

VISION



NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
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August 3, 2009



PRAYER OF THE MONTH!

Eternal God, we thank you for the gift of work and service. Free us so that we might dedicate our hearts and lives to our *VISION* of Catholic school education with dignity, passion, and commitment as we teach, lead, and model your Gospel to the children and youth who have been entrusted into our care.

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A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE MOST REVEREND HENRY J. MANSELL

*It is an honor to feature an article written by Archbishop Henry J. Mansell in the August 2009 edition of *Vision*. We are most appreciative of the Catholic Bishops of New England who have agreed to communicate their thoughts, dedication, and commitment regarding the importance of Catholic schools in published articles throughout the New England region from January 2009 to April 2010. We are especially grateful to Archbishop Mansell for sharing his thoughts as we prepare to begin a new school year. Please share his article with your school community.*

Dale R. Hoyt

Parents Know

By the Most Reverend Henry J. Mansell

Parents know where real value is, and they know the value of our Catholic schools.

Parents know the results of standardized tests and how our students compare so favorably with students from other schools on those same tests.

They know that Catholic schools address the whole person: physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual. It is a matter of integrity, integrity of the student and integrity of the school. They understand that without spiritual development all education is fundamentally flawed.

They know that Catholic schools integrate prayer in the course of the day and highlight the sacraments as critically important in our lives. Periodic celebrations of the Mass give praise to God and remind us of our identity. The saints are presented as models for every age.

They know that Catholic schools function as families and that our schools encourage the involvement of parents, guardians, and grandparents.

Parents know that Catholic schools require order and an atmosphere conducive to learning. They provide safe and secure environments.

They know that Catholic schools cultivate study habits in our students and train them in work habits which serve them for life.

They know that Catholic schools enable youngsters to establish roots for steady and strong growth. They understand that without roots you are left with dryness, decadence, and decay.

Parents know that Catholic schools teach us to love God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – our origin and our ultimate destiny.

They know that Catholic schools give direction to our lives. They understand that our schools provide a moral compass, enabling us to stand against aimless drift.

They know that Catholic schools focus attention on every single student, each one created in the image and likeness of God.

They know that Catholic schools see in religion a unique and extraordinary incentive for the practice of the virtues.

They know that Catholic schools produce leaders, academically prepared, knowledgeable of the world around us, and sensitive to the needs of others.

Parents know that with all of us working together, and with God's grace, Catholic schools produce great people.

What More People Should Know

If finances were not the problem, our schools would be teeming with students and others trying to enter. So often we hear parents say they would be thrilled to have their youngsters in our schools, for all the reasons listed above, but they simply cannot afford the tuition.

All sorts of programs have been developed at diocesan levels and local levels to subsidize our schools and provide scholarships for individual students. These programs must continue to grow and expand. The increasing involvement of corporations and foundations is gratifying and encouraging.

Government should be providing more financial assistance at the state, federal, and local levels.

It should be known that the Catholic schools in the six states of New England currently save government approximately 1 billion 350 million dollars a year in operational expenses. This figure does not include the costs for capital repair and new construction which would be necessary if our schools did not exist. It also does not include the lien which the dropouts from other schools place on the public assistance rolls for years to come. Those costs are in the multi billions of dollars.

Catholic schools have a dropout rate of a fraction of 1%. Other systems reach rates of 37% to 40%.

Various states in the United States have provisions for government aid to non-public schools which suggest that we could be doing much more than we are here in New England. Government funding would provide meaningful help in the following areas: text books, library materials, technology, transportation, mandated services (covering costs of record keeping), school nurses, teacher training, tuition tax credits, corporate tax credits (for assistance to public and non-public schools), etc.

When we consider the enormous contributions that Catholic schools make for society at large, in educating both Catholic and non Catholic students, financial assistance from government could reap rich dividends for everyone.

Gratitude

The history of Catholic schools in the United States is an incomparable story of sacrifice, leadership, and success. The epic continues. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to so many who make it possible: pastors, principals, teachers, administrative staff members, parents, guardians, grandparents, and other parishioners. Clergy, religious, and lay people carry forward the momentum together.

Numbers and statistics affirm the importance of Catholic schools. When you hear and read, however, the profound and emotional expressions of gratitude from parents whose children would not be able to attend Catholic Schools without the assistance they receive, you appreciate beyond a semblance of a doubt the significance of our schools. Parents know where real value is.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Highlighting our **vision** that we are Church, we go forth in prayerful gratitude to carry out the mission that Jesus, the greatest of teachers, entrusted to His disciples.*

LEADERS IN TRANSITION:

Susan O'Brien, Ed.D. has been appointed Principal of St. Brigid School, West Hartford (Elmwood).

