

2026 Annual Report



ST. PIUS 
CATHOLIC SCHOOL



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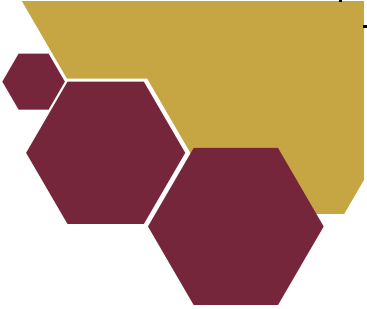
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Welcome to St. Pius X

Dear Parishioners, Families, and Friends,

It is with gratitude and joy that we share this Annual Report, celebrating the life, mission, and growth of our parish and school community. In 1956, a one-story school with eight classrooms and a kitchen opened its doors to 120 excited students, marking the beginning of a legacy rooted in faith, learning, and community. Today, that legacy continues to flourish, with 462 students enrolled in our school and a vibrant parish community of 1,800 members walking together in faith.

Within these pages, you will find stories that reflect both where we have been and where we are going. This report highlights celebrations of academic growth, meaningful faith formation, and responsible stewardship, all grounded in a shared parish and school mission. You will also see how our community continues to grow together through innovation, collaboration, and a deep commitment to forming students spiritually, academically, and socially.

We are deeply grateful for the trust, generosity, prayers, and dedication of those who have supported this parish and school across generations. As you explore this report, we hope you are encouraged by what has been accomplished and inspired by the vision that carries us forward. May God continue to bless our parish and school as we build upon a strong foundation and look with hope toward the future. Thank you for joining us as we live our mission to: Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples. Restore All Things in Christ.

With joy,

Rev. Matthew Luft, | Pastor
Mr. Alex Baranosky, Ed.S | Principal
Mrs. Jordan Blackburn | Assistant Principal



Campus Identity



Mission

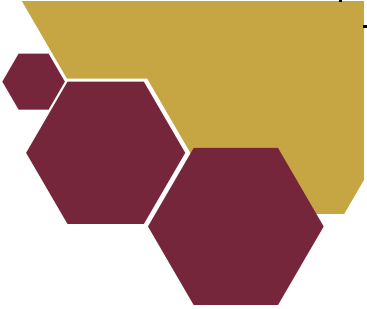
Several years ago, our school formally adopted the parish mission, making it the foundation of who we are and how we serve. This shared mission guides every aspect of our work, from faith formation and academic excellence to relationships, service, and community life. Rather than existing as words on paper, the mission is lived daily in our classrooms, liturgies, decision-making, and interactions, uniting parish and school in a common purpose of forming disciples rooted in faith, knowledge, and love.



New Logo

In that same spirit of unity, we recently completed a thoughtful logo development process to create a shared visual identity for both our parish and school. This new, common logo reflects our deep connection, shared values, and commitment to moving forward together. More than a design update, it serves as a visible symbol of our unified mission, one parish, one school, one community, working together to proclaim faith, foster excellence, and build a strong future.

ST. PIUS X



National Standards

The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) provide a nationally recognized framework for excellence in Catholic education, rooted in faith, governance, academic quality, and operational vitality. Our diocese has intentionally embraced these standards as a guiding tool for continuous improvement, with the diocesan school board, school administrators, and a small group of teacher leaders engaging in focused learning and reflection around their application. As a result of this shared commitment, you will see the NSBECS referenced throughout this annual report as they shape our goals, inform our decisions, and support our ongoing mission to strengthen Catholic education.



MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Our Catholic identity is intentionally formed through the teachings of the Church and lived within the sacramental life of the parish and school. Students grow in faith through shared service-learning rooted in Catholic social teaching, encounters with the Communion of Saints such as the visit of a first-class relic of Saint Carlo Acutis, and daily prayer and formation. From our earliest learners, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in our three- and four-year-old preschool introduces children to Scripture, liturgy, and the person of Jesus Christ, forming a strong Catholic foundation for lifelong discipleship.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic excellence remains a hallmark of our school. Year after year, student achievement consistently exceeds state averages, reflecting strong instruction, high expectations, and a commitment to continuous growth. At the same time, we are intentional about meeting the needs of every learner through robust support systems that assist students who need additional help while also providing opportunities that challenge and enrich advanced learners, ensuring all students are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential.



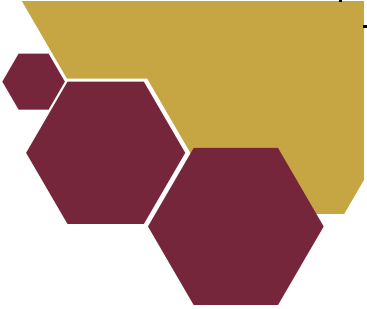
GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Strong and effective governance and leadership continue to guide our school forward. This is evident in high teacher retention, steady enrollment growth, and a culture of trust and collaboration. Our School Advisory Council, formed through the integration of the former school board and Home and School and now operating as a committee of the Parish Council, strengthens alignment between parish and school leadership. Together with forward-thinking campus leaders, this structure ensures clear vision, responsible stewardship, and strategic decision-making in support of our mission and long-term vitality.



OPERATIONAL VITALITY

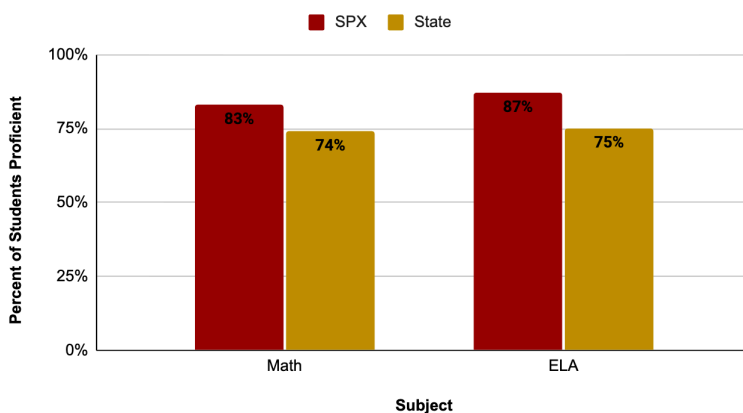
Operational vitality remains a priority as we continue to embrace and grow in our understanding of the regional business model in partnership with our parish. This collaborative approach strengthens financial stewardship, transparency, and long-term sustainability while honoring the parish's support and shared responsibility for the school. Continued enrollment growth reflects the strength of our parish-school relationship and the confidence families place in our united mission, leadership, and vision for the future.



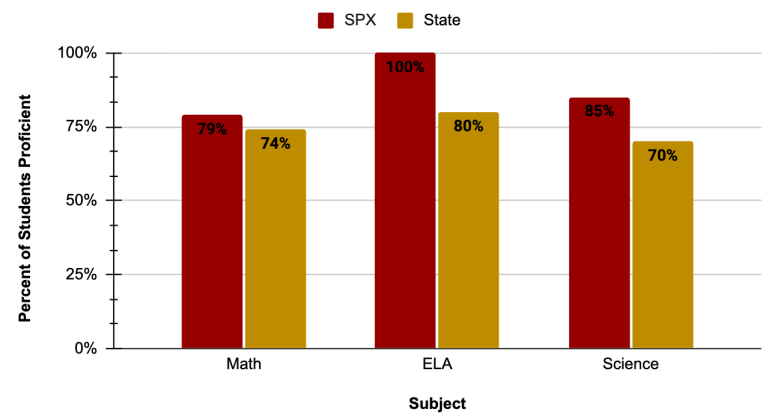
Academic Excellence

This year, our students continued to demonstrate outstanding academic achievement, consistently exceeding state averages on the Iowa State Assessments of Student Progress (ISASP). Our 4th and 8th graders showed impressive growth across key subjects, including English Language Arts, Math, and Science (for 8th grade). Students in 4th grade excelled in foundational skills, while 8th graders showcased strong problem-solving abilities in Math and a deep understanding of scientific principles in Science.

