Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools
and Catholic Education Foundation

Annual Report
2020-2021

Going Forward with the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit is the strength of God, it’s what gives us the strength to go forward.

- Pope Francis

Are you familiar with the conversion story of St. Ignatius of Loyola? A cannonball shattered his leg in the Battle of Pamplona in 1521. During his lengthy convalescence, he read a book on Christ and a book on the lives of the saints, beginning his conversion. Would his life have been different had he not encountered this cannonball? Would he still have formed a new religious order or gone back to school and become a saint if not for his injury and recovery? The Holy Spirit was at work in this unexpected challenge in his life.

The Covid-19 pandemic is our cannonball – our unexpected challenge that shattered parts of each of us in different ways. In Catholic schools, we are inspired by the Holy Spirit who is at work in our lives. Jesus guides us and is present in all we do.

The Diocese of Joliet Catholic schools asked for God’s guidance and grace, identified community needs, planned how to keep our schools healthy and safe learning spaces, reopened and remained open for the entire 2020-21 school year. How? By following the example of St. Ignatius and continuing to prayerfully discern God’s plan. The Holy Spirit guided our efforts and God protected those entrusted to our care.

We again found new ways to teach – simultaneously to students both in the physical classroom and to those still learning from home. We measured the reality of spacing 6-feet apart. We converted gymnasiums and cafeterias to classrooms. We created protocols for what to do when a student got sick. We adapted activities and schedules. We learned how to see smiles behind masks. We celebrated being reunited inside the classroom and outside on the playground. We adjusted to new drop-off and pick-up procedures. And we cleaned...a lot.

God was present in it all, guiding us forward to face whatever challenge or victory lay ahead. This year our annual report reflects on the many ways in which God guides us forward and connects us as a community of faith in our Catholic schools. The stories that follow demonstrate the many ways in which “We Teach More” throughout the 52 Diocese of Joliet Catholic schools. We celebrate the amazing work our schools did during “Covid Year,” following God and moving forward.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

May the Peace of Christ be with you always. We are pleased to present the annual report of the Catholic Schools Office and Catholic Education Foundation in the Diocese of Joliet. This year has continued to be challenging. Yet, despite these challenges, our schools remained open for in-person learning for the entire 2020-21 school year. This feat was accomplished because of the incredible dedication and faith of the pastors, principals, administrators, teachers, families and benefactors of the diocese.

In spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic, our diocesan schools continue to shine a light on three very critical elements: Catechesis, Evangelization and Faith into Action. In partnership with the families of the diocese, our schools are places where students learn about Christ, grow in their relationship with Him and have many opportunities to put this faith into service.

I offer my gratitude to our parents for their continued partnership with the schools of the Diocese so that the students can experience a faith-filled education. I also offer my deep appreciation to the faithful of the Diocese for their on-going support of the ministry of Catholic education. May God bless you always.

The Most Rev. Ronald A. Hicks
Bishop of Joliet
We are created in God’s image and called to live in Christ through the Holy Spirit.

-Pope John Paul II

The 2020-21 school year ended and Covid continued to present challenges to our world. Yet, despite the roadblocks that occurred, the schools of the Diocese of Joliet continue to move forward. In a world of shut downs, the schools of the Diocese of Joliet remained open (and continue to remain open) for in-person learning. This remarkable feat is due to bottomless dedication and support of the pastors, administrators and teachers of the Diocese. As Pope Francis reminds us, “Let us thank all those who teach in Catholic schools. Educating is an act of love; it is like giving life.”

This past year, this act of giving life has taken many forms. The pastors and principals worked together to problem solve and adjust plans to ensure that doors were always open. Teachers adapted their instruction to meet the various modes in which they had to work to ensure that students continued their learning in faith-filled environments. To accomplish this, the continuous support of diocesan families was critical.

This year’s annual report highlights the important work of the diocesan Catholic schools in shaping saints and scholars. The stories shared in this report offer on-going samples of the acts of love that our diocesan schools offer to students. Throughout the many disruptions that our world has experienced, our schools have remained a constant. Diocesan schools continue to offer rigorous curriculum, regular participation in liturgy and prayer, and service learning. Our gratitude goes out to the very important partnership among benefactors, families, dedicated pastors and commitment from faculty and administrators which has allowed our schools to continue to offer these acts of love. Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

Dear CEF Supporters and Friends,

During the 2020-21 school year, the Catholic Education Foundation was privileged to walk alongside the students, families, teachers and principals as they pushed forward with the Holy Spirit. But we could not have done so without YOU. You opened your heart and contributed to the success of our Catholic schools. As a result of your generous gifts, prayers and advocacy, our Catholic school students were able to flourish last year.

