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HFCA Celebrates National Blue Ribbon



Principal Kate O'Brien (center) celebrates HFCA's Blue Ribbon Award with Mrs. Moynihan's (right) and Mrs. Connelly's 1st grade class. Holy Family Staff

Holy Family Academy Communications

There are few things more joyful than delightfully surprising a child. Multiply that by almost 500 and you have Thursday's exuberant scene at Holy Family Catholic Academy when Principal Kate O'Brien announced that the Inverness school was one of fifty private schools in the nation to earn a 2017 National Blue Ribbon for its exemplary high performance.

The exciting announcement was met with all the expected cheering, music, balloons, and blue confetti and was also streamed live to parents on Facebook. What made HFCA's celebration unique is that students were asked to work in multi-grade teams to create posters on why they feel their beloved school is a Blue Ribbon School. Not surprisingly, the students identified their teachers as the singular best part of their school.

"Our test scores earned us recognition as a High Performing Exemplary School for teaching and learning, but scores are but one part of preparing our students to be effective global thinkers and leaders grounded in faith," states Principal O'Brien.

She attributes the school's success to its dedicated faculty and staff who challenge and support their students while continually looking for innovative ways to teach critical thinking and problem solving skills that prepare students for high school and beyond. It is this culture of continuous improvement that has been a hallmark of the Academy which is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year.

States HFCA's founding principal, Mrs. Jean Noble, "From its beginnings in 2002, Holy Family Catholic Academy has been committed to a culture of continuous improvement. That commitment has continued through the years and is evident today in the forward looking curriculum provided by Principal Kate O'Brien and her wonderful staff."

It was that culture that led to Blue Ribbon recognition and it is also that culture which prompted HFCA to pursue authorization as an International Baccalaureate World School (IB), the first school in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the first known school in the northwest suburbs to apply for candidacy* in the IB Primary Years Programme. Much of the multi-year IB candidacy has been devoted to writing units of inquiry and aligning HFCA's curriculum to the IB framework. This process required a significant amount of training, collaboration and commitment from the entire faculty.

"This is truly the most dedicated and talented faculty with whom I have had the pleasure of working," states Mrs. O'Brien. "I am thrilled that their talent and dedication has been recognized by our students, parents, and now formally by the US Department of Education."

*Candidacy is not a guarantee of authorization.

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