



Sustaining Mental Health and Wellness in Our Catholic Schools

# Peace<sup>+</sup> of MIND

“Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding  
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7

# WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2015, the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE) partners with all 78 preschool through eighth-grade Catholic schools in the greater Twin Cities metro area to guide more than 21,000 students on the journey toward realizing how God is calling them to greatness. Our mission is to help Catholic schools enhance excellence and increase enrollment.

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**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**  
**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Catholic Schools,

Being a kid has never been easy. Facing challenges is part of growing up.

However, today's young students are contending with a world that is almost unrecognizable from the one in which most of us lived as children. From changes in technology, to modes of social interaction, to entertainment standards, to what they see and hear in the news, growing up these days brings challenges that often overburden our children's minds and too routinely cause lasting harm.

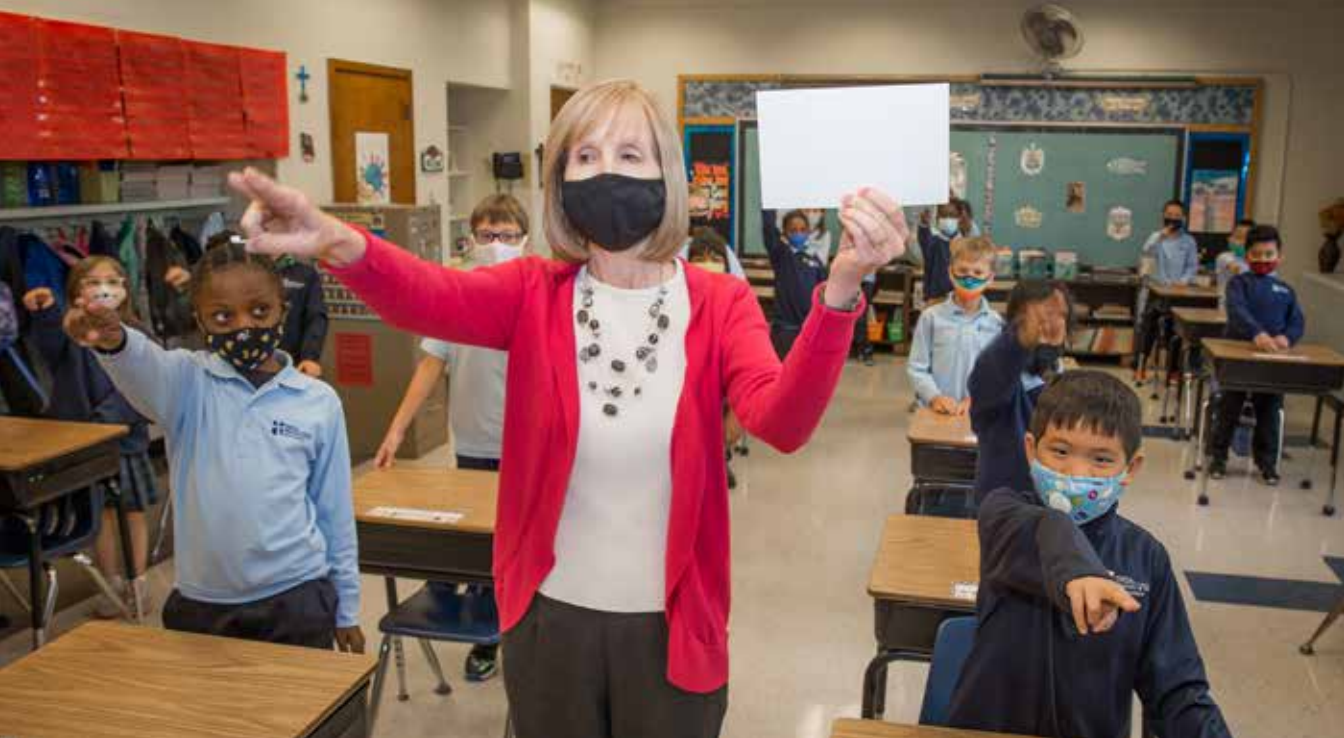
To complement the whole-child education that Catholic schools provide to students — mind, body and soul — CSCOIE has developed an important initiative for our Catholic schools that helps not only students, but also parents, principals and teachers work through struggles and improve mental health and well-being. We call this initiative Peace of Mind.

