

STAKEHOLDER 2019-2020



State of the School
STAKEHOLDER REPORT
2019-2020

June 1, 2020

Dear Epiphany School Parents and Stakeholders,

To many, the 2019-2020 school year will forever be remembered as the year of: “Shelter in Place”, Coronavirus, Remote Learning, face masks, social distancing, cancellations, and the effects associated with our current national emergency. To the staff and families of our school, it will be remembered as a year of intense learning, fervent prayer, emotional tests and trials, technological evolutions (unless you were already familiar with using a screen to connect to your community and school), and Jesus, I trust in You. For the lessons learned, the challenges conquered, the character formed in fire, and the presence of gratitude and holy courage, we raise our eyes to God and humbly submit to His will. He knows us best, He loves us more, and He already sees tomorrow. Let us leave this year with our eyes on Him and our hearts on fire for the eternal reward that He has waiting for us.

May God bless you and your family.

In Christ,

Mrs. Coone, Principal

STATE OF THE SCHOOL REPORT

This annual State of the School Report is written to provide information to our stakeholders, including parents, parishioners, and benefactors, about the wellness of Epiphany Catholic School. It is also written to meet accreditation requirements for the Minnesota Nonpublic Schools Accreditation Association (MNSAA).

“Accreditation provides a framework for the best possible educational program for learners. In addition to delivering recognized credibility of the quality of a school program in the eyes of stakeholders and the public, accreditation also offers outside objective validation that a school has met high standards and is actively seeking a quality educational program.”

EPIPHANY CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION

Epiphany Catholic School, an integral part of Epiphany Parish, is a Christ-centered faith community. Dedicated to formation of the whole person, we are committed to providing all students with the highest quality Catholic education.

We are preparing students to Manifest Christ to all.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Epiphany School Advisory Council’s primary purpose is the fostering of faith development and the advancement of the school community, in accordance with the bylaws and the school’s mission statement. Meetings were held monthly August through May to review goals and establish channels of success for the

Pastor: Father Dufner	Principal: Ann Coone	Business Administrator: Jay Tomaszewski
	School Advisory Council	
	Laura Peichel: Chairperson	
Rob Scalia	Stacy Noren	Ami Beurance
Stephanie Neuman	Kendra Turner	John Christianson
Ann Evans	Nick Vasko	Hilary Jeon

attainment of the mission of our Catholic school.

STUDENT BODY 2019-2020

We are pleased to be present 43 eighth grade graduates from Epiphany Catholic School this year. Our graduates have received a rigorous education in Math, English, Reading, Science, History, Theology, Spanish, Music, Art, and Physical Education. The high schools they will attend are many including DeLaSalle, Holy Spirit Academy, Saint Agnes, Totino-Grace, Andover, Anoka, Blaine, Coon Rapids, Elk River, Irondale, and Spring Lake Park.

Our PreK to Grade 8 enrollment this year included the following 350 students:

- PreK: 31
- K: 39
- 1: 35
- 2: 34
- 3: 24
- 4: 23
- 5: 48
- 6: 30
- 7: 43
- 8: 43

INSTRUCTION

During our August 2019 Back to School Workshops, we provided teachers two important frameworks to strengthen our already rigorous **Theology and Literature** curriculum:

- ***Christus Vincit, Epiphany School's Theology Expectations for 2019-2020***, which includes guidelines for:
 - Grade Level Prayer Expectations
 - Catholicity in Our Classrooms
 - A Guide for the appreciation of Liturgical celebrations and the Liturgical Calendar with our students

- The ***Cardinal Newman Society's Literature, Library, and Media Guide for Catholic Educators***, which narrates best practices for the selection of literature, media and movies for our curriculum and school library. Using this Guide, we chose two **classical literature lists** to direct our literature and media selections for the classroom and library. Although the two lists are not exhaustive of all possible literature suitable for our children, they represent our commitment to choosing literature and media committed Catholic integrity. The two lists are:
 - **The Cardinal Newman Society Reading List for Catholic K-12 Schools** (updated 2/27/19)
 - **Classical Christian Education 1000 Good Books List**

In 2018-2019, we initiated three new curriculum components: K-8 Singapore Math, grades 3-8 Voyages in English, and Latin in grades 4-8. **The first two trimesters of 2019-2020, we focused heavily on strengthening our pedagogy in these three new areas of curriculum and in helping our students acclimate to new methods in learning.** The third trimester, however, God led us through an entirely unanticipated adventure when our school closed on March 25 due to a pandemic and the resulting Shelter in Place. Within one week we transitioned from textbooks, paper, and pencils to screens, keyboards, and webinars. Teachers worked hard to learn new ways to teach, and students worked even harder to stay on task and grow in knowledge. Webinars, group chats, and electronic lessons became common, along with morning announcements, prayer, and the Pledge of Allegiance and Morning Prayer from Epiphany Live, the home of our Remote Learning platform. Even our kindergartners learned quickly how to “jump online” and attend a classroom session. Although this was an unusual learning platform for our school, objectives were reached, and students grew academically.