The generosity of donors like you, allowed 1,738 students to attend Catholic school who may not have otherwise been able to do so. Because of you, 1,159 families were able to breathe a little easier under extremely trying financial circumstances.

Champions of Catholic education throughout the Diocese of Joliet rallied together to successfully save the Illinois Tax Credit Scholarship Program, which raised an additional $3.6 million to provide 676 full or partial scholarships for our students last year.

There will always be challenges to face, but together with YOU, the Catholic Education Foundation is committed to walk alongside our schools and families to ensure that the promise of a Catholic education is always available to those who want to attain it.
Education is a thing of the heart.
-St. John Bosco

Study with Great Teachers

Expert, passionate and selfless, our teachers personally invest themselves in the success of your child, seeing them as not just another student, but rather as someone’s beloved son or daughter who is deserving of all the individual attention, undivided love and thoughtful encouragement necessary to reach their full, God-given potential.

The professionalism, dedication and faith of our teachers moved us forward in fulfilling our Catholic school mission. We remain deeply grateful for their teaching, creativity, patience and generosity.

Looking Ahead

Our local school leaders continually look ahead to ensure each school’s learning resources, teaching approaches and classroom tools stay abreast of new ideas and best practices as they plan for the long-term success that will benefit students and teachers alike.

Before the new school year even began, our teachers were hard at work preparing to move forward with students returning to buildings and continuing to learn online. Teachers learned how to better use technology to deliver the curriculum and assess student work and progress. Principals and teachers also strengthened their social-emotional competencies as educators to equip our students and families to do the same during this unique and stressful time.

Our teachers are always learning and growing. Professional development for our teachers throughout the year included hybrid teaching support and planning for the post-Covid teaching environment. The Winter Seminar for principals focused on courage, and included meaningful reflections on all that was being overcome during “Covid Year” and the gifts the pandemic presented to carry forward.

Summer School

In a “normal” year, most students are less than enthusiastic about spending part of their summer in school. But Summer 2020 was anything but normal. To help students bridge any Covid-related learning gaps prior to the start of the new school year, St. Jude Catholic School, Joliet provided academic enrichment to children in grades K-8. Spread throughout five classrooms, students spent time on content areas such as reading, writing and math with Catholic faith-formation at the core. The six-week program was offered at no cost to students who needed support, and classes were limited to 10 students per room.

Parents, teachers, faculty and staff members worked together to offer the program, with teachers devoting part of their summer vacation to prepare and teach lessons. Students responded positively, with one saying “E-learning was hard. The classroom is easier, and I understand questions better in person.” In addition to student feedback, parent feedback was welcomed and helped form plans for returning to school in the fall. “My kids really liked being back in the school setting with other kids,” said Sarah Tafoya, parent of second and third grade students. “Even with precautions in place, face-to-face learning is important and easier to gauge how well a student is doing, and how to encourage growth in all areas – mental, physical and spiritual,” she said.
**Learning Communities**

In the 2020-21 school year, our dedicated teachers did things a little differently to provide students a hands-on approach while staying safely distanced. To do so, they needed the support of their peers across diocesan schools more than ever. Throughout the fall, all teachers were invited to participate in online grade-level and subject area learning communities. They shared the excitement of their students returning to school, strategies to engage remote learners with those physically in the classroom and tools used to enhance learning. They chatted about the invaluable technology training they had over the summer, strategies that worked well as they spent precious face-to-face time with students and how they were getting to know new students in creative ways behind their masks.

Music teachers discussed strategies for virtual performances, how they maintained our Catholic identity through music when not singing and plans for Christmas programs. Art teachers discussed how they taught technique lessons by video and creative ideas such as using non-dominant hands and closed eyes. Language teachers chatted about strategies to learn a language without seeing the pronunciation on each other’s faces. Physical education teachers researched creative approaches for activities never done before, from using game boards and weekly workouts with activity logs to students building their own soccer balls and learning to appreciate their equipment.

Overall teachers shared how inspired they felt by the engagement of their students and families, and the unanticipated blessings they found – students became more independent and showed more empathy, and everyone enjoyed more fresh air with mask/brain breaks outside connecting with nature. One teacher shared her happy surprise...her students loved eating lunch with her in the classroom. We are blessed to have such inspirational teachers in our schools!

**Honors and Recognition**

Teachers were honored for their accomplishments during 2020-21. We are very proud of their achievements and the recognition of their hard work and talents.

**St. Joan of Arc, Lisle** kindergarten teacher Angela Suwanski (pictured far left) was named WGN TV’s Teacher of the Month for September 2020.

