



Child Services Program

August 1, 2019 - July 31, 2020 Report

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Strategic Plan: Vision 2025 - More Than Possible

Looking beyond present realities, making our mission transformational for those with whom we walk!

Mission Statement

St. Joseph's Indian School is an Apostolate of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. We partner with Native American Children and Families to Educate for Life – Mind, Body, Heart and Spirit

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| • An APOSTOLATE of the Congregation of POSH | Strength-Based |
| • We PARTNER | Relationship-Based |
| • With Native American CHILDREN AND FAMILIES | Student-Centered |
| • To educate for life – MIND, BODY, HEART AND SPIRIT | Holistic |

A Holistic and Integrated Approach

St. Joseph's Indian School provides students with a wide array of individualized support including the primary services of education, residential care, counseling services and mission integration (pastoral care, cultural education, alumni and family services). Supportive services include recreation, medical and food services. An individualized, child centered approach is used that meets the needs for belonging, mastery, generosity and independence to build a resilient future. Services are integrated as necessary to meet the individual needs of each student.



Outcomes

Long-Term Lifestyle Outcomes:

1. Our students will have the skills to live a healthy balanced lifestyle: body, mind, heart and spirit.
2. Our students will have the ability to enter into stable, healthy relationships as persons of character and virtue.
3. Our students will have the education and training to sustain their lifestyle.

Department Overview Highlights

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Program Overview

St. Joseph's Indian School is a residential/educational organization for Native American youth and families. St. Joseph's strives to provide services in a holistic and integrated manner. A focus on teamwork and the development of a student-friendly milieu allow for a seamless integration of services.

Our efforts to provide quality programming include an organized program evaluation system. Within this report are many highlights gathered in that system.

Education Highlights

The 2019-2020 school year started normally but ended with students distance learning from home for the final quarter due to the COVID pandemic. Regardless of this, twenty-three students graduated from the eighth grade in May 2020. Twenty-one of those students, 91%, plan to attend our High School Program. Below are a number of highlights from the 2019-2020 school year:

- Average daily attendance on the state report through the third quarter was 97.67%. This can be compared to the South Dakota average of 72% for Native Americans in public school.



- Full staff retention for this year helped provide a consistent educational program for our students.
- Twenty percent of our students qualified for special education services. The breakdown is as follows: 43% of those students received academic assistance, 21% received speech and language assistance, and 36% received both academic and speech/language support. The number of our students that qualified for services decreased 25% from the previous year.

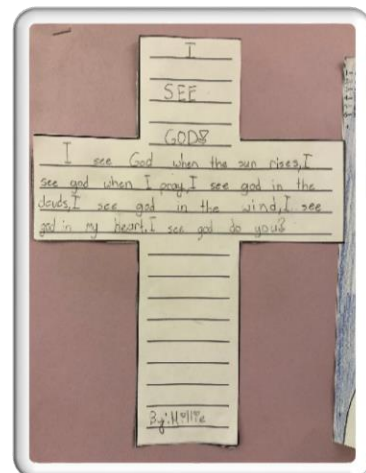


- Our Christmas and spring concert featured 30 students performing instrumental pieces as well as a dance program involving 56 1st-6th grade students.

- Twelve students competed in three area Acalympic competitions.



- Eight new members were inducted into the Beta Club in February; bringing the total group membership to 19. Beta Club is a national organization for 4-8 grade students. The program's purpose is "to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, leadership and service among elementary and secondary school students.
- The school held two Parent-Teacher Conferences this year. Our October conference had 67% attendance, up from 49% last year. The February conference attendance also increased to 58% from 38% last year.
- During the first semester, the school staff had 1,474 contacts with families through phone calls, emails, and newsletters.
- A focus for last school year was writing and speaking skills for students in 1st-8th grade. For example, the 8th grade students took part in the following writing and speaking exercises during the first semester: papers and presentations on Colonial America, the American Revolution, and a New Government; math explanations in front of the class; a drug awareness PowerPoint and presentation; a cooking demonstration for their classmates; introductions and conversation in Lakota; as well as character poems and research presented to the class on a monthly basis.
- National Catholic School Week theme was "Where I see God". Activities and service projects all related to this theme.



Student Test Information

Program Goal:

To provide an educational program dictated by student's needs.

Educational Objective:

To have 'one-year growth' progress for every child and/or a remedial plan in place to meet their academic needs.

