



CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHRONICLE

AUGUST 2014

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT . . .

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The month of August is memorable for many reasons. First of all, on August 15th, we celebrate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. Mary hears our prayers and helps us with her motherly kindness. (Pope Benedict XVI) Second, school begins for the students in the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Birmingham after a two month vacation for students and teachers. Third, the first signs of autumn begin to appear toward the end of the month. If you observe nature on a daily basis, you will begin to notice the subtle signs of autumn approaching. The leaves may begin to change color, fall flowers bloom, the days get shorter. What wonders of God’s creation will you find?

This school year is a particularly important one for us. From March 1-4, 2015, an External Review Team will visit us to make a recommendation regarding our application for renewal of our accreditation. The last such visit was in January 2010. Our schools have been working very hard during the past two years to prepare the required documentation. From July through November, the Catholic Schools Office will be working on its documentation. As the March 2015 visit draws near, we will provide you with updates. On behalf of the Catholic Schools Office, I would like to thank Dr. Niyah Griffin, Associate Superintendent, Nathan Wright, SACS Steering Committee Chair, the members of our steering and principals’ advisory committees, Christine Salberg, Administrative Assistant and all the people who have contributed to the completion of the first phase of our re-accreditation.

A final thought. A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.
Henry B. Adams (1838-1918)

DID YOU KNOW?

- Total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2013-2014 academic year was 1,974,578.
- There were 1,391,793 in elementary/middle schools; 582,785 in secondary schools
- There were 19.8% racial minorities, 15.0% were Hispanic/Latino and 6.4% were reported as unknown in the racial data collection.
- Non-Catholic enrollment is 323,542 which is 16.4% of the total enrollment.

NCEA Data Report 2013-14

DIOCESAN SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT . . .

Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School is located in Homewood and serves pre-k-3 through 8th grade students. Staffed for many years by the Sisters of Mercy, OLS School continues their mission of fostering the religious, academic, and social development of every child, recognizing that knowledge enlightened by faith and realized through service is at the heart of Catholic education.

Teachers continuously strive to find innovative ways to make subjects more engaging. For example, students write, illustrate, and publish their own books or other forms of written medium. Their work is celebrated with “Ultimate Author Day,” where they attend sessions provided by professionals from the community. In addition, OLS offers the latest technology to its students through computer and classroom instruction. The children experience a variety of tools to expand the school curriculum, thus making learning more interactive and fun.

OLS is pleased to hold the distinction of being the first Catholic school in the state to offer all three levels of the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* religious formation program. This Montessori-style religious method is designed to meet the religious developmental stages of children, nurturing and encouraging their relationship with God.

OLS School truly strives to provide its students with a special kind of education, one that not only meets the needs of the individual child, but one that also teaches through example and experience the ideals of the Catholic faith. Mary Jane Dorn is the principal of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School.

A NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT . . .

As we begin the 2014-2015 academic school year, we will be charged with improving ourselves and impacting teachers and students' lives in an exceptional way. Let's make choices that will add value to ourselves and the talent around us. What creates the effectiveness necessary for converting talent into results? Orator, attorney, and political leader William Jennings Bryan said, "Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved." John Maxwell discovered thirteen key choices that can be made to maximize any person's talent in your school or organization:

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| ~Belief lifts talent. | ~Courage tests your talent. |
| ~Passion energizes your talent. | ~Teach ability expands your talent. |
| ~Initiative activates your talent. | ~Character protects your talent. |
| ~Focus directs your talent. | ~Relationships influence your talent. |
| ~Preparation positions your talent. | ~Responsibility strengthens your talent. |
| ~Practice sharpens your talent. | ~Teamwork multiplies your talent. |
| ~Perseverance sustains your talent. | |

Can you imagine what type of diocese WE will become if we continue to make choices that will add more value to our talent? The Catholic Schools' office is looking forward to serving you this academic school year!

SACS ACCREDITATION . . .

