

## Forming Scholars, Leaders, and Disciples: The Research Behind Catholic Education

*By Samantha Nachtwey, GRACE Director of Marketing and Communications*

For generations, Catholic schools have formed students academically, morally, and spiritually. At GRACE, this mission is lived out every day across our nine schools. Students grow in knowledge and confidence in a safe, supportive environment. Teachers know students personally, care deeply about their success, and hold them to high expectations. From early learners to high school students preparing for college, GRACE schools are committed to helping every child thrive.

Research consistently affirms the impact of Catholic education. A landmark study by Dr. Anthony Bryk of the University of Chicago found that Catholic schools support strong academic achievement and help narrow learning gaps for students from diverse backgrounds. High expectations, shared values, strong leadership, and a culture of care were identified as essential elements of student success. These qualities are evident in GRACE classrooms, where students feel a strong sense of belonging and understand that their growth matters.

National data reflects similar outcomes. Catholic school students often perform as well as or better than their public school peers in reading and math. At GRACE, student achievement mirrors these trends. In spring 2025, nine percent of students scored in the 95th percentile or higher in reading on the STAR assessment, and eight percent did so in math. Overall, GRACE students outperformed the Wisconsin average by thirteen percent in ELA and eight percent in math. These results reflect the academic excellence families can expect when choosing GRACE.

Catholic education extends beyond academics. It intentionally forms character and faith. The Cardus Education Survey shows that Catholic school graduates demonstrate strong moral grounding and greater community involvement. At GRACE, students participate in service projects and faith-based experiences that help them grow into compassionate and confident leaders. Families are active partners in this journey.

Graduation and college attendance rates further highlight the strength of Catholic education. Nearly ninety-nine percent of Catholic high school students graduate, and most continue on to four-year colleges. Smaller class sizes allow for close

student-teacher relationships and individualized support.

Catholic education works. Research supports it, and GRACE families experience it every day. Students grow into scholars, leaders, and disciples of Christ who are prepared to make a meaningful difference.

### Sources:

- Bryk, A., Lee, V., & Holland, P. (1993). *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*. Harvard University Press.
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), *Private School Data, 2023*
- GRACE Schools, *Star and Forward Assessments, 2024-2025*

## TOP 5 REASONS FAMILIES CHOOSE GRACE

- 1 EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMICS** 
- 2 STRONG FAITH** 
- 3 CONNECTIONS THROUGH FAMILY & FRIENDS** 
- 4 WELCOMING, CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY** 
- 5 SAFE & ORDERLY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** 



# GRACE Tuition Affordability Options

At GRACE, we believe every family should have access to a high-quality Catholic education. That's why we offer a variety of programs, discounts, and support options designed to make tuition more manageable.

## GRACE FINANCIAL AID

GRACE Financial Aid is a need-based program for students in grades K-12. Awards are based on a family's financial situation and are applied directly to tuition.

The average financial aid award for 2025-26 was **\$1,600 per student**, made possible through generous support from donors, grants, and strategic financial planning. Families are encouraged to apply early, as the **deadline for first consideration is May 1**. Applications completed after May 1 will undergo review and award determination as financial dollars permit.

## MONTHLY PAYMENT PLANS

Families can spread tuition into manageable monthly payments rather than paying one large sum upfront, making budgeting easier.

## SIBLING INCENTIVE

Beginning with a family's second child enrolled in grades K-12, that child receives a \$200 tuition incentive. Each additional K-12 child receives the same \$200 incentive. For families with five K-12 enrolled children, the fifth child attends tuition-free, further reducing the total tuition cost. The Sibling Incentive applies only to students enrolled in grades K-12.

## SCRIP PROGRAM

The Scrip program allows families to earn tuition credit by purchasing gift cards as gifts or for items they purchase every day such as groceries, gas, dining, and more. According to the program's criteria, a percentage of each purchase is applied directly toward tuition. Scrip programs vary by school and specific details are available from the school office.

## ACTIVE PARISHIONER INCENTIVE

GRACE-affiliated parishes help make Catholic education more affordable. Families who are registered, active members of one of our 23 parishes and have students in grades K-12 may complete parish



verification with their GRACE parish to qualify for this incentive. Verification must be submitted annually by the June 1st deadline.

Verified families receive a **\$2,000 incentive per K-12 student** applied to tuition. Contributions from our 23 supporting parishes amounts to almost **20% of GRACE's overall revenue**, making this one of the biggest ways families can help reduce tuition costs. The Active Parishioner Incentive applies only to students enrolled in grades K-12.

