

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL

VERMILLION, MN



State of the School Report
2026

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to read through the 2026 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 2025-2026 school year. This report also keeps St. John the Baptist Catholic School up to date on the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association credential requirements.

As a preschool through fourth-grade school, this report includes a variety of information about 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 expansion of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, the continuation of our marketing plan, the third 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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OUR MISSION



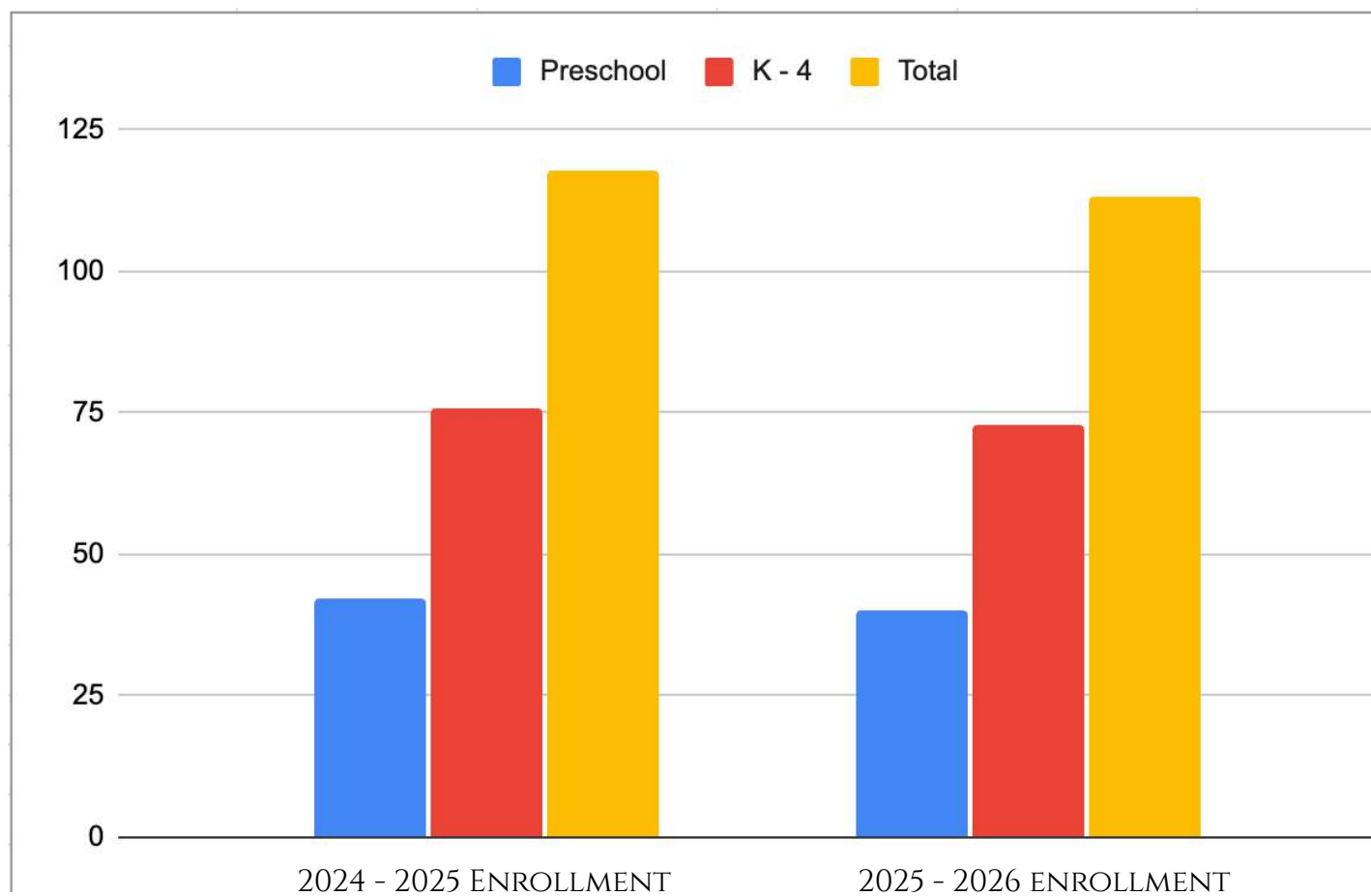
ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC SCHOOL IS AN ENDURING COMMUNITY WELCOMING STUDENTS TO BE KNOWN AND LOVED, TO EXCEL ACADEMICALLY, THRIVE SPIRITUALLY, AND TO LEAD WITH GENEROSITY AND JOY.

