Indiana Statewide High School Graduation Rates Released
Over 95% Graduate from Archdiocesan Schools!

Superintendent of Public Instruction, Suellen Reed, released the official state and local high school graduation rates for 2006. The final data confirms that about three-quarters (76.5 percent) of eligible Indiana students earned a high school diploma in 2006 – with more than half of schools (56.2 percent) graduating greater than 80 percent of their students.

The majority (66 percent) of Indiana high schools met or exceeded the state graduation rate in 2006. Rates varied significantly from school to school statewide. Forty-two (42) high schools were above 90 percent and 159 schools topped 80 percent. In contrast, 15 high schools graduated fewer than half of their senior classes in 2006.

The Class of 2006 is the first group of Hoosier students that could be followed using a new state formula for calculating graduation rates. Adopted by the Indiana General Assembly in 2003, the new formula for calculating graduation rates begins by establishing a cohort (or class) of first-time freshmen that expands and contracts as students transfer in and out of school during the years that follow. This precise measure is made possible using unique student identification numbers to track each student’s progress since entering high school in 2002. The four years of data needed for the new rate first became available with the 2005-2006 school year, making Indiana among the first states in the nation to calculate graduation rates based on student-level information.

For more information on Indiana’s graduation rate, visit: www.doe.state.in.us/html/gradrate.html

Celebrated since 1974, Catholic Schools Week is a time to honor our schools’ excellence and highlight our mission and traditions. It is the time to reflect on the high-quality, faith-focused, values-added education that we offer and to spread the good news about Catholic Education.

But most of all ... it is a time to celebrate!
**The Good News In Catholic Education!**

**Six More Blue Ribbons Awarded in DC**

Principals of the newest National Blue Ribbon Schools in the archdiocese traveled to Washington, DC, in November to receive their awards from the US Department of Education. Six schools in the archdiocese were honored with Blue Ribbons for 2006. Some 21 Blue Ribbons have been earned by schools in the archdiocese in the past four years on the No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon program. A total of 24 schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have earned a total of 30 National Blue Ribbons since 1985 – more than any other diocese. Shown at the headquarters of the National Catholic Education Association in Washington are from left to right: Jerry Bomholt, Principal, Shawe Memorial High School, Madison; Scott Stewart, Principal, Christ the King School, Indianapolis; Dr. Ron Costello, Superintendent of Catholic Schools; Betty Popp, Principal, St. Lawrence School, Indianapolis; Dena Steiner, Principal, St. Lawrence School, Lawrenceburg; Bill Herman, Principal, St. Monica School, Indianapolis; Kathy Schubel, Principal, St. Bartholomew School, Columbus; and, Mickey Lentz, Executive Director of Catholic Education and Faith Formation.

**Roncalli Dedicates New Wing and Fine Arts Center**

Archbishop Buechlein dedicated a new wing of Roncalli High School this fall as a result of a recent successful capital campaign – Building Faith and Futures. The centerpiece is a state-of-the-art performing arts center that provides a professional venue for the many visual, dramatic and musical offerings at the school. New special rooms for band, chorus and dramatics are included. Also included in the new construction are new guidance offices, a special education resource center and a new drafting facility as well as classrooms and work on the school grounds and athletic facilities.

**New School at SS. Francis and Clare**

Being the founding principal at SS. Francis and Clare School in Greenwood this year has been the hardest work of my life, but I have never been happier at work! I wear so many hats, from nurse, to secretary, to Mass planner, to teacher to principal, and everything in between, but I won’t complain. One of the greatest gifts is the small size of our community. I made it a point to meet every family before school began. On the first day, I was able to greet each child and parent by name. We pray each day with all 33 students (picture at left). There is a real sense of family here and a commitment to the success of the school from both the families who took that “leap of faith” on a new school, and also from the parishioners. The Archbishop will dedicate the new building on Sunday, January 28. On February 1, Fr. Vince Lampert, Pastor, will bless the building, followed by a parade from our temporary space to the new space. ~ Sandi Patel, Principal

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**Meeting Bullying Head-on at St. Roch**

The students and staff of St. Roch Catholic School are meeting the perils of bullying head-on. They are ready to do everything in their power to curtail the sad reality that too often undermines the order in schools. Gone are the days of the lunch money/knuckle-sandwich *quid-pro-quo*. Modern bullying is more subversive – often electronic - sometimes as subtle as a roll of the eyes – yet still packing a negative punch.

