



# CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHRONICLE

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT . . .

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On Wednesday, February 18, 2015, the church begins the liturgical season of Lent. Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and penance as we develop, in the words of Pope Francis, "a greater awareness of the redemptive work of Christ." Pope Francis also reminds us of the need for improvement and to change for the better. But there is more to Lent than self-improvement. We must attend to the needs of the poor and suffering which we can accomplish through service and charitable giving. Christ commands us to love one another as He loves us.

I love this description of love. "Love is open, it spreads out and bears fruit and always kindles new love." The same can be said of forgiveness.

May your Lenten time be spent well in preparation for the joyous celebration of Easter.

## DIOCESAN SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT . . .

Located atop "Catholic Hill" in Florence, Alabama, St. Joseph Church and School have been educating the youth of the Shoals for over 100 years. The name "Catholic Hill" was given to the site by its surrounding residents when it was donated by a non-Catholic, Mrs. Lena Peters, to build a Catholic church and school in 1898. Even though St. Joseph Catholic Church, School, and surrounding area have encountered many transformations over the past century, the school's reputation for academic excellence and spiritual growth has continued to flourish and transcend as generations of its graduates have worked to serve the church and its surrounding communities.

The school was established in 1898 by its first resident pastor, Rev. Gammebert Brunner, O.S.B., who was a firm believer in education. He built a two-room school house, and with the enrollment of thirty students, he served as the first teacher and administrator of St. Joseph School. In 1907, the Benedictine Sisters of Cullman, Alabama, were sent to operate the school and remained a part of the school for the next eighty years. With the diligent commitment of the Sisters, the student enrollment would soon out grow the small school house and a larger facility would be needed.

In 1972 St. Joseph School received the official certificate of accreditation from the Alabama State Department of Education. This was within the same year that the Florence City System received their accreditation. The school and church communities had worked arduously on this project, and it was reflected in an all time high enrollment of 280 students by the early 1980's. The Benedictine Sisters continued to work to educate and maintain enrollment through the eighties, but with a decrease in vocations to the Sisterhood, the Sisters were forced to retire from St. Joseph School in 1990. Two Franciscan Sisters were sent to serve the school, but their tenure was short-lived, and Mrs. Sue Halfman became the first lay principal at St. Joseph School in 1993.

With the sisters no longer present, the cost of maintaining an entire lay staff and faculty became a looming challenge. The PTO and church parishes worked together to increase annual donations and subsidies to help offset tuition increases. The St. Joseph School Foundation which was started by the Benedictine Sisters and a group of parents in the 1980's had also grown financially secure enough to begin making an annual contribution which they continue to increase each year.

With an average enrollment of 190 students, our school community continues to realize the benefits of educating the "whole child" through Catholic education. We continue with the determination and vision of Father Gammebert Brunner and his two-room school house by being steadfast to our mission to "grow spiritually, shine academically and serve others".

### DID YOU KNOW?

These are some additional tips designed to help principals (new and seasoned) fulfill their leadership roles:

1. **Write notes of appreciation-** Never devalue the simple act of thanking your staff for doing a great job.
2. **Refer angry parents to speak to the teacher first-**If a problem is not resolved after talking to the teacher, have them contact you to help improve the situation.
3. **Offer teachers meaningful professional development-**Make sure everything presented to them is worth their time and effort.
4. **Don't forget your own professional development -**Spend time reflecting on your leadership, continue to learn by reading, attending professional meetings, and conversing with other administrators.
5. **Accept that you are not perfect -**And realize that concept applies to others as well. (simplek12.com)

## A NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT . . .

Many people have New Year's Resolutions or goals that they set for themselves in the beginning of the year. Along with a new look, a new exercise regimen and so on, why not include these six ways to improve your professional image? Michelle Powell writes about business etiquette for the Alabama Media. She recommends the following:

