

# Child Services 2020-2021 Year-End Report



**St. Joseph's Indian School**  
August 1, 2020 - July 31, 2021

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## A Circle of Care

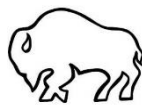
St. Joseph’s Indian School educates for life – mind, body, heart and spirit. Our approach embraces Catholic teaching alongside Native American spirituality and relational worldview. The wraparound environment honors each student as an individual with specific needs that are met through the combined efforts of the students, their thiyóšpaye, our supporters and every staff member on campus. Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ.



### Report overview

The largest accomplishment this last school year was collaborating with the Department of Health, Sanford, students’ families, and all service lines within our organization to get the students back to school and to stay open the entire school year.

Within that framework, each service area continued to provide the wraparound services to best meet the needs of each student. Below you will find highlights from each department.



## Education Highlights

*Our educational philosophy is student-centered. Through a variety of instructional methods, we strive to develop a love for learning; instill habits of mind and heart; and promote faith and culture.*

During the 2020-2021 school year, St. Joseph's Indian School was fortunate to have in-person learning. However, due to COVID precautions education was not always consistent or predictable. Ten weeks of the school year were spent in the homes following breaks. At various times, homes or entire communities spent additional time in quarantine when positive cases arose. Instruction from teachers was done in person and/or virtually depending on the students' grade level and academic capabilities. COVID safety took precedent over all educational instruction.



- Fourteen students graduated from the eighth grade in May 2021. 100% of those students are part of the high school program next year.
- Average daily attendance on the state report was 96.5%. This can be compared to the South Dakota average of 72% for Native Americans in public school.
- Our Grade 4-8 Spring Recital featured 27 students performing musical pieces. This was pre-recorded and shared with families online.
- Our Beta Club received a national recognition award for service from their work during the previous school year. 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. Ten students were inducted into the program last year.
- Due to COVID restrictions, we were unable hold in-person Parent-Teacher Conferences. Information and collaboration with families occurred via zoom, phone, and email per parent/guardian preference.
- The National Catholic School Week theme was "Faith, Excellence, Service" with activities throughout the week: Saint of the Day, Are you Smarter than a 5<sup>th</sup> grader –Catholic Style, I Spy (Catholic and Lakota symbols around campus), Dress up days, a Food pantry drive, and Prayer flags.
- Staff development focused on trauma sensitive learning environments, especially through a perspective of COVID impact on students, staff and families.

## Academic Test Overview

### 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

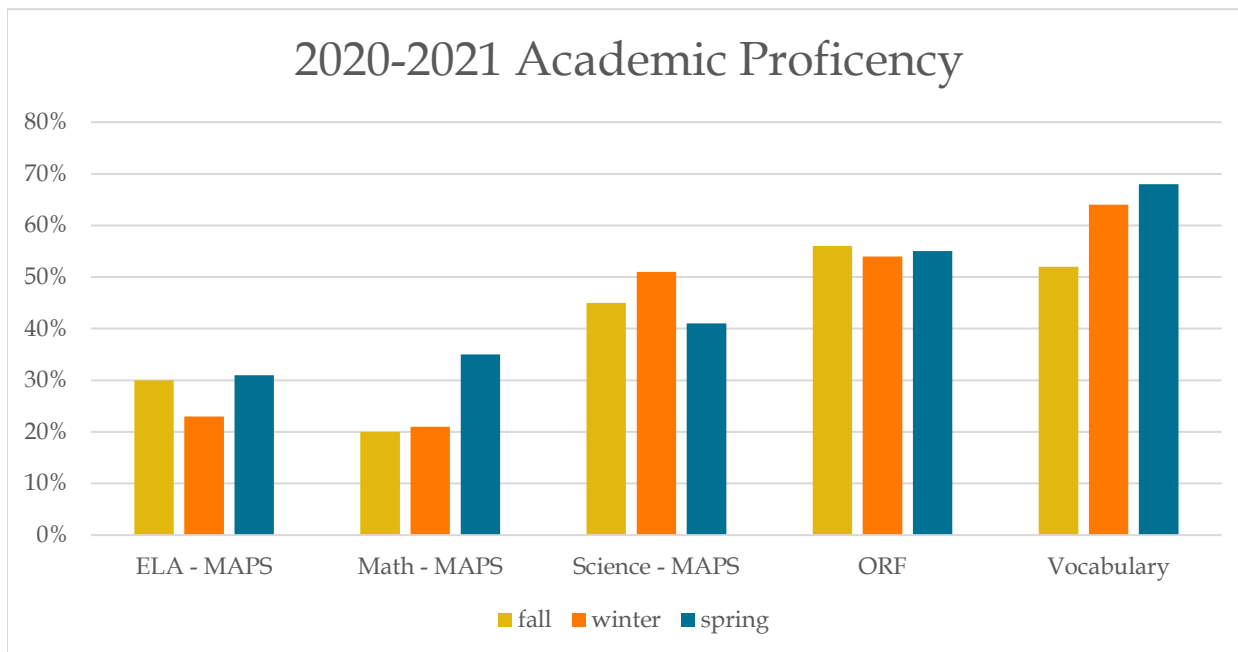
Smarter Balance State Standardized Testing - Direct data method for measuring performance on core academic standards



