



the MEASURE of  
**SUCCESS**

Catholic Schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama  
**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



**Diocesan Advisory Council  
for Catholic Education  
2022-23**

Margaret Dubose, *Ex Officio*  
Joe Ross, Ph.D., **Chair**  
Frank Chapuran, **Vice-Chair**  
Meghan Hendrick, **Secretary**

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Andy Rothery  
Sister Veronica Ryan, O.S.B.  
Sara Turner  
Father Justin Ward  
Cindy Westbrook

**THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
OFFICE**

**MISSION**

Create a community of learners who joyfully navigate faith and reason in order to propagate our Catholic beliefs.

Ensure vibrant and enduring communities of faith by:

- Fostering a sense of belonging,
- Providing a framework of operational support,
- Helping to bring our community of learners closer to their God-given spiritual and academic potential.

*Cover photo by Mary Dillard  
Holy Spirit Stained Glass Window,  
Holy Spirit Catholic Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama*



“Catholic schools have been an essential component of Catholic life in the U.S. and throughout our diocese. The education and formation of our Christians in the faith have a critical role to play in the heart of the Church, where diocesan support, oversight, and mission are vital.”

**MOST REVEREND STEVEN J. RAICA**

Bishop of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

# the **MEASURE** of **SUCCESS** through **Service**



**MARGARET  
DUBOSE**

Superintendent  
of Catholic Schools

**H**ave you ever considered the purpose of a Catholic school? Yes, Catholic schools exist to guide students on their path to Christ, to build an academic foundation, and to contribute to the common good by forming active, faith-filled members of society. Catholic schools also exist to serve, and through that service comes great joy and, ultimately, great peace.

**In Catholic schools, service and joy are part of the package and part of the product.** Christ calls us to service, and there is no better model of this service and joy than that which is demonstrated by our teachers, administrators, and staff each day. Their impact is evident as you read this report and see the successes of our students. And we find peace in knowing that by helping Catholic education continue to grow and thrive, we are significantly impacting our society and our faith forever.

**The momentum for Catholic education in our diocese directly results from engaged service in the light of joy.** The data and stories within this latest edition of *The Measure of Success* support our Catholic schools' service to the Church's mission. This work can only happen through the engagement and service of all our stakeholders: parents, school leaders and staff, chancery leadership and administrators, volunteers, clergy and religious, and parishioners.

Thank you for joining with us in these pages as we share with you the results of our service to our students and our school communities and celebrate the successes of the 2022-2023 school year.

# A SERVANT'S HEART

## the fruits of serving Christ in His people

Service and joy inform each day in our Catholic schools, creating a legacy of virtue for students and their families. Pastors, teachers, and staff model and nurture following in the footsteps of Jesus in daily interactions, prayer, and sacraments.

Service hours as a requirement for graduating students are a culmination of service formation begun in the earliest grades. Three graduating students share what they have learned and carry with them as the fruits of embracing a servant heart.



### GROWING IN FAITH TO MEET LIFE'S CHALLENGES

#### Jack Chandler

John Carroll Catholic High School  
Class of 2024

Jack has attended John Carroll Catholic High School as one of six children in his single-parent family. Losing his father seven years ago, Jack found support and opportunity in faith, academics, sports, and community. He credits his experience at John Carroll with helping develop character attributes of responsibility and compassion. He says:

**“It is this spiritual foundation that has helped me remain resilient in the face of life’s challenges and be grateful for the opportunities that have come my way.”**

### GIVING BACK TO THE WORLD IN GRATITUDE

#### Valerie Wiegmann

St. John Paul II Catholic High School  
Class of 2024

Valerie attended Holy Family Catholic School in grade school and credits her Catholic education with “the opportunities to grow in my faith.” She serves as president of the youth group, religious education teacher, altar server, and choir member at Our Lady Queen of the Universe Catholic Church. She has also served at Casa Gardens and First Stop and sponsored a coat drive. She says:

**“When we are grateful for what we have, we can see the world differently and be moved to help those in need.”**



### GROWING CLOSER TO GOD BY HELPING GOD'S PEOPLE

#### Michael Lopacki

Holy Spirit Catholic High School  
Class of 2024

Michael has attended Holy Spirit Catholic School since PreK3. His family believes in Catholic education and has faithfully prioritized sending him and his brothers to Holy Spirit School. Michael has repaired fences at a cemetery, built a garden shed, and, with his mother and brothers, helped with food donations for Holy Spirit Catholic Church. He says:

**“Working on service projects helps me feel closer to God because we’re helping His people.”**





# 4,213

TOTAL STUDENTS  
3% INCREASE FROM 2022

CATHOLIC  
3,210

NON-CATHOLIC  
967

Students receiving  
Title I Services  
406

Students eligible for free  
and reduced lunch  
492

Students with disability,  
diagnosed by local  
education agency  
303

International students  
12

# 436

TOTAL STAFF  
89% RETENTION FROM 2022

CATHOLIC  
294

NON-CATHOLIC  
142

STATISTICS INCLUDE  
DIOCESAN SCHOOLS ONLY.

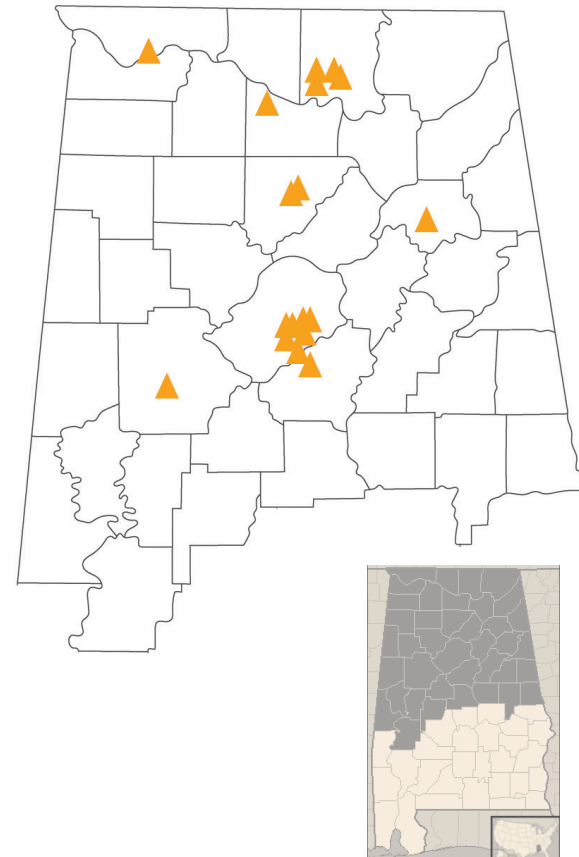
28,091  
SQUARE MILES  
IN DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM  
SERVED BY CATHOLIC  
SCHOOLS

