



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *in the*
ARCHDIOCESE of NEW YORK

Faith-Based. Future-Focused.

PASTOR NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019

Dear Pastors,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and rested from a peaceful summer. As you will see in this September outreach, we are ready for a new year in this great institution of Catholic education. As you navigate these pages, you'll see a few facelifts our schools have enjoyed, as well as the new principals who are ready to lead our schools in their sacred mission of delivering a superior values-infused curriculum. Specifically, there is a preview of this year's Catholic Identity curriculum, including the monthly values for 2019-20. You will also find a few links to the recent back-to-school issue of Catholic New York where you can learn more about the forward thinking teaching and learning initiatives of which we are so proud.

Your partnership is invaluable to what we do every day in our Catholic schools. Thank you for being a constant pastoral presence, setting the tone for our school leaders, students and families.

With gratitude,

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



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS NIGHT AT DUTCHESS STADIUM

Timothy Cardinal Dolan celebrated Catholic Schools Night at Dutchess Stadium, and watched the Hudson Valley Renegades take on the Lowell Spinners. His Eminence signed custom-made baseballs branded with the St. Patrick's Cathedral logo for our students, and threw the first pitch of the night. The national anthem was sung by students from St. Denis-St. Columba School who won an essay contest regarding Cardinal Dolan.



Values Infusion Program 2019-20 Calendar

September	Faith
October	Choose Life
November	Gratitude
December	Hope
January	Perseverance
February	Charity/Love
March	Mercy
April	Generosity
May	Kindness
June	Loyalty

NEW MONTHLY VALUES FOR THE 2019–20 SCHOOL YEAR

The Office of Catholic Identity releases new values each year as part of their Values Integration Program in which each month is assigned a different value. The 2019–20 Calendar is live on CatholicSchoolsNY.org, and was also distributed to all principals and teachers at our schools. The abridged version is included here. The full calendar not only reflects values, but also provides a theological question regarding each value, a scripture verse, the time of the Liturgical Year in which the value occurs and other resources to help educators teach the whole child, not just academically, but spiritually as a child of Christ.

These monthly values are consistent for all of our schools, from Pre-Kindergarten to 8th grade, and educators incorporate them into the curriculum accordingly. The values program is also aligned with our Anti-Bullying/Safe Environment curriculum to ensure they are fully infused in everything our students are learning. Additionally, each value is paired with a Loukoumi book for grades K-2, resources that come from a non-profit focused on values, and an age-appropriate Netsmartz lesson, which focuses on internet safety. The Office of Catholic Identity was able to secure 21 new Loukoumi books for each of our schools for the 2019–20 school year.

FIVE STUDENTS WIN BOOK SERIES COMPETITION

Five of our students were selected as winners for The Loukoumi Make a Difference Foundation's Inspiring Stories that Make a Difference! book series. Students ages five to 18 were asked to write a 400-500-word essay about something they did that made a difference in the world. The winners will appear in the first edition of the *Inspiring Stories that Make a Difference!* book series. Their stories will also be promoted on social media with an accompanying interview. The book and promotion is slated to come out mid-to-late October. It is truly remarkable that five of the 50 winners came from our schools, two from Our Lady of Grace School in the Bronx and three from Our Lady of Victory School in Mount Vernon.



Some of our new principals posed with Interim Superintendent Mr. Michael Deegan at their New Principals Retreat

