

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DIOCESE OF SAGINAW



Our Catholic Schools initiative making great strides

In April of 2022, the Diocese of Saginaw announced the Our Catholic Schools: Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence initiative. The Office of Catholic Schools is pleased to share an update on our progress in the first semester of the 2022-23 academic year, as well as other ongoing and upcoming efforts related to our schools.

2 - SCHOOL COUNCIL

3 - CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK, ACCREDITATION, LET MI KIDS LEARN

4 - CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND CURRICULUM

5 - MARKETING AND ADMISSIONS

6 - INVESTMENT IN EXCELLENCE, SAFETY AND HEALTH

7 - POINTS OF PRIDE





The Catholic School Council, in part, is pictured in July 2022. Council and committee membership has been updated since this photo.

Catholic School Council and subcommittees

In July, the Catholic School Council and related subcommittees were formed. After two days of training and formal commissioning, the members got to work.

The subcommittees focus on Catholic identity and academic excellence, marketing and enrollment, financial viability and people and governance.

The council has identified 10 goals based on importance and available resources and is working diligently to address them.

The Office of Catholic Schools is grateful for the support of all who serve on the council and committees.

Minutes from council meetings are available for review and will be posted upon approval. If you would like to share a comment with the committee, please contact any member of the Office of Catholic Schools staff.

Calling all Catholic school alumni!



Recently, the Council approved an Alumni Committee. Alumni from past and present Catholic schools in the Diocese of Saginaw are encouraged to register for the Diocese of Saginaw Alumni Honor Roll [here](#).



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Jan. 29 - Feb. 4

Catholic Schools Week is an exciting time as we celebrate the gift of our Catholic schools and all the dedicated people who make Catholic education possible.

This year's celebration will be Jan. 29 through Feb. 4. Keep up with some of the events by visiting our [Facebook](#) page. Daily themes can be found on the [NCEA website](#).

Please consider including our students, families, staff, and faculty in your prayers during this special week.

To support our Catholic Schools and schools initiative financially, please click [here](#).



Let MI Kids Learn

In the spring of 2022, along with dioceses across the state and the Michigan Catholic Conference, we asked members of our community to support the Let MI Kids Learn (LMKL) petition drive. The petitions in part would have allowed children from low-income families to qualify for "Student Opportunity Scholarships" toward their out-of-pocket educational costs at public or nonpublic schools for tutoring, school supplies, computers, and tuition, among other expenses.

Due to the shifting balance of power as a result of the recent elections in the state legislature, Let MI Kids Learn has decided to withdraw the two petitions, essentially bringing this process to a close. More information can be found [here](#).

ACCREDITATION



Every Catholic school in the diocese is accredited through the Michigan Non-public School Accrediting Association, a service of Michigan Association of Non-public Schools. Schools conduct internal audits every third year of a five-year cycle. Every five years,

each school is reviewed and audited by other educators based on the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools.

Three schools will have a site visit this spring. The site visits also provide objective confirmation of the great things that are currently occurring within the school as well as possible opportunities for growth. The findings from the site visit are then incorporated in annual school improvement goals moving forward.

Catholic
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
OF MID-MICHIGAN

Thank you, CCFMM!

The Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan disbursed almost \$500,000 for Catholic education in 2022, with more than \$134,000 in stipends for Catholic school teachers.



Curriculum + Catholic Identity

Theology curriculum

One of the first priorities of the Catholic school initiative was and is to update our theology curriculum. Krista Willertz, Catholic identity and curriculum coordinator, has been working diligently to assess the various tools and resources that are currently being used in our schools. She has also been exploring best practices from other dioceses around the state and nationally.

In the second semester, we will be exploring the curricula from four other dioceses and creating a team of local experts (theology teachers, administrators and the diocesan staff theologian) to compare our current curriculum with that of the four other dioceses. A robust, updated curriculum will be ready by this June to share with teachers for the 2023-24 school year.

School leaders retreat

In February, the Office of Catholic Schools will be hosting an overnight retreat for school leaders and associated pastors/directors of parish life. These leaders so often put others first before themselves. We are excited to be able to support this group in such an important way that it is so connected to our missions. The theme is "Come, be renewed." Just as we evangelize to our students, we also need to remember our obligation to support our school and parish leadership.

Using technology to support teachers and schools

The Office of Catholic Schools is currently working with schools to pilot a program to support emerging teachers' growth in their instructional and methodological skills set to best serve their students.

The diocese is partnering with one school to test a new software program to address various needs related to parent communication, grading, housing educational resources and financial operations, among many other school information/data related items.

Professional Development Days

In the fall we were able to host our first in-person, diocesan-wide professional development day for our school staff since the fall of 2019. It was great to be back in person. The day included Mass, eucharistic adoration and various breakout sessions.

