

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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VERMILLION, MN

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State of the School Report  
2025

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# INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to read through the 2025 State of the School report for St. John the Baptist Catholic School. The purpose of this report is to inform all stakeholders at St. John the Baptist Catholic School about important updates and events from the 2024-2025 school year. This report also serves to keep St. John's up to date with MNSAA credentialing requirements.

This report has a variety of information on the school year we have just completed. A number of the items referenced are action items from our school's strategic plan. These include the implementation of a new religion and social emotional curriculum, the expansion of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the continuation of our marketing plan, the second year of the Blue and White Gala, and continued facilities improvements.

All of us at St. John the Baptist Catholic School are proud and grateful for the vocation of educating students from our three parishes and beyond. Thank you for your continued support!

## CONTACT

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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# OUR MISSION



**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC  
SCHOOL IS AN ENDURING COMMUNITY  
WELCOMING STUDENTS TO BE KNOWN  
AND LOVED, TO EXCEL ACADEMICALLY,  
THRIVE SPIRITUALLY, AND TO LEAD  
WITH GENEROSITY AND JOY.**

**Be Known, Be True, Be You**

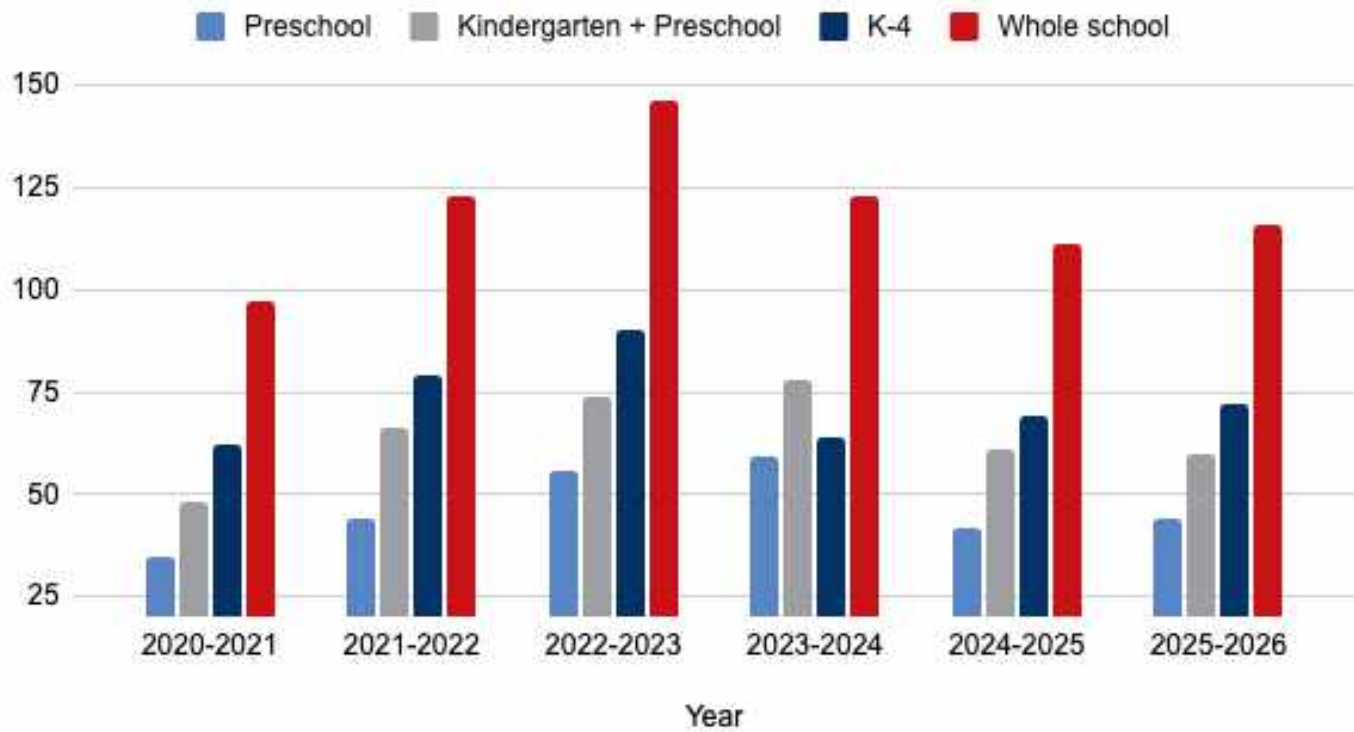
# ENROLLMENT

St. John's continues to show signs of increasing enrollment, with kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade accounting for over half of our elementary students. This trend continues into the next school year, with early elementary grades comprising 75% of our elementary enrollment.

