

# Holy Rosary Catholic School

## 2020-2021 State of the School Report

Dear Parents, Staff Members, Parishioners, and Investors in Holy Rosary Catholic School:

What a year it has been for schools across the country! Here at Holy Rosary, we were blessed to have our students in the building for in-person instruction for the entire school year. As educators, we recognize that children learn best when they can be in a classroom, working face-to-face with their teacher and alongside their peers. Committing to bringing our students back into the building during a pandemic, presented us with many unique challenges that required us to operate a school and teach in a classroom in a way we had never done before. Due to the dedication and resilience of our staff, outstanding student compliance, and the exceptional support of our parents, our school year during such unique times went better than we could have ever expected. We are beyond blessed!

Since 1916, Holy Rosary School and Parish have been providing a Catholic education option to families in the Detroit Lakes area. Faith development, academic excellence, and a dedication to service are key elements to Catholic education and set our school apart from other educational options.

This report will provide some information with regards to the current state of our school. It specifically addresses our School Strategic Plan, a summary of our financial resources, standardized assessments, enrollment trends, ways we serve others, and upcoming improvement initiatives.

Thank you for your continual support for our school. The Holy Rosary community is very blessed to have so many individuals who care about our school's ongoing success!

May God bless you & your family most abundantly!

*Cathy Larson*

Holy Rosary School Principal



# School Strategic Plan Progress

Holy Rosary School is accredited through the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accreditation Association (MNSAA). The mission of MNSAA is to be a facilitator in improving the quality of nonpublic education in Minnesota through an accreditation process.

Part of the improvement initiative that MNSAA requires of Holy Rosary School is to produce a School Strategic Plan that includes objectives, action steps, and a timeline. Progress on our School Strategic Plan is reported to MNSAA on an annual basis.

The information below includes our 4 objectives and a description of what steps have been taken thus far to achieve these goals.

## **Objective 1: Holy Rosary School will become more financially independent.**

Several steps have been taken to meet this objective. A new tuition management system was implemented through the use of an online software program. Using this method of collecting and managing tuition money has increased our overall tuition revenue, and currently, we are on track to collect 100% of the tuition due by the end of June. We are also actively working towards the establishment of an endowment fund to augment the school's operating fund. Through contributions made at our annual Spring Interlude fundraiser and memorial donations, we have deposited a significant amount into this fund. The most substantial accomplishment, related to this objective, was that this year our fundraising brought in more income than ever, which contributed to 20% of our total revenue. The parish subsidy was at an all-time low, at 27% of the total budget. For comparison's sake, in 2018-19 (during a more "normal" school year rather than 2019-20), we ended the fiscal year with fundraising at 10% of our total revenue and the parish subsidy at 40%.

## **Objective 2: Holy Rosary School will meet the academic needs of each student.**

Holy Rosary School reviews and updates our preschool through 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum on an annual basis. This past year we focused on science and religion. When we review curriculum, we are looking at standardized testing scores to determine strengths & weaknesses in student progress, MN state education standards and how our curriculum aligns. We also have been working towards purchasing necessary science materials to provide our students with more hands-on learning experiences related to science. As we reviewed our religion curriculum, we worked closely with our Faith Formation Director here at Holy Rosary, Kathy Olson, who provided some insight to the various religion curriculum options and their approach. In addition, currently at each grade level, we have a list of Catholic prayers and teachings that students are expected to learn. We will be reviewing that list as well to determine if any revisions are necessary. In 2012, our school was gifted with a number of iPads for student and staff use. Over the years, the iPads have been a wonderful resource and addition to our education in technology; however, they had become outdated and were not operating as well. Due to a generous donor, our PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization), and some federal funding, we were able to purchase new iPads for every student in grades 2 – 4, and Chromebooks for each student in grades 5 – 8. Updated devices were necessary this past year when students had to be in quarantine and distance learn from home. Going forward, the new technology will support student learning and give them the tools they need to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

## **Objective 3: Holy Rosary School will provide a regionally competitive salary/benefit package to provide students with highly qualified teachers.**

