



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
DIOCESE of DES MOINES

SAINT THERESA  
CATHOLIC



ANNUAL REPORT  
2021 - 2022

“For as one body we have many parts, and all parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.”

Romans 12:4-5

*Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this report. We apologize for any errors or omissions.*

# LETTER FROM MRS. WATZNAUER, PRINCIPAL

Dear St. Theresa Community,

I am honored to be the Principal of St. Theresa Catholic School beginning in July of 2022. As we reflect on the past academic year (2021-2022) we have many celebrations to share. St. Theresa Catholic School has served the community for 69 years.



Mrs. Ellen Stemler retired after serving as Principal for 21 years in June of 2022. She is actively enjoying retirement at the printing of this annual report. We wish her many years of happiness as we thank her for her dedication to St. Theresa Catholic School.

St. Theresa Catholic School is deeply rooted in the faithful formation of our youth, based Christ, service and love. The mission of St. Theresa parish, supports our Catholic School and the students we serve to grow in knowledge and faith under the guidance of our passionate teachers.

Our teachers and staff have dedicated their lives to our school. We have 5 staff members who retired at the end of year with more than 25 years of service to St. Theresa- Ellen Stemler, Denise Clark, Jennifer Vaske, Mary Hingtgen, and Dennis Minard. This shows their love and dedication to our students and our school.

Our teachers partner with our families to educate our children in faith, academics and service. Parents are the first educators in their child's lives and they share them with each year to support their development. Working as a team, our children benefit and grow.

We are thankful to all who support our school with their time, talent and generosity. Our community is a blessing to our students and families. We are blessed to serve these families during their time at St. Theresa Catholic School.

Mrs. Gretchen Watznauer  
Principal





# OUR MISSION

St. Theresa Catholic School educates the individual child within our Catholic faith by providing excellent academic experiences and dynamic faith formation.

# OUR VISION

We are a nurturing community that empowers and challenges each child to use their God given gifts to become faithful disciples, inspired life-long learners and responsible citizens.





# OUR STAFF

- **Administration**
  - Ellen Stemler, Principal
  - Jennifer Jorgensen, Office Man.
  - Mary Baker, Tuition Dir.
  - Emily Melcher, Communications
  - Pat Stuekerjuergen, Technology
  - Danny Lastro, Maintenance
  - Dennis Minard, Custodian
  - Kenneth Seymour, Nutrition Dir.
  - Billie Collins, Kitchen Staff
  - Erin Vostad, School Nurse
  - Marcy Custer, Guidance Counselor
- **Before/After Care**
  - Maria Calhoun, Dir.
  - Jessica Chicoine, Asst. Dir.
  - Amy Gerk, Staff
  - Shirisha Gaddam, Staff
  - Jennifer Tess, Staff
- **Transportation**
  - Joe Dols, Bus Driver
  - Kevin McLaughlin, Bus Driver
- **Specials**
  - Elaine Oursler, Music
  - Ron O'Connor, PE
  - Jennie Gervais, 4-8 Band
- **Title/Resource Teachers**
  - Angie DeMoss, Reading/EL
  - Julie Logan, Title I
- **PreKindergarten (4-year-old)**
  - Sarah Mohrfeld, Teacher
  - Jenn Lyddon, PreK Associate
- **Kindergarten**
  - Denise Clark, Teacher
  - Jen Vaske, Teacher
- **First Grade**
  - Missy Collins, Teacher
  - Ann Strom, Teacher
- **Second Grade**
  - Lana Duff, Teacher
  - Ashley Ver Schuer, Teacher
- **Third Grade**
  - Nicki Castellano, Teacher
- **Fourth Grade**
  - Mary Hingtgen, Teacher
- **Fifth Grade**
  - Jen Faber, Teacher
  - Meghan Hug, Teacher
- **Middle School**
  - Ashley Mitchell, Math
  - Ronda McCarthy, Science/STEM
  - Jane Ann Becicka, Religion
  - Patrick Williams, Social Studies
  - Katie White, 6-7 Language Arts
  - Teri Siembieda, 8 Language Arts



# BOARD OF EDUCATION

St. Theresa Catholic School employs an advisory Board of Education. The role of the board is to give advice, provide consultation, make recommendations and suggestions, give support and encouragement to the pastor/canonical administrator and program administrators, and establish policies with the approval of the pastor/canonical administrator which will enable the stated mission of the programs to be accomplished. A board of education/school board has purview for the education programs provided by the parish, region or diocese.

