 students and their families in our Catholic schools, they know our schools are not just academic learning environments. They know their families are the true beneficiaries of a special gift. The schools are the places where students can encounter individual attention and a true sense of belonging in environments permeated by the love of Christ.

Our Catholic schools are built upon the pillars of faith, knowledge, community, and leadership. As I reflect on the impact of Catholic schools, I am deeply grateful for my own Catholic school education and how it has shaped and defined my life. I am thankful for the Catholic school educators who give their lives in noble service to teach their students about Jesus and the world. And I am thankful for the dedicated support of the faithful throughout our diocese who contribute to the schools through time, talent and treasure.

Our Catholic schools are invaluable gifts to our mission and ministry in East Tennessee. As you peruse the pages of this report, I hope you are drawn in to witness the difference our Catholic schools are making.

Through Christian doctrine formation and education, we are placing our hope in our youth. The future of our Church and the world will be in the hands of the youth. It is incumbent upon each of us to equip them with the values, skills, and knowledge for an ever-changing global society. Catholic schools can afford the best opportunity to educate and form the whole child.

“May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

Notre Dame High School, Chattanooga

St. Mary’s Catholic School, Johnson City

St. Joseph Regional Catholic School, Knoxville
St. Mary’s Catholic School, Oak Ridge
Our Catholic schools serve students from various religious affiliations, but the highest percentage of students in elementary and secondary school are Roman Catholic (81%).

The racial profile of the 2,124 students in the foundational schools indicate 89% are Caucasian, 5% Asian, 3% African American, and 3% two or more races. Nineteen percent of the elementary student population report to be of Latino heritage.

St. Jude Catholic School students with teacher, Marian Joyce

St. Dominic Catholic School Preschool students

The Catholic Schools within the diocese welcomed 3,142 students in preschool through Grade 12 for this academic year. Our schools are more than learning communities. They are places where students can truly thrive and families can be assured of individual attention for their children. Many schools claim they have a sense of community, but families and teachers throughout the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Knoxville report the relational difference in our schools. Whether teacher to student, parent to teacher, or teacher to teacher, interactions cultivate a loving, family-centered environment.

Our schools embrace the unique attributes of each child. Approximately 24% of the students have exceptional learning needs and another 14% have diverse linguistic backgrounds with a native language other than English. All students are fully included in the educational program and receive individualized academic instruction for accelerated learning or support as needed.

The 338 professional educators that serve on the Catholic schools’ faculties strive to inspire students to excellence in everything they do. Their actions are visible signs of the schools’ mission to prepare . . .

St. John Neumann Catholic School, Knoxville. Our schools have 7 female religious and 10 clergy serving.
IMPACT on ACADEMICS:
Awakening the Greatness Within Each Student

Notre Dame High School and
Knoxville Catholic High School
Students Achieve

$ 32.6 million in college scholarships

2019 ACT COLLEGE EXAM SCORES (DIOCESAN)

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The 2019 graduates from the two high schools reflect another year of outstanding performance on the college entrance exams. ACT scores for the diocese are reflected above. In addition, the two high schools had 3 National Merit Scholars, 3 Semi-Finalists, and 2 Commended Scholars on the SAT college entrance exam.

CATHOLIC STUDENTS’ REPORT CARD

Students in grades three through eight take nationally standardized Iowa Assessments every spring. The series of assessments compare student performance in English/Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies to students in over 200,000 schools across the nation. The scores reported are based on national percentile ranks (NPRs) with a range of 1-99 and an average mean of 50. As evidenced below, students in our elementary schools performed higher than students across the nation.

2019 IOWA ASSESSMENTS

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<th>GRADE</th>
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- College acceptances
- 130 different colleges in 30 states, D.C. and Spain
- Students passed Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- 70% scored passing scores on 559 AP Exams
- Military Appointments or ROTC Scholarships
- 2-Military Preparatory Academies for Air Force Academy and the Naval Prep Academy

Grades 3, 7, 8 - Top 20% of the nation

Grades 7 & 8 - Top 12% in Reading/English/Language Arts
Our vibrant Catholic schools are rooted in the same mission that honors and embraces the teachings and rituals of a proud tradition in Catholic school education. Yet, each school offers its own unique charisma and distinctive expressions in the faith life of the school community. The breadth and depth of experiences are reflected in our distinctive devotions, acts of service, and prayerful works.

