

Achieving
**Academic
Excellence**
A Road Map for Success



Our Goal

To be Iowa's Top Academic System

At Holy Family Catholic Schools, students have always excelled, both academically and as young people of faith and strong character. Since 2011, though, when system administrators were challenged at the Iowa Education Summit to set goals that “made our stomachs hurt,” we have been on a quest to become the top academic system in the state of Iowa. To be the best is a lofty goal, but we are already seeing the fruits of our laser-like focus on each individual student's academic

growth. Achievement is soaring on several different measures, as you will notice in this booklet.

On the next several pages, you will also see the road map that we are following to attain this goal, including the plan we are implementing as well as the measures we are employing to determine our success. Our ultimate success, however, will be measured when we see our graduates making an even greater difference in our world.

Each Child **Potential Maximized**

At most schools, the annual analysis of student progress usually begins—and ends—with a look at proficiency levels, or how many students score at or above the 40th percentile nationally on Iowa Assessments. At Holy Family Catholic Schools, we could be very satisfied with the **90-plus percent of our students** who achieve at that basic level; instead, we judge our effectiveness based on how much each child grows each year on Iowa Assessments and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). In order for students to grow on both measures, they have to be **presented with new and challenging material each day**. It's not the easiest way to teach, but it's the best way to make sure that each and every child learns—and **maximizes his or her potential**.



“Above all else, Catholic schools need to provide a rigorous academic program. If we do not teach our children to think, they will be unable to think about God.”

—Most Reverend Daniel Kucera, O.S.B.
Archbishop Emeritus, Archdiocese of Dubuque

Current Achievement Levels

Iowa Assessment Results

Iowa Assessments (formerly Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Iowa Tests of Educational Development) are administered in late fall each year. In addition to proficiency data, which indicates at what level students are performing, we are also able to track individual student growth through their standard score from year to year. Our target is that students will grow at a rate that is at least 120 percent of their expected growth.

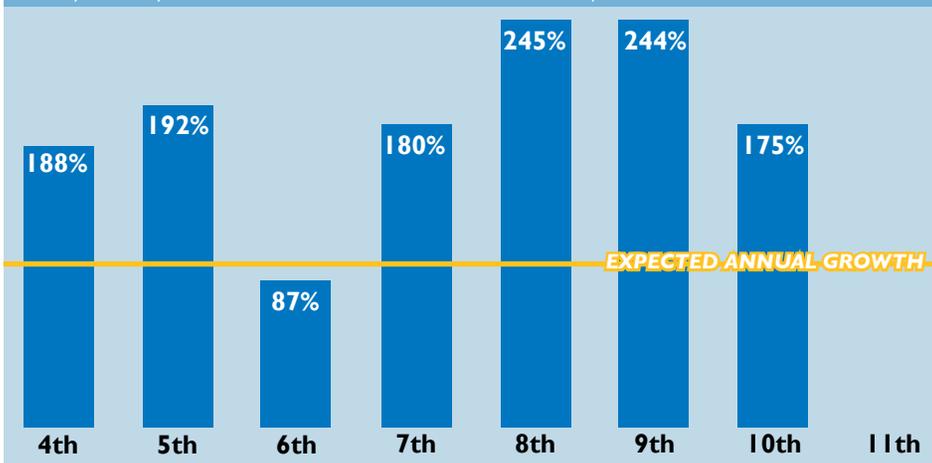
Iowa Assessments are based on the information that students should know at their current grade level. They do not take into account the knowledge that students gained the previous year or how much more they know in the current year. These proficiency levels show that Holy Family students tend to be well ahead of their state and national peers on this assessment.

In the graphs below, which reflect student growth in reading and math (science is equally as strong), not student proficiency, you will see that our students meet, on average, our 120 percent growth target. When student growth doesn't meet that expectation, as you see in the transition to sixth grade and in eleventh grade reading, extensive analysis of curriculum, testing environments and other factors is completed to ensure that the target is met.