- Laura Sarcone, President
- Lindsay Wisniewski, Vice-President
- Ellen Stemler, Principal
- Jen Adams
- Eric Klein
- Rebecca Klocke
- Meghan McConville
- Vicki Nolan
- Frank Steinbach
- Tory Tyrrell

# PARENT TEACHER COMMITTEE

Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) is our parent association tasked with fundraising to support special projects and activities not covered by tuition. In doing so, this group helps initiate community events and enrich the educational experience for all students at St. Theresa Catholic School. All parents of a St. Theresa students are members of the PTC and we invite all our school parents to attend meetings and take an active role in this important committee.

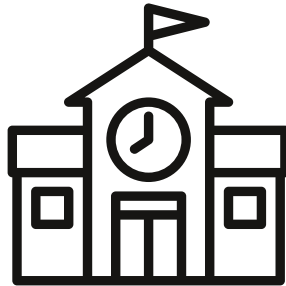
- Amanda Van Wyk - President
- Tory Tyrrell - Vice President
- Vicki Nolan - Secretary
- Moses Castellano - Treasurer



# SCHOOL YEAR 2021-2022 BY THE NUMBERS

269

PK-8 Students  
as of September 2021

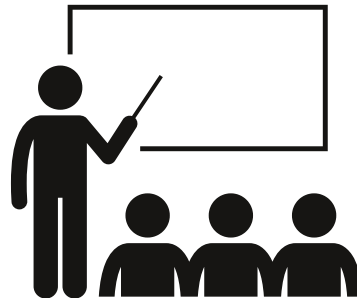


26%

Student Diversity

38

All School  
Masses



12:1

Teacher to  
Student Ratio



\$149K

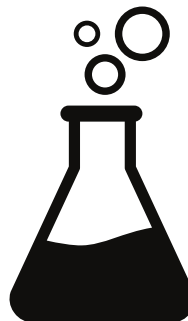
Provided in CTO  
Tuition Assistance

50%

Students Received  
Tuition Assistance

3600

Service hours provided  
to the community



11

New grant-funded  
STEM initiatives





# A FAITH-FILLED ENVIRONMENT



*"It's hard to put into words what St. Theresa means to our family. It's more than just our children's school. It's certainly more than just a space where we can practice our faith. It's another home filled with family who care about us; that celebrates the good news and proactively reaches out when times are tough. To put it simply, they love fiercely and there is absolutely no substitute for that kind of compassion."*

*- St. Theresa Parents*



# FAITH HIGHLIGHTS

At St. Theresa Catholic School, faith formation promotes a relationship with Christ and teaches all students how to live the Gospel through love and service to others. Scripture, doctrine, prayer, and Liturgy are related to children at their developmental levels, beginning with their own experiences. While Catholic faith is the cornerstone of our school, we welcome students of all faith traditions.

Through the lens of Catholic social teaching, we encourage our students to respect the diversity, dignity and beliefs of all in pursuit of knowledge and truth through critical thinking and constructive debate. This helps form strong principles, a moral center and a vibrant community that celebrates all achievements for the common good.



Students in grades PK-8 participated in 38 school masses. In addition, our faculty provided 1,200 hours of faith instruction to all students.



Monthly a student from each classroom received the Little Flower Award. This award is given to students chosen by their peers for embodying the qualities of our patron saint, St. Theresa.



Teachers grew in their faith through participation in four after school sessions on topics including Apologetics, Praying with Students, Sacraments of Initiation, The Mass, Social Justice and Current Events, and the Bible.



# EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



*We liked the idea of the STEM school, looking at the future for our kids, not realizing it starts in pre-k! On STEM Day, the pre-k kids built parachutes, while the older grades built rockets and launched them. The Maker Space has been an amazing addition to the school and just goes to show the continued hard work the school is going to for our kids.*

*- St. Theresa Parents*





# EXCELLENCE HIGHLIGHTS

St. Theresa Catholic School is fully accredited in the state of Iowa, and we challenge students to aim higher academically, spiritually and personally through faith-centered learning and a rigorous academic program aligned with state standards. Since 2011, St. Theresa Catholic School has offered an integrated STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education that is recognized locally, nationally, and internationally. This STEM-centered learning caters to learners of all academic abilities by working collaborative using hands-on methods to solve real-world problems.



St. Theresa Catholic School and its students benefitted from 10 business partnerships for STEM learning. Some of these vital partners included Area 515 Makerspace, Iowa State University, the Governor's STEM Advisory Council, South Central Iowa STEM Hub,, Accumold, Zirous and Kemin Industries



On May 11, middle school science teacher Ronda McCarthy, participated in a ZERO-G flight in partnership with Carthage College. During the flight, she recreated student-informed experiments and brought her findings back to her students.



