

# 2023-24

## ANNUAL REPORT



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE  
of  
PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



*From the Bishop*

## DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Greetings in the Lord. Once again it is my privilege to share with you the Annual Report for our Catholic schools. Like our schools themselves, this report can serve as a means for evangelization, as we can clearly see how God is working in and through our beloved diocese.

God's hand is at work when hearts and minds are open to receiving the Good News of Jesus Christ. God is at work when a child expresses a desire for Baptism and First Communion, and the rest of the family follows suit. The love of God is shared through the many hours of service that our high school students offer to those who are hungry or alone or in need. God must be pleased when His children gather each day for Mass or recreation or study, and so our schools reflect His very presence constantly.

I am thankful that most of our schools are nearly at capacity or are full, knowing that we are going to open a couple of new schools in the diocese very soon. Consider how many lives are touched by Catholic schools! It is not an exaggeration to say that I very well might not be a priest and bishop today, were it not for my experiences in Christ the King School, in South Bend, Indiana. There my vocation to be a religious priest was nourished and strengthened constantly. What a joy it is for me to be the shepherd of so many wonderful schools and parishes here.

Thank you for your trust in us. Thank you to our teachers, principals, faculties, families, and benefactors. Thank God for our Catholic schools.

In Christ's Love,

Most Rev. William A. Wack, CSC  
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

## OUR MISSION

Filled with faith, hope, and love, the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee's Catholic schools and early learning centers seek to glorify God by challenging and supporting students as they strive to become joyful scholars and saints through a rigorous academic curriculum as well as complete immersion in the Catholic pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.





**DEAR FRIENDS OF THE DIOCESE OF  
PENSACOLA-TALLAHASSEE,**

Thank you for taking the time to read this annual report about our Catholic schools and early learning centers. As superintendent, I'm delighted to share with you the successes of the past school year, made possible by the hard work and dedication of our faculty/staff, administrators, and pastors. They spent countless hours in service of our Lord for the growth and development of our students. This report provides a summary of the incredible work done by the teams at each of our schools and centers. It is an honor for me to share the success story of Catholic education in our diocese with you.

Our Catholic schools exist for the sole purpose of leading families to Christ through a rigorous education where the Catholic Faith permeates all facets of what we do, which we refer to as Catholic immersion. We do this to implement our Bishop's vision of students being able to articulate and defend their faith by the time they graduate. By encountering Christ infused in all aspects of the student experience, our students grow in knowledge and personal relationship with Christ, aiming to be master communicators of the written and spoken word while growing in their faith.

We hope to inspire others as we form future saints, instilling the hunger and tools in our students to be the best version of themselves they can be.

As you learn more about Catholic education in our diocese by reading this report, we invite you to engage with us by visiting our websites and social media and by coming to campus events.

Yours in Christ,

Mike Juhas, Superintendent



*From the  
Superintendent*



A photograph of four young girls in school uniforms. The three girls on the left have black face paint on their foreheads. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP THROUGH

# Catholic Immersion

The purpose of Catholic education is to form students in a way that draws them closer to God and guides them along the path to becoming saints. We build Catholic culture in our schools through a philosophy called Catholic immersion. Just like learning another language, where immersion is the most effective way to become fluent, we immerse our students in the Catholic Faith in all aspects of their education, helping them to know Jesus and apply His teachings to their lives.







**"Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others."**

**ST. JOHN PAUL II**

## **FORMATION THROUGH TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS**

Our Catholic schools use Catholic curriculum standards to integrate the Catholic Faith into a rigorous academic program. By integrating Christ across the curriculum, students learn to appreciate truth, beauty, and goodness in their lessons and experience a Catholic worldview while developing critical thinking skills.

## **ENCOUNTERING THE RISEN LORD AND BUILDING VIRTUE**

At a time when recent studies have shown that many Catholics do not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, we actively work to help students know Jesus and build habits of prayer. Our students have ample opportunities to encounter Christ through Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, Reconciliation, and prayer. Students learn about the virtues and works of mercy in their curriculum and how to apply these in their daily lives through service to others. This virtues-based curriculum reinforces Gospel values and Catholic social teaching, giving students the interpersonal skills and empathy necessary to be servant leaders and active participants in their faith. Families are supported by the schools and early learning centers as they grow closer to Christ in their homes.