In the **Parent Survey we sent out to parents regarding their child’s Remote Learning experience**, 88% of parents said that their child’s remote learning experience was better than they expected. Additionally, they shared the following comments with us:

- *“Sometimes it takes the loss of something to make people appreciate how great something truly is.”*
- *“We really appreciate that Epiphany took immediate actions to ensure that our kids continued to learn.”*
- *“Blessings always come from hardship. Thank you for your tireless effort to continue to instill the highest education possible in our children.”*
- *“We are so grateful for the teachers and their hard work and dedication. We wouldn’t want our children anywhere else.”*
- *“We need to get our kids back to Epiphany School!”*

ASSESSMENT

Epiphany Catholic School uses assessment to measure student knowledge *prior* to teaching, progress *during* teaching, and cumulative knowledge *after* teaching. Diagnostic, formative and summative assessments are used by teachers and administrators to support educational progress in all subjects. This year, our students in grades 1-8 took the fall MAP assessment and students in grades K-8 took the winter MAP assessment. Reports were provided to parents at the completion of the fall MAP and with final report cards at the close of the school year.

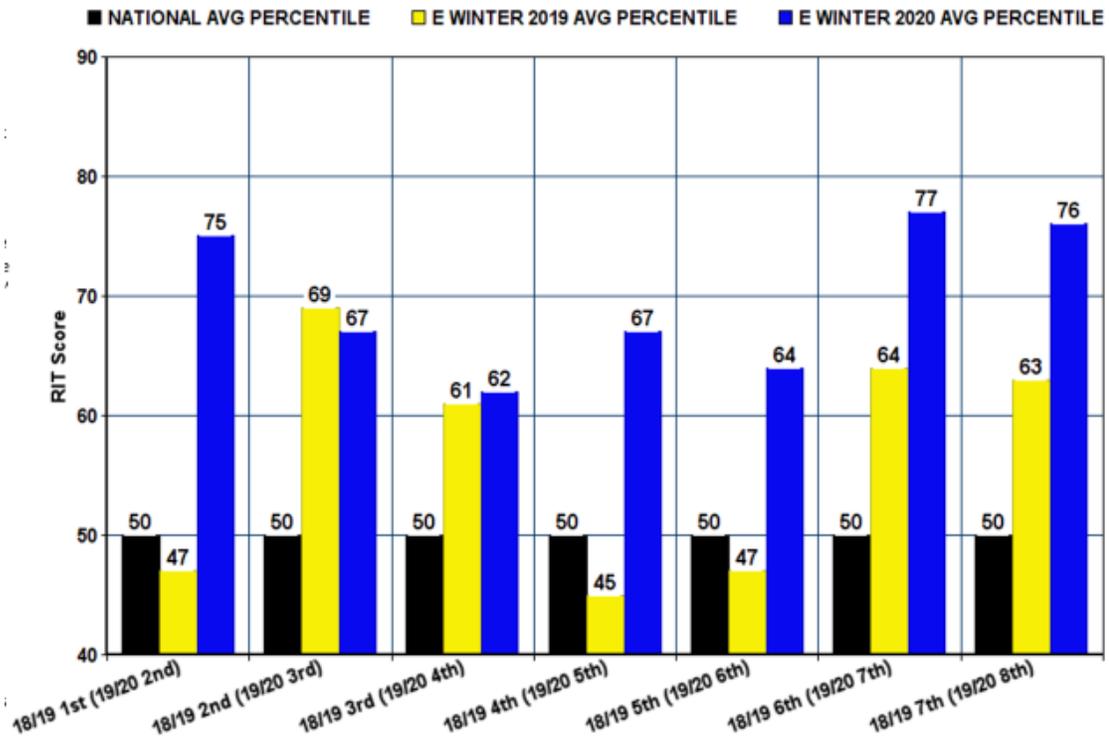
MAP, which stands for Measure of Academic Progress, is a powerful tool for measuring student growth over time. MAP tests are unique in that they are **adaptive tests** that dynamically adjust to a student’s performance whether a student performs on, above, or below grade level. The test becomes more difficult as a student answers questions correctly and easier when they answer incorrectly. Our Fall MAP results revealed:

