



## PARENT NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

Dear Families,

The images and stories in this newsletter provide glimpses of daily life for nearly 63,000 students in an area encompassing the Catskill Mountains to Staten Island. Every day, the tireless efforts of dedicated adults in each building instill a desire to succeed, which results in ever-improving test scores, excellence in the arts and a deeper understanding of and relationship with God.

As I step into the role of Interim Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of New York, I wish to express my gratitude to Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan for his confidence and support while our national search for a long-term superintendent continues. I also thank Dr. Timothy J. McNiff for his decade of tireless service to our great schools. His hard work and leadership ensured that Catholic education in the Archdiocese of New York will continue to thrive and excel for generations to come.

As a lifelong Catholic educator, first as a Catholic school teacher, then as principal and now in administration, I understand that our families are the heart and soul of this magnificent institution of learning. Thank you for the honor of preparing you children for their Catholic journey through life.

Going forward, we will continue to innovate our approach to teaching and learning, led by our dedicated principals, faculty and staff who work to create a culture of learning and a determination to succeed.

With gratitude,

Mr. Michael J. Deegan  
Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of New York



### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Timothy Cardinal Dolan celebrated Catholic Schools Week 2019 with a Mass and tour of Our Lady of Pompeii in Manhattan. Events and observances were held throughout the archdiocese and across the nation, as Catholic schools opened their doors and welcomed their communities to highlight the beautiful traditions, values and academic-excellence that define Catholic education.





From left to right: Sr. Nancy Usselmann, FSP; Msgr. Edmund J. Whalen; Georgia-Renee Boamah; Obinna Nwako; Robert Astorino.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HOLD SPIRITED DISCUSSION ABOUT MEDIA AT THE SHEEN CENTER

The third annual high school student leadership conference - an interactive dialogue titled *The Media Landscape: A Catholic Lens* fostered a thoughtful discussion on reconciling the current media culture of incivility and “fake news” with our calling as Catholics to seek truth and compassion. Student representatives from 32 Catholic high schools heard from a panel which included: Director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles, Sr. Nancy Usselmann, FSP; Vicar for the Clergy of the Archdiocese of New York and former principal of Monsignor Farrell High School, Msgr. Edmund J. Whalen; Cardinal Spellman High School student, Georgia-Renee Boamah; and Regis High School student, Obinna Nwako. Rob Astorino, former Westchester County executive, CNN commentator and Cardinal Timothy Dolan’s delegate to the Mother Cabrini Foundation, served as the moderator.

The discussion included opportunities for questions and comments from the audience, and students openly discussed topics such as the Covington Catholic controversy, how minorities are portrayed in the media, and the line between free-speech and hate-speech.

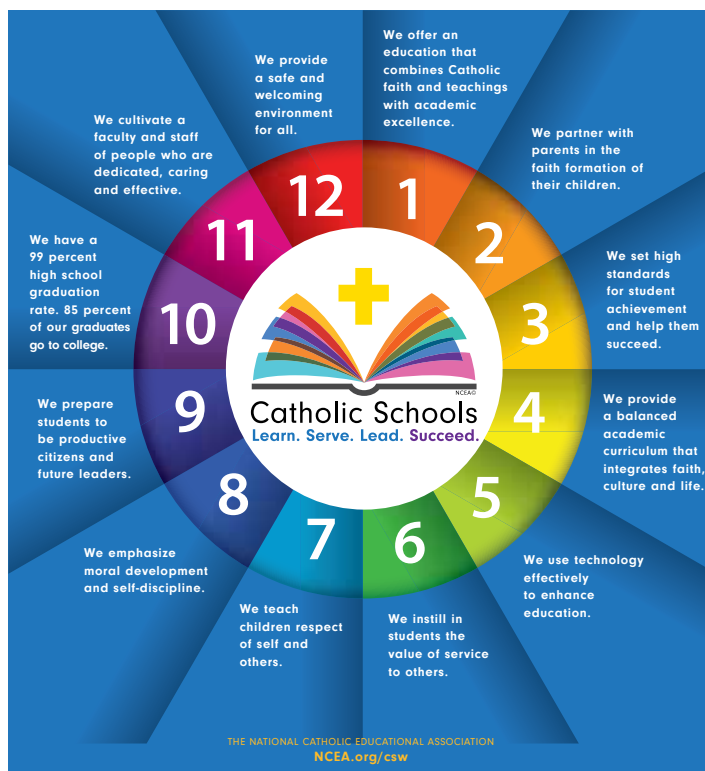
## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS EARN ACCREDITATION

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York have once again proven our academic excellence, earning accreditation from AdvancED. The Office of the Superintendent hosted the review team from March 19–21, at which time a rigorous evaluation of academic programs and processes took place. In order to make its determination, the review team listened to presentations from regional superintendents, principals and teachers that offered a cross-section of our schools and established their adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards.