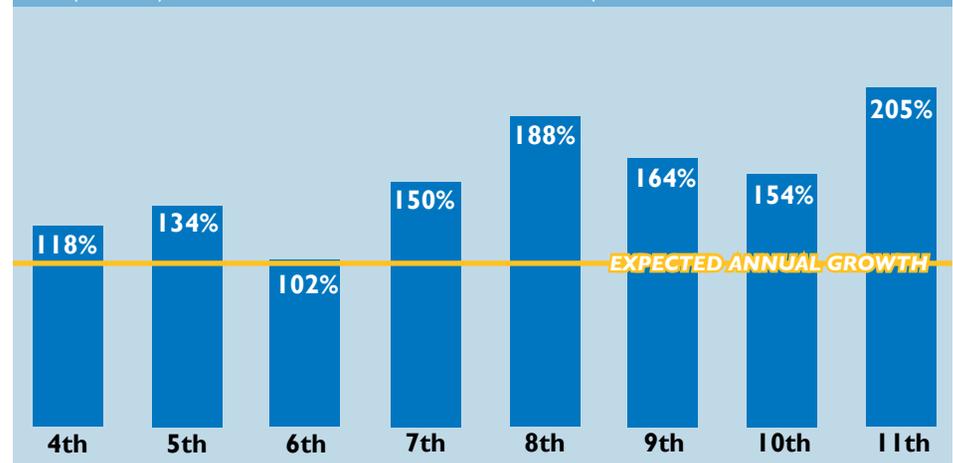
2012-2013 Relative Growth: Reading

Holy Family Growth Relative to 100 Percent Expectation



2012-2013 Relative Growth: Math

Holy Family Growth Relative to 100 Percent Expectation



Measures of Academic Progress Results

Holy Family administered the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments for the first time in 2012-2013. Unlike Iowa Assessments, students in grades kindergarten through 11 take MAPs three times each year, giving a clear picture of student growth in that school year. In addition, MAP provides teachers with information about what students are ready to learn based on their performance on the reading, math and science assessments, as students will only grow if they are exposed to new material.

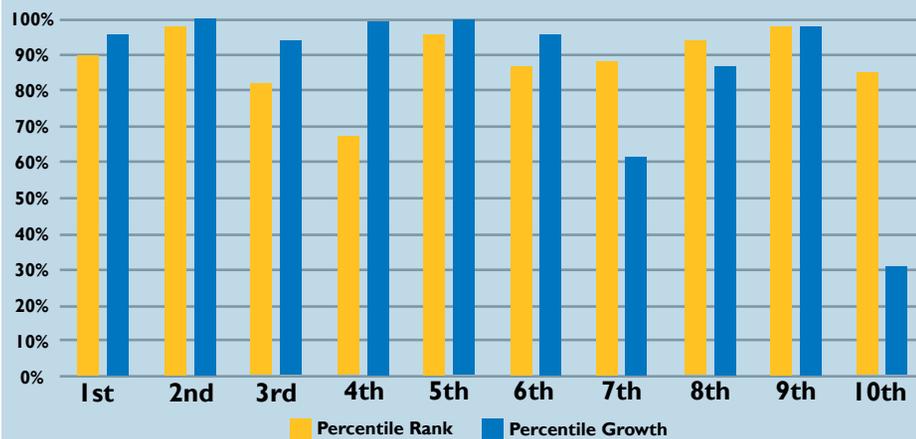
MAP growth is normed, with just 50 percent of students expected to meet their targeted growth each year. With anecdotal information that the best systems in the country see 65 percent of students meeting their expected growth in a year, we have set that 65 percent level as our target. In 2012-2013, we exceeded that target in math, with 70 percent of students meeting their growth.

The charts below show how Holy Family students ranked nationally in reading and math in both performance and growth. In general, you see both high performance and growth. In those grades that are below our averages, an examination of curriculum and other factors is underway.