Sixth grade teacher Amy Wilson spearheaded an anti-bullying rally at the beginning of the school year by recruiting a cadre of Roncalli High School students and St. Roch Pastor Fr. James Wilmoth to give witness to over 100 middle school students. Wilson notes, “We have to combat the ‘girls will be girls’ mentality and the idea that ‘boys are just that way at this age.’ At what age in life are we allowed to treat other people badly?”

“Today’s bully uses words and emotional violence,” Wilson adds. “Their behavior is intended to damage or manipulate another person’s relationships.”

The successful anti-bullying rally at St. Roch – dubbed “Rage Against the Night” – intertwined witness accounts of true friendship and the perils of adolescent relationships with team-building activities. The Roncalli students imparted the wisdom of experience and hindsight, grounding their messages in the lessons of love from the Gospels. The middle school students were called to acknowledge their own frailty and how the quick gratification of bullying pales in comparison to true and lasting friendship.

Emphasis and follow-up was placed on the modern reality of cyber-communication. Today, bullies are most likely to unleash their venom online – via instant messaging or on websites like MySpace – with the false hope of remaining anonymous. These subversive activities then spill into the classroom. Teachers, armed with the awareness gained through the rally, have been able to combat these situations and offer help and support to parents.

The lessons learned in St. Roch’s one-day rally have resurfaced several times this year according to Principal, Joe Hansen, and Fr. Wilmoth. The success of “Rage Against the Night” is being parlayed into an upcoming anti-drug rally. Wilson hopes to use more high school students’ testimonies and team activities to supplement the call for genuine friendship. She believes that, “We as teachers have a responsibility to be more involved in encouraging students to have healthy peer relationships.”
Sustaining and Replicating Project EXCEED

Project EXCEED is the school improvement initiative in Marion County for 2002-2006 that was funded by a generous $10 million grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., matched with nearly $8 million from other generous corporate and individual donors. School year 2006-2007 is a transition year for the project. Remaining grant funds and “sustaining and replicating funds” raised above the required match have been used to fund programs in this interim period. The goal is to sustain and replicate the most effective programs developed in Project EXCEED throughout the archdiocese using proceeds from the Legacy for Our Mission campaign and other sources.

Perhaps the biggest transition this year is the movement of all schools to a “value-added” assessment and growth model. This is an effort to assure that every student is growing academically every year through applied instructional and assessment methods (best practices). This goes hand-in-hand with the school improvement and accreditation model that all schools are now following in conjunction with the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). Some 54 of our schools will have completed this process by June to become members of NCA and also to be accredited by the State of Indiana.

Work is also ongoing to better address the needs of special populations within the archdiocese. These efforts will build upon the Project EXCEED initiatives to reach out to students with special needs, the growing Hispanic population and students in urban environments. A large cadre of well-trained teachers will help network among all the schools to address the learning styles of all students.

Many of the approaches that will be used in the sustaining and replicating process emanated from the Milken Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) that has been implemented in 13 schools. Applied professional development, strong instructional accountability for teachers and performance-based compensation are three of the TAP approaches that have proven successful in improving student achievement. These will have a similar positive effect when implemented in other schools throughout the archdiocese.

Archdiocesan ISTEP+ Combined Results

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NCEA National Convention
Coming to Indy in 2008!

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis will be the host site for the 2008 National Catholic Education Association annual convention. It will be held in the Indiana Convention Center, March 29-29, 2008. This annual event attracts Catholic educators and administrators from throughout the United States and Canada. The Office of Catholic Education and archdiocesan educators have begun preparations to host over 15,000 participants and presenters in Indianapolis. This is the first time the annual convention has been held in Indiana!

