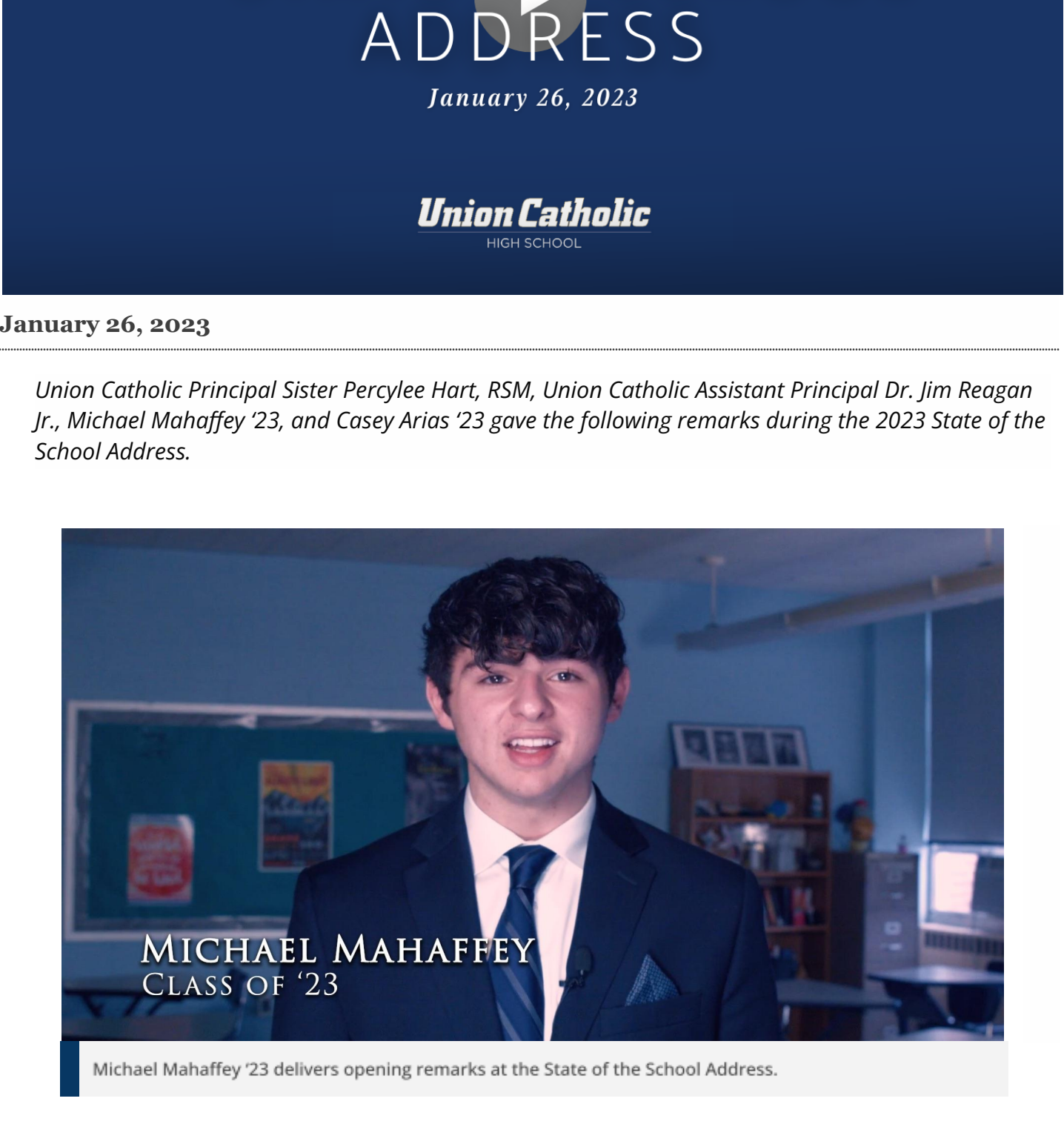


2023 STATE OF THE SCHOOL ADDRESS

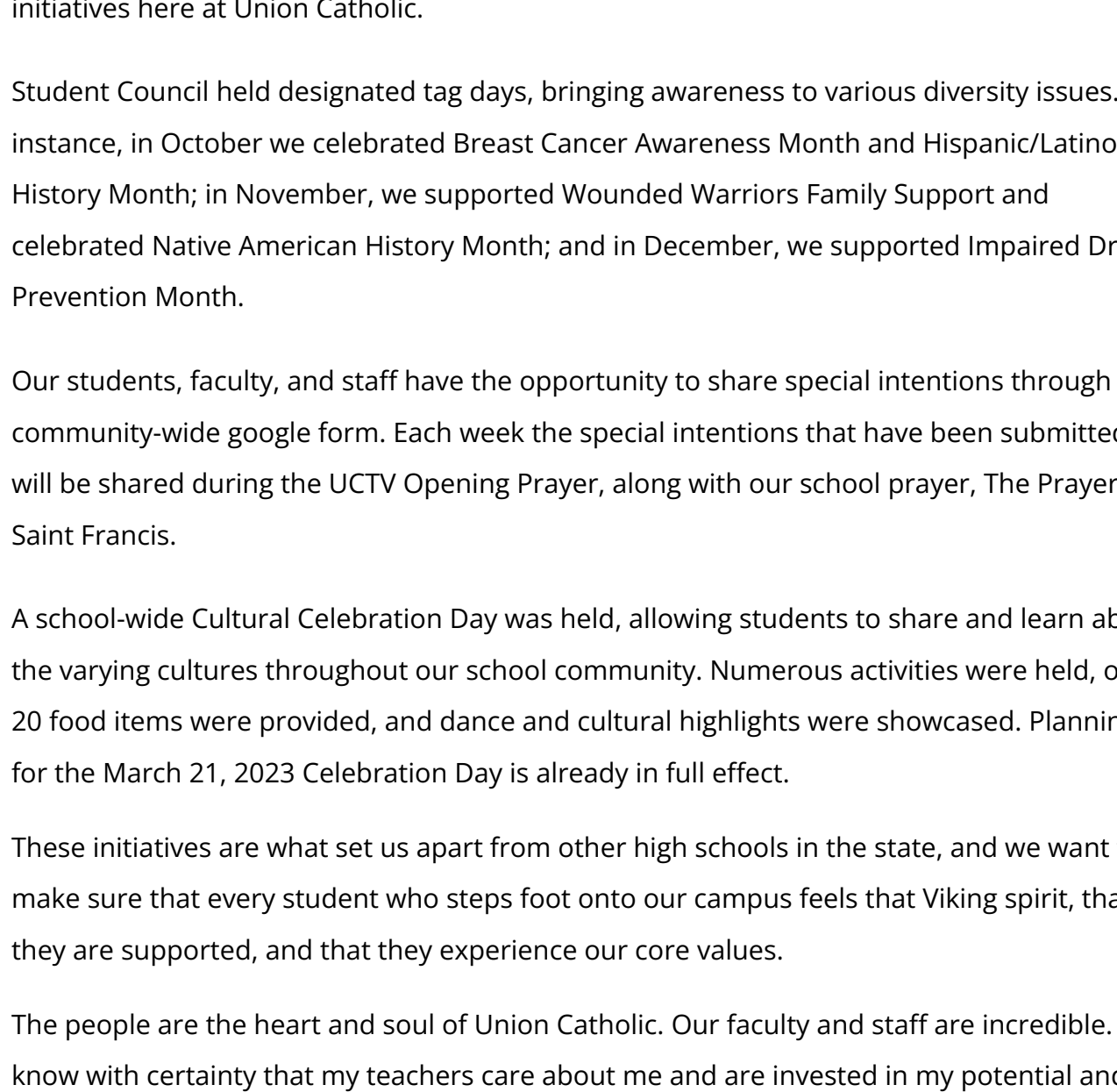
Launching into the Next 60 Years of Union Catholic

The Annual State of the School Address provides an update on the school's progress and achievements this past year and offers insight into the trajectory of Union Catholic High School for 2023 and beyond.



January 26, 2023

Union Catholic Principal Sister Percylee Hart, RSM, Union Catholic Assistant Principal Dr. Jim Reagan Jr., Michael Mahaffey '23, and Casey Arias '23 gave the following remarks during the 2023 State of the School Address.



Michael Mahaffey '23 delivers opening remarks at the State of the School Address.

The Viking Experience

Welcome to Union Catholic's Annual State of the School Address. My name is Michael Mahaffey, class of 2023, and it is a privilege to be here today to welcome you into this exciting, dynamic presentation here at UC. It is my privilege to speak to you today about the future of our school and the initiatives and programs that we are so excited about and that we know will take Union Catholic to the next level, so thank you for being here and for tuning in. I would like to kick things off by giving a snapshot of some of the student initiatives here at Union Catholic.

