



St. Cecilia School - Principal Notes - April 17, 2026

No School - April 20, 2026

Due to professional development, there will be no school on Monday, April 20, 2026.

ESA (Education Savings Accounts) Open - April 16, 2026

Iowa's Students First Education Savings Account (ESA) application for the 2026-27 school year opened at 8:00 am on Thursday April 16, 2026 and will close on Monday June 30, 2026 at 11:59 pm. Please see the Department's [ESA](#) web page to apply for the 2026-27 ESA.

Mission Spirit Day - April 24, 2026

Our next Mission Spirit Day is Friday, April 24th. This year preschool has chosen to support the Oscar Romero House. We ask students to bring \$1.00 for the mission if they want to participate in this spirit day.

Announcement from Father Jim Secora

Dear St. Cecilia School Staff and Parents:

First of all, let me introduce myself to those of you who may not know me.

I am Father Jim Secora, the former pastor of St. Cecilia Church. I retired from active parish ministry in 2020 and continue to live here in Ames. In my retirement I do weekend substitute coverage for parishes and am involved in a couple of community organizations as a volunteer.

With the reorganization of the parish structures beginning in July, a couple of responsibilities formerly assigned to a pastor may now be filled by another priest of the parish or area. For the past seven years I have served as the Dean of this local area of the archdiocese. That will end in July.

Previously, a pastor of a parish which had a school, or a pastor from among the other pastors of parishes which were part of a multi-parish school system was appointed as the Pastoral Coordinator of the school or system. Given the increased administrative role the pastor will have in the new pastorate system, the archbishop has decided that another priest in the pastorate will be assigned that responsibility to help lighten the administrative responsibilities of the pastor.

On Friday, April 10th I received a letter of appointment from Archbishop Zinkula to serve as the Pastoral Coordinator of St. Cecilia School. As Pastoral Coordinator my primary responsibility is to assure the continued Catholic identity of the school. I will be an "ex-officio" voting member of the school board. All decisions by the board to become effective must be approved by me. If necessary, the Pastoral Coordinator does have the authority to veto a proposal. The Coordinator also serves as a "sounding board" for the principal and is to be regularly consulted in matters related to the operation of the school.

In case anyone may wonder regarding my background to serve in this capacity, I'll try to be as brief as possible.

I hold a B.A. in English from Loras College; an M.Div. from St. Mary's Seminary and University, Baltimore, Md.; and a M.Ed. from Boston College, Newton, Ma. I also hold (when it was still being given) a Permanent Certified Iowa Teachers License. For the whole of my nearly 51 years of priestly service I have been directly involved with Catholic schools at both the elementary and high school levels. I spent 11 years teaching and 5 years as chairperson of the theology department at Wahlert Catholic High School in Dubuque. I served as a board member of Marquette High School in Bellevue, Immaculate Conception-St. Joseph Grade School and Don Bosco High School in Gilbertville, (and also as Pastoral Coordinator) Columbus High School (later Cedar Valley Catholic School System, Waterloo, St. Patrick School, Cedar Falls, and finally St. Cecilia School here in Ames. I also served 6 years as a member of the School Board of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

I look forward to again being able to share my gifts and experience with the Saint Cecilia School community. In this time of transition, let us hold up each other in prayer.

Father Jim Secora

Mileage Club

Mary Greeley Medical Center and St. Cecilia are partnering to offer Mileage Club again this year! Mileage Club offers students an opportunity to walk/run during their lunch recess and will occur on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for 4 weeks this spring starting on Monday, April 13th to Friday, May 8th. Students will receive toe tokens to place on their lanyard for every 5 miles logged along with earning a t-shirt if they reach 25 miles! Your help is needed to make Mileage Club successful! We need volunteers to help scan iPads and QR codes as well as providing encouragement along the route in the parking lot! Lace up your tennis shoes, come be outside and watch the students get excited to participate in Mileage Club!

