

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic School



2020 Report & More

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

Hello and welcome!

It is both a blessing and a privilege to accompany the students, families and staff of St. Stephen the Martyr School. Although this has been an unprecedented year, our staff and school community rallied together to create a safe and positive learning environment for our students. I can truly say that we are so excited to have students and staff in the building, and those who enter our doors can feel the joy of Christ in all that we do.

St. Stephen the Martyr School lives its mission by being United in Christ to ignite the joy of faith, community and learning. I am especially confident in our priorities: providing a safe and nurturing environment, continuous improvement, ongoing intentional teacher development, service to others, social emotional well-being, and relationship-building.

If you are seeking to provide a strong faith foundation in your children, and if you are looking for a spiritual community to call home, we'd love to meet you! Give us a call, we'll schedule a tour!

Experience the love of Christ shared at our school.

Julie Perrault
Mrs. Julie Perrault



OUR MISSION

United in Christ to ignite the joy of faith, community and learning.



Message From Our Pastor

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church is a community for all to encounter Christ, know Christ and proclaim Christ. Our school is an important extension of this mission. With this understanding, through financial stewardship and fundraising efforts, all parishioners help fund more than 50% of the per pupil tuition cost. This generosity allows all children in our community the opportunity to establish a strong Catholic faith foundation while receiving a first-class education. Our school is truly blessed by this financial support.

Although 2020 presented many challenges, that did not stop us from providing a solid Catholic education to our students. I attribute this to our incredible staff, parents and students who all worked together. We look forward to sharing the love of Christ with you and your family! On behalf of our parish and school, thank you for taking the time to read through this report. God bless you!

Father David Belt
Father Dave Belt

FAITH

St. Stephen the Martyr is proud of its unique identity as a faith-based Catholic school. Our education provides the competencies necessary for knowledgeable and excellent Christian servant leaders to impact the world. We invoke God's name in prayer first thing in the morning, throughout the day and upon dismissal. Each class attends Mass and assists in the liturgy twice per week. Students are active in Catholic devotions including Adoration, Eucharistic Benediction & Exposition, and The Stations of the Cross. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered to students throughout the school year. Our priests regularly visit classrooms and help with faith formation. Last year, our preschool program began faith formation through the "Catechesis of the Good Shepherd" curriculum. This year the school implemented "Theology of the Body" as part of the K-8 curriculum. Our Catholic Identity Committee meets quarterly to review Catholic Identity goals. In 2019-2020, the committee focused on creating additional opportunities for students to participate in service projects. Our students have participated in over 50 service projects since 2019.

COMMUNITY

A sense of community is fostered between grade levels with our buddy reading program and mixed-grade Mass celebrations. Students have the opportunity to participate in a range of athletics, from micro-soccer to 8th grade football, through the Parochial Athletic League (PAL). Although this year presented several challenges with COVID-19, students still had some opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. During a regular school year, we offer an array of extracurricular opportunities including: robotics, musicals, show choir, book clubs, math clubs, a Bible bowl, Spanish club, speech club, and more.

As part of curriculum, students grow in virtue by participating in community outreach, starting in preschool. Students feed the hungry with canned food drives; make cards and gifts for the homebound, elderly, and sick; provide warmth to the homeless and low income by making blankets and hosting clothing drives.

Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's education by collaborating with teachers, volunteering in the classroom and getting to know other parents. A vibrant and active Home and School Association plans many events for parents to interact and create lasting friendships.

2020 Highlights

All students participate in whole school and class level service projects.

Student faith formation includes participation in retreats, prayer, mass, sacraments, and other spiritual experiences.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program is offered for all early childhood programs.

STAR Assessments provide reading and math data that direct and drive class and individualized instruction.

Multiple digital subscriptions and platforms enhance the core curriculum for all grade levels.

245 new devices including iPads, Apple TV, and Chromebooks were added to support Blended Learning.

Grades 6-8 students are 1:1 utilizing Chromebooks for daily instruction. All students are assigned their own device through our "loan-to-own" program.

The Cognia Accreditation Review in November once again certified St. Stephen the Martyr as an accredited state of Nebraska school.