4th Grade ISASP Scores



8th Grade ISASP Scores



These results reflect the dedication and collaboration of our students, teachers, and families, as well as the impact of innovative teaching methods and a focused curriculum. By combining rigorous academics with meaningful support for all learners, we continue to foster both confidence and a love of learning. We are proud of our students' achievements and remain committed to building on this success in the years ahead.

Additional Assessment information:

The **FAST** assessment measures students' reading and math skills, providing insight into growth and achievement across grades K-8 three times a year.

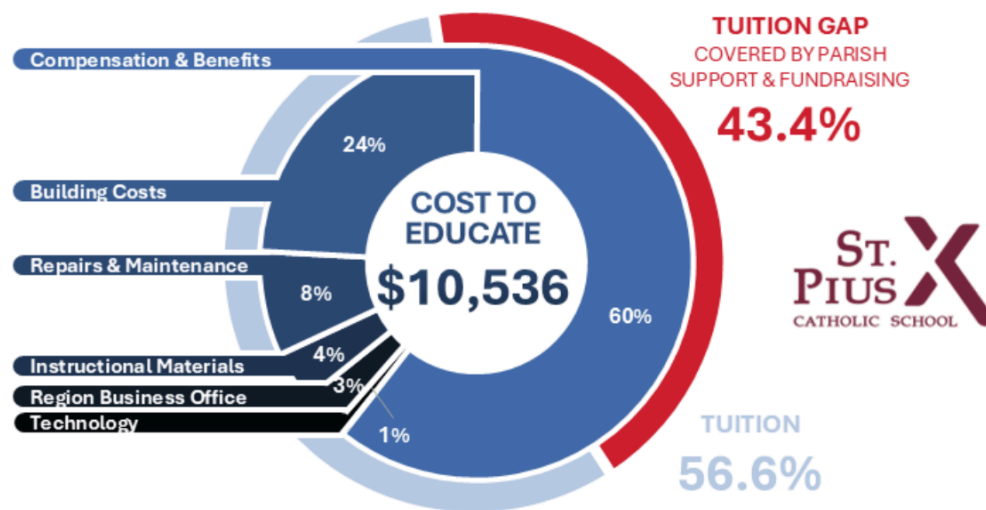
- FAST (Spring Window 2025)
 - 37% of K-8 students scored in the advanced category for Math
 - 50% of K-8 students scored in the advanced category for Reading

The **ACRE** assessment evaluates students' knowledge, faith formation, and Catholic identity, highlighting growth in prayer, moral formation, and understanding of the Church.

- ACRE (Faith Formation Assessment Spring 2025)
 - SPX students scored above diocesan and nationwide averages in all areas
 - Categories include Prayer, Moral Formation, Missionary Spirit, Liturgical Life, Knowledge of the Faith, and Communal Life
 - Moral Formation remains the highest-performing area

Assessments are just one piece of the student picture, reflecting growth academically and spiritually.

Financial Overview



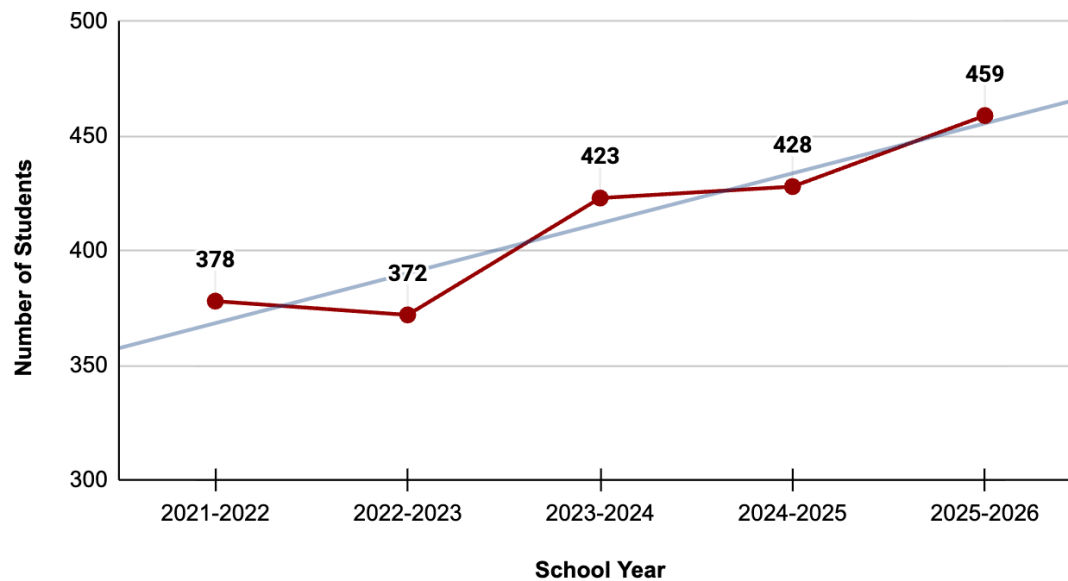
Tuition for the 2026–2027 school year is \$7,500 per student, with active, registered parishioners receiving a parish-supported discount, bringing tuition to \$6,225. Students in grades TK–8 remain eligible for the State of Iowa Students First Education Savings Account (ESA), which provided \$7,988 per student last year.

St. Pius X continues to prioritize operational vitality, ensuring responsible stewardship while investing in our educators and learning environments. Since 2022–2023, teacher compensation has increased 36%, supported by the centralized services of the Des Moines Region Business Office, which provides HR, IT, and financial support for all 12 metro Catholic schools. Academics and faith formation remain guided by the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools Office. Generous parish support and tuition assistance programs, including the Catholic Tuition Organization (CTO) and Diocesan Tuition Assistance (DTA) through the Ignite! Capital Campaign, help keep a Catholic education accessible while sustaining our mission and excellence.



Enrollment

St. Pius X Total School Enrollment

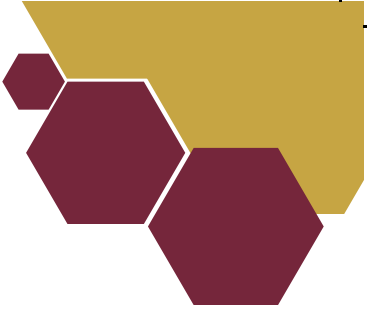


Our school continues to experience strong and steady growth, reflecting the confidence families place in our academic excellence, faith formation, and supportive community. This year, overall enrollment from preschool through 8th grade increased by 8%, with early childhood programs (3-year-old through TK) seeing an impressive 17% growth. We welcomed 74 new students in 2025 bringing fresh energy and perspectives to our classrooms.

Retention remains a hallmark of our school community, with 99% of students returning for the 2026-27 school year and 100% of our TK students enrolled for Kindergarten. These numbers highlight the trust families place in St. Pius X to provide a faith-filled, academically rigorous, and nurturing environment for their children.

As shown in the accompanying five-year enrollment trend graph, our school has seen consistent growth, reflecting both the strength of our programs and the vitality of our parish-school partnership. We are grateful to our families for joining us on this journey and look forward to continuing to grow together in faith, learning, and community.





Student Life

Student life at our school is vibrant, engaging, and rooted in the belief that every child is known, supported, and challenged to grow. From the classroom to the stage, the field, and beyond, students are encouraged to discover their gifts, build confidence, and develop a love of learning. Through strong academic support, enrichment opportunities, co-curricular activities, and meaningful relationships, student life reflects a balanced approach to formation that nurtures the intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual growth of each student.