- 78% of students scored average or higher in Math
- 76% of students scored average or higher in Reading
- 80% of students scored average or higher in Language Usage
- 90% of students scored average or higher in Science (MS only)

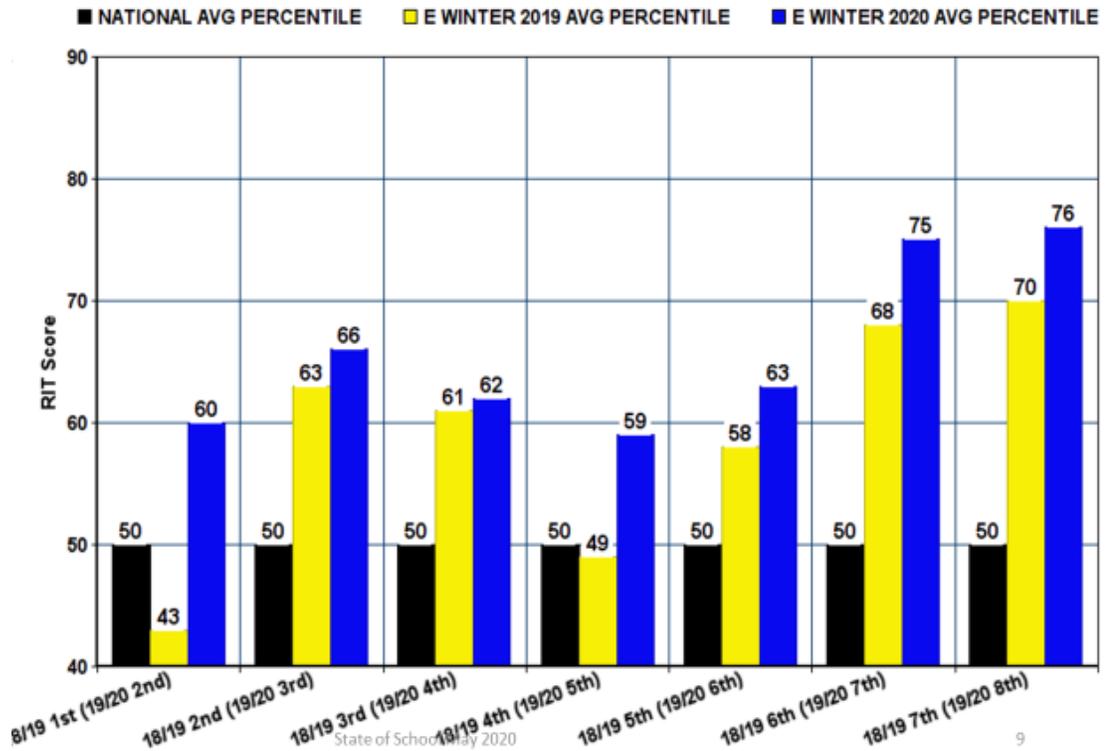
Our Winter MAP results are summarized in the following Math and Reading charts. The charts compare the percentile for the **same group of students from winter of 2019 to winter of 2020**. Following the same group of students allows us to accurately analyze student growth from year to year.

The black bar represents the national average, the yellow bar is the students' winter 2019 percentile, and the blue bar is the students' winter 2020 percentile.

WINTER 2019 AND WINTER 2020 COMPARISON: MATH



WINTER 2019 AND WINTER 2020 COMPARISON: READING



EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ENHANCEMENTS

New “E Plus” After School Care Program Opens

In our Parent Survey last spring, families indicated that they wanted an after school care program that didn't require pre-registration and pre-payment AND was open to all children in grades preschool - eight. We met this need by opening our new E Plus (Epiphany Plus) after school care program. E Plus provides licensed preschool care and kindergarten through grade 8 care on all school days until 5:30 pm. We staff E Plus so that parents have peace of mind knowing that their children are safe and well-cared for until they arrive to pick them up. Additionally, we added an electronic sign-in and sign-out program that easily documents attendance and bills family accounts monthly.

“Virtues in Practice” Program

The goal of Catholic education is to assist our children on their pathway to Heaven, but knowledge alone will not get them there. Because of this, one of the many exciting initiatives that we began this year was our new preschool – grade 8 virtues program, **Virtues in Practice**, written by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecelia. **Virtues in Practice** is designed to help children live out their faith in everyday life **both at home and at school**. Our students studied a new virtue each month and families used a parent guide to reinforce the virtues at home.

