



CATHOLIC SCHOOL CHRONICLE

APRIL 2014

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT . . .

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- DIOCESAN SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT** 1
- SACS ACCREDITATION** 2
- MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION** 2
- RESOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** 3
- UPCOMING EVENTS** 4

Most of you have had a chance to rest during our spring break. This month is filled with many activities. Our elementary and middle school students will be taking the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. We are also administering two versions of the NCEA IFG: ACRE Information for Growth Assessment of Children and Youth Religious Education. This assessment will be given to students in the 5th, 8th, 9th and 12th grades. The older edition will be given at the beginning of April. The newer edition is scheduled to be administered at the end of April. These two tests are program and not student assessments.

We will still be in the liturgical season of Lent when the month of April arrives. Lent culminates at the Easter Vigil when we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us use the days before Easter to reflect on the love that God gives us and how we can increase our love for Him. Let us find ways in which we can demonstrate our love for God and for each other. I wish each and every one of you peace and joy at Easter time and always.

DIOCESAN SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Holy Family Catholic Academy (HFCA), a ministry of Holy Family Catholic Church, strives to educate the whole child by providing a quality Catholic education in a safe, caring, and learning environment. Focusing on academics and gospel values, children are encouraged to strive for excellence in spiritual, academic, social, and physical activities. Such activities include daily character development, academic and social interventions, basketball, track, and volleyball. Future activities will include band, baseball, and football. At HFCA there is a strong encouragement for community service for both staff and students; each person is expected to contribute at least 100 hours of community service each year. Most of our staff and students have already met this expectation which included assisting the March of Dimes, Ronald McDonald House, Salvation Army, and other reputable charities. In addition, our staff and students learn about different cultures and ethnicities via Multicultural/Diversity classes and training to ensure we embrace and love all of God's people. Holy Family Catholic Academy is pastored by Father Robert Crossmyer (Father Bob) who is given credit to be the first to integrate Ringling Brothers and Barnum Bailey Circus here in Birmingham, Alabama, with an entire class of African American Students. HFCA has always stood for equality and peace by offering services to all without prejudice or discriminatory biases.

The team of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers maximize learning potential in all subjects with integrity, intelligence, imagination, and cooperative teaching; working together to make connections among the different content areas. The educational mission is to work together with parents and endeavors to assist each student in the harmonious development of his/her spiritual, physical, moral, and intellectual endowments. Holy Family strives to provide an atmosphere of Catholic community, integrating religion and life, so that the student may "...experience learning and living fully integrated in the light of faith."

DID YOU KNOW?

Characteristics of Catholic Identity in schools by Karen Ristau:

- ~Catholic education should foster the desire to seek wisdom and truth, a preference for social justice, the discipline to become self-learners, the capacity to recognize ethical/moral grounding for behavior and the responsibility to transform the world with Gospel values.
- ~Catholic schools give witness to the Gospel in curriculum, programs, respect, priorities, and budgets, codes of conduct and codes of discipline.

A NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT. . .

“Our diocese has been working extremely hard on updating our standards and Catholic benchmarks for English/ Language Arts and Mathematics for kindergarten through twelve grades. We value the input of our colleagues across our diocese. There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise at our fingertips. With that in mind, we will be establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLC). A professional learning community (PLC) is an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues within a particular work environment or field. It is often used in schools as a way to organize teachers into working groups. These groups of teachers will meet by grade level to assist our diocese with creating more rigorous standards and Catholic benchmarks. Our PLC meetings will begin in April of 2014 until the end of the academic school year. It is our goal to have a set of standards and benchmarks that we are proud of. In the fall, we will focus on Science and Social Studies Standards.

SACS ACCREDITATION

Our school system is pressing forward with our Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) Re-accreditation. All of our schools within the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama completed their Self Assessments, AdvancED 5 Assurances, and 21 diocesan Assurances. Now, our schools will be focusing on telling their schools’ stories through Executive Summaries and Building/ Managing Goals and Plans in the Adaptive System of School Improvement Support Tools (ASSIST). The ASSIST system provides a step by step process by which schools and school systems can identify goals, construct measurable objectives, identify strategies and define activities. ASSIST takes the guesswork out of planning by allowing the school/school system to respond to a series of guiding questions that result in a quality measurable objective. The system then allows the school/school system to identify strategies and activities to meet each objective. This is a thorough process by which the school/school system assigns resources, establishes timelines and identifies staff responsible for implementation. Once goals are built in ASSIST, the school/ school district can assign goals to create various improvement plans and print working documents.

By using the Goals and Plans component in ASSIST, it supports the continuous improvement process by allowing schools and school systems to reuse the goals to construct various plans as needed. It also tracks the implementation of goals and plans while allowing for ongoing modification and addition of goals based on new data and information. If you need additional assistance with creating goals in ASSIST, go to www.advanc-ed.org/assistresources.



