



CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS



CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHRONICLE

JANUARY 2014

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Catholic Schools Chronicle. We are excited to launch our monthly newsletter that will feature brief articles from those of us at the Catholic Schools Office. Each month a school will be featured. There will be updates on SACS accreditation, upcoming events, resources, and professional development opportunities. A noteworthy feature will be our Curriculum Focus/ Best Practices and Effective Strategies.

Our newsletter will be distributed to principals, pastors, school board chairs and parent association presidents. We welcome feedback from our stakeholders.

Please note that our Catholic Schools website is also a resource for our schools: teachers, parents, and principals. There are sections devoted to each group with links to the state education department and SACS. Visit it frequently to stay current on our activities.

I hope you enjoy this very first issue. May God bless you and your families as we begin the second half of the 2013-2014 academic year. Fran

DIOCESAN SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Did You Know?

- There are 18 Elementary Schools, 6 High Schools and 5 Early Childhood Centers in the Diocese.
- The Catholic population of the Diocese of Birmingham is only 3.3% of the total population of Northern Alabama.
- Pope John Paul II Catholic High School in Huntsville started in 1996 with 40 students in two grades.

“National Blue Ribbon Schools represent the full diversity of American schools... At the same time, they share some key qualities. Their leaders not only articulate a vision of excellence and hold everyone to high standards, they stay close to the real action of teaching and leading. The whole school community embodies a sense of collegiality and commitment and members are supported by mentoring and professional development. Using standards of excellence, the Department of Education celebrates these high performing schools. One of our schools has earned this great honor. Holy Spirit Regional School in Huntsville, Alabama lead by Principal Jim Bell, maintains high standards by elevating and enhancing learning through challenging, differentiated curriculum, Students are provided a technologically-rich environment in which students use that technology for mastery. Their vision is to help students to be faith-filled individuals as they discover and utilize their gifts and talents through academic success and service to others. Student-led Masses encourage talents in drama, music, and public speaking while providing the opportunity to learn and teach. Participating in community projects and various charitable activities gives students the experience of living gospel values. In the last 50 years, they have grown steadily from four classrooms of students taught by nuns to a vibrant K-8 accredited school, while maintaining true to their mission and embracing the demands of 21st century learners.

A NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT. . .

After reading John Maxwell's book entitled *Today Matters*, he shared 12 daily practices to guarantee tomorrow's success. As we embark on another year in our ministry in education, let's focus one day at a time on our assignments and reflect on these daily. **Just for Today...**

We will choose and display the right attitudes.

We will determine and act on important priorities.

We will know and follow healthy guidelines.

We will communicate with and care for our family.

We will practice and develop good thinking.

We will make and keep proper commitments.

We will earn and properly manage finances.

We will deepen and live out our faith.

We will initiate and invest in solid relationships. We will plan for and model generosity.

We will embrace and practice good values.

We will seek and experience improvements.

We will act on these decisions and practice these disciplines, and

Then, one day.... We will see the compounding results of a day lived well. Niyah G

SACS ACCREDITATION

The Diocese of Birmingham School Catholic School District is doing an excellent job working towards our re-accreditation for SACS and on continuous improvements within our diocese. Our schools have successfully administered AdvancED and Catholic Identity Surveys to all stakeholders, analyzed and interpreted data in the Stakeholder Feedback Diagnostics and Data Documents. The next phase of our accreditation process is working on our Self Assessments (SA). The SA is a critical component of the AdvancED accreditation process. It is designed to serve as a valuable tool that will assist schools in reflecting upon their effectiveness as well as prepare them for an External Review. Our External Review visit is scheduled for March 1st -4th, 2015. The SA is based on the five AdvancED Standards for Quality, which serve as the foundation of the AdvancED accreditation process. In order to earn and maintain accreditation, schools must meet the five AdvancED Standards for Quality, engage in a process of continuous improvement and host an External Review at least once every five years. The SA has been designed to engage the school community in an in-depth evaluation of each of the AdvancED standards. The SA will help our schools within the diocese identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Inspirational

Quote:

Great ability develops and reveals itself increasingly with every new assignment.

Baltasar Gracian y Morales

CURRICULUM FOCUS/ INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

20 Brain Compatible Research Strategies:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Brainstorming and Discussion | 8. Graphic Organizers | 15. Role Play |
| 2. Reciprocal Teaching | 9. Visuals | 16. Metaphor/Analogy/ |
| 3. Drawing and artwork | 10. Humor | 17. Mnemonic Devices |
| 4. Writing | 11. Games | 18. Music |
| 5. Field Trips | 12. Manipulatives | 19. Story Telling |
| 6. Project Based/Problem-based Instruction | 13. Technology | 20. Visualization |
| 7. Work Study | 14. Movement | |

RESOURCES

Consortium for School Networking

www.cosn.org

The mission of the Consortium for School Networking is to empower K-12 school district technology leaders to use technology strategically to improve teaching and learning.

Office of Educational Technology

www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/os/technology/

The Office of Educational Technology provides leadership in leveraging use of technology to improve education. Three areas of this site are of special interest to principals. The Grant Programs link takes you to a listing of federal grants that support technology in schools. Visit the Research and Reports area to review current and past national education technology plans, surveys, research, and evaluations.

Free Teaching Resources (c/o Learning A-Z)

www.sitesforteachers.com

It has professional produced lesson plans, books, worksheets, and much more!



We are
your servants,
So make us
brave enough to
speak your
message.

Acts 4:29

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCEA Webinars (see www.ncea.org)

Concussion Management for the Secondary Schools

Monday, January 13, 2014

4 p.m. and 7 p.m. ET

Presented by Christopher Cosentino, NCEA Secondary Schools Department, and Jeremy Fisher, Las Vegas Wranglers

Rigor/Relevance Framework: The Bridge for Catholic School Community & CCSS (1) Tuesday, January 14, 2014

4 p.m. and 7 p.m. ET

Presented by Kathy Mears, NCEA Elementary Schools Department, and Sue Nelson, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Catechetical & Educational Planning: Crafting a Vision & Identifying Critical Issues

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Presented by Lori Dahlhoff and Regina Haney, NCEA Religious Education and Boards and Councils Departments

The Role of the Board in Marketing and Development

Tuesday, January 21, 2014

1 p.m. ET

Hosted in partnership with the Institute of School & Parish Development (ISPD)

Implementing the Bishop's Framework (rescheduled from December 10, 2013)

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

4 p.m. and 7 p.m. ET

Presented by Christopher Cosentino, NCEA Secondary Schools Department, and Kelly Reed, Notre Dame Academy

National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Convention and Expo

April 22nd-April 24th, 2014

Pittsburg, PA

UPCOMING EVENTS/DEADLINES

- January 8, 2014-SACS Steering Committee meeting from 10:00-12:00 in Cullman
- January 8, 2014-Principals Advisory Council (PAC) meeting from 1:00-3:00 in Cullman
- January 14, 2014-Professional Growth Review (PGR) due
- January 14, 2014- Principals meeting from 9:30-3:00 at the CSO
- January 15, 2014 - Catholic Schools Week items due to CSO:



We are
 your servants,
 so make us
 brave enough to
 speak your
 message.

Acts 4:29

-Years of Service information

-Number of students and adults attending the CSW Mass (Elementary only – 6th graders)

-Name of student(s) participating in the Mass. (Elementary only – 6th graders)

- January 31, 2014– Principals’ letter of intent due to CSO

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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