

Spring 2024



Five Circles of Light

The First Step Toward Success is Showing Up
Student attendance is a key indicator of future achievement

Two years ago, Heydi first arrived at Risen Christ as a 6th grader. “I was nervous to join a new school and meet new people, but the teachers, staff and students were very welcoming,” Heydi shared, reflecting on her time at Risen Christ now as an 8th grader. She emphasized the importance of positive relationships and entering a welcoming environment, “I instantly made new friends and felt comfortable. Students are taught to never disrespect and always make everyone feel safe.”

Showing up to school for the first day can be challenging and schools in the state of Minnesota are finding it difficult to keep students in the classroom – well beyond the first day. One third of Minnesota students are chronically absent, a state report revealed. Chronically absent students are defined as those missing over 10% of the school year.

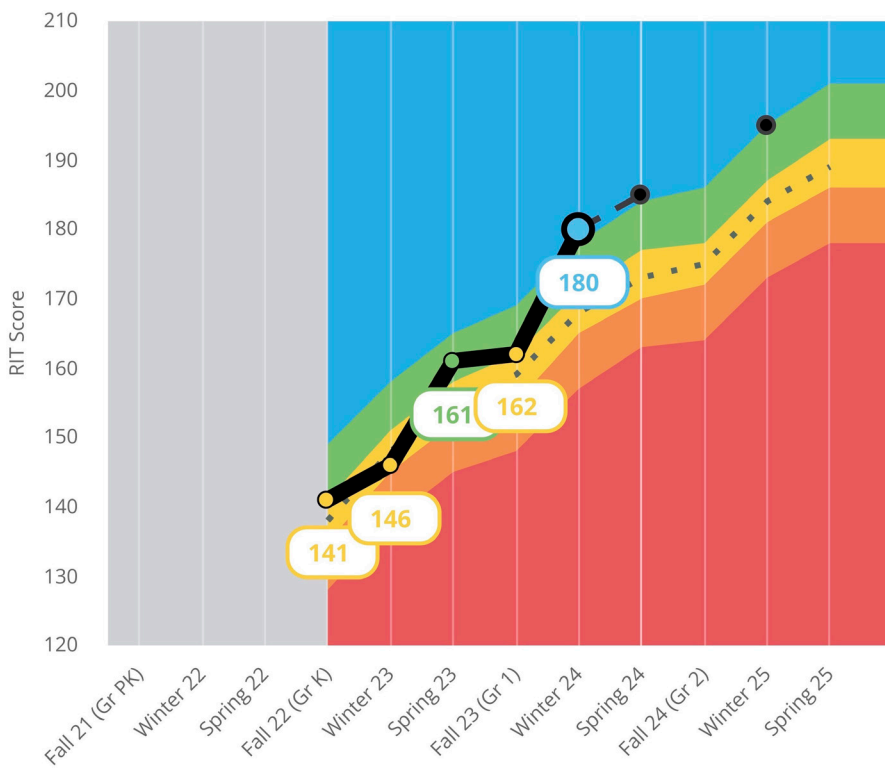
The figures are worse for students living in poverty. In Minneapolis Public Schools, 56% of students live in poverty and the consistent attendance rate is only 46%. At Risen Christ, 89% of students live in poverty, but average daily attendance is 93%.

Why is daily attendance so important?

Studies show that students who miss more than two weeks of class annually during middle school only have a 66% chance of graduating high school, compared to 93% for those missing two or fewer days. Not only do we have exemplary daily attendance at Risen Christ, we also retain 90% of students from one year to the next. When students start at Risen Christ, they stay at Risen Christ.

Risen Christ’s graduates not only complete high school, but often become the first in their families to attend college or pursue other postsecondary programs. Supported by scholarships, 73% of Risen Christ’s 2023 graduates are currently attending a local Catholic high school and on their way to pursuing a post-secondary education.

Attendance continued inside ...



ATTENDANCE FUELS ACHIEVEMENT

- RIT Score: Math
- Projected Score: Math
- Average Achievement

The chart shows Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results for a 1st grade student in math since arriving at Risen Christ. Teachers administer the MAP in reading and math in both English and Spanish three times each year. This particular 1st grade student started at Risen Christ in Kindergarten, arriving in the U.S. with her family from South America. She has only missed one day of school. Her consistent daily attendance has played a key role in her strong and steady academic improvement thus far, and vastly improves her chances for continued success at Risen Christ, into high school and beyond.