- ⇒ **Watch your mouth:** Even in key strokes.-Keep your business communications professional, especially electronically. Your words you say or type could impact you in a positive or negative way.
- ⇒ **Write a professional email:** Now that you are thinking twice about what not to say, here is what you should be doing in emails. Write an appropriate subject line. Think about your main point and write it as if it were a newspaper headline to grab your reader's attention. Be cordial, clear, and brief. If your message requires more than a couple of paragraphs, you may need to pick up the phone. Attachments may be multiple pages; however, an email is meant to simply introduce the additional content. Remember to proofread and consider whether all receivers are appropriate before hitting the send button.
- ⇒ **Show appreciation:** Nothing makes you look better than to express genuine appreciation to someone. There is no need to wait for a special occasion when names are announced and certificates are given. A simple "thank you" to someone who has done something for you could make all the difference, and you will might be surprised to see what follows-i.e more cooperation, productivity, and a positive atmosphere.
- ⇒ **Be on time:** Being on time to meetings, even virtually, is a matter of respect. It shows respect for other people involved who are equally giving their time, respect for the subject matter, respect for the job and respect for yourself. Improve your professional image and your relationships by improving your timeliness.
- ⇒ **Avoid assumptions; ask:** We learned as children that taking without asking is not appropriate. But how many times does this occur in the workplace? Someone decides to "borrow" an item from another person's workplace or shared common area. Other assumptions include inviting guests when an invitation was extended for you. Never assume privileges but rather ask permission or ask for clarity.
- ⇒ **Be present without dominating:** Turn off your phones and be present during a meeting or at an event. Don't try to be the center of attention. Give others an opportunity to contribute.

If we worked to improve ourselves in these areas, it could make certain that we have better relationships and a better New Year!

Article written by Michelle Power ([mpowell@professionalmanner.com](mailto:mpowell@professionalmanner.com))

## SACS ACCREDITATION . . .

The Catholic Schools' Office successfully completed and submitted our Accreditation Report to AdvancED through the ASSIST system which included our system's Self Assessment (SACS Standards), Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostic and Stakeholder Data Document (Surveys), Student Performance Diagnostic and Stakeholder Performance Data Document (Data Analysis), Assurances, and Goals/ Plan for our diocese.

Currently, we are collecting evidence and artifacts to support the ratings in our Self Assessment. AdvancED carefully selected our External Team to assist us during our re-accreditation visit in March. Mr. John Fanelli, Educational Consultant, will be our lead evaluator. Dr. Ron Valenti, Former Superintendent, will be the Associate Lead Evaluator, Linda Raush, Curriculum Specialist with the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Jan Lancaster, Superintendent of Archdiocese of New Orleans, Jennifer Hornyak, Director of Technology from the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, and Dr. Alberto Vazquez Matos, Superintendent of Diocese of Saint Petersburg, will be our team members.

The Diocese of Birmingham has been working extremely hard since our last visit in 2010 and has made continuous improvement a priority for our diocese. We look forward to receiving our commendations and recommendations from our External team during the March 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> re-accreditation visit. This will affirm what we are doing well and assist us with making improvements for our system over the next five years.

## MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES . . .

The Office of Human Resources is often thought of as the benefits department. The manager of the human resources office is very knowledgeable about the medical, dental, short and long term disability, life insurance, and flexible benefits plans for lay and religious employees offered by the Diocese of Birmingham. The Human Resources manager is responsible for the day to day administration of policies and program and serves as a consultant to parishes and schools regarding labor relations and benefits.

However, the human resources manager also counsels employees on matters both personal and confidential and is available to schools and parishes to consult on matters of discipline, employee relations and organizational changes.

For further information, contact Ina Cooley, Human Resources Manager at (205) 838-8321 or [icooley@bhmdiocese.org](mailto:icooley@bhmdiocese.org).



## RESOURCES

### Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Resources

ASCD provides a number of resources helpful to educators and administrators interested in learning more about curriculum mapping. The materials listed below are some of the sources planners might consult when developing their mapping plans.

