



## Purpose and Vision for Catholic Schools

Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford welcome students of all faiths, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds. The fundamental purpose of Catholic schools is to:

- ✦ Provide a safe, nurturing and secure environment in which **students encounter the living God** who, in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth;
- ✦ Partner with parents to support students in their learning and in their **search for knowledge, meaning, and truth**;
- ✦ Create a Catholic climate that contributes to the **formation of students** as active participants in the parish community;
- ✦ Foster a **culture of educational excellence** through critical thinking skills, innovative and rigorous curriculum standards, a global perspective, and an emphasis on moral education, community, and service;
- ✦ Promote life-long learning that advances the **development of the whole person** - mind, body, and soul; and
- ✦ Graduate students prepared to become **productive, virtuous citizens and church leaders** who will fashion a more humane and just world.

## Sharing Our Resources

"Building relationships is key to building a positive learning community. Spending time on [spiritual], social, and emotional learning enables academic gains to happen" (Kriete, *ASCD*, 2011).

During my classroom visits, I try to observe and connect best practices with the challenges Catholic educators face on a day-to-day basis. Most often, I leave the school strengthened by the wonderful experiences of the students and their teachers. Additionally, questions surface as to how our network of Catholic schools can better share resources among the many talented and gifted administrators and teachers in the Archdiocese of Hartford.

Recently, I learned of a district meeting that was led by Principal Kathy Spencer, St. Joseph School, Meriden, sharing ideas on the many functions of the iPad2 with her colleagues. Similarly, Principal Norine McDermott, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Meriden, invited administrators and educators to her school to experience the integration of the iPad2s into the curriculum and explore means for funding these technological tools for their schools.

Director of Curriculum Design, Valerie Mara, offers curriculum conversations for Catholic leaders in order that they may share instructional best practices. That same process of *conversations* is taking place through other office personnel with school board chairs, business managers, advancement personnel, and new administrators. At the next PACE meeting the principal representatives and the Office of Catholic Schools staff will engage in reflective conversations from the book, *Changing the Ending*, by Kevin Baxter.

Sharing our resources with each other provides new insights, new and practical lessons from the field, and insights into action. No one person has all the answers and that is why it is essential that we learn from our colleagues whom we trust and admire.

Administrators and teachers face many challenges in their daily roles; it can be daunting to say the least. We must look proactively at these challenges with different lenses and transform them into opportunities for growth and success. Answers to many of these challenges are found within the school building, in our neighboring Catholic schools, and in partnership with the Office of Catholic Schools and other Archdiocesan agencies.

## Lent

Let us be mindful that in February the liturgical season of Lent will begin. During this time, the school community should provide opportunities for various spiritual exercises. Since the season of lent is nearly seven weeks in length, consider adopting one of the seven themes of the Catholic social teaching each week. "Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came 'to bring glad tidings to the poor... liberty to captives... recovery of sight to the blind' (Lk 4:18-19), and who identified himself with 'the least of these,' the hungry and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:45). Catholic social teaching is built on a commitment to the poor. This commitment arises from our experiences of Christ in the Eucharist" (USCCB). By embracing the social doctrine of the Church, the Catholic school community may find new and insightful ways for the sharing of resources.

**Dale R. Hoyt**  
**Superintendent of Catholic Schools**

### BEST PRACTICES

#### **Learning: An Act in Progress**

Valerie Mara, Director of Curriculum Design



Education is cyclical in nature. What has been tried and true always resurfaces, but often disguised as a different initiative or under a different name. Those of us who have been blessed to be educators for over twenty years, have known that the best way to deepen knowledge and elicit the greatest degree of student achievement is to constantly check for student understanding and to then re-teach, often using different methods, and keep at it until the students indeed *learn!* Great teachers are tenacious at heart. Can you say you have taught, if the students haven't learned? Back in 1989, Madeline Hunter would say a resounding "NO!"

"To say that you have taught when students haven't learned is to say you have sold when no one has bought. But how can you know that students have learned without spending hours correcting tests and papers? ...check students understanding while you are teaching... so you don't move on with unlearned material that can accumulate like a snowball and eventually engulf the student in confusion and despair" (Madeline Hunter, 1989).

