

Fall 2023



State of the School



Principal's Perspective

Dear Friends and Families of Holy Cross,

We are officially underway on our 12th year as Holy Cross Regional Catholic School and it is with great pride that I share with you this State of the School Report, which I believe you will find to be an amazing testament to our continued focus on operating a spiritually centered, academically driven, and fiscally sound learning environment for our students.

As we enter this 12th year together as a community, I find myself reflecting on the twelve Apostles and their trust in – and respect for – the Lord and his teachings. How fitting as our theme for the 2023-24 school year is respect. This year, as a school community, we will demonstrate our respect for our faith in the teachings of the Church – and for one another – through our actions and words as well as through the many activities that take place throughout the year.

As we remain committed to our motto, "A School United in Faith, Hope, and Love", I am abundantly proud of the ways our students, educators, and parents continue to work together to deliver a positive and nurturing community for our students. I cannot wait to see what this year has in store for us all!

Peace and blessings,

Theresa Healy
Principal

**"Let us always meet each other with a smile,
for the smile is the beginning of love."
~ Mother Teresa**



Rooted in Faith

We demonstrate respect for our faith by placing God at the core of who we are and everything we teach. To strengthen our students' Catholic faith and provide a foundation rooted in living as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, we offer many opportunities for students to practice their faith.

- All students attend Mass every First Friday and all Fridays during Lent and Advent. In addition, one grade level attends Mass on each Friday throughout the school year.
- Pre-Kindergarteners through 1st graders are paired with 6th through 8th graders respectively, as prayer partners who read, talk, and pray together.
- We have sacramental preparation for First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.
- We place a strong emphasis on daily prayer, Sunday Mass and living and celebrating the liturgical year and special feast days.
- We offer opportunities for Confession, Adoration and praying the Rosary.
- Junior high students in 7th and 8th grades will participate in BLAZE, for girls, and IGNITE, for boys, our new program. These two programs beautifully balance the everyday struggles of being a middle school student with the importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

State of the School

Fall 2023



Academic Excellence

Holy Cross has a proud tradition of academic excellence. Fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, we will be going through the re-accreditation process during the 2023-24 school year. For the second year in a row, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia recognized HCRCS as a School of Distinguished Instruction for "Exceeding Potential" thanks to our students' 2022-23 standardized Terra Nova test scores.

- **Reading:** 97% scored at or above the National Average
- **Language:** 97% scored at or above the National Average
- **Math:** 96% scored at or above the National Average

Scholarship

In the 2022-23 school year, there were 58 eighth-grade graduates. These students received \$362,000 in academic scholarships towards their high school tuition.

Neumann Scholarship

The Neumann Scholarship is a full, four-year scholarship to any of the 15 Archdiocesan high schools. The Connelly Foundation awards this scholarship to approximately 40 eighth-grade students across the Archdiocese. On average, 900 eligible eighth-grade students qualify to take the independently administered exam, including 22 students from Holy Cross in Fall 2022. Over the past 11 years, we have had 12 winners of this prestigious award. In 2022, we had one Neumann Scholar winner.

Rigorous Coursework

- Advanced Honors Mathematics program for those who meet the criteria, for 4th through 8th grade.
- Accelerated Reading Program for Kindergarten through 8th grade.
- STREAM-based education that emphasizes hands-on learning with real-world applications to develop a variety of skill sets including creativity and 21st-century skills.
- Wilson FOUNDATIONS for Language basics for Pre-K to 1st grade, utilizes a structured literacy approach grounded in the science of reading to make learning to read fun. Establishes a foundation for reading, spelling and handwriting.
- Heggerty phonemic awareness program for Pre-K to 1st grade that provides phonics instruction, the basis for reading independently.



Spotlight on Academics

Broadcast Club

After implementing the Broadcast Club in the 2021-22 school year with 21 students, we grew our team in 2022-23 to 35 students in the 8th grade. Using state-of-the-art broadcasting equipment, students expanded their video production knowledge to include graphics for the introduction of the newscast. One-on-one interviews with teachers and students featured monthly or weekly themes, events and news around the school. Our students are excited to have access to this modern technology to share their talents in creative ways.

Spotlight on Special Areas

Spanish

Students expanded vocabulary and grammar lessons by learning holiday traditions from Spanish-speaking countries. From Altar (ofrenda) for Día de los Muertos to using chalk in the parking lot to create our own school-wide sawdust carpets (las alfombras) intended to represent the popular designs used during Holy Week in Guatemala.