In February 2021, **Holy Family, Shorewood** preschool teacher Jessica Bertino (pictured near left) received the Great Teacher Award by the Joliet Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Diocese of Joliet teachers from **St. Joan of Arc, Lisle, St. James, Glen Ellyn, Saints Peter and Paul, Naperville** and **St. Pius X, Lombard**, in addition to Catholic Schools Office staff, were selected to share their expertise with educators across the country. They presented “Nurturing a Justice-Centered Education through the Catholic Social Teachings” and Superintendent Michael Boyle, Ph.D., presented “To Act with Justice and Love Tenderly: Exploring the Church’s Call for Inclusion” at the National Catholic Education Association annual conference in April 2021.
Let us open wide our hearts. Press forward and fear nothing.

-St. Katherine Drexel

Belong to Something Bigger

Our schools are noticeably and joyfully Catholic with prayer throughout the day, daily religion instruction and weekly Mass. We celebrate the sacraments and our students interact with the religious. We employ devotional practices, participate in service opportunities and promote vocations. Our students begin to find new meaning in life through the structured beliefs and moral foundation of the Catholic Church, and to understand that they now belong to something bigger – and infinitely higher – than themselves. In 2020-21, we found new ways to keep faith at the center of all we do. These special traditions in our schools, although they looked a bit different, prepare our students for a life eternal with God!
Students in our schools, like St. Pius X, Lombard (pictured right), participated in the joyous celebration of the ministry of Bishop Ronald A. Hicks by watching the live stream of his Installation Mass from their classrooms.

Ash Wednesday masses were celebrated in our schools with students, faculty and staff receiving ashes sprinkled on their heads to begin the 40 days of Lent.

Children throughout our schools prepared to receive their First Communion and be welcomed at the Lord’s table. Second grade students at Holy Family, Shorewood (pictured left) wrote letters to Jesus about how they felt leading up to this important day.

Devotional Project
Through the annual diocese-wide devotional project, students are introduced to practices allowing them to nurture their devotional lives and strengthen their relationship with Jesus, Our Blessed Mother and the Saints. Over 16 weeks, 8th grade student leaders and their teachers teach and lead K-7th graders through classroom prayer and religious lessons centered on Our Lady’s role as Mother of God and the relationship between Jesus and Mary. The 2020-21 theme was Saints and Catholic Social Teachings and many of the lessons were conducted via video featuring the student leaders. Students focused on 14 saints whose lives were dedicated to living out one of the Catholic Social Teachings. Student leaders led a prayer service in their schools to conclude the project.
**Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.**  
-1 Thessalonians 5:11

**Collaborating With Families**

Understanding that many parents work, and some may even work multiple jobs, our teachers and school leadership do their best to maintain proactive, candid and open communication with each student’s family, because learning doesn’t stop at the edge of the schoolyard, nor is it where it begins.

Partnering with parents as the primary educators of their children was essential during “Covid Year.” We found the way forward with our strong faith-filled family communities and the Lord’s guiding hand.

**Returning to School**

School leadership learned what it took to reopen schools during a pandemic and spent much of the summer planning to welcome everyone back for the 2020-21 school year while ensuring academic excellence in the context of our Catholic identity in the safest way. Our schools collaborated with families as all prepared to return and how different the school year would look. We were blessed to have most of our students back learning in their school buildings this fall, but some families needed other options. Our school communities offered a variety of learning formats for our students throughout the diocese.

The school year required flexibility, resilience and patience to meet new challenges and information faced every day. Together with our school families, we worked hard to keep our communities safe and our schools open. Parents were essential to ensuring each of our Catholic schools successfully implemented face-to-face instruction that honored safety measures outlined in reopening plans.

We remained vigilant and stayed strong. We wore masks, social distanced, washed our hands often, sanitized materials and facilities regularly, did temperature/wellness checks each morning and stayed home if we were sick. Through increasing and decreasing Covid-19 positivity rates, we continued to follow safety procedures and adhered to guidelines for students learning face-to-face. We monitored county statistics daily and the low Covid prevalence rate in our diocesan schools. Contact tracing indicated that positive cases were traced to outside sources. We protected our cherished school communities to the best of our ability. We prayed for the safety of our staff, students and families. And we gave thanks for the trust our families placed in us.
To say “thank you” to the diocesan teachers and staff who worked tirelessly to keep schools sanitized and open for face-to-face instruction, Saints Peter and Paul, Naperville parent Elaine Lohse generously offered a donation by Freudenberg Household Products of more than 600 O-Cedar ProMist MAX Spray Mops. Teachers were grateful for the donation as it helped expedite the sanitation and cleaning process.

