



CATHOLIC ACADEMY
OF BRIDGEPORT

Something more.



2023-2024 Annual Report



Our school mission

The four campuses of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport provide a Christ-centered, academically rigorous learning environment where cultural diversity is welcomed and celebrated. Students are nurtured, encouraged and challenged in preparation for a successful life of leadership and service.

Our student mission

I am a Catholic Academy of Bridgeport student. I am worthy of the love of God. I am worthy of an excellent education. I am worthy of respect from my classmates and teachers. I recognize my obligation to return that respect and to reflect the light of Christ by living a successful life of leadership and service to others.

Welcome Message

As Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport and Chair of the Board of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, we are pleased to share with you our Annual Report for the 2023–2024 academic year.

The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport continued its vibrant faith-based mission, providing a high-quality education to 888 PreK-8 students this year. Our student outcomes remain extraordinary. Despite leaving us after 8th grade, 100% of our students graduate high school and 99% go onto college or a secondary education of their choice. We owe much of our success to our student families who are fully committed to investing what they can to best educate their children in a city where there are few options.

CAB's financial standing is as strong as ever, recording a balanced budget for the year. This is always a major accomplishment as the vast majority of CAB families live at or below the poverty level and need substantial scholarship funding. This past year CAB underwrote 70% of the cost to educate our students this year, or roughly \$4.5mm of our increasing, and inflation affected, \$7mm budget. Fortunately, we gain support from many different sources and controlling costs is always job number one. A CAB education still costs less than half that of Bridgeport public or charter schools, ensuring that our school is the most efficient pure play

donors can make toward completely changing the lives and hopes of Bridgeport youth on a large scale.

CAB's Success Pay initiative, previously referred to as Merit Pay, concluded its second year. Over the first two years, 11 teachers have successfully completed their portfolios and advanced to their subsequent levels of teacher mastery. They express gratitude for this opportunity and admit that while the process initially seemed daunting, taking the time to reflect on their practice from so many points of view was valuable and ultimately rewarding. Success Pay is the bedrock of CAB's efforts to recruit, develop and retain the best teachers possible and to continue our push to further improve the education we provide.

Thank you for supporting the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. With the leadership of our executive Director, Angela Pohlen, and our 20-member Board, 4 principals, 54 teachers and 36 other staff members, we will continue to work hard to provide an exceptional, faith-based education for our growing student body.



THE MOST REVEREND FRANK J. CAGGIANO
BISHOP OF BRIDGEPORT



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The Team Makes the Dream

With every year that I have the privilege of serving as CAB's Executive Director, my pride in our school grows. What we are able to accomplish together is a true testament to the power of shared mission and a belief that with God, all things are possible.



Executive Director Angela Pohlen above, and below with CAB's four campus principals (L-R): Sr. Elizabeth Doyle, ASCJ, Dr. Christopher Hampton, Mr. Gene Holmes, Dr. Allison Hurtt



As I reflected upon which, among our many, accomplishments last year that I wanted to highlight in this letter, each memory brought with it a profound sense of gratitude for our principals and teachers. When I think of our academic accomplishments: the many prestigious Catholic and private non-Catholic high schools to which our students matriculated; our diagnostic testing data which showed growth in ELA and Math from Trimester 1 to Trimester 3 for every single class cohort and individual student; when I think of the writing competition winners and STEM work in drones, 3-D printing, and coding; at the heart of every accomplishment is the dedication, skill, and enthusiasm of a principal and a teacher. When I think of our extra-curricular opportunities: our winning basketball teams and other athletics offerings, our chess tournament winners, our Alegre Program for the Performing Arts festivals, our musical and theater productions, our Bible study groups, our dozens of after school enrichment experiences; in every single example of "something more" a principal

or teacher established it, coached it, or moderated it. The superlative experience of our students is directly related to the devotion of the high-quality educators that choose to live out their vocation at the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. Make no mistake - they can work anywhere - but we are blessed to have them here making the difference in classrooms, stages, and sports courts every day.