Most would agree, however, that education is far from where it was even 15 years ago. Today, what was previously coined, "checking for understanding" is termed formative assessment. It is a pedagogical change; the most powerful assessments are used to *inform and adjust instruction*, rather than for a grade once instruction ended. Research has irrefutably indicated that if we wait for the summative assessment, the "test" that takes place on a predetermined day in a finite period of time, is no different than waiting for an autopsy to explain why a patient "failed"; but the information comes too late, especially from the patient's point of view. Formative assessments are assessments FOR learning, assessing few skills frequently while learning is in progress. Summative assessment are assessments OF learning, assessing all skills taught in a unit at one time when instruction has ended and learning is measured and graded.

Formative, on-going methods of assessments are specifically designed to provide immediate feedback to students on performance to improve and accelerate learning. Research practitioner, John Hattie, conducted a study based on research of 83 million students that rendered irrefutable conclusions validating what effective teachers have been saying for years: "It's all about trusting relationships and 'oodles of feedback'." In his book, Making Learning Visible, Hattie reported that providing students with specific information about their standing in terms of particular objectives increased their achievement by 37 percentile points.

Formative assessments are about making learning visible to both the teacher and the student. We don't attach grades to these authentic responses. Rather, we use it to guide the direction for our next steps in the instructional process (Miller, 2008). How do we make learning and thinking about understanding visible? Like I have so often been reminded: keep it simple! Pull up a chair next to a child or group of children and talk to them about their



understanding of what you “taught.” Did learning happen? Did teaching occur? Listen to what students say and note what’s pertinent in a notebook or sticky note either during whole class instruction, independent practice, or in the course of spontaneous conversation. Observe – were students engaged? What were students really doing during that lesson? Who needs more support? Who needs less support?

What have we learned over the course of two decades? Learning is an act in progress. Assessments are not just for grades. The most powerful assessments are those that occur each day in every class and go beyond the realm of simply checking for understanding. They enable teachers to take action before the summative assessment. It involves using that knowledge about students’ understanding to change the course of all students’ learning toward the path of mastery and success. No small feat, but then again remember, we teachers are tenacious at heart. The successful teacher is one who can say without a shadow of a doubt, my students *learned* today and here’s the evidence!

*“Only a teacher? Thank God I have a calling to the greatest profession of all! I must be vigilant every day lest I lose one fragile opportunity to improve tomorrow.” (Ivan Welton Fitzwater)*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**Jason S. Hartling**, the Principal of East Catholic High School, Manchester, and **Carolyn Daniels**, a teacher at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, Meriden, who will be featured on *That’s the Spirit* on the television station, WCCT-TV at 5:40 a.m. and 10:40 a.m., and the radio station, WJMJ-FM, at 12:40 p.m. next Sunday, February 5. They will discuss the topic of technology and education.

**Camilla Marzella**, a fifth grade student at St. Mary Magdalen School, Oakville, who was one of two winners in the Watertown Fire Safety poster contest. Camilla won a U. S. Savings Bond and her poster will be entered in the Litchfield County round of competition.

the five Catholic school elementary teachers who participated in the Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) training for student teacher mentoring: **Bryan Cosham, St. Mary School, Newington; Alice Dunn, St. Paul School, Berlin (Kensington); Megan LeFevre, St. Mary Magdalen School, Oakville; Gina Raymond, St. Mary School, Simsbury; and Yvette Rosemond, St. Bridget School, Manchester.** This training will allow college students pursuing a career in education who are attending St. Joseph College in West Hartford to student teach under the supervision of these trained mentor teachers.

**St. Peter/St. Francis School, Torrington**, which was featured in two newspapers, the *Republican American* and the *Register Citizen*, on January 13 and 14, 2012. The articles highlighted the dedication of a large beautifully constructed wood cross affixed to the side of the school and the school’s new science lab. These efforts represent the great volunteer efforts of the Torrington Cluster of Catholic Churches and the school.

**Maria Maynard** and **Thomas Maynard** on the birth of their grandchildren, a boy, Jenson Jacob, on November 1, 2011, and a girl, Ellory Demaris Byron, on January 4, 2012.