What are the strategies? Risen Christ practices all four.

According to Ed Allies—a Minnesota-based education advocacy nonprofit—researched-backed strategies for improving attendance include: fostering positive relationships at school, connecting with students’ identities, engaging parents and being aware of life at home.

Teachers and staff work very hard to build positive relationships and a welcoming environment for students. In November 2023, 100% of teachers reported through an anonymous Insight Survey that Risen Christ is a “fun and joyful place to work and learn.” Students reinforce this sentiment as well. Aileen, an 8th grader said, “My experience at Risen Christ has been nothing but joyful memories. I love my friends and all my teachers. This strengthens me as a person and a student.” Aileen’s classmate Marilyn agreed, “Risen Christ has helped me improve my grades. This is because the teachers are motivating me to be the best version of myself.”

Risen Christ’s dual immersion model was established in 2014 to meet the growth of its predominantly Spanish-speaking community, transforming the school into a destination for families and staff that represent cultures from nine different countries. As Aileen commented, “Risen Christ teaches you that we are multiple personalities and cultures able to get along and love each other like God intended.”

Risen Christ’s City Connects Coordinator, Maggie Longsdorf, plays a crucial role in creating a sense of community for families. Maggie connects students and their families to resources in the community. In severe circumstances, families can receive urgent support through a Family Emergency Fund, generously supported by donors. Risen Christ also provides incentives for families to attend an ongoing Parent Education Series to build capacity as the first educators of their children. Each of these initiatives contributes to a collaborative partnership between parents and the school.

Listen to your parents!

Each spring, Risen Christ conducts the New Teacher Project (TNTP) Parent Insight Survey, providing families the opportunity to share feedback about their experiences with all aspects of our organizational culture and practices. We were thrilled to see 95% of parents agreed that their child’s language, culture and background were reflected by their child’s teachers. In addition, families recently completed a separate survey specifically related to our reaccreditation process with MNSAA (the Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association), providing critically important ideas and feedback that will inform the development of our new strategic plan for the future of Risen Christ.

When asking Marilyn about finding Risen Christ, she said, “My parents transferred me to Risen Christ because my mom heard from a friend that Risen Christ was a really good school. She said the teachers were very good and the staff were very nice and helpful no matter what. I will always thank my parents for sending me to Risen Christ. The school has given me a great education as I prepare for high school.”

By implementing these strategies in partnership with parents and families, Risen Christ is proud to stand as a beacon of success in tackling chronic absenteeism while maintaining a joyful, welcoming environment that is committed to academic excellence and financial accessibility for all students.



30th Anniversary Gala

Friday • April 19th
The Depot Minneapolis

5:30 PM
Cocktail Reception & Live Music

7:00 PM
Dinner & Program

9:00 PM
Dessert Reception

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Live Music by Local Musicians
- Premiere of Risen Christ's Feature Film
- Performance by Risen Christ's Gala Choir
- Exciting Live Auction with Halie Behr
- Raffle Drawing with Prizes of \$2,000, \$1,000 & \$500

Scan the code to visit our Gala website for tickets, tables, silent auction, raffle tickets and much more!

risenchristschool.org/gala



Live Auction Preview

A 5-Day Escape for 2 to the Old Head of Kinsale, Ireland, the most scenic golf course in the world!



Authentic Italian Dinner for 8 People, Hosted and Prepared by Fr. John Forliti



Food Building Tour & Tasting for 12 with Fr. Joe Gillespie & Kieran Folliard

PROXY BIDDING

If you cannot attend, but you would like to bid by proxy to participate in the Live Auction, please contact:

James DeLong '95
Director of Advancement
jdelong@risenchristschool.org
(612) 234-8439



Risen Christ CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1120 East 37th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 4696

Ms. Byrne Has a Message for Alumni!



Address Service Requested

Learn More on our Alumni Page:
risenchristschool.org/alumni



SAVE the DATE! Risen Christ All-School Reunion Saturday, May 18, 2024 at 10am - 2pm



All are welcome to gather as a community of students, families, alumni, teachers, staff, volunteers, donors and more to reconnect and celebrate 30 years!

Visit our Alumni Facebook Page
for the latest info and updates:



The cost to produce this newsletter and other print communications is generously underwritten by an anonymous donor.