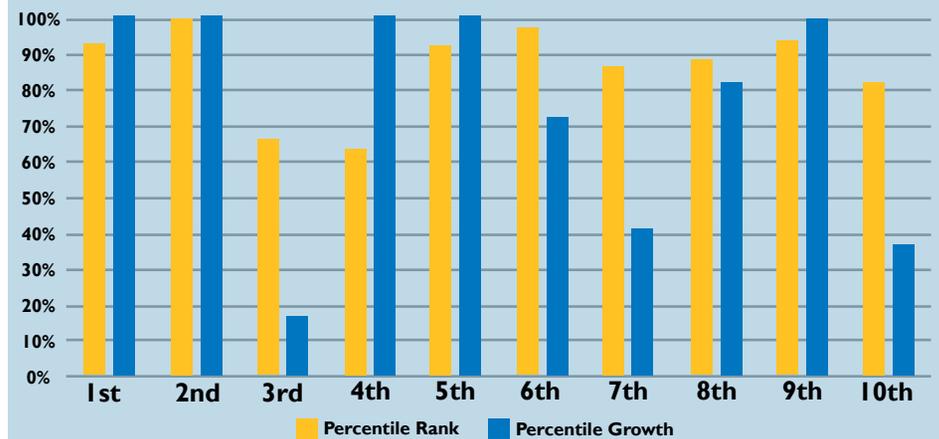
2012-2013 Relative Growth: Reading

Holy Family Performance and Growth Relative to National Norms



2012-2013 Relative Growth: Math

Holy Family Performance and Growth Relative to National Norms



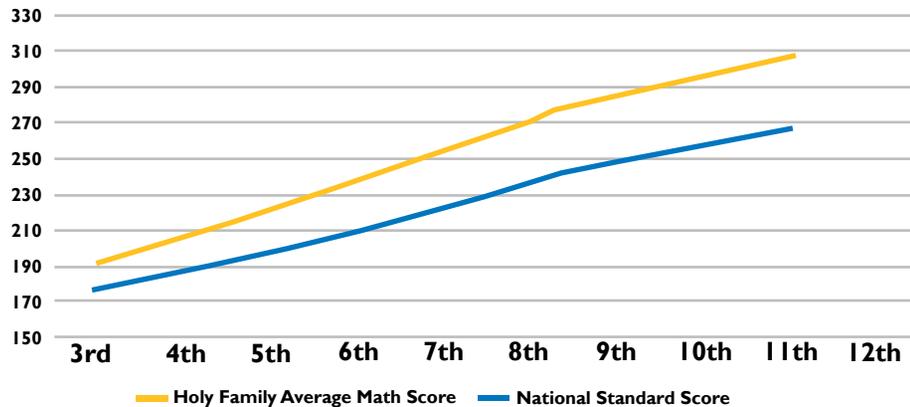
Current Achievement Levels

A Child Who Attends a Holy Family School...

A number of indicators suggest that Holy Family students are achieving at incredibly high levels. The data below demonstrates the growth that students experience the longer they are enrolled in Holy Family schools.



...will grow **25% faster in math** on Iowa Assessments



...and score **well above current grade level***

	Reading	Written Expression	Math	Social Studies	Science	Composite
6th	8.1	8.4	8	7.8	7.2	7.7
7th	9.6	11.1	9.5	9.6	8.8	9.5
8th	13+	13+	12.3	12.6	11.9	12.6

The maximum grade-level equivalency computed is 13+. In some cases, students may be scoring higher than this level. *Chart data based on 2013 Iowa Assessment results.

...will likely be **accelerated in math**

75 Percentage of Mazzuchelli sixth graders on track to complete Algebra in middle school

25 Percentage of Mazzuchelli sixth graders on track to take Pre-Calculus in ninth grade

...will likely top **state and national averages on the ACT**

24.2 Average ACT score of the Wahlert Catholic High School Class of 2013, topping the state average of 22.1 and national average of 20.9

95 Percentage of Wahlert Catholic seniors who take the ACT exam, compared to the state average of 66 percent and the national average of 54 percent

...will likely attend—and **graduate from—college**

95 Percentage, on average, of Wahlert Catholic students who pursue post-secondary education

75 Percentage of Wahlert Catholic alumni who complete a four-year degree within six years, compared to the 41 percent of the general population who complete a degree at some point in their lives

Innovative Programming

Our world is rapidly changing, and our students will experience a future that we can only imagine. To make sure that they are as prepared as possible, we are committed to providing our students with an education that incorporates the new and innovative while ensuring that they have a solid academic foundation.



TENMARKS SUPPLEMENTAL MATH

Students in grade 1 through Algebra II access a supplemental online math program that supports classroom lessons and uses standardized test data to determine the next challenge for students. Complete with “amplification” to help students understand the problems they have answered incorrectly, the program is available to students year round.

