



ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL'S

BRICK LOT *Bulletin*

November 2025



FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

As we move deeper into the school year, our theme, "On Target for Christ!," continues to guide everything we do at St. Sebastian Parish School. Whether in the classroom, on the playground, or in liturgy and service, our students are learning what it means to align their hearts, minds, and choices with the mission of Jesus Christ. Each day offers new opportunities for them to aim their lives toward Him through acts of kindness, perseverance, faith, and love. I am continually inspired by the way our students and staff embrace this call with joy and purpose.

THANK YOU

Thank you to all the parents for volunteering throughout the beginning of the school year. Starting with our new family picnic, open house, and parent prep night, visits during special classroom presentations to all of the Halloween parties, the participation has been remarkable. I want to thank HASA for the staff lunches, the monster mash, and all of the other ways our families have supported our school. Thank you also to our Parent Ambassadors and the Welcoming Committee, Socials (especially for the snacks and goodies for the teachers on the first week of school), our Booster Club, and all of our athletic and academic coaches, including cross country, soccer, volleyball, and football. Thank you to the following teachers: Jen Smee and Maggie Blischak (Power of the Pen), Robert Dedinsky, Debra Landis, and Megan Sanford (MATHCounts), Scott Mason (Band), and Jeff Beshore (Choir and Cantors). Finally, thank you to all of our students and staff for participating in our first Living Rosary of the school year and to all the parents, families, and friends who came to pray with us.

WELCOME NEW STAFF

A warm welcome is needed for new staff members, Mrs. Kathleen Reitz, administrative assistant; Mrs. Beth Williams, intervention specialist; Miss Liliana Neugebauer, preschool aide; Mrs. Kimberly Stillwagon, first grade aide; Mrs. Mary Barnhart, our gifted intervention specialist and coordinator of our Minds in Motion program; and Mrs. Allison Barstow, our school psychologist. We are thrilled to welcome them to our wonderful team and look forward to the knowledge and support they will bring to our students.

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

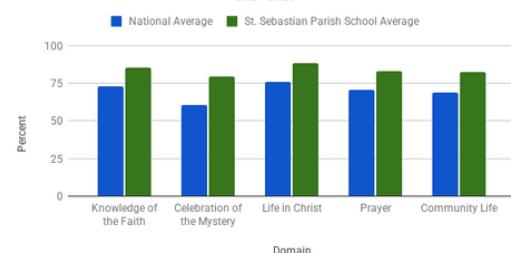
This year, our students have also been blessed with meaningful programs and guest speakers that help them understand the beauty, dignity, and sacredness of every human person. Junior high students are participating in Culture Project presentations on Human Dignity, Sexual Integrity, Social Media, and Pro-Life Apologetics. Grades 3, 5, and 8 are engaging with the McKeon Education Group through lessons on Friendship Skills for Life, Honor and Harmony, and Service Learning rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. Our students in grades 6-8 are also supported through the Greenleaf Signs of Suicide program and the LifeWorks Ohio Choose Life curriculum in 7th grade. Each of these offerings strengthens the moral and spiritual foundation we strive to build, helping students develop healthy relationships and inspiring them to recognize that we are all made in the image and likeness of our Creator. Together, we evangelize simply by witnessing to one another the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The data here shows the 5th and 8th grade average scores compared to the national average scores for 5th and 8th grade students on the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) Test results chart, St. Sebastian Parish School 5th and 8th grade students demonstrated strong performance across all five domains: Faith Knowledge, Liturgical Life, Moral Formation, Prayer, Communal Life, and Missionary Spirit, when compared to the National Average. In all categories, St. Sebastian Parish School outperformed the national averages. This part of the assessment helps us see what our students know and understand of Catholicism.

Yours in Christ,
Anthony Rohr
Principal

NCEA ACRE Test Results Percent Correct by Domain
2024-2025



WELLER'S WORLD!

What a paw-some Halloween Parade we had this year! I was honored to march beside our Spectacular winner, Elliot Bondar, who served as the 2025 Halloween Parade Marshal! Elliot led the band, Principal Rohr, and our entire St. Sebastian school community through the parade route with confidence and joy. I've been part of a lot of parades, but I have to say, this one might have been my favorite yet! Having Elliot leading the way made it extra special. Thanks for making it such a memorable day, Elliot!

FROM THE STEM COORDINATORS

Grades K-3, by Mary Heffern

Our Kindergarten classes had an exciting first quarter of hands-on learning. Students created apple volcanoes using apples, baking soda, and vinegar. They also practiced counting using candy corn in a tens frame. To wrap up their science exploration, they observed what would happen when pumpkin candy corn was dissolved in three different liquids—milk, water, and vinegar.