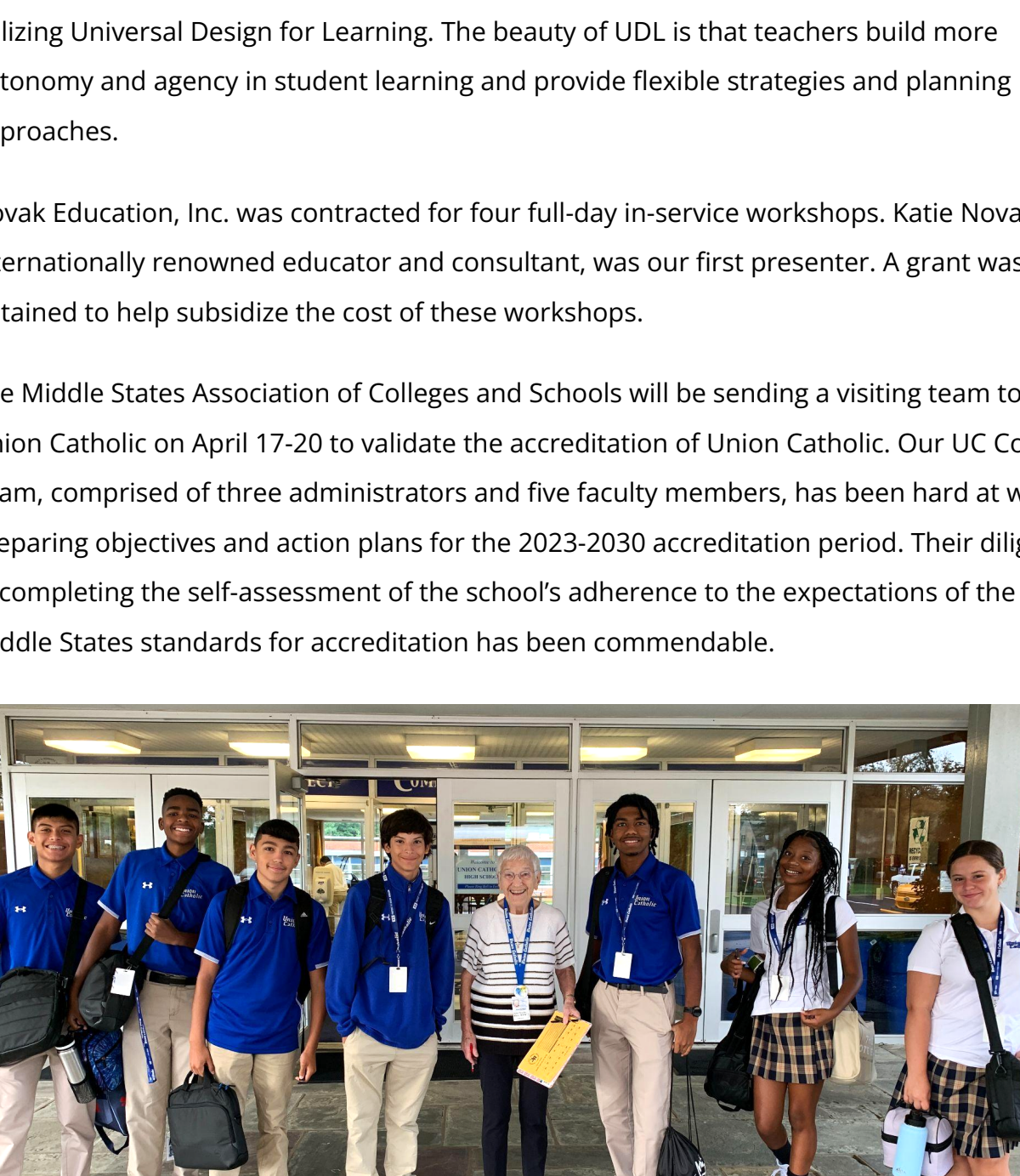
Student Council held designated tag days, bringing awareness to various diversity issues. For instance, in October we celebrated Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Hispanic/Latino History Month; in November, we supported Wounded Warriors Family Support and celebrated Native American History Month; and in December, we supported Impaired Driver Prevention Month.

Our students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to share special intentions through a community-wide google form. Each week the special intentions that have been submitted will be shared during the UCTV Opening Prayer, along with our school prayer, The Prayer of Saint Francis.

A school-wide Cultural Celebration Day was held, allowing students to share and learn about the varying cultures throughout our school community. Numerous activities were held, over 20 food items were provided, and dance and cultural highlights were showcased. Planning for the March 21, 2023 Celebration Day is already in full effect.

These initiatives are what set us apart from other high schools in the state, and we want to make sure that every student who steps foot onto our campus feels that Viking spirit, that they are supported, and that they experience our core values.

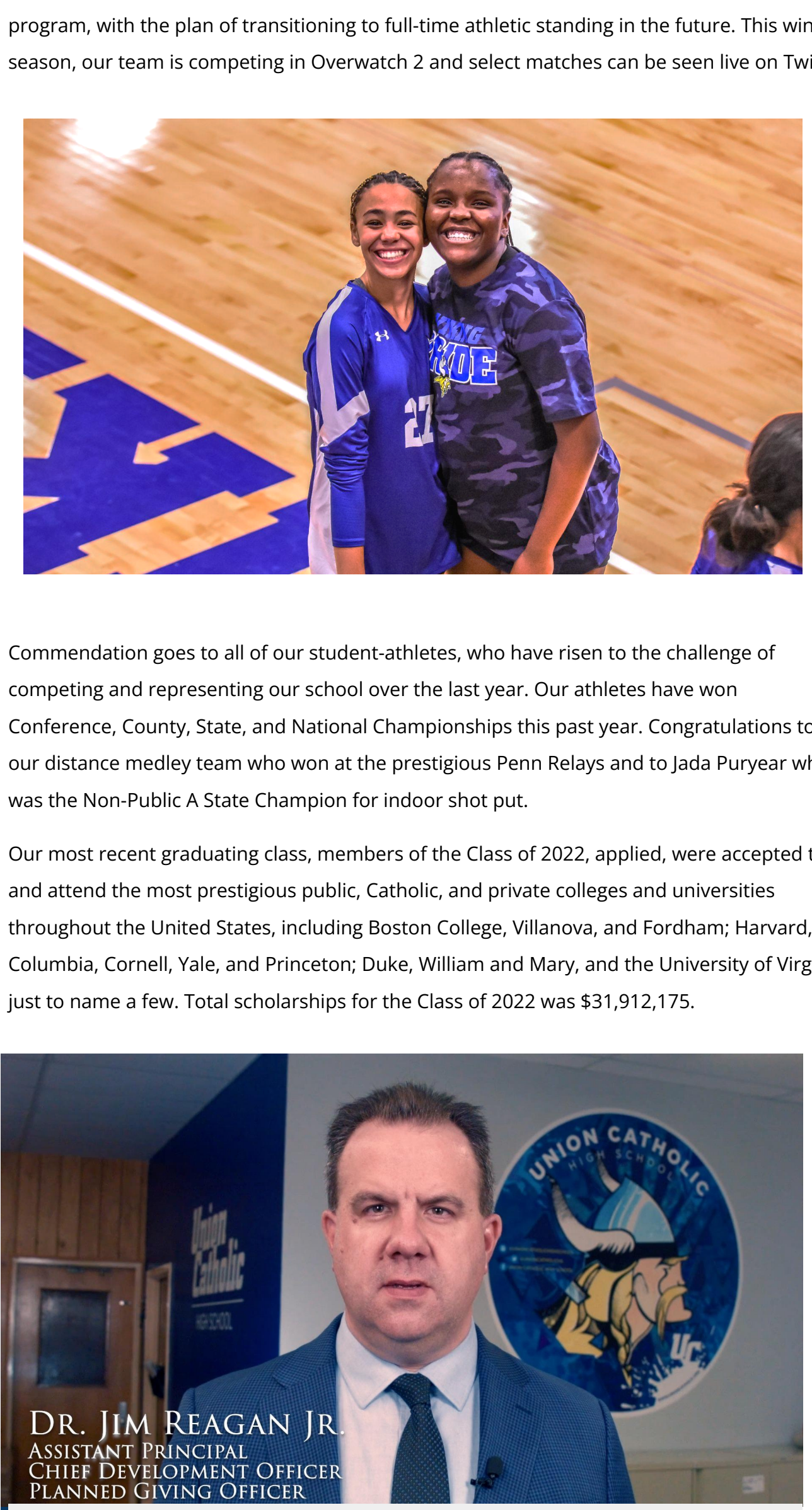
The people are the heart and soul of Union Catholic. Our faculty and staff are incredible. I know with certainty that my teachers care about me and are invested in my potential and my future, and the UC Administration encourages me to succeed through their actions, initiatives, and constant words of encouragement.