SPANISH IMMERSION

Research shows that learning a second language early in life enhances a child’s cognitive development. Our Lady of Guadalupe, now in its 12th year, allows students to become fluent in Spanish while learning the same innovative curriculum in place at other Holy Family elementaries. With native speakers on staff, students master Spanish language and culture here at home.

1:1 COMPUTING

Building on the technological fluency that they bring to school, all students in grades 6-12 are provided with a laptop to allow them to become producers, rather than simply consumers, of information. Differentiated instruction, collaborative learning and equal access to materials are being seen as the benefits of this initiative. At the elementary level, carts of laptops and tablets allow us to bring technology to students at a better than 1:2 ratio while enhancing the learning process.

PROJECT LEAD THE WAY CURRICULA

Holy Family is pleased to offer three different Project Lead The Way programs. PLTW, the leading provider of pre-engineering courses, helps students to build the problem-solving, collaboration and innovation skills they will need for future success while providing them with a hands-on curriculum designed to engage their interest.

GATEWAY TO TECHNOLOGY

All Mazzuchelli Catholic Middle School students learn that there is more than one way to solve a problem through the Gateway to Technology program, which offers hands-on activities and experience with industry-leading software.

PATHWAYS TO ENGINEERING

Wahlert Catholic students build on what they learned in the Gateway program. Even for students who do not plan to pursue engineering as a career, Pathways allows students to focus on the process of defining and solving a problem, not on finding the “right” answer.

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

A grant from the Medical Associates Foundation supports the implementation of the Biomedical Sciences program at Wahlert Catholic, one of three in the state of Iowa. Through this rigorous and relevant curriculum, students investigate the role of biomedical professionals as they study human medicine, physiology, genetics, microbiology and public health.

Keys to Success

Pathways to College Credit

Preparing students to earn college credit before they finish high school is a process that begins when students are presented with appropriate challenges starting in kindergarten. Holy Family is pleased to offer multiple opportunities for students to earn that credit.

Math Acceleration

Students who demonstrate potential in math are advanced, even to the point of taking Algebra in sixth grade and finishing AP Calculus BC as high school juniors and taking college math courses as high school seniors.

Spanish Credit

Those students who have completed the Spanish Immersion program at Our Lady of Guadalupe have the opportunity to earn four years of high school Spanish competency credit, allowing them to earn Advanced Placement and college credit during their high school years.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

Ten Advanced Placement courses afford students who post a qualifying score on the AP exam the opportunity to earn college credit.

Dual-Credit Courses

Five dual-credit courses offered through Northeast Iowa Community College allow students to earn both high school and college credit.

Project Lead the Way

Students who complete Project Lead the Way courses take an end-of-course exam; a qualifying score allows them to apply for credit at the college they attend.



Measures of Success

How do we know if we have become the top academic system in the state of Iowa? We are tracking our progress on a number of measures, including:

IOWA ASSESSMENTS

Goals: achieve comparable proficiency levels to top systems in the state and 120 percent of expected annual growth

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP)

Goal: 65 percent of students meet their expected annual growth in all tests, matching the success of top-performing students in the country

AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING (ACT)

Goal: graduating classes average at least two points over the state ACT average while maintaining the high percentage of students taking the exam

PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (PSAT)

Goal: match schools with demographics similar to ours, which average four National Merit Semi-Finalists each year

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

Goal: 70 percent of AP students earn a score of "3" or better

NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE DATA

Goal: 75 percent of graduates earn a four-year degree within six years of graduation

Keys to Success College Readiness



Thanks to a grant from BP and the Molo Companies, Wahlert Catholic High School has an added emphasis on college and career preparation. In individual meetings with seniors, Counselor David Kelley focuses students on potential colleges, the college application process, pursuing scholarship opportunities, possible majors and career goals. For juniors, the emphasis of these one-on-one meetings is on preparing for and taking college entrance exams and beginning the college search process, while sophomores explore potential careers and the classes they need to be taking to be prepared for those careers. David also works with the rest of the counseling staff to coordinate college visits for groups of students. His bi-weekly newsletters to parents and students relay information about college planning, important deadlines and available scholarships while spotlighting colleges that might be good fits for students but aren't generally known.