### Frequency of data collection:

Three times a year for MAP, DIBELS, CORE

Once a year for Smarter Balance

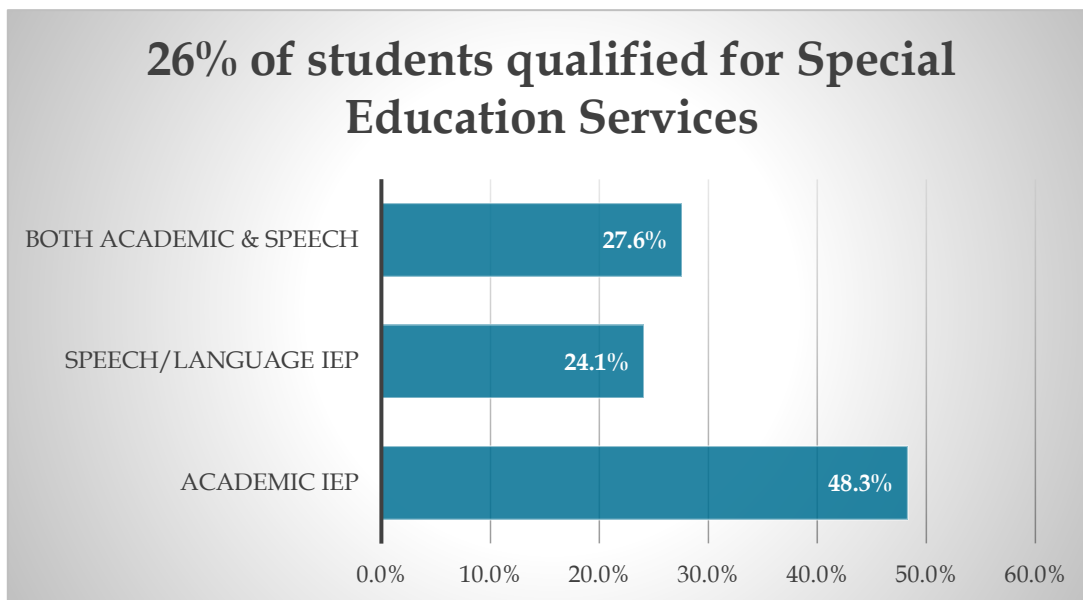


### Academic focus for the coming year:

- Teaching increased concentration for reading comprehension next year will increase all areas of academics.

- Reading fluency and vocabulary is less of an issue over the years so a future emphasis on comprehension, sustained reading stamina and writing abilities will help to improve student achievement.
- Growth is being made yearly in the area of mathematics. Keeping students at proficient when they return in the fall is a challenge. Transition and application of new concepts on previously learning ones in difficult for many students. The pandemic hit math concepts exceptionally hard. The missing building blocks of math concepts make the mastery of new ones more challenging and puts students farther behind. A concentration for math will be moving past overall computation and working on application of problems and being able to explain the process of solving those problems in words and writing.