Where is the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic Schools in our re-accreditation process? During the 2013-2014 academic school year, our SACS Steering Committee created a time line to use as a guide as we embarked on continuous improvement for our schools. We administered AdvancED and Catholic Identity Surveys, analyzed and interpreted data for our Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostics. We dissected our schools' Self Assessments and rated each AdvancED Standard as well as reflected on our effectiveness in the following areas: Vision and Purpose, Governance and Leadership, Teaching and Assessing Learning, Resources and Support Systems, and Using Results for Continuous Improvement. Our diocese demonstrated and showed evidenced that we followed the policies, procedures, and requirements for AdvancED and the Diocese of Birmingham Assurances. We examined and interpreted longitudinal data from the following tests: ITBS, ACRE, ACT, PLAN, EXPLORE, and used this information in the Student Performance Diagnostics. After gathering extensive data, we created our Goals and Plans for our schools. To conclude our schools' work, we told stories about our schools through Executive Summaries. For the 2014-2015 academic school year, our system will go through a similar process that the schools went through for continuous improvement from a broader perspective. We have committees assembled that consist of principals, teachers, and other stakeholders to assist with our System's Self Assessment and Goals/Plans (Strategic Plan).

MESSAGE FROM MISSION OFFICE COORDINATOR, CHRISTINA WRIGHT . . .**Missionary Childhood Association (MCA)**

The MCA formally known as the Holy Childhood Association is one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies... The goal of the MCA is to gather prayers and financial support to other children around the world. The hope is to instill a missionary spirit by inviting all children to help spread the Good News of Jesus to other children around the world. It is vital that we as Catholic parents instill in our children the ability to be sensitive to the needs of others. The motto of MCA is "Children Helping Children". MCA membership is made up of students from Catholic elementary schools, parish schools of religion, and homeschooled children. We would like your help to foster the education and awareness of the MCA. This program gives our children a unique sense of belonging to the Church.

Please visit the national website www.onefamilyinmission.org for all of the latest MCA news.

You may also visit the MCA kid's website at www.hcakids.org to see what the program has to offer. I would love to have the opportunity to come and bring you some sample materials and further explain the program in the hopes that your schools will participate this year. Please feel free to contact me at any time for any additional information.

God Bless,

Christina Wright, Mission Coordinator

Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, teach people.
Chinese Proverb

RESOURCES

If you are interested in staying current on research, best practices, trends, and innovative approaches in your profession, consider joining a professional organization. See options below:

- Join Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). These are some benefits:
 1. Professional Liability/Insurance Plan
 2. Home, Auto, and Life Insurance
 3. Webinars and series of relevant educational topics
 4. Receive free books and have e-books available electronically
 5. *Educational Leadership Journal*
 6. Can publish articles and present at conferences
 7. Have annual conventions and mini conferences year round

www.ascd.org

- Join The National Association of Elementary School Principals (serving all elementary and middle level principals). These are some benefits:
 1. Legal Defense and Liability Insurance
 2. Numerous Publications
 3. *Principal Journal*
 4. Conferences and Conventions
 5. On-line Learning
 6. Grant Opportunities

www.naesp.org

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
 Conference on Educational Leadership
 October 31st-November 2014**

Learn the secrets to great leadership practices
 Kissimmee, Florida at Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention

**Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
 Challenging Convention: Leading Disruptive Innovations
 March 21st-23rd 2015**

Learn how to create, share, and experience vibrant learning ecosystems that address global challenges.
 Houston, Texas

National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Convention

The NCEA Convention & Expo is the largest private-education association gathering in the nation. Those participating represent all aspects of Catholic and faith-based education from preschool, elementary, secondary, adult education, colleges and universities, to local parish pastors, priests, directors of parish religious education programs, parish volunteers, and more. Registration and Housing information will be available in mid September.

April 7th- 9th 2015
 Orlando, Florida

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UPCOMING EVENTS/DEADLINES

- Opening Day Numbers due to CSO first day of school.
- Local Board Roster and name of PTO/PTA President with email addresses due to CSO by August 15, 2014
- Faculty/Parent/Student handbooks due to CSO by August 25, 2014.
- Fall In-service: List of which session(s) teachers will be attending due to CSO by August 29, 2014.



Prayer:
 Lord Jesus, help
 us to mirror
 your humility
 in our lives.
 Amen

OUR VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION:

Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Birmingham provide an excellent educational experience in the Catholic tradition enabling all students to develop their God-given talents.

OUR MISSION:

The mission of the Diocese of Birmingham Catholic School System is to educate our students to seek God in Truth and for loving service by teaching the message of the Gospel, forming a community of faith, providing the whole child with a Catholic and Christ-centered environment, and inspiring all to reach their full academic and spiritual potential.

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