## **MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP BY ARTICULATING AND DEFENDING THE FAITH**

In accord with our Bishop's vision, our academic programs seek to form master communicators of the written and spoken word. Coupled with a philosophy of Catholic immersion, these programs enable students to graduate from our Catholic schools equipped to articulate and defend their faith. Formed in a school culture that stresses love of God and love of neighbor, students are naturally drawn to go out into the world and care for others, reflecting Christ to them.



# Inviting Families to the Faith



Our schools work hard to offer opportunities for parents to engage in the faith life of the school community. Various schools offer opportunities such as monthly family faith night, prayer groups for parents, and serving alongside their children at community service days, to list a few examples. We hope to continue growing in this aspect of Catholic school culture in future years.

BISHOP WACK'S

## Pastoral Letter




Scan this QR code to read Bishop Wack's Pastoral letter on the diocesan website.

[PTDIOCESE.ORG/PASTORAL-LETTER](https://PTDIOCESE.ORG/PASTORAL-LETTER)

In November 2021, Bishop Wack wrote a pastoral letter on evangelization. This letter highlights the need for evangelization in our times and the importance of walking with others on their faith journey.

Our Catholic schools were inspired by this call to evangelization and began working on implementation. Staff are encouraged to share the joy of the Gospel and give accounts of their faith. School families are invited to Mass and to pray together. Our goal is to continue witnessing Christ to others within and outside of our community.





**“Now more than ever,  
our God calls us to  
be disciples of His  
Son and apostles  
who bring the Good  
News to the world.”**

**BISHOP WILLIAM WACK**

In 2023-24, twenty-six students in our schools joined the Catholic Church. Over the past five years, 100 students have joined the Catholic Church through our schools.