Middle School Advisory Program

We were very excited to initiate our new Middle School Advisory Program this year with three main goals:

1. **Virtue and character formation:** The Advisory Groups meet weekly to focus on character development.
2. **Student advocacy:** Middle School students are each assigned an Advisor who can more successfully get to know them through small group interactions. The Advisor is the first point of contact for parents who may have general concerns about non-academic issues like social skills and character formation and for students who are concerned about school issues.
3. **Community building:** The small group model used in our Advisory Groups encourages students to build relationships outside of their regular school friendships and helps develop important, and frequently missing, social skills in an adult supervised environment.

Google Classroom

With the switch to Remote Learning in March, we doubled down on our commitment to teaching an exceptional core curriculum with the one resource available: the internet. With the help of some very tech-savvy teachers, all K-8 students received access to Google Classrooms where teachers continued to share their knowledge and passion for education through electronic lesson plans, webinars, class meetings, and one-on-one remote tutoring. Although remote learning can never be as effective as the presence of a talented teacher, learning goals can be attained. In a Parent Survey, the majority of our parents reported that the use of Google Classroom and Remote Learning was successful, and should we need to flip to Remote Learning again, they are confident in their child's ability to succeed and their ability to support learning from home. Google Chromebooks were loaned out to families who did not have adequate computers in their home for Remote Learning.

PARENT AND STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

Epiphany School continues to communicate with parents and stakeholders regularly through weekly E-Happenings, parish bulletins, parent surveys, and State of the School Meetings.

Parent Surveys

This year's parent surveys asked questions about parent satisfaction, academic rigor and assessment, modes of communication, our new 45 (mixed 4th and 5th grade) classrooms, and Remote Learning. The results were reviewed by teachers and shared with parents. Our parents are pleased with the formation of their children as proven in the following statistics:

State of the School Meetings

In November we hosted our annual Parent Social and State of the School Meeting, which was well-attended by over 100 guests. In May, due to the Shelter at Home order, we hosted a remote State of the School Meeting, which was posted on YouTube. During the State of the School Meetings we reported on:

- Our MNSAA accreditation objectives and progress
- Current Epiphany School programs, events, and enhancements
- Enrollment trends
- Fundraising progress
- NWEA MAP assessment results
- Curriculum review, development, and planning
- Ways for parents to get involved

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

Epiphany School strives to make our Catholic Faith and our school known throughout our local and broader community. Each year, we host events that are open to our community so that we can share our faith, our traditions, and the beauty of our school.

Due to the Coronavirus and mandatory school building closure in March, some of our favorite events such as Grandparent's Day, Middle School Coffee House, Academic Showcase, and Kinder Camp had to be postponed until next year. However, we were still able to host wonderful events for our community from September through March. Additionally, due to the school closure, we were pleased to provide the children in our community free breakfast, lunch, and dinner five days a week from April through July in our Grab and Go Meal Program.

A Response to Families in Need: The Epiphany School Grab and Go Meal Program

This program was absolutely one of the most successful undertakings of our school year. When schools and places of business closed, families lost income, and children lost precious time at school with teachers and friends, our kitchen team jumped into action. By the end of March, a small team of ten people joined forces for six hours a day to prepare, cook, and package “Epiphany style” meals for all children under the age of 18 in our community. providing nutrition, smiles, and Yesterday our Grab and Go crew served almost 650 children with a total of 1,950 meals – that’s one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner for each child! As parents pull through the line, we hear so many wonderful stories and comments and the connection is priceless. Please continue to share the good news about this wonderful service with your neighbors and friends. We have the capacity to serve up to 1,000 children each day and each meal is fully reimbursed by the Federal Lunch Program so bring us your hungry!

Annual Veterans Day Morning of Gratitude Breakfast and Program

On Veteran’s Day our students attended Mass with over 150 visiting Veterans and guests then served them a delicious hot breakfast (Miss Rhonda style!). Following breakfast, our student choirs provided a patriotic program followed by the Armed Forces Medley that brought about a rousing response from our Veterans. The morning ended with our students singing the Irish Blessing over our Veterans and presenting gifts and cards of gratitude. God bless the Veterans of the United States of America!

STEM Carnival

We once again hosted our now famous STEM Carnival for preschool through fifth graders that is free and open all school families and our community. The STEM Carnival provides great opportunities for young learners to experience science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on activities and demonstrations. This year’s event included presentations by:

- **Hightouch-Hightech** Science Made Fun!
- **Snapology**
- **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**
- **America’s Fun Science** and Dr. Tyronne Carter
- **Bruce the Bug Guy** from Minnesota Bug Hunt
- Computer Programable **Finch Robots** from the Science Museum
- Hands on activities with **3D Printers** from the Science Museum
- And “crazy fun” STEM activities presented by our middle school students

In addition to the hands-on STEM experiences for our children, our Knights of Columbus served a free dinner of hot dogs, chips, and a beverage. It was an exceptional event for everyone!