## GRACE EMPLOYEE TUITION DISCOUNT

Full-time GRACE employees, including teachers, classroom aides, lunchroom staff, and playground staff, may be eligible for a tuition discount for their dependent children enrolled in a GRACE school. Eligibility requirements and discount details are available through GRACE Human Resources. In addition, current job openings are regularly posted on the GRACE employment page.

## CATHOLICLINK EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT

Through the CatholicLink partnership of GRACE, Notre Dame Academy, and St. Norbert College, eligible employees may receive tuition discounts for their children who attend these partner

schools, supporting families in continuing Catholic education beyond GRACE. Employees of all three institutions can obtain eligibility details and requirements from their respective Human Resources departments. This discount program also applies to eligible employees of GRACE-affiliated parishes.

## NEW FAMILY REFERRAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

GRACE families who refer a new family that enrolls their children in a GRACE school can receive **\$200 off tuition** or a **\$200 gift card** as a thank-you for helping grow the GRACE community.

## PARISH FINANCIAL AID

While not every parish or school offers additional scholarships, some are able to do so. Please check with your principal for more information.

## STATE AND TAX OPTIONS

Families may also qualify for state and tax benefits. The **Wisconsin Tuition Tax Deduction** provides savings for private school tuition and school-related expenses. Eligible families may also receive support through the **Wisconsin Parental Choice Program**.

(Read more about the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program in the full article on the next page.)



# Opening Doors and Strengthening Our Mission: How the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program Supports Our GRACE Catholic Schools

By: Melissa Wolcanski, GRACE Executive Director of Finance

## FATHER ALLOUEZ CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Francis Dempsey  
920-432-5223 (Elementary)  
920-336-3230 (Middle)  
[fatheralloezschoool.org](http://fatheralloezschoool.org)

## HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Kari Peterson  
920-468-0625  
[holycrossfamily.org](http://holycrossfamily.org)

## HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Interim Principal: Dr. Jamie Tyrrell  
920-494-1931  
[holyfamilyschool.org](http://holyfamilyschool.org)

## NOTRE DAME OF DE PERE

Principal: Mrs. Molly Mares  
920-337-1115  
[notredameofdepere.com](http://notredameofdepere.com)

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. Jeff Young  
920-336-3091  
[lourdesschooldepere.org](http://lourdesschooldepere.org)

## ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Mr. David Gusloff  
920-468-5026  
[saintbernardgb.com](http://saintbernardgb.com)

## ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST SCHOOL

Principal: Mrs. Gerene Thom  
920-434-3822  
[sjbhschool.org](http://sjbhschool.org)

## ST. JOHN PAUL II CLASSICAL SCHOOL/ CHESTERTON ACADEMY

Headmaster: Mr. Eric Schreiber  
920-617-9542  
[sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/](http://sjpclassicalschoolgreenbay.org/)

## ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Principal: Dr. Jamie Tyrrell  
920-432-8242  
[stmorgb.com](http://stmorgb.com)



One of the greatest strengths of our Catholic school community is that we exist to serve all families who desire a faith-filled, academically excellent education for their children. For generations, our schools have been places where students grow not only in knowledge, but

in character, compassion, and a sense of purpose rooted in the Gospel. As we look toward the future, the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) continues to play an essential role in helping us live that mission more fully and sustainably. It provides an option for parents, as the first educators to be able to select a school that is the right fit for their child.

### Q: Why does the GRACE school system participate in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP)?

**A:** At the core of our mission is the commitment to serve all families who desire a Catholic education for their children. The WPCP allows us to open our doors more widely by reducing financial barriers that prevent many hardworking families from accessing our schools. Participation helps ensure that a Catholic education is not limited by income, but available to all who value faith formation, strong academics, and a supportive community.

### Q: How does the Choice Program strengthen our Catholic mission?

**A:** The program helps our schools better reflect the diverse communities we serve, socially, culturally, and economically. This diversity enriches our classrooms and strengthens the formation of every child. Welcoming students from a broad range of backgrounds is a lived expression of the Gospel, and it mirrors the Church's call to serve all who seek faith-centered education.

### Q: Is the Choice Program only for students with learning needs?

**A:** No. Eligibility is based on income and residency, not on whether a child has a learning challenge. Families choose our schools because they want a values-driven, academically strong education. Once enrolled, Choice students are fully integrated in every classroom, activity, and expectation. They are simply part of our school family.

### Q: How does the Choice Program benefit our school operations and long-term stability?

**A:** WPCP funding helps close the gap between tuition and the actual cost of educating a student. This support strengthens the entire school community, not just Choice families. It allows us to maintain strong academic programs, hire and retain talented staff, invest in classroom materials and technology, and keep class sizes at an efficient level. In short, the program helps ensure quality and consistency for every student.