Sacrament preparation is an integral part of the religious formation in the schools. This past year, the schools celebrated sacraments of Christian initiation with 469 students.

Focus on Faith Formation

Students in our Catholic schools have the opportunity to attend Mass weekly and participate in religious instruction daily. Each liturgical season invites students to encounter Jesus through prayer and devotions that enables the students to develop a life-long relationship with our Lord. This spiritual formation provides the moral foundation to give students strength, confidence, and support to become their best selves.

37,444 hours of Community Service

Service to our communities is an integral component to helping our students learn about others in our local and world communities. It is an opportunity for students to look within themselves to discover their own talents and skills and how these gifts can be shared within our homes and communities. Listed below are a few of the organizations who benefitted from our students’ charitable works this past year.

- Angel Trees/Nursing Homes
- Arbor Terrace Nursing Home
- Catholic Charities
- Catholic Ladies of Charity
- Catholic Heart Work Camp
- Chattanooga area Food Bank
- Columbus Home
- Crisis Pregnancy Center
- East TN Children’s Hospital
- Family Promise
- FISH Pantry
- Habitat for Humanity
- Haiti sister parishes and schools
- Mission trips to Belize and Haiti
- Mobile Meals
- Project Linus Blankets
- Providence Medical Clinic
- Ronald McDonald Houses
- Saint Jude Children’s Hospital
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- STAR Volunteer therapy programs
- St. Vincent De Paul Societies
- TC Thompson Children’s Hospital
Student Life

And then I would like to speak especially to you young people, committed to your daily duties, your study, your work to relationships of friendship, to helping others; your future also depends on how you live these precious years of your life.

Pope Francis, Feast of St. Joseph Speech, 2013

Nurturing Growth—Realizing Dreams

Developing the whole student in mind, body, and spirit, requires engagement beyond the classroom. Whether a student is an athlete, an artist, or an engineering genius, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Knoxville have something to offer each child. Pope Francis provides the guide to Catholic educators when he encourages each of us to “create the material and spiritual conditions for young people’s full development.”

Notable Achievements

State Championships:
- KCHS Dance Team
- KCHS Gymnastics

Team Accomplishments:
- KCHS Girls’ Volleyball State Runner-Up
- NDHS Girls’ cross-country
- NDHS Students Qualify for State Golf Tournament
- NDHS Football Advance to State Quarterfinals
- NDHS Boys Tennis Advance to State Final Four
- NDHS Boys Bowling Region Champions

Individual Accomplishments:
- KCHS student, Jake Renfree, Gatorade Runner of the Year
- St. Mary’s, Oak Ridge, 2 students qualified for Nationals in Cross Country
- OLPH student, George Gribben, Creative Thinking Award
- OLPH student, Millie Meagher, Artistic Talent & Excellence Award
- St. Joseph student, Sarah McLean qualified as one of the top 1% of History students in the Tennessee
- 22 students placed in regional science fairs

Experiential Learning

Schools provide many unique learning opportunities both on and off campus. These curricular and cocurricular activities include environmental exploration trips, historical trips to our nation’s capital, and various other opportunities for students to learn about the world around them in engaging experiences. For example, St. Mary’s Catholic School in Johnson City began their own agri-business by growing and marketing flowers at the local Farmer’s Market.
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As this school year began, our schools embraced the theme of hope. Pope Francis encourages us to put on faith, hope, and love for a fulfilling life. Our faith provides our focus, our hope encourages us to do God’s work, and our love gives us joy on our journey. As we now enter into this season of Advent, while we prayerfully hope for our Lord, I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the support given to our Catholic Schools! I also pray that during this preparation time before Christmas and throughout the coming days, you and your family will be surrounded by love, joy, happiness, and the hope of a blessed new year!