FINANCIAL REPORT

The following image presents a summary of this year’s financial overview. As shown on the report, our revenue continues to decline, and we are working hard to breach this divide by lessening our expenses. The financial picture reminds us how blessed and grateful we are to have the parishioners of Epiphany Church to help support our school; without them, our tuition would be cost prohibitive for most of our families. The report also reminds all of us how important it is for us to use our resources wisely and continue to fundraise when possible.



Financial Report

	17-18 Actual	18-19 Actual	19-20 Forecast
Total School Revenue	1,975,462	1,729,375	1,569,388
Total School Expense	2,162,072	2,147,323	1,968,827
Surplus / (Defecit)	(186,610)	(417,948)	(399,439)
Overhead Costs (facility, main., admin, utilities, etc.)	(510,000)	(375,000)	(375,000)
Total Parish Subsidy	(696,610)	(792,948)	(774,439)
Total Students	390	361	350
Total Cost per Student	6,851	6,987	6,697
Archdiocese Average Cost per Student			7,629

State of School May 2020

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ACCREDITATION REPORT

Epiphany Catholic School has been accredited by the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA) since 1989. Our school files an annual progress report that delivers pointed information about our successes and challenges while providing the exemplary Catholic education we have promised to our families and stakeholders. An important component of the annual report is our School Strategic Plan (SSP), which documents our improvement initiatives and progress. Every seven years, MNSAA does a comprehensive study of our school to ensure that we are working toward our objectives, reporting our progress to stakeholders, and succeeding. We have just completed our third year of the seven-year rotation. The following objectives were developed in 2016 and every year we work toward them and further enhance our school through the hard work of staff, parents, parishioners, and our community. The following is a summary of our Objectives and Outcomes for the 2019-2020 school year.

STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW 2019-2020

1. **Objective:** Strengthen academic integrity in math and reading as measured by MAP scores.
 - Teacher professional development was executed to target our students' needs and help them attain their growth potential.
 - Students who were identified to be "at risk" received support/tutoring to help close learning gaps.

Outcome: Our students achieved unprecedented success in grades 1-8 winter MAP assessments for math and continued success in reading achievement.

2. **Objective:** Strengthen Catholic classical identity through curriculum and teacher professional development
 - Teachers received two important frameworks to strengthen Theology and Literature curriculum:
 - ***Christus Vincit, Epiphany School's Theology Expectations***, which includes guidelines for:
 - Grade Level Prayer Expectations
 - Catholicity in Our Classrooms
 - A Guide for the appreciation of Liturgical celebrations and the Liturgical Calendar with students
 - ***The Cardinal Newman Society's Literature, Library, and Media Guide for Catholic Educators***. Using this Guide, we chose two **classical literature lists** to direct our classroom and library selections:
 - **The Cardinal Newman Society Reading List for Catholic K-12 Schools** (updated 2/27/19)
 - **Classical Christian Education 1000 Good Books List**
 - Teachers were invited to professional development in classical pedagogy through Classical U. Classical U provides training for classical educators in the classical tradition. Teachers who completed the course, and were able to prove mastery through classroom instruction, received a monetary stipend for their efforts and commitment.

Outcome: Teachers updated curriculum to include our new Theology Expectations and Classical literature lists; 19 teachers completed Classical U professional development along with three support staff.

3. **Objective:** Increase student safety during extra-curricular events and programs held on school grounds through new E Plus program (Epiphany Plus).
 - Opened Preschool – Grade 8 **E Plus** after school program with safe and highly defined check-in / check-out areas and procedures.
 - Ensured that the **E Plus** program was used by all extracurricular events and programs our students participated in after school.

- Through effective staffing, we made the program available to all students at all times; no pre-registration was required.

Outcome: E Plus opened successfully with 25-50 children participating on a daily basis. Our students had a safe place to be after school while waiting for parents to arrive and parents had the safety net of knowing that when they couldn't be here by dismissal time, their children were in a well-managed program with friends and exceptional staff.

4. **Objective:** Initiate school-wide virtues programs for character formation and classroom management.

- Began new Preschool-grade 8 virtues curriculum, Virtues in Practice, by Dominican Sisters of St. Cecelia.
- Began new Middle School Advisory Groups that each had 12 students and one teacher advisor; Advisory groups met weekly in addition to eating lunch as a team at least once per month.

Outcome: Although these programs are still new to our students, we have witnessed a renewed growth in service to one another and friendships outside of one's "regular" group of friends. Additionally, middle school students have enjoyed the support and counsel that they receive from their Advisor.