Every St. Theresa student has access to technology as an educational tool. We have a fully equipped STEM lab and are a 1:1 device school.



# EXCELLENCE HIGHLIGHTS

St. Theresa Catholic School participates in the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). ISASP is a standards-based assessment designed to inform schools and families on how students perform on the Iowa Core Academic Standards. Students performing at the proficient level demonstrate adequate competency in the knowledge, skills, and abilities that meet the requirements for their grade level associated with academic readiness for college and a career in the subject area.

## 2022 Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP)

	State of Iowa (Percent Proficient)	St. Theresa (Percent Proficient)
8th Grade English Language Arts	76%	100%
8th Grade Math	67%	81%
8th Grade Science	67%	80%



# EXCELLENCE HIGHLIGHTS

St. Theresa Catholic School applies the use of a standards-based evaluation tool, FASTBridge, for grades K-5 to identify student goals for learning and provide individualized student support to ensure these goals are met. This screening and early identification of student needs increases the speed of intervention and supports a building-wide multi-tiered system of supports. These assessments help teachers better understand student progress and needs. Moreover, this additional layer of data allows teachers to focus on essential skills and better track student growth.

## 2022 FASTBridge Highlights:

- 87% of K-1 students are on track in early math skills.
- 24% of students in grades 2-5 are advanced in their math comprehension.
- 32% of students in grades 2-5 made aggressive growth in their math fact fluency.
- 35% of students in grades 2-5 are advanced in their reading comprehension.

*\*Aggressive growth is defined as a score increase from fall to spring greater than 75 percent or more of their peers nationally.*

*\*\*FASTBridge does not assign an "advanced" designation for grades K-1.*

Students in grades 6-8 participate in the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. This assessment measures achievement and growth in math, reading, and language usage, providing teachers with data to help inform instructional strategies and create an individualized learning experience for each student.

## 2022 MAP Highlights:

- 21% of students in grades 6-8 scored above the 80th percentile in Math.
- 28% of students in grades 6-8 scored above the 80th percentile in Reading.
- 27% of students in grades 6-8 scored above the 80th percentile in Language.
- Students in grade 6 grew 11 points overall in Math.
- Students in all grades 6 - 8 scored multiple points above the national average in reading and language.





# A CARING COMMUNITY



*"The best part about St. Theresa Catholic School is the people. It's a family! They'll tell you it's a family and they mean it! They don't just say it. The amount of love and care from the faculty, staff, parents and kids shows each and every day!"*

*- St. Theresa Parent*



# COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Members of our school community experience together what it means to live a life of prayer, personal responsibility and freedom reflective of Gospel values. Teachers open the world of knowledge and pursue the intellectual development of each child; and believe that each child is a unique creation of God, and thus requires individual attention.

We teach love, care and concern for others as a part of our curriculum. Values of respect, discipline, diligence and compassion are instilled in all students. In addition, students in all grades have the opportunity to participate in community service and mission projects.



Our school serves students and families from all faith backgrounds, ethnicities, races, and cultures. Student diversity was 26 percent in 2021-2022 and our student body represented 15 different cultures.



St. Theresa Catholic School devotes an entire week to social justice every year. During this week, students engage in activities and hear from guest speakers that help expose our students to the needs of others and the world around them. Through our service learning opportunities, St. Theresa students provided 3,600 hours of volunteerism in the community during the 2021-2022 school year.



# THE BEST VALUE IN EDUCATION



*"We transferred our daughter to St. Theresa Catholic School this past school year. The unknown is always scary, but the experience we have had in the last nine months has been nothing but incredible! Everyone we come in contact with has bent over backward to make us feel welcome and supported. We consider ourselves very lucky and very thankful that we made the decision to send our daughter to St. Theresa!"*

*- St. Theresa Parents*





# VALUE HIGHLIGHTS

Investing in your child's education at St. Theresa is about more than a number—it's about a teaching approach that focuses on your child's mind, body and soul. It's about having the best educators with challenging lesson plans and new technologies at your disposal. It's about a creative, disciplined and welcoming environment where a focus on social justice, service and leadership is central to each student's experience. It's about your child growing and flourishing in every part of their life – not just test scores.



Outside of the classroom, we offered a variety of clubs, activities and athletic programs that promoted teamwork, responsibility, dedication and good sportsmanship. Additionally, enrichment activities and fine arts programs were available throughout the year to help develop student interests and potential talents.



92 percent of 2021-2022 eighth-grade graduates continued their Catholic education at Dowling Catholic High School.