Peace in Christ,
Dr. Sedonna J. Prater
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Growing Leaders Within

Teachers in our schools model a commitment to lifelong learning. While 67% of our teachers hold advanced degrees, our educators continue to strive to improve their knowledge and instructional practices by embracing opportunities for increased professional learning. The students are the direct beneficiaries of the increased skills and innovative ideas employed as a result of continuous training.

In every great school, there are also teachers whose vision extends beyond their own classrooms—to beyond their own teams and departments. Such teachers recognize that students’ positive school experiences depend not only on interaction with individual teachers, but also on the complex systems in place throughout their school and the diocesan system of schools. They experience a sense of professional urgency—what some have called the “leadership itch.” Sometimes on their own initiative and sometimes within a more formal structure, these professionals find a variety of ways to exercise leadership.

Recognizing the innate talents and skills of these teacher leaders within our schools and the need to more appropriately prepare for leadership succession, the Catholic Schools’ Office developed a Leadership Academy to strengthen leadership aptitude to apply to Catholic schools. Faculty members were invited to either nominate someone or apply themselves through a formal process.

The selection committee was enthusiastic by the number of applications and interest in the Leadership Academy. Current Catholic school principals and presidents worked with the superintendent to develop a coherent curriculum that focuses on the four domains of the National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Schools: (1) Mission & Catholic Identity, (2) Governance & Leadership, (3) Academic Excellence, and (4) Operational Vitality. From these applicants, 14 teachers were selected to be the first cohort group in the Academy.

Leadership succession in any organization is an inevitable occurrence. Planning for that succession is essential to maintaining quality and excellent standards. It is the hope that the Leadership Academy will provide a foundation in Catholic school leadership that can be used in the participants’ current role, as well as, be the impetus for the possibility of continued education in Catholic school administration and leadership at a college or university.

Congratulations to the Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools’ Leadership Academy Cohort 1:

Naomi Berlinski, St. John Neumann Catholic School
Martha Brach, Sacred Heart Cathedral School
Amanda Carr, St. Dominic Catholic School
Kendall Doogan, St. Mary’s, Oak Ridge
Becky Frye, St. Mary’s, Johnson City
Suzanne Gaudin, St. Jude Catholic School
Laura Goodhard, Notre Dame High School
Valerie Hans, Sacred Heart Cathedral School
Kathleen Karnes, Sacred Heart Cathedral School
Jared Kinutis, Knoxville Catholic High School
Mollie Krueger, St. Joseph Catholic School
Kathleen Preston, St. Jude Catholic School
Katrina Ron, Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Wendy Waxmonske, St. Joseph Catholic School

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We Hope to Hear From You!

In an effort to more fully serve and realize the educational ministry of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Knoxville, Dr. Sedonna Prater, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, is seeking input from parishioners on their perspectives related to our Catholic Schools. Please take a few moments to complete the survey designed for schools in the region nearest to your parish by using one of the links below. Thank you for providing your insights.

- Chattanooga - https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DOKCSAIS-Chatt
- Kingsport/Johnson City - https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DOKCSAIS-KingsportJC

Visit our website for information about our Catholic schools in East Tennessee.
https://dioknox.org/diocese-of-knoxville-catholic-schools/

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Mrs. Jamie Goodhard, St. Jude Catholic School Principal and the Santesteban family, Fernando, Chanel, and Maximo. Applications are now being accepted for the 2020 school year. Contact one of our Catholic schools for a visit or shadow for a day for your student.

Catholic Schools

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Top prize = $10,000
Go to: dioknox.org/catholic-schools-2019-raffle/

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$5,226,673 in tuition support
$141,347.09 August Second Collection
$141,347.09 August Second Collection for Catholic Schools

Visit our website for information about our Catholic schools in East Tennessee.
https://dioknox.org/diocese-of-knoxville-catholic-schools/

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