This pipeline number projects strong future enrollment. We are encouraged by the commitment of families to Catholic education for their children and their commitment to SJB.



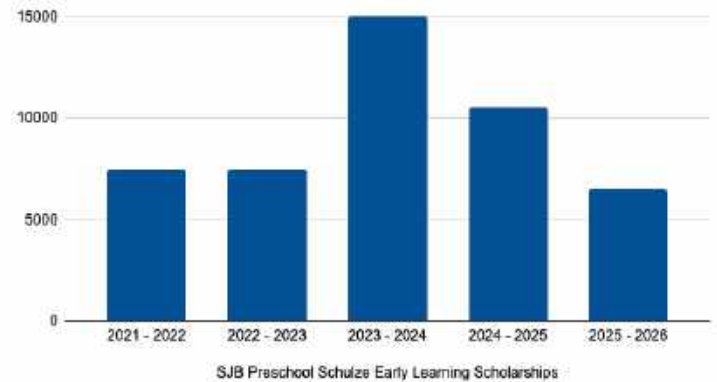
### St. John's Enrollment By Year



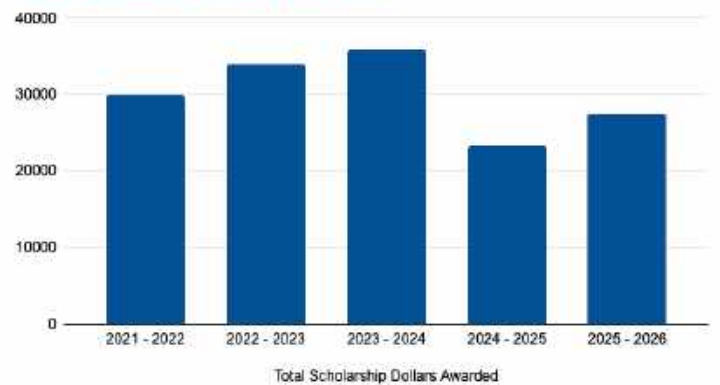
# SCHOLARSHIPS

Many St. John's students receive scholarships to help offset the cost of tuition. Our goal is to provide a Catholic education to all who seek it. The Schulze Family Foundation Early Learning Scholarship is meant for preschoolers in the year before Kindergarten. Other organizations grant scholarships to our elementary students, including the AIM Higher Foundation, Catholic Services Appeal Foundation, Catholic Community Foundation, and other anonymous groups and individuals. As our school grows, we are committed to increasing aid opportunities for families that would otherwise be unable to attend a Catholic school. Our total scholarship dollars increased in the last year, and we have commitments from these organizations for next year. Thank you to all who have generously supported financial aid at St. John's.

SJB Preschool Schulze Early Learning Scholarships



Total Scholarship Dollars Awarded



# SPIRITUAL LIFE

## Daily Prayer

Students participate in daily school wide prayer during morning announcements. We pray the Morning Offering and Guardian Angel prayers.

Each class prays before and after meals and snacks, as well as at the end of the day.

## Weekly Mass

We attend Mass as a whole school every Wednesday at 9 am. Families and parishioners are always welcome to join. Preschool students attend once each month.

## Rosary

K-4 students pray the Rosary as a whole group every week in October and May. Our Rosary services are led by the fourth-grade students.

## Advent Services

All students participate in schoolwide prayer services each week during Advent.

## Stations of the Cross

All K-4 students participate in Stations of the Cross services each week during Lent. These services are led by third-grade students, and 2nd grade students assist at the stations.