Specific Academic Measures:

MAPs – Measures of Academic Progress

DIBELS – Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills

CORE – Consortium on Reading Excellence

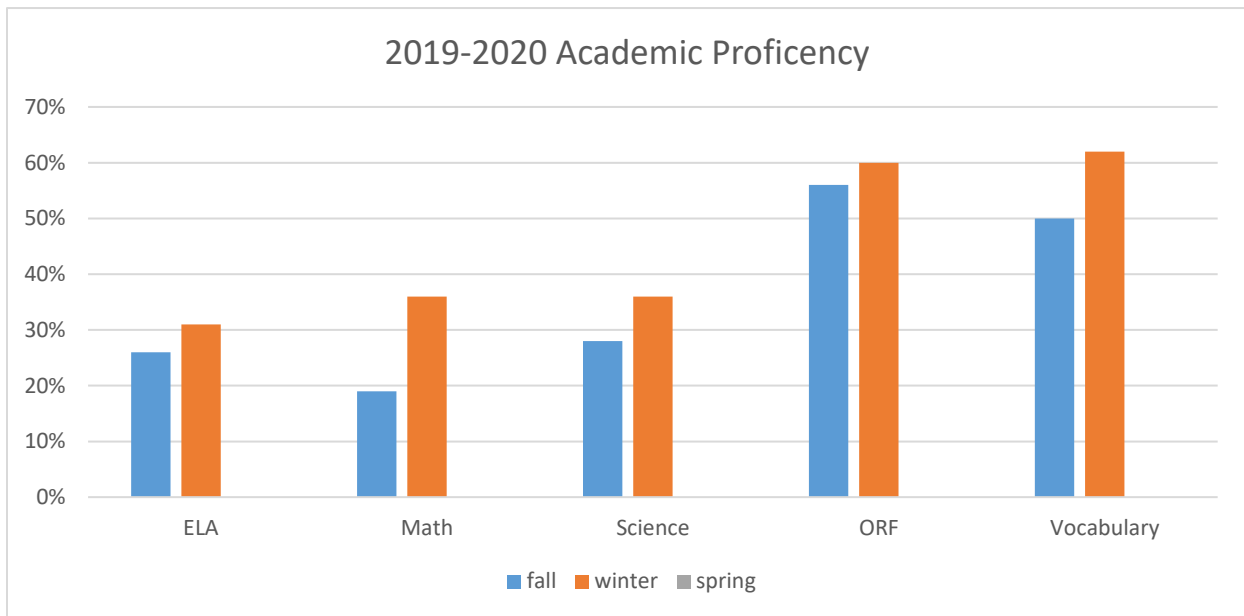
Smarter Balance State Standardized Testing – Direct data method for measuring performance on core academic standards



Frequency of data collection:

Three times a year for MAP, DIBELS, CORE

Once a year for Smarter Balance



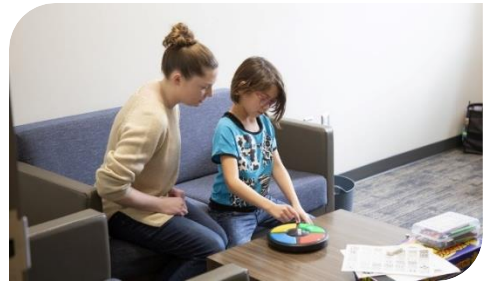
This graph shows the increases in proficiency in reading, math, science, fluency and vocabulary from the fall to winter MAPS test. The May MAPS test was not given due to the students being home.



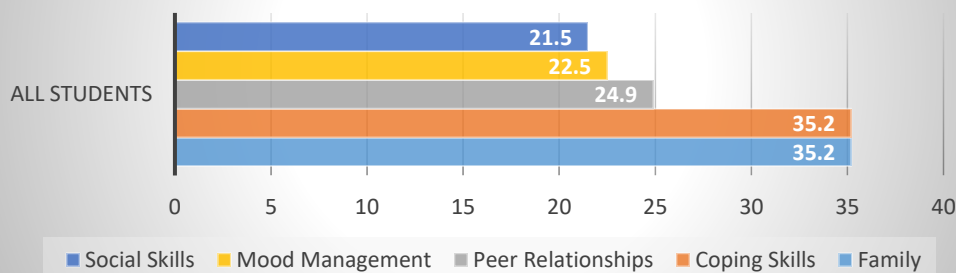
Counseling Services Highlights

Counseling Services provides quality therapeutic services for our students. Highlights for the 2019-2020 school year include:

- A total of 161 students (80.1%) were referred for specialized services. Of these services, 135 received individual counseling and 87 were provided with group counseling. Seventy-one students received psychological services and 47 had psychiatric referrals.