FAITH FIRST

Faith is at the center of student life, shaping both learning and relationships. Students deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith through opportunities such as the Diocesan Religion Bee, where they demonstrate knowledge of Church teaching, Scripture, and tradition. Programs like Made 4 More provide small-group formation guided by a mentor, creating space for prayer, discussion, and personal growth. Together, these experiences help students build a strong foundation of faith while forming meaningful connections within our school community.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Academic enrichment opportunities challenge students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and apply their learning in meaningful ways. Programs such as Mock Trial, Battle of the Books, and LEGO Robotics invite students in grades 3-8 to extend their thinking beyond the classroom, strengthening skills in problem-solving, communication, creativity, and teamwork. These experiences foster curiosity and confidence while encouraging students to take intellectual risks and grow as independent, motivated learners.



ARTS

The arts are a vibrant part of student life, providing opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and collaboration across all grade levels. Students in grades K-4 shine through the dance squad, while grades 5-8 participate in band, including marching alongside Dowling Catholic High School, jazz band, middle school choir, and a fully staged musical production. These experiences not only develop artistic skills but also build confidence, teamwork, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.



ENGAGING MINDS

Students benefit from a wide variety of learning experiences that extend beyond traditional classroom instruction. STEM and Spanish classes engage students in hands-on problem solving, critical thinking, and global awareness, while projects like the 3rd grade, *Three Little Pigs*, musical bring curriculum to life in creative and interactive ways. Field trips, guest speakers, and other in-school experiences further enrich student learning, providing opportunities for exploration, discovery, and real-world application that complement and enhance daily instruction.

IMPACT REPORT

St. Pius X Catholic School in Urbandale, Iowa, offers student enrollment beginning in Three-Year-Old Preschool. Early childhood programs continue with Four-Year-Old Pre-Kindergarten (including State of Iowa UPK funding options) and Transitional Kindergarten. Kindergarten through eighth grade are offered with two homeroom classrooms in each grade.

BY THE NUMBERS

CURRENT
ENROLLMENT

462

STUDENT TO
TEACHER RATIO

13:1

OF FAMILIES

279

SCHOOL DISTRICTS
REPRESENTED

14

CATHOLIC
STUDENTS

80%

STAFF W/
ADVANCED
DEGREES

15

STUDENTS
RECEIVING ESA

411

LANGUAGES
SPOKEN

14

FUN FACTS

Student Clubs and Activities

Parish Athletics
Battle of the Books
Art Club
Dance Squad
Mock Trial
Made 4 More
Writers Workshop
Math Club
Band
Jazz Band
Girls on the Run
LEGO Robotics
STEM Enrichment Groups
Choir
Middle School Musical

Student Support

PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports): A schoolwide approach that promotes positive behavior, reinforces expectations, and helps students make responsible choices while fostering a safe and supportive learning environment.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports): A framework that provides academic, social, emotional, and behavioral support to meet the needs of all students, ensuring every child can thrive and succeed.

Partnership with Urbandale Public Schools; full time in building Special Education staff, Federal Title funded interventionist, English Language Learner Teacher

Dedicated Full Time Teachers

In addition to full time homeroom teachers in grades PS-5, students benefit from specialist teachers in the following areas.

K - 8th School Counselor
Academic Interventionist
Dir. of Student Support
(School Psychologist)
PE
Music (inc. TK)
Art
Band
Library (inc. TK)
STEM

Middle School Only
Theology
Science
Math
Social Studies
English Language Arts
Spanish (inc. 5th grade)



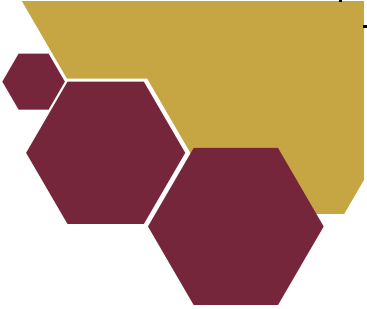
A Saintly Visit

In February 2025, our parish and school community were deeply blessed to host the relic of Saint Carlo Acutis, offering students, families, and visitors a powerful encounter with the Communion of Saints. Through this experience, students learned about Saint Carlo's profound love for the Eucharist and his inspiring witness to the faith through modern technology. The reverence shown by our students throughout the visit was a beautiful reflection of the depth of our Catholic identity and the formative power of lived faith.