CATHOLIC IDENTITY LEADERS SPEAK TO NEW PRINCIPALS AT JULY NEW PRINCIPALS RETREAT

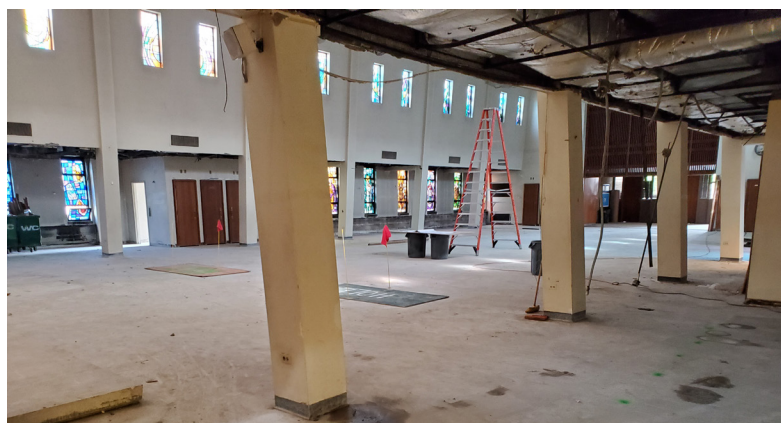
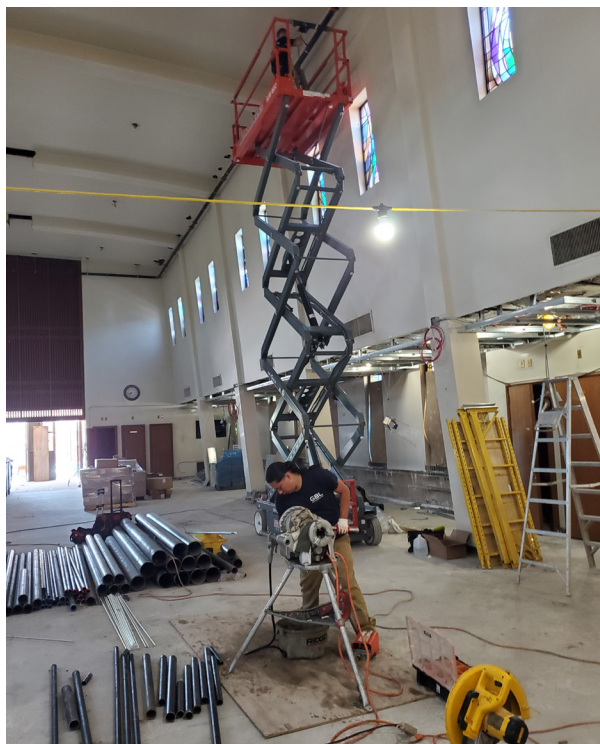
Executive Director for the Office of Catholic Identity Sr. June Clare Tracy, O.P., E.D., and Associate Superintendent for Mission Effectiveness Sr. Anne Massell, spoke at the new principals meeting this past July. Sr. June Clare spoke about responsibilities that our principals have as leaders in a Catholic school in order to prepare them for their newfound vocation. She explained that principals are privileged witnesses of Christ's love for His children. They are responsible to promote and pass on the Faith, provide experiences to allow children to come to really know and love God, support faith formation for teachers, and foster traditional practices of the Catholic faith. She also gave a presentation on the history of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York, to instill in them our rich heritage and help them understand we are about something larger than just one school or region. Sr. Anne spoke about the characteristics of Catholic leaders and tied this to the theme of servant leadership, an approach to leadership and service whereby the leader is servant first and leader second.

EXCITING IMPROVEMENTS THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS

This summer yielded some wonderful capital improvements in many of our schools across the archdiocese. Upgrades ranged from fresh paint, to new blinds, to fully renovated bathrooms, and 21st century science labs. One school even experienced the transformation of a decommissioned church into a brand new gymnasium. These enhancements reflect the momentum and focus on the future our schools enjoy thanks to the hard work and generosity of foundations and individuals who are committed to sustaining the sacred mission of Catholic education.

One of the largest endeavors is wrapping up in the Bronx, where Our Lady of Grace School is completing an exciting project, funded through a grant from the Shea Family Foundation, which will transform their former church—closed three years ago—into a new gymnasium. The basketball team, as well as all of the other sports programs and gym classes at the school, will now have a new court to call their own. The Jaguars were also given a fresh new logo specifically for their sports teams to accompany their new home.

