

Growing DISCIPLES

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GET THE FACTS ABOUT EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

In 2023, Gov. Reynolds enacted the Student First Bill, allocating state funding via Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) to help eligible Iowa K-12 students attend accredited nonpublic schools. This bill also provides public schools additional funding for students who live in the school's district but attend nonpublic schools.

For the 2024-2025 school year, all incoming kindergarteners and current public school students qualify for an ESA. Plus, many families already enrolled in Catholic schools may qualify for an ESA based on income. By 2025-2026, All K-12 students in Iowa will qualify for an ESA, regardless of income.

Eligible families may receive approximately \$7,600 per child if they apply before the deadline. ESA funds are renewable annually, roll over, and remain available until high school graduation or age 20. We encourage all families to **get the facts** about ESAs and see if your family qualifies at ESAsForIowa.org.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION NOW ENROLLING

Get a jump start on your child's education with Early Childhood Education classes at the Diocese of Des Moines! All of our schools are accredited in the state of Iowa and our Early Childhood curriculum is aligned with Iowa Common Core and our K-8 school curriculum. Coursework includes faith formation, academic growth, social skills development, and enrichment activities like art, PE, library, and computer classes. Our focus on literacy development helps ensure students are at or above grade level across all disciplines by third grade. There's still time to enroll, but space is limited. Email grow@dmdiocese.org to schedule your tour today.

AN IMMERSIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

At the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools, we ardently pursue excellence by fostering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and growth. Our mission is to equip graduates with critical and creative thinking skills, enabling them to solve real-world problems independently and collaboratively. JA BizTown® stands as a pivotal component of our commitment to this mission.

JA BizTown® provides a distinctive educational experience that prepares young students for the complexities of the working world and business environment. This innovative program integrates nine hours of classroom learning with a culminating visit to a fully interactive, simulated town. Here, students actively engage in various roles and responsibilities, gaining invaluable hands-on experience within a real-world setting.

In collaboration with JA BizTown®, thirteen schools within the Diocese of Des Moines annually empower students to explore diverse career pathways, refine financial skills, fulfill civic duties, and foster collaboration with classmates.



St. Malachy students explore careers in medicine.



St. Augustin fifth graders at JA BizTown.

The curriculum is woven into classroom teaching, ensuring that the experience aligns seamlessly with educational objectives and offers a smooth transition from theoretical learning to the dynamic, simulated business environment.

The Des Moines JA BizTown® facility, designed with storefronts, a town hall, a radio station, and other structures mirroring a real town, is the backdrop for this immersive experience. Students assume roles as business owners, employees, and civic leaders, collaboratively managing the town's operations and making decisions regarding commerce, governance, and community involvement. This hands-on, experiential learning method allows students to comprehend the intricate interconnectedness of various community aspects, fostering a holistic understanding.

Students gain practical insights into economics and business and cultivate essential life skills, fostering confidence, teamwork, and an appreciation for the positive impact of individual contributions within a community. JA BizTown® emerges as a transformative experience that meets educational goals and prepares students for success in the complex landscape of the future.

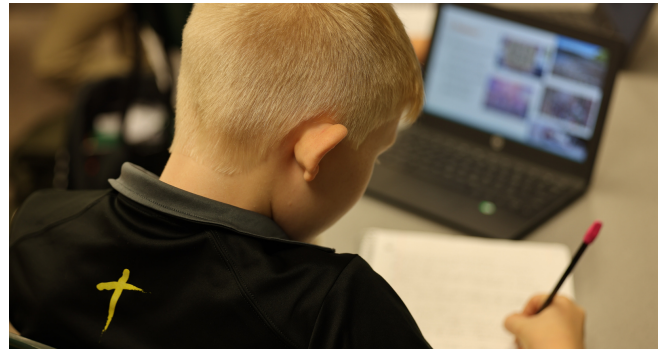
INVENTIONLAND GRANT TO REVOLUTIONIZE SCIENCE CLASSROOMS

St. Albert Catholic announced it is the recipient of an Inventionland Education Grant for the 2023-2024 grant cycle. This grant promises a transformative overhaul of the school's science classrooms, benefiting both faculty and students.