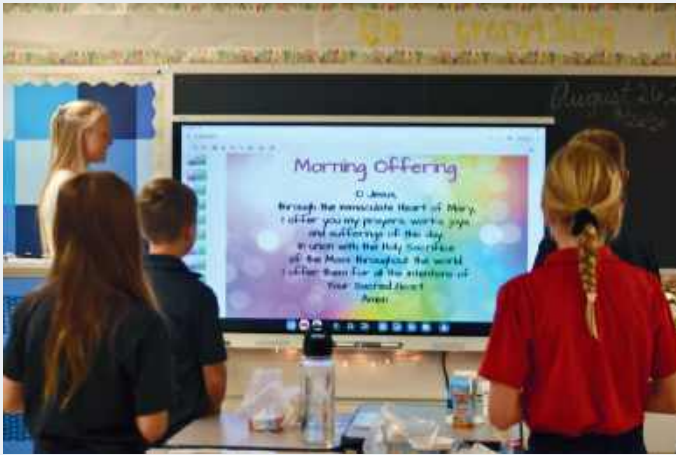
## First Reconciliation

Second graders experience God's forgiveness and mercy through the Sacrament of Penance. Teachers work with the Director of Faith Formation to prepare for First Reconciliation.

## First Communion

Students in second grade begin preparing for the Sacrament of First Communion in January. They learn about the elements of the Mass and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. They receive First Communion at their home parish or St. John's, depending on their family's wishes.





## Faith Families

Our fourth graders lead a mixed grade group of K-4 students. They meet once per month to participate in faith and virtue-focused activities together.

## All Saints Day

Our fourth graders present an annual skit on All Saints Day to teach us about Saints, and we host a party for local families on All Saints Day to celebrate with pizza, games, cookies, and fellowship! Children are encouraged to dress as their favorite saint.

## Catholic Schools Week

This week celebrates our school with exciting and educational activities. It is a fun way for our students to express their pride for our school, and express our Catholic identity and parish commitment to Catholic education.

We held a personal hygiene and sock drive during Catholic Schools Week and collected over 76 pounds of personal care items and over 1500 pairs of socks. All items were donated to Hastings Family Services.

## Service Opportunities

Our students bring donations throughout the year for several organizations, including Hastings Family Service, 360 Communities, Veterans' Home, and the Lewis House.

## Third and Fourth Grade Retreat

Students from the Academy of Holy Angels lead St. John's third and fourth graders in an end of the year retreat.

## Baptisms

This year, we had three elementary students receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

## Graduation Mass

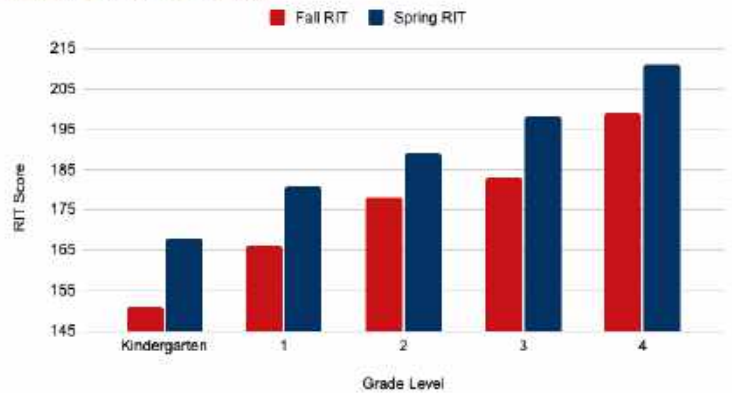
Our end of the year liturgy is a Graduation Mass, which honors fourth grade students who are moving on from St. John's.

# NWEA TESTING

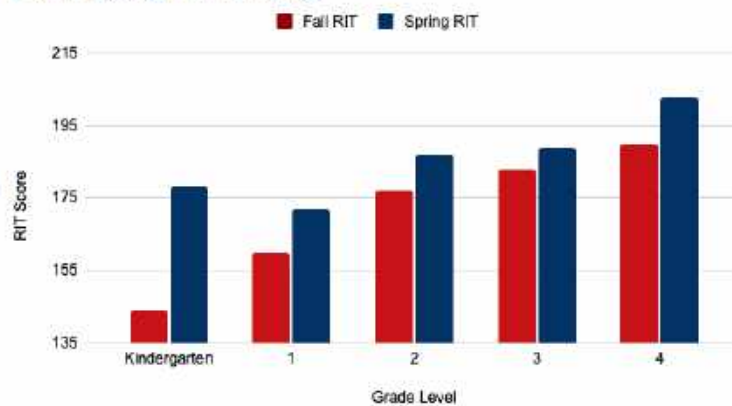
St. John's elementary students take the MAP NWEA standardized test three times per year. NWEA is an online benchmarked test that adapts questions based on student performance. St. John's teachers participated in three professional development sessions with Bluum, an educational technology organization, on using data from NWEA to inform and direct instruction during the 2024-2025 school year. Teachers use the data throughout the year to follow which skills students have mastered, which need to be reinforced, and which are ready to be introduced.