### Special Education Services



- The number of our students that qualified for services increased 5% from the previous year.
- Five additional students received academic pull out help. These students are receiving help while they await testing.

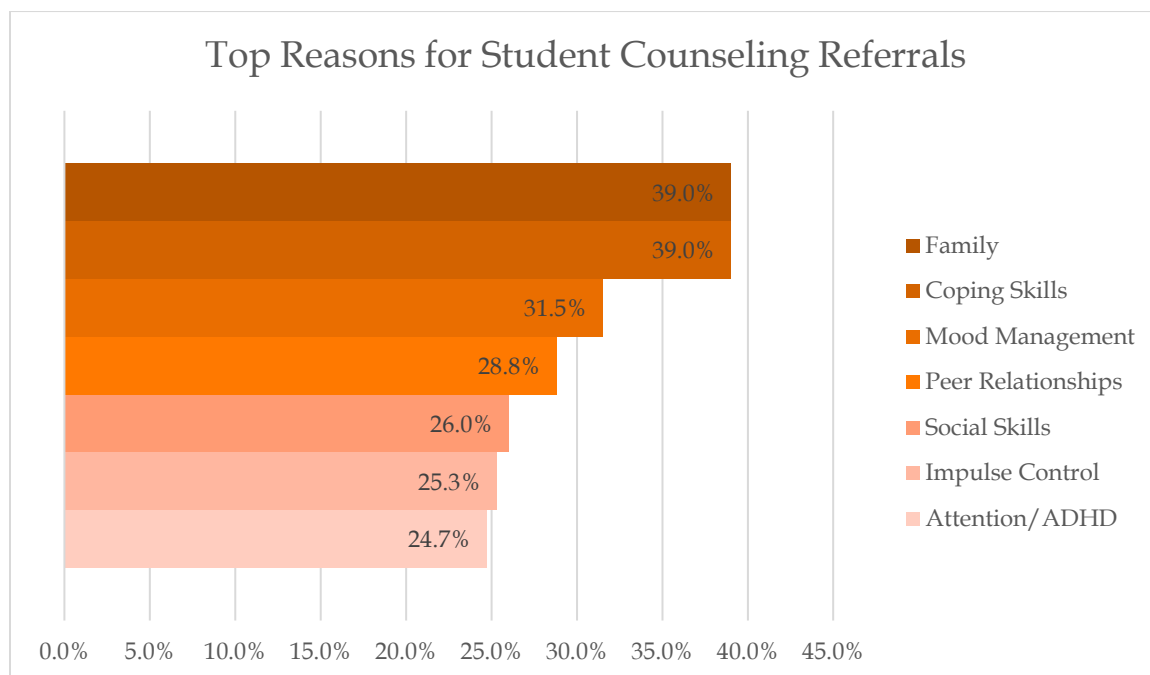
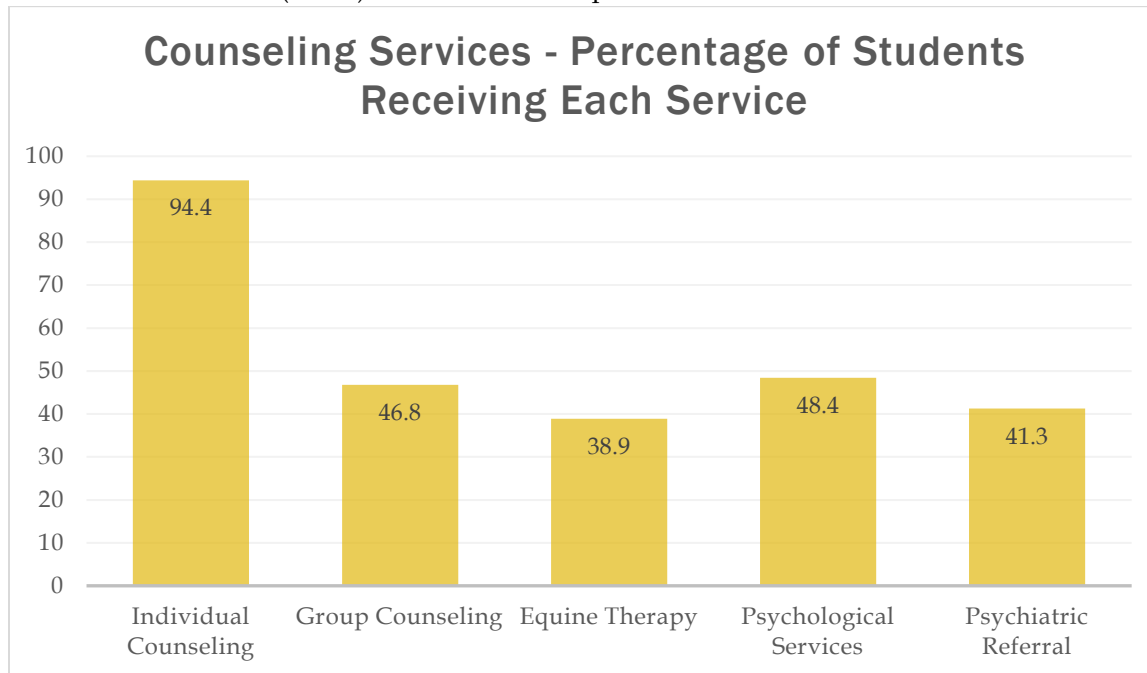




## Counseling Services Highlights

*Our counseling philosophy is to support students through a relationship-based, holistic approach to become strong, self-determined, resourceful and resilient.*

A total of 126 students (86.3%) were referred for specialized services.



- Substance abuse services: 12 students were served last year; 7 of these students were carry-overs from the previous year. Eight assessments were completed, 4 students took part in diversion/education classes, and 7 students took part in outpatient counseling.
- The percentage of students taking psychotropic/controlled medication was 32% (47 students). This percentage is an 8% increase from last year; there are several factors for this.
  - Our enrollment was significantly lower than last year (145 vs 223).
  - Higher needs students were more likely to return for the 2020-2021 school year
  - The pandemic had many repercussions on mental health

Each student is seen by a doctor or psychiatrist regularly to make sure medication levels are appropriate. Parent/guardians are involved in the process and give approval for medication.

- St. Joe's hosted the SD Cultural Awareness training for counselors and other administrative staff. This is a three day training developed for mental health professionals that teaches Native American history as well as methods to incorporate cultural interventions into mental health services. Staff on campus provide opportunities for students to smudge, provide support in Inipis on campus as well as using sage and cedar in ceremony and healing activities.
- While all staff members have contact with parent/guardians, the FSC's are their main contacts. During the last school year, the FSC's made a total of 11,676 contacts with parent/guardians, averaging out to 80 contacts per student. FSC's also assisted with the food deliveries to families.
- The horses in our Equine Therapy program are involved in many aspects of campus life from the beginning of the year welcome back parade and Wačhipi grand entry to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women event and Family Camp.
  - Our first Family Horse Camp was held in June 2021; the goal was relationship building per the family request.
  - The Horse Barn has been delayed by a year due to supply chain delays. The new estimated installation date is August 2022.





## Health and Wellness Services

*Our health and wellness philosophy is to safely meet the health care needs of all of our students. We provide on-site health and wellness services and facilitate access to specialized care.*



- The largest accomplishment for the Health Center this last school year was collaborating with the Department of Health, Sanford, students' families, and all service lines within our organization to get the students back to school and to stay open the entire school year.
- By putting policies in place, increasing nursing and staff education on COVID, allowing flexibility as information became available, and staying closely connected with the Department of Health, the Health Center played a large role in managing the pandemic on campus.
- During nurse visits, 1 of every 6 students is seen for a skin-related concern such as a rash or sore. Nurses will be attending a conference on dermatological practices in order to provide the best care moving forward.
- Increasingly, students are on medications that meet their needs but are not covered by Medicaid such as melatonin, some seizure medications, vitamins, and others. The health center paid a total of \$15,000 for student prescription coverage above Medicaid coverage. This was a \$3,000 increase from the prior year.



