

# Saint Agnes Catholic School Awarded National Blue Ribbon School Designation

*Recognition Highlights School's Academic Performance and the Achievement of Students, Educators and Families*

Arlington, Va. -- Saint Agnes Catholic School, a pre-K-8 school of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington, is being recognized as a high-performing National Blue Ribbon School for 2022 by U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. This is the second time the school has received the award.

The distinction highlights the exemplary achievements of the entire St. Agnes community, including teachers, students, parents and families. Only 50 non-public schools are recognized annually.

"I offer my heart-felt congratulations to the entire St. Agnes Catholic School community!" said Bishop Michael F. Burbidge. "Under the inspired and joyful leadership of Principal Jennifer Kuzdzal and the strong support of pastor Father William Saunders, St. Agnes School offers students a Christ-centered education focused on academic excellence and the development of the whole child."

Bishop Burbidge continued, "This second Blue Ribbon recognition affirms the strength of the school and the great work of the faculty and staff. I commend and thank the entire St. Agnes community for this accomplishment and ask God to continue to watch over and bless the school."

The Department of Education said 297 schools nationwide received the designation in 2022. St. Agnes Catholic School, located in Arlington, was the only private school in Virginia to receive the designation.

"As our country continues to recover from the pandemic, we know that our future will only be as strong as the education we provide to all of our children. Blue Ribbon Schools have gone above and beyond to keep students healthy and safe while meeting their academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. These schools show what is possible to make an enduring, positive difference in students' lives," Cardona said in a statement accompanying the announcement.

Kuzdzal has been a member of the St. Agnes School community for 20 years, first

as a teacher and now as principal.

"The mission of the school is to follow in the footsteps of Christ and St. Agnes, to educate the whole child," Kuzdzal said. "My faculty is incredible, our kids are tremendous, and the parent partnership is so strong. This is a great crowning achievement as we work together to grow our great school. This recognition validates everything we do here, and I am so grateful for the supportive community of St. Agnes."

More than 60 percent of diocesan schools have been awarded this designation. St. Agnes joins Blessed Sacrament Catholic School in Alexandria (2008, 2018) as a two-time awardee. It last received the recognition in 2009. St. James Catholic School in Falls Church is the Diocese's only three-time award winner, having achieved this milestone in 1999, 2014 and 2020.

"We are thrilled by this designation from the Department of Education for St. Agnes. The school is blessed with a diverse group of dedicated, engaging and experienced teachers who love God, love children and sacrifice daily to provide a phenomenal education for their students. This award endorses their dedication and commitment," said Dr. Joseph Vorbach, Superintendent, Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Arlington.

"We are very fortunate in the Diocese to have so many schools who have been nationally recognized in this way. All our educators work tirelessly to provide our students and families with a strong and solid academic foundation, rooted in faith," Vorbach continued.

For more information about St. Agnes Catholic School, please visit their website.

For more information on the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Arlington, please click here.

For more information about the National Blue Ribbon School award program, please click here:

Fast Facts:

- St. Agnes has an enrollment of approximately 450 students, in grades PK-3-8th
- In the elementary school, each grade has two classrooms, with an average class size of 24 students
- Approximately 20% of families identify as being members of a minority community, including African American, Hispanic and Asian
- St. Agnes' proximity to the Pentagon and State Department attracts military and diplomatic families
- 70% of teachers at St. Agnes have a post graduate degree
- The faculty includes teachers who speak seven languages
- There are 41 elementary schools in the Diocese of Arlington, as well as 4 pre-schools, 5 private elementary/middle schools, 4 diocesan high schools, and 2 private high schools
- 27 diocesan schools have received Blue Ribbon status
- Total school enrollment in diocesan schools for the 2022-23 school year is 17,477
- 47% of Diocese of Arlington Catholic school teachers have completed post-graduate work. Our teachers have a combined teaching experience totaling over 16,000 years

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The Catholic Diocese of Arlington was established on August 13, 1974, and is home to 70 parishes and more than 460,000 Catholics. There are currently 276 priests serving in the Diocese and 49 seminarians discerning a priestly vocation.

Geographically, the Diocese includes the seven cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Winchester and the 21 counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Loudoun, Madison, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren and Westmoreland