The recess times are as followed:

kindergarten - 2nd grade: 11:35am-12:05pm

3rd - 6th grade: 12:30-1pm

Please use the following link to sign up for volunteer times! Thank you in advance for helping make this heart healthy activity successful at our school!

[Mileage Club Sign Up Genius](#)

Special Olympics Volunteers Needed

On Friday, May 22, the 4th, 5th & 6th grade students will be volunteering at the Special Olympics of Iowa Summer Games. Students will be helping with events at the track and field venue. We need several parent volunteers to help supervise students and volunteer alongside them in the FANTASTIC and MEMORABLE service learning opportunity. If you are interested and able, please click on the link below to sign up. If all slots are filled, please just respond to the email letting me know you would like to help.

This year the volunteer coordinator has asked for all student and chaperone names. So I will need all chaperones signed up by Friday, April 17.

[2026 Special Olympics Volunteer Sign-up](#)

Thank you in advance for your consideration!

Nonpublic Transportation Services - May 1, 2026 Due Date

Parents that live outside the Ames School District are reminded to turn in your transportation reimbursement request. The reimbursement comes from the resident district and is flow thru money from the state of Iowa so by requesting the funds you are not taking any money from the local district. They are reimbursed for the amount they pay you. We have attached forms for Ballard, Gilbert, Nevada, Roland Story, and United. Remember this is only for families that live outside the Ames district.

Notice to nonpublic parents regarding public school district transportation services: Iowa Code Section 285.1 requires public school districts to provide transportation services to resident nonpublic students that are entitled as per that section. How the transportation service will be provided is to be determined by the public school district. When funds are appropriated by the Iowa General Assembly and if your public school district has selected "Parent Reimbursement" as their transportation service type of choice and you meet the transportation entitlement policy provisions of the public school district in which you live and the nonpublic school being attended has been accredited by the Iowa Department of Education, you are entitled to parent reimbursement as per Iowa Code Sections 285.1, subparagraph 3 and 285.3.

(Iowa Code, Section 285.3) If your public school district selects the “Parent Reimbursement” option, it is your responsibility as the nonpublic parent or guardian to notify your resident public school district that you have children attending an accredited nonpublic school and its location. In addition, specific information, as requested on this form, must be submitted by the nonpublic parent or guardian no later than December 1st (for first semester reimbursement) and May 1st (for second semester reimbursement), each year and sent to the school district where they reside. Failure to submit this request by the above deadline each semester will result in the denial of the reimbursement request for the claim period.

Please print off the appropriate form, complete it and mail it to the address toward the bottom of the form by December 1st for 1st semester and May 1st for 2nd semester.

Wraparound Childcare Registration Form

St. Cecilia School will be adding wraparound childcare for the 2026-2027 school year. There are options for part time (2-3 days a week) and full (4-5 days a week) time care. The approximate cost of full time care a month is \$660 and the approximate cost for part time care is \$420 a month. These costs include snacks and lunch.

The wraparound childcare schedule will follow the St. Cecilia School calendar. Wraparound childcare will be open from 8:10-3:20 pm Monday through Friday when school is in session.

Your child must be enrolled in preschool at St. Cecilia School to attend wraparound childcare. Wraparound childcare will bridge the gap between preschool and elementary school release times.

Example A) If your child attends preschool on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings he or she could attend wraparound childcare when preschool is finished on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons as well as Tuesday and Thursday all day. This would be considered full time wraparound childcare.

Example B) If your child attends preschool on Tuesday and Thursday mornings he or she could attend wraparound childcare when preschool is finished on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. This would be considered part time wraparound childcare.

Example C) If your child attends preschool in the afternoon he or she could attend wraparound childcare in the morning before preschool begins.

These are just examples. Please call if you have questions about accommodating your childcare needs. Please fill out the form below if you plan on enrolling your child in wrap around care.

