



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
DIOCESE of DES MOINES

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025





# Letter from Mr. Jeff Lynch, Principal

It is a great joy that we share this Annual report with you.

What a truly wonderful place to be an administrator. I have been in Catholic schools for thirty two years and never experienced what I have experienced this year. Mrs Halligan and I could not have asked for a better place to be. We have supportive parents, students who strive to be better every day. A group of teachers who are experienced and are student centered in all that they do. We also have a great support team to welcome our students and answer questions to the best of their ability every day.

Our main goal is to continue to keep student achievement as my top priority. St. Francis experienced a great increase in our achievement data last year and we expect the same this year. We will continue to meet every child where they are and move them forward.

Parents are valuable partners and I encourage our parents to visit our school, consult with our staff and participate in all the great activities that we have planned this school year. Further, we invite you to become aware of what our curriculum has to offer, and the resources used to educate your children.

This year with the Virtue a week has been incorporated into the Leader In Me initiative for this year. This enabled the students to see how these words were used and encountered in their everyday lives. How those words fit so well into the LIM. We continued to improve our STEM program with the addition of a new assistant teacher and our students experiencing rocket launches, and being pinball wizards. Fifth grade while working with JA, (junior achievement) were able to do Biz Town again.

Mr. Jeff Lynch  
Principal

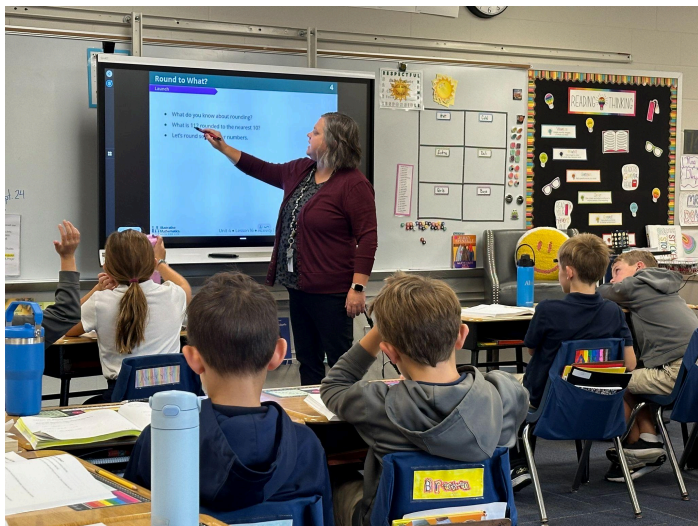
Mrs. Jodi Halligan  
Assistant Principal



# OUR MISSION

The mission of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is to provide a Christ-centered environment that promotes developing our students academically, physically and spiritually. We develop learners for life through our core values of faith, knowledge and service.

St. Francis of Assisi strives to be more through our mission. With a focus on providing a holistic education – we develop the whole child socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, and culturally. All are of utmost importance to ensure that our school is genuinely Catholic in self-understanding and Catholic in our identity. We demonstrate and teach these values to develop in both students and staff the Character of Christ.



# OUR VALUES

## FAITH

Providing your child with an outstanding education in an environment that fosters the development of their Catholic faith and deepens their love of God is the most important gift you can give, with rewards that will last your child's lifetime.

## KNOWLEDGE

As a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, our goal is to foster a high-quality education while encouraging creative expression and critical thinking.

## SERVICE

Outreach to the less fortunate is fostered through monthly mission projects and our staff and students contribute thousands of service hours to the community every year.

In addition to these core values, we develop the Character of Christ in both students and staff by fostering:

Joy

Collaboration

High Standards in all areas

Respect for human dignity

Discipleship





# OUR TEAM

## Administration

Father Joseph Pins  
Father Alex Kramer  
Jeff Lynch, Principa  
Mrs. Jodi Halligan

## Staff

Maegen Anthony, Nurse  
Joan Bowman, Secretary  
Sara Karpuk, Secretary  
Cheryl Riedl, Lunch Program  
Jessica Riemenschneider, Kids Care

## Preschool

Wendy Henry, Director  
Jessica Zabel, Teacher  
Melody Banks, Teacher  
Laurie Coder, Teacher  
Lisa Helland, Associate  
Barbara Horvath, Associate  
Beth Schulte, Teacher

## Kindergarten

Tiffany Murphy, Teacher  
Rachelle Hentges, Teacher  
Sarah Schliesman, Teacher  
Susan Staiert, Associate  
Pam Pitz, Associate  
Jennifer McNichols, Associate

## 1st grade

Michelle Curtin, Teacher  
Carol Gaul, Teacher  
Diane Murphy, Teacher  
Kim Staun, Associate  
Amanda Stover, Associate  
Sonia Schumacher, Associate  
Michele Krage, Associate