And behind each teacher is an army of angels, helping to provide the things they need to do their jobs well. Thank you for being among that number. Thank you for believing in us and for assisting us to bring the type of quality academics and dynamic programming to our students that other schools in Fairfield County take for granted. Our kids deserve it, and they are in wonderful hands: their principals', their teachers', and yours. I hope that as you review this Annual Report, you will be proud of the impact you help us to make in the lives of nearly 900 children and their families. It is a blessing to work in the vineyard with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Pohlen". The signature is fluid and cursive.

ANGELA POHLEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



After-Care & Summer Programming - After-care programs were available on three of our campuses, with St. Augustine poised to begin its own after-care program next year. Summer programming was in full swing on all four campuses, including our popular JumpStart enrichment program at St. Augustine, which is open to all CAB 4th-8th grade students.

High School Partnerships - We continued to deepen our relationships with top private high schools so that the 98% of our 8th graders who are accepted into these schools annually have access to the scholarships and financial aid many of them need to afford them. Our students received awards from Cheshire Academy, Fairfield College Preparatory School, Greens Farm Academy, Hamden Hall, Hopkins School, Kolbe Cathedral Prep, Luralton Hall, Notre Dame Prep of SHU, Sacred Heart Hamden, and St. Joseph High School, among others.

The Arts - Our Alegre Program for the Performing Arts offered drama, dance and choir to students after school. Participants were able to perform live onstage at the end of the semester at the Quick Center for the Arts as well as travel to New York City to see The Wiz. Afterward, they enjoyed a private Q&A with the production stage manager.

Community Building - Students participated in a Tree Lighting Ceremony in Black Rock, marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, hosted an Easter Egg Hunt, and held potluck suppers, family bingo and drive-in movie nights. CAB also held Financial Aid Nights to personally assist parents who had questions or needed help with our application process.

STEM Grants - Funding was awarded to CAB for the purchase of Blu Track kits and accessories for our physics lab as well as for an additional 3D printer, printer cart and drones.



THE STUDENTS WE SERVE



888 PreK through 8th-grade students across 4 campuses

96% qualify for & receive financial assistance

87% come from families living at or below the poverty level

\$39K is the mean family income

100% qualify for & are offered free breakfast, snack & lunch each school day

92% identify as People of Color

50% are non-Catholic



HOW OUR STUDENTS *STAND OUT*

100% graduate from high school
compared to only 76%
of their local school
counterparts

99% go on to college
or post-secondary school
compared to only 25%
of their local school counterparts

98% of CAB 8th graders
accepted to top private
high schools



**THE PROMISE OF
“SOMETHING MORE”**

WINNING THE RACE TO COMPENSATE & RETAIN TOP FACULTY

Success Pay Recognized By Industry Leaders

The '23/'24 school year was the second full year of Success Pay implementation at CAB and the results remain notable: Teacher turnover remained down, faculty morale remained up and school-wide diagnostic assessments conducted regularly throughout the year showed notable growth for *all* students on *all* campuses in reading, ELA, and math. Faculty continued to feel validated for being evaluated based on their merit rather than their longevity, and teachers only left the Academy due to moves outside of the area and not because of salary. **Industry leaders have taken note and are supporting this transformative initiative, including those shown on these pages.**



"One of the lessons educators can learn from successful private sector enterprises is that pay for performance executed effectively can produce meaningful results. That is precisely what the Academy has done with its Success Pay program, and I am delighted that we were able to assist in putting this effort into place successfully."

Sam Palmisano
Former President & CEO
IBM



Tim Sciarillo
Executive Director
*Stich Charitable
Foundation*

"We helped fund the innovative Success Pay program at CAB because a school is only as good as the dedication of its teachers. The Success Pay program rewards teachers by ensuring that they can do the work they love, positively impact the students, and earn satisfying compensation. It is an outstanding, win-win program."



