

# MAKING THE GRADE

NEWS FROM THE OMAHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL CONSORTIUM

JANUARY 2017

## VISIONING SESSIONS HELP SHAPE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium held two visioning sessions this past fall to map out the future for Catholic education in southeast Omaha. Session participants, who represented Clergy, educators, Consortium alumni, parents and employees, community stakeholders, and investors provided input through guided visioning exercises. During the session, participants worked to identify and understand the challenges facing the Consortium schools, and defined the organization's priorities and goals. Participant feedback helped develop the framework for a three-year strategic plan supporting the organizational mission of the Consortium.

The event was sponsored by Catholic Health Initiatives and used the Decision Accelerator model of strategic planning. Decision Accelerator is a planning model that engages a large group of stakeholders in addressing complex problems to effectively and efficiently innovate, collaborate, create, plan, make decisions and implement strategies.

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium strives to provide quality Catholic schools for children and families in southeast Omaha. To help achieve this goal, we must sustain our schools financially, embody our tradition of academic excellence and ensure affordable tuition, all while preserving our strong Catholic identity. During the visioning sessions, participants explored broad themes of Catholic education – Catholic identity, sustainable funding, academic excellence, holistic formation and community – to develop six core work streams.

These core works streams – Catholic identity, academic excellence, sustainability, communications, community outreach, and resource management – will become the strategic priorities for the Consortium and its member schools.

An overview of outcomes from both visioning sessions and a recap of the next steps Consortium leadership will take to develop and enact our strategic vision **will be shared with school parents during an upcoming State of the Schools event on March 26**. If you are interested in getting involved with our schools and our strategic planning efforts, please contact Nicole Evans at 402-590-2815 or [nlevans@archomaha.org](mailto:nlevans@archomaha.org).

### STATE OF THE SCHOOLS EVENT

Parents - Save the date of **March 26 at 2 p.m. for our State of the Schools event at Gross Catholic High School**. During this event, Patrick Slattery, superintendent of schools and Donna Bishop, Consortium executive director will offer an update on the status of the Consortium schools, including the outcomes from the visioning sessions. Parents will also have the opportunity to visit with Consortium staff and vendors featuring school spirit wear, tuition assistance information and more. Additional details and an invitation will be sent out soon.



## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR CONSORTIUM FAMILY

You might talk to them by phone or email them with questions. Here's a chance to know a little more about the people working hard to make your Consortium Schools run.

### Sara Hood

**Sara is the technology integration specialist** for the Consortium schools. Sara is an experienced teacher and former technology director with an extensive background using Chromebooks and iPads in the classroom. She works individually with our educators to help them develop skills in the use of instructional technology. Her role enables teachers to create the best 21st-century learning experience possible for Consortium students. She assists teachers with classroom devices such as Smartboards, Apple TV, and iPads, and helps them integrate use of classroom aids such as Google Apps for education.

Sara hails from Overland Park, Kansas and has a bachelor's in applied computer science and endorsements in K - 12 technology and mathematics. She and her husband, Jim, have two children, Andrew and Jocelyn. She enjoys volunteering at her home parish, St. Gerald in Ralston, by taking the lead in the Christmas "Angel Tree" project as well as supporting refugees.

"Schools are such a joyous place filled with passion, excitement and promise. Being on a team that strives for the best learning environment for students while cultivating the Catholic faith is a blessing," said Sara.

### Nicole Evans

**Nicole, an Omaha native, is the director of Development for the Consortium.** She is responsible for community and capacity building to support the mission of our schools. Her work with Consortium leadership, the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Stewardship and Development helps to identify funding sources and to implement best practices in fund development.

After spending more than a decade in healthcare and public health, Nicole spent a year working as a first grade teacher assistant and certified substitute teacher at a Catholic elementary school to help transition her career from healthcare to Catholic education.

