2018–2019
Annual Report
Extracurriculars

Holy Spirit Athletic Teams Score!
The 2018–2019 school year brought great success to Holy Spirit’s athletic teams. Accomplishments include:

• 7th grade girls basketball finishing second in championship playoffs
• 8th grade girls basketball finished second in the class B championship game
• Girls track team took 1st place in the CAA meet
• 7th–8th grade boys swim team took 3rd out of 14 teams at the CAA meet
• K–6 boys swim team finished 5th out of 22 teams
• K–6 girls swim team finished 6th out of 19 teams
• 7th–8th grade girls swim team finished 7th out of 17 teams
• 8th grade boys baseball finished first in their regular season conference, made it to the semi finals for playoffs
• 8th grade girls softball finished first in their regular season conference, made it to the semi-finals for playoffs
• 6th grade baseball made it to the semi finals for playoffs

Robotics
Robotics Club began at Holy Spirit during the 2018–2019 school year under the direction of 4th grade homeroom teacher, Rebecca Dennis-Johnson, and with the support of 10 parent coaches. Sixty students participated in our first year of robotics, making up 7 teams.

• Grades 1–3 did FIRST Lego League Junior’s Mission Moon. They learned about what humans need to survive on the moon and then built a moon base with one moving part.

• Grades 4–6 did FIRST Lego League’s Into Orbit Challenge. They programmed a Mindstorms robot to complete challenges and did a presentation on one problem humans might encounter in space.

• Grades 7–8 did FIRST Tech Challenge. They programmed a robot to play a game called Rover Ruckus, worked with younger students on their robots and created a video on their mentoring experience.

All teams participated in a formal competition. One team won a Spirit Award because they stayed so positive even when things weren’t going well for them in the competition.

This summer Holy Spirit is sponsoring a STEM Camp with middle school students acting as camp counselors. Students will program the Mindstorm and WeDo robots; participate in engineering challenges, CAD and 3D printing science activities and much more.

Robotics will continue at Holy Spirit during the 2019–2020 school year.
Assessment

Holy Spirit students continue to grow spiritually, socially, and academically. One measure of their academic growth can be found in standardized testing results. Students in grades 3–8 completed the NWEA – MAP testing in the fall and again the spring. The results below indicate the percent of students in each grade that scored at or above the grade level norm in the areas of reading and math.

As part of our partnership with Groves Academy, students in K–2 were tested with a battery from the AimsWebPlus that focused on reading fluency. Kindergartners were tested in the winter and spring. First and second graders were tested in the fall, winter and spring. Below you will find the results of first and second grade testing.

FIRST GRADE

SECOND GRADE
Faculty and Staff

Hellos and Goodbyes
After over 30 years teaching at Holy Spirit, middle school teacher, Dale Columbus, retired at the end of the 2018–2019 school year. A beloved middle school teacher, Dale inspired and encouraged students to love math. Much to her delight, she was able to teach the children of many of her students. While retired, you will still see Ms. Columbus around Holy Spirit. This summer and next fall she will be tending the garden behind the gym (Columbus Gardens). After that we hope she will continue to be involved in the life of Holy Spirit School.

We are pleased to add two new staff members to our faculty for the 2019–2020 school year. Patrick Bowlin will be joining the Holy Spirit faculty as a 4th grade homeroom teacher and a 4th/5th grade math teacher. Patrick comes to Holy Spirit from St. Mark’s where he taught for the past several years. In addition to teaching (which is of highest priority to him), Patrick coaches volleyball at the University of St. Thomas, basketball at Totino-Grace High School, and softball at Cretin-Derham Hall.

We will also be hiring an additional preschool teacher. As of this writing, interviews are in process. Stay tuned for an opportunity to meet this new staff member.

Staff Investment Fund
At the beginning of the 2018 school year many teacher-initiated projects were funded through the Night of Spirit Fund-a-Need. Among those items funded were:
- Robotics Program
- Flexible seating options to meet the needs of a variety of learners (i.e. standing desks, stability balls, wiggle seats, etc.)
- Cooperative seating for our 4–5-science classroom. This seating arrangement encouraged collaborated efforts among students.
- Enhancements to the middle school art and language arts curriculum.
- SMART Music: An online program that supports band students in their instrumental practice and development.

Marketing Efforts
Holy Spirit’s marketing committee has worked on several important initiatives this year. Beginning in June 2018, there were several events that were held to engage the community and encourage prospective families to consider enrollment at Holy Spirit. Beautiful new recruitment materials were developed, and a lawn sign initiative was completed. All of this was aimed at increasing awareness of Holy Spirit Catholic School within the community. Many of these projects were made possible by a grant from CSCOE.