The student body is equally phenomenal. The students here are motivating, caring, open-minded, and exhibit incredible diversity. Our students come to UC with different interests, talents, and aspirations... friends come from different towns, have had different life experiences, and most importantly, hold different perspectives. Learning from each other has helped me to expand my range of interests, enhance my knowledge, and deepen my sense of compassion and understanding.

At Union Catholic, I have forged meaningful relationships with my peers and teachers, and through them I have learned about myself and the greater world around me.

To the Union Catholic Community viewing this address, "thank you" ... thank you for being there for us and for all you are doing to support Union Catholic into 2023 and beyond. And with that, I have the honor of introducing our Principal, Sister Percylee Hart.



Sister Percylee Hart, RSM delivers the 2023 State of the School Address. "Launching into the Next 60 Years of Union Catholic"

Launching into the Next 60 Years

Thank you for joining us for Union Catholic's 2023 State of the School Address. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to Union Catholic Senior Michael Mahaffey. Thank you, Michael, for dedicating your time to us today and for your wonderful message.

2022 was a year of excitement and optimism as we celebrated Union Catholic's 60th Anniversary. After serving students and our community for sixty years, it is imperative that we look toward the future, now more than ever before, and envision how Union Catholic can seize the moment and make a positive impact in the next sixty years.

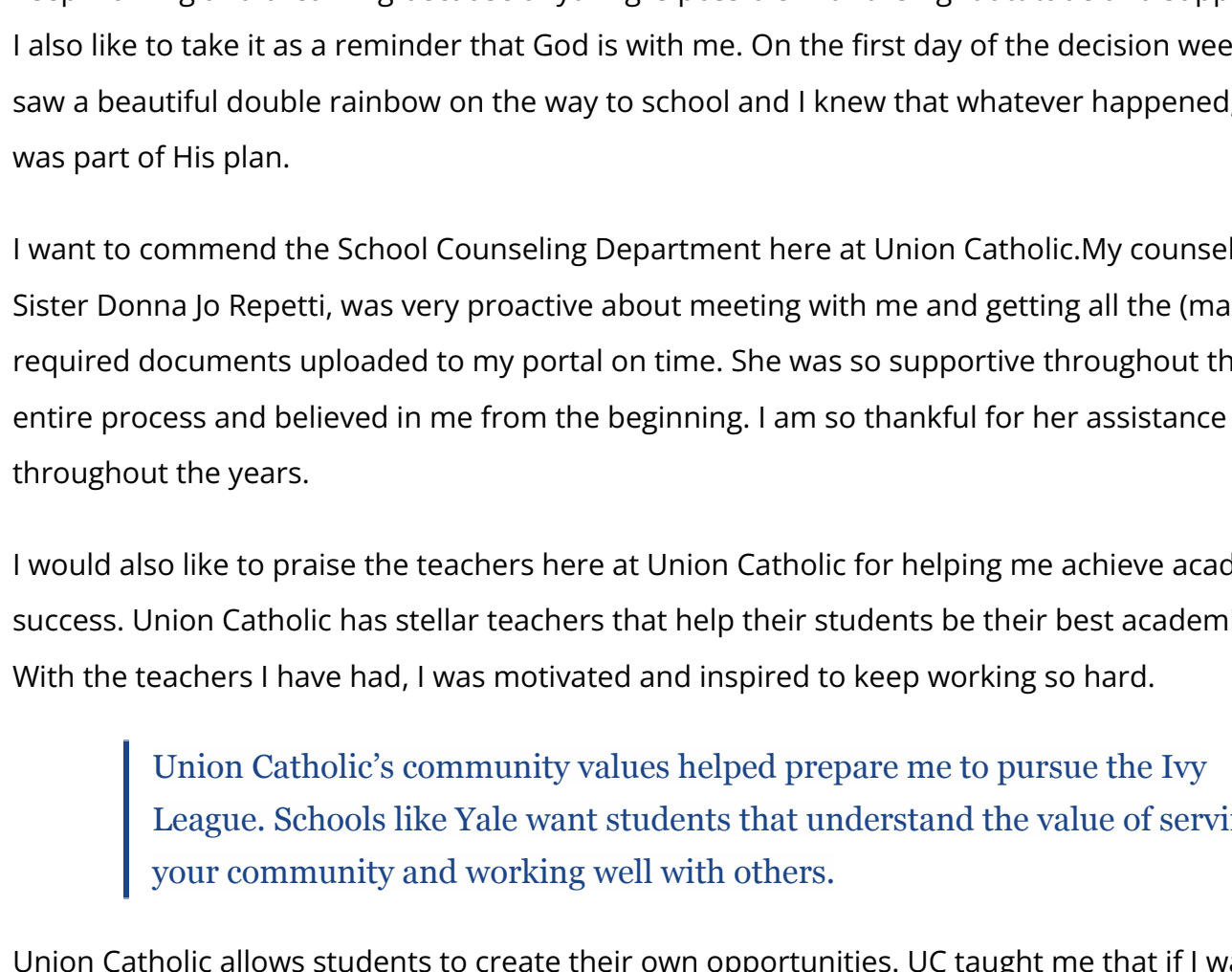
We are here to serve and positively impact our students and this special community. This is why Union Catholic exists.

Transformational Education/Advancing Knowledge

I am pleased to announce that the exceptional faculty of Union Catholic have been diligently implementing a wide variety of instructional techniques to empower students and to deliver authentic learning effectively and efficiently for growth and development. Over the last year, our faculty have attended full-day in-service workshops with the goal of implementing and utilizing Universal Design for Learning. The beauty of UDL is that teachers build more autonomy and agency in student learning and provide flexible strategies and planning approaches.

Novak Education, Inc. was contracted for four full-day in-service workshops. Katie Novak, an internationally renowned educator and consultant, was our first presenter. A grant was obtained to help subsidize the cost of these workshops.

The Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools will be sending a visiting team to Union Catholic on April 17-20 to validate the accreditation of Union Catholic. Our UC Core Team, comprised of three administrators and five faculty members, has been hard at work preparing objectives and action plans for the 2023-2030 accreditation period. Their diligence in completing the self-assessment of the school's adherence to the expectations of the Middle States standards for accreditation has been commendable.



Supporting Students

This year Union Catholic focused on providing our students the opportunity to connect with each other, explore who they are, and celebrate their uniqueness. We embarked on a new and exciting initiative to mail each student a birthday card with a voucher for a free cookie from our food vendor, Four Seasons. Additionally, cards and cookies are provided to each faculty and staff member throughout the year.

A new "Viking Event" was created for incoming freshmen during the first week of school to connect with the larger UC Community and each other. The day focused on the areas of Spirituality, Social Emotional Development, Leadership, and Diversity.

The SDSN (Schedule Dedicated to Student Needs) days are comprised of activities that intend to provide our students with the ability to alleviate the causes of stress and teach them how to find positive means to handle the pressures associated with stress. Nine SDSN days are scheduled for the 2022-2023 school year. SDSN activities included opportunities for freshmen and sophomores to connect with each other through team building activities and opportunities for juniors and seniors to meet with over 100 colleges and universities during our annual college fair held in the courtyard. Other SDSN activities include therapy dogs, break-out boxes, virtual escape rooms, holiday crafts, and assemblies with the Morris County prosecutor's office to focus on bias issues, cyber harassment, and making smart choices about social media.

The Meditation Room was created as a space in School Counseling for students to relax and decompress when struggling with difficult situations. Students were called to submit artwork during the month of November to help design the room, creating a welcoming and inviting space. The space is used frequently by students who need to take small breaks, collect their thoughts, and return to their classroom environment.

Additionally, the Union Catholic eSports Team has begun competition this academic year. The team is coached by Rick LaBelle, STREAM teacher and moderator of the Versus Club. In this initial phase, the eSports Team falls under the auspices of our extracurricular activities program, with the plan of transitioning to full-time athletic standing in the future. This winter season, our team is competing in Overwatch 2 and select matches can be seen live on Twitch.

Commendation goes to all of our student-athletes, who have risen to the challenge of competing and representing our school over the last year. Our athletes have won Conference, County, State, and National Championships this past year. Congratulations to our distance, middle team who won at the Prestigious Penn Relays and to Jada Puryear who was the Non-Public A State Champion for indoor shot put.

Our most recent graduating class, members of the Class of 2022, applied, were accepted to, and attend the most prestigious public, Catholic, and private colleges and universities throughout the United States, including Boston College, Villanova, and Fordham; Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Yale, and Princeton; Duke, William and Mary, and the University of Virginia, just to name a few. Total scholarships for the Class of 2022 was \$31,912,175.

Assistant Principal Dr. Jim Reagan Jr. delivers remarks during the 2023 State of the School Address.

Building Our Future and Establishing a Legacy

Fulfilling our promise to provide a high-quality education requires that we remain on sound financial footing and serve as good stewards of philanthropic funds. The growing legacy of Union Catholic High School has always been built from a foundation constructed by our caring donor community. Our campus is entrenched in several projects that are key to a strong future and we sincerely appreciate the collaborative efforts to ensure they are successful. From gifts to and pledges toward the Union Catholic Fund, scholarships, and support of the Major Gifts Initiative through incorporating Union Catholic in your will or living trust and other planned gifts ... your generosity has inspired our efforts and assures the continuance of our vision. Thank you for the abundance of support you have provided.

Through the Union Catholic Annual Fund, you have had an immediate impact on today's students. Tuition does not cover the full cost of delivering an outstanding high school experience, and your donations have supported all aspects of the operating budget, including academics, the arts, athletics, capital improvements, tuition assistance scholarships, student activities, and technology. We count on your gift this and every year to strengthen the UC Experience for all of our students.

Scholarships offer alumni, family members, current and former faculty, and other friends of Union Catholic an opportunity to ensure that students of today and tomorrow continue to reap the lifetime rewards of the Union Catholic Experience. By establishing a scholarship or contributing to an existing scholarship, you have helped to make the dream of a quality, faith-based education at UC a reality for qualified students. This year 10 new scholarships were created and awarded, bringing the total number of scholarships at Union Catholic to 55.

Union Catholic's Building the Future Major Gifts Initiative allows for the enhancement of our building and campus and helps build an endowment to meet the needs of present and future generations of students, faculty, staff, and families. This initiative is a multi-phase program to fund a larger, more intense reconfiguration of the school's footprint and to provide a solid financial foundation for UC's future. Projects include building our endowment, expanding the scholarship program, completing the athletic complex, and improving our facilities. These enhancements, along with technology infrastructure upgrades, enhance the innovative teaching and learning opportunities that are already in place.

As we embark on the next 60 years of Union Catholic High School, we ask you to please consider including UC in your estate plans through a will, trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy. Please think of this as your personal opportunity to leave a lasting legacy of financial health for our wonderful Union Catholic community.

At this time I would like to introduce Union Catholic Senior Casey Arias. Casey is the founder of The Gavel, Union Catholic's political magazine, she is a National Qualifier for our diocesan leading Forensics team, and she is presently the co-President of Aprendalo ESL, a non-profit offering free, online ESL courses for underprivileged students. Recently Casey was named the recipient of a very prestigious QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship to Yale University, the school of her dreams. Quest Bridge connects America's brightest students with prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. and covers all expenses, from tuition, room and board, travel expenses, books, and supplies. Congratulations, Casey.

Casey Arias '23 delivers her story of a dream realized at Union Catholic High School.

Realizing Our Dreams

Thank you Dr. Reagan and thank you to the Union Catholic Community for being with us today and for tuning in to UC's annual address.

On December 1st, I received an email that my admittance decision had been released via the QuestBridge portal. I opened the status update with my family and couldn't believe that not only had I been selected to receive a QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship, but I had also been selected by my top choice school!

The opportunity to attend Yale University means the world to me and my family. Yale is such an amazing institution, and to have been selected by them for a full scholarship brings me great joy and fulfillment as a high school student. To me, this opportunity is a message to keep working and dreaming because anything is possible with the right attitude and support. I also like to take it as a reminder that God is with me. On the first day of the decision week, I saw a beautiful double rainbow on the way to school and I knew that whatever happened, it was part of His plan.