12  
DIOCESAN ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS

3  
DIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOLS

4  
DIOCESAN EARLY LEARNING  
CENTERS

4  
INDEPENDENT,  
NON-DIOCESAN SCHOOLS



# GATHOLIC SCHOOLS

in the Diocese of Birmingham

## BIRMINGHAM

**Holy Family Catholic Academy\*** (4K, K, 8)  
[www.hfcatholicacademy.org](http://www.hfcatholicacademy.org)

**Holy Family Cristo Rey Catholic High School\*** (9–12)  
[www.hfcristorey.org](http://www.hfcristorey.org)

**John Carroll Catholic High School** (9–12)  
[www.jcchs.org](http://www.jcchs.org)

**Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.olsschool.com](http://www.olsschool.com)

**Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Children’s Learning Center**  
(6 weeks–4K)

**Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.olvbirmingham.com](http://www.olvbirmingham.com)

**Prince of Peace Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.popcatholic.net](http://www.popcatholic.net)

**Prince of Peace Adventure Ark Playschool**  
(6 months–2 years)  
[www.popcatholic.org](http://www.popcatholic.org)

**St. Francis Xavier Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.sfxcatholic.com](http://www.sfxcatholic.com)

**St. Peter’s Child Development Center** (6 weeks–4K)  
[www.saintpeterscdc.com](http://www.saintpeterscdc.com)

**St. Rose Academy\*** (3K–8)  
[www.strosebhm.org](http://www.strosebhm.org)

## CULLMAN

**Sacred Heart School** (3K–6)  
[www.shscullman.com](http://www.shscullman.com)

## CULLMAN (CONT.)

**St. Bernard Preparatory School\*** (7–12)  
[www.stbernardprep.com](http://www.stbernardprep.com)

## FLORENCE / DECATUR

**St. Ann Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.saintanndecatour.org](http://www.saintanndecatour.org)

**St. Joseph Regional Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.catholicill.com](http://www.catholicill.com)

## GADSDEN

**St. James Catholic School** (3K–8)  
[www.stjamesgadsden.org](http://www.stjamesgadsden.org)

## HUNTSVILLE / MADISON

**Good Shepherd Catholic Preschool** (10 months–4K)  
[www.goodshephsv.org](http://www.goodshephsv.org)

**Holy Family Regional Catholic School** (4K–8)  
[www.holy-family-school.com](http://www.holy-family-school.com)

**Holy Spirit Regional Catholic School** (4K–8)  
[www.hstigers.org](http://www.hstigers.org)

**St. John Paul II Catholic High School** (9–12)  
[www.jp2falcons.org](http://www.jp2falcons.org)

**St. John the Baptist Catholic School** (4K–8)  
[www.stjohnb.com](http://www.stjohnb.com)

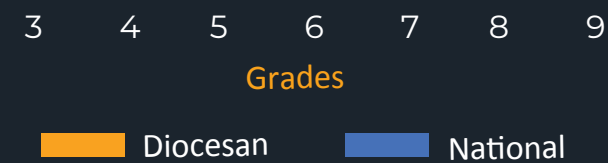
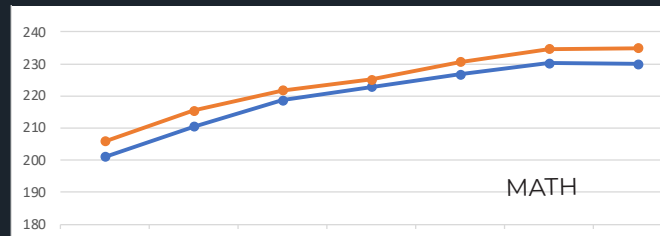
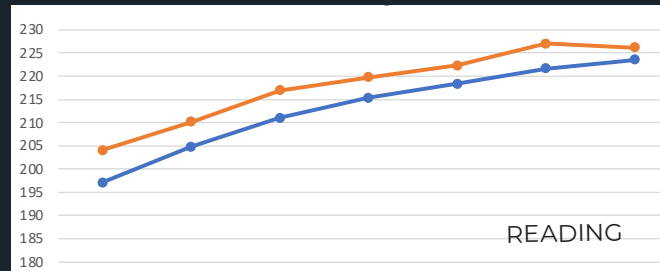
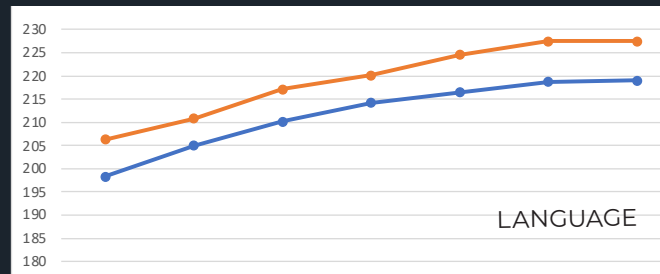
## TUSCALOOSA

**Holy Spirit Catholic School** (3K–5) (6–12)  
[www.holyspirit-al.com](http://www.holyspirit-al.com)

\* An independent, non-diocesan school

## MAP National Evaluation Norms

Diocesan schools exceeded MAP National Evaluation Norms. The yearly testing measures student achievement and growth in key academic areas for grades 3 - 9.