Art

The Art Program at Holy Cross continues to provide a diverse, fun, and creative curriculum for students to explore age-appropriate techniques using the elements of art and principles of design. In recent years, several students achieved art scholarships for high school. Each student's artwork is proudly displayed through Artsonia, an online student portfolio database where HCRCS students have been chosen as Artists of the Week. In the 2023-24 school year, students will be using specific mediums to travel around different biomes.

STREAM

Teaching our STREAM curriculum in the new Innovation Station provides our Pre-K through 8th grade students a variety of opportunities to develop their Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics skills. Using technology to create, collaborate, and complete project-based learning, students apply this knowledge when brainstorming new solutions. They are challenged to:

- **ASK** a question or identify a need,
- **IMAGINE** a solution by brainstorming ideas,
- **PLAN** and make a prototype,
- **CREATE** by testing and evaluating,
- **IMPROVE** by modifying and retesting

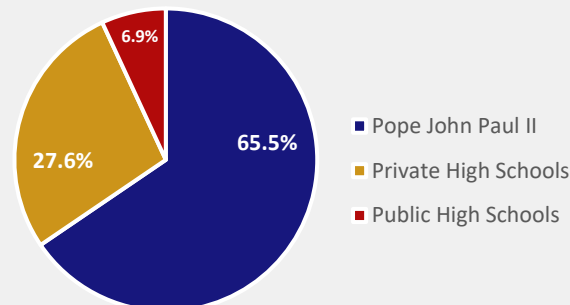
Students in our middle school recreated clay models of famous architectural structures from around the world, researched their example, and presented the information to their classmates. Digital citizenship is a vital component of our STREAM curriculum, where students explore the pitfalls of social media and learn strategies to avoid cyberbullying.



Where do our graduates go?

Holy Cross prepares its students for High School and beyond. 93% of our 2023 graduates are now attending a Catholic high school, academy, or preparatory school in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

HOLY CROSS CLASS OF 2023



Alumni Highlights

Several of our HCRCS alumni have been named in the National Merit Scholars program.

College

The Holy Cross graduating classes from 2012-2023 are attending many outstanding colleges and universities, including:

- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Notre Dame
- Villanova University
- Bucknell University
- University of California, Los Angeles
- Drexel University
- Lehigh University
- Penn State University
- St. Charles Borromeo Seminary
- St. Joseph's University
- University of Scranton
- University of Southern California

Active and Dedicated Board

Commitment to Service

- Several of our board members had terms ending in June 2023, including former Chair Jeff Mehallick and two of our longest-serving members, Bill Breslawski and Don Barbuto. Added replacements for all rotating positions ensured a fully functioning board heading into 2023-24.
- The Board conducted its annual self-assessment, stressing identified areas of need. This ensures that we are responsive to the needs of the school and our parish communities.

Advancement

- \$494,399 raised for EITC for school year 2023-24 with 107 grants distributed to eligible students.
- Increased participation in the EITC program from 68 donors in 2022-23 to 74 donors in 2023-24.
- \$92,527 was raised for 2022-23 Advancement Fund from 174 donors.
- We expect an EITC need of over \$350,000 for school year 2024-25. Generous participants in the PA tax credit program are needed.
- Annual Fund for 2023-24 has a set goal of \$85,000.

Investing in our Infrastructure

- Upgraded school's technology to advance students' learning
- Developed a roadmap for the next generation of heating and air conditioning for the entire building
- Enhanced safety by authorizing a new and enhanced security camera system throughout the school
- Began the process of obtaining an improved backup power solution

A New Website, Spring Campaign, and Team of Marketing Volunteers

Behind the scenes of our new website launch, a well-timed Spring campaign, and the development of a long-term strategy for marketing Holy Cross, there is something exciting happening. Volunteers from our parish communities are coming forward to lend their talents in an unprecedented fashion. To effectively tell our story to even more prospects, our marketing committee needs volunteers who can actively collaborate with us to sustain our work and share our amazing story with even more prospects.

We are especially seeking volunteers with experience in the areas of:

- Digital marketing (SEO, Social, and Content including writing, blogging, and podcasting)
- Website development
- Graphic design (Adobe Creative Suite)
- Event planning

Please consider lending your time and talent to a special group who cares deeply about our school.