All students in K-4 take the reading and math tests. Third and fourth grade students also take the language usage test. SJB students annually show significant growth on all tests, often at higher rates than the national norm.

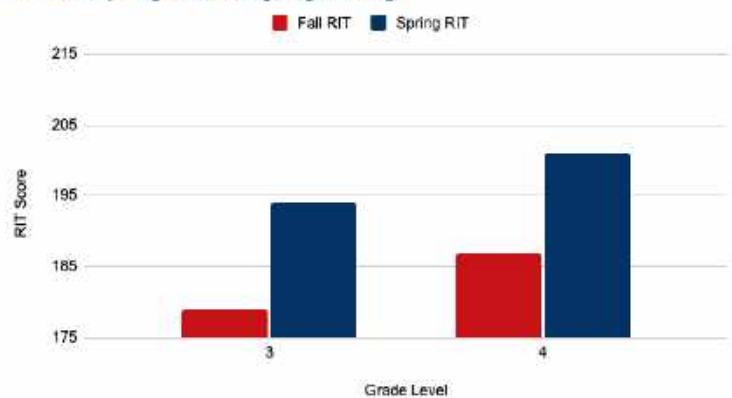
Fall to Spring RIT Math



Fall to Spring RIT Reading



Fall to Spring RIT Language Usage

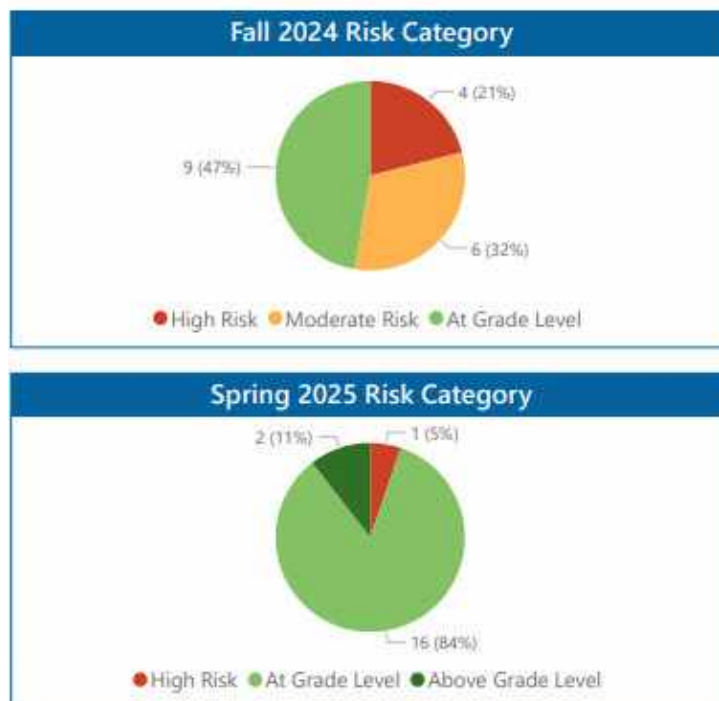


# BELIEVE AND READ

2024-2024 was the fourth year of the Believe and Read program. Powered by the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence and in partnership with Groves Learning Organization (GLO), a national leader in literacy instruction, Believe and Read is an initiative that brings GLO's methodology using the Science of Reading, with the goal that every student at our school reads at or above grade level.

For the past several years, a literacy coach from GLO has worked with our Kindergarten - Third grade and intervention teachers. This past year, two of our teachers became certified to serve as in-house literacy coaches. Working in partnership with the GLO coach, teachers have received weekly support and feedback from these in-house literacy coaches, along with assistance in tracking student progress through routine assessments. At-risk students meet in small groups daily with our reading interventionist, which allows daily targeting of skills for students who need it the most.