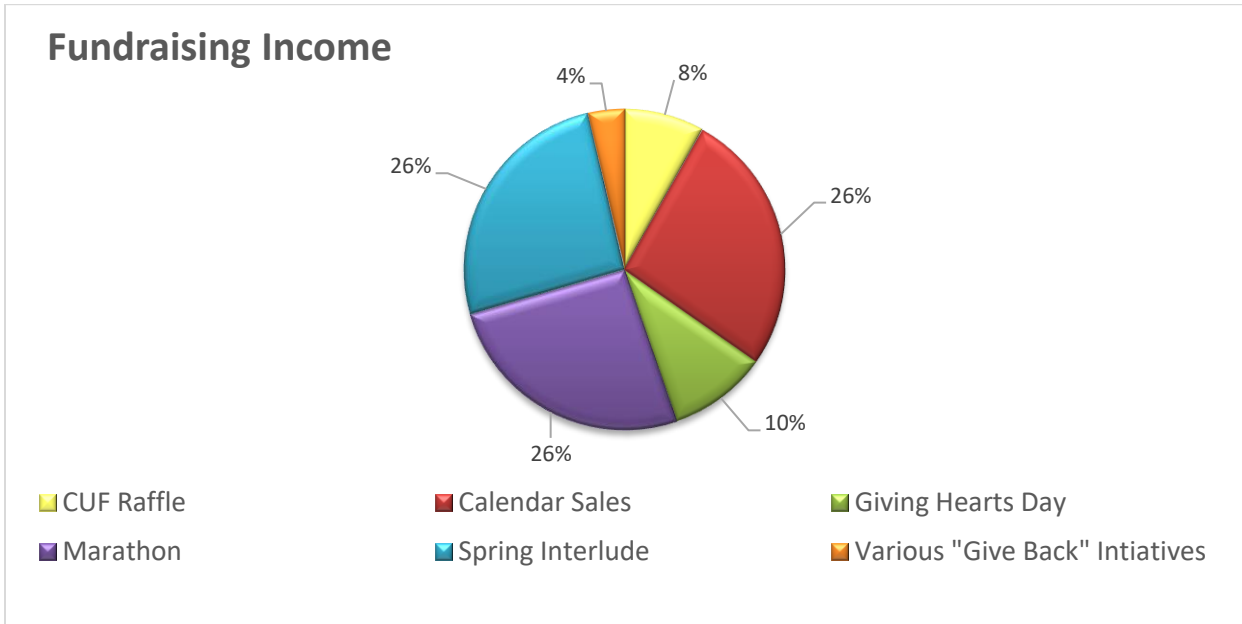
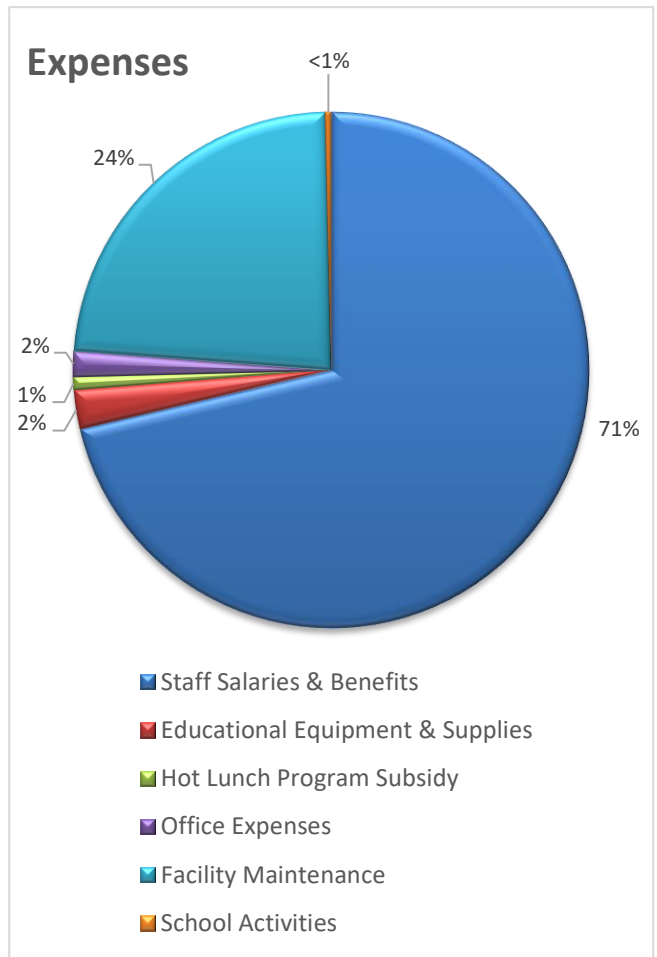
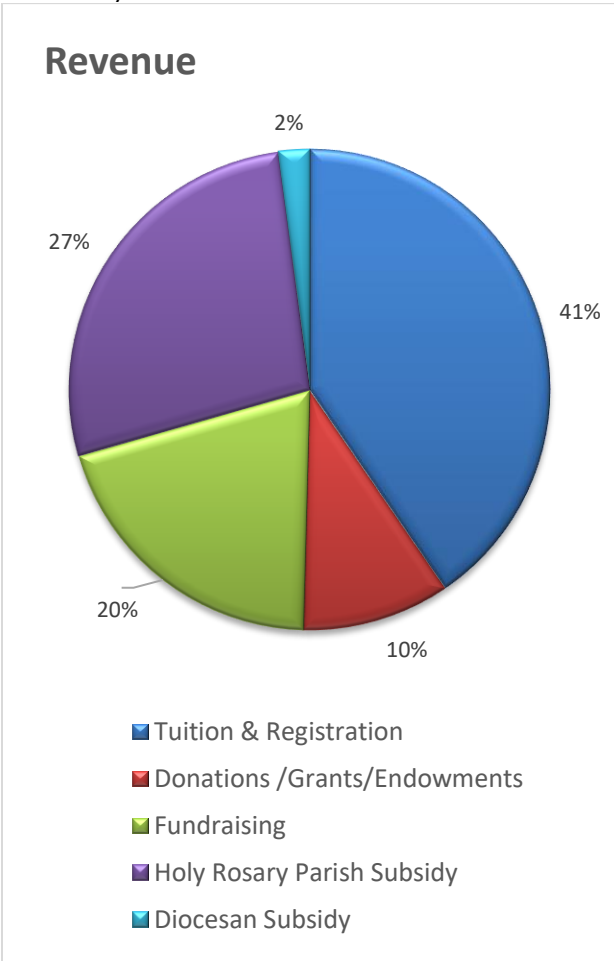
Holy Rosary School has been working towards raising the base pay for teacher salaries so that we are more competitive with what the public schools can offer. Offering a more competitive salary would allow us to attract teachers, retain quality teachers, and provide staffing consistency for our students. This year, we were able to increase teacher salaries, so they are at 77% of a Detroit Lakes Public School teacher's salary. This was made possible through our fundraising efforts and an increase in tuition for the upcoming school year. An endowment fund to support teacher salaries continues to be developed. It is our hope to increase compensation each year by 2% until we attain 85% of the Detroit Lakes Public School's salary.