Top 5 Reasons for Student Counseling Referrals



- The percentage of students taking psychotropic/controlled medication was 24.38%. This is a slight decrease from last year. Each student is seen by a doctor or psychiatrist regularly to make sure medication levels are appropriate. Parent/guardians give approval for medication.
- Horses are now on campus 7 days a week. The horses were at the entrance of school for our opening day and they took part in various aspects of the Powwow. During the first semester, 61 students took part in equine therapy.



- Elders worked with the high school girls during their Daughters of Tradition group to sew ribbon skirts. Ribbon skirts are a symbol of resilience, sacredness and survival.



- The counselors have been trained in two additional skills that have proven very beneficial:
 - Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality (CAMS) is a flexible therapeutic framework where the student and counselor work together to assess the student's suicidal risk and then use that information to plan and manage suicide-specific, "student-oriented" treatment.
 - Brainspotting locates points in the client's visual field that help to access unprocessed trauma in the subcortical brain. This technique helps to locate, process, and release a wide range of emotionally and physically-based conditions.
- Substance use and abuse continues to be a focus with the students in our care. Due to escalated use, three students in the 7-12 grade community participated in inpatient treatment last year.

First through Twelfth Grade Residential Services Highlights

The residential homes provide students with a safe and secure environment. The goal is to teach life skills per age/grade level, preparing them for high school graduation and beyond.

- Work began in December to create a new web-based Home Log system. This system contains a rating system that is directly tied to our Logic Model outcomes. This system went into effect in August. It will greatly assist us in measuring the skills we want to instill in our students.
- A new social-emotional learning unit was added to the 1-6 grade student's enrichment programming. The Second Step Child Protection unit helps students recognize, report, and refuse unsafe situations.
 - There were three times as many abuse and neglect reports in January 2020 than in January 2019. This coincides with the introduction of the Child Protection unit.
 - › 60% of the reports occurred the day following the enrichment lesson
 - › 20% of the reports were made when the students returned from break
 - › 85% of the reports were made by 1st-5th grade students
- 30.8% of students were matched in our Children Count mentor program. This is an increase from our previous high of 22.3%.



- During the month of November, 70.4% of families took part in Case Service Plan meetings, an increase of 10.2% from the previous year.
- Student travel to donor luncheons took place during the first semester but remaining student travel, including the German Exchange trip, was cancelled.
- The HS Program began the school year with 44 students and ended with 34 students. This put the retention rate for the year at 77%; this is lower than previous years. Custody issues and other family events precipitated five of the withdrawals; drugs and alcohol or other behavioral issues played a part in the others.
- The overall GPA for the HS program increased to 2.72 from 2.39 the previous year.
- The High School Learning Center was relocated and updated this year. These changes resulted in a 30% increase in the use of the facility.
- The first semester started with 16 high school students on an academic agreement and ended the semester with only one remaining on an agreement.
- The Transition Specialist took 42 high school students to six college visits during the first semester; two parents and two alumni also attended.
- The High School Program had two students graduate in May 2020. One is joining the Marines and the other enrolled at SDSU for the fall.



Mission Integration Highlights

The Mission Integration department focuses on the development and integration of both religion and Native American culture. This impacts all areas of child services. Highlights include:

- Fifty-five percent of our second through eighth grade students are Catholic.
- Thirty-one students completed sacramental preparation last year. However, the sacraments were postponed due to the pandemic. These students will be received into the Church during the coming school year.



- A Prayer tree, holding Lakota prayer ties, is located in Wisdom Circle in the center of campus. Staff, students, and donors all added prayer ties to the tree.
- Seven Inípi (Sweat Lodge) ceremonies were available for the 7-12 grade students to participate in during the fall semester. Seventy-four students chose to take part. Parent/guardians give permission for students to partake in ceremonies on campus.
- Students lead a “live” Flag Song and Lord’s Prayer in Lakḥóta every morning during school announcements.



- Each home received a bag of sage, shell, Holy water and a font to help guide prayer in the residential setting. In addition, Fr. Richard joined each home once a semester to lead evening prayer.
- One hundred and eight student dancers participated in the Wačhipi (Powwow), the highest ever.
- The 7th grade Cultural Trip that normally occurs in May is rescheduled for the fall.



Admissions

The Admissions process seeks to match student applicants with available services and openings. Information of note includes:



- The total number of students on the waiting list was 138 in February 2020.
- At the end of the school year, our 1-12 enrollment was 223 students, which is 97% capacity – this is the highest in quite some time. Also, note in the following table that we ended the school year with more students than we started with despite the usual number of withdrawals. This is due to admissions bringing in an additional 14 students during the school year.