Through Believe and Read, our kindergarten students are monitored in letter name and sound fluency, while our first, second, and third grade students are monitored in oral reading fluency. 95% of kindergarten students are fluent with letter names and sounds, setting them up for success in reading and spelling, while 100% of students in grades 1-3 increased the number of words they read from fall to spring, positively impacting oral reading fluency. The charts displayed show the growth of our Kindergarten students in letter naming fluency from Fall 2024 to Spring 2025.



# HANDS ON SCIENCE

St. John's loves hands-on science. Using the Amplify Science curriculum platform, our students participate in deep dives on topics that last a full Trimester. In each unit, students read, explore, and write about the topic and participate in hands-on science and engineering activities. Each class completes three units during the school year.

Our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) class has kits that last six to eight lessons and include reading, exploration, and engineering. Students make parachutes that save packages, and design bridges to see how much weight they can hold. They learn about simple machines like levers, pulleys, and fulcrums, and they build and test windmills. Our STEM class also offers chances to learn about simple circuitry and to program robots. St. John's preschoolers program simple robots, and our older students program larger robots using an iPad.



This year, thanks to meaningful partnerships and generous support, science at St. John's has continued to flourish. Our collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota Lending Library brought dynamic, hands-on materials into our classrooms, allowing students to explore a wide range of scientific concepts in engaging and accessible ways.

With funding provided by a grant from Flint Hills Resources, every elementary student had the opportunity to visit the Minnesota Science Museum. This enriching field trip included interactive exhibits and exciting live demonstrations, and many of our students were even selected to participate on stage, making science come alive in unforgettable ways.

Our students also showcased their curiosity and creativity at our annual science fair, with several advancing to the regional competition in Mankato. Beyond the classroom, our outdoor learning spaces continue to thrive—students grow flowers and vegetables in our gardens, tap our maple tree each spring, and engage with a variety of live animal visitors, from eagles and falcons to snakes and lizards.

At St. John's, we believe that faith and science are partners in discovery. Your continued support helps us bring science to life for our students, sparking wonder, encouraging exploration, and inspiring future innovators.

Thank you for helping us make these impactful experiences possible.



# COMMUNITY EVENTS

We believe students do best when they feel the support of the whole community. We also believe parents are the primary educators of students. We work to provide opportunities for the community to support our mission.

## Marathon

Students raise pledges and we walk around Vermillion with families, friends, and staff. This annual event is our largest student fundraiser.

## Fall Festival

St. John's Parish holds an annual festival in September. Students perform at the festival. St. Mathias holds a festival in August. St. Mary's holds a sausage supper in November.

## Christmas Caroling

On the last day before Christmas break, the entire school goes Christmas Caroling to every business in Vermillion and enjoys hot cocoa and cookies afterwards.

## Christmas Concert

All Preschool - 4th-grade students participate in our Christmas Concert.

## All Saints Party

On November 1, we host a party at the school for the local community, with free pizza, games, and treats. Children are encouraged to dress as their favorite saint.

## Art Show

This year, we held our fourth annual Art Show on Grandparents' Day. The Art Show featured art projects from throughout the school year for all students, preschool - 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Pancake Breakfast

We kick off Catholic Schools Week with a pancake breakfast after Sunday Mass.





### St. Nicholas Day

We partnered with St. Mathias to host the third annual St. Nicholas Day party. Students sang carols, ate dinner, and met St. Nicholas.

### Field Days

Elementary and Preschool have separate field days where they compete in outdoor activities and enjoy treats.

### Family Picnic

Families join us for hot lunch after Mass during Catholic Schools Week.

### Teddy Bear Picnic

Preschool students parade Teddy bear floats through the school. Older students and staff watch and cheer. A preschool snack picnic is held afterwards.

### Bingo Fun Day

A day of bingo, food, games, and friends. This event is held in May after a Sunday Mass.

### Skateville

All elementary Students enjoy a roller skating field trip during Catholic Schools Week, at Skateville in Burnsville. This is a time honored tradition!

### Summer Event

We hold an annual summer event in late June at Jack Ruhr Field with the Miesville Mudhens. This is a chance to connect in the summer and engage with the broader community.