Stan Litow
Professor
*Columbia University's School of
International & Public Affairs*

"Innovation in education is rarely effectively implemented. But the Academy's effort to support innovation and improve student performance through the implementation of Success Pay, done with the full input and support of its faculty, is not only an example of what to do, but how to do it."



Melodie Wyttenbach, Ph.D.
Executive Director
*Roche Center for Catholic
Education at Boston College*

"The Success Pay Program at the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport is a bright-spot nationally for creatively compensating Catholic educators for their excellent instruction. By rewarding high-performing teachers, Success Pay will retain top talent to the Academy, ultimately benefiting student outcomes and fostering a more effective educational environment."

"SUCCESS PAY" REWARDS:

- Performance
- Building up the school community
- Demonstrated mastery of specific, measurable skills that impact student outcomes
- Peer-based review system to ensure fairness



BETTER OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- Excellent, engaged, enthusiastic teachers
- Continuous learning and teacher improvement is baked into the reward model
- Weeds out less committed teachers early on
- Best-in-class teaching = most successful students

A Year in Development

We are most grateful to everyone who contributed financially to the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport this year. Despite holding only two special events in '23/'24 and pushing pause on our Annual Gala as we look ahead to our 20th anniversary in November 2024, our school met and exceeded its Development goals. Because of donations from private individuals and foundations, we continue to change lives and provide "Something More."

ANNUAL FALL DINNER AT POLPO



"Catch A Rising Star" was the theme of the night when 70 guests gathered in Greenwich for this major fundraiser. CAB alumnus Dr. John Gresh '73 was one of the keynote speakers, and he said the sacrifices his parents made "yielded incredible results." In fact, he is investing in the future by sponsoring a current student through the Academy's Rising Stars program. The event ended with a paddle raise and brought in over \$350,000 for scholarships for the 96% of students who qualified for need-based assistance last year.

12TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC



Because of the generosity of over 100 individuals and private foundations, CAB raised more than \$650,000 for need-based scholarships during its 12th Annual Golf Classic at the Country Club of Fairfield. John Kennedy was presented with the Distinguished Board Member Award, Tony Fox with the Alumni Service Award and Pat Griffin, principal of CAB's St. Ann campus who retired in June, with a Lifetime Achievement Award. We are are deeply grateful to everyone who made this fundraiser such a success.





A BRIGHT LIGHT IN BRIDGEPORT

For over a decade, CAB's Rising Stars program has paired students in need with sponsors willing to help subsidize the cost of their education. To date, over 80 individuals have walked alongside 100+ PreK through 8th-grade students and given them the gift of a lifetime. On this page are some of those children and their inspiring success stories. We are so grateful to all those who have allowed Rising Stars to be such a bright light in CAB's history.



SHARING THEIR STORIES OF SUCCESS



Autumn '23

Alumna Autumn Joseph, a freshman at Notre Dame Prep and alumni speaker during our Fall Dinner fundraiser, said she was "so happy and grateful my mother and my Rising Stars sponsor are here with me tonight. Without both of these women, I would never

have the chance to go to school at CAB and been able to become the person God meant me to be."



Phillip '20

Alumnus Phillip Martins, a rising freshman at Yale University and alumni speaker at our May 2024 Golf Classic, explained, "I am proud to say that the work ethic I was taught at CAB's St. Augustine [campus] translated into

me being Summa Cum Laude honors all four years of high school at Fairfield Prep and being accepted into Yale. Words can't even begin to describe how much the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport means to me. They believed in me when I couldn't find it to believe in myself, and sometimes that is all you need: someone to believe in you. I am confident with the support of [donors], they can help other students just like me find the belief in themselves that they need to succeed."

“My parents work really hard and I know it’s a blessing I can go to such a nice school, so I really take advantage of the opportunities I have here.”

-Gabe, 7th grader



Drawn to More

After attending the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport for PreK, Gabriel Cruz's parents decided to transfer him to a local magnet school, in an effort to save money. But by 3rd grade, Gabriel was back at the Academy, where he "felt happy and cared for. I really missed the feel of being in a Catholic community, and having religion classes and being around people who were really nice and supportive. The teachers and staff here really care."