Nicole served on both the Home & School Association and Recruitment Committee at St. Gerald Catholic School and currently serves as a parent volunteer at St. Gerald School where she has taught Junior Achievement to Kindergarten, second and fifth graders. She has also served as a lead fundraiser for the YMCA Annual Support Campaign and volunteered for the American Heart Association, Relay for Life, March of Dimes, and Project Angel Bereavement Support Services.

She has a bachelor's in journalism/communications, a master's in business administration/healthcare administration and has a local substitute-teaching license from the Nebraska Department of Education. Nicole and her husband, Shawn, have two boys – Tyler, 12 and Bryce, 9. They are parishioners at St. Gerald Catholic Church and both children attend St. Gerald Catholic School in Ralston. The family also has a rambunctious Labrador retriever named Lucy. In her spare time, Nicole enjoys time with her family, running, swimming, yoga, reading and cooking.

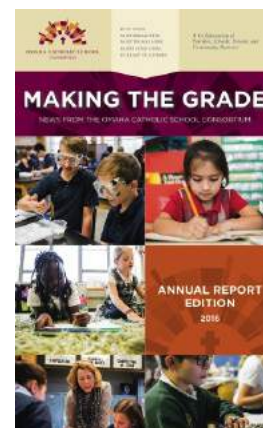
"I love the commitment and enthusiasm of the Consortium school principals," said Nicole. "I feel truly blessed to work with a team of individuals who are so dedicated to Catholic education."

## CONSORTIUM RELEASES FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

As parents who entrust our schools with the care and education of your children, we want to thank you for your ongoing support and update you on our accomplishments from the past school year. Our Consortium schools are emerging as leaders in Catholic education. Whether innovating blended learning opportunities, enhancing professional development for our educators or experiencing

unprecedented enrollment gains, Consortium schools are serving as instruments of positive change in Catholic education throughout our archdiocese. The 2016 Annual Report highlights these achievements and outlines our financial information from the past fiscal year.

The annual report was distributed as an insert in the December 5 edition of the Catholic Voice. To view a copy online, visit [www.omahacsc.org](http://www.omahacsc.org) and enter "annual report" in the search engine at the top of the website. If you would like a printed copy, please contact the Development Office at 402.590.2815 or via email at [nlevans@archomaha.org](mailto:nlevans@archomaha.org).



## IT'S KINDERGARTEN ROUND UP TIME!

It's time for Kindergarten Round Up! Incoming kindergarteners and parents are invited to attend a fun-filled event to learn more about the kindergarten experience at our Consortium schools. You and your child will have an opportunity to meet our teachers and register for the upcoming school year at one of our five schools.

### Kindergarten Round Up Schedule:

<b>Holy Cross</b>	Feb. 10
<b>Our Lady of Lourdes</b>	Feb. 16
<b>St. Bernadette</b>	Feb. 16
<b>Sts. Peter and Paul</b>	Feb. 17
<b>St. Thomas More</b>	Feb. 15: Kindergarten Parent Meeting Feb. 17: Kindergarten Round Up February 18: Pre-K Round Up Parent Meeting

Please call the school office or 402-590-2810 to register for Kindergarten Round Up or for more information.

## REGISTRATION COMING SOON!

Mark your calendars! Registration for current families begins Feb. 9 and registration for new families begins Feb. 17.

### Here is an overview of the registration process:

- Registration for the 2017-2018 school year will be online via Sycamore.
- Current families can register online from home by logging onto their Sycamore account beginning Feb. 9. If you need assistance with online registration, contact the school office.
- We invite new families to contact our schools for registration information.

Additional information will be sent to current families from your school principal in the weeks ahead.

## COOL NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

### ST. BERNADETTE STUDENTS GIVE BACK TO OTHERS

St. Bernadette School students made a difference to families at Christmas by participating in an Angel Tree project with St. Bernadette Parish. Each year, the parish's St. Vincent de Paul Society gathers names of those needing assistance during the holidays from five neighboring schools. Parishioners and school families choose a tag from an angel tree and commit to buying gifts or donating cash. Three gifts are purchased for each child under the age of 16 as well as a family gift.

