



# PARENT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019

Dear Catholic Schools Families,

Thank you for your faith and trust in our Catholic schools. I hope this newsletter find you and yours well-rested and 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. You will also find some helpful strategies for returning from vacation, as well as a link 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.

I am so grateful your family is once again a part of ours. Welcome back.

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.



## TIPS FOR PARENTS

FROM MANHATTAN REGIONAL  
SUPERINTENDENT JOSEPH TWEED



From Target to Staples, back-to-school ads flood the airways as families brace for Labor Day weekend, the end of summer, and the school bell ringing to usher in a new school year.

Whether shopping for that perfect backpack or thinking about what this school year may bring, these next few weeks are often filled with anxiety and excitement for parents and students alike.

For parents, the end of summer and the start of the school year can bring mixed emotions, less time with children, a busier schedule, and the often-dreaded challenge of getting the whole family back into the routine of school. Most parents I speak with want the school year to go well from day one, but know that the challenges mentioned above, coupled with building a new relationship with their child's teacher, makes this hill appear steep.

Teachers and school administrators love this time of year as we open our doors to the children we serve. Over the years, I have comprised a list of suggestions that I, and my colleagues, have shared with countless parents in an effort to build a strong and lasting relationship with each one, and help families begin the school year on a positive note.

### FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 5

Commit to being a partner. Believe it or not, teachers love partners in parents. As a parent, introduce yourself to the teacher early in the school year. A short email introduction can be fine, letting the teacher know that you are excited to work together. This is also a time to inform the teacher about anything unique with your child. Starting the conversation early will help form a lasting partnership that will serve to enrich your child's educational experience.

### FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-8

Build a bridge. The tween years can be challenging, as middle school students want to push boundaries and explore all that the world has to offer. With the independence students want at this age, it is difficult as parents to begin to let go. Middle school students will make some mistakes along the way, but the lessons they learn from each one can set them up for tremendous success later. Teachers know this.

As parents, build a bridge with your child's teacher that helps you work together to navigate the emotional waters that lie ahead. Let the teacher know what you see at home, and be open to hearing the same from the teacher. If tweens know that you and the teacher are on the "same page," and are committed to helping them mature and gain some independence, you will see success. At this age, it really does "take a village," and this connectedness will lead to academic and emotional growth.

Lastly, for much of my educational career, I have served high school students and parents as a college counselor, dean of students, and assistant principal. In these roles, I have encountered every type of helicopter parent from the Apache-attack style to the Medical fix-it style, so I understand the trials and tribulations you all face.

### FOR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Take a step back. High school is a time for students to take ownership over their learning, and be self-advocates. This is an essential skill that these young leaders need if we are to set each one up for success, both in high school and in college.

I know it is hard to step back and support children from the sidelines, but the lessons they learn from success and failure will leave a lasting impact. We want them to know we are there, but we want them to feel like they earned the victory themselves. Even when a challenge or obstacle presents itself, and your instinct is to swoop in and fix it, you need to trust that the partnership both you and your child have built with the teacher will help them find their way.

High school is a terrific time for parents, students, and teachers to work together to help young adults prepare today to be leaders of tomorrow. Encourage your child to lead the discussion that is their education. Have them lead the parent/student/teacher conference. Help them build a relationship that makes it easy to ask for help when it is needed.

Show these young adults that working smarter is as essential as working harder, and that their teachers are their biggest ally in achieving success in the classroom and out. If this is done well, your graduating senior will be prepared to navigate the next four years of their education in the college, university, or trade of their choice.