While we are very pleased with student testing results, it’s important to keep in mind that standardized testing is but one measure of student success. Other measures include:
- Over 75% of Holy Spirit graduates go on to take high school honors or advanced placement courses in the areas of Math and Science.
- Increased confidence in reading and students reading above their lexile level.
- The joy and enthusiasm for learning that our students have.

Parent Support
During the 2018–2019 school year Holy Spirit continued its relationship with Phoenix Counseling services, which provided support to parents via the Parent Help Line as well as consultation and professional development with staff regarding students with any number of needs. We anticipate continuing and expanding our collaboration with Phoenix during the 2019–2020 school year.

This year we were also excited to offer additional parent support through a Parent Liaison. Kelly Tronstad, a licensed parent educator, conducted two parent nights and provided individual consultation to parents on a variety of developmental issues. The topics of the parent night discussions were related to 1) Social Media and 2) Relational Aggression.

Program Development

Preschool Expansion
In the spring of 2019, the Holy Spirit Finance Council recommended the expansion of Holy Spirit’s Preschool program. After meeting with Steve Hoeppner of CSCOE and the Schulze Family Foundation, the council approved a variety of methods to enhance our recruitment efforts.

Beginning with the 2019–2020 school year, Holy Spirit’s Preschool programming options will significantly increase. Parents will be able to choose from 3–5 mornings of preschool for their 3–5 year olds. Also available to parents will be a full-day care option to meet the needs of working parents. This expansion is designed to increase our enrollment and make our services more attractive to families in need of full time options. This endeavor has been supported financially by CSCOE who has provided two grants to Holy Spirit for this purpose. One of the grants will support the development of a second preschool classroom and the second grant will provide funding for the construction of a preschool playground.

Math Focus
This year Holy Spirit began to use IXL, a personalized computer program that allows students to have their own account so they can practice skills at their own level and grow from where they are to master more complex skills.

Math teachers also participated in a three-part professional development series. The aim of these sessions was to examine math vocabulary and to determine ways of supporting students in their preparation and success in the mathematics.

Exceptional Learners
Last summer Holy Spirit received a treasure trove of materials through CSCOE. These materials were designed to assist students with special needs access and be successful at Holy Spirit. Throughout the year teachers were using these materials to assist students in their classrooms.

In mid-June four Holy Spirit staff members will be participating in a Year 2 session aimed at examining ways to support, challenge, inspire and energize students who are academically gifted.

Both of these initiatives (entitled, A Place at the Table) support the notion that all children regardless of their needs are gifts from God, and promoting the capacity of Catholic Schools to meet the needs of learners.

Staff Religious Formation
As a Staff Investment Fund initiative, staff participated in two religious formation sessions conducted by University of St. Thomas professor, Dr. Kennedy.
Accreditation

MNSAA

In preparation for our accreditation visit from the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA) during the 2019–2020 school year, we conducted a parent survey this year. The survey focused on five areas: mission, learning environment, academic excellence, community support, and overall experience. Approximately 50% of families responded. Overall the results were very positive with 90-95% of families responding positively in each area. Suggestions for improvement included:

- strengthening our art and world language programs,
- examining homework expectations, and
- continuing to expand technology opportunities.

Staff and the school advisory council also completed a comprehensive self-study aimed at identifying current practices, strengths, and challenges related to MNSAA standards. This information and process is essential as we develop our School Strategic Plan, an outcome of our MNSAA accreditation.

Holy Spirit’s accreditation visit will take place on November 11–13 of 2019.

Finances

The 2018–2019 academic year marked the end of almost 20 years of financial debt for the Church of the Holy Spirit. The $7 million+ loan taken to pay for the expansion of the school was paid off in May 2019. This is an incredible feat for the Holy Spirit community. Nearly $3 million came from estate gifts that were directed, per the pastor and Finance Council, to go towards the principal of the loan.

While tuition revenue is below budget due to lower than expected enrollment in Preschool and the elementary grades, we have higher than expected revenue from outside sources. Our fundraising efforts through the Marathon for Nonpublic Education, Give to the Max, and employer matching gift programs have realized higher donations than budgeted. The school also received grants for financial aid from Relevant Radio, Catholic Community Foundation, GHR Foundation, AIM Higher Foundation, and the Catholic Services Appeal Foundation. Alumni have also helped with scholarships funds being donated from two classes: 1962 and 1966. These funds from outside sources have helped us with maintaining the operational budget, as well as provide families with much needed financial aid. Note: Our year-end reports will not be completed until August 2019.

The school continued to be challenged with maintenance and repairs with the heating system in the old building exceeding our budget for expenses. However, through funds raised by the Night of Spirit, we were able to upgrade the exterior lighting on the school building. Men’s Club funded new lights for the school parking lots improving our safety around the building.

We received more than $13,946 in a rebate for general insurance premiums. Through our safe practices within employment, financial, safety and security, protection of youth and other operational areas, we received the maximum amount of discount due to limiting our exposure to liability claims.