ESCAMBIA  
COUNTY

SANTA ROSA  
COUNTY

OKALOOSA  
COUNTY

WALTON  
COUNTY

HOLMES  
COUNTY

WASHINGTON  
COUNTY

BAY  
COUNTY

# Our Schools and Preschools

## Escambia County

Holy Spirit Child Development Academy

Little Flower Catholic School

Pensacola Catholic High School

Mother Clelia Morning Star High School

Sacred Heart Cathedral School

St. John the Evangelist Catholic School

St. Paul Catholic School

## Santa Rosa County

St. Ann Discovery School

## Okaloosa County

St. Mary Catholic School

## Walton County

St. Rita Catholic Preschool

## Bay County

St. Bernadette Child Development Academy

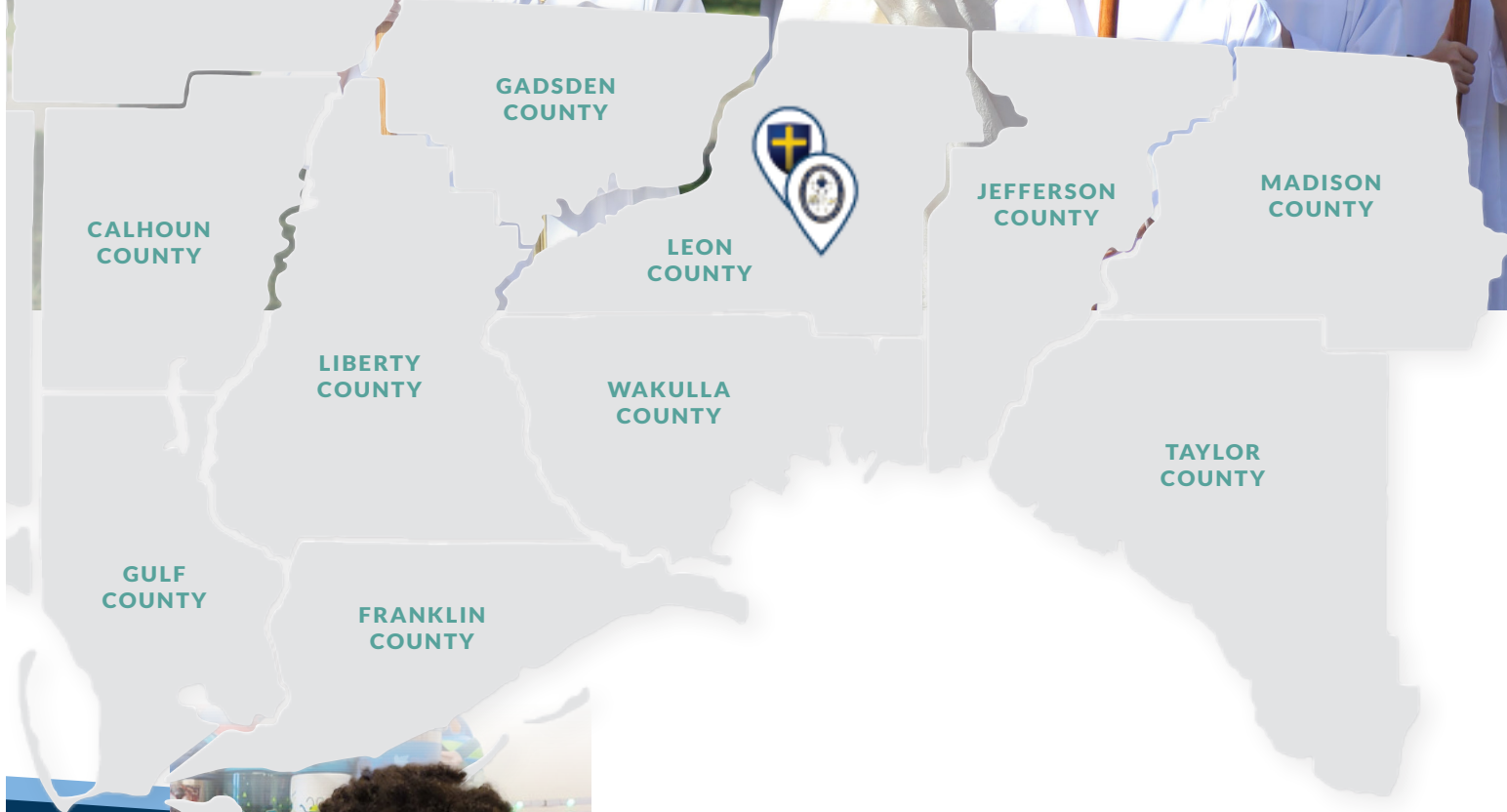
St. John Catholic Academy

## Leon County

St. John Paul II Catholic High School

Trinity Catholic School





## UNIVERSAL SCHOOL CHOICE IN FLORIDA

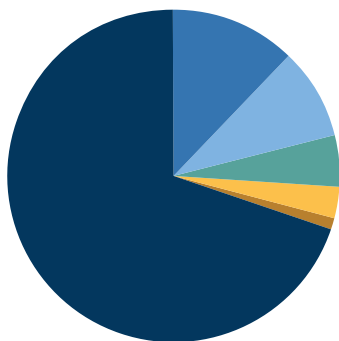
Great news for Florida families! Every student in Florida can now attend Catholic school, regardless of income. Thanks to Florida's 2023 universal school choice law, all children qualify for scholarships to help cover tuition costs at their preferred school. Learn more and apply at [stepupforstudents.org](https://stepupforstudents.org).

# The Students We Serve

Our Catholic schools welcome families from all backgrounds, serving children from infancy through high school graduation. Our dedicated teachers create safe, nurturing environments where students develop academically, emotionally, and spiritually. As a core ministry of our diocese, we work closely with our Bishop and pastors to support parents in raising the next generation of faithful Catholics.