Over the ten days the relic was in our care, nearly 4,000 individuals came to venerate Saint Carlo, seek his intercession, and learn about the Eucharistic miracles he worked tirelessly to share with the world. This extraordinary response was a remarkable witness to the vitality of our parish and a humbling reminder of God's providence in allowing our community to host such a sacred experience. We are grateful to Mr. Joe Tallman, Fr. Matthew, Fr. Daniel, our parish and school staff, volunteers, parish groups, and the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem for their leadership, service, and devotion in making this visit possible. Saint Carlo's witness continues to remind us that holiness is possible in every age and that each of us is called to be a saint.

Saint Carlo Acutis was canonized on September 7, 2025.





Faith in Action

Faith at St. Pius X Catholic School is not confined to the classroom or the walls of our church; it is lived daily through prayer, service, and community. Our students and families are invited throughout the year to encounter Christ and put the Gospel into action in meaningful, age-appropriate ways.

During Lent 2025, families were provided with resources to practice Lectio Divina at home, encouraging shared prayer and reflection on Scripture. These moments helped strengthen family faith life and taught students how to listen for God's voice, deepening their relationship with Him and living our call to Love God.

That love naturally extends outward. In the fall, students participated in a schoolwide food drive, learning the importance of generosity and care for those in need. During Advent 2025, our parish and school community came together to assemble 400 Blessing Bags for individuals experiencing homelessness, transforming the season of preparation into active charity and reminding students that welcoming Christ means serving others.

Our middle school students further live this mission through required service hours, intentionally designed to help them learn what it means to love like Jesus. Through service and reflection, students grow in empathy, responsibility, and discipleship as they connect faith to action.

Students and parishioners were also blessed to venerate a first-class relic of St. Teresa of Calcutta, reflecting on her life of prayer, humility, and service. This powerful experience reminded students that holiness is lived through everyday acts of love. Together, these experiences reflect our mission: Love God. Love Others. Make Disciples. Restore All Things in Christ. Through prayer, service, and community, we are forming students who are compassionate, faith-filled, and ready to live the Gospel in the world.





Habemus Papam

Earlier this year, our St. Pius X community mourned the passing of Pope Francis, honoring his life of service, humility, and faith. Shortly thereafter, we celebrated the election of our new Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, a moment of joy and excitement across campus. Students, teachers, and staff gathered to watch the announcement, with church bells ringing and cheers filling classrooms and hallways.

Adding to the excitement, Channel 5 visited our campus to capture the historic moment. Their coverage included recordings of classroom learning, interviews with Mr. Tallman, Mr. Baranosky, students, and families, and reflections on what this transition meant for our school community. Students shared their excitement and faith-filled perspectives, helping to highlight the enthusiasm, curiosity, and prayerful spirit that define St. Pius X.

As a school family, we were blessed to witness this historic moment together, united in prayer and gratitude. We continue to give thanks to God for Pope Leo XIV and pray for him as he begins his sacred mission guiding the Church into the future.



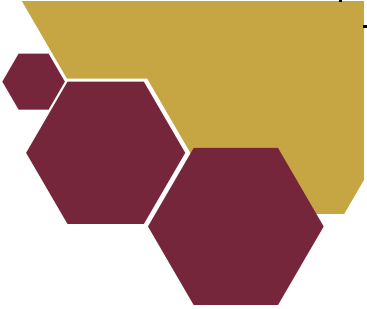


Our Parents

Parents are essential partners in the mission of our school, generously sharing their time, talents, and faith in support of our students and the broader parish community. Families serve on the School Advisory Council, which operates under the Pastoral Council of St. Pius X and advises the pastor on ways to meaningfully involve school families in the life of the parish. Through its committees focused on Faith and Service, Community, and Safety, the SAC helps strengthen connections between parish and school while fostering collaboration and shared responsibility.