The St. Bernadette students were responsible for purchasing and wrapping gifts for 18 families (a total of 145 gifts) and collected \$1,200 in cash donations allowing volunteers to purchase an additional 25 gifts and \$50 in grocery gift cards for most of the 18 families. A group of seventh-grade girls helped make angel tags, staple, sort and check off gifts as they came in. Eighth graders sorted gifts and volunteers verified that each child was receiving three items.



St. Bernadette students pictured: Jessica Godek, Kenna Buscher, Jenna Skradski, Jordan Skradski, Ellie Zoucha and Julissa Gamon.



Thanks to generous support of school students and parents and St. Bernadette parishioners, 222 children received Christmas gifts of clothing and games or toys and each family received a grocery voucher. A crew of 31 volunteers delivered the bags of goodies to the 54 families.



## CONSIDER A GIFT TO THE ANNUAL FUND



Earlier this year, our Consortium schools launched our first-ever Annual Fund – *Together in Christ: Five Schools, One Mission*. The Together in Christ Annual Fund is a collaborative effort to strengthen our Catholic identity, sustain our schools financially, continue our tradition of academic excellence and maintain affordable tuition.

We invite all of our school families to prayerfully consider a gift to the *Together in Christ* Annual Fund. Tuition covers less than half of the cost to educate a child at our schools. The remaining amount is covered by parish support and through development efforts like the Annual Fund.

Gifts can be designated to a specific Consortium school, or to the area of greatest need. To make your gift today, contact the Development Office at 402-590-2815 or click the “Donate” button in the top left corner of our website, [www.omahacsc.org](http://www.omahacsc.org), to make a secure online donation. Thank you for your support!

## 2017 - 2018 TUITION RATES

Information was sent home last week with the tuition rates for the 2017-2018 school year. Rates can also be viewed online at [www.omahacsc.org/registration/tuition-rates/](http://www.omahacsc.org/registration/tuition-rates/).

## IMPORTANT TUITION ASSISTANCE INFORMATION

This year, Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF) applications must be completed online, and supporting documents will have to be uploaded. An email address is required which will then become your user name for your CSF application. Please contact the Consortium office at 402.590.2810 if you need help creating an email account or completing the CSF application.

In addition, CSF will be offering “Help Sessions” that will be announced soon. If you are applying for any type of tuition assistance you must first apply to the CSF. Applications for the 2017 - 2018 school year must be submitted online between Feb. 13 - April 28.

## Alumni, we want to hear from you!

If you attended Assumption, Holy Cross, Holy Ghost, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Agnes, St. Bernadette, St. Bridget, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Mary, St. Peter, St. Stanislaus, St. Thomas More, or Sts. Peter and Paul - we want to hear from you! Let us know where you are today and we'll keep you in the loop about what's happening at our schools. To register, email [nlevans@archomaha.org](mailto:nlevans@archomaha.org) or visit [www.omahacsc.org](http://www.omahacsc.org).

## Like us on Facebook!

Be sure to check out the Omaha Catholic School Consortium page on Facebook for updates, events and information from our member schools!

This is a publication of the Omaha Catholic School Consortium.

To submit a story idea contact: Nicole Evans, director of Development at [nlevans@archomaha.org](mailto:nlevans@archomaha.org)

Visit our website at: [Omahacsc.org](http://Omahacsc.org)

### Mission

The Omaha Catholic School Consortium provides academic, administrative and financial support to its member schools to ensure students have access to an exceptional education in a nurturing and culturally unique environment, where they are encouraged to explore their Catholic faith and become Disciples of Christ. We are committed to Catholic education that will thrive in our community for generations to come.

### Vision

We will be recognized as a sustainable model for Catholic education with schools that challenge students of many abilities to excel and become faith-filled leaders in service to God and others.

Omaha Catholic School Consortium

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Para hablar con alguien en Español, favor llamar 402-557-5570.