SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

SUSTAINING THE MISSION IN THESE CHALLENGING ECONOMIC TIMES

These past few months have been economically tumultuous for our nation – a time when people have been forced to realign their financial priorities, spending precious dollars only on the most important expenses. I am heartened and inspired by the many families who continually place Catholic school education on that list of priorities despite the struggles they may face in meeