



**BELIEVE  
AND READ**

Awakening Literacy Greatness in Our Catholic Schools

## Who we are

Founded in 2015, the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (CSCOE) partners with all 79 preschool through eighth grade Catholic schools in the greater Twin Cities metro area to accompany more than 21,000 students on the journey toward realizing how God is calling them to greatness. Our mission is to help Catholic elementary schools enhance excellence and increase enrollment.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Catholic Schools,

Did you know that in America today, the number of students who are not reading at grade level by third grade is 60 percent?

While the average number of young struggling readers in our Catholic school system is not 60 percent, we are close to 20 percent.

That's certainly not good enough for us.

Fortunately, CSCOE found a solution. It's a partnership with Groves Academy, a national expert in reading instruction. We call it Believe and Read. It's a three-year program that transforms literacy instruction through outstanding professional development and teacher coaching. One of the many benefits of Believe and Read is that it supports both struggling readers *and* highfliers!

Thanks to the generosity of Cretin-Derham Hall Catholic High School, Believe and Read is being implemented in 44 Catholic schools. Looking to the future, we hope the program can be an option for every one of our schools. However, we can't do it without you.

With your generous support, you can make a profound impact by making literacy a reality for each of the precious children that our 79 preschool through eighth grade Catholic schools serve.

Thank you for your support and partnership.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ragatz'.

Brian Ragatz

## CSCOE'S IMPACT



Established and/or grew 72 preschool and early childhood programs.



Provided technology assessments and upgrades of WiFi, bandwidth, hardware and professional development in 79 schools that requested them.



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



Opened a Latino enrollment office to help more Latino families access a Catholic education. The team personally enrolled nearly 350 new students in the last three years.



In collaboration with the University of St. Thomas, created a STEM Lending Library. In the first two years of operation, 713 loans were provided to 63 schools.



United more than 13,000 Catholic school students to participate in the Mass of the Holy Spirit, an all-school Mass at U.S. Bank Stadium.

*School participation is optional. CSCOE is 100 percent opt-in!*

## OUR CHALLENGE & OUR OPPORTUNITY

Reading is the foundation for educational success and life opportunities. Unfortunately, many of the K-3 students in our Catholic schools still do not have the skills to build this foundation. Children without the necessary literacy skills can fall behind quickly, and the consequences last a lifetime.

Let's fix this.



## OUR VISION

**Believe and Read** is a best-in-class literacy program. Powered by the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence, and in partnership with Groves Academy and Cretin-Derham Hall Catholic High School, our goal is to ensure every student is at or above grade-level reading by fourth grade – because we believe that God calls every child to greatness.



## HOW

**Believe and Read** brings an explicit, systematic reading instruction and literacy framework to Catholic elementary schools. It is designed to transform one student, one teacher and one school at a time.

### EVIDENCE-BASED

Groves Academy is an industry leader with more than 50 years in literacy research and training. Its unique literacy framework has been recognized twice for “Excellence in Education” by the U.S. Department of Education.

### COMPLEMENT EXISTING CURRICULUM

The program is designed to improve and enhance the reading teaching methods that schools use.

### TEACHER SUPPORT

Literacy coaches from Groves Academy work with teachers in participating **Believe and Read** schools over a three-year period. The result of this “train the trainer” approach is sustainability and consistency across participating schools.