## **Objective 4: Holy Rosary School will maintain strong leadership for students and staff in Catholic education.**

This objective was written when Mr. Mike Connell resigned as principal three years ago. In May of 2018, Mrs. Cathy Larson was hired as principal of Holy Rosary School. In December of 2019, she completed her Master of Education degree in Elementary Administration through the University of Mary, Bismarck. Father Chuck Huck, school superintendent, is Mrs. Larson's supervisor and administers an annual evaluation of her job performance.

# Financial Report

The following charts depict Holy Rosary School's revenue and expenses during the 2020-2021 school year.

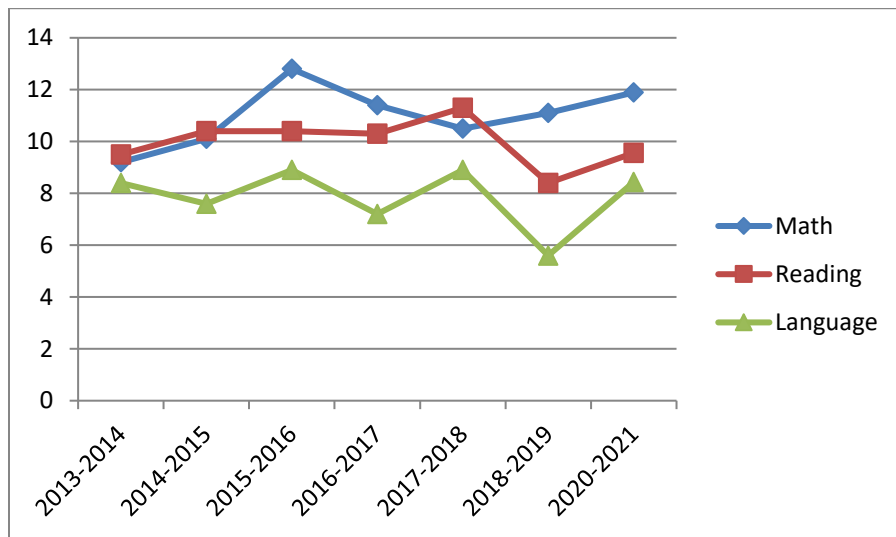


\*\* "Give Back" Initiatives Include: Coca-Cola Caps, Our Family Labels, Arvig Donations, Scrip, Box Tops for Education, Recycling, and We Care Receipts.

# Assessment Data

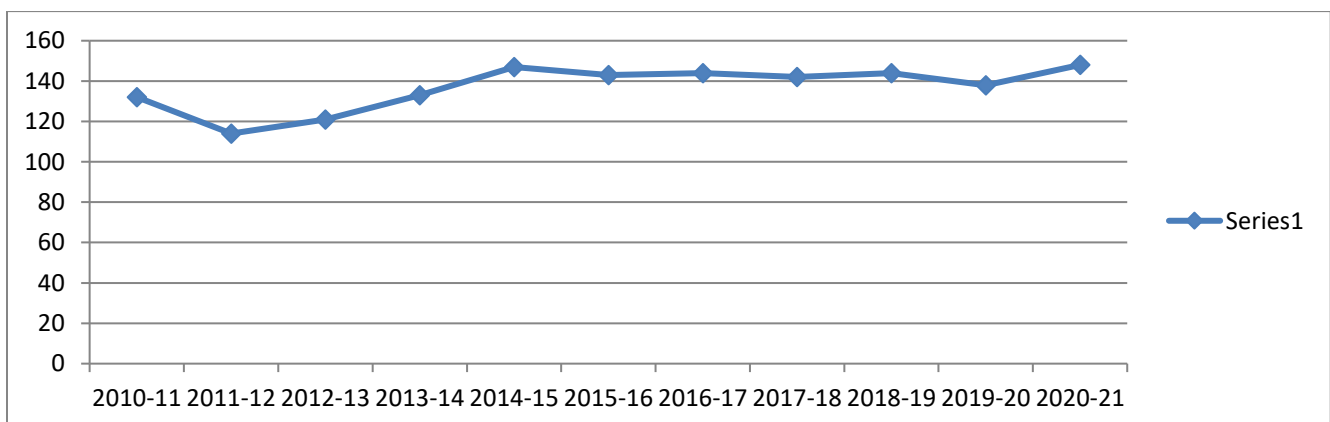
Each fall and spring, Holy Rosary School administers the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) Test to our students. Students in grades K- 8 are tested in Math and Reading, and students in grades 2-8 are also tested in Language. The scores generated from these tests provide teachers and parents with a lot of information about student progress. Because so many factors (ie: class size, attendance, student ability to focus, state of mind, effort, etc.) play into the test results, we use the results as a tool and guide as we monitor student progress. In other words, we do not rely solely on standardized test scores to determine student success.

The line graph below shows trends in student growth during the course of the past 8 years. The graph excludes test results from the 2019-20 school year; due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we were unable to complete our annual standardized testing in the spring. The plot points on the graph indicate the average growth per class throughout the whole school. As a staff, we are constantly reviewing our curriculum and teaching strategies, so it was good to see the average growth rise in all three content areas for this school year.



# Enrollment Trends

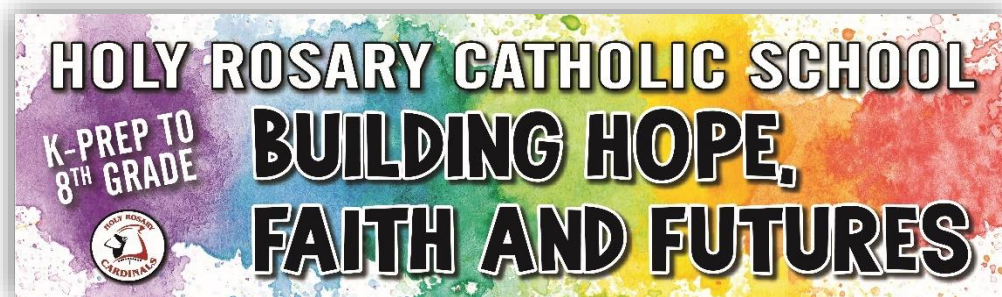
Enrollment numbers have increased as we ended our school year with 148 students enrolled in preschool through grade 8. Registration for the 2021-22 school year has been continuous and we are projected to be at another significant increase.