## EXCELLENCE RECORDED

### NWEA MAP EVALUATION

The MAP® (Measures of Academic Progress) Growth™ evaluation, developed by NWEA (Northwest Educational Assessment), measures achievement in key subject areas. Results from the assessments provide teachers a reliable, consistent source of information that can help inform evaluation and development of instructional strategies.

Diocesan schools administer the MAP assessments to grades three through nine in the areas of math, reading, and language usage. Normative averages for 2022-23 continue to indicate overall consistent growth throughout the diocese, exceeding national norms.

### ACT RESULTS

The ACT® (American College Testing) is a college admissions test that helps institutions of higher learning assess college readiness and can have broad impacts for high school students, including access to scholarships, college acceptance, and course placements.

In 2022, diocesan schools earned an average ACT Composite Score of 24.1, well above the U.S. and Alabama scores of 19.8 and 18, respectively. As the nationwide average continues to decline, average Composite scores for students in our diocesan high schools have increased year-over-year, consistently exceeding state and national levels.

## EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED

Our Catholic schools, our students, and our teachers are seen and recognized.

**Academic commendations** including National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society, science fairs, spelling bees, National Merit finalists, teacher recognitions, essay contests, and the National Science Olympiad

**Athletic achievements** including regional and state honors in football, baseball, basketball, softball, volleyball, swimming and diving, track and field, soccer, cross country, tennis, lacrosse, cheerleading, golf, and fishing

**Arts accomplishments** including visual arts achievements, choir competitions, art shows, band competitions, and theatre festivals

**Spiritual growth** through active participation in Sacramental life, Catholic catechesis, prayer throughout each day, volunteer service hours, and projects and raising funds to help those in need

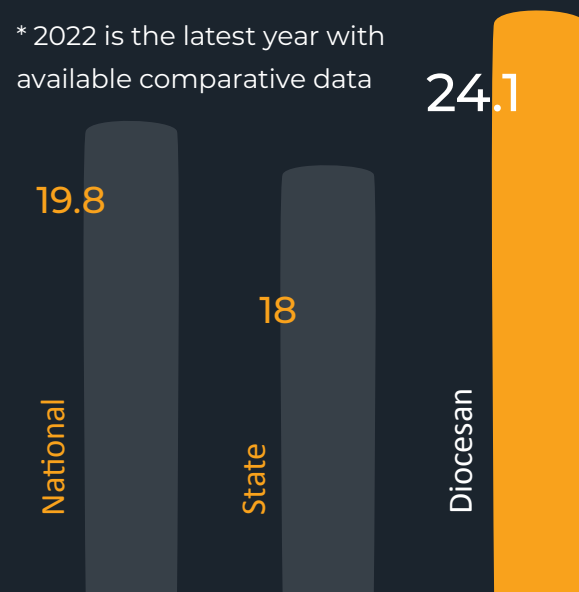
### OUR 2023 GRADUATES

The 252 Class of 2023 graduates from the three diocesan high schools—Holy Spirit Catholic High School, John Carroll Catholic High School, and St. John Paul II Catholic High School—together delivered impressive results:

- Graduation Rate:** 100%
- Amount of 2023 Scholarships Received:** \$26,497,432
- Hours in Service to their Communities:** 21,184
- Hours in Prayer, Mass, and Adoration:** Incalculable

### Average ACT Composite Scores (Class of 2022)\*

\* 2022 is the latest year with available comparative data



In our Catholic schools, **we educate the whole person—mind, body, and spirit**—through rigorous, Gospel-based instruction and a wide variety of extracurricular, arts, and athletic opportunities that form our students in ways that go beyond other educational models.

**Every child is a child of God**, and by our educational emphasis on all aspects of their person as created by God, students are equipped with the skills and the habits of mind, body, and spirit to go out and be disciples in this complex world.