The grant provides three funding opportunities: facility upgrades, STEM curriculum, and teacher professional development. The first of these funding opportunities, the InnovationLabs® Grant, is a matching grant of up to \$250,000 that will significantly reduce the financial burden of design, construction, and outfitting classrooms with cutting-edge Inventionland materials. As a result, this grant will pave the way for an immersive and dynamic learning environment for Saint Albert students.

"I am excited for our students to have a creative space to learn and engage in collaborative activities," said Melissa Johnson, science teacher. "Students will be excited to come into school and see this new space!"

With this funding, the school plans to upgrade its library and middle/high school STEM classrooms to provide a more welcoming and functional workspace designed to harness student creativity and innovation. The building project is still in the planning phase, and the construction timeline will be announced at a future date. Additionally, Inventionland will equip science teachers with the know-how to fully integrate 3D printing and laser cutting into the curriculum to enhance project-based learning opportunities for students in grades 6-12.



As part of the grant agreement, the school has committed to actively participating in interviews and surveys, validating the impact of the redesigned spaces created by Inventionland, tailored explicitly for STEM learning. This collaborative effort seeks to evaluate and affirm the effectiveness of the revamped classrooms in cultivating scientific curiosity and innovation among students.

This grant is pivotal in Saint Albert Catholic School's commitment to providing an unparalleled educational experience. It positions the school to offer its students a transformative educational journey, propelling its science education into a new realm of innovation and hands-on learning.

Inventionland Education brings its award-winning applied STEM innovation curriculum and invention contests to K-12 schools in America and overseas. They also design immersive, age-appropriate Innovation Labs® and maker spaces that inspire creativity and original thought, as well as a complete line of STEM and maker space professional development, delivered in-person or virtually. For more information, visit [InventionlandEducation.com](https://www.inventionlandeducation.com).

Building on the foundation of Catholic values, Saint Albert Catholic inspires students to fulfill their spiritual, academic, moral and physical potential by following the teachings of the Catholic Church. To learn more, visit [saintalbertschools.org](https://www.saintalbertschools.org).

DIOCESE ANNOUNCES HONOREES FOR BISHOP'S CELEBRATION EVENT

The Diocese of Des Moines announced it will honor administrators, educators, and volunteers for their exceptional service to Catholic education during the third annual Bishop's Celebration of Catholic Schools on August 24, 2024. This event unites the entire Diocese of Des Moines community in celebration of the life-changing impact our faith-centered education has provided for more than 150 years. The honorees were selected based on their demonstrated impact on the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools and their commitment to faith, academic excellence, and fostering a vibrant school community. This year's honorees include:

Administrator of the Year

Ann Andersen, Shelby County Catholic School

Teacher of the Year

Jane Brown, St. Augustin Catholic School

Volunteer of the Year

Megan Kluesner, Sacred Heart Catholic School



"This year's nominees exemplify an unwavering commitment to putting faith into practice and a dedicated effort to propagate the Catholic faith through thriving, energetic Catholic schools," said Donna Bishop, Superintendent of Schools. "It is always a challenge to select just three individuals among the outstanding pool of nominees. However, I am confident that the chosen three represent the epitome of excellence in our schools. I continue to be awed by the abundance of individuals who ardently champion for our Catholic schools."

The event also recognizes Honorary Chairs. These individuals stand as esteemed ambassadors, embodying a profound commitment to the values and principles of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines. Selected for their unwavering dedication to fostering the growth and success of Catholic schools, these individuals play a pivotal role in championing the mission of education grounded in faith. This year's Honorary Chairs include Frank Harty of Des Moines and Dennis and Connie Purdum of Creston.

Full bios for each honoree can be found [here](#). To learn more about the Bishop's Celebration of Catholic Schools, visit dmdiocese.org/catholic-schools/support or call 515-237-5079.



Dennis and Connie Purdum,
Honorary Chairs.

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools includes 16 schools serving 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa. Catholic schools in the Des Moines Diocese build Christ-centered, collaborative, inclusive partnerships with parents, students, and parishes to provide innovative academic excellence and inspirational faith formation. To learn more about the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools, visit dmdiocese.org/catholic-schools or email grow@dmdiocese.org.

Growing Disciples is a quarterly publication of the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools Office. Content may not be reproduced without the expressed written consent from the Diocese of Des Moines. To submit a story idea, email grow@dmdiocese.org.



St. Theresa, Des Moines

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