Now an 8th grader on CAB's St. Augustine campus, Gabe recalls a time when he was in 5th grade and had an issue with another student. "I was crying in my teacher's arms and she was comforting me the whole way. Everything was resolved very quickly. This school gives you that kind of 1:1 attention. We all try to live with a Christ-like manner and be the best version of ourselves."

Gabe strives to be the best version of himself outside of class too. He has been a member of the Boys Varsity Basketball Team for the past three years, and this year is the team's co-captain. "Last year, we won the championships for our division and made it all the way to the Regionals in New Hampshire. It was like playing on another level."

Gabe's mother, Diana, is a CAB alumna and thankful her son has been able to attend the same school she did. Gabe's father, Jonathan, is also grateful. "In the beginning it was tough but we were able to get aid and that made all the difference. We have to spend extra, but we get to avoid a lot of the stuff you find in public schools. [CAB] is more in line with how we live...Plus, I see a mindset in my son he gets from here. He's a problem solver and figures things out. He uses his imagination. I see other kids who don't go here and they can't think



for themselves or have the maturity Gabe has. My son is with his teachers in small classes eight hours a day and it's a game changer."

Jonathan also credits St. Augustine principal Dr. Allison Hurtt for his son's successes. "Dr. Hurtt is at every one of the kids' games. She really gets along with everybody. She's as real as it comes. A lot of these kids don't have dads in their lives or their parents don't speak English well. They have to grow up quickly and may not all have a role model. Dr. Hurtt can play that role because she gets it."

Gabe understands the sacrifice his parents make for him to attend CAB. "My parents work really hard and I know it's a blessing I can go to such a nice school, so I really take advantage of the opportunities I have here. Every summer I go to Camp Pinehurst in Maine through the school and I've had a chance to try archery, water skiing, canoeing, riflery, kayaking. Going there puts me back to nature and there are no electronics. It's just people talking."

Gabe will soon be ready to launch from CAB into the next chapter of his education. "For high school, my dream is to go to Fairfield Prep, Notre Dame or St. Joe's. I'm hoping to get a scholarship and one day use my math and numbers skills in a job. I think this school has made me very ready for my time in high school."

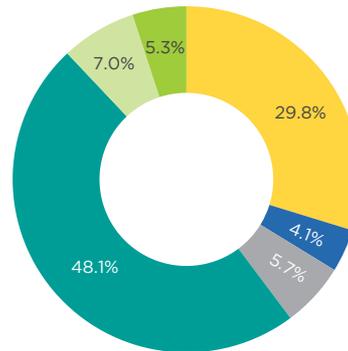
Financial Summary



Revenue, Support & Expenses

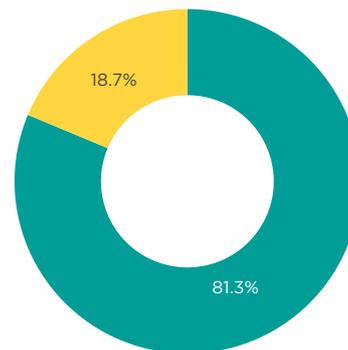
REVENUE & SUPPORT

● Family Tuitions	\$2,175,934
● Contributions for Scholarships and Fundraising Activities	\$3,527,261
● Annual Catholic Appeal	\$303,407
● Bishops Scholarship Fund	\$415,049
● Other Auxiliary	\$391,420
● Endowment Distribution to Operating	\$515,000
TOTAL INCOME	\$7,328,071*