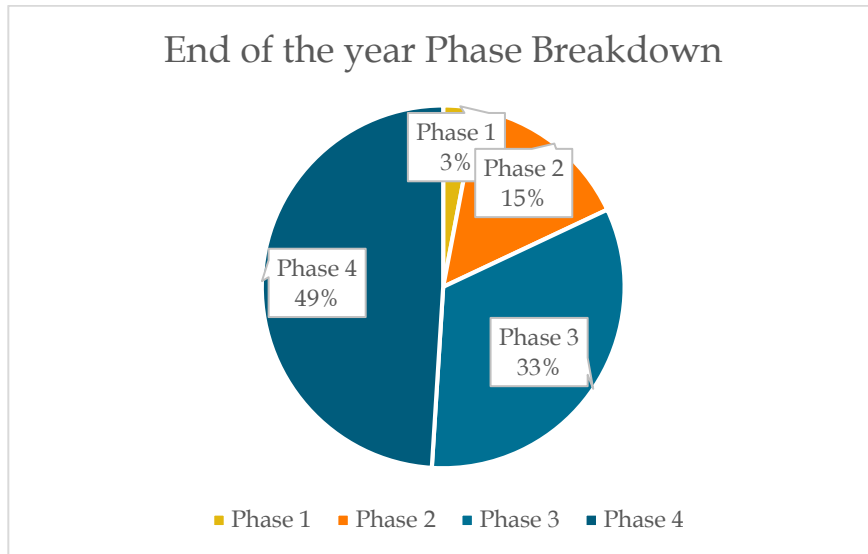
## Residential Services

*Our residential philosophy is to develop collaborative relationships with students and families using a strength-based, developmental approach that teaches life skills and fosters lifelong learning through the values of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.*



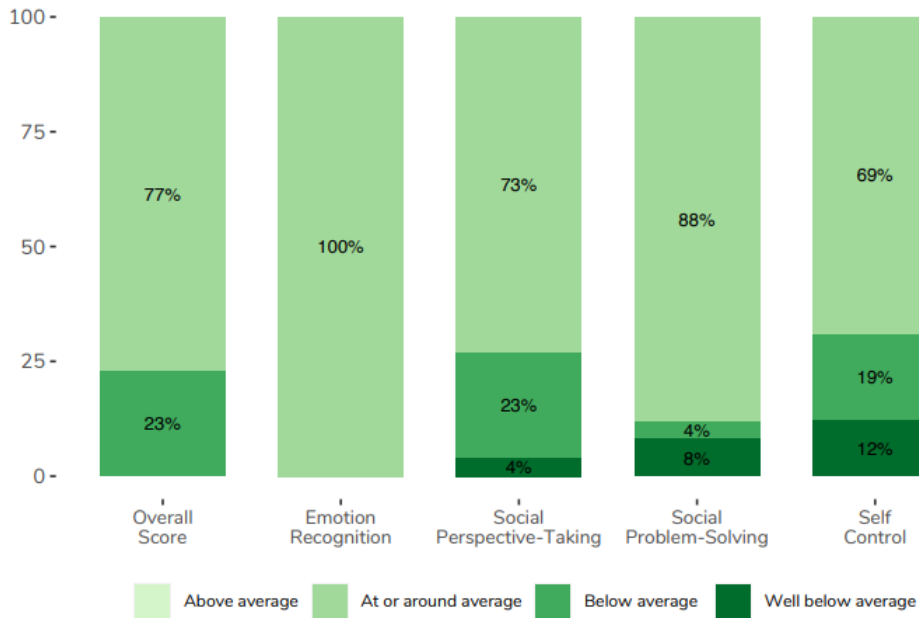
- The 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade program uses a Phase System to promote positive behavior and allow privileges based on that behavior. The system ranges from Phase 1, low, to Phase 4, high.