### Q: How does WPCP help our schools plan for the future?

**A:** Consistent enrollment and predictable funding give us the ability to plan strategically. We can invest in teacher development, curriculum updates, technology improvements, and facility enhancements. These investments benefit current students while strengthening the long-term vitality of our schools.

### Q: Does participating in the program change our Catholic identity?

**A:** Not at all. Nothing in the Choice Program restricts our ability to teach the Catholic faith, celebrate the sacraments, or live our mission. Our religious education, values, culture, and expectations remain fully intact. Participation simply supports our mission, it does not change it.

### Q: What is the biggest takeaway for parents?

**A:** The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program is more than a funding mechanism. It expands access, strengthens our mission, and supports long-term sustainability. It allows us to continue forming every child in mind, heart, and spirit, today and for generations to come. Most importantly, it allows families the ability to select the school that aligns with their values and meets their child's unique learning needs rather than being restricted to their assigned public school.

### Q: How can I learn more about the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program and its benefits?

**A:** You can contact GRACE Outreach Administrator, Mr. Edgar Zaragoza to find out more and whether your family might qualify to participate in the program. He can be reached at [ezaragoza@gracesystem.org](mailto:ezaragoza@gracesystem.org).

## Priest Spotlight

Last July, Resurrection Parish and Father Allouez Catholic School welcomed Father Bob Kollath as their new pastor, and serves on GRACE's Board of Directors. A diocesan priest for twenty-eight years, Father Bob had served in four other parishes before Bishop David L. Ricken asked him to take on this new role.

A graduate of Clintonville High School, Father Bob has remained in the area throughout his career, including previous assignments in four school systems within the Diocese. This is his first assignment at a GRACE school.

As he has been getting to know the parishioners of Resurrection and the students of Father Allouez since last Fall, Father Bob has made some positive observations. He reports, "It's a nice parish with a good staff and good principal. We have a very nice facility and it's well taken care of. The students are dedicated and well-behaved, nice kids. Those are all good things, and I don't take that for granted for a second!"

He added that he enjoys the local football games as a pastime! The families of the parish and school are sure to appreciate your religious and educational leadership, Father Bob.



## GRACE Special Needs Scholarship Program

*By James Cullen, GRACE Director of Student Services*

During the Christmas season we were reminded that Jesus was a gift to us and at GRACE we believe every child has gifts to be nurtured. The Special Needs Scholarship Program (SNSP) is a gift that provides an opportunity for children with exceptional needs to attend and receive services at a designated GRACE school to allow parents the decision to determine the best educational setting for their child.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School in De Pere is the chosen GRACE School that has a licensed special education teacher and dedicated classroom to help support and educate students with a variety of educational needs. We will be accepting K-5th grade students for the 2025-2026 school year who have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Jesus made all of us unique with different strengths and challenges, and our SNSP students are UNIQUE in their ability to not only learn in a faith filled setting but help to educate others to understand and appreciate ALL they have to offer. I would be most fortunate to have the opportunity to talk to you if you would like to learn more about SNSP at OLOL.

## GRACE Holy Cross Students Spread Holiday Cheer Through Service Projects

In a school year full of meaningful events, GRACE Holy Cross Catholic School carried out three special service projects during the 2025 holiday season.

In November, the school community completed the Toddler Coat Drive, collecting eighty coats to keep little ones warm. They send a heartfelt "Thank you!" to school and parish families for supporting the 5th grade drive. This generosity will make a big

difference over the winter months.

The second project, Coins for Cribs, invited families to donate loose change to the Love Life Ministry. This was the school's first year participating. A manger was set up in the lobby to collect donations, which were then presented to the Ministry. The funds help provide eligible families with furniture, baby clothing, blankets, and diapers in the Green Bay area.

The third project focused on elderly residents. In the "Adopt a Resident" program at Anna's House, students in grades 5-8 collected, wrapped, and delivered gifts before Christmas break. They also played bingo and sang Christmas songs with the residents. Meanwhile, younger students visited Angel's Touch Assisted Living in De Pere to share holiday cheer. This project offered students a special learning experience while bringing joy to their newfound acquaintances and serving as a tangible Corporal Work of Mercy.

Holy Cross students add their coins to the collection basket.



