



June 9, 2023

The Year-in-Review

The 2022-2023 school year was another incredible year of progress for our students and school community. As I mark my 6th year as principal, I continue to be extremely proud that we are able to ensure our students are safe, nurtured, loved, and inspired to learn. PENGUINS RULE. We continue to build on our rich history of excellence while also striving to grow and improve.

Highlights from this past year include:

- Remarkable growth and increase in enrollment.
 - A retention of 91% of our current students
 - An increase in student enrollment from 197 to 220 students (as of June 2023: 28 Kindergarteners and 220 students enrolled for next school year)
 - An amazing growth rate from 2017 to 2023 of 520%
 - An off the chart increase in school spirit- WE LOVE OUR HAPPY PLACE!
- Increased NWEA Map Scores (Fall 2022 and Spring 2023- INCREDIBLE GROWTH!)
- Continued focus to infuse religion, technology, STEM, writing instruction and unique opportunities into all subject areas by all teachers.
- Continued growth of faculty in utilizing student data to inform instructional decisions.
- Steady support of a school-wide community service project, The Blessing Box, and supporting many others throughout the year such as the Mahtomedi Food Shelf, Catholic Charities, and heroes throughout our community.
- Generous financial support and scholarship opportunities for our students; and
- Continuation of the countless events, activities, and traditions that make St. Jude of the Lake Catholic School such a great and happy place for a child and family to be! It was truly heart-warming to see and feel the students' excitement and energy levels grow stronger throughout the year.
- **Some activities & events highlights include:**
 - Minnesota Water Shed Trout In The Classroom: 137 trout released this year, in addition to snow shoeing and other unique opportunities.
 - Aquaponics Lab: growing lettuce and basil as well as fileting Tilapia and enjoying shore lunch.
 - *NEW*- Solar Suitcase participation for Middle School
 - Greenhouse that allows for more horticultural experiences
 - Weekly STEM classes for all students, STARBASE learning and Valley Fair STEM Day
 - CSCOE Big Bang STEM Fair
 - Math Masters and Math Counts
 - Lego League
 - SERVE-A-THON (2022: 30 Days of Random Acts of Kindness)
 - School Pop Ups and Special Activities
 - Partnered Events
 - Alumni and Institutional Advancement initiatives, including Cornfest Corn Hole Tournament
 - New LINKS Program (Life Involves New Kinds of Skills) and Career Day for the Middle School
 - All-School Masses and other special celebrations, like our Christmas concert and Spring performance for our Grandparents.
 - Middle School trip to Wolf Ridge Lodge in Finland, Minnesota and Eagle Bluff in Lanesboro, Minnesota, Our upcoming 8th Grade Trip will be Sea Camp in sunny San Diego!

Our building improvements this year included the Math Lab in the Middle School. Our Phase 3 project for the Middle School will include a new learning space and a staff bathroom. We will continue to grow in the Science and Engineering Lab and add more robust programing in our library and Technology/Media Center. The Parents Pray & Play (ECFL) and Extracurricular Programs, such as art club and sport camps, are growing along with our student body.

Looking Forward

As we look forward to the coming school year, we have worked hard to analyze our progress, assess our needs and any possible gaps in our programming, and innovate to offer the best experience we can for our students. **To that end, here are some highlights and items to note for the 2023-2024 school year:**