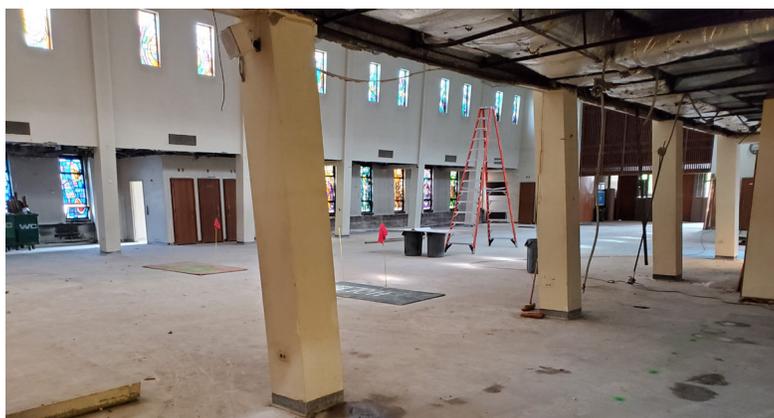
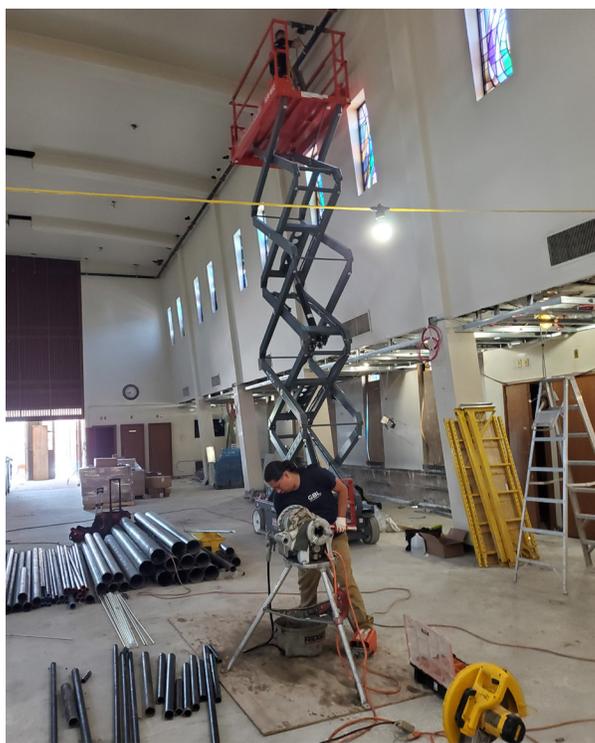
Remember, whether your child is three, 13 or 18, all want to succeed in school. Children want to make their parents proud, and teachers want children to develop a love for learning that will last a lifetime. In these past two weeks, countless classroom doors opened, welcoming in the next surgeon, lawyer, teacher, astronaut, engineer, and more. Work together with your child and teacher to make this year one of tremendous learning and growth.

## 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!



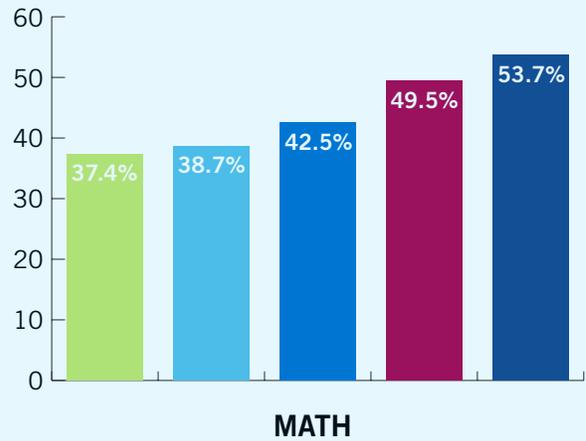
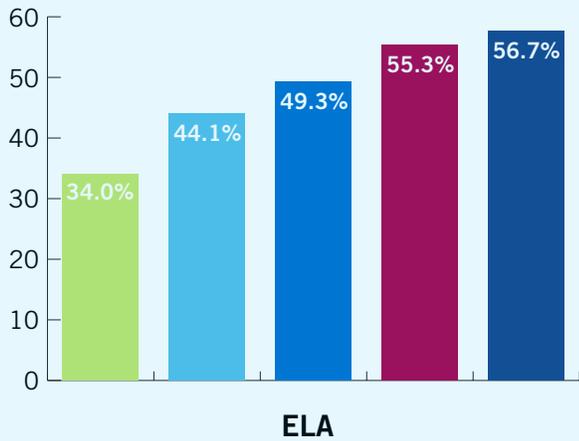
Immaculate Conception School in Tuckahoe was awarded a 'Champions Grant' of \$27,000 to replace aged blinds, which have adorned their school since the 1950s.



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.

**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, 2018
90-100	100	81
80-89	22	33
70-79	13	12
Below 70	1	4

June 2018 – June 2019: 12 individual schools improved percentage rates by 10 or more points; 4 individual schools improved their rates from below 70 to above 70.

## 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 parents 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.

### 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](#)



*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*



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

### FOLLOW US FOR IMPORTANT UPDATES ON OUR SCHOOLS