Congratulations to:

Archbishop Henry J. Mansell named as one of *Greater Hartford's 50 Most Influential People of 2009* in the August issue of *Hartford Magazine*.

The following priests have been appointed by Archbishop Mansell as pastors to parish schools: **Rev. Kevin P. Cavanaugh**, Assumption School, Manchester, in addition to his duties as Pastor, St. James Parish, Manchester; **Rev. Thomas A Sievel**, Pastor, St. Vincent de Paul School, East Haven; **Rev. Stephen M. Sledesky**, St. Bartholomew School, Manchester, in addition to his duties as Pastor, St. Bridget Parish, Manchester. We are delighted that Archbishop has reappointed, **Rev. Joseph P. Crowley** as Chaplain of Northwest Catholic High School, West Hartford.

Please pray for:

the soul of **Frances R. Ptaszynski**, who died on Tuesday, July 7, 2009. She was the mother of the Reverend Thomas E. Ptaszynski, Temporary Administrator, Saint Vincent de Paul Church, East Haven. May the soul of Frances R. Ptaszynski rest in peace!

the soul of **Patricia D'Angelo**, the mother of Patricia Kanute, the Principal of St. James School, Manchester. May the soul of Patricia D'Angelo rest in peace!

the soul of **Rocco (Al) Rotondaro**, the uncle of Maria Maynard, Assistant Superintendent, Office of Catholic Schools. May the soul of Al Rotondaro rest in peace!

the soul of **Michael Fournier**, the father of two young students at St. Mary Magdalen, Oakville, who died suddenly on July 15. Please keep the entire family in your prayers. May the soul of Michael Fournier rest in peace!

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

*Honoring the **vision** that Catholic Identity is the hallmark of our schools,
and our awesome obligation is to ensure that those entrusted to us
understand the Gospel message.*

Caritas in Veritate: The latest encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, "**Caritas in Veritate**" (Love in Truth) was released in July. Caritas in Veritate highlights the social themes of humanity and reminds us that authentic renewal of both individuals and society requires living by Christ's truth in love as a community of faith.

2009 Catechetical Sunday Materials Being Offered Entirely Online: The Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) announced for the first time that the materials for the major Catechetical Sunday celebrated annually on the third Sunday in September (September 20, the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time) in parishes across the United States, will be offered entirely online at <http://www.usccb.org/catecheticalsunday>. The theme for Catechetical Sunday 2009 is "Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word." The Catechetical Sunday materials, entitled "Celebrating the Catechetical Year 2009-2010 with Resources for Catechetical Sunday 2009," are available in English and Spanish and will assist parishes in celebrating Catechetical Sunday. Orders for the various printed materials are available through USCCB Publishing at <http://www.usccbpublishing.org>. A variety of helpful resources can assist parish catechetical leaders, catechists, Catholic school teachers, and parishioners throughout the 2009-2010 year. These resources can be used in catechist or teacher in-services, parish adult faith formation, family enrichment, personal prayer and retreats, and are available online free of charge.

Catholic Youth Spectacular: "Beyond Sunday: Reading the Signs-Getting Home", is the theme of this year's Catholic Youth Spectacular to be held on Sunday, September 20, 2009. Tickets purchased by August 25, are \$25. (After September 11, tickets are \$35 per person, including those purchased at the door on the day of the event). No group is too big or too small; bring all your catechists – its Catechetical Sunday!! Features included the possibility of a youth choir from Africa, "walkabout" icebreaker, entrance procession with pennant from your parish, prayer service with dirt on home plate, *Catholic Idol* with talent from your parish, "Sister Act", Reconciliation behind home plate, inflatable's, information tables for disciple development, great music from Exaudio, and more! Schools are encouraged to register their students in grades 7-12 for this spectacular event. Contact Shawnee Baldwin sbaldwin@adh-ore.org at the Office of Religious Education or 860.243.9465 for more information on how your school can participate as we celebrate the youth of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

ADMINISTRATION

*Recognizing our **vision** that we build community, serve others, and bridge the crossroads
of faith and knowledge for our students.*

Administrative Openings for the 2009-2010 School Year:

St. Anthony School, Bristol

Act Concerning the Availability of Automatic External Defibrillators: Some of you have inquired if S.B. 981, An Act Concerning the Availability of Automatic External Defibrillators in Schools, applies to private and religious schools. In June 2009, Governor Rell signed S.B. 981. This act requires a local school board to have at each school in its jurisdiction, if funding is available, (1) an automatic external defibrillator (AED) and (2) school staff trained in its use and in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The act allows school boards to accept donated AEDs under certain conditions. It also allows boards to

accept gifts, donations, and grants for AED acquisition and staff training costs. It also requires each school to develop emergency action response plans for the appropriate use of school personnel to respond to individuals experiencing sudden cardiac arrest or similar life-threatening emergencies. This act only applies to public schools. However, local school boards could purchase the defibrillators for private and religious schools. The effective date is July 1, 2009.