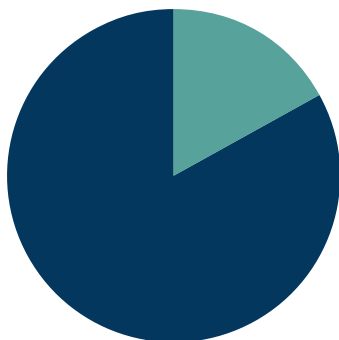
68%

OF OUR STUDENT BODY IS CATHOLIC



## DEMOGRAPHICS BY RACE

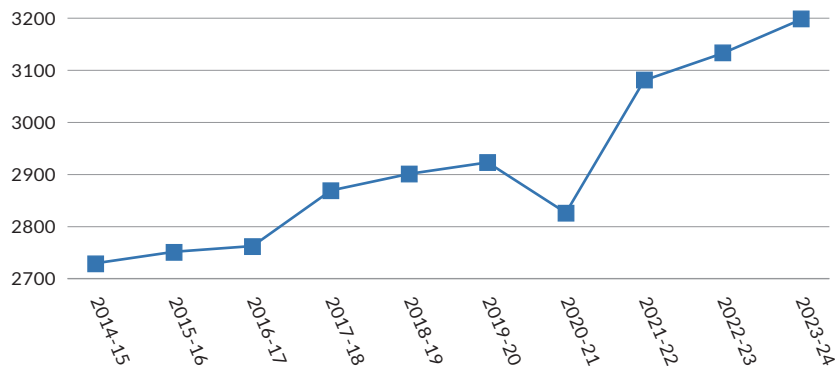
Caucasian	70%
Multiracial	12%
African American	9%
Asian	5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3%
Native American/Native Alaskan	1%



## DEMOGRAPHICS BY ETHNICITY

Non-Hispanic	83%
Hispanic	17%

## PK-12 ENROLLMENT OVER TIME IN OUR SCHOOLS

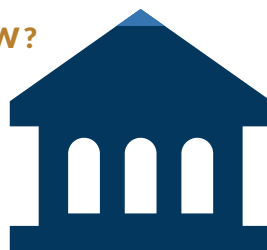


## MUSTARD SEED GRANTS

The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida generously funds the Mustard Seed Grant. **A ONE YEAR \$2,000 GRANT** for a select number of students who have never and whose siblings have never attended Catholic school.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Our Catholic schools were at 93% capacity in 2023-24.





#### STUDENT PARTICIPATION BY SEASON

Fall (flag, tackle, cheer, volleyball) 845

Winter (basketball) 743

Spring (soccer) 850



# Catholic Youth Sports League



The Catholic Youth Sports League is a faith-based athletic venture of the Office for Catholic Schools that serves Pensacola students from our Catholic schools and other non-public schools in grades K-8. CYSL offered basketball, cheerleading, flag football, soccer, tackle football, track, and volleyball in 2023-24.

While seeking excellence on the field or court, CYSL places the highest priority on sportsmanship and growing in virtue through athletic competition. We pray before every game, and we do not play on Sundays to honor the Sabbath. We partner with Notre Dame's *Play Like a Champion Today* program to instill Catholic values and sportsmanship in our students, coaches, and parents.

## BISHOP'S CUP

The diocese created the Bishop's Cup in Fall 2023. The cup is awarded to the winning team any time the varsity squads from Pensacola Catholic and St. John Paul II play in any sport.







# Our Faculty and Staff

## DID YOU KNOW?

If you or someone you know has an interest in teaching the Catholic Faith to the next generation, email [teachersearch@ptdiocese.org](mailto:teachersearch@ptdiocese.org) to inquire about a faculty position for next school year.

“As educators, you are called to nurture the desire for truth, goodness and beauty that lies in the heart of each individual, so that all may learn how to love life and be open to the fullness of life.”

POPE FRANCIS

The heartbeat of our Catholic schools and early learning centers exists within our faculty and staff. They nurture our students and model Christ, the master teacher. Our faculty and staff provide a loving, safe classroom environment where students are challenged to seek their full potential.

Teachers work hard to attain and maintain professional credentials, as well as catechetical certification. Our catechetical certification program provides a common formation in the Catholic Faith; all teachers, regardless of subject or personal faith, actively participate in the program.