Be Known, Be True, Be You

ENROLLMENT

St. John's continues to experience positive growth in student enrollment. Currently, nearly every elementary classroom maintains an optimal cohort size of 14 to 19 students. This robust pipeline of preschool through third grade projects sustained enrollment across all elementary grades, alongside continued strength in our preschool program.

We are encouraged by families' commitment to Catholic education for their children and to St. John's.



SCHOLARSHIPS

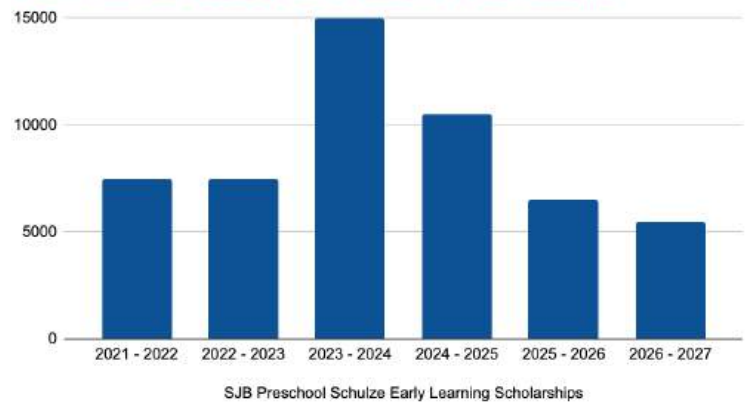
Many St. John's students receive scholarships to help offset the cost of tuition. Our goal is to provide a Catholic education to all who seek it.

The Schulze Family Foundation Early Learning Scholarship is meant for preschoolers in the year before Kindergarten. Other organizations that grant scholarships to our elementary school students include the AIM Higher Foundation, Catholic Services Appeal Foundation, Catholic Community Foundation, and other anonymous groups and individuals. As our school community grows, we remain deeply committed to expanding financial aid opportunities, ensuring that a Catholic education is accessible to every family that seeks it.

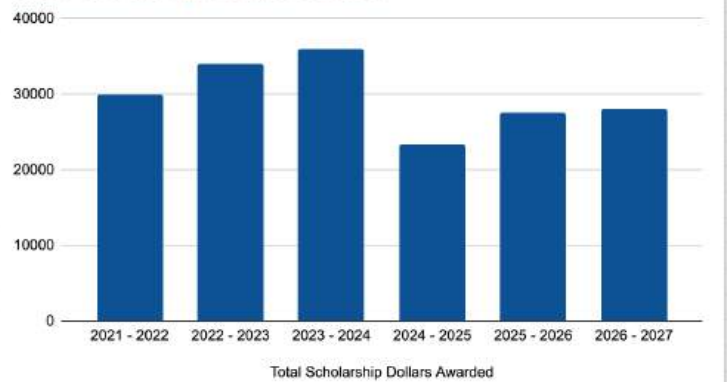
Our total scholarship dollars have remained stable for the past several years, and we have commitments from these organizations for continued support next year.

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 every Wednesday at 9 am. Families and parishioners are always welcome to join. Preschool students attend once each month.

Rosary

Twice a year—during the months of October and May—our K-4 community joins together in prayer for weekly Rosary services. We are proud to have our fourth-grade students take the lead in guiding their younger peers through these spiritual reflections.

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

This program empowers fourth-grade students to serve as mentors to their younger peers. Once a month, these mixed-grade groups (K-4) gather to build community and grow together through activities focused on faith and virtue.