# SEEKING CHRIST IN NEW WAYS: THE HEART OF OUR MISSION



## ASSESSMENT OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE



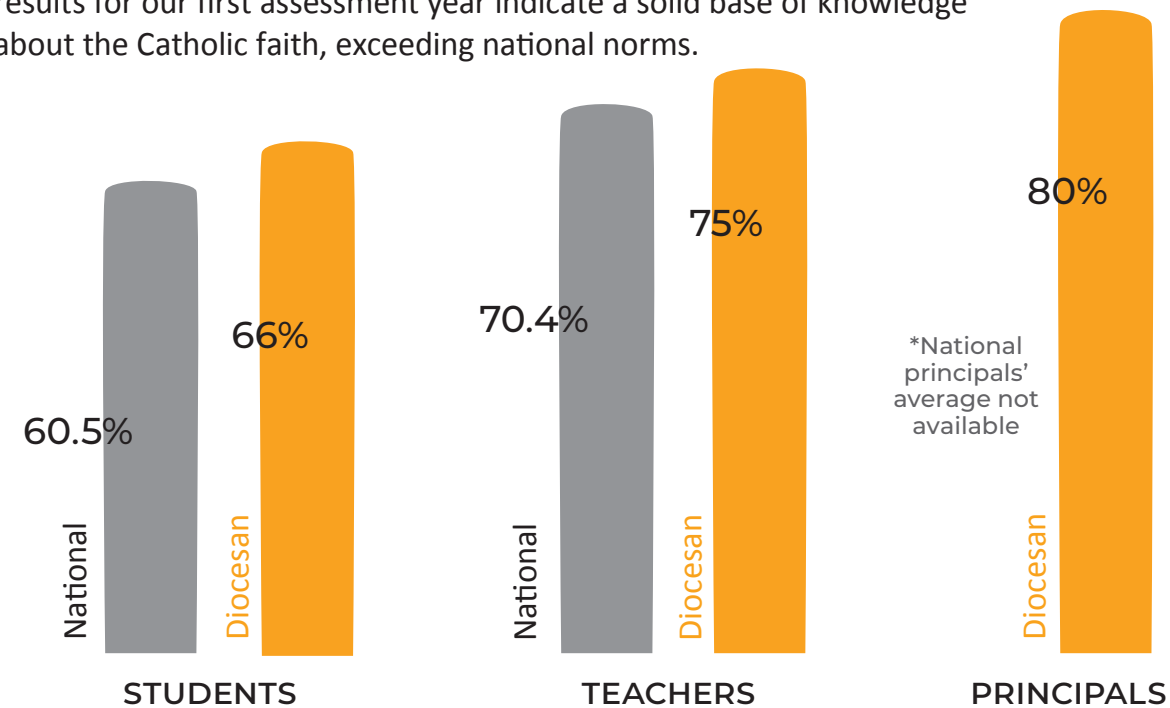
**A**ssessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) is a standardized Assessment given for the first time in our Diocese of Birmingham Catholic schools in April 2023. This assessment guides our schools in understanding what our 2<sup>nd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students, faculty, and school leaders know and believe about the Catholic faith in six domains of the Catholic faith:

- Sacraments and Liturgy
- The Creed and Salvation History
- Morality
- Prayer
- Virtue
- Living Discipleship



## DIOCESAN SCHOOLS EXCEED NATIONAL NORMS IN KNOWLEDGE SCORE AVERAGES

More than 235,000 students and 24,000 faculty rostered in 1,400 schools and parishes participated nationally in the 2023 ARK assessment. Diocesan results for our first assessment year indicate a solid base of knowledge about the Catholic faith, exceeding national norms.



## CATHOLIC IDENTITY STUDENT COUNCIL

**T**he Catholic Identity Student Council was established during the 2022-2023 school year to provide input and direction to the Superintendent of Schools and the Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education to ensure that our Catholic schools continue to form lifelong disciples in faith-filled environments where students encounter Christ. The council comprises student representatives from John Carroll Catholic High School, Holy Family Cristo Rey High School, Holy Spirit Catholic High School, and St. John Paul II Catholic High School, as well as faculty leaders. Students met throughout the school year and shared their insights with Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dubose in April 2023, highlighted below.