Preparation for Potential Flu Outbreak: President Obama has advised delegates at a national flu summit that "the potential for a significant outbreak [of the H1N1 virus] in the fall is looming." He urged "vigilance and preparation." Read about the summit and its implications for religious and independent schools on CAPE's Web site at: <http://www.capenet.org/new.html>

Be sure to check out CAPE's new blog at <http://capenetblog.blogspot.com/2009/07/joes-take-nurse-pappas-to-rescue.html> for a behind-the-scenes look at one of the summit's most engaging speakers, Nurse Mary Pappas from St. Francis Prep in New York City, which was hit hard by H1N1 last spring.

Administrators 5th Annual Convocation, *Come to the Water*: Once again, we look forward to welcoming all administrators to another informative and relaxing session at Water's Edge Resort, Westbrook, on August 13 and 14, 2009. The expectation is that all presidents and principals will be present on both days. Registration is from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and the meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. with opening prayer. This year, we are pleased to welcome Reverend Ronald J. Nuzzi, Ph.D., Convocation Director and Professor, Notre Dame University, as our retreat facilitator.

Safe Environments: Please remember that all new employees must complete a criminal background check within 30 days of being hired. Those who volunteer on a regular basis must complete a background check before service begins. All personnel, whether paid or volunteer, are to complete Virtus Training within six weeks of commencement of service. Please contact Larry Duffany at 860.242.4362 or lduffany@adh-ocs.org for any needed materials or information.

Request for Student Desks and Chairs: St. Francis/St. Rose School, New Haven is in need of additional student desks and chairs for grades K – 8. To arrange for pick-up, please call Victor Vessicchio, Principal, or Dennis Beaupre, Assistant Principal at 203.777.5352.

CURRICULUM

Providing vision of education for a lifetime where faith and knowledge intertwine to form person-centered learning communities.

Elementary Administrators' Curriculum Meeting: There will be a meeting on August 17, 2009 for all elementary school principals at St. Dominic School, Southington, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The purpose of the meeting is to disseminate curricular information that will impact the upcoming school year. In addition, time will be designated for discussion and planning for the 2009-2010 school year. High school principals will be given information that pertains specifically to high school curricular areas at the October High School Consultations. High school principals wishing to participate in the August 17 meeting are welcome to attend. A detailed agenda will be emailed on August 3.

ADVANCEMENT

Building our vision of understanding that Catholic schools must be supported by expanding our efforts in development, marketing, and support from business and civic communities.

Bring Your Board Up to Speed: Be on the lookout for your invitation to the annual School Board In-Service Training Workshops. The workshops will be held earlier this year to accommodate principals who wish to get their boards "up and running" by the start of the new academic year. Two sessions are being

offered: Tuesday, August 25 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at St. Bridget School, Cheshire, and Thursday, August 27 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Alumni Lounge, Bloomfield. This is a great opportunity to give all board members, either new or veteran, an understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Tips for Attracting More Students: John Cooper, in the newsletter he publishes for the Institute of School and Parish Development, offers these tips for attracting new students over the summer to enhance your fall enrollment:

- Place eye-catching "Good News" and pictures in your parish bulletin (Ex.: "8th Grader Awarded Prestigious Scholarship")
- Offer a "30-Day Money Back Guarantee" to those who have expressed an interest in your school. We cannot change the cost of tuition, but we can speak to the value of the investment!
- Host Information Sessions, not Open Houses, since this eliminates the problems of not getting enough faculty and volunteers to host and not drawing a large enough crowd of visitors. Organize small discussion groups that address what your school has to offer its students (Principal), what teachers have to offer students (Teacher), how the school has benefited our family (Parent), and how the school has benefited me (Student).
- Use "story telling" to get your message across. Do some brainstorming to surface compelling human interest stories, and interview the families/students involved, requesting permission to write the story.
- Ask a recent graduate to write a "Letter to the Editor" thanking the school for what it did for him/her.
- Make sure that all inquiries who have not registered receive one more phone call.
- Offer to present a session for parents at the local public library about preparing a child for school.
- Encourage your teachers to connect personally with each enrolled family over the summer to help students "on-board" and to help minimize attrition.
- Remember: "The Catholic school recruitment season is a long one. Catholic schools have to hustle and run out every ground ball (inquiry lead that comes in), whether it comes in the first inning or the last."