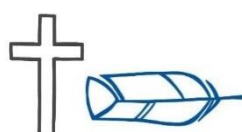
A social-emotional learning unit is taught in the homes once a week. The Second Step program is evidenced based and builds upon the knowledge from year to year. The program uses pre and post-tests to rate student’s progress in areas like emotion recognition, understanding others, social problem-solving, and self-management.

This report shows student performance on SELweb in the St. Joseph’s Indian School district. The summary plot shows what proportion of students in the St. Joseph’s Indian School district fall into each of the 4 performance levels.



- 29% of students are matched in our Children Count mentor program. The mentor program focuses on students who have fewer opportunities for family contact and check outs.
- During the last school year, 64% of families took part in Case Service Plan meetings, a slight decrease from the previous year.

- The HS Program began the school year with 49 students and ended with 33 students. COVID concerns as well as homesickness played a large part in the number of withdrawals during the school year.
- The overall GPA for the HS program increased to 2.79 from 2.24 the previous year. At the end of the school year, there were 123 A's and only 10 F's.
- The Learning Center continues to be a busy place for the high school students with 1,555 visits to the tutor.
- The HS students were busy with extracurricular events as well:
  - 15 students passed Driver's Education
  - 12 students were involved with the Native American Club
  - 26 students participated in sports
  - 13 students had a part-time job during the school year
- The High School Program had six students graduate. Five completed all coursework and graduated with their class and one finished credits online and graduated in June. Four of the graduates plan to attend Technical School or College in the fall, two plan to join the workforce.
- SJIS has had 22 graduates over the last four years. 95% of those students are currently employed, in the military, or pursuing higher education.



### Mission Integration

*The Mission Integration department focuses on the development and integration of both religion and Native American culture. Founded by the Priests of the Sacred Heart, our spiritual philosophy is to provide students with a rich base of Catholic faith and Native American tradition upon which they can draw for a lifetime, finding *T̄h̄uŋkášila* in all things. Our cultural philosophy is to celebrate and embrace our students' Native American heritage through the study and practice of language, ceremony, dance and other activities.*

- Seventy-one percent of our students are Catholic.
- Twenty-five students received Sacraments last spring.



- Two cultural trips were held last year. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students took part in the fall after their trip was canceled the prior year, and the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students went in the spring as usual.
- A Buffalo Harvest was held on campus for the first time last November. Students were able to learn about the cultural significance of the ceremony and all meat was used on campus or shared with families.
- Our Wačhipi (Powwow) was held virtually last year since campus was closed as a COVID safety measure. Sixty-five students danced in their regalia for the event.



### Other areas of focus

#### 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 83 students in May 2021.

At the end of the school year, our 1-12 enrollment was 145 students, which is 66% capacity – having a lower number of students was planned to allow for COVID protocols and safety in the homes and classrooms.

	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
2020-2021	173	145	-28

#### Parent Advisory Committee

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

- In July 2020, PAC members reviewed the COVID safety and preparedness plan for the upcoming school year. Members gave insights, advice, and approval for the plan.

- In October, PAC members met to review the efficacy of safety plans. The strategic plan was also presented to the group.
- In April, PAC members were updated on equine therapy, Native Hope events, communications work, and other end of the school year events. Four members ended their term on the committee; new members will be brought on next year.



## Conclusion

This report highlights many activities that took place at St. Joseph’s Indian School throughout the 2020-2021 school year. The organization continues to provide a safe environment and quality services for all of our students.

Looking ahead to the 2021-2022 school year, our focus will be on:

- Safety and wellbeing for students and staff.
- Continuing strong relationships with families during a time when less in-person contact is the norm.
- Strengthening academic and social-emotional skills students need for long-term stability.
- Improving core service functions through evaluation and data management across Child Services programs.
- Focus on the Strategic Plan, particularly developing our new system of student measurements.
- Begin work on updating the Recreation Center to better meet the students’ extracurricular activities and wellness needs.