OUR STORY

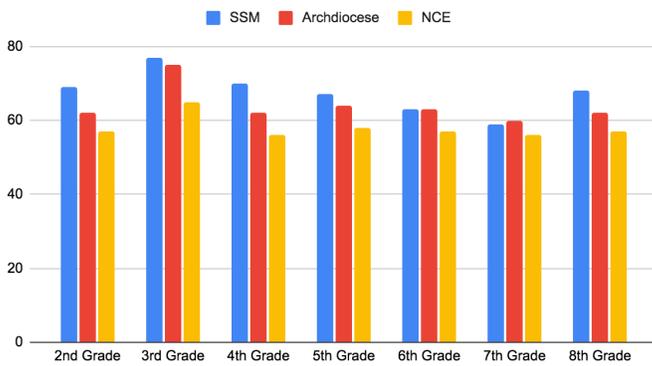
St. Stephen the Martyr School was established in 1992 and named after the first martyr of the Catholic Church. The school started with grades K-5. Fr. Gerry Gonderinger was the founding pastor and Sister Regina Wagner was the first principal. Our own Fr. Dave Belt was the first music teacher in addition to being the associate pastor. Within four years of opening the school, it had grown to K-8th grade. Two years later a new structure was added providing 19 more classrooms, a computer lab, a library, and a full-size, state-of-the-art gym. The enrollment grew quickly and by 2002, there were three classes in every grade including preschool.

In 2008, the school earned the title of being a national Blue Ribbon School. That same year, St. Stephen the Martyr became an accredited school. Both awards acknowledge excellence in administration, curriculum, and instructional staff. The school continues to exceed accreditation standards attributable to the hard work and commitment of students, staff, and families. In November, the school participated in their five-year accreditation review. Although the review team noted many strengths, they spoke repeatedly of the sense of community, positive culture, strong Catholic Identity, and a shared mission. This school is truly a place where students, staff, and families feel safe and loved.

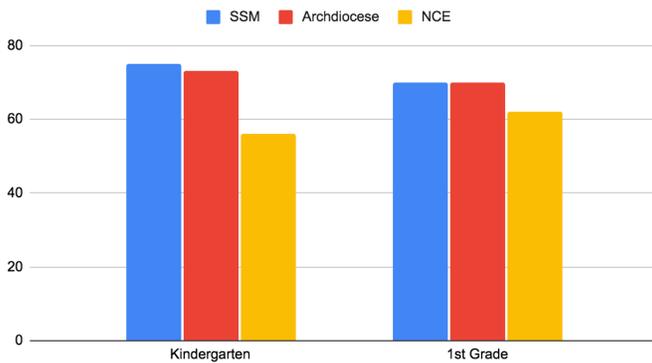
Today St. Stephen the Martyr School has 659 students enrolled in preschool through 8th grade and consistently remains a top five populated Catholic Elementary School in Nebraska. Since inception, St. Stephen the Martyr has graduated almost 1,700 students.

Although 2020-2021 and Covid-19 presented schools with many challenges, we celebrate our successes. We are so proud of our staff and students and their ability to adapt to a changed learning environment, and we are so grateful to our families for their outpouring of support and confidence in our school leadership. We did this together, and we will continue to provide students with an exceptional faith-filled education.

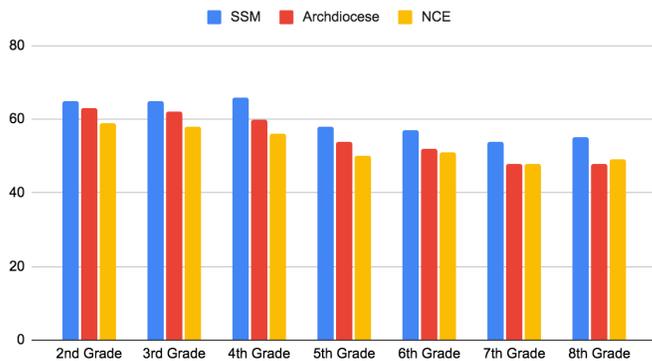
STAR Math Comparisons Winter 2020



STAR Early Literacy Comparisons Winter 2020



STAR Reading Comparisons Winter 2020



A multitude of technology options are available to teachers and students in the classroom, including iPads, 3D Printers, SMART boards, Apple TV and laptops. Middle school students are assigned Chrome books as part of the "loan-to-own" program. Google Classroom Suite is utilized for posting assignments, calendars, and email. This year the school benefited from CARES and GEERs funding and received over 200 devices. The school also implemented many digital learning opportunities through RAZ Kids, SeeSaw, Mystery Science, Freckle Math, and other grade specific subscriptions.