# GRACE BY THE NUMBERS



**86%**

of our students  
are registered at  
a GRACE parish



**31**

New Teachers  
Hired



**9**

School  
Volunteer  
Awards

**16**

Top Teacher  
Talent Awards



**9%**

of students scored in  
the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or  
higher on the Star  
Reading test in  
Spring 2025



*\*Grades K-8 Assessment Data*



**8%**

of students scored  
in the 95<sup>th</sup>  
percentile or higher  
on the Star Math  
test in Spring 2025



**20**

High School  
Graduates

**199**

8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Graduates

*\*Spring 2025*



In **Math**, GRACE  
students perform **8%**  
higher relative to the  
Wisconsin average.

In **ELA**, GRACE  
students perform **13%**  
higher relative to the  
Wisconsin average.



This Infographic features data from our 2024-2025 Annual Report, showcasing accomplishments, and key school data. To read the full report, scan the QR code or visit

[www.gracesystem.org](http://www.gracesystem.org)



## Talent Spotlight

For Mrs. Muenster, a GRACE fourth-grade teacher, the call to Catholic education began early. As a child, she spent her summers helping her mother, also a longtime Catholic school teacher, prepare her classroom for the new year. “I never considered another career,” Mrs. Muenster says, “Students

GRACE’s reputation for academic excellence, faith formation, and meaningful support made it her first choice as an educator. Over the past eleven years, she has become one of the system’s many transformational teachers whose mentorship, guidance, and faith-filled leadership have shaped the lives of countless students. Through GRACE’s fully donor-funded Master’s Path Program, she earned her master’s degree last Spring from St. Norbert College, a milestone that reflects both her dedication and GRACE’s commitment to supporting its teachers, administrators, and support staff.

At GRACE Notre Dame of De Pere, Mrs. Muenster treasures the ability to weave prayer and faith naturally into each day. Her classroom brings faith to life through traditions such as a Holy Week Seder meal and Last Supper reenactments, enriching both her teaching and her students’ experience. She also sees Catholic education as a true partnership with families. Because parents choose this environment with its mission and values in mind, the school community benefits from consistent expectations and strong support for both behavior and academic excellence.

Mrs. Muenster’s commitment to Catholic education extends to her own family with her children attending GRACE St. John the Baptist School in Howard. “The same families we see at Mass are the ones supporting our children each day,” she says. “If someone were considering a GRACE school, I would



*Mrs. Amy Muenster, 4th Grade Teacher at  
GRACE Notre Dame of De Pere Catholic School*

recommend it wholeheartedly. Watching my own children grow up into thoughtful, empathetic, faith-forward humans is the best thing I could hope for as a mom.”

Mrs. Muenster’s journey reflects what GRACE offers every family: a community where staff are supported and cared for, children are known, and faith and learning thrive every single day.

# GRACE 2026-27 Enrollment Information

Admissions and Enrollment Open During Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 25 – Feb. 1, 2026

Green Bay Area Catholic Education (GRACE) provides the best in Catholic education to the Greater Green Bay Area, aiming to provide academic excellence and help students grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our tuition rate represents less than 75% of the actual cost of education; the remaining amount is covered by the generous support of our parishes and strategic financial development. GRACE works with families to find a way to make Catholic education accessible and affordable, no matter their income. There are many ways that tuition can be managed and reduced.

## EARLY ENROLLMENT INCENTIVE

- Receive the lower incentive rate by registering early:
- \$50 – January 25 - February 1, 2026
- \$100 – February 2 - 28, 2026
- \$150 – beginning March 1, 2026

The GRACE School System requires all families to keep their tuition and fee accounts in good standing in accordance with the tuition agreement and billing plan established during enrollment.

When financial challenges arise, GRACE supports families through payment arrangements and tuition-reducing options such as discounts, financial aid, and scholarships. All requirements and deadlines must be met to remain eligible.

## K-12 Tuition

	Standard Tuition	Tuition with Active Parishioner Incentive*
K - 5	\$5,750	\$3,750
6 - 8	\$5,875	\$3,875
9 - 12	\$8,710	\$6,710

\*Active Parishioners receive an incentive of \$2,000/student.

## 3- and 4-Year-Old Preschool\*

HALF DAYS	2 Days	3 Days	5 Days
FULL DAYS	2 Days	3 Days	5 Days

Preschool rates for 2026-2027 can be found at [gracesystem.org/academic-life/preschool/](https://gracesystem.org/academic-life/preschool/)

\*Ineligible for Sibling and Active Parishioner Incentives and GRACE Financial Aid. Eligible for New Family Referral Incentive.