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

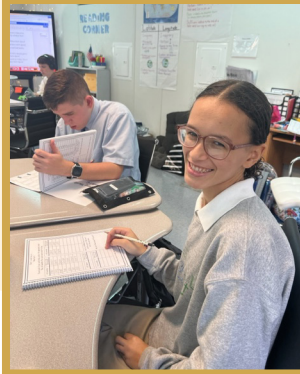
Each year, our teachers participate in a training day called Data Day. The purpose of this professional development, done at each diocesan school with a common set of objectives, is to break into teams and study student performance on standardized testing and other student data, looking for patterns in data and finding areas where students need to grow. Areas of strengths and weaknesses are identified and strategies are formulated to address weaknesses at the class and student levels.

72%

OF OUR FACULTY IS CATHOLIC





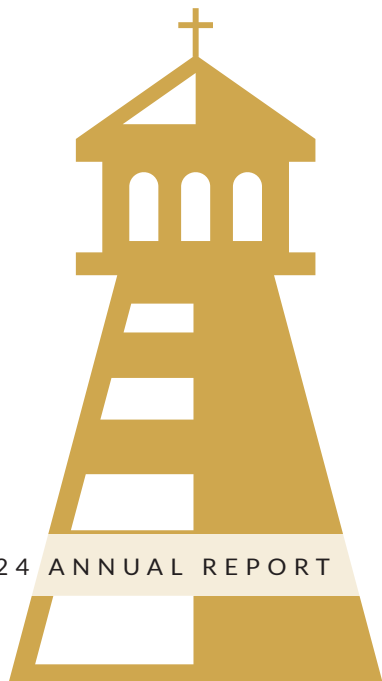


**MOTHER CLELIA MORNING STAR HIGH SCHOOL** in Pensacola earned high marks during its FCC accreditation, receiving recognition for its commitment to graduating students with a standard diploma with access points, integration of the school's Catholicity into teaching, and its ability open a new building since the school's inception in 2020.

# Accolades in Accreditation

Accreditation plays a vital role in validating the excellence of our Catholic schools. Our elementary schools are accredited through the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC), which uses the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools as its guiding principles. Our high schools are accredited through regional agencies.

Much preparation goes into an accreditation self-study and visit, as schools develop long-range plans for continuous improvement. The Office for Catholic Schools supports these efforts, which culminate in a visiting team from the outside inspecting all aspects of the school at the three year and seven year marks of the accreditation cycle.



# Academic Performance

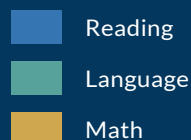
Our Catholic schools teach a rigorous curriculum, building from fundamental skills, including critical thinking, writing, and math facts. Catholic Immersion, an important part of our academic program, is the integration of the Catholic Faith into all subjects. We build in our students a desire to become lifelong learners with a disposition toward seeing the truth, beauty, and goodness in what they learn and the tools to be effective communicators of the written and spoken word, able to articulate and defend their faith.



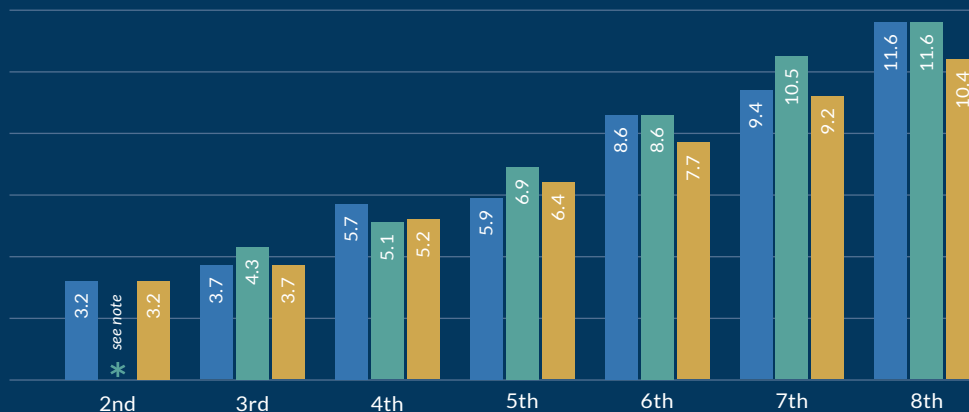
## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Our students consistently outperform the national average on standardized testing, and this past year's high school graduates collectively earned over \$16,000,000 in scholarship money to colleges. Elementary students take the Terra Nova assessments, while high school students take the ACT and SAT. The graphs show the aggregate performance of our students by grade according to grade equivalent, which describes academic performance in terms of grade level and month. For example, if a third grade student taking the Terra Nova early in the second semester scores a 4.2 on the third grade reading test, this means the student scored as well as a fourth grade student in the second month of the school year if given the same third grade reading test.