Established Governance

The Holy Cross Regional Catholic School Board, established in 2015, has been working hard to develop and execute a strategic plan in the areas of finance, facilities, technology, enrollment, marketing, and development. Their work helps to promote Holy Cross as a premier Catholic school in the area and we are blessed to have dedicated leadership from the School Board, Pastors, and Administration.

2023-24 HOLY CROSS REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD

Jack Kraft – Chair

Maureen Martin – Vice Chair

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Monsignor Michael T. McCulken – St. Eleanor Parish

Reverend Tadeusz Gorka – Sacred Heart Parish

PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Theresa Healy

ADVANCEMENT DIRECTOR

Susan Mollahan

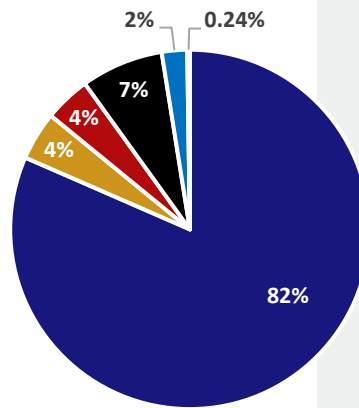
Financial Report

June 30, 2023

Annual Report Summary

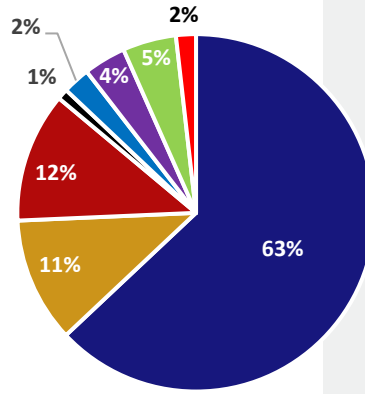
Source of Funds

TUITION	\$2,620,471.00
PARISH SUBSIDY	\$140,400.00
FEES	\$133,151.00
OTHER INCOME	\$238,480.00
CARES	\$73,239.00
SOCIALS/DONATIONS	\$7,732.00
TOTAL	\$3,213,473.00



Use of Funds

SALARIES AND BENEFITS	\$2,024,009.00
MAINTENANCE	\$363,845.00
OTHER EXPENSES	\$378,310.00
INSURANCE	\$31,154.00
UTILITIES	\$79,323.00
PENSION	\$122,969.00
BOOKS, SUPPLIES, PRINTING	\$155,867.00
CAPITAL INCLUDING TECHNOLOGY	\$57,996.00
TOTAL	\$3,213,473.00



“Throughout our years here at Holy Cross, our children have seen the importance of being a part of the school community. They have all also had the opportunity to help out in both our school and our parish over the years. I think the biggest lesson that they have learned is that helping others can be very rewarding not only for the recipient but also for those that offer the help.”

– Parent testimonial

Blessing and Dedication Of the Innovation Station

We were pleased to celebrate the blessing and dedication of the new Blessed Carlo Acutis Innovation Station. Monsignor McCulken celebrated the blessing and dedication on February 1, 2023, during Catholic Schools Week. We are excited to have this newly dedicated space for our students to continue to expand their knowledge of STREAM activities and gain valuable 21st-century skills.

“To always be close to Jesus, that is my life’s plan.”

– Blessed Carlo Acutis



Student Spotlight

A Community of Care

Recognizing the needs of others in our community, Holy Cross students participate in many service projects throughout the school year. Here are a few of the many ways our students, staff, and families extended their generosity during the 2022-23 school year:

- Joy of Socks – collected 1,731 pairs of socks for the homeless
- “Souper” bowl – collected canned goods for a local food pantry
- Thanksgiving meal food drive for Martha’s Choice Marketplace, Norristown
- Toy Drive for the patients at St. Christopher’s Hospital, Philadelphia, PA
- Girls with a Cause (GWAC), a 4th-grade group of girls, is committed to spreading kindness throughout the school. The group hid its image of avocados, the GWAC logo, around the school, each with a written message providing the act of kindness a student was to perform. Once a student performed their act of kindness, he or she would then hide the avocado again for someone else to find.
- Students collected various items for the homeless for Cecil and Grace’s Bean Soup Kitchen in Norristown. Items included personal care items, coffee, hats, gloves, scarves. They were overwhelmed with our generosity and filled their shelves to serve the homeless locally.
- Partnered with The Giving Tree, a local non-profit organization to provide “Full Belly Bags” to families experiencing food insecurity. Our students prepared an impressive 944 bags full of food items along with special notes of encouragement and kindness. Holy Cross donated the most bags out of all participating schools, earning us a visit from the Phillie Phanatic!