### What are our schools doing well?

- Faith life and religious instruction** in classes, sacraments, and building relationship with each other and Christ
- Developing the whole child**—mind, body, and spirit
- Integrating faith throughout the school**, in every class and activity
- Providing welcoming, supportive environments** from students, teachers, staff, and coaches

### What could our schools do better?

- More collaboration for faith and development opportunities**, within the school and in the community
- More comprehensive education for Theology of the Body**
- Developing the faith life for all**, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or previous Catholic experience
- More in-depth faith integration across the school day**, in studies and service



# FOCUSED ON A HIGHER VISION

serving Christ for schools

## VISION

Currently in her fifth year as Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Birmingham, Margaret Dubose has focused on implementing a strategic vision to achieve results and establish momentum for Catholic education in the light of Christ's service throughout the diocese.

To cultivate a community where Christ is experienced beyond the walls of each school, this vision seeks to build ownership and positive engagement throughout the Diocese of Birmingham. Our goal is to ensure that families have access to Catholic education, to continue to provide the highest quality spiritual and academic formation, and to propagate the Catholic faith for years to come.

## RESULTS

To realize this vision, the strategic engagement of school personnel, school pastors, Catholic Schools Office staff, diocesan leadership and staff, and volunteers aligns an active focus throughout the diocese. Notable accomplishments in diocesan Catholic education include:

Significant progress in the **implementation of the Strategic Plan for Catholic Education**.

The **highest system accreditation score** in the history of our schools.

The establishment of a **new endowment**, The Monsignor Michael F. Sexton Continuing Education Endowment, to provide continuing education scholarships to Diocese of Birmingham school staff.

Promotion of a **long-term endowment**, the Faith in Education Endowment, that assists schools with advancing their resources and programming.

## MOMENTUM

Our service to Christ continues to grow, with several exciting advancements that occurred during the 2022-2023 school year, including:

**Groundbreaking** by Holy Family Regional School in Huntsville for a new facility to accommodate their growing school enrollment.

**Approval of a new preschool** at St. Paul Catholic Parish in Athens.

The third consecutive year of **increased enrollment** diocese-wide.

“Creating a vision is easy; putting the vision into action is tough business.

The last few years have been exciting, being part of the strategic plan roadmap for building momentum and driving results. One way we have been able to nurture collaboration, cultivate learning, and ensure results is the bi-annual Aligning for Success workshop for our Catholic school leaders and committees. By working together as a Catholic community, we continue to create the very best education and learning environment for our students and families.”

Joe Ross, Ph.D., 2023 Chair  
Diocesan Advisory Council  
for Catholic Education

## STRATEGIC PLAN

a roadmap for progress

Since 2019, a comprehensive strategic plan for the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama has informed planning and alignment in all areas of the collective educational mission.

Guided and led by the Superintendent of Schools, implementation of the plan has produced significant accomplishments in the first four years,

### Key accomplishments for 2022-23 include:

- ✓ **Support for developmental disabilities** such as autism by continued partnership with Mitchell's Place.
- ✓ **Professional development workshops** for differentiated instruction, presented regionally by Northshore Consulting.
- ✓ **Alignment and coordination of advisory councils/boards** between individual schools' councils/boards and the Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education.
- ✓ New initiatives for continued strengthening of **Catholic identity and formation**, including administration of Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) for teachers and students, coursework for teachers from the Franciscan Institute's track for Catholic schools, and a Catholic Identity Student Council for high school students.



Groundbreaking for school expansion, Holy Family Regional Catholic School

including use of Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tools for formative assessment data, dedicated Human Resource guidance for schools, a Code of Ethics for Catholic Educators, a system for facilities inventory and assessment for each campus, and an enhanced culture of trust, communication and collaboration.