Wellness Policy for Archdiocesan Schools

“We hold a sacred trust to educate and form the whole person—mind, body, and spirit.” NCEA/National Catholic Educational Association.

Both Federal and State governments responded to the rise in childhood obesity and Type II diabetes by requiring schools to develop a Wellness Policy to be in place at the beginning of school year 2006 (Indiana was ranked third in the nation in 2001 in the percentage of childhood obesity).

The Office of Catholic Education, realizing the amount of work this policy would require, assumed the responsibility for the creation for the Archdiocesan Schools as a whole. A Task Force of health care professionals and educators worked with the government guidelines and information from school surveys to create the policy that each school was then asked to make their own.

Each principal designated a staff member to be responsible for coordinating the implementation and reporting their school’s progress annually to the Archdiocesan Education Commission in the areas of improved health education, nutrition and physical activity. The Archdiocesan Wellness Policy is available on our website www.archindy.org/oce, Items of Interest, and in each school office.

Archdiocesan 2006 ISTEP+ Scores
Our Students Continue to Improve on the ISTEP+

In September 2006, 13,186 students in grades 3 through 10 from 70 Catholic Schools within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis took the Indiana Statewide Test of Educational Progress (ISTEP+). For the last six years, students have shown and have been able to maintain growth in their language arts/English and mathematics proficiency on the Indiana academic standards compared to students across the State of Indiana.
National Catholic Conference for Youth Ministers 2006

Kay Scoville, Program Coordinator for OCE Youth and Young Adult Ministries, recently attended the 25th annual National Catholic Conference for Youth Ministry (NCCYM) and wrote this report. This was my first time to the conference as well as my first time to Vegas. I left a balmy Indianapolis at 55º to a chilling 40º in the desert and I realized that just as these are unlikely occurrences, God is also found in the most unexpected places.

The theme of the conference was “…and the desert shall bloom.” Opening speaker, Rev. Allan Deck, immediately addressed our controversial location: “We need to be BOLD and on the cutting edge for people on the edge.” He quoted from St. Paul, “Where sin multiplies, Grace abounds.” What is amazing is that the Diocese of Las Vegas has only been a diocese since 1997 and it’s growing at an incredible rate.

Some 2600 ministers to youth, including 20 from the archdiocese, gathered and were challenged to clarify our faith, to be open and to listen to others in order to be prepared for the “new generation” of youth. These youth are looking for something to live for and to die for; they want and need a challenge. We need to give it to them!

In addition to the inspirational keynote speakers, I had an opportunity to attend some relevant workshops to assist me in direct ministry to youth: “Teens and Crisis,” “Teen Media and Culture,” “Rethinking Adolescent Catechesis,” and “Choosing Faithfulness over Success,” which focused on my own spiritual direction.

Now you may ask, “You went to Vegas and that’s all you did?” Actually, I see it as finding the blossom in the desert.

“31 Came Bearing Gifts”

On a unseasonably warm 2007 New Year’s morning 31 people from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis met at St. Luke Church to begin a journey south. The group of 20 youth, one permanent deaconate candidate, two youth ministers, a nurse, six skilled laborers, and a priest traveled to Waveland, MS, an area devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

After a 15-hour trip and a good night’s rest we began our work. Some removed tile from a floor, some scraped and painted a house, while others dry-walled and replaced wiring.

The trip was not all about work. It was also about presence among the people of Waveland. While we were eating dinner one night a resident approached and spoke to the group. The woman mentioned with tears in her eyes how incredibly grateful she was that we had come to help. She thanked us, but said she was most thankful for the presence of the youth who brought great hope to their community.

Every evening, the youth and adults from Indiana did the most important thing Catholics can do—they celebrated Mass together. Prayer and the Eucharist fed their souls and centered their hearts. In addition, members of the group participated in two nights of perpetual adoration. Youth and adults alike shared time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr. Meyer reminded us, “While physical work is a great witness to these people, the best thing we can do is pray.”