- **Communication:** As a school, we are always looking for better and more efficient ways to connect with our families. St. Jude of the Lake continues to use the unified digital app, ParentSquare, to better serve and insure the best communication with our teachers, parents, and greater community as possible. The communication platform has been outstanding at keeping our entire campus, especially our PreK through 8th grade families, informed of everything going on at our school.
- **Specialists:** All students will continue to enjoy Specialist Opportunities each week. That means each student will have time each week allocated to Art, Music, PE, STEM, Library and Spanish. Did you happen to check out our incredible Art Show? AMAZING! In addition to the weekly STEM time, the students will also have a weekly rotation in the Technology/Media Center. We get very excited about finding a way to fit in everything that is important in elementary and Middle School education. We are particularly excited about our Outdoor Classroom and even more innovative technology/media opportunities OUTSIDE. St. Jude of the Lake is also positioned with student support staff to assist those learners that need a little extra propping-up.
- **Science and Engineering Lab:** We will continue to grow opportunities in our Science and Engineering Lab as part of our effort to focus on Science and Engineering teaching and learning, and to ensure all teachers have access to the space and resources they need to make learning engaging, fun, hands-on, and inquiry-based. For the 2023-2024 school year, we will have three staff members taking the initiative to build out the program further. We will continue to partner with the Minnesota Trout In The Classroom and grow our aquaponics component as well. We have complete curriculums of FOSS- NEXT GENERATION and Engineering Is Elementary and Engineering Is Everywhere on site, and our teachers have been trained. And we're super excited to be expanding our offerings further by bringing Virtual Reality into our learning space through the CLASSVR Program. We look forward to igniting our students' love of Science, Engineering and Math even more!
- **Robust religious education program:** We will continue to focus on our faith through a Catholic Virtues and Saints Programs that allows our students to have an increased awareness and knowledge of our beautiful Catholic faith and how to be great disciples. We are continuing our religion curriculums this year, Word of Life and Rua Woods Theology of the Body, for all grade levels. In addition, we will continue MagnifiKID, grades 2-5, and OSV Kids, PreK-1, curriculums. For our Middle School students, we are implementing Studio 3:16. Through catchy music and a variety of types of performances, the students are submerged into the incredible messages of the Gospel in a way that is entertaining, and rememberable.
- **Reading Curriculum improvements!** SuperKids is one of the best comprehensive English language arts curriculums for grades K-2 using relatable characters and their ongoing adventures to provide an engaging framework for literacy success for a lifetime. In grades 3-5, we are finishing implementing the Read Side by Side Reading Program to increase motivation and expose the students to a wide range of genres- OUTSTANDING!
- **Technology throughout our campus:** We are a 1:1 iPad for grades K-5 and 1:1 laptops grades 6-8. each classroom is fitted with both an Apple TV and Smartboard to integrate technology into the classroom. We are installing two of the latest model Smartboards. These resources and tools are effective ways to connect with students of all learning styles. The teachers do a fantastic job creating and maintaining a balance of technology and hands-on experiences. We have found the studies to be true for our community when striking a balance of hands-on learning: students respond well to technology because they believe that it makes learning more interesting and fun. Subjects that students deem challenging or boring can become more interesting with virtual lessons, through a video, or interactive activities. In addition to our internet safety instruction, we have installed Go Guardian and Class Link applications to protect our students' safety while accessing the internet.
- **Lunch Program:** We continue to provide all our students with delicious well-balanced hot/cold lunch options for purchase 5-days a week. We have also added Munchables and Yogurt Packs to add more options, in addition to the main entrée, cold sandwich, and/or hot soup.
- **SPORTS ARE BACK....**Through the Catholic Youth Organization, soccer, volleyball, hockey, basketball, baseball, swimming and more possibilities available throughout the school- GO ST. JUDE!! Please watch ParentSquare for all the details.
- **New- Band Opportunities:** We will be providing these lessons in-house going forward. Along with piano lessons, our music teacher will offer a variety of other instrument lessons during the day, before and after school. Our band program will be run completely in-house with a shift to Modern Band. Students will learn instruments like guitar, keyboard, bass, drum set and vocals, and will have instruction from Miss Kittelson as well as professionals with experience in the industry. They will learn the basics of being in a rock band through classic rock songs and contemporary worship songs plus everything in between. Our choir program will be available to students 2nd-8th grade and have several opportunities for after school performances; field trips, service and leadership; and to lead our school in worship at school Mass. They will also be able to audition for the Minnesota State Honors Choir again this year. We are looking forward to another great year of choral music at St. Jude!

- **School Counseling Services:** Through a grant from CSCOE, we have partnered with Phoenix School Counseling to support our students' social and emotional needs and development for our staff. Phoenix also has available parent educational videos and a variety of resources to support our families.
- **Campus Security-** In addition to the installation of Riot Glass around the entrances, multi-faceted and functioning security cameras will be installed for extra security measures.
- **Leadership Announcements-** Super excited to announce, Jill Ryan has graciously accepted the opportunity to lead our Middle School Team and School-Wide Curriculum. Jill brings such amazing energy, creativity, professionalism, and knowledge to our school every day. Look out St. Jude of the Lake - Even more Shining Penguin Power is coming our way! Mrs. Hackman will continue to embrace the principal opportunity and start devoting more time to school fundraising and endowment. I am sure we can all agree, we want St. Jude to be around another 85 years!

As you can see, there is a lot in store for the 2023-2024 school year. St. Jude of the Lake teachers and staff are/will continue to be educated, prepared, and supported to address possible learning challenges that arise during the students' academic journey.

Our HAPPY PLACE experience could not occur without the endless energy, skills and devotion of the St. Jude of the Lake teachers and staff. Thank you, and well done to an incredible group of professionals. St. Jude of the Lake School Community, we could not have managed without your partnership! Your prayers, support, and commitment to our kids and school are awe inspiring!

Final words for our students: Thank you for all your hard work throughout the school year. I am so honored to be your principal; you make me proud to be a PengWINNER. You keep me laughing and energized every day. I am grateful for your joy, wise insights, and amazing talents. Best wishes and cheers to a wonderful summer. Please be sure to mark your calendars for our community events and park dates- Enjoy the sunshine, warm weather, and relaxed schedule! For those going in a different direction, we will miss you dearly—please come back and visit - Once a PengWINNER, Always a PengWINNER!

KEEP YOUR PENGUIN POWER SHINING BRIGHT!
Enjoy a safe and happy summer break!

Cheering In Christ-
Carrie Hackman, Principal