“I applaud you for your courage and perseverance, and for all the hard work you did to reopen our schools.”  - Bishop Ronald A. Hicks

The efforts of all our school leaders, teachers, staff, students and families made in-person instruction happen safely and successfully. We didn’t take the elements of a school day – opening a locker, hanging a backpack, ironing a uniform or packing a lunch – for granted. Our staff and families did a heroic job maintaining a safe learning environment for our students both inside and outside of the school building thanks to their diligence and dedication demonstrated daily. We finished the school year just as we began – healthy, strong and in person thanks to everyone working together.

Parent Resources
In what was a challenging year for everyone, the Catholic Schools Office offered helpful resources to support parents at home. Liz Repking (pictured right), founder of Cyber Safety Consulting, presented a virtual workshop for our school parents about building healthy technology at home. She addressed how parents could balance the great advantages and opportunities of technology while protecting children in our hyper digital age. She also offered helpful tips and strategies to manage screen time, implement successful eLearning strategies, address the isolation children felt while trying to stay connected to the outside world and how parents could create healthy family tech time. The Catholic Schools Office also hosted a free webinar presented by social-emotional experts from Friendzy – Finding Balance in Uncertain Times – for parents to help identify and understand the impact of stress and learn tips for parenting in its midst with grace and resilience.
Financial Aid
The Catholic Education Foundation (CEF) is committed to ensure that the promise of a Catholic education is always available to those who want to attain it. Throughout the diocese, there are many families with significant financial need, which often prevents them from even considering a Catholic education for their children. We are blessed with donors who believe in the promise of Catholic education as much as we do. Thanks to generous benefactors who contributed to the CEF and Illinois Tax Credit Scholarship Program in 2020-21, 2,414 scholarships were awarded to students in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Joliet.

These scholarships help families who want their children to have a faith-filled education. CEF and Tax Credit Scholarships provide tuition assistance to the most financially deserving students attending our Catholic elementary and high schools, with Tax Credit Scholarships covering up to 100 percent of tuition per student for a year. Ongoing funding is needed so we may continue to help families provide their children an education instilled with Catholic values. Call the Catholic Education Foundation at (815) 221-6127 or visit CEFJoliet.org for more information or to contribute.

We are grateful for the generous donors who contributed to the CEF for the 2020-21 school year and/or through the Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Please visit CEFJoliet.org/Ways To Give for a list of benefactors. The list reflects donations received by the CEF through June 30, 2021 and donations received to the Tax Credit Scholarship Program through December 31, 2021.

Donor Spotlight - The Women’s Giving Circle
Recognizing the extraordinary efforts of the Catholic school teachers throughout the Diocese of Joliet, the Women’s Giving Circle provides opportunities for Catholic educators to enhance their teaching through financial support of projects that may otherwise go unfunded.

Members of the Women’s Giving Circle pool their contributions into one fund and decide by vote which projects and opportunities to fund, allowing their individual gifts to have a greater impact. Last school year, the Women’s Giving Circle awarded four classroom grants totaling $13,500. These grants provided additional classroom technology, curriculum materials and supported school-wide Catholic faith programs. Congratulations to all our classroom grant recipients (pictured below).

The winners of the 2020-21 grant awards were selected from more than 23 impressive applications seeking funds during the Women’s Giving Circle’s second funding year. Mae Ciancio, a member of the Women’s Giving Circle, noted, “We are proud to have dedicated and creative teachers in our Catholic Schools to inspire our students and guide them as they explore and expand their minds, hearts and souls.”

The Women’s Giving Circle seeks to promote philanthropy that empowers women, compels action, advances Catholic education, and glorifies God through collective giving, collaboration and shared faith. We invite you to learn more about the Women’s Giving Circle and how you can join. Visit CEFJoliet.org/Women’sGivingCircle.
Our schools and families joined other advocates across Illinois to protect and extend the Invest in Kids Act Tax Credit Scholarship Program leading up to the Spring 2021 legislative session. We are grateful for the bipartisan agreement on the program — especially the one-year extension of the program’s sunset and the preservation of the 75% state tax credit. We remain committed to working with leaders to advocate for essential changes to the program so we can serve even more low-income and working-class students and families. We thank all the elected officials and advocates from across the state for their work to ensure that all lawmakers knew the importance and potential of this program. State Rep. Seth Lewis of the 45th District visited St. Isidore, Bloomingdale (pictured bottom left) and State Rep. Amy Grant of the 42nd District visited St. John the Baptist, Winfield (pictured bottom right) to see classrooms, meet students and speak with parents to see first-hand how important this program is to our families.
Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.