## 2nd grade

Nikki Kock, Teacher  
Katie Tigges, Teacher  
Courtney Waters, Teacher  
Ana Fulton, Associate  
Debbie Shadle, Associate  
Pam Flori, Associate  
LeAnn Hewitt, Associate

## 3rd grade

Kathleen Drey, Teacher  
Denise Swartz, Teacher  
Melissa Thornton, Teacher

## 4th grade

Sara Doyle, Teacher  
Mollie Jenks, Teacher  
Danielle Winter, Teacher

## 5th grade

Lisa Anderson, Teacher  
Annie Desing, Teacher  
Katie Uitenbroek, Teacher

## 6th grade

Cecelia Groah, Teacher  
Grant Holben, Teacher  
Todd Hilton, Teacher

## 7th grade

Alexandra Henke, Teacher  
Jessica Cline, Teacher  
Holly McFarland, Teacher

## 8th grade

Peter Hunter, Teacher  
Megan Howell, Teacher  
Kelly Koenings, Teacher

## PE

Michael Hazel, K-5  
Tracy Schmulbach, 6-8

## Related Arts

Sara Grabau, K-5 Visual Arts  
Jason Southward, 6-8 Visual Arts  
Nicole Kolbo, K-5 Music/Band  
Paige Kolk, 6-8 Music  
Rebecca Buckmiller, Spanish  
Kristin Richey, Media Center

## Technology

Jason Southward  
Dominic Muse  
Diane Nitzel

## Student Support

Micki Alsin, K-5  
Kasey Eoriatti, K-5  
Lynda McLuen, 6-8  
Mary Stumbo, Behavior

Julie Heckle, K-5 Guidance  
Emily Behrens, 6-8 Guidance

# Leadership Council

Father Joseph Pins  
Steve Craig  
William Downs  
Mari Lewis,  
Jeff Lynch  
Dr. Jamie Zable  
Wendy Henry

Mari Lewis Treasurer  
Andrew Phillips  
Phill Stover  
Brenda Pederson  
Apollinaire Kayam

Mollie Mertens, Recording Secretary



# SCHOOL YEAR 2024-2025 BY THE NUMBERS

678

PK-8 Students

\$65K

Provided in Tuition  
Assistance

30%

Of Faculty Hold  
Advanced Degrees

38

School Masses

19.3%

School Diversity

31

Extracurriculars and  
Athletics

13:1

Student-to-Teacher  
Ratio  
(K-2)

1:1

Student-to-Device  
Ratio

Forming a Strong  
Future for All

# FAITH

At St. Francis of Assisi, faith formation promotes a relationship with Christ and teaches students how to live the Gospel through love and service to others. We are purposeful in including parents in school religious activities including school Masses, retreats, and Sacrament preparation. Catholic faith is the cornerstone of our school, we welcome students of all faith traditions.

- We shared a monthly newsletter with parents called *Partners in Faith*. This resource supports parents in raising faithful Catholic children. Every issue is filled with actionable ideas to build a Christ centered family life, increase the family's knowledge of the Catholic faith and grow in devotion to the sacraments.
- Students in grades K-5 celebrated May Crowning by presenting flowers at the altar to honor Mary. Middle school students brought flowers for the Mary Garden.
- Volunteerism and community outreach are a cornerstone of the Catholic faith, and our students provided 4000 hours of service throughout the local community during the 2024-2025 school year.





# EXCELLENCE

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School is fully accredited in the state of Iowa, and is a two-time Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. We challenge students to aim higher academically, spiritually and personally through faith-centered learning and a rigorous academic program aligned with state standards. Our teachers and support staff are equipped with the tools to support ALL students wherever they may be on their academic journey. Throughout the school year, we assess all students to monitor growth and provide intervention for those needing additional support or enrichment.

- Our school offered WIN time to enhance student learning. What I Need (WIN) time is a flexible period of time incorporated into the daily school schedule where extra help or enrichment opportunities are available.
- To meet the needs of diverse learners, our student support team helped improve academic achievement for all students through individualized assessment and interventions. We also offered Reading Recovery and Enrichment and Gifted Learner programs.
- We strive to incorporate new and innovative technology to enhance our curriculum and prepare students for the future. This commitment to innovation drives our 1:1 device program with Ipads in use for grades K-1 . In grades 2-8 the use of chromebooks 1/1



# EXCELLENCE

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School participates in the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). ISASP is a standards-based assessment designed to inform schools and families on how students perform on the Iowa Core Academic Standards. Students performing at the proficient level demonstrate adequate competency in the knowledge, skills, and abilities that meet the requirements for their grade level associated with academic readiness for college and a career in the subject area.