Save The Date: Elementary school administrators are encouraged to place Sunday, September 27 on their school calendars for the annual HOPES Dinner honoring our wonderful Catholic school volunteers. The event will take place at 5:00 p.m. at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington, and we hope all elementary schools will be present to enjoy it. Invitations will be sent out in August.

FINANCES

*Establishing a **vision** of responsibility to continue to strive toward the goal of making Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all parents and their children.*

Projected Enrollment Report 2009-2010: This report can be downloaded from the Office of Catholic Schools' website, under the "School Finance Section". In order to access enrollment trends within the Archdiocese, the completed report is now due and is required to be emailed or faxed to Jim Giangreco, Administrative Assistant to Ken Przysiecki, CPA, Director of School Finances at jlgiangreco@adh-ocs.org or 860.242.8683.

Compilation Reports for 2008/2009: Compilation reports due on October 1 are prepared by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and are required to comply with NEASC certification requirements. To meet with this deadline the financial records (books) of the school should be closed on or around August 1. This will allow sufficient time to contact your CPA and arrange for him/her to complete their work and issue a report in sufficient time.

DUE DATES

NOW DUE

- Asbestos Semi-Annual School Report** due to Leslie Nelson via U. S. mail
RSVP Multiage Design Teachers' Workshop due to Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org
RSVP Elementary Administrators' Curriculum Meeting due to Valerie Mara at vmara@adh-ocs.org
Intent Form for Catholic Youth Spectacular due to Shawnee Baldwin, Office of Religious Education, at sbaldwin@adh-ore.org or fax at 860.243.9690
Projected Enrollment Report 2009-2010 due to Jim Giangreco at jlgiangreco@adh-ocs.org

AUGUST

- 7 **Elementary Advancement Plans** due to Anne Clubb at aclubb@adh-ocs.org
18 **RSVP to School Board In-Service Training**, Cheshire, due to Anne Clubb via dnewell@adh-ocs.org
20 **RSVP to School Board In-Service Training**, Bloomfield, due to Anne Clubb via dnewell@adh-ocs.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST

- 4 **Meeting of the Pastors with Schools** to discuss the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Room 1A
5 **Multiage Design Teachers' Workshop**, Office of Catholic Schools, 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon
6 **New Principals' Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
13-14 **Administrators' Convocation**, Water's Edge, Westbrook, CT, Registration 8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Meeting begins at 9:30 a.m.
17 **Elementary Administrators' Curriculum Meeting**, St. Dominic School, Southington, 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon
19-21 **Archdiocesan New Teachers' Orientation**, St. Timothy Middle School, West Hartford, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
21 **Virtus Training Session**, St. Timothy Middle School, West Hartford, 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
24 **Elementary Administrators' Curriculum Meeting (alternate date)**, Office of Catholic Schools, 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon
25 **School Board In-Service Training Workshop**, St. Bridget School, Cheshire, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
27 **School Board In-Service Training Workshop**, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Alumni Lounge, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
29 **Archdiocesan School Board Social**, Meriden, 5:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER

- 7 **Labor Day** (Holiday) Office of Catholic Schools Closed
9 **Curriculum Commission Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
10 **Principals' Advisory Council for Elementary (PACE) schools**, Office of Catholic Schools, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. followed by lunch
14 **Meeting of the Pastors with Schools** to discuss the *Archdiocese of Hartford Handbook of Policies and Procedures for Catholic Schools*, Donnelly Parish Center, St. Rita Church, Hamden, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
17 **Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools**, Board of Trustees Meeting, Chancery, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
17 **Professional Development for Elementary Educators**, St. Rita School, Hamden (*as assigned*), 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
18 **Professional Development for Elementary Educators**, St. Brigid School, West Hartford (*as assigned*), 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

- 20 **Catholic Youth Spectacular**, Rockcats Stadium, New Britain, 12:30 – 7:00 p.m.
- 21 **Archdiocesan School Board Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 6:30 p.m.
- 24 **New Principals' Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- 24 **Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents**, Board of Trustees Meeting, The Catholic Center, Bridgeport, 6:00 p.m.
- 26-27 **HOPES Collection** taken at all Masses in all parishes of the Archdiocese of Hartford
- 27 **HOPES Dinner**, Aqua Turf Club, Southington, 5:00 p.m.
- 29 **Secondary Administrators' Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- 30 **Curriculum Conversations**, St. Bridget, Cheshire, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.



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