## Activity and Technology Fees

	Activity	Technology	Total
PRESCHOOL	\$65	\$35	\$100
K - 5	\$70	\$45	\$115
6 - 8	\$120	\$55	\$175

## Returning Family Reminder

Re-enrollment for current GRACE families begins January 23, 2026. Families will receive a student-specific re-enrollment link via TADS.com and are encouraged to complete re-enrollment as soon as possible. Seats not re-enrolled during Catholic Schools Week may be offered to other families. Current GRACE families wishing to enroll siblings who are new to GRACE must submit an admissions application and receive acceptance prior to enrollment. Admissions for new families open January 25, 2026. Visit [gracesystem.org](https://gracesystem.org) | Admissions | How to Apply for more information.



## New Family Referral Incentive

Our GRACE community members are our greatest ambassadors. Current GRACE families are eligible for a **\$200 tuition discount** for each New Family referred that enrolls in a GRACE school.

More information can be found at [gracesystem.org/admissions/referral-incentive](https://gracesystem.org/admissions/referral-incentive)

# LITTLE SAINTS

CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Did you know GRACE offers a childcare program for GRACE employees and families called Little Saints?

- Serving Ages Six Weeks to Three Years Old
- Faith-Based
- Developmentally Appropriate
- Safe and Secure
- A Home Away From Home

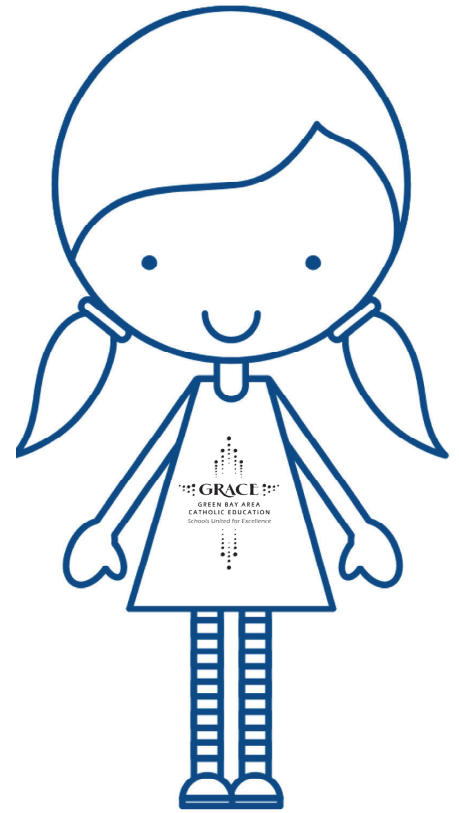


Visit Our Website  
to Learn More!



Located in Holy Family Catholic School  
1204 S Fisk St. | Green Bay, WI 54313  
[gracesystem.org/about-us/little-saints/](https://gracesystem.org/about-us/little-saints/)

WE ARE:  
**GRACE:**



## WE ARE: GRACE: GOLD

*Join us for a GRACE-filled summer!*

**MONDAY, JULY 6 - FRIDAY, JULY 31**



**GRACE: GOLD** CAMP OFFERS A FAITH-FILLED, FUN SUMMER EXPERIENCE FOR CHILDREN WITH FULL AND HALF-DAY CLASS OPTIONS.

**EARLY REGISTRATION  
OPENS:**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD**

## Important Dates 2026

### JANUARY

1/12 - 7th and 8th Grade Boys & Girls Basketball Championship at the Mulva Sports Center at St. Norbert College  
1/19 - No School: Teacher In-Service

### FEBRUARY

2/6 - No School: GRACE In-Service  
2/26 - GRACE Forensics Meet at OLOL  
2/27 - Early Dismissal: Teacher In-Service  
End of Trimester 2

### MARCH

3/5 - Evening Parent Conferences  
3/6 - Early Dismissal: Afternoon Parent Conferences  
3/9 - 3/13 - No School: Spring Break

### APRIL

4/3 - No School: Good Friday  
4/24 - No School: Teacher In-Service (weather makeup day if needed)

2026-27 Academic Calendar available at [gracesystem.org/about-us/calendar/](https://gracesystem.org/about-us/calendar/)

## Weather Alerts:

Please be alert to updates from your GRACE school in the event bad weather forces a “snow day” or early dismissal.



# 2025-26 Annual Appeal

**We're excited to share that our GRACE Annual Appeal is already 80% of the way to our \$200,000 goal! Every gift helps support our schools and students, and there's still time to make an impact. Join us in reaching our goal.**



Scan the QR code to contribute!

## LET US HELP YOU

Call 920-499-7330 ● E-mail [graceoffice@gracesystem.org](mailto:graceoffice@gracesystem.org) ● Mailing Address 1822 Riverside Drive, Green Bay, WI 54301

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