### Terra Nova Performance by Grade Equivalent



*\*Note: there was no language test in 2nd grade*







### DID YOU KNOW?

The Office for Catholic Schools in 2023–2024 released an approved reading list of over 1,000 books to guide K–12 schools in the intellectual formation of their students.

### ADDRESSING LEARNING GAPS

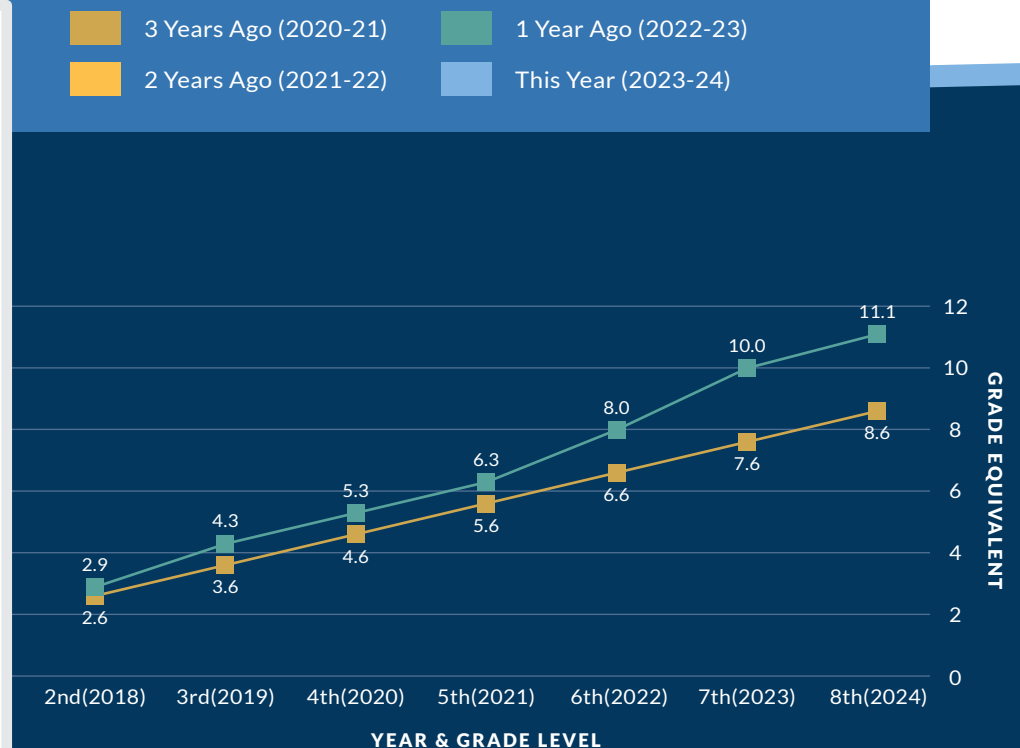
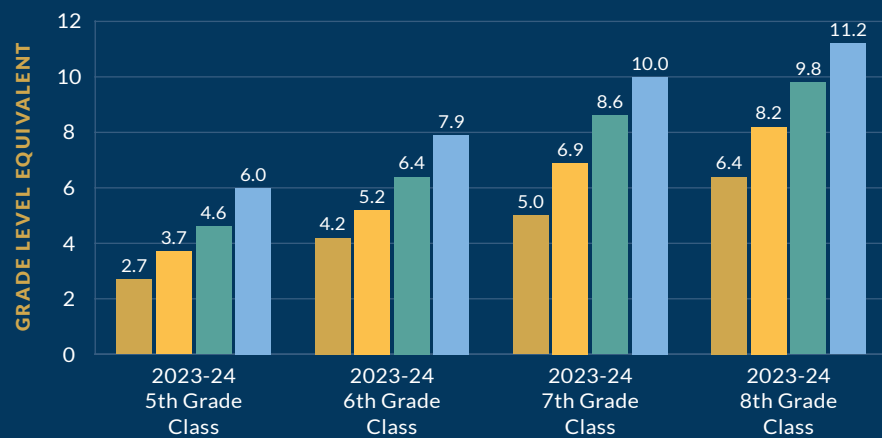
In a time where nationally, Catholic schools surpassed public schools in learning loss recovery, our Catholic schools addressed learning gaps and had many success stories. The following graph shows how our students fared over a four-year period.