The photos here of Our Lady of Grace's gym renovation, and on the following page, are just a snapshot of some of the fantastic improvements our schools have enjoyed.





The Academy of Mount St. Michael completed a whole new state-of-the-art sports complex, including field, scoreboard, locker rooms, and weight rooms. Support was donated by Phyllis and Angelo Mozilo '56, Alison and Buzz Zaino '61, and Rocco Commisso '67.



Kingston Catholic School implemented extensive renovations, including new bathrooms, front office, science lab, library, bright paint, and more. The “crowning jewel” is the new gymnasium pictured here. Check out these before and after photos!



Immaculate Conception School in Tuckahoe was awarded a ‘Champions Grant’ of \$27,000 to replace aged blinds, which have adorned their school since the 1950s.



Immaculate Conception in Tuckahoe also connected some of their rooms, which now allows for more instructional space, as well as play/creative space in the center room that is shared by all Pre-K and Kindergarten students.

THOUGHTS FROM SOME OF OUR PASTORS

FR. BLENKLE



Fr. Joseph A. Blenkel, Pastor of Saint Mary, Mother of the Church in Fishkill, with his students

It seems like only yesterday, that I had the privilege of being a 15-year-old teenager who was present to hear the message of St. John Paul II at Madison Square Garden

He spoke to us about the value of a Catholic education, and challenged us to build his church. It was there that I felt Jesus call me to be His priest.

In my 29 years as a priest, I have taught a generation of children the faith. Whether that be teaching the Sacraments, like Confirmation, Penance and the Eucharist, or sharing the children's book Charlotte's Web. I have tried to teach and instill in children the gift of friendship which Jesus extends to them, and the importance of their place in the church.

I thank God for the opportunity to teach in a Catholic School. Forty years later, I still hear those words of St. John Paul II, "Build my Church."

DEACON BOB



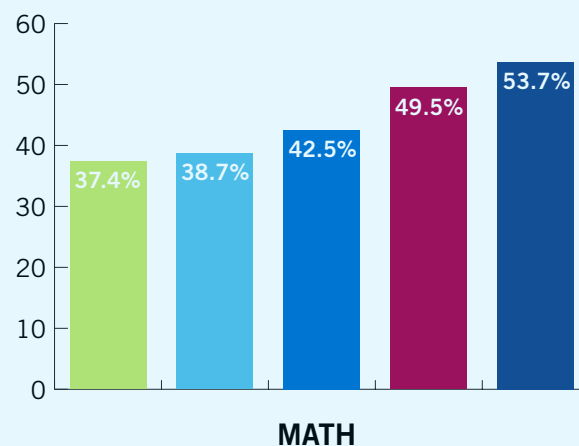
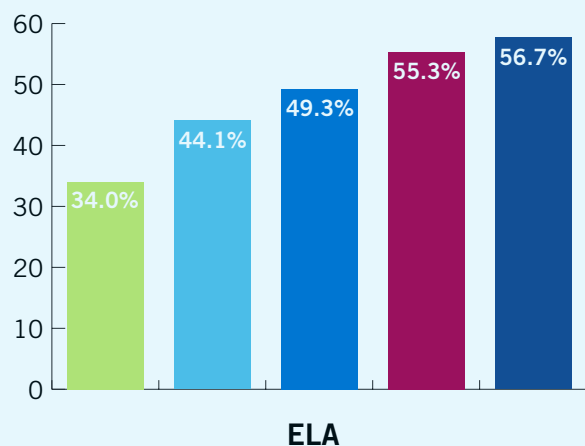
Deacon Bob Gontcharuk, Regional Director for Catholic Identity in Central Westchester, at Annunciation Elementary School in Crestwood

For the past three years, I have been the Regional Director for Catholic Identity in Central Westchester. The purpose of my office is to foster the spiritual life within each school. Specifically, this enables me to foster open communication between pastors and principals in addressing concerns related to the teaching of the Catholic faith, traditions, and values, as well as practices within the schools.