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 sock drive during Catholic Schools Week and collected over 1200 pairs of socks, which 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 Campus Ministry team at the Academy of Holy Angels lead St. John's third and fourth graders in an end-of-the-year retreat.

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.

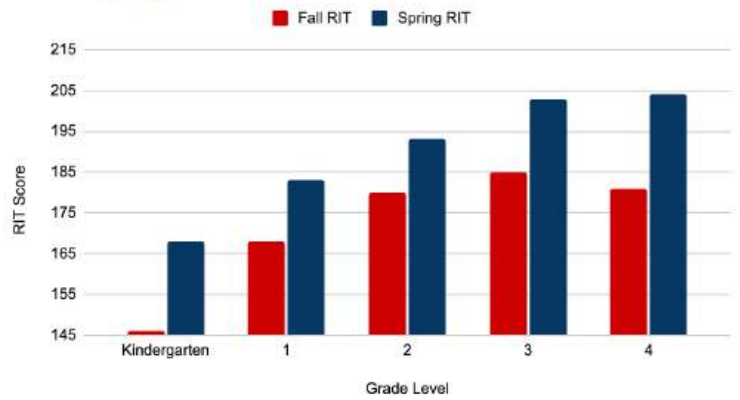
NWEA TESTING

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 use the data throughout the year to monitor which skills students have mastered, which skills need to be reinforced, and which skills are ready to be introduced. The data also helps with creating small groups for intervention and Title I assistance.

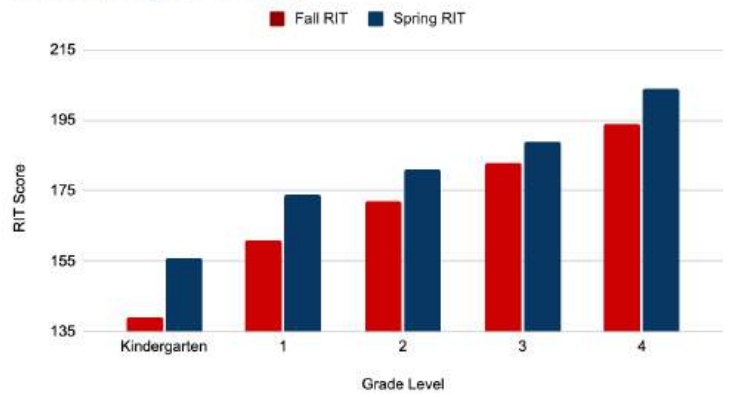
All students in K-4 take the reading and math tests. Third and fourth-grade students also take the language usage test. SJB students annually show growth on all tests, outperforming the national norm.

Additionally, this spring, second, third, and fourth-grade students completed the Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) as part of a pilot with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, outperforming the national norm by nearly 50%.