Our first-grade classes engaged in apple and pumpkin investigations where students measured the height of their apples and pumpkins, conducted sink-or-float tests, and explored the different parts of both fruits—inside and out. They also collaborated with their 5th-grade buddies to carve jack-o'-lanterns!



Our second-grade students created an “x-ray” of their arm and hand by drawing each bone, then painting their artwork with vegetable oil using Q-tips. Once displayed on the window, their work looked just like a real x-ray! They also designed disguises for their pumpkins using symmetrical shapes with help from their 6th grade buddies.

Our third-grade classes used tiles for a hands-on approach to learning basic multiplication and division facts. They also applied the scientific method in a paper airplane challenge. After receiving the teacher's original design, students could change just one variable in order to compete for the longest flight. Their goal? Beat the teacher's model!

Grades 4-6, by Jen Slegus

The 4th-graders have been learning about animal and plant adaptations. The students completed several labs including a simulation lab where they discovered the differences and similarities of birds' beaks. They used different tools to show how well birds' beaks are adapted to eat specific foods. The unit culminated with an animal research paper. On Halloween, the students learned about physical and chemical changes while “capturing a ghost”. They had to measure a solution using a graduated cylinder and record the reaction times, discovering that heat increases the rate of speed of chemical reactions. They also completed a gummy bear lab where the students soaked their gummy bears in different solutions to test how each solution would affect composition.

The 5th-grade class used the scientific method and the engineering design process in the “Penny Boat Challenge Lab”. They designed a boat using only foil and tested the buoyancy by adding pennies to their design. They were able to improve their design and retest the buoyancy. After learning about photosynthesis, the 5th-graders extended their knowledge with a “Leaf Chromatography Lab”, where they discovered how and why leaves change colors in the fall.

The 6th-graders completed several activities to practice investigating, measuring, calculating, identifying, and adapting new processes through the scientific method. The students completed measurement labs, where they spent time measuring mass and volume (standard shapes and water displacement). The students also conducted mineral identification activities involving the rock cycle.

Grades 7-8, by Megan Sanford

In 7th grade, students studied the engineering design process, empirical evidence, and the scientific method, especially how it will apply to their Science Fair project coming up. They enjoyed a STEM bridge building challenge where they had to use the Engineering Design process to build a bridge out of spaghetti noodles and marshmallows that would support a pouch of pennies. The students also participated in an H2Olympics Project Wet Lab where they learned about cohesion, adhesion and surface tension. A lab was also conducted where they had to test samples of water to find out the source of the pollution of their water sample.

In 8th grade, students explored experimental design and data analysis throughout the first quarter. They engaged in a variety of hands-on activities to deepen their understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry, including inquiry cubes, analyzing “mystery checks,” and descriptive drawing exercises. The students also conducted several classroom experiments to practice essential scientific skills such as writing procedures, forming and testing hypotheses, making precise measurements, collecting data, and analyzing results. Many of these investigations came from the Project WET curriculum. For example, in the lab “Is There Water on Zork?”, students performed a series of tests to identify which clear liquid was actually water by examining its physical and chemical properties—including reactivity, solubility, density, pH, odor, and cohesiveness. In a recent data analysis project, students became CDC medical researchers investigating the causes of a fictional zombie outbreak. Through this engaging scenario, they learned about key statistical concepts such as measures of central tendency, data organization, variation, and correlation. The 8th graders also completed a unit including detective stories by creating logic projects. These projects incorporated verbal, spatial and numerical logic to create games, puzzles, escape rooms and mystery stories.

Both 7th and 8th grade students are currently preparing science fair projects on topics of their own choice. The science fair provides an opportunity for students to apply the scientific method as they independently research an idea and design an experiment.



TEAM TRESSEL CHALLENGE

Recently St. Sebastian Parish School had the great privilege of welcoming Ohio's Lt. Governor, Jim Tressel, as our honored guest for the kickoff of the Team Tressel Fitness Challenge. The assembly energized our students with fun fitness activities, encouraged them to value "Quiet Time" as much as movement, and reminded them to strive for their best in mind, body, and spirit. Our students will participate in this ongoing challenge, receiving encouragement and incentives along the way to achieve their goals.



ST. SEBASTIAN SOCIALS NEWS

Grade-Level Socials

Socials organized several successful grade-level events over the summer. Rising 6th-graders enjoyed a pool party social at the Shaw JCC, and rising 8th-graders concluded their summer with a pool party at Fairlawn Country Club. We are currently planning additional grade-level socials throughout the academic year.