College and Universities Attended

Bellevue University
Bradley University
Capri College
The Citadel
Clarke University
Coe College
College of DuPage
Colorado College
Creighton University
DePaul University
Edgewood University
Hamline University
Harvard University
Illinois Institute of Art
Iowa State University

Kirkwood Community College
Lebanon Valley College
Lewis University
Lindenwood University
Loras College
Loyola University
Luther College
Madison Area Technical College
Marquette University
Mount Mercy University
North Dakota State University
Northeast Iowa Community College
Northern Illinois University
San Francisco Art Institute
Seattle University

South Central College
Southwest Tech
St. Ambrose University
St. Louis University
St. Mary's University
St. Norbert College
Tarrent County College
Truman State University
Tulane University
University of Central Florida
University of Dayton
University of Dubuque
University of Illinois-Springfield
University of Iowa
University of Kansas
University of Minnesota-Duluth
University of Missouri
University of Northern Iowa

University of Notre Dame
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of St. Thomas
University of Tulsa
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay
University of Wisconsin-Lacrosse
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
University of Wisconsin-Platteville
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Upper Iowa University
Utah Valley University
Wartburg College
United States Military Academy
Western Illinois University
Winona State University

Keys to Success

Providing Teachers The Right Tools

Studies on education point to one factor as most critical in improving student achievement: the teacher in front of the room. Because we have incredibly talented, caring and dedicated teachers who inspire students to pursue excellence, Holy Family is committed to providing them with the tools to continue to positively impact students' lives.

The Tools

Rich Professional Development: Holy Family uses the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model to deliver professional development that is customized to teachers based on their needs and provides them with time to collaborate with their peers to discuss best practices. Principals work with outside consultants, faculty from the education departments of local colleges and Keystone Area Education Agency personnel to design and implement this targeted training.

Valuable Feedback: In order to ensure that teachers have the information they need to continuously hone their skills, we have developed a three-pronged approach to our teacher evaluation process. The process includes:

- **Enhanced Observations:** Using a research-proven framework, administrators observe teachers in action and provide feedback that leads to increased student achievement.
- **Standardized Test Results:** Analyses of results from both Iowa Assessments and Measures of Academic Progress allow teachers to understand what individual students already know and are ready to learn.
- **Student Surveys:** End-of-course Tripod surveys at all levels allow teachers to learn how well they are reaching students in terms of the Seven Cs: Care, Control, Clarify, Challenge, Captivate, Confer and Consolidate.



Success Stories

One doesn't have to look far at Holy Family to see teachers using these tools to increase student achievement. Consider these two of the many examples at opposite ends of the spectrum:

Ralph Rollins and Tom Stierman: For a number of years, these Wahlert Catholic teachers have scored Advanced Placement exams during the summer months. Because they better know what is expected of students, they are able to challenge their students at the highest levels of rigor. The result: exam pass rates far exceeding state and national averages.

Shelly Murley and Sara Weires: These two kindergarten teachers at Resurrection and Holy Ghost, respectively, used Measures of Academic Progress data to understand what their students were ready to learn. While differentiating instruction to meet their students' needs, both teachers saw 100 percent of their students achieve their expected growth in the first year of MAP testing, doubling the expected result.

Keys to Success

Building Strong Character

The same high expectations that foster academic excellence permeate all aspects of students' Holy Family experiences.

- We work to instill values that are in concert with parents and anchored in the Catholic faith, creating a strong sense of community between students, faculty and parents.
- Service is another priority, as all students learn of their responsibility to serve others, preparing them for a lifetime of active community participation.
- High expectations for behavior create a culture of respect that permeates our schools and allows teachers to maximize instructional time.
- Because they are able to participate in multiple co-curricular activities, students of all ages learn about teamwork and responsibility while developing their athletic, fine arts and academic talents.



*Holy Family students
contribute more
than 30,000 hours
of service to the
community each year.*

System Awards

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL

Resurrection Elementary, 2009

St. Columbkille Elementary, 2011

**NATIONAL CATHOLIC HIGH
SCHOOL HONOR ROLL**

Wahlert Catholic High School, 2010

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR**

Kim Hermsen,

Mazzuchelli Catholic Middle School, 2013



Our Schools

Wahlert Catholic High School

Mazzuchelli Catholic Middle School

Holy Ghost Elementary School

Our Lady of Guadalupe Spanish

Immersion Elementary School

Resurrection Elementary School

St. Anthony Elementary School

St. Columbkille Elementary School