To earn accreditation, systems must meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, implement a continuous process of improvement, and host an external review team once every five years.

In addition to presentations, a team of trained professionals from across the nation reviewed policy documents and performance data, interviewed community stakeholders, and conducted site reviews at several schools. All of these efforts resulted in our approval for accreditation.

## a dozen reasons to choose Catholic Schools





## WHY I TEACH: A BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT

I am the special education teacher here at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School in the Bronx. My job is indeed very special.

Our mission is to make the environment less constricting for children with different abilities, because we know children learn in different ways. The secret to deciphering and decoding education is to find the interest point which will accommodate learning. We work from an intentionality model, with child-led sessions. This encourages the individuality of each child, leading to increased interest and learning.

This past Fall was the first year in Catholic school for one of my young students who came to us from a public school. His favorite phrases were, "I can't," and "I don't know." He was unable to read and was in second grade, when he should have been in third. He did not know one word on the Dolch Sight Word List. This child had an aversion to academic work. Learning was not a familiar experience. He seemed frightened when work presented itself to him. Daily, his body tensed as academic demands increased. But one day, this same child had an epiphany all of his own! He was able to understand and recite 70 Dolch Sight Words off that list! I watched his face as he shrieked with delight! This was a very special moment for him and for me.

*Derinda Smith, Special Education Teacher  
Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Bronx*

## TWO MORE REASONS TO CHOOSE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### MRS. BETHANY NEGERSMITH

*Principal of St. Stephen-St. Edward School, Warwick*

Anyone who knows Bethany Negersmith, understands her two main focuses are the spiritual and intellectual growth of her students. She knows their academic success is enhanced by a deeper understanding of a strong relationship with God. Mrs. Negersmith has cultivated an environment of "God first" at St. Stephen-St. Edward School. This is evident by the increased number of school Masses from once per month to once per week. Additionally, each month, the students say a different prayer, such as a Novena or the Rosary, while being taught the importance of praying for others. This culture of respect for others, and respect for self, is complemented by the faith-based conviction that God's children must be challenged academically in order to become productive members of society. The individualized academic needs of each student are met through the use of technology and distance learning courses. Mrs. Negersmith also strongly encourages parents to participate in the academic life of the school by volunteering their time and talents. For example, a parent who is a local farmer will be teaching the students about Earth Day, and each student will receive a tiny tree. Every student at St. Stephen-St. Edward School knows they are loved and cared for by Mrs. Negersmith, the faculty and staff. Mrs. Negersmith sets a wonderful example as a school leader and as a true witness to our Catholic faith.



### MRS. JEANNINE ROLAND

*Principal of Our Lady Star of the Sea School, Staten Island*

"Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two." This Bible passage from Matthew 5:41 perfectly describes the approach of Mrs. Jeannine Roland, principal of Our Lady Star of the Sea School on Staten Island. Mrs. Roland always goes the extra mile, and does more than is required for her students, faculty, staff, parents, and her colleagues. Mrs. Roland takes the time to get to know each of her 621 students and families personally and she celebrates each student's talents and uniqueness. More importantly, the school continues to thrive under her leadership due to her willingness to serve the individual academic needs of her students, including students who learn differently and members of the National Junior Honor Society. We applaud Mrs. Roland for her leadership, compassion, and being a great role model of what it means to live the way Jesus.







# #IPRAYED

A new social media campaign called #IPrayer was launched on Ash Wednesday and will continue through Lent. The campaign, which puts a faith-based twist on the #IVoted campaign, encourages people to use “#IPrayer” after praying. To help launch the campaign, Timothy Cardinal Dolan created a video urging all to join our students in posting on social media after they pray with the “#IPrayer,” hashtag.



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