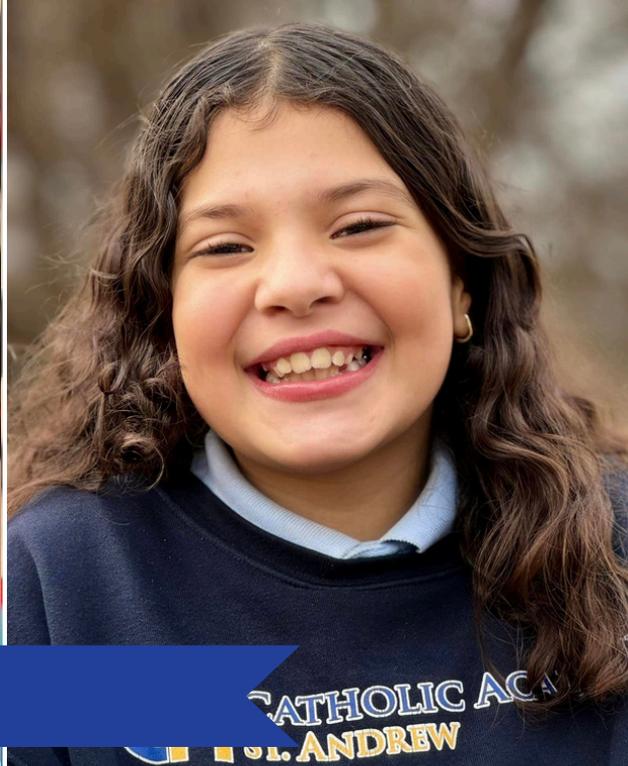


EXPENSES

● Compensation and Benefits	\$5,898,009
● Other Expenses	\$1,355,024
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$7,253,033*
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$75,038



*Excludes Contributions In Kind



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This list contains names of donors from 7/1/23-6/30/24. We tried to include all names. If we omitted yours inadvertently, please excuse us and call 203-362-2990.

Why I Give

Susan Jensen, New Canaan, CT

- CAB Rising Stars Sponsor
- CAB Event Planning Committee Member
- Wife of Board member Tim Jensen



“Attending my first Catholic Academy of Bridgeport Ladies Luncheon years ago introduced my husband, Tim, and I to the school.

CAB’s mission and positive impact on the community meant a lot to me. I felt a strong desire to support a student in their Rising Stars program the following year and we have expanded that support to multiple students in subsequent years. Receiving copies of the students’ annual progress reports was meaningful, and meeting some as they graduated and learning about their next steps was even more powerful.

Tim and I both value education as a top priority for our immediate family, extended family and for all others. Education can only bring good to changing this world and making a more balanced and fair society. We support various educational charities in addition to Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, including high schools, colleges and other programs, but we believe that the return on investment on dollars given to CAB is probably the highest.

Tim serves on the CAB board, which has given us additional insights into the successes and needs of CAB.

We have found it very useful to discuss with CAB the greatest needs the schools face at the beginning of each fiscal year. This has led us to broaden the use of our annual donation. Tim believes given the seasonality of revenues at the schools that it is helpful to give early in CAB’s fiscal year to help strengthen the organization’s financial flexibility.”

How can you give to the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport?

The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport is an independent 501(c)(3), with an independent Board of Directors. We are fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Our EIN is 47-3496968.

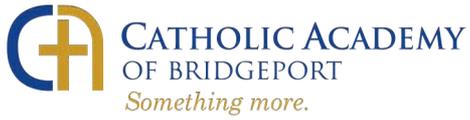
TO DONATE ONLINE: Go to www.catholicacademybridgeport.org and click the “DONATE NOW” button.

TO SEND A CHECK: Make payable to “Catholic Academy of Bridgeport” and mail to *Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, 63 Pequonnock Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604, Attn: Development Office*

- **TO WIRE STOCK / SECURITIES:**
- Instruct your broker to “deliver free” to:
- National Financial Services,
- DTC 0226, Bridgeport Roman Catholic Diocesan Corp.
- Account Number: Q81-086780.
- Please email *both* marisa@wcmfm.com and prowella@diobpt.org
- to let them know this gift is for Catholic Academy of Bridgeport.

TO DONATE TO OUR ANNUAL FUND: Scan the QR code here →





EXECUTIVE OFFICES
63 Pequonnock Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Thank you for
your support!

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