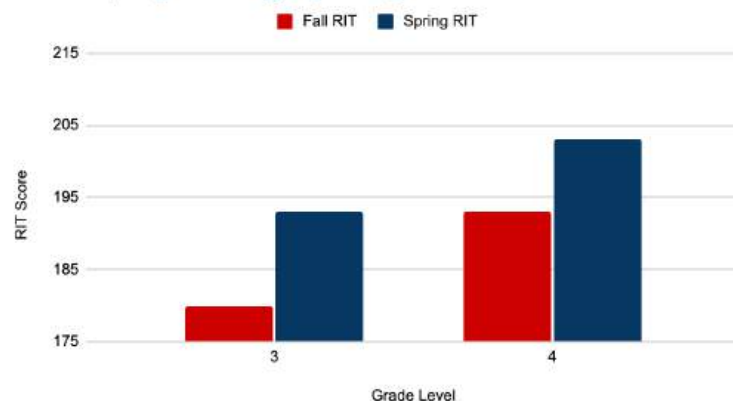
Fall to Spring RIT Math



Fall to Spring RIT Reading



Fall to Spring RIT Language Usage

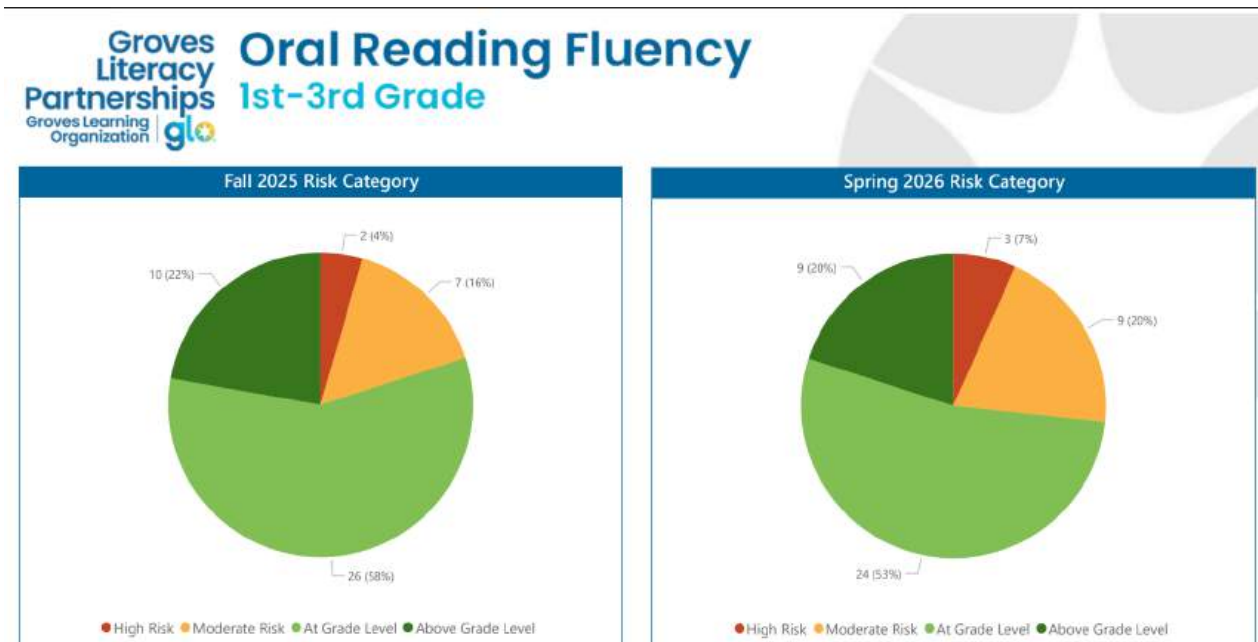


BELIEVE AND READ

The 2025–2026 academic year marked our fourth year partnering with Believe and Read. Powered by the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence in collaboration with Groves Learning Organization (GLO)—a national leader in literacy instruction—this powerful initiative leverages the Science of Reading to ensure every student at St. John's reads at or above grade level. We believe reading is the key to lifelong learning in all subject areas.

Our commitment to literacy is backed by a robust professional development framework. Over the past several years, an expert GLO literacy coach has guided our K–3 and intervention educators. Today, we are proud to have two certified in-house literacy coaches on our staff. Working alongside our GLO partner, they provide bi-weekly coaching, feedback, and data-driven assessment tracking for our teachers. Furthermore, our dedicated reading interventionist meets with students daily in small groups, delivering targeted, high-impact skill development where it is needed 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. Nearly all of the 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 chart displayed shows the growth of our first to third-grade students in oral reading fluency from Fall 2025 to Spring 2026.