In partnership with local experts at Phoenix School Counseling and with your support, we can deliver Peace of Mind to all who need help in the 78 valiant Catholic schools that CSCOIE serves. I welcome you to learn about it here, and further at [cscoc-mn.org/initiative/peace-of-mind](https://cscoc-mn.org/initiative/peace-of-mind).

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Ragatz". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brian Ragatz



## SNAPSHOT OF CSCOE'S IMPACT

Thanks to CSCOE's partnership with Groves Academy and Cretin-Derham Hall High School, 44 Catholic schools participate in **Believe and Read**, a best-in-class literacy program with the goal of ensuring that each student reads at or above grade level by fourth grade. CSCOE works to add more schools to the program every year.

In collaboration with the University of St. Thomas School of Engineering, CSCOE continues operating the **C-STEM Lending Library**, lending hundreds of cutting-edge kits and materials to Twin Cities preschool to eighth-grade Catholic schools — more than 700 to date.

CSCOE established and/or expanded **72 Catholic preschool and early-childhood programs**.

The **Latino enrollment team** enrolled 116 new students from 77 families for the 2020-21 school year, bringing the team enrollment total to more than 350 students over the past three years.

Provided **technology assessments and upgrades** of WiFi, bandwidth, hardware and professional development in 70 schools that requested them.

Connected and convened more than 2,100 school faculty and staff at the **Catholic Schools Summit of Excellence** professional development conference.

United more than 13,000 Catholic school students to participate in the **Mass of the Holy Spirit**, an all-school Mass held in 2016 and 2018.

*Participation is optional. CSCOE is 100% opt-in!*

# OUR CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITY

Catholic school communities are in unprecedented times, serving students and families who are dealing with anxiety, fear and depression. According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in five students in classrooms across America have mental and behavioral health symptoms significant enough to warrant diagnosis and treatment, but only about one-third of these children get the help they need.

Of those who do get help, 80% get only what is available at school. With Minnesota's state ratio of *one counselor to about 750 students* being one of the lowest in the nation, it is no wonder that many students fall through the cracks. At our Catholic schools, the counselor-to-student ratios are better, but we still fall short of the overwhelming need.

The Catholic Schools Center of Excellence can help bring peace of mind to these school communities through practical experiences, education and effective techniques that can be tailored to various settings.

