



## **ST. FRANCIS SELECTED FOR NATION'S TOP 50 CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS**

**November 10, 2008, Traverse City, Mich.** – Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools' (GTACS) St. Francis High School received today the honor of being named one of the nation's top 50 Catholic High Schools by the National Catholic High School Honor Roll. St. Francis High School was selected out of the nearly 1,300 Catholic schools in the United States.

The National Catholic High School Honor Roll announced today its fifth selection of the best 50 Catholic secondary schools in the United States. The purpose of the Honor Roll is to recognize and encourage excellence in Catholic secondary education. It is a critical resource for parents and educators that distinguishes those schools that excel in three categories:

- Academic excellence
- Catholic identity
- Civic education

St. Francis Principal, Erick Chittle, recognizes the school's talented teaching staff, "This honor stems from the work of our outstanding teaching staff – a staff committed to push each student to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential." He continues, "The key to our success is that we apply Catholic teachings throughout the curriculum, and that requires above-and-beyond dedication."

In celebration of the recognition, GTACS Superintendent Mike Buell hosted special assemblies Monday at each of the school system's buildings throughout Traverse City to share the news with students and parents, and to honor GTACS' well-respected faculty. Mr. Buell's exciting announcement at each school was accompanied by prayers of thanksgiving, praise music, and performances by the St. Francis marching band. All faculty and staff were presented with certificates acknowledging their role in St. Francis receiving this prestigious honor.

Mr. Buell expressed great satisfaction for St. Francis' accomplishment, "We have strived all along for exemplary education, and we challenge our students to apply their Catholic faith," he said. "But to receive recognition that we're amongst the best in the country is humbling and uplifting. I am extremely proud of our faculty and students' dedication to raising the bar."

The best schools demonstrate a balanced excellence, which includes an active Catholic culture, sound college preparation and integration of Church teaching in all departments. These schools prepare students for vocations in the world as political, religious, scientific, education and business leaders.

This year's list includes 10 new honorees as well as eight schools that have earned recognition each of the Honor Roll's five years of existence. Michigan and Texas led the top 50 with six schools selected in each state. To see a list of the top 50 schools, as well as lists of the 10 honorable mention schools in each category, visit [www.chshonor.org](http://www.chshonor.org).

The Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute, an international research and educational organization. It is produced in consultation with an advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and scholars. Advisory board member Very Rev. David M. O’Connell, President of Catholic University of America, said the Honor Roll’s evaluation method is indispensable. “Catholic schools must examine themselves on a regular basis using a well-rounded approach that assesses adherence to the Church’s educational calling,” he said. “The Honor Roll strengthens schools by encouraging high standards and vibrant Catholicism.”

### **About The National Catholic High School Honor Roll**

The National Catholic High School Honor Roll is a list of the top 50 Catholic high schools in the United States, where schools are examined on the criteria of academic excellence, Catholic identity, and civic education. The purpose of the Honor Roll is to recognize and encourage excellence in Catholic secondary education, and is a resource for parents, schools, donors, and colleges.

The Honor Roll is an independent project of the Acton Institute, an international research and educational organization. The Honor Roll was produced in consultation with a national advisory board comprised of Catholic college presidents and Catholic scholars. For more on Acton, visit [www.acton.org](http://www.acton.org).

### **About Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools**

Established in 1877, Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools are dedicated to providing a Catholic education – ensuring quality for all families willing to enter into a partnership to develop each child to his or her fullest spiritual and academic potential. Education is provided in grades preschool through high school.