The overall feedback from participants was positive. We are planning additional professional development days this year to allow teachers from across the diocese to collaborate and enrich the student experience.



Marketing + Enrollment



Marketing training and materials

In October, the Office of Catholic Schools, with support from FAITH Catholic and Jolt Credit Union, hosted a marketing training day for all our schools. Principals, parents, alumni, teachers and community members from each school were invited to participate. Best practices related to enrollment practices, websites and marketing were shared. As part of the training, each school received a workbook and posters. Roller shade banners were also provided for each school.

Great Lakes Bay Catholic special schools edition

In January, a special edition of *Great Lakes Bay Catholic* magazine (formerly *FAITH Saginaw*) was sent to the homes of all registered parishioners throughout the diocese. Each school had one page dedicated to sharing a story or photo collage with quotes from students. The edition also highlighted a great story about a Sacred Heart High School student and his commitment to community service.

Diocesan consumer-facing school website

On Jan. 5, the Office of Catholic Schools unveiled a new consumer-facing [website](#) designed as a resource for prospective families. This website includes a listing of all diocesan schools, as well as blog posts and important facts about our schools.

New website opportunity

The digital presence of a school is one of the first things parents review when considering a school. To best support our schools thanks in part to the financial support of Jolt Credit Union, all schools will have the opportunity to update/upgrade their school website for the next three years at no cost.

Ongoing support for schools

School marketing teams have the opportunity to meet regularly with Danielle McGrew Tenbusch, marketing and admissions coordinator, to discuss and review marketing strategies and fine-tune marketing efforts. Regular marketing newsletters and social media resources are also available to support our schools.



Visit our new website:
greatlakesbaycatholicschools.org



Investment in Excellence

The Office of Catholic Schools is working with each school to determine how intentional and targeted investments can ensure excellent Catholic schools. Aspects of this review include staffing levels and compensation, infrastructure needs, academic resources, and other key items. This analysis is based on the *National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Schools*. This effort will ensure that there is a common understanding of needs at each location. It will also allow the schools and diocese to work together more closely from a planning and fundraising perspective.

School safety and student well-being

School safety and student well-being are top priorities for our schools. Over the past few months, additional resources have been made available to our schools to support these aspects of our operations.

ALICE Training

The Diocese hosted ALICE safety training in September. Principals and diocesan staff, along with representatives for parishes throughout the diocese, were invited to attend two days of training. Those who attended have the opportunity to become certified ALICE instructors. All schools now have the opportunity to have their staff trained at no cost. ALICE training provides age-appropriate education in how to respond to a potentially violent critical incident.

Updated Code of Conduct for the Diocese of Saginaw

Effective Jan. 1, 2023, the Diocese has updated its policies and requirements related to ensuring a safe environment for minors and/or vulnerable adults. The updated policy requires more ongoing and frequent training.

Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management

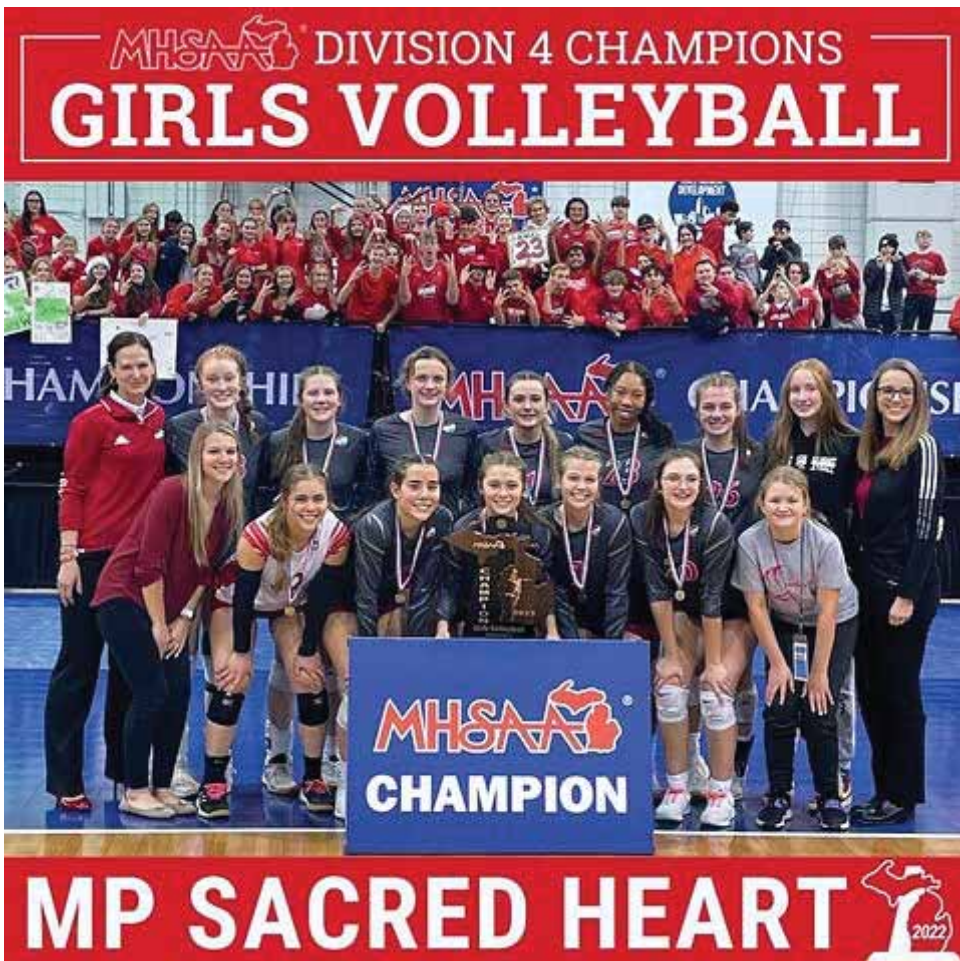
Various school leaders and members of the Chancery staff attended training sponsored by the Michigan State Police to help schools identify and address potential threats to school safety. School staff who attended the training stand ready to support all our schools should an assessment be needed. The goals of the assessment is to ensure that student receive the support he or she may need and that the school, with the aid of the assessment team, respond appropriately and promptly to any concerns.

New Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Number is 988

The new nationwide 988 three-digit dialing code will route callers to the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, previously known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL). Users can connect via phone, text, or chat with suicide prevention, mental health, and substance misuse support specialists using a nationwide, easier-to-dial phone number: 988.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is asking schools to begin the transition of shifting away from using the former NSPL number on the back of school identifications (IDs), replacing the 800 number with 988. For questions or additional information, please email MPCIP-support@mphi.org or visit the website 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and Michigan Crisis & Access Line.

Points of Pride



CONGRATULATIONS, SACRED HEART VOLLEYBALL TEAM!

The team went 44-7-6 on the season culminating with a come from behind win in 5 sets to beat Athens in the state finals.

Sacred Heart did not lose a set in Conference play.

Two student-athletes were named All-State players for division 4: Angel Brown, outside hitter and Lillian Laney, inside hitter.

Three student athletes were named Academic All-State: Angel Brown, Eliza Pieratt and Lillian Laney

The team as a whole was named to the Academic All-State list.

Back to School Mass

In October, a Mass for Catholic schools was celebrated at the Cathedral by Bishop Gruss. We welcomed more than 400 faithful to join in the celebration. Current schools and alumni were recognized in a special procession.

Following Mass, Bishop Gruss hosted a reception in the lower level, where attendees viewed historic Catholic school photos from the Diocese of Saginaw Archives, shared their school experiences and enjoyed time together.

The Mass was well-received, and the Diocesan School Council has voted to make this celebration an annual event.





ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC SUPPORTS OXFORD COMMUNITY

In November, students and staff from All Saints Catholic (ASC) in Bay City visited Oxford High School to support that community as they neared the one-year anniversary of the tragic school shooting. ASC students delivered Christmas lights to support a project aimed at "lighting up Oxford with love."

Oxford High School principal Darcia Beazley is the daughter of Ilene Darbee, who taught social studies at ASC in the 1970s.

Read the full story [here](#).



Office of Catholic Schools

Cormac Lynn, Superintendent of Schools
clynn@diosag.org

Katy Pham, Administrative Assistant
kpham@diosag.org

Krista Willertz, Catholic Identity and Curriculum Coordinator
kwillertz@diosag.org

Danielle McGrew Tenbusch, Marketing and Admissions Coordinator
dtenbusch@diosag.org

Excellence in Teaching Award returns

The Office of Catholic Schools is pleased to announce the Excellence in Teaching Award for the 2022-23 academic year. This award, made possible through Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan endowment funds, recognizes and celebrates the positive impact that Catholic School teachers in the Diocese of Saginaw make in the lives of their students, schools and communities. The award also seeks to recognize teachers who exemplify what it means to be a Catholic educator.

Recipients will receive a \$2,500 gift in recognition of their contributions to their school.

Community members are encouraged to nominate the Catholic school teachers who exemplify the traits of an excellent Catholic educator. The selection committee will choose one K-8 teacher (self-contained classroom or specials teacher) and one subject area specialist from grades 7-12, as recipients. More information on the award and how to nominate a teacher can be found [here](#).

Past award recipients have been:

2019 Katie Mocny

Auburn Area Catholic School, fifth grade teacher

2020 Terry Dewer

All Saints Catholic School, English teacher