[Wraparound Childcare Registration Form](#)

FACTS Student Tuition Organization (STO): 2026-2027 Tuition Assistance Information

The FACTS online application for STO opened on January 1, with the **application deadline on May 1, 2026**. In addition to completing the application, parents must consent to allow FACTS to retrieve their 2025 federal tax return and other required schedules or tax documentation from the IRS, or upload their 2025 federal tax return and any required schedules or tax documentation. Families who applied last year will receive an email that the 26-27 application is open. Here are some essential points to share with your families:

- The online FACTS application can be found at <https://online.factsmgt.com/aid>. It is available in English and Spanish.
- If families applied through FACTS last year, they should use the same username and password.
- Families must consent to have FACTS retrieve their 2025 tax return and all appropriate documentation, or upload a completed 2025 federal tax return and all related documents. For families with business income/loss, please include:
 - Business - send Schedule C or C-EZ and Form 4562 Depreciation and Amortization
 - Farm - send Schedule F and Form 4562 Depreciation and Amortization
 - Rental Property - send Schedule E (page 1)
 - S-Corporation - send Schedule E (page 2), Form 1120S (5 pages), Schedule K-1 and Form 8825
 - Partnership - send Schedule E (page 2), Form 1065 (5 pages), Schedule K-1 and Form 8825
 - Estates and Trusts - send Schedule E (page 2), Form 1041 and Schedule K-1
- Families that are not required to file federal income tax must check DNF on their application.
- The application VERIFICATION deadline is May 11, 2025. Families must have their 2025 Federal Tax Return completed and their STO application verified by FACTS no later than May 11.
- If the May 11th Round #1 verification deadline is missed, families will be considered in Round #2 if all materials are received by August 10th.

If you need assistance with your application, please call the FACTS Helpline at 866-315-9262, Monday - Thursday, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, and Friday, 7:00 am to 5 pm.



Puzzle Party - April 26, 2026

New this year!! FSA will be hosting a Puzzle Party on Sunday, April 26th from 3:30-5pm. Bring the whole family and your problem solving skills for an afternoon of brain boosting challenges and fun from preschool to adults - there's a puzzle for every age! Are you feeling competitive? Teams of up to 3 can compete to finish a competition puzzle with prizes awarded for the fastest puzzle completion time! FSA will provide puzzles in various sizes and difficulties for families to try out but feel free to bring your own puzzle to share. Popcorn and M&M's will be provided for puzzlers. RSVP today for this new Spring Event FSA is hosting!

[Puzzle Party Sign Up Genius](#)

Dine & Donate - April 27, 2026

This month's St. Cecilia Family School Association fundraiser is Monday, April 27th from 4-8 pm at Chipotle. Please present the flyer at the Ames location and Chipotle will donate 25% of your total food purchases to St. Cecilia School Family Association. Order online for pickup using the code TQKRECG. Don't forget to participate in our raffle to win a gift card or Centennial Swag.





Calling All Parents

We need your help cleaning up the Social Hall and Narthex and returning items following our Centennial Soiree! [Please sign up here to help!](#)



Summer Programs from ISU Extension and Outreach

Please see the flyers of summer programming that the ISU Extension and Outreach is offering this summer. Anyone with questions is welcome to contact the Story County Extension and Outreach office at xstory@iastate.edu or 515-337-1601



April 18: Gala

April 20: No School (Staff Professional Development)

April 23: All School Mass 9:00 am *followed by 1st grade reception

April 24: Mission Spirit Day - Preschool (Gala)

April 30: All School Mass 9:00 am

May 4: No School (Staff Professional Development)

May 5: Spring Concert 6:30 pm

May 7: All School Mass 9:00 am *followed by May Crowning

May 8: Scrip Spirit Day

May 14: All School Mass with 5th Grade Graduation 9:00 am

May 21: All School Mass 9:00 am; Last Day of Three-Year-Old Preschool

May 22: Mission Spirit Day; Last Day of Four-Year-Old Preschool

May 25: No School (Memorial Day)

May 28: All School Mass 9:00 am

May 29: Last Day of School; Early Dismissal 1:30 pm