Beyond leadership roles, parents give generously of their time through volunteer service, contributing thousands of hours on field trips, classroom support, and schoolwide events such as Field Day. Many parents also support the spiritual life of the school by helping lead prayer experiences, including Stations of the Cross and other liturgical and devotional opportunities. Together, these efforts reflect a vibrant partnership between families, parish, and school, united in the shared mission of forming students academically, spiritually, and socially.





Celebrating our Teachers

Our teachers are the heart of our school, inspiring students every day through their dedication, faith, and expertise. This year, we celebrate a remarkable 95% teacher retention rate, with 85% of our faculty serving at St. Pius X for four years or longer—testament to their commitment to our students, families, and parish community.

Annual staff survey results reflect this strong foundation: teachers gave our school the highest marks for statements such as “Our Catholic identity drives decision making” (3.8/4) and “Teachers support the mission of the school” (3.86/4). These results highlight a shared commitment to faith-driven leadership, collaboration, and the spiritual and academic formation of every child.

Our teachers also embrace continuous growth, both professionally and personally. Professional learning opportunities this year focused on the Science of Reading, youth mental health, and strategies to meet the needs of all learners. Faith formation remains central, with retreats, service experiences, and spiritual development woven into the life of the faculty. By cultivating a growth mindset, our teachers model curiosity, resilience, and lifelong learning for their students while deepening their own knowledge and skills. At St. Pius X, our educators embody the mission, nurture students holistically, and inspire excellence through faith, service, and learning.





Community Partners

Rooted in our mission to form students who serve others and engage with the world around them, our school community thrives through partnerships that enrich learning and foster compassion. Students and our art teacher collaborated with Urbandale Parks and Recreation to learn about and visit a mural at the American Legion, combining creativity with community service. Our youngest learners had an exciting visit from the Urbandale Fire Department, gaining hands-on learning about safety and community service. Sixth graders participated in the Culture of Integrity program with the Urbandale Police Department, exploring ethical decision-making and civic responsibility, while students across grade levels benefited from the BRAVO Passport to Culture, which supports field-based learning and cultural exploration.

Our staff, parents, and community members supported our 30 Burmese families by attending the EMBARC (Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center) gala, demonstrating solidarity and generosity. Additionally, select 8th graders were recognized as Optimist Club winners, reflecting the character, leadership, and civic-mindedness cultivated at St. Pius X. These partnerships provide meaningful experiences for students while strengthening connections between our school, families, and the broader community.





Beyond our School Walls

In November 2025, St. Pius X students and families were given a bold and timely challenge: Fill Mr. B's SUV with food by Friday. With less than 24 hours' notice, our school community was invited to look beyond our school walls and respond to the needs of our neighbors facing food insecurity. Would it be possible to make a meaningful impact so quickly? The answer was a resounding **YES!** By the next day, our families didn't just fill one vehicle—they filled four SUVs, delivering an extraordinary 2,123 pounds of food to the Johnston Partnership food pantry. To put that number into perspective, 2,123 pounds is roughly the weight of a small car, two full-grown polar bears, or three church pianos. More importantly, it represents thousands of meals and a powerful outpouring of generosity.

This pop-up food drive was more than a collection effort—it was a living example of our mission in action. Students, parents, and staff responded with open hearts, demonstrating what it means to love others as Christ calls us to do. In classrooms and homes, conversations centered on compassion, service, and the responsibility we share to care for those in need.

We are proud of our St. Pius X community for responding with urgency, joy, and generosity. This moment reminds us that when we are willing to act—especially on short notice—our collective impact can reach far beyond our school walls.







Contact Us



515-276-1061



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Urbandale, IA 50322

MASS TIMES

WEEKEND

Saturday - 5:00pm

Sunday - 7:00am, 9:00am,
11:00am

WEEKDAY

Monday - Friday - 8:15am

Tuesday - Thursday - 5:15pm



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

We are offering Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the church from 9:30am to 7pm on Wednesdays.

8:15 am Mass followed by Exposition **Please note: Exposition will end at NOON on December 24 and 31.**

5:15 pm Mass followed by Exposition (no Exposition or Benediction following the 5:15 pm Mass on the first Wednesday of the month)

7:00 pm Benediction