Jacobs, H. H. *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum and assessment K–12*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Stock #197135

Price: \$13.95 for ASCD members; \$16.95 for nonmembers

### Articles from ASCD Publications

These articles are intended to help curriculum planners better understand the issues and practices related to curriculum mapping. Although these articles were written years ago, these articles were peer-reviewed and had high quality content as it related to curriculum mapping. Other experts have built on their work and findings: See below:

- ⇒ "The Need for Calendar-Based Curriculum Mapping" by Heidi Hayes Jacobs  
Adapted from *Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K–12*, 1997, pp. 1–5, Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- ⇒ "Procedures for Curriculum Mapping" by Heidi Hayes Jacobs  
Adapted from *Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K–12*, 1997, pp. 7–16, Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- ⇒ "Focus on Curriculum Mapping Improving What's Really Being Taught"  
*Curriculum\*Technology Quarterly*, Summer 2000
- ⇒ "Essential Questions—Inclusive Answers" by Cheryl M. Jorgensen  
*Educational Leadership*, December 1994/January 1995
- ⇒ "Learning History by Doing History" by David Kobrin et al. *Educational Leadership*, April 1993

Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel/ staff. If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish.

*Sam Walton*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCEA Webinars cover trending and need to know topics relevant to your career in Catholic education. All participants will receive the recorded webinar for reference and inclusion among other professional learning resources. See ([www.ncea.org](http://www.ncea.org))

### Task of Moral Formation

Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 4 p.m. ET

*Presented by Dr. Lori Dahlhoff, NCEA Religious Education Department and Dr. Joseph White, Our Sunday Visitor*

The Catholic church describes six fundamental, interrelated tasks for the work of religious education and faith formation. This webinar in the Six Tasks of Catechesis webinar series will focus on the task of *moral formation*.

Through a learning dialogue with NCEA staff and a practitioner working in the field, Catholic educators in Catholic schools and parishes will explore the practical implications of educating learners in Christian community life. We will also look at how cognitive and affective elements this task are addressed in NCEA's religious education assessments.

Webinar participants will be able to:

- ✦ Describe what the Church means by a "well-formed conscience."
- ✦ Sketch both cognitive and affective indicators of moral development.
- ✦ Identify practical ways to address moral formation in instructional settings.

This webinar is offered free of charge as an NCEA member benefit. All registrants will receive the recorded webinar and presentation files.

*Learning & the Brain Conference*

*Making Lasting Memories: Using Brain Science To Boost Memory, Thinking And Learning*

February 12-14, 2015

San Francisco, California

Register online at [Learningandthebrain.com](http://Learningandthebrain.com) or call (781) 449-4010

**UPCOMING EVENTS/DEADLINES**

- ⇒ February 3rd—SACS Chairs Meeting at CSO
- ⇒ February 10th—Principals’ Meeting—Decatur
- ⇒ February 16th—Religion In-service (North and South)
- ⇒ February 18th—Ash Wednesday
- ⇒ February 19th—Religion Scholars Bowl—Our Lady of the Valley



*Create in  
me a clean  
Heart O God,  
and renew a  
right Spirit  
within me.*



**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.

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE**

SUPERINTENDENT:	FRAN LAWLOR	<a href="mailto:flawlor@bhmdiocese.org">flawlor@bhmdiocese.org</a>
ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT:	DR. NIYAH GRIFFIN	<a href="mailto:ngriffin@bhmdiocese.org">ngriffin@bhmdiocese.org</a>
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:	REV. JOHN MCDONALD	<a href="mailto:directorofeducation@bhmdiocese.org">directorofeducation@bhmdiocese.org</a>
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT:	CHRISTINE SALBERG	<a href="mailto:csalberg@bhmdiocese.org">csalberg@bhmdiocese.org</a>

**P.O. Box 12047, 35202  
2121 3rd Avenue North, 35203  
Birmingham, Alabama  
205.838.8303—Fax 205.838.8330  
www.bhmcatholicsschools.com**