MESSAGE FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Friends of Catholic Education,

2020 has certainly been an unforgettable year. In reflection, we give thanks to God for allowing us to be together in our schools this semester and look forward to the new year. We are grateful to our staff who have worked tirelessly to keep our children safe, healthy and in school; to our families for putting their trust in us; and to our parishes and other stakeholders for their support, both spiritually and financially.

I am so very proud of how our schools successfully transitioned to distance and digital learning platforms so quickly upon the governor’s order to close all school buildings in the spring. This would not have been possible without the hard work of our teachers and the leadership of our dedicated administrators.

While the school year effectively came to a close in May, our principals, teachers, and staff did not experience a traditional “summer break.” Weeks were filled with planning for reopening in August, preparing our buildings to minimize risk, and preparing our staff with professional development. Our goal was to deliver instruction to meet the needs of all students whether in the traditional classroom setting, virtually or a combination depending on the needs of each school community.

Our parents have been instrumental in guiding student learning this year more than ever. The spring shut down presented new challenges of combining learning from home with work from home. A sincere thank you for all your support, patience and flexibility. We are indebted to you for the sacrifices you have made to ensure your children thrive.

Thank you to our pastors for supporting our school and parish communities with your calm presence and spiritual encouragement in a time of doubt and uncertainty. You are the role models that we need to remind us to trust God in all things, pray for those who are suffering and serve our communities.

As we look ahead to the rest of the school year, we ask that you please continue to follow health and safety protocols, and work with our teachers and schools to keep your children growing in their faith and their academic journey.

Yours in Christ,

Patty Lansink,
Superintendent of Schools

Our Mission

Essential to the educational ministry of the Church, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Sioux City are fulfilling the Church’s mission to teach as Jesus did. Together with the support of parents, teachers, administrators, clergy, parishioners and the community at large, we are committed to providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service and integrity.
In 2020 Catholic Schools Week was one of the last times that our schools could celebrate in person. Catholic Schools Week is a yearly reminder of the vital role Catholic education plays in the lives of nearly 6000 students and their families in NW Iowa. Our schools are teaching students to become future servant leaders, faith-filled disciples and enriched citizens in our communities. Catholic Schools Week is a time to celebrate all those that are so vital in support of our mission.
On a Sunday evening our schools were notified that the Governor of Iowa was closing all schools for four weeks in hopes of combating the Coronavirus. All classes, practices, events, and field trips were paused. This decision created additional challenges for our both our schools and our families.

After closing for only one week our schools pivoted to online learning and reopened with virtual learning opportunities.

Schools offered standard-based lessons via zoom and other learning platforms. Schools worked hard to provide academic, emotional and spiritual support to students and families throughout the spring.
Despite not being able to teach lessons in the classroom, Our Catholic schools used technology to keep students learning and minimize any decline in academic retention and performance. Our staff found creative ways to engage students. In addition schools provided food assistance to families through food banks and mental health support for students and families through Catholic Charities.
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Back to School
Back to the Classroom

All 16 of our Catholic schools opened in August for in-person learning. Administrators, teachers, staff and the Catholic Schools Office worked tirelessly over the summer to create plans to ensure the safety of students while providing the same high quality learning opportunities.

Each school created a Return to Learn plan based upon the state, diocesan and local community health guidance. Plans included both onsite and online learning—should the need arise. Plans provided options for families that needed or wanted online learning due to underlying health conditions.

Plan Highlights include:

- Staying home if ill
- Increase sanitizing of buildings
- Frequent handwashing
- Social distancing in classrooms and buildings
- Cohort learning—keeping groups of students together and not mixing with other students
- Face coverings when social distancing is not possible
- Limiting school visitors
- Communication plans for changes to requirements and guidelines
CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Faith

The goal of all Catholic schools is to guide students in the development of their faith, to help them grow in knowledge and to teach them to show their love of God through service to others.
CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Service

All students participate in service projects both locally and globally building community and supporting our mission.
The annual banquet to raise funds for our Catholic schools had a new look this year thanks to Covid-19. The online event was live-streamed on September 13, 2020.

Bishop Nickless was joined by Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Patty Lansink and Susan O’Brien, diocesan Director of Development.

Pre-recorded highlights included messages from our school chaplains and each of the award winners. Live appearances included administrators, staff, students and priests sharing their stories of our Catholic schools.

Six outstanding Catholic school employees were also honored for going above and beyond in their position and demonstrating a true passion for Catholic schools.

Funds were raised through sponsorships, and contributions from around the diocese.