*Inspirational
Quote:*

*Tell me and I
forget. Teach me
and I remember.
Involve me and I
learn."*

Benjamin Franklin

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Recently, the Catholic schools of the Diocese of Birmingham have partnered with *Scholarships for Kids*, one of the larger Scholarship Granting Organizations in the State of Alabama. Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) are 501-c3 charitable organizations which serve as a pass-through for citizens to designate a portion of their state income tax bill for the purposes of education scholarships for needy students or for students in school districts deemed “failed” by the State Department of Education.

There are two parts to the full functioning of an SGO: one is the work of sharing with potential donors the benefits of designating their state tax liability for the purposes of educational scholarships, and second is the process through which parents apply for the scholarships themselves. In the model adopted by the Diocese of Birmingham, our schools are the first point of contact for the parent interested in applying for a scholarship from an SGO. That way, a positive dialogue is established from the beginning between the parent and the school.

Working with *Scholarships for Kids* is a rewarding experience for the schools of the Diocese of Birmingham. Committed to excellence in education and character formation, *Scholarships for Kids* wishes to provide our schools not only with scholarships for qualified students wishing to attend Catholic schools, but also with other helps to achieve our schools’ goals. Parents are always free to apply to whichever SGO they choose, but parents are required at least to apply to *Scholarships for Kids* if it appears that they are qualified for the scholarships available. Much more information can be found at: alabamakids.net.



RESOURCES

If you are interested in sharing ideas, best practices and innovative approaches as well as learn from your fellow colleagues that could impact how you lead others, consider subscribing to *Connected Principals*. It is a website with peer reviewed educational articles on numerous topics. Within the website, it also has a blog created by a principal for principals. All of the contributing authors of the blog have different experiences in education but have the same goal in mind; they want what's best for all children they serve in their schools. To obtain a free subscription to *Connected Principals*, go to www.connectedprincipals.com. Updates are available via email, Tweets, Twitter, Facebook, or on LinkedIn.



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

Acts 4:29

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NCEA webinars cover trending and need-to-know topics relevant to your career in Catholic education.

Each webinar is scheduled for one hour. All participants will receive the recorded webinar for reference and inclusion among other professional learning resources. Read through the upcoming schedule of webinars for the remainder of 2013. Go to www.ncea.org to register for webinars.

It's an iPad and 1:1 World, So How Do I Live, Teach, and Lead in It?

April 1, 2014

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

Presented by Kathy Mears, NCEA Elementary Schools Department, and Greg Dhuyvetter, Diocese of Orange

National Council of Mathematics (NCTM) Annual Meeting and Exposition

April 9th-12th 2014

New Orleans

National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Convention and Expo

April 22nd- April 24th, 2014

Pittsburg, PA

National Council of Science Conference

May 5th-7th 2014

Washington D.C. at Gaylord National Resort

International Reading Association (IRA) Conference

May 10th-12th 2014

New Orleans

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Teaching Excellence

June 27th- 29th 2014

Dallas, Texas

UPCOMING EVENTS/DEADLINES

- April 1-4 2014- ACRE Testing to be administered
- April 5th 2014-Diocesan Art Fair
- April 7th 2014-All ACRE Completed/Answer Sheet to CSO by Noon
- April 7th -11th 2014- ITBS/CogAT Assessment-Administered this week
- April 8th 2014- Kindergarten Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting from 10am-12pm located at CSO
- April 8th 2014- 1st Grade PLC meeting from 1pm-3pm located at CSO
- April 8th 2014- Admin. Assistant Workshop—North 9:30am-1:30pm located JP2
- April 9th 2014- Admin. Assistant Workshop—South 9:30am-1:30pm located Prince of Peace
- April 10th 2014- 2nd Grade PLC meeting from 10am-12pm located at CSO
- April 10th 2014-3rd Grade PLC meeting from 1pm-3pm located at CSO
- April 15th 2014-4th Grade PLC meeting from 10am-12pm located at CSO
- April 15th 2014-5th & 6th Grade English/Language Arts PLC meeting from 1pm-3pm located at CSO
- April 17th 2014- Riverside MUST receive All Tests (ITBS/CogAT) by Noon
- April 21st 2014-Easter Monday (Weather Make-up)
- April 29th 2014-5th & 6th Grade Mathematics PLC meeting from 10am-12pm located at CSO
- April 29th 2014- 7th & 8th Grade Mathematics PLC meeting from 1pm-3pm located at CSO



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

Acts 4:29

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 | flawlor@bhmdiocese.org |
| ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT: | DR. NIYAH GRIFFIN | ngriffin@bhmdiocese.org |
| DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: | REV. JOHN MCDONALD | directorofeducation@bhmdiocese.org |
| EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: | CHRISTINE SALBERG | csalberg@bhmdiocese.org |

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