### PHONICS-BASED INSTRUCTION

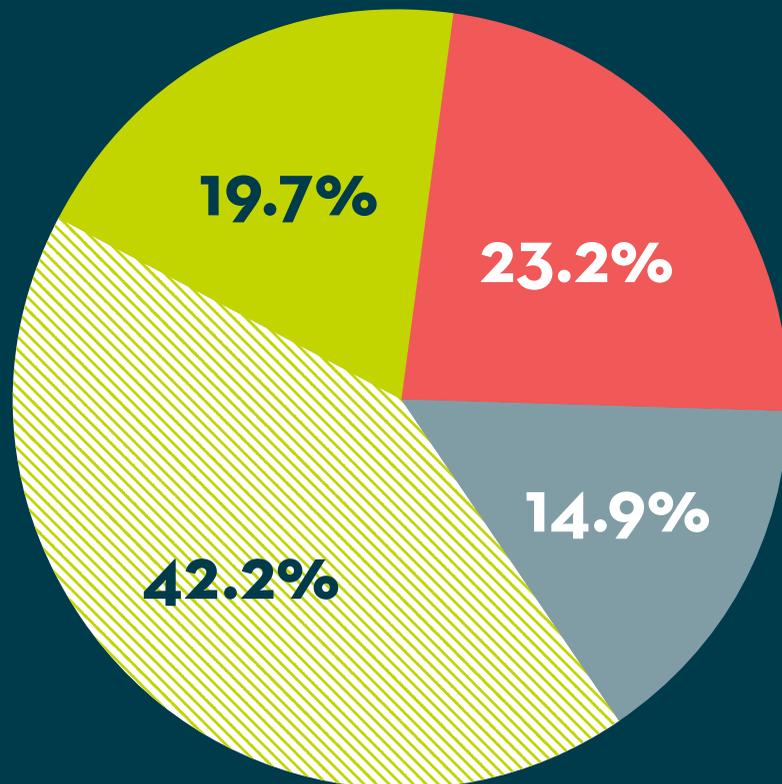
In addition to building kids’ vocabulary and comprehension skills through their regular reading lessons, teachers incorporate a daily 30-minute phonics-based lesson to ensure that students are grasping the reading rules they’ll need to one day achieve fluency.

*“Our daughter did not learn the same way as our son. So, when she started kindergarten, she could recognize two letters and knew none of their sounds. Through the Believe and Read framework, she’s confident, writing sentences and starting to read on her own.”*

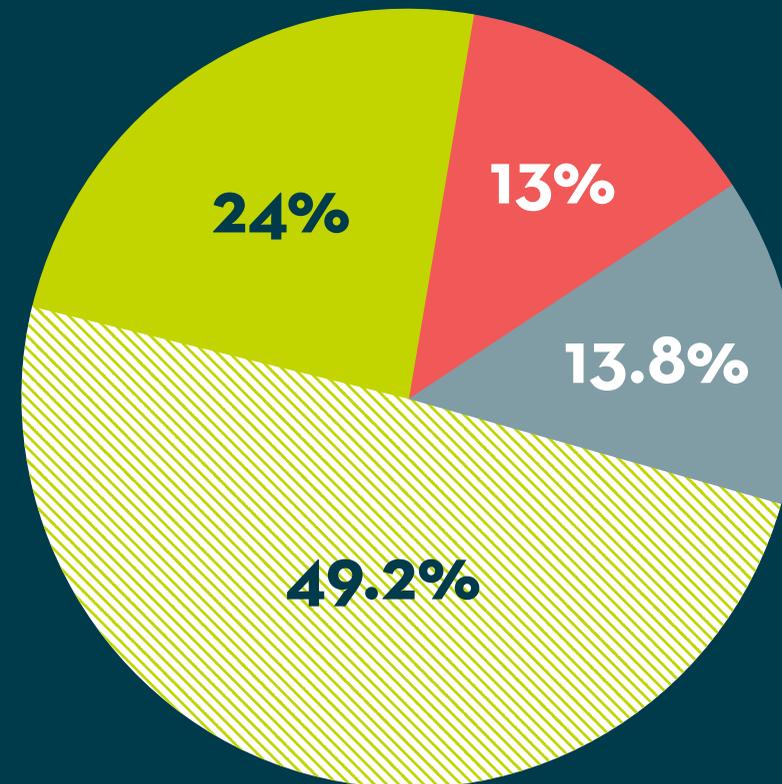
Kate, Catholic school parent

## STUDENTS BY RISK CATEGORY / GRADES 1 - 3

FALL 2020



SPRING 2021



**56% OF STUDENTS**  
at moderate risk in the fall were reading  
at or above grade level by spring.

**1 IN 5 STUDENTS**  
at grade level were reading above grade level (in  
the top 25% of the nation) by the end of the year.

