



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *in the*
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Archbishop Hicks Meets with Catholic Educational Leaders, Emphasizing Mission and Unity

YONKERS, NY – In a moment that underscored both continuity and renewal, educational leaders from across the Archdiocese of New York came together for their first systemwide meeting with Archbishop Hicks on May 4, 2026, signaling a shared commitment to strengthening Catholic education through unity, mission, and faith.

The gathering began with the celebration of Mass at the St. Joseph Seminary Chapel, where the Archbishop centered his homily on the call to communion with God and one another. “We are united together, and we are united in love,” he preached, emphasizing that the foundation of Catholic education flows from a lived relationship with Christ. “Our response is to love God and love each other.”

Following the liturgy, educational leaders convened at Dunwoodie Golf Course for a meeting that blended personal witness with pastoral vision. The event provided an opportunity not only to welcome Archbishop Hicks but also to better understand the experiences and convictions shaping his leadership within Catholic education.

Sr. Mary Grace Walsh, ASCJ, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York, opened the program with a warm expression of gratitude. “We are so grateful that you have come to the Archdiocese of New York,” she said, presenting the Archbishop with a Catholic school jacket as a sign of appreciation for his spiritual leadership and support of Catholic education.

In his remarks, Archbishop Hicks offered a deeply personal reflection on the role Catholic education has played throughout his life. Raised by parents who chose Catholic schools despite the financial sacrifice, he described his early formation as foundational. “I will be eternally grateful,” he said. “It is where my love for the faith began.”

That formation, he explained, was not something to be kept, but something to be given. “If you have received something in your life, you’re obligated then to give it back,” he said, framing Catholic education as both a gift and a responsibility.

The Archbishop connected this conviction to his priesthood, recalling his desire to remain closely involved in parish schools. “I wanted to be the kind of priest that the kids actually saw,” he said, noting the lasting impact such presence had on him as a student.

He also drew on his experience serving children as regional director of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos in Central America, where education became a powerful instrument of change. Without significant financial resources, the community achieved academic excellence through dedication and purpose. “You do not need to have money to make sure education is available,” he said. “There just has to be a desire to do it well.” The result, he noted, was transformative; students were able to break cycles of poverty and reimagine their futures.

Throughout his address, Archbishop Hicks returned to a central theme: the mission of the Church must shape the work of Catholic education. Referring to his installation homily, he reiterated that the Church is not inward-looking. “The Church exists to serve others,” he said. “We are a Church on mission.”

For educators, that mission takes a distinctive form; one that integrates faith, knowledge, and action. “Evangelization is not so much about what we know about God; it’s knowing God,” he said. “And when you know and love God, you put your faith into action every day.”

He encouraged leaders to help students understand the deeper meaning behind their formation, particularly acts of service. “It’s not just what they do, but why they do it,” he said, pointing to the baptismal call that underlies Christian life.

Acknowledging the challenges facing Catholic education, Archbishop Hicks affirmed that the sacrifices made by families and educators are meaningful and worthwhile. The fruit, he said, is seen in students who grow not only academically, but as disciples; young people who understand their identity and mission within the Church.

The gathering concluded with a shared sense of purpose and encouragement. For many in attendance, it was not simply an introduction to a new archbishop but the beginning of a deeper collaboration rooted in faith.

“This is where the Lord has asked us to be,” Archbishop Hicks said. “And it is a blessing, especially when we are united together in that mission.”

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Photo Credit: (Gerald Wutkowski/Superintendent of Schools Office ADNY)

Photos and Captions:



Above: Most Rev. Ronald Hicks, Archbishop of New York, processes into the chapel at St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, NY, for eucharistic liturgy with educational leaders in the Archdiocese of New York on May 4, 2026



Above: Ms. Stacey Swinkunas, Principal of Most Precious Blood School, Walden, and Ms. Jacqueline Fretwell, Principal of Sacred Heart School, Hartsdale, present the gifts to Most Rev. Ronald Hick, Archbishop of New York, during a eucharistic liturgy with educational

leaders in the Archdiocese of New York on May 4, 2026 in the chapel of St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, NY



Above: Catholic school principals and administrators sing and pray during a Eucharistic liturgy for educational leaders in the Archdiocese of New York with Most Rev. Ronald Hicks, Archbishop of New York, on May 4, 2026, in the chapel of St. Joseph Seminary in Yonkers, NY



Above: Most Rev. Ronald Hicks, Archbishop of New York, delivers an address to educational leaders in the Archdiocese of New York at The Fairways at Dunwoodie Golf Course in Yonkers, NY, on May 4, 2026.



Above: Catholic school principals and administrators listen attentively to an address given by the Most Rev. Ronald Hicks, Archbishop of New York, on May 4, 2026, at The Fairways at Dunwoodie Golf Course in Yonkers, NY, on May 4, 2026.