School-Wide Socials

Our two school-wide socials this fall, Trunk or Treat and Celebrity Bartending Night, achieved the highest fundraising amounts ever for the teachers' event fund! We also just concluded our largest social event of the year, the 12th Annual Ladies Luncheon and Christmas Boutique, which took place at Portage Country Club in early November.

Giving Back to Teachers and Staff

The Socials Committee kicked off the year by "Stocking the Lounge," filling the new drink fridge and snack area with coffee, drinks, sweets, and snacks. We also reinstated our "Quarterly Treats" program, surprising teachers with muffins at the end of the recent grading period. Furthermore, we provided hearty meals during conference nights: Mexican Night from Casa del Rio Express on Tuesday and Italian Night from Acme on Thursday, both accompanied by various desserts.



HASA UPDATES

HASA has had a busy start to the school year! We started with a Uniform Exchange before school began in August, hosted the Back to School Open House and a Back to School Prayer Service, organized our first monthly teacher lunch and concluded with Monster Mash, a spooktacular mom and son event. We had a great turnout with over 130 boys in attendance! The boys and their moms had a blast exploring the haunted hallway, dancing and competing in "minute to win it" style games. A special thank you to the third grade parents who helped organize this year's event.

GRANDPARENTS DAY



Grandparents Day at St. Sebastian Parish School was a heartwarming celebration of faith, family, and community. It was truly special to gather together for Mass, where grandparents and grandchildren joined in worship, deepening the bond that unites our school family. After Mass, grandparents were invited into the classrooms to share in the daily experiences of their grandchildren, connecting with the vibrant learning that takes place every day. It was a joyful occasion, filled with love, gratitude, and the strengthening of our community ties, reminding us all of the importance of family in our faith journey.

LIVING ROSARY

We were blessed with the opportunity to celebrate the Month of the Rosary in October with a Living Rosary. Students, staff, parents, and grandparents gathered together in prayer outside of Z-Hall. Sixty-one students formed the "living" rosary, leading our school community in this moving devotion to Our Blessed Mother.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Student Council

Congratulations to the following student council members who were elected by their classmates for the 2025-2026 school year: President -- Jack Clymire, Vice President -- Emma Gilbride, Secretary -- Tenley Bills, Treasurer – Nolan Johnson, and Room Representatives: Laura Frank, Kingston Roebuck, Cecilia Vaccaro, Parker Chapin, Gabriella Deagan, and Apollo Parke.



Camp Damascus

During the first quarter our junior high students all had the opportunity to visit Camp Damascus. Our 6th-grade students attended a Faith and Science Retreat; our 7th graders' retreat focused on Communication, Collaboration, and Compassion; and our 8th- grade students took part in a Confirmation Retreat to help prepare them for their upcoming sacrament. The students were able to spend a few days together in uninterrupted prayer and fellowship, growing closer in friendship, community, and faith. These experiences are truly transformative for our students, with experiences that will help to shape their faith throughout their lives.



Flight 93 Memorial Field Trip

In September, our 8th-grade students traveled to the Flight 93 National Memorial, a profoundly moving experience that left a lasting impact on their minds, hearts, and faith. As they walked the grounds and learned the stories of the passengers and crew, many students were struck not only by the historical significance of that day, but by its deep spiritual meaning. "This Memorial drew me closer to God by showing just how precious life is," shared Gabby Deagan, while Catherine Schlueter reflected on the power of unity, noting that "even though we are all so different, we can come together to do the right thing." Amelia Kilker was reminded that despite earthly differences, "we are all still God's children," and Avery Leffler expressed how seeing personal artifacts helped her recognize that these heroes were "real people, not just symbols." Several students made meaningful connections to their faith, including Noah Wojnicz, who saw in their bravery a reflection of Christ's sacrifice, and Jack Clymire, who shared that the experience taught him "to always resist evil and that God can help you overcome challenges." This annual trip continues to be a powerful opportunity for our students to grow in understanding, compassion, and courage as they prepare to enter young adulthood rooted in faith.



On Target For Christ Retreat, Grades 4 and 5

In October, students in grades 4-5, in partnership with senior students from Hoban High School, participated in a retreat, centered around the theme On Target For Christ. This was a powerful and transformative experience designed to nurture the students' spiritual growth, while fostering teamwork, communication, and critical thinking skills. The retreat offered an opportunity for students to deepen their relationships with both their peers and Christ, allowing them to connect through faith and mutual support.



NEWS AND NOTES

Fall Sports Wrap-Up

Volleyball

5th-6th grade Boys: this team competed hard in their playoff run, but ultimately fell 3-2 in a hard fought match. Competing against primarily seasoned 6th grade teams, our boys should be proud!

