



Submitted » **HFCA Students
Raise a Flag for
Patriotism**



HFCA's Flagpole Team: Caroline Mahdik, Principal Kate O'Brien, and Lincoln ThiemHFCA Staff

Holy Family Catholic Academy

How often have we heard, "Need an answer? Just google it!" Today's digital natives, those brought up with technology like the Internet, computers, and mobile devices, are adept at finding answers to factual questions in seconds. But the process of finding solutions to difficult and complex problems takes higher level thinking skills and equally important, takes time.

Developing critical thinking and problem solving skills is a hallmark of Holy Family Catholic Academy's nationally and

internationally recognized curriculum and instruction. As the only International Baccalaureate World School in the Northwest suburbs, HFCA's teachers rely on worldwide best practices to assist them in attaining this lofty goal.

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While education has historically focused on the cognitive skills of remembering, understanding and applying facts, HFCA recognizes that the global workforce requires people who can research, analyze, communicate, collaborate and make confident decisions. These skills cannot be taught by asking and answering questions found in a textbook. HFCA teachers go beyond textbooks and transform learning by listening to learning by doing.

A case in point is HFCA's 4th grade government unit. Students researched 16 types of governments around the world, learned which laws are made at the local, state, and federal government level, and collaborated with classmates to prepare a "bill" for a new rule for Holy Family Catholic Academy. Just like in real life, not all bills made it out of committee.

States 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Debbie Toussaint, "Student teams were challenged to create a potential new rule that was aligned with the values and mission of HFCA. This process included collaborating with team members, presenting their issue to classmates, and ultimately bringing their idea to the principal and assistant principal for approval." A bill requesting the installation of a permanent flagpole on the Holy Family campus earned the support from both the class and the administration.

The final step in the process included meeting with the Academy parent association who, based on the students' compelling presentation, provided funding to help finance the flagpole.

Adds 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Lorry Liesenberg, "Our students clearly learned about the function of government, and equally important, they learned that real-world problems do not have quick solutions." The students recommended the flagpole in May 2018 and patiently followed the process until its installation in July 2019. States Lincoln Thiem, member of the flagpole team, "I really learned a lot. It's so cool that our idea actually became a reality and so many people helped!"

Concludes Principal Kate O'Brien, "The new flagpole looks amazing, and we are so proud of our students' contribution to this effort. It is so rewarding to see HFCA students become confident learners and problem solvers of real-world issues."

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