### Grandparents and Special Friends Day

We invite Grandparents and Special Friends to a school Mass, a meal, and classroom visits on the Friday before First Communion. All students are invited to bring a special friend.

### Veterans Day

We host an annual Veterans Day program to thank and learn from our Veterans. Veterans in the community and from our families are invited.

### Class Parties

Our classes have Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day parties organized and led by room parents.

### Field Trips

We took a K-4 field trip to the Science Museum of Minnesota, a K, 1, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade field trip to the Minnesota Zoo, and a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade field trip to Crystal Cave. Carpenter Nature Center brought a field trip to the school during Catholic Schools Week.

# A NIGHT TO REMEMBER: CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF OUR SECOND ANNUAL BLUE AND WHITE GALA

We are thrilled to share the incredible success of our Second Annual Blue and White Gala in support of Catholic education. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our school families, parishioners, alumni, and friends, we raised an astounding \$216,000! This inspiring show of support is a testament to the strength and spirit of our St. John the Baptist Catholic School community.

A highlight of the evening was the remarkable success of our Fund-A-Need initiative, which not only met but exceeded its goal. Because of this, we are excited to move forward with the installation of new high-efficiency windows throughout our school. These much-needed upgrades will significantly improve classroom comfort and building energy efficiency, positively impacting our students, staff, and future generations. This is more than just a facilities improvement; it is a lasting investment in the quality and sustainability of Catholic education at St. John's and for our entire tri-parish community.

What made this evening truly special was witnessing the power of our tri-parish community coming together with a shared purpose: to celebrate and uphold the mission of Catholic education. The Gala reminded us of how deeply our school is valued—not only as a place of academic excellence, but as a cornerstone of faith, service, and connection within our wider community.

We are profoundly grateful to everyone who helped make this event such a success. Your continued support ensures that St. John the Baptist Catholic School remains strong, vibrant, and deeply rooted in our Catholic faith, for this generation and the next. Thank you for believing in our mission, our students, and the bright future ahead.





# MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT

St. John the Baptist Catholic School has an annual marketing plan that is developed with support from the Marketing and Enrollment team at the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE). CSCOE also provides a majority of funding for our marketing plan. This plan has included several school events (summer get-together at Miesville Mudhens game, All Saints Party, St. Nicholas Day Party), boosts for Facebook posts, school swag, including Friday t-shirts, and more. The Preschool Network of Excellence was established this past year as a part of CSCOE, which provides the majority of funding for our preschool marketing plan. The grant received this year provided outreach marketing efforts through targeted mailers, Facebook and Instagram posts, the Kindergarten Signing Day event, and more.



# ENDOWMENT

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church created an endowment through the Catholic Community Foundation in September 2021 for St. John's School. The endowment had \$209,120 as of April 2025. This money is available for limited distribution annually, and the goal is to grow the fund so that it can provide a perpetual, long-term revenue stream to ensure school viability. Gifts to the endowment can come in the form of cash or stocks, IRA distributions, and bequests from a will or estate. All help to support a fund for the sole long-term purpose of providing the opportunity for a Catholic education and maintaining this important value for our tri-parish community. For more information about St. John's School endowment fund, contact the parish office or Catholic Community Foundation (651-389-0300). Gifts to our school endowment help to share the gift of Catholic education for generations to come.

We also have an annual fund made up of general donations to be used in the present fiscal year to support the annual cost of operating our Catholic school. This fund has raised over \$100,000 in each of the past four fiscal years. For more information about how to donate to the annual fund, contact either the parish or school office. Gifts to our annual fund help to make a positive difference for our students of today.



# SCHOOL FINANCE

St. John the Baptist Catholic School is the parish school of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Vermillion. As a ministry of the parish, the school receives an annual operating subsidy from St. John's. In 2020, St. John's entered into a partnership agreement with St. Mary in New Trier and St. Mathias in Hampton to support school operations and maintain a Catholic school presence after their respective schools closed. This parish agreement was renewed and expanded through the 2026-2027 school year. Today, St. John's educates students from each of the three parishes and beyond.

Tuition provides 32% of the cost to educate SJB students. The remainder comes from fundraisers and partnerships with generous donors and organizations.