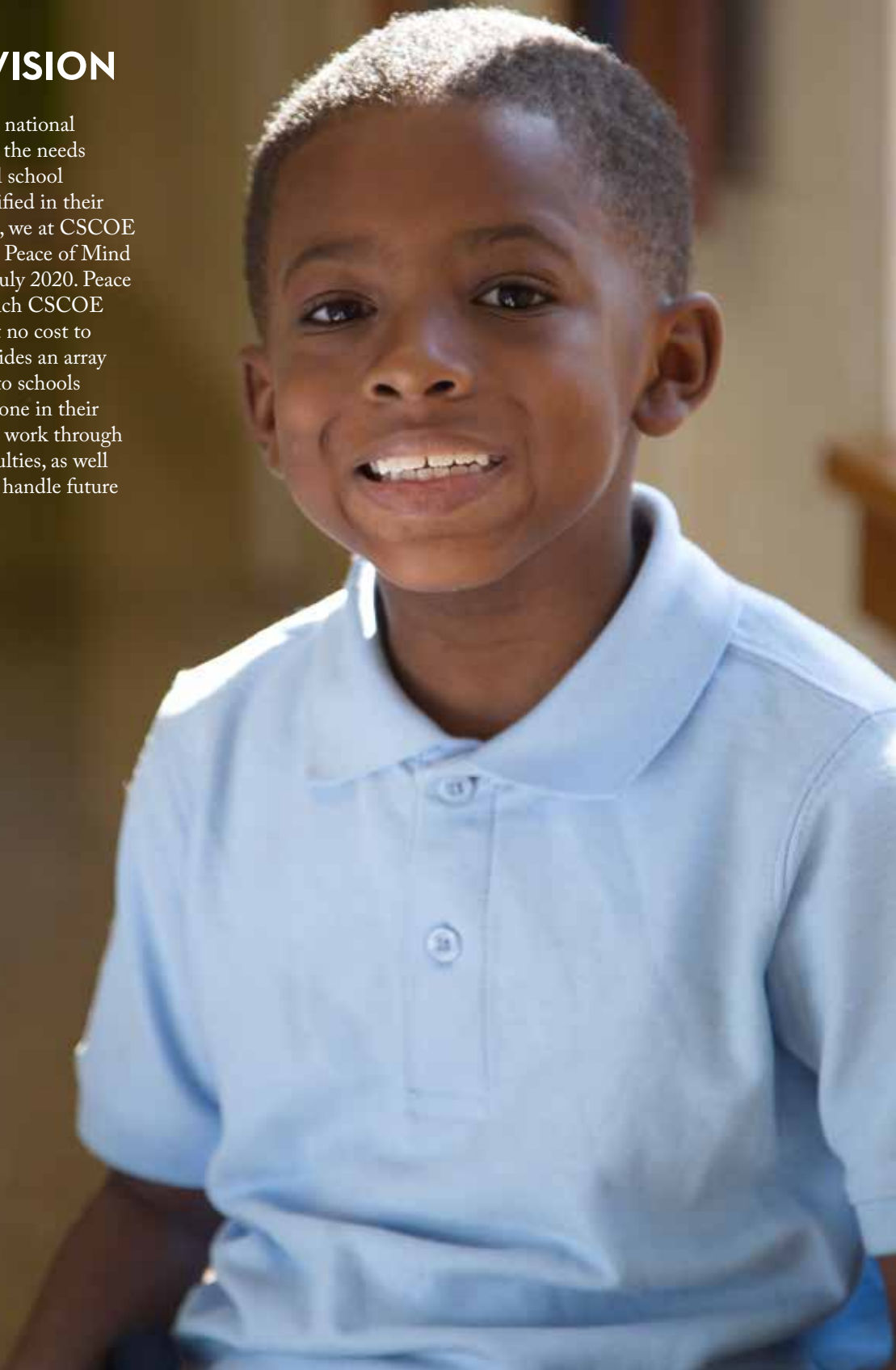


## ONLY ABOUT ONE-THIRD

of students who need help with mental and  
behavioral health symptoms receive it.

# OUR VISION

Prompted by national statistics and the needs that our local school leaders identified in their communities, we at CSCOE launched the Peace of Mind initiative in July 2020. Peace of Mind, which CSCOE fully funds at no cost to schools, provides an array of resources to schools to help everyone in their communities work through today's difficulties, as well as prepare to handle future challenges.



THE REVIEWS AND FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS  
HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY POSITIVE.

**“I learned more in one hour than  
in two years of therapy.”**

**“I really want my husband to see this.”**

**“I took away great concrete strategies  
that were really helpful.”**

**“Is there any chance Dr. Jules would ever  
do a presentation for young kids?  
I’d love for my children to hear her.”**

**“You named the emotion my 13-year-old  
and I are struggling with ... grief.”**

# HOW

Peace of Mind, in partnership with the Twin Cities-based Phoenix School Counseling team, offers a menu of services tailored to support Catholic school principals, teachers, parents and students:

- ❶ Principals can join small virtual groups to share experiences and learn strategies for handling trauma, anxiety and stress. Each principal can also access individual confidential consultations with a licensed psychologist, and attend a wellness retreat.
- ❷ Teachers can access videos and live virtual sessions on mental health-related topics. Each school can also designate staff members to take certification courses on how to address anxiety and ADHD.
- ❸ Parents can participate in monthly virtual presentations led by a licensed psychologist, download free resources about social and emotional learning, and access educational videos.