6th grade Girls: with a team of only eight, of which four girls had never competed on a volleyball team before, they advanced all the way to the championship, where they won! Way to go, ladies!

8th grade Girls: - the team fought hard all the way to the end, but a strong St. Bernadette team prevailed. These girls had an amazing season!



Cross Country

4-8th Girls: these girls finished in the "Runners-Up" place in the championship race, and placed 2nd overall in the Diocese! WOW!

4-8th Boys: For the 5th year in a row, the boys were dominant, not only taking the championship, but also having FIVE runners inside the top 19 of the entire CYO!

Way to go, TERRIFIC TERRIERS!



2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIPS

Thanks to the generosity of our school and parish community, there are many opportunities for St. Sebastian Parish School students to earn scholarships for next year. Scholarships for the 2026-27 school year, listed here, are available for students currently in grades pre-K-7 (to be applied to next year's tuition at St. Sebastian) as well as 8th-grade students (to be applied to high school tuition). If you have questions, please contact Anne Dennée at scholarships@stsebastian.org.

Scholarships Funded Through the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation

Michael R. Beck III Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, Walsh Jesuit HS)
Mary Ley Burke Scholarship – (grades K-7, religious/academic)
Christopher James Consilio Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, STVM HS)
Dayspring Opportunity Scholarship – (pre-K to 7, diverse student body)
Elms Family Scholarship – (grade 8, Our Lady of the Elms HS)
Denise Maroon Finley Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, Hoban HS)
Lynn Frey-Steward Organ Scholarship – (grades K-7, organ lessons)
Gerstenmaier Family Scholarship – (grade 8, Walsh Jesuit HS)
GOAL Scholarship – (grades 2-7, leadership and academic excellence)
Hanlon Family Scholarship – (pre-K to 7)
Karg Family Scholarship – (grades K-2)
Tom and Jeanne LaRose Family Memorial Scholarship – (pre-K to 7)
William and Mildred Loftus Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, STVM HS)
Frances L. Sharp Music Scholarship – (grades 4-7, school band or choir)
John A. Trecaso Scholarship – (grade 8, STVM HS)
Chesterton Academy of Akron Wonder Scholarship – (grade 8, Chesterton)
Doucet Family Scholarship – (grade 8, Hoban HS)

Scholarships Funded Through Parish School/Parish-Related Groups

HASA Youth Christian Service Scholarship – (grade 8, community service), 2 available
Knights of Columbus Deacon Terry Peacock Memorial Scholarship – (grade 8, further Catholic education), 2 available
Sanctuary Society Service Scholarship – (grades 5-8, ushers or altar servers)
St. Irene Principal's Scholarship – (grades K-7, grade 8, exemplify our school's mission), 2 available





SAVE THE DATE

Early Dismissal, 1:00 -- March 5
 Confirmation – March 6
 Spring Music Program -- March 12
 No School -- March 20
 No School – March 31
 Easter Break -- April 3-10
 Spectacular – April 25
 First Communion – May 2
 Reserve Calamity Day*** -- May 4
 Band & Choir Concert – May 19
 No School, Memorial Day -- May 25
 Last Day of School -- May 28



NOVEMBER

21 Explorer Day
 22 Night at the Races
 26-28 No School/Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

1 No School/Thanksgiving Break
 4 Winter Music Program 7:00 P.M.
 16 Band/Choir Concert 7:00 P.M.
 22-31 No School/Christmas Break

JANUARY

1-2 No School/Christmas Break
 15 Family Game Night
 15 End of Second Quarter
 16 No School/Teacher Professional Development Day
 19 No School/MLK Observance
 25 Catholic Schools Week Open House
 31 Father-Daughter Dance

FEBRUARY

10-20 Read-a-Thon
 13 No School
 16 No School/Presidents' Day
 18 Ash Wednesday
 27-28 Musical Performances, *Beauty and the Beast Jr.*



SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

St. Sebastian Parish School is dedicated to Christ and committed to excellence in education. We honor the Catholic traditions of the past, work to develop our talents today and prepare for Christian service in the future.

Save the Date: School Musical, February 27-28

This year we will be performing the musical, *Beauty and the Beast Jr.* This will take place the weekend of February 27-28, 2026. More information to come, including ways you can help, but save the date because you won't want to miss this!



Save the Date: St. Sebastian Spectacular, April 25



This year's Spectacular will be held on April 25, 2026. This is our school's largest annual fundraising event, raising funds to enrich your child's educational experience. **This year's paddle raise will focus on raising funds to renovate our school playground!**

If you are interested in being a part of this event in any way, or need more information, please reach out to our marketing director, Bernadette Gibson, at gibsonb@stsebastian.org. Mark your calendars today for a fun and fund-raising event!