**Ken Przysiecki** on the birth of his granddaughter, **Tenley Faith**, born on January 11, 2012.

### P RAY FOR:

the soul of **Kenneth J. Console**, the son of Linda Carlson, the Pre-K paraprofessional at Saint Lawrence School, West Haven, who passed away suddenly on Thursday, January 19, 2011. May the soul of Kenneth Console rest in peace!



the soul of **William Gaites**, father of Cindy Paulus, the bookkeeper at Saint Lawrence School, West Haven, who passed away suddenly on November 29, 2011. May the soul of William Gaites rest in peace!

the soul of **Rev. Thomas Plathottam, C.S.T.** who served on the East Catholic High School Board and had been a vocal supporter of East Catholic High School, Manchester. He was the longtime pastor of St. Luke Church, Ellington. May the soul of Father Plathottam rest in peace!

## ADMINISTRATION

### 2012-2013 Administrative Openings:

#### *Archdiocese of Hartford:*

- St. Paul Catholic High School, Bristol, Dean of Academics

#### *Diocese of Norwich:*

- Principal, Mercy High School, contact Sr. Mary McCarthy, R.S.M. at [MMcCarthy@mercyhigh.com](mailto:MMcCarthy@mercyhigh.com)

**iPad2 for Administrators:** The Office of Catholic Schools is working in collaboration with the Apple professional development team to create a Wiki that administrators will be able to access to share resources and educational applications, ask questions, or communicate innovative uses that ease some administrative tasks. This site is under construction and is expected to be unveiled some time in March.

**Purpose and Vision Statement Display:** All administrators are urged to display laminated copies of the new Purpose and Vision Statement in each of their school's classrooms. The four-color pdf document can be accessed on the Administrators' Login of the Office of Catholic Schools' website under the title, Organization. Look for "Purpose and Vision 2011, FINAL, 8.5 X 11.pdf." This is a great way to encourage students, faculty and school community members to become familiar with this important statement.

**Archbishop's St. Patrick's Day Breakfast Hosted by the Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools (FACS)** is planned for Friday, March 16, 2012 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. The guest speaker is Rev. James Martin, S.J., an award-winning author and sought-after commentator on religion and spirituality in the national and international media. For those familiar with The Colbert Hour, Rev. Martin is a frequent guest and contributor, and has appeared on all the major radio and television networks and in venues as diverse as NPR, PBS, CNN, MSNBC, The History Channel, the BBC and Vatican Radio. In addition to his years spent improving the lives of many in Jamaica and Kenya, he has worked with gang members from the inner city of Chicago and served as chaplain in a Boston prison.

Proceeds from this event provide support for FACS to provide student scholarships and fund special projects at Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford. This lively event has become a favorite way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and support Catholic education. The breakfast features great food and Irish themed entertainment by students attending our Catholic schools.

For information on sponsorship opportunities, advertising in the breakfast program, or to purchase tickets, please contact Shirley Ziolkowski at [Sziolkowski@facshartford.org](mailto:Sziolkowski@facshartford.org) or call 860.761.7499. Shirley will be pleased to send an eFlyer that may be forwarded to friends and family. Please visit <http://facshartford.org/Events.html>.

## CATHOLIC IDENTITY

**Adult Faith Formation Classes:** Congratulations! The Archdiocese of Hartford has 83 educators participating in the current cycle of religion courses at the University of Dayton. Two site-based courses will be offered in Cycle 2,



which runs from the end of February through the end of March. For more information, please contact Larry Duffany at [lduffany@adh-ocs.org](mailto:lduffany@adh-ocs.org).

**Catholic Educators' Faith Conference:** Information on the Catholic Educators' Faith Conference (March 28 and 29, 2012) will be posted to the Office of Catholic Schools' website within the next week. This year there will be the opportunity to select a break-out session.

**The Prayer of the Month**, written by **the sixth grade class of St. Augustine School, Hartford**, will be featured on the Office of Catholic Schools' website for February.