St. Theresa Catholic School offered bus transportation to 50 students daily. Additionally, our buses transported students to field trips throughout the year to enhance learning.





# THE COST TO EDUCATE

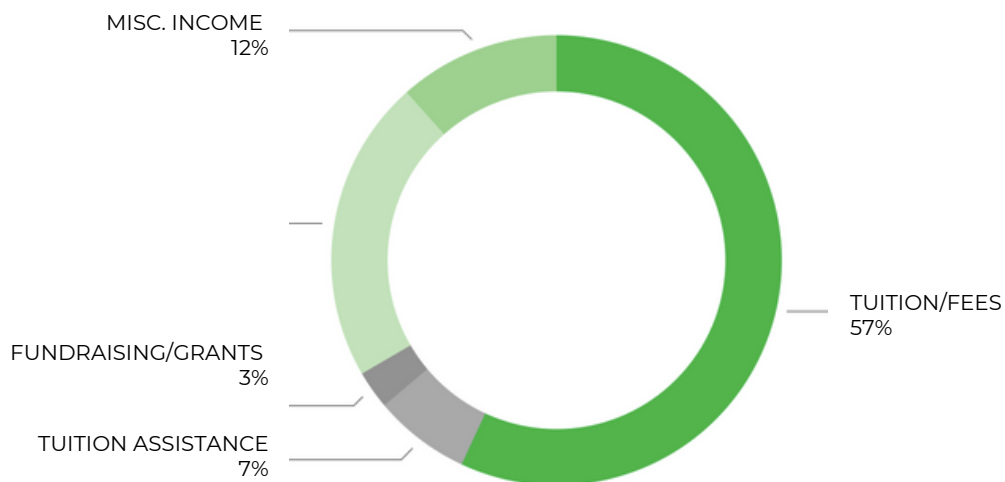
As a parent, your tuition investment goes towards high-caliber educators, enhanced learning experiences, the latest technology, and moral and emotional education for your child. We greatly appreciate and understand the financial sacrifice our families make to provide their children with an education at our school. However, tuition only covers a portion of the cost of educating a student at St. Theresa.

## TUITION AND COST TO EDUCATE

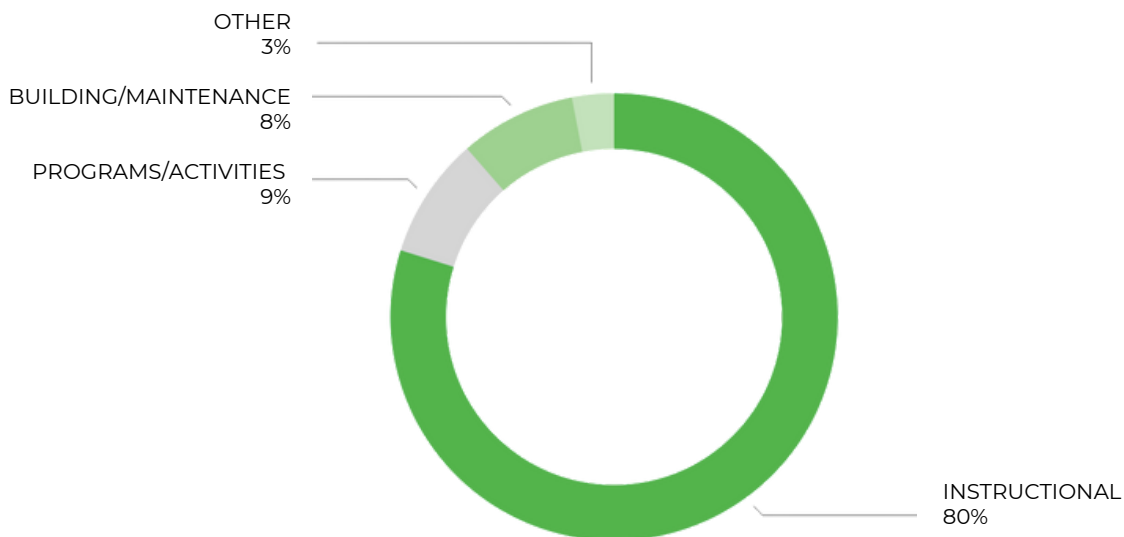
- Cost to Educate = \$9,088/student
- Average Tuition = \$3,875/student

The remaining \$5,213 is supported by parish subsidies, private donations, grants, and tuition assistance resources.

## INCOME BY SOURCE (as a percent of total income\*):



## EXPENSES BY SOURCE (as a percent of total expenses\*):





St. Theresa Catholic School  
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