The Phoenix team, led by licensed psychologist Dr. Jules Nolan, an expert in mental health, parenting and child/adolescent development, helps teachers and parents learn prevention methods such as fostering students' social and emotional learning (SEL). The five widely recognized SEL skills are:

- ◆ Self-awareness: Understanding and managing emotions
- ◆ Self-management: Setting and achieving positive goals
- ◆ Social awareness: Feeling and showing empathy for others
- ◆ Relationship skills: Establishing and maintaining positive relationships
- ◆ Responsible decision-making: Making constructive and respectful choices

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**Peace of Mind has been the best resource for schools this year. I attend all of the sessions and have been so thankful to have that hour each month to learn and take in more time on how to be my best as a parent, but then also as a principal and school leader.**

**BECKY KENNEDY, PRINCIPAL, OUR LADY OF THE LAKE  
CATHOLIC SCHOOL, MOUND**



# PEACE OF MIND IS ALREADY WORKING

Since fall 2020, we've hosted approximately 5,000 participants — principals, teachers and parents — in Peace of Mind presentation sessions and support groups. Some of the participants have watched the parent/teacher presentations with friends and colleagues, increasing the number of participants well past 5,000.



## PEACE OF MIND PARTNER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

As with everything we do, we look to improve and expand to meet more people's needs. Our Peace of Mind Partner School Initiative allows us to:

- ◆ In 10 Catholic schools, train every staff member in how to address childhood anxiety and student mental health.
- ◆ Provide schools with a professional school counselor one more day per week.
- ◆ Support student needs in all grades, especially middle school, with an intentional and age-appropriate approach.
- ◆ Offer teachers and staff members direct support for their own mental health and wellness.
- ◆ Give individualized assistance to both parents and school staff members to address an immediate concern of a child.
- ◆ Establish a sustainable mental health and wellness program.

# INVESTING IN GOOD MENTAL HEALTH PAYS OFF

We all need help sometimes. Children, especially, aren't able to recognize when their mental health needs a boost.

When adults can identify or even anticipate unwanted behavior, emotional outbursts, stress, anxiety or depression in children, then they can employ positive prevention strategies and coping techniques to manage situations and restore well-being.

Through CSCOE's skilled partner, Phoenix School Counseling, the team offers professional expertise and proven approaches to teach emotion management to achieve positive outcomes.

- ◆ Research indicates that age-appropriate Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) skills are better predictors of positive outcomes for students than are IQ, class rank or grades in school. (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning – [casel.org](http://casel.org))
- ◆ Emotional intelligence — being able to recognize, understand, label, express and regulate emotion — predicts not only good mental health outcomes, but also achievement in school. (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence – [ycei.org](http://ycei.org))
- ◆ Children who have more words around emotion in first and second grade are less anxious and depressed in sixth and seventh grade. (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence – [ycei.org](http://ycei.org))



**Children especially aren't able to recognize when their mental health needs a boost.**



## YOUR IMPACT OPPORTUNITY

### *Why we need your help*

Our Peace of Mind initiative can make a difference in the lives of students at a time when the world and our culture have become unsure places. Today, good mental health is not guaranteed. We ask that you help Catholic schools improve wellness and bring peace of mind to those who need it.

### *Our invitation to you*

Please prayerfully consider a philanthropic investment in the lives of young students by helping implement Peace of Mind in their schools. This is just the beginning.

**TO MAKE PEACE OF MIND PART OF YOUR OWN LIVING LEGACY, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**Mike Halloran, Vice President of Development and Operations**

**612-269-802 / [mikehalloran@cscocoe-mn.org](mailto:mikehalloran@cscocoe-mn.org)**



**My strong faith, love of children  
and past work as a clinician in the mental health arena  
have fueled my passion for supporting Peace of Mind.  
My current work in our schools has illuminated the  
immediate need for increased resources.**

LISA M. ANDERSON, PEACE OF MIND CAMPAIGN CHAIR



LISA ANDERSON PICTURED WITH NIECES AND NEPHEWS

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**All any parent wants is for their child to be happy and healthy, and to have the tools to process things in the future, because we're setting them up for their future life. So, the more resources we have, the more tools we can give them.**

**- CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT**



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