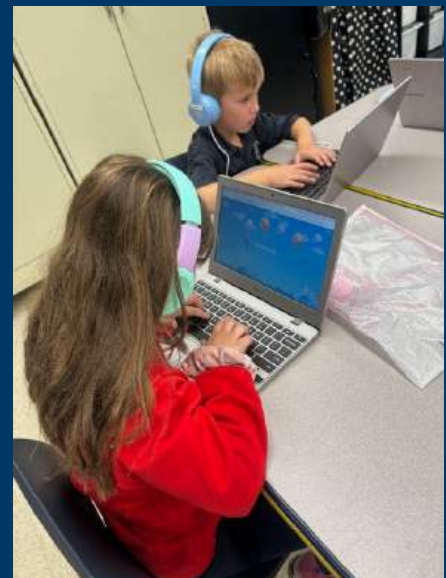
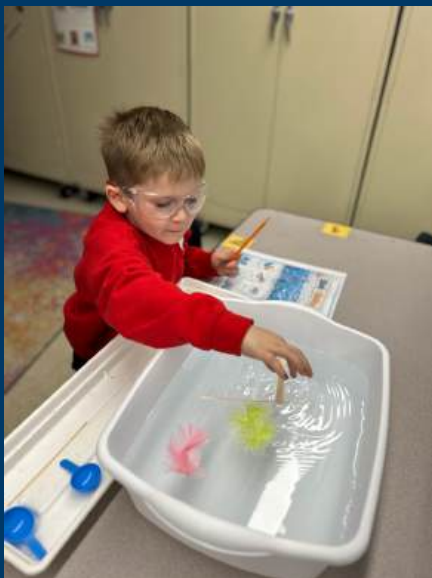
HANDS ON SCIENCE

St. John's fosters a vibrant culture of scientific inquiry through the Amplify Science and Mystery Science platforms. Our students engage in immersive, trimester-long deep dives into complex scientific topics. Throughout each unit, students read, analyze, and write about their focus areas, bridging literacy with interactive science and engineering activities. Every class completes three comprehensive units over the course of the academic year.

Our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) curriculum features dynamic kits designed for multi-lesson exploration and hands-on engineering challenges. Students actively apply problem-solving skills by:

- Designing and building bridges to test weight capacity.
- Engineering parachutes designed to safely deliver cargo.
- Exploring physics by constructing and testing windmills to study levers, pulleys, and fulcrums.

This year, our STEM curriculum expanded to include weekly keyboarding instruction for all elementary students, equipping them with fundamental 21st-century digital skills.



Thanks to community partnerships, the science program at St. John's continues to flourish: Through a collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota Lending Library and the CSCOE STEM Lending Library, teachers were able to bring dynamic, hands-on materials directly into our classrooms, allowing students to explore a variety of scientific concepts in highly accessible ways.

Funded by a generous grant from Flint Hills Resources, every elementary student enjoyed the field trip to the Minnesota Science Museum. This experience featured interactive exhibits and live demonstrations, where several of our own students were invited on stage to participate directly in the presentation.

Our students proudly showcased their curiosity and creativity at our annual Big Bang Science Fair, with several exceptional projects advancing to the regional competition in Mankato.

At St. John's, we believe that faith and science are natural partners in discovery. Your continued support allows us to bring science to life—sparking wonder, encouraging rigorous exploration, and inspiring our school's future



COMMUNITY EVENTS

We believe students thrive when surrounded by a deeply supportive community. Recognizing parents as the primary educators of their children, we are dedicated to creating meaningful opportunities for families, parishioners, and neighbors to advance our shared mission.

Marathon

Students raise pledges, commit to service projects, and 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.

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.

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.

St. Nicholas Day

We partnered with St. Mathias to participate in the annual St. Nicholas Day party. Students and families ate dinner and met St. Nicholas.

Christmas Concert

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





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



Skateville

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

Family Picnic

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

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.



Art Show

Our annual Art Show is held on Grandparents' Day. This features art projects from throughout the school year for all students, preschool - 4th grade.

Teddy Bear Picnic

Preschool students parade teddy bear floats through and around the school. Older students and staff watch and cheer. A preschool snack picnic is held afterwards on the playground lawn.



Field Days

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

Summer Event

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

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

We are thrilled to share the incredible success of our Third Annual Blue and White Gala in support of Catholic education. Thanks to some quiet early fundraising and the overwhelming generosity of our school families, parishioners, alumni, and friends, we raised an astounding \$320,000! 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 exceeded its goal. Because of this, we are excited to move forward with the installation of a beautiful new playground for our school. This much needed improvement is a lasting investment in the quality and sustainability of Catholic education at St. John's and for our entire tri-parish community that will be ready to use on the first day of the 2026 - 2027 school year.