2024 Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)

	State of Iowa (Percent Proficient)	St. Francis (Percent Proficient)
5th Grade English Language Arts	70%	87%
5th Grade Math	71%	85%
5th Grade Science	64%	84%
8th Grade English Language Arts	80%	94%
8th Grade Math	74%	92%
8th Grade Science	70%	91%

# EXCELLENCE

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School applies the use of a standards-based evaluation tool, FASTBridge, for grades K-5 to identify student goals for learning and provide individualized student support to ensure these goals are met. This screening and early identification of student needs increases the speed of intervention and supports a building-wide multi-tiered system of supports. These assessments help teachers better understand student progress and needs. Moreover, this additional layer of data allows teachers to focus on essential skills and better track student growth.

2024 St. Francis of Assisi FASTBridge Scores

	On Track or Advanced**	Aggressive Growth*
K-1 Reading	87%	17%
K-1 Math	88%	6%
2-5 Reading	82% Comprehension 48% scored advanced	34% (Fluency)
2-5 Math	2nd grade Auto 87% 3-5 88% Auto	2nd grade 18% 3-5 16%

- 2nd grade AUTO test reports separate from grades 3-5 Auto test. Reported as two different percentages

*\*Aggressive growth is defined as a score increase from fall to spring greater than 75 percent or more of their peers nationally.*

*\*\*FASTBridge does not assign an “advanced” designation for grades K-1.*

# EXCELLENCE

Students in grades 6-8 participate in the FAST assessment. This assessment measures achievement and growth in math, reading, and language usage, providing teachers with data to help inform instructional strategies and create an individualized learning experience for each student.

## 2024 St. Francis of Assisi FAST

	St. Francis of Assisi Students
8th Grade Reading	49% of students scored above the 85th Percentile
8th Grade Language	40% of students scored above the 85th Percentile
8th Grade Math	55% of students scored above the 85th Percentile



# COMMUNITY

In 2024-2025, the St. Francis of Assisi community identified what is most unique about our school. These differentiators included parental involvement, a community committed to the faith formation and success of all students, high academic expectations supported through robust programs to meet the needs of all learners, and strong parish and school leadership.

- We prepared students to be viable members of our community through social-emotional learning. Our goal is to establish a strong foundation for each student's social-emotional development which is critical for building healthy relationships, communicating effectively,
- Students participated in a food drive for our local food pantry. They collected four large boxes of food items which were donated around Thanksgiving time.
- Middle school students were able to help 30 families from our diocese to have a Christmas with presents under their tree
- Students in 5th grade host a collection of supplies and create boxes for West Des Moines to hand out to the homeless and people in need. All grade levels contribute something different for the boxes.



# VALUE

Investing in your child's education at St. Francis of Assisi is about more than a number– it's about a teaching approach that focuses on your child's mind, body and soul. It's about having the best educators with challenging lesson plans and new technologies at your disposal. It's about a creative, disciplined and welcoming environment where a focus on social justice, service and leadership is central to each student's experience. It's about your child growing and flourishing in every part of their life – not just test scores.

- In 2024-2025, We had 120 families which made 243 students recipients of ESA funding.
- Approximately 97 percent of 2024-2025 eighth-grade graduates continued their Catholic education at Dowling Catholic High School.
- Outside of the classroom, we offer extracurricular programs that provide students with an opportunity to learn teamwork, responsibility, dedication and good sportsmanship. In school year 2024-2025, students participated in various extracurricular and athletic programs including basketball, soccer, track, cross country, football, swimming, cheerleading, softball, volleyball, and wrestling.



# THE COST TO EDUCATE

As a parent, your tuition investment goes towards high-caliber educators, enhanced learning experiences, the latest technology, and moral and emotional education for your child. We greatly appreciate and understand the financial sacrifice our families make to provide their children with an education at our school. However, tuition only covers a portion of the cost of educating a student at St. Francis of Assisi.

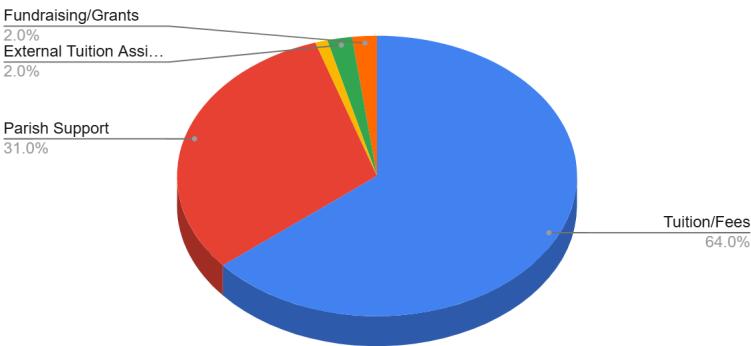
## TUITION AND COST TO EDUCATE

Cost to Educate = \$9634/student

Average Tuition = \$6125/student

The remaining \$3,000 is supported by parish subsidies, private donations, grants, and tuition assistance resources.

### Income by Source (as a percentage of Total Income)



# Expenses by Source (as a percentage of Total Income)