After four days of work, prayer, eating, and fun, the group packed up and headed home to Indianapolis on the Epiphany of the Lord, and the trip ended just how it begun, with Mass together. “And how suitable it is that we end this trip on the Epiphany of the Lord. We, like the Three Kings, traveled a great distance to give gifts to our Lord, because it is through service to others that we truly serve the Lord,” said Fr. Meyer in his homily.

By: Tyler Mayer (Youth Minister at St. Luke Catholic Church in Indianapolis)

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Year In Review

1597 youth and young adults participated in events this past year!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>March for Life</td>
<td>Washington DC</td>
<td>January 21-24</td>
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<td>CONSUMED Retreat</td>
<td>Cardinal Ritter, Indpls.</td>
<td>February 3-6</td>
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<td>Senior Retreat</td>
<td>CYO Camp, Nashville</td>
<td>February 16-19</td>
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<td>Archdiocesan Youth Rally</td>
<td>Scecina/Cathedral HS</td>
<td>March 4-5</td>
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<td>Spring Break Mission Trip</td>
<td>Biloxi, MS</td>
<td>April 2-8</td>
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<td>Steubenville Midwest</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td>July 7-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeland Mission</td>
<td>Christ the King, Indpls.</td>
<td>July 10-15</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer Mission Trip</td>
<td>Biloxi, MS</td>
<td>July 23-28</td>
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<td>CONSUMED Retreat</td>
<td>Bloomington</td>
<td>Sept. 29-Oct. 1</td>
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<td>St. Theodora Mass</td>
<td>St. Mary of the Woods</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winter Mission Trip</td>
<td>Waveland, MS</td>
<td>January 1-6, ’07</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mark Your Calendars!

Young Adult Holy Land Pilgrimage
Cost: $2,630. Caesarea, Mt. Carmel, Galilee, Nazareth, Mt. Tabor, Capernaum, Bethlehem, Jerusalem. Includes: airfare, 11 days and 9 nights in hotels, dinner and breakfast, tips, travel guides, daily Mass and prayer.

World Youth Day 2008
Sydney, Australia.
July 9-22, 2008
Cost: $3,500.
Includes: airfare, housing, two meals a day, tour guides, daily mass and prayers. A tremendous opportunity to gather with millions of Catholics from around the globe.

For information about these events, contact Kay Scoville at 216-1477 or (800) 382-9836, ext 1477 or by email at kcoville@archindy.org.
SPRED (SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

SPRED was developed in the Archdiocese of Chicago in the early 1960’s and was adopted as a ministry of the Indianapolis Archdiocese in the fall of 1997. SPRED is a process of faith formation specifically designed to meet the spiritual needs of persons with developmental disabilities. While some parishioners with disabilities may be comfortable assimilating into traditional classroom-based catechetical instruction, many persons with special needs - our “Friends” - truly thrive in small faith communities. These small communities, with their high degree of personalization and symbolic catechesis, work hand-in-hand with parish programs and provide effective forms of inclusion, faith formation, advocacy and justice.

Recognizing that it takes 10-24 months of work within a parish to get a community started, SPRED has shown steady growth over the past nine years. There are programs in eight of the eleven deaneries in the archdiocese with “animation” (start-up processes) in progress in two additional deaneries. Programs includes twelve groups for age 22+, one group for 11-16, and three groups for 6-10 year olds. These groups are meeting in eleven SPRED Centers throughout the archdiocese serving a total of 88 Friends with 99 catechists from 24 parishes.

This year we began animation at St. Simon parish in the East Deanery, St. Lawrence in the North Deanery, St. Barnabas in the South Deanery, and St. Bartholomew in the Seymour Deanery, while continuing to work with St. Thomas More in the West Deanery, and St. Paul in the Bloomington Deanery. In addition to parish animation and training for catechists, SPRED also hosts enrichment opportunities for the catechists and an overnight retreat for catechists and adult SPRED Friends.