Since 2019, our students have been learning via the STEM Education Model. STEM takes the individual disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics and combines them to create an interdisciplinary curriculum. With STEM, students use critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity to better understand the interrelation of these disciplines. Students work in Makerspace areas in the computer lab allowing collaboration in creating and solving problems using all four disciplines. Dash and Evo robots are utilized to build the foundation of coding from which students will benefit in the years to come. The use of three 3D printers further students' ability to create new ideas and improve existing concepts. All of these resources allow students the ability to see how individual classes can come together to create new and exciting possibilities.

All of our students participate in Blended Learning. Students rotate through small group stations to gain a better understanding of specific concepts within a core subject (i.e. multiplication). Examples of small group station work include manipulatives (hands-on learning), teacher led, reading/writing (cross curricular), and iPads (purchased subscriptions). Blended Learning also allows teachers to strategically place students into groups based on their level of understanding. Twenty percent of our 8th graders taking the Catholic High School Entrance exams earned scholarships for this school year. Whether students attend public or Catholic high schools, they are more than prepared to take on a high school curriculum. Approximately 80% of our alums earn high school academic honors.

As Covid-19 required us to end our 2020 school year at home, teachers rose to the challenge and implemented Blended Learning so our students' learning experience was as seamless as possible. We also bought and trained staff on digital platforms that are now being used inside the classroom on a daily basis. Since 2019 our staff has been learning and practicing the Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework, an "I do, We do, You do" approach to learning. They are also using formative assessment more effectively in daily instruction. Last winter the school put together a Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) team. This select staff member team is in the beginning phase of training. Once completed, they will train the remaining staff and help us to implement restorative practices. PBIS will work well with the Love and Logic approach and the training that our teachers already receive.

In August, St. Stephen the Martyr School began using STAR Assessment data to learn what students already know and what they are ready to learn, to monitor student growth, and to determine which students may need additional help. Star Assessments are heavily researched and scientifically proven to help teachers guide each student on his or her unique path to mastery. By pinpointing exactly what our students know, our teachers can personalize your child's practice to keep them growing. The charts on the left show comparative information based on the NCE (Normal Curve Equivalent), the Archdiocese, and St. Stephen the Martyr School.

ENROLLMENT AT A GLANCE

- 560** K-8th grade students
- 99** early childhood program students
- 409** school families
- 355** school families are parishioners of St. Stephen the Martyr Parish
- 120** students in KidZone (before/after school care)
- 20** average class size
- 15:1** Student to staff ratio
- 79** 8th grade graduates attend Catholic high school (past 3-year average)

REASONS TO LOVE SSM

- 1 Academic Excellence**
Recognized by the Nebraska Department of Education as a distinguished AdvancED Accredited elementary school. This accreditation ensures that all learners realize their full potential and that the administration is committed to continuous improvement. Our school has also conferred the Blue Ribbon Award where students attain and maintain high academic goals.
- 2 Individualized and Holistic Approach**
Dedicated, passionate & qualified teachers and staff empower students to recognize their unique gifts and inspire them to reach their greatest potential.
- 3 United in Christ, Faith Formation**
Students, united in Christ, participate in school Mass liturgies, daily prayer and Catholic catechetical instruction.
- 4 Service Projects**
Students develop lifelong skills, virtues, and habits of heart and mind through caring for others in our community.
- 5 Needs-Based Instruction**
Blended Learning environments allow teachers to cater to the specific educational needs of each classroom.
- 6 Welcoming, Thriving Environment**
Rooted in faith; our vibrant student life, active Home & School Association, thriving Athletic Association and supportive parish community ensures a positive; safe and joy-filled academic experience.

My husband Owen and I are from eastern Iowa and without the local support of extended families. We knew when it came to raising our son and daughter, a sense of the community support we had growing up was essential. Not only have we found it at SSM, we've embraced it. While intangible, the feeling of belonging and joy of learning that Fr. Belt, Mrs. Perrault, Dr. Greco and all SSM staff and teachers work tirelessly to create is why the SSM children excel academically, socially and spiritually. As president of our SSM School Advisory Board, I am blessed to witness firsthand the work that goes into making our school the extended family and support system parents need to raise good citizens. Please continue to show your prayer, philanthropic and financial support of our parish and school, ensuring the community so many of us rely on and love continues for generations to come. - Amanda Treiber, parent



Schedule Your Tour Today!
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school.stephen.org/enroll



St. Stephen the Martyr
CATHOLIC CHURCH
Encounter, Know, Proclaim



Archdiocese of Omaha
Catholic Schools