### 8th Grade Class of 2023 Performance over Time

Academic performance on the Terra Nova and IOWA tests over the past seven years for students who spent grades K–8 in our Catholic schools (per Terra Nova–Iowa linking study):

- Students who spent grades K–8 in our Catholic schools
- National Average

### Longitudinal Growth over Time on Terra Nova by Grade Level Equivalent







# High School Achievements

**100%**

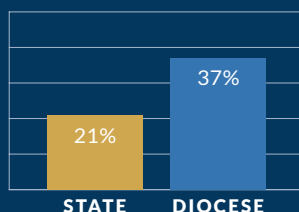
GRADUATION RATE

**98%**

CONTINUING  
EDUCATION OR  
ENTERING MILITARY

## BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, thirty-seven percent of our eligible high school graduates were awarded Bright Futures Scholarships, almost doubling the statewide average of twenty-one percent.

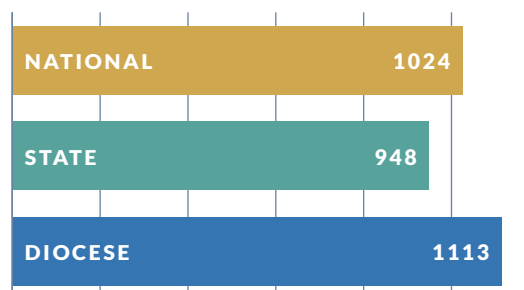


**\$16,310,249**

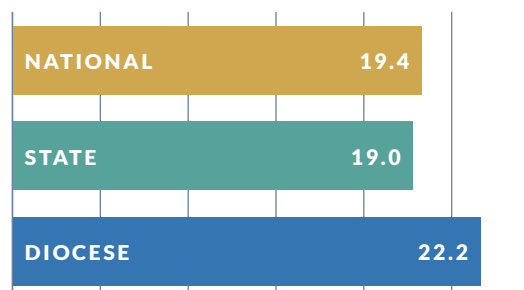
IN SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

Average amount of scholarship dollars offered per graduate was **\$77,668**—almost double the average four-year tuition for Catholic high schools in our diocese.