	Start of school year enrollment	End of school year enrollment	Change
2016-2017	191	178	-13
2017-2018	203	185	-18
2018-2019	217	192	-25
2019-2020	222	223	+1



Parent Advisory Committee

The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) consists of parent/guardians of our students. The group meets twice during the school year to discuss issues relevant to our students and families.

- In September 2019, PAC members toured the CAIRNS exhibit at the museum. They also listened to updates and gave feedback on the health center, communications plan, education and admissions updates, and the social emotional learning program that is used in the homes.
- The next meeting, to be held on March 16, 2020 was cancelled. PAC members were instead invited to campus in July for a review of the safety and preparedness plan for the upcoming school year. Members gave insights, advice, and approval for the plan.



COVID-19

Campus life changed dramatically on March 13, 2020. Details on the impact and our response are as follows:

- 1st-8th grade students were already home for Spring Break when the Governor ordered schools to be closed due to the unknown effects of the pandemic.



- Remaining on campus were 11 elementary students in the break home and the high school students. The decision was made to transport these students home since Chamberlain public school also closed on March 13, 2020.
- Schoolwork packets were mailed to the 1st-8th grade students. The first mailing did not include envelopes to return schoolwork as we hoped to have students return to campus within a couple of weeks. Return envelopes were included with all subsequent mailings. We had a low rate of return on the four packets sent – approximately 30%.
- In March 375 boxes were sent out with 1st-8th grade students' personal belongings and hygiene items. That was followed by another 1,075 boxes of items in April, when it was determined that students would not return to campus for the remainder of the school year. Families that lived nearby and had transportation came to campus to pick up their child(ren)'s belongings.
- As we looked at options for distance learning, it was determined that 21.9% of our families did not have access to the internet and a high number of those that did accessed it through a Hot Spot on their phone with a limited number of minutes each month. Due to this, it was determined that sending laptops home would not be viable and we continued with paper schoolwork packets.
- Nurses worked with our local pharmacy to fill the gaps when families were unable to procure needed medications due to shortages in their home communities.
- \$2,700 worth of grocery cards were sent to families in March and April.
- Staff on campus made facemasks that were distributed around campus and included in care packages sent to health care workers in Chamberlain, Lower Brule, and Crow Creek and care packages for the elderly in Chamberlain and Crow Creek. Facemasks made and donated by benefactors increased the count. By the end of July 3,807 masks had either been made or donated.

- Child services staff made videos to post on the family Facebook page. These ranged from science experiments to story time to spiritual teachings and 'we miss you' videos.



- Rec Center staff made videos of camp games and activities that were shared with our students and the Boys and Girls Clubs in Lower Brule and Crow Creek since we were unable to hold the Soaring Eagle Summer Camp.
- Over the summer months, house parents, teachers, and counselors wrote and mailed letters to students, picked out books to send to their homes, and mailed craft supplies and activities to each family.

- Five “curbside” food deliveries were made to each family every two weeks between June and early August. In the month of June:

- 36 staff volunteers traveled 6,184 miles in SD
- 106 families were served on 12 different routes
- 318 food boxes included:
 - › 636 boxes dried/canned food
 - › 1,040 gallons of milk
 - › 1,130 loaves of bread
 - › 38 cases of apples, 32 cases of oranges.
 - 720# of bananas
 - › 477 dozen eggs



- During these deliveries, staff tested MIFI's from Verizon and AT&T at each family's home location to determine best performance in the event of future needs for distance learning.



- The 1-8 summer program and the HS summer program was not held. A version of the freshmen orientation program will be held in August 2020, prior to school starting.
- Many, many hours were spent planning for the student return for the 2020-2021 school year. Detailed plans were developed and changed repeatedly as the guidance from the CDC changed rapidly.
- The determination was made not to accept any new students for the first semester. This was in anticipation of restricted family visits and checkouts for campus safety. It also allowed an extra home and staff to give flexibility during the school year.
- A collaboration with the South Dakota Department of Health and Sanford Health in Chamberlain was developed to aid in the planning and preparation process.

Conclusion

This report highlights many activities that took place at St. Joseph's Indian School throughout the 2019-2020 school year. The organization continues to provide a safe environment and quality services for all of our students.

Looking ahead to the 2020-2021 school year, our focus will be on:

- Safety for students and staff.
- Strong communication with families and staff during this time of change and unknowns.
- Strengthening academic and social-emotional skills lost over the long break.
- Developing a robust distance learning plan.
- Continued work on outcome measurements across Child Services.
- Focus on the new Strategic Plan.