## CURRICULUM

**Connecticut Private School Summit Master Teachers:** The Connecticut Private School Summit will be held on April 26, 2012, and is open to two or three teachers and/or administrators from each Archdiocesan elementary and high school. In addition to this dynamic day of professional learning at Sacred Heart University, each school may nominate one teacher who is considered a master teacher and is willing to attend a second, follow-up training day with the presenters, and who will also agree to present a small workshop at the fall Catholic Educators Curriculum Conference for their colleagues. A stipend is attached to this presentation. **Nominations are due February 1, 2012.** Each candidate will be reviewed by the nominating committee. Notification of selections will be sent by February 13, 2012. Online registration for the Summit opens March 1, 2012 and will be available via the Archdiocese of Hartford, Office of Catholic Schools' website.

## ADVANCEMENT

**Parent Satisfaction Survey:** The Current Parent Satisfaction Survey posted on the Office of Catholic Schools' website has been taken down and results will be compiled. In order to maintain sound statistical processes, only those schools whose response rates meet or exceed 10% of their enrollment will **automatically** receive a report. Anything less than 10% of school enrollment would not be representative of the general level of satisfaction. However, any administrator who would like to see their school's report (whether or not the response rate reaches 10%) may request the results of Anne Clubb and a report will be generated for them. Reports will be emailed to the principals/chief administrators as well as to the elementary school pastors.

**Periodic Inquiry and Source Report:** The Inquiry and Source Report for the period of October to January is due **February 6**. Elementary and secondary administrators can now utilize a simplified, online process to submit the information, accessed via the Administrators' Login on the Office of Catholic Schools' website. Simply enter the school code (the same code used for completing the Census) in the box corresponding to the October to January report and select "Submit." The appropriate report will appear and data can be entered. When the report is done, check the "Report is Fully Completed" box, then select "Submit" and the data will be sent to the Office of Catholic Schools. Any questions can be directed to Diane Newell in the department of School Advancement (by phone or [dnewell@adh-ocs.org](mailto:dnewell@adh-ocs.org)).

**HOPES Grants:** The application for HOPES Grants has been posted on the Administrators' Login on the Office of Catholic Schools' website, and elementary administrators are encouraged to complete and submit their applications by the **March 23** deadline. HOPES Grant applications may be designated for a wide variety of objectives, including, but not limited to programmatic initiatives (i.e., textbook series, computer software and hardware, physical education equipment), tuition assistance to promote enrollment, or physical plant improvements. In response to *Common Threads* goals, and in light of current enrollment trends, schools may want to consider funding a stipend (in the range of \$5,000 - \$7,500) with their HOPES Grant to provide an admissions coordinator for the school.



**Donor Management Software:** In order to be in compliance with Archdiocesan advancement policies and procedures (Policy #6.101), all schools must now utilize a donor management software program. Those schools that participated in the Catholic Alumni Partnership (CAP) program and that will no longer be utilizing the FACTS Donor Management Software System are asked to provide Anne Clubb ([aclubb@adh-ocs.org](mailto:aclubb@adh-ocs.org)) with the name of the alternate software the school has chosen. Those schools that have yet to convert to an advancement software system are also asked to communicate the name of the system they select. To assist schools in their choice, webinars are currently being arranged to provide software demonstrations. The first webinar demo has been scheduled for **Wednesday, March 21 at 10:00 a.m.** and will be presented by The Little Green Light. This is an on-line, user-friendly system that is intuitive and highly affordable. The link to the webinar will be emailed to all administrators prior to March 21. Webinars regarding additional options for donor management software systems will be scheduled in the near future. Questions may be directed to Anne Clubb.

**FACTS Software Training:** Questions and challenges regarding the advancement software can be addressed to our primary contact person at FACTS, Steve Ulrich ([sulrich@factsmgt.com](mailto:sulrich@factsmgt.com)), who is working to ensure that support is timely and comprehensive.