## CLASS OF 2024 AVERAGE SAT



## CLASS OF 2024 AVERAGE ACT



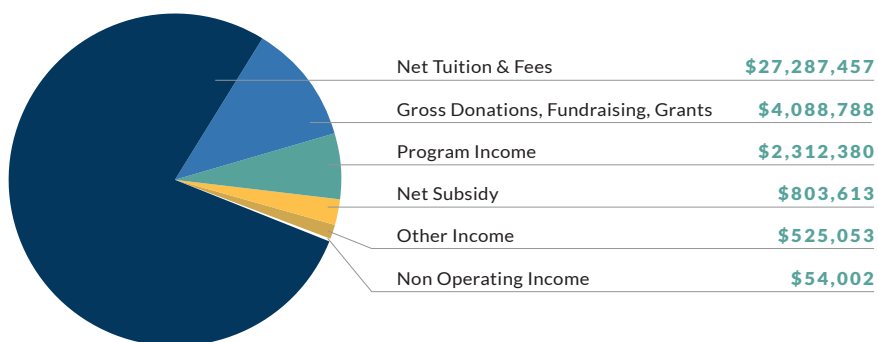


# School Finances

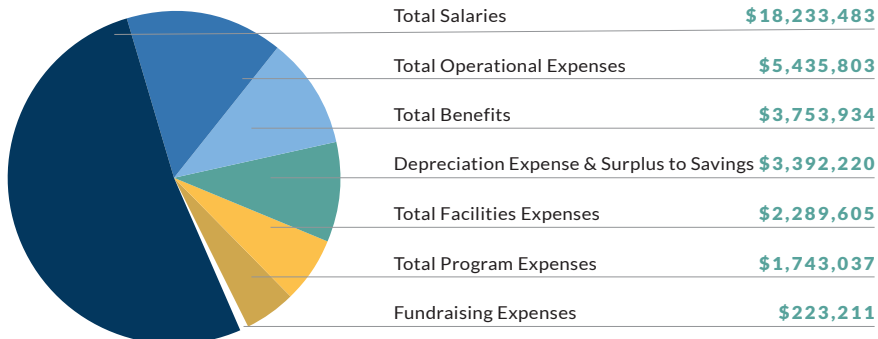
Our Catholic schools and early learning centers practice fiscal responsibility, working closely with their pastors, advisory councils, and the diocesan pastoral center. We always seek to be good stewards of our funding, using it to provide quality infrastructure and enhance the Christ-centered educational experience of our students.

As we seek to keep tuition as affordable possible for our families while fairly compensating the fantastic work performed by our faculty and staff, schools and early learning centers hold fundraisers and annual fund drives to bridge the gap between tuition and the cost to educate a student. School families are encouraged to apply for financial aid through Step Up for Students. Families may also apply for grants from their school, where applicable.

## Source of Funds



## Use of Funds



**TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDS: \$35,071,293**



## How Can I Help?

### PROMOTING

Word of mouth is the most powerful form of marketing a school could have. Encouraging families and friends to explore the possibility of Catholic education for their child could change a life forever.

*Please share this information with families you know who would benefit from Catholic education.*

### SUPPORTING

# Catholic Schools

## Time, Talent, and Treasure

*There are many ways you can make a difference and support the efforts of Catholic education in our diocese.*

### PRAYING

Lifting up our Catholic schools and early learning centers in your regular prayer life is essential to our continued success. Join a school's intercessory prayer team or commit to a holy hour of prayer at the school's parish church in Eucharistic Adoration; contact [schools@ptdiocese.org](mailto:schools@ptdiocese.org) if you would like more information about joining an intercessory prayer team.

TIME

### VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering at a Catholic school is yet another way to make a difference and advance the mission of our Catholic schools and early learning centers. Your particular talent or your presence through volunteerism connects you to a vibrant community of faith that enriches everyone involved. Please reach out to a school if you are interested in service opportunities.

TALENT

### GIVING

In order to provide Catholic education to as many families as possible, our tuition is lower than the cost to educate a child, creating a "tuition gap."

Partnering with a Catholic school through its annual fund drive, capital campaign, school fundraising event, or through bequests is a tangible way to support the programs of the school.

TREASURE

### TOTAL COST TO EDUCATE A CHILD





# Scholarship Opportunities

In the Spring of 2023, the Florida Legislature passed universal school choice legislation, which was signed by our governor. This allows for all children in Florida, regardless of income, to be eligible for a scholarship to help cover the cost of attending the school of their choice.

## Scholarships for K -12 students to attend a private school:

The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO) and the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program offer scholarships worth, on average, \$7,800. These scholarships cover most of the cost of private school tuition, fees, books, and more.

**ALL FAMILIES ARE ELIGIBLE!**

## Scholarships for students with unique abilities:

The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA) is worth approximately \$10,000 and covers most of the cost of private school tuition, instructional materials, home education, tutoring, and more. Students are eligible if they are between 3 years old and high school graduation or age 22 (whichever comes first) and have one of the 23 qualifying diagnoses including, but not limited to, autism spectrum disorder; Down syndrome; spina bifida; and emotional, behavioral, or intellectual disabilities.



Scan the QR code or go to [ptdiocese.org/scholarships](https://ptdiocese.org/scholarships) to learn more.





## 2023-24 DIOCESAN SCHOOLS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Mike Juhas, ex-officio



**Mike Juhas**  
*Superintendent of  
Catholic Schools*

**Cindy Adams**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Donna Bass**  
*Assistant to Superintendent,  
Certification and  
International Students*

**Tony Howard**  
*CYSL Director*

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