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

Through a close partnership with the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE) Marketing and Enrollment team, St. John the Baptist Catholic School implements a dynamic annual marketing plan. Sponsored largely by CSCOE funding, this plan boosts our community presence through signature events (such as the Miesville Mudhens summer outing and All Saints Party), strategic Facebook advertising, and popular school swag like our Friday spirit shirts for each school year. This past year also included the support of the Preschool Network of Excellence, a CSCOE branch that helps to fund our preschool-specific marketing.

Grant-funded marketing efforts this year successfully expanded our community outreach through targeted Facebook and Instagram campaigns, our Kindergarten Signing Day celebration, and the Preschool Playdate Open Houses.



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 \$263,280 as of April 2026. 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, or 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 routinely raised over \$100,000 each year. 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 for the 2026-2027 school year. Today, St. John's educates students from each of the three parishes and beyond.

Tuition provides only 31% of the cost to educate students at St. John the Baptist Catholic School. 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 enhancing our offerings in art, music, and physical education. 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, and a (\$1,500) grant from CSCOE to support our marketing plans.

FUNDRAISER	GOAL	TOTAL RAISED
MARATHON	\$35,000	\$39,658
CATHOLIC UNITED RAFFLE	\$15,000	\$13,850
BLUE AND WHITE GALA	\$285,000	\$320,000

AFTERSCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

We offered five weeks of summer programming and averaged 20 students per week. Our summer camps pay for themselves entirely and are an opportunity for our community to connect, for our staff to get extra hours, and for us to incorporate fun summer learning to any and all who might join us, whether current students, new students, or potential students from any of our three parishes and beyond.



After School Clubs

This year, we offered a variety of different clubs for our students: Cross Country, Spanish Club, Outdoor Games, Art Club, Games Club, Lego Club, and a Puzzle Club.



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 US Bank and the JA Cafe. They worked together to run a simulated city, making decisions, managing budgets, and learning what it takes to be a leader in the workplace.



CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

We believe that students thrive in a well-maintained, thoughtfully equipped learning environment. Modern, safe facilities not only support student well-being but also reinforce the message that education is valuable and that each student is respected and valued.

Looking ahead, an exciting campus transformation is set for June 2026. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community during the Fund A Need at our annual Blue and White Gala, our current playground will be completely replaced with a state-of-the-art system that is fully funded at a cost of \$235,000. This new playground is a beautiful testament to what happens when our community unites with a shared purpose. By upgrading this space today, we are not only enriching the daily lives and well-being of our current students, but we are also securing a vibrant, competitive, and welcoming environment for the generations of future families who will call St. John's home.



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.

2025-2026 SAC members: Jessica Beissel (Chair), Kristy Meyers (Secretary), Dave Beskau (Trustee), Janna Bauer, Josh Fahey, Jesse Starkson, Joe Lawler, and Brent Staples

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.

2025 - 2026 HSA Officers: Melissa Fransen (President), Jen Bloemendahl (Vice President), and Kacie Fahey (Secretary).



WHAT'S NEXT?



We enter the next school year in the third 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 2027-2028 Catholic Schools Study, extending parent education opportunities, and continuing work on curriculum mapping for each content area.

Next school year, we will participate in the CSCOE Exceptional Learners Pilot Program, a strategic initiative focused on strengthening support systems for all students. Through this work, we will examine and enhance our use of data-informed decision-making, multi-tiered systems of support, instructional practices, and school-wide structures. As student needs continue to grow in complexity, this pilot will provide valuable guidance and resources to help us build a sustainable framework that promotes academic success, behavioral growth, and equitable access to support for every learner.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program expanded this year to include kindergarten and first grade, in addition to preschool. This hands-on and joyful Catechesis program centers on The Atrium (or prepared environment), which is an important element that helps the relationship between God and the child flourish. We will add second grade to the CGS Atrium next school year to bring added focus to this critical sacrament year.

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