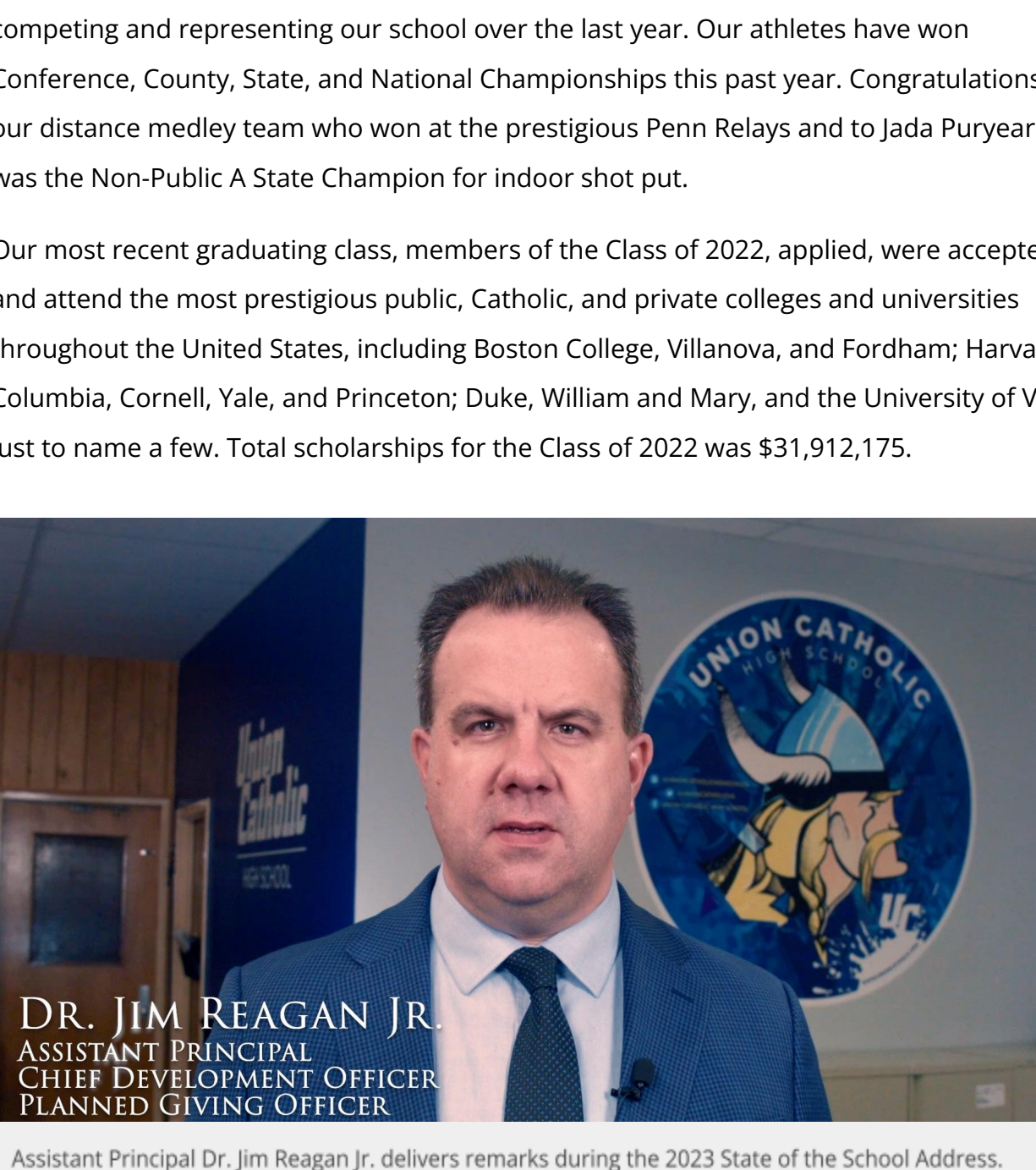
I want to commend the School Counseling Department here at Union Catholic. My counselor, Sister Donna Jo Repetti, was very proactive about meeting with me and getting all the (many) required documents uploaded to my portal on time. She was so supportive throughout the entire process and believed in me from the beginning. I am so thankful for her assistance throughout the years.

I would also like to praise the teachers here at Union Catholic for helping me achieve academic success. Union Catholic has stellar teachers that help their students be their best academically. With the teachers I have had, I was motivated and inspired to keep working so hard.

Union Catholic's community values helped prepare me to pursue the Ivy League. Schools like Yale want students that understand the value of serving your community and working well with others.

Union Catholic allows students to create their own opportunities. UC taught me that if I want something, I should go for it. I think that mentality helped me "go for" Yale.

There is an adage that says, "Blessed are those who plant trees knowing that they shall never sit in the shade of their foliage... those who plant trees, knowing that only others will enjoy the shade." Your support, your time, and your efforts are all valued by so many students just like me, so thank you for supporting us and doing what you can to ensure that future generations can benefit from all that Union Catholic has to offer. Thank you and God Bless!



A Call to Meet the Moment

Our call to everyone in our Union Catholic Community and to all of those who are watching this address is to embrace the idea that, for all of us, there is only one direction: forward into a bright future. If we continue the tenacity, ingenuity, and commitment to our purpose and mission that we have demonstrated over and over again in the last sixty years, we will achieve our vision together. Thank you for your time today and for all you have done and continue to do to ensure that our students have the opportunity to meet their moment at Union Catholic High School.

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