Thanks to our many generous sponsors and supporters, more students will receive scholarships for tuition helping to make Catholic school affordable to more families!

Photos courtesy of Lumen Media
Excellence in Education Award Winners

William Kane
Kuemper Catholic

Marty Kurth
Gehlen Catholic

Kim Phillips
Remsen St. Mary’s

Kate Swanson
Storm Lake St. Mary’s

Award Criteria

• A teacher who emphasizes Catholic identity in the classroom regardless of subject matter. Faith remains the cornerstone of the classroom and ongoing faith formation is emphasized.

• A teacher who strives endlessly for academic excellence and achievement while incorporating new & innovative teaching strategies in the classroom.

• A teacher who has earned the respect of peers, students and/or parents by fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork. Serves as a role model to fellow teachers as well as students.

• A teacher who is a witness of his or her faith in his or her professional and personal life.

• A teacher who promotes the mission of the school both on and off the job, contributes time, talent and treasure and exhibits a true passion for the school.

• A teacher in a Catholic school of the Diocese of Sioux City for at least five consecutive years.
Good Shepherd Award Winners

Tom Betz
Bishop Heelan

Amy Seuntjens
Danbury Catholic School

Award Criteria

• A school employee who is admired, respected and held in high regard by fellow peers, students and parents.

• Routinely goes above and beyond the call of duty enthusiastically promoting the mission of the school.

• A school employee who demonstrates a true passion for the job. Ready and willing to help at a moment’s notice.

• Any employee in a Catholic school of the Diocese of Sioux City for at least five consecutive years.

Congratulations!
Amy Seuntjens, Danbury Catholic Good Shepherd Award Winner 2020

Tune in on September 13 at 3-4PM to watch Amy’s message!

*11AM: Noon: Special Tribute to All Award Winners
www.scdioce.se.org
Catholic School Foundation

The Catholic School Foundation supports our all of our Catholic schools in a variety of ways. Funds for the foundation are generated through investments, endowments and generous donors.

Initiatives supported by the CSF:

- Annual Catholic School administrator retreat
- Principal Development Program- supporting additional education to promote from within our Catholic schools.
- English Language Learner-continuing staff educational support to work with our changing student demographic.
- Library Services- Electronic inventory and checkout services for all school buildings
- Marketing and Recruitment Support
- Safe Environment Program
- Student Mental Health and Wellness
- Tuition Scholarship Program

Bishop: Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Vicar General: Very Rev. Brad Pelzel
Superintendent: Patty Lansink
Director of Education Services: Kelly Kohout
President: Chuck Kellen of LeMars, IA

2019-2020-Board Members
Jill Book of Whittemore, IA
Dennis Boyle of Danbury, IA
Rev. Craig Collison of Pocahontas, IA
Rev. Shane Deman of Sioux City, IA
Dan Flattery of Fort Dodge, IA
Leon Heider of Humboldt, IA
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John Steffes of Carroll, IA
The Diocesan Board of Education serves to advise the Bishop and provide guidelines for local boards of education through policies and procedures creation and review.

Bishop: Most Reverend R. Walker Nickless
Superintendent: Patty Lansink
Director of Education Services: Kelly Kohout
President: Pete Haefs of Carroll, IA
Vice President: Cindy Edge of Humboldt, IA

2019–2020 Board Members
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Mary Fischer of Sioux City, IA
Rev. Merlin Schrad of Esterville, IA
Mike McGowan of Sioux City, IA
Rev. Siby Punnoose of Sheldon, IA
Theresa Engle of Sioux City, IA
Our Catholic Schools
Bishop Garrigan Catholic School
Boone Sacred Heart Catholic School
Kuemper Catholic School
Danbury Catholic School
St. Rose of Lima Catholic School
Emmetsburg Catholic School
St. Edmond Catholic School
Spalding Catholic School
Humboldt St Mary’s Catholic School
Gehlen Catholic School
Pocahontas Catholic School
St. Patrick’s Catholic School
Bishop Heelan Catholic School
Spencer Sacred Heart Catholic School
Remsen St. Mary’s Catholic School
Storm Lake St. Mary’s Catholic School

BY THE NUMBERS

FALL 2020
5629 STUDENTS

SCHOOL SYSTEMS 16

542 TEACHERS FULL AND PART-TIME

CATHOLIC 86%
NON-CATHOLIC 14%

$9 MILLION TUITION SCHOLARSHIP DOLLARS RECEIVED BY K-12 STUDENTS

100% GRADUATION RATE