-Proverbs 1:5

Achieve Ahead of Your Peers

Our students score above the national mean in every subject area compared to the national norms in reading, English language arts and math. Although the previous school year concluded remotely, the scores of our students tested in Fall 2020 did not slip significantly over previous years, and in most cases were maintained or higher. In addition, when comparing the number of students expected to meet growth in a typical full school year to the adjusted growth of our student learning during the interruption of typical in class instruction, the data shows the remote learning provided by the schools in the Diocese of Joliet resulted in continued growth and achievement for our students.

While the 2020-21 school year was different, our students were actively engaged in learning whether in the school building, remotely with technology or with work sent home. Students in our schools are taught to rely on their faith for support as they persevere through challenges they experience.
Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

- Joshua 1:9

Change the World

The Bible teaches us that having knowledge is not enough. Our students also serve others, better their communities and change the world outside the classroom. They practice generosity and gratitude. With resilience and courage, they participate in activities to become leaders and to create a better future.
For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

- Jeremiah 29:11

The Benefits of a Catholic Education “By the Numbers” 2020-21

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<th>Revenue Sources</th>
<th>Consolidated Actual</th>
<th>Per Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment in Catholic Education</td>
<td>$66,296,411</td>
<td>$7,118</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Tuition & Fees     | $45,391,169 | $4,873 |
| Local Fundraising  | 4,761,299   | 511    |
| Parish Investment  | 12,227,155  | 1,313  |
| Other Revenue      | 3,635,023   | 390    |
| **TOTAL REVENUE**  | **$66,014,646** | **$7,088** |

Catholic Education Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet

Statement of Financial Position June 30, 2021 and June 30, 2020

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<th>2020</th>
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<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<td><strong>Liabilities and Net Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td>Refundable advance</td>
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<td>With Donor Restrictions</td>
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<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities and net assets</strong></td>
<td>$18,114,909</td>
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Explanation of Terms
Undesignated and Designated Net Assets: Net assets which are not subject to donor-imposed restrictions.
Restricted Net Assets: Net assets, which are subject to donor-imposed restrictions.
Preschools/Early Childhood Centers: 2
Elementary Schools: 42
High Schools: 8

Elementary School Students: 10,859
Elementary School Teachers: 1,057

Average Joliet Diocese Elementary School student-to-teacher ratio: 10:1
Average Illinois Elementary School student-to-teacher ratio: 17:1

High School Students: 4,630
High School Teachers: 428

Average Joliet Diocese High School student-to-teacher ratio: 11:1
Average Illinois High School student-to-teacher ratio: 18:1

4-Year Graduation Rate at Joliet Diocese Schools: 100%
4-Year Graduation Rate at Illinois Public Schools: 86%

Average ACT of Joliet Diocese Schools: 25.2
Average ACT of Illinois Public Schools: 25.2

Percentage of 2021 Joliet Diocese high school graduates who attended a four-year college or university: 88%
Percentage of Illinois 2021 public high school graduates who attended a two- or four-year college or university: 69%

Percentage of our Class of 2021 high school seniors who graduated from their high school: 100%

College Scholarships offered to our high school seniors in the Class of 2021: Approximately $203 million

Total Catholic Education Foundation (CEF) Scholarships and Grants Awarded: $1,902,150
To: 1,738 Students
Average scholarship: $1,094

Total Tax Credit Scholarships (TCS) Awarded: $3,887,604
To: 676 Students
Average scholarship: $5,751

Note: 2020-21 Illinois public school data is from the 2021 Illinois Report Card.
Last Look at 2020-21
Covid-19 vaccinations for adults began as the calendar flipped to 2021. In addition to some schools dedicating time for school and parish staff to receive vaccinations, the Catholic Schools Office hosted a clinic at Cathedral of St. Raymond, Joliet for Diocese of Joliet Catholic school staff who wanted a Covid-19 vaccination.

Volunteers took temperatures, checked-in guests, assisted medical staff and ensured all ran smooth. KODOCARE Pharmacy and nursing students from University of St. Francis and Joliet Junior College administered nearly 400 doses!

St. Andrew the Apostle, Romeoville preschool teacher Cindy Corcoran (pictured right) was so excited for her turn that she even made a custom t-shirt for the occasion!

Are you an alumnus of a Diocese of Joliet Catholic School?
Connect today with your alma mater and learn how to give back with time, talent and/or treasure.

Catholic Schools Week 2022
January 30–February 5
www.NCEA.org/csw #CSW22

Follow our Catholic schools on Facebook at @DioceseOfJolietCSO and on Twitter at @WeTeachMore.