



## SCHOOL SNAPSHOT

# Holy Guardian Angels Regional School, Reading

**Background/history:** Holy Guardian Angels Regional School (HGARS), Reading was established through the merger of St. Joseph School, Reading and Holy Guardian Angels School, Reading in a new educational facility constructed in 2000. The doors to the new HGARS were opened in September 2001. Dedicated faculty and staff, sharing rich traditions of both schools, provide students with excellence in academics and religious instruction, in a safe, structured and nurturing learning environment.

**Enrollment:** 468 students. The student-teacher ratio is 23:1.

**Mission:** The primary mission of the school is to develop and foster Christian students focused on loving and serving God, self and others. HGARS strives to achieve high academic standards in an environment that embodies diversity and creativity, to nurture openminded individuals who positively and responsibly contribute to their community.

**Principal and teacher biographies:** Maureen Wallin, principal since 2000, has worked in education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Allentown for the past 26 years.

Prior to her assignment at HGARS, Wallin taught two years at St. Aloysius School, Pottstown; 11 years at St. Ignatius Loyola Regional School, Sinking Spring; and one year at the former Holy Name High School, Reading. Wallin also served as interim principal at the former St. Mary School, Reading.

Wallin obtained a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia and participates in ongoing professional development. She served on the Bonding Committee for the newly created Berks Catholic High School (BCHS) and is a member of the Diocesan Board of Education.

"Molding children's lives and being part of their families is a special gift that I have been able to be a part of at HGARS," said Wallin.

Ginny McCartin, HGARS kindergarten teacher, has 30 years teaching experience and has been a kindergarten teacher at the school for the past 28 years.

McCartin graduated from Allentown Central Catholic High School and earned a bachelor's degree from University of West Florida.

She believes the primary grades set the foundation for learning, and kindergarten is an integral part of those beginning years.



"In kindergarten, we strive to make learning an enjoyable, hands-on experience while mindful of each child's social, physical, mental and spiritual development," said McCartin.

According to McCartin, her teaching career at HGARS is a blessing and the success of the school is multifaceted.

**Special programs/ technology/extra-curricular activities:** HGARS offers many programs and activities designed to enrich students in the areas of faith, service, academics and social development. Academically students participate in enrichment classes, instructional music lessons, Spanish, digital photography, spelling bee, science fair and writing contests.

A degreed full-time instructional technology coordinator is on staff, not only providing technology instruction to students, but also serving as a technology coach for the faculty and staff. Interactive whiteboard technology is available to all teachers and students, and a 30-unit mobile laptop station is in place for use with middle school students.

In addition, "Technology Month" was established six years ago to promote Internet safety practices, increase awareness of innovative uses of technology, and partner with the local community.

The extra-curricular activities offered to students include French Club, Culinary Club, Homework Club, Lego League, Chess Club, Book Club, Recycling Committee, Cupstacking Club, Zumba and Yoga Club, Drama Club, Glee Club, Honor Choir, An-

gel Singers, Declamation, Mathletes and Poetry Club.

HGARS offers girls' volleyball, girls' and boys' basketball, cheerleading, baseball, softball, track, junior high BCHS soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, football, and BCHS ice hockey and cheerleading.

**Pre-K and kindergarten programs:** HGARS offers two academic sections of full-day kindergarten. The core curriculum consists of religion, reading, phonics and math programs that offer a foundational design to align with how children learn. Thematic units relating to literature, social studies and science are integrated across the curriculum. Special courses incorporated into the curriculum are computer science, art, music, library and physical education.

The pre-K program consists of both 3- and 4-year-old programs. The 3-year-old program is a morning or afternoon session Tuesday and Thursday from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 12 to 2:45 p.m.

Several options are provided for the 4-year-old program: five days of full-day program (8:20 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.), five half-days (8:20 to 11:30 a.m.) or three days of full-day program or half-day program (Monday, Wednesday and Friday).

**Extended care:** The after-care program is a Christ-centered child care service supervised by teachers and aides and housed within the school building. This program is open to all HGARS students from pre-K through eighth grade and runs from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. when school is in session.

**Academic achievements and awards:** County CYO Art finalists, Regional Pro-Life Essay finalists, County and Diocesan Declamation champions. Students have received awards as Albright Science Fair finalists, County Kitchen Kapers grand champion and second place in Berks County Mathletes Competition.

HGRAS has been named one of the top five schools in the district and top 100 schools in the state for First in Math.

The school's choir received the honor of being selected to perform at Carnegie Hall, N.Y.

Numerous alumnae from HGRAS have been named salutatorian and valedictorians of both Catholic and public high schools.

**Catholic high schools attended:** BCHS.

**Financial aid availability and transfer grants:** Scholarships are available through the Eastern Pennsylvania Scholarship Foundation. The school participates in the Bishop's Commission on Catholic Schools Transfer Grant Program, in which students transferring into grades one to seven from a public or private school can receive a \$1,500 grant. HGARS participates in the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program through the state. Scholarships are also available through private donations from parishioners of Holy Guardian Angels Church and community families.

**School contact information:** 3125 Kutztown Road, Reading PA 19605, 610-929-4124, [www.hgaschool.org](http://www.hgaschool.org), [albhga@ptd.net](mailto:albhga@ptd.net).

**Social media:** Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/HGaregionalschool> and YouTube Channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/HGaregionalschool>.

**School tours:** Tours are available during school hours or by appointment. To schedule please call Caroline Reber, 610-929-4124.

The school community strives to achieve high academic standards in an environment that embodies diversity and creativity to nurture openminded individuals who positively and responsibly contribute to their community.