This year, we received several grants from organizations wishing to help us with special projects. These include an anonymous gift (\$15,000) towards technology needs. This is in addition to the same gift reported in our 2024 report. We also received a (\$10,000) grant from the Catholic School Center of Excellence (CSCOE) to be used to support the school with recruiting, retaining, and hiring teachers, a (\$3,500) grant from CSCOE to support our marketing plan, and a (\$500) grant from CSCOE for teacher appreciation.

FUNDRAISER	GOAL	TOTAL RAISED
MARATHON	\$35,000	\$43,582
CATHOLIC UNITED RAFFLE	\$18,300	\$13,510
BLUE AND WHITE GALA	\$170,000	\$216,000

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# AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

2024 was our fourth year of summer programs. We had five weeks of summer programming, and averaged 25 students per week. Our summer camps pay entirely for themselves and are an opportunity for our community to connect, our staff to get extra hours, and for us to incorporate fun summer learning.



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## After School Clubs

This year we offered Fall Cross Country, Lego Club and Spanish Club. The winter offered Art Club, Cribbage Club, and a Puzzle Club. The spring offered Card Club and Art Club.

## Summer Program

We plan to have four more weeks of summer programming for Summer 2025. This includes Vacation Bible School and camps with the themes of Space Explorer, Farm Fun, and Under the Sea.

# JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT



Each spring, students in kindergarten through 4th grade at St. John the Baptist Catholic School take part in Junior Achievement lessons, thanks to the time and dedication of many wonderful parent and community volunteers. This hands-on program builds financial literacy, critical thinking, and real-world skills at every grade level. Our 4th-grade students culminated their JA experience with a trip to Junior Achievement BizTown, where they took on exciting roles like CEO, CFO, Executive Director, and Program Manager at businesses such as Delta and Affinity Plus. They worked together to run a simulated city, making decisions, managing budgets, and learning what it takes to be a leader in the workplace.

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# BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

We believe that students thrive in a well-maintained, thoughtfully equipped learning environment. A modern, safe facility not only supports student well-being but also reinforces the message that education is valuable and that each student is respected and valued.

In August, before the start of the school year, new interactive SMART Boards were installed in all classrooms to enhance instruction, foster student engagement, and enrich the learning experience. This upgrade was made possible through a generous grant from CSCOE and the support of an anonymous private donor.

Looking ahead, high-efficiency windows will be installed in June 2025, replacing the original single-pane aluminum-frame windows from 1957. These new windows will significantly improve the building's energy efficiency, enhance ventilation, and increase exposure to natural UV-filtered sunlight, contributing to a healthier and more comfortable learning environment.

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# SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council (SAC) of St. John the Baptist Catholic School is established to assist the pastor and the principal in the governance of this parish school. SAC meets monthly during the school year to discuss topics such as school policy, tuition rates, events, strategic planning, new programs, and to provide a variety of viewpoints for advising the pastor and principal.

2023-2024 SAC members: Jessica Beissel (Chair), Kristy Meyers (Secretary), Dave Beskau (Trustee), Sam Endres (Trustee), Josh Fahey, Kate Johnson, Jesse Starkson, Joe Lawler, and Brent Staples

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# HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Home and School Association (HSA) supports St. John's by organizing events, fundraisers, and volunteers. Its mission is to foster collaboration between parents and teachers, promote Catholic education, support the school's goals, and coordinate efforts that strengthen our school community.

2024 - 2025 HSA Officers: Melissa Fransen (President), Sarah Kuhns (Vice President), and Kacie Fahey (Secretary).



# WHAT'S NEXT?



We implemented our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum, *Character Strong*, this year. Integrating this curriculum allowed us to deliver explicit lessons on topics such as conflict resolution, focus, emotional awareness, stress management, and more.

Next year, we will expand the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program to include kindergarten and first grade, in addition to preschool. This hands-on, peaceful, and joyful Catechesis program centers around The Atrium (or prepared environment), which is one of the important elements that helps the relationship between God and the child to flourish.

We enter the next school year in the second year of our seven-year strategic plan. Some of these strategies include offering high-quality professional development to our staff, especially in differentiated instruction, preparing for a 2026-2027 Catholic Schools Study, and completing a curriculum mapping tool for the Preschool Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. We will also be reviewing the Parent Student handbook to align with the Archdiocesan Manual for Catholic Schools, while expanding our efforts in marketing, advancement, retention, and alumni relationships.

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