# Improvement Initiatives

Holy Rosary School is always looking for ways to improve in order to provide a quality education for our students. It is our goal to take on the following initiatives during the next couple of school years:

- **Enhance Safety Throughout the Building:** This year some changes were made to our school security, which has been a long-time goal. We installed security cameras throughout our building and along the outside premises. We made updates to our current PA system so that an "all call" can be made to the entire school from any phone in the building; in an emergency, this will be an essential tool to communicating quickly. As we continue to make our building as secure as possible, we are planning to install a key-card entry system on all of our doors and do away with the many sets of traditional keys that have been distributed to various individuals over the years.
- **Adding an After-School Program:** We see a benefit to providing our families with an after-school childcare program for our K-6 students. This would allow students to stay after school until 5:30 p.m., get some physical activity, have a snack, and then complete homework. Under adult supervision, our 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students would be invited to assist with the program.
- **Providing a K-Prep Program:** In an effort to increase our kindergarten numbers, we are implementing a 4-year-old and 5-year-old kindergarten prep program in lieu of our traditional preschool program. These two groups of students will attend school for a full day and because of their age, will be able to attend kindergarten the following year, if they are developmentally ready. Two groups of students who are of age, allows for more students to transfer into our kindergarten class, as some preschool families do not stay at Holy Rosary for their elementary schooling.
- **Implementing New Marketing Strategies & Increasing Enrollment:** We have started many new marketing initiatives, including radio ads, the use of digital billboard space, and putting out promotional yard signs. It is our goal to continue implementing new marketing strategies to increase our overall enrollment.
- **Planting a Pollinator Garden:** To offer our students a hands-on and up-close experience with nature-centered learning opportunities outside of the classroom, we have started exploring the possibility of creating a pollinator garden on our school grounds. This endeavor would support teaching ecological studies in an appealing and effective manner to students.
- **Improving Student Learning Opportunities with STEM:** In 2019-20, we began to implement an after-school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) program for our students in grades 3-8, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel the class, and because of the COVID guidelines this past year, we were unable to host it again. We hope to begin offering this opportunity to our students during the 2021-22 school year.



# Faith Development & Dedication to Service

Throughout the year, our students have many opportunities for developing a strong faith and learning to serve others. Although COVID protocols made it challenging to do some of our traditional service projects, we did what we could. These are a few of the activities that our school family participated in throughout this past school year that reflect our dedication to service and reaching out beyond the walls of our building.

- In lieu of reading to the residents at Oak Crossing, like they traditionally do, our 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders made artwork for the residents and wrote notes to them on a monthly basis
- Our Christmas program was done virtually this year, so we were able to share that video and the message of Christmas with all area nursing homes
- We held a "Blue Mass" in honor of all emergency personnel. Those individuals were invited to Mass and then received a special blessing, and notes and treats from our students
- Daily prayer intentions were said for those in need during our Morning Prayer together & during our weekly school Mass
- All students brought contributions for the local food pantry on a weekly basis
- Each class took turns leading the "Stations of the Cross" on Fridays during Lent
- Students all participated in various Mass ministries throughout the year
- As a school, we raised money for "TeachHaiti" and through our efforts, provided an education for 3 Haitian children who would have not received an education otherwise
- As a school, we raised money for the "American Heart Association"
- During Lent, Holy Rosary School Families each contributed a birthday party item. Items collected were made into baskets and distributed to families who don't have the means for buying birthday party supplies



## Holy Rosary School Mission Statement

Holy Rosary School Community is rooted in the word and energized with the spirit of Jesus Christ.

We cultivate our community to live as Jesus taught within the Catholic Tradition.

We strive to build gospel values and promote academic excellence.