NEW Archdiocesan Christ Renews His Parish Committee Formed

The Office of Catholic Education Evangelization Commission has renewed the Christ Renews His Parish Committee and has been working with participating parishes to assess what works, what doesn’t and where help is needed. The Committee met recently and determined that half of our parishes have been involved in various levels of CRHP. The Committee also is outlining a variety of workshops for the future which will aid in the development and sustenance of the groups.

CHRIST RENEWS HIS PARISH

Sixty-one (61) parishes in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis have experienced Christ Renews His Parish, a renewal process. This year, the Office of Catholic Education and the Evangelization Commission have established a new Archdiocesan Committee for Christ Renews His Parish. The objective is to support this valuable ministry, to assist in the training and development of CRHP leadership and to encourage the formation of outreach teams to work with new and existing programs. According to Jim Seebeck, chairperson of the ArchCRHP Committee, “Christ Renews His Parish is a proven process that helps people grow in their relationship with Jesus and with others.”

CRHP is one of our most effective ways to “go forth and make disciples.” For more information, contact Evangelization at OCE 317-236-1432 or contact Jim Seebeck at jseebeck@insightbb.com.

In particular, the Committee commends the work of Jim and Tina Seebeck, who have been instrumental in the continuation of Christ Renews in our Archdiocese for the past fifteen (15) years. The Seebecks are thrilled that the Archdiocese has taken a renewed interest in supporting this ministry and have a powerful story to share. The committee is in the process of interviewing DREs and Pastors to assess where help is needed and is providing resource items and articles for the Archdiocesan web page.

Workshops In Development

- Continuing Formation -- Training CRHP Spiritual Leaders
- Time For Respite? Discernment for Letting the Land Lay Fallow.
- Recruiting For Your Next Weekend
- Alumni: Building a Small Church Community
- CRHP -- Positive Impact On The Parish
- Back To Basics: “Working with and sticking to the Book!”
- Pastoral Leadership

Committee members include: Jim and Tina Seebeck, Joe Gufreda, Russ Diaz, Joe Mennel, Steve Hodges, Jenny Peyton, John Valenti, Mary Hodges and Barb Lemen. Jim and Tina can be reached at jseebeck@insightbb.com or by cell phone, 317-435-1798.
Where did 2006 go? I remember celebrating the New Year, birthdays, Lent, Easter, graduations, the August Administrators’ Conference, Advent, then Christmas, and, “Wow,” the year was gone.

One special year-end event was when our high school seniors gathered with the Archbishop to celebrate a special liturgy. They heard his wishes and hopes for them as he reflected on the life of our own Saint Theodora. What a role model as well as a challenge he placed before them! It was catechesis-in-the-flesh on that day in December – December 6th, to be exact – the feast of St. Nicholas.

Coincidence? I don’t think so. Over 1200 students – no, young adults – were literally crammed into SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral including the choir loft. To some it was chaos; to others it was “cool.” There was nothing spectacular about the liturgy. It was simple and nice. What made the gathering so significant was to witness our young people demonstrating their faith, their quiet respect for the Church, and their pride in who they are and what they represent. Standing in the rear of the Church and viewing this scene gave me great hope in the future of our Church.

I quickly realized that everyone who works in ministry for the archdiocese – everyone – had a role in this event. A real impact had been made on these fine young men and women from their earlier experiences in their parishes, parish elementary schools or faith formation programs; preparing for Confirmation; participating in community service; or, in their high school classes and activities. It said to me that we are about far more than athletic championships, outstanding musicals, and great academics. It said that our archdiocese is blessed abundantly by its clergy, catechetical leaders, administrators, teachers, staff and students, who truly live the mission of Total Catholic Education.

As we move through the year 2007, let us ever be mindful of the good work begun, continued and planned for the future. We are God’s people and He will continue to bless us in every way.

A Blessed New Year to All!!

Annette “Mickey” Lentz
Executive Director
Catholic Education and Faith Formation

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