Upcoming training sessions for elementary schools utilizing the FACTS Donor Management System include the following opportunities to enhance your knowledge and abilities, have questions answered, and challenges addressed:

- Webinar session on **Wednesday, February 8 at 10:00 a.m.** – link into the online session and attend a FACTS class designed to help you perform typical data management tasks (60 – 90 minutes in length).
- Conference call on **Thursday, February 23 at 10:00 a.m.** – dial into the call and have your specific questions answered, or simply listen and learn (30 – 45 minutes in length).

Emails containing information on how to connect to the webinar and the conference call will be sent by Anne Clubb to the principals of those schools utilizing FACTS, who may forward to all those who wish to participate. Feel free to submit questions about FACTS training or suggest topics to be covered to Anne Clubb at [aclubb@adh-ocs.org](mailto:aclubb@adh-ocs.org).

## FINANCE

**Capitol Region Education Council (CREC):** The Archdiocese of Hartford is now in its fourth year using CREC as a cooperative purchasing program where substantial cost savings can be obtained on school supplies, machines, services, etc. In 2011-2012, the CT consortium members purchased a total of \$9.1 million of products and services through this program. The Office of Catholic Schools pays the annual membership fee for all of our schools to be in this program.

## SCHOOL BOARD

**Board In-Service: School Board Chairs, Pastors, Principals, and Chief Administrators:** The next series of conversations will be held on February 15, 2012, at St. Bridget School, Cheshire, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Please join in facilitated discussions to address all school board questions and concerns. Topics may either be emailed ahead of time or raised during the program. Dinner will be served. RSVP to Maria Maynard, Assistant Superintendent of the Office of Catholic Schools, at [mmaynard@adh-ocs.org](mailto:mmaynard@adh-ocs.org) by February 4 with your name and that of the school and town. If you do not receive a reservation confirmation reply by February 4, please call 860.242.4362.

## DUE DATES

### FEBRUARY

- 1 **Nominations due for CT Private School Summit Master Teachers** to Valerie Mara at [vmara@adh-ocs.org](mailto:vmara@adh-ocs.org)
- 6 **Periodic Inquiry and Source Report** for October – January, submitted online via the Administrators' Login page
- 15 **High School Preliminary Budget 2012/2013** to Ken Przysiecki via [kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org](mailto:kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org)
- 15 **Elementary School January Cash Flow Report** to Ken Przysiecki via [jlgiangreco@adh-ocs.org](mailto:jlgiangreco@adh-ocs.org)
- 24 **Archdiocesan School Board Committee Reports** to Dale R. Hoyt via [gkeene@adh-ocs.org](mailto:gkeene@adh-ocs.org)

## EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

- 7 **Principals Advisory Council for Elementary (PACE)**, Office of Catholic Schools, 10:00 a.m. –1:30 p.m., (lunch included)
- 8 **FACTS Software Training Webinar**, 10:00 a.m. (Link provided by Anne Clubb via email)
- 9 **New Elementary Principals Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- 15 **Board In-Service: School Board Chairs, Pastors, Principals, and Chief Administrators**, St. Bridget School, Cheshire, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 17 **New Secondary Administrators Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- 20 **Presidents' Day** (Office of Catholic Schools Closed)
- 22 **Ash Wednesday**
- 23 **FACTS Software Training Conference Call**, 10:00 a.m. (Dial-in provided by Anne Clubb via email)
- 23 **Year Two Elementary Principals Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- 23 **Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools (FACS)**, Board of Trustees Meeting, Chancery, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
- 27, 28 **Archdiocesan High School Consultations**, Office of Catholic Schools
- 29 **Catholic Schools Civics Day**, Legislative Office Building, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### MARCH

- 5-22 **Iowa Tests of Basic Skills and Cognitive Ability Tests** administered to grades 3 through 7
- 6 **Curriculum Conversations**, St. Mary Magdalen School, Oakville, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- 6 **Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents**, Board of Trustees Meeting, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Hartford, 6:00 p.m.
- 15 **New Principals Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- 16 **St. Patrick's Day Breakfast**, Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
- 21 **High School Corporation Meeting**, Chancery, 9:00 a.m.
- 22 **Second Year Principals Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- 28, 29 **Catholic Educators Faith Conference**, St. Paul Catholic High School, Bristol 8:30 –2:30

## REFLECTION

The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.

~ Mother Teresa