Sharing Talents

From our parish community and beyond, the God-given talents of Holy Cross students are on display:

- One artist was recognized for his artistic talents by being selected on the Artsonia platform as “Artist of the Week”
- Reading Olympics was held this year at St. Albert the Great in Huntington Valley on May 10, 2023, for our 4th -8th graders. We had 8 teams and a total of 81 students participate.
- All Saints Day program with our 1st grade students
- 7th grade Christmas Tableau and Wax Museum
- 8th grade Living Stations
- 35 students in 8th grade participated in the Broadcasting Club and fully produced a morning program that was livestreamed to every classroom each Friday and for special events



Simon’s Heart visits Holy Cross

In May our Holy Cross Home & School Association planned an event to bring Simon’s Heart CPR Jukebox to our school for all 3rd-through-8th graders. Simon’s Heart is a local organization that brings awareness and training for responding to sudden cardiac arrest. FOX29’s very own Bob Kelly visited for his segment, Kelly’s Classroom, to highlight this wonderful organization. Students learned the importance of the Chain of Survival steps they can take if someone needs help and then practiced how to use an AED machine. HCRCS is equipped with two AED machines, one in the school building close to the gymnasium and one in St. Eleanor Church. All teachers and staff were certified in CPR/AED use in February as part of our professional development.



HOLY CROSS

REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL

A SCHOOL UNITED IN FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

Our mission

It is the mission of Holy Cross Regional Catholic School to strengthen our community in faith, hope and love. We challenge each other to develop independence, creativity, and curiosity as disciples of Jesus Christ for our future. As members of the Holy Cross community, we recognize the unique gifts and talents of others while practicing the values of respect, integrity, compassion, and justice.

How Can You Help?

Financial assistance is critical for the growing number of parents considering Catholic education for their children. Our commitment to EITC and ongoing contributions to our Annual Advancement Fund are making Catholic education a reality for nearly 20% of our student body.

EITC (EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT) PROGRAM: UP TO 90% TAX CREDIT FOR YOU WHILE DELIVERING 100% IMPACT FOR A CHILD IN NEED.

Individuals and businesses can take advantage of PA tax credits by designating state tax dollars to HCRCS. The funds raised through this program provide tuition assistance for families that are experiencing financial hardship. By participating in the EITC program, Pennsylvania State taxpayers can receive a 90% state income tax credit in return.

In 2023-24 we are awarding over \$430,000 benefiting 107 students. Our goal for 2024-25 is to again raise over \$400,000 and meet the needs of our families who qualify through FACTS for financial aid. More EITC participants are needed to make sure we keep this level of tuition assistance available for our families.

TUITION CARE

Holy Cross participates in a unique program (TuitionCare) established by the Foundation for Catholic Education that allows you to redirect your PA state tax dollars, receive a 90% state income tax credit AND reduce tuition for Holy Cross families. TuitionCare, is open to all parishioners of St. Eleanor and Sacred Heart and school families of HCRCS. To participate, just contribute to the EITC program and designate your contribution to TuitionCare. For each participant who joins the program, HCRCS will receive \$1,000 which will be distributed equally to all K-8 school families in the form of a Tuition Reduction Grant.

ANNUAL ADVANCEMENT FUND

The Advancement Fund, a critical component of the Holy Cross operating budget, supports financial shortfalls between tuition and the actual cost of educating a student. Directly impacting a student's daily life, the fund supports our commitment to modern technology and a safe and progressive learning environment. It also provides additional tuition assistance for those that may not qualify for other financial aid.

TELL A FRIEND

Do you have a friend, family member or neighbor who is curious about a Catholic education? Have them call us. We are happy to provide a tour and share the amazing activities, academic excellence, and faith-filled environment at the core of Holy Cross Regional Catholic School.



“You have given my children the opportunity to learn the Catholic faith at Holy Cross.”

– Parents of 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade students

“A big thanks to all the EITC donors. Holy Cross is such a great school and the assistance from the EITC program makes it easier for our family to be a part of the Holy Cross family.”

– Parent of 2nd grade student

Give Now

Prayerfully consider supporting Holy Cross Regional Catholic School as we prepare our students for the future.

Donate at <https://hcrs.school/support-us/>