### Priorities for 2023-2024 include:

- ✓ **Promotion of the Faith in Education Endowment**, a financial and spiritual commitment to advance the mission of Catholic education for years to come.
- ✓ Continued efforts in **school safety** to ensure the safest environment at all levels.
- ✓ Expanded communication efforts to build a **collaborative view of Catholic education in our diocese** through initiatives such as the Aligning for Success workshops and our annual report, *The Measure of Success*.
- ✓ Research to **improve standards and benchmarks** for language arts and social studies to address continued academic rigor, 21st century skills, and affective dimensions of learning.
- ✓ A focused initiative to promote a **deeper student understanding of vocations in life and career opportunities**, both religious and secular.

A copy of the Strategic Plan is available for download at [bhmdiocese.org/schools](https://bhmdiocese.org/schools).

## ADVANCING OUR MISSION

### MONSIGNOR MICHAEL F. SEXTON CONTINUING EDUCATION ENDOWMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF: 2023 AWARDS

Through the generosity of our community, the Catholic Schools Office has recently established The Monsignor Michael F. Sexton Continuing Education Endowment. Named in honor of Monsignor Michael Sexton, the endowment provides annual scholarships for professional staff in diocesan Catholic schools, who wish to continue their education or pursue advanced degrees. 2023 award recipients are:

- Victoria Jordan, counselor at Prince of Peace Catholic School in Hoover.
- Courtney Magee, principal of St. Joseph Regional Catholic School in Florence.

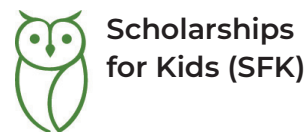
### FAITH IN EDUCATION ENDOWMENT GRANTS FOR SCHOOLS

The Faith in Education Endowment is a financial and spiritual commitment to assist schools from the diocesan level to address priority needs, to advance programming in areas that may be outside the established school budget, or to meet an unplanned need.

For more details on these and other support options,  
please see [bhmdiocese.org/schools](https://bhmdiocese.org/schools).

#### HELP MORE FAMILIES CHOOSE CATHOLIC EDUCATION

**Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs):** Scholarships for eligible students in the Diocese of Birmingham are offered by the three SGOs below, funded by Alabama state tax credits that directly benefit students at no additional cost to the taxpayer. To register and designate your tax credit to benefit our diocesan students, go to [myalabamataxes.alabama.gov](https://myalabamataxes.alabama.gov), click on "Report a donation to an SGO," and select one of the organizations listed below.



**Direct gift from IRA:** Supporters over age 70½ can give any amount (up to a maximum of \$100,000) per calendar year from your IRA directly to a qualified charity such as our schools or our diocesan endowments, without paying income taxes on the donated gift.

# THANK YOU

to all those who give so generously

#### TO OUR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS & VOLUNTEERS:

- All of our pastors of Catholic schools, faculty, and administrative staff members
- Priests, administrators, deacons, religious, and parish staff across our diocese
- Our Diocesan Advisory Council for Catholic Education
- Our local school and parish advisory councils and boards
- Volunteers with our parent organizations, booster clubs, school and parish support teams
- The Most Reverend Steven J. Raica, Bishop of Birmingham, and all Chancery staff

#### TO ALL WHO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

- Local school donations and fundraisers
- Parish tuition assistance and other financial support
- School and diocesan system endowments
- Legacy gifts, long-term planning, and estate giving

... AND TO ALL WHO JOIN IN PRAYER FOR OUR MISSION!

## a prayer for CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Christ, our TEACHER, You said, "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." Thank you for the gift of Catholic schools, where children come to praise and adore You, striving to live Gospel values enlightened by the Holy Spirit to grow in virtue.

Guard and protect the hearts and minds of our students. Inspire educators to create a climate of love, joy, and sacredness within all Catholic schools.

Bless and guide our families, who daily give witness to the gift of Catholic education. Deepen our commitment to love and serve You and others as we build the Kingdom of God. Amen.

— Cindy Westbrook



ENVIRONMENTS OF LOVE & CARE,  
OF THE HIGHEST MORAL & ACADEMIC STANDARDS  
**CENTERED ON CHRIST,**  
AND OF JOY-FILLED LIVES OF MISSION AND  
PURPOSE INTENDED BY GOD



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
**BIRMINGHAM** *in* **ALABAMA**