**50% REDUCTION**  
of high risk students in the spring,  
after just one year of instruction



## THE LIFELONG IMPACT OF ILLITERACY

**61 percent of Minnesota fourth-graders and 65 percent of U.S. fourth-graders cannot read proficiently.**

- National Assessment of Educational Progress

**Children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma.**

- Annie E. Casey Foundation

**70 percent of U.S. prison inmates cannot read above the fourth-grade level.**

- National Institute for Literacy

**75 percent of unemployed adults have reading or writing difficulties.**

- National Institute for Literacy

**Only 5 percent of Americans with strong literacy skills live in poverty.**

- National Institute for Literacy

# YOUR IMPACT OPPORTUNITY

## *Why We Need Your Help*

Because **Believe and Read** is working, we want — and need — to reach more students. And we are. Catholic school enrollment has increased to a point where we'll have more students involved with Believe and Read than we anticipated, so the need for additional coaches and other support resources is even greater. Our hope is that you will make Believe and Read a personal passion and that together, we will profoundly change the trajectory of thousands of children's lives and help strengthen our Catholic school system.

## *Our Invitation to You*

Please prayerfully consider a philanthropic investment in the lives of thousands of children by helping implement Believe and Read in their schools over a three-year period.

- Sponsor a **Believe and Read** school: \$75,000
- Sponsor a **Believe and Read** classroom: \$14,000
- Sponsor a **Believe and Read** student: \$600

**To make Believe and Read part of your own living legacy, please contact:**

Mike Halloran  
Vice President of Development and Operations  
Catholic Schools Center of Excellence  
612-269-802 | [mikehalloran@cscoc-mn.org](mailto:mikehalloran@cscoc-mn.org)



*"The gift of literacy stays with someone their entire lifetime. It's too precious not to be part of."*

Mary and Michael Cole, Believe and Read campaign chairs

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**MICHAEL COLE**  
*Global Business Educator*  
L'Oreal



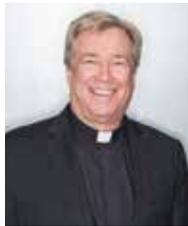
**STEVE RYAN**  
*Partner-in-charge*  
Taft



**GAIL DORN**  
*Executive Chair*  
Catholic Schools Center of  
Excellence Board of Directors



**MICHELLE  
SCHLEHUBER**  
*Title I Reading Teacher*



**FR. KEVIN FINNEGAN**  
*Pastor*  
Our Lady of Grace  
Catholic Church



**KATHY SCHNEEMAN**  
*Catholic Author and  
Community Volunteer*



**STEVE HOEPPNER**  
*Vice President*  
Richard M. Schulze  
Family Foundation



**ANITA AROCKIASAMY  
WILLS**  
*Former Director of  
Enrollment Management*  
Visitation School



**BRIAN RAGATZ**  
*President*  
Catholic Schools Center  
of Excellence



**ROBERT WOLLAN**  
*Former Global  
Managing Director*  
Accenture Strategy

*We believe ...*

... in serving our Catholic schools.  
They support the whole child in mind, body and soul.

... in forming critical thinkers with mature moral values,  
which they will carry with them their entire lives.

... in sharing innovative ideas, sound business practices,  
proven strategies and financial resources to help meet each school's  
specific academic, business and spiritual goals.

... that Catholic schools will help our children  
become leaders who will make the world a better place.

... that reading opens doors, builds confidence and  
fosters a lifelong love of learning.

**AND WE BELIEVE** that you can play a part.

*Thank you.*

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
**CENTER OF EXCELLENCE**

6600 France Avenue South, Suite 520  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55435

[cscoc-mn.org](http://cscoc-mn.org) • 612-425-1105