I have been able to actively support the school leaders in the discharge of their duties as they pertain to the spiritual lives of the students, ensuring that the Mass and Sacraments are integral to the practice of our faith. I have been called upon to teach religion classes, conduct vocation conversations, give faculty retreats, and lead communion classes and confirmation retreats; meet with the regional school leaders monthly to listen and to share Catholic Identity concerns. I meet with pastors periodically and as needed. As the regional director, I have seen greater collaboration between pastors and principals on many levels. As we go forward, it is my task to encourage and support our Catholic schools as we address the Catholic identity goals listed in the Pathways to Excellence II strategic plan.

PERCENT OF GRADE 3–8 STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING PROFICIENCY STANDARDS —ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

2015 2016 2017 2018 2019



Math and ELA Scores
Have Improved for the
Fifth Straight Year at NY
Catholic Schools!

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



ADNY FINAL RELIGION EXAM

	Pass % June 2015	Pass % June 2016	Pass % June 2017	Pass % June 2018	Pass % June 2019	Pass % Avg (5 yrs)
Bronx – Northeast/East	92	89	88	88	91	90
Bronx – Northwest/South	89	87	89	83	90	88
Manhattan	92	89	88	90	93	90
Staten Island	95	90	92	91	93	92
Central Westchester	94	91	93	90	93	92
Dutchess/Northern Westchester/Putnam	98	95	95	96	96	96
Rockland/Ulster/Sullivan/Orange	96	92	92	91	93	93
Partnership	90	88	85	76	83	84

Average Across 136 Schools

2019 Average Percentage Passing Rate: 92%
2018 Average Percentage Passing Rate: 91%

Percentage Passing	Number of Schools, 2019	Number of Schools, 2019
90-100	100	81
80-89	22	33
70-79	13	12
Below 70	1	4

CONTINUED ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE FOR THE 2019–20 SCHOOL YEAR

Our focus for the year ahead continues to be strong academics. We'll be supporting teachers and principals with engaging and purposeful professional development around the use of small group instruction, mental health, and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The new mental health standards will be implemented in the 2019–20 school year, while the new NGSS standards will wait for the 2020–21 school year. We'll also continue our rollout of computer-based testing for the New York State exams, with 3rd grade math, and 5th and 6th grade ELA. We'll collaborate on ways to support students with diverse learning needs, as well as support strong pedagogical practices in religion classrooms. Finally, we'll work together to create more support for new teachers within our system, to guarantee that they are fully prepared to ensure excellence in the classrooms.

\$1 MILLION CONTRACT TO PROVIDE 210 SEATS IN NEW UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN (UPK) PROGRAM TO CORPUS CHRISTI-HOLY ROSARY CAMPUS

There is a new group of young UPK students to welcome into our school community, and we call on our pastors and faculty to keep them in your prayers as you settle into your back-to-school routine. The archdiocese won a more than \$1 million contract to provide the Town of Port Chester's UPK program, which will offer an additional 210 seats to four-year-olds across 12 classes.

"These additional 210 seats in Port Chester demonstrate the tremendous growth in early childhood education in the Sound Shore area," said Dr. Noelle Beale, Regional Superintendent of the Catholic School Region of Central Westchester. "We currently serve more than 1500 early childhood students in 23 schools through Central Westchester, and we are excited to expand the terrific services we provide families in the Port Chester community come September."

This will be the beginning of a journey through the vibrant Catholic school system for many families, and we look forward to welcoming them all into our community.



*Curriculum and Staff Development
Associate Superintendent Dr. Susan Miller*



*Westchester Regional Superintendent Dr.
Noelle Beale speaking about Port Chester's
new UPK facility with WVOX Radio*

A Few Highlights from Catholic New York's Back-to-School Issue

- ['Work, Play, Prayer' Requisites for a Successful School Year, Says Interim Superintendent](#)
- [Teachers Offer Tips to Equip Students Heading Back to School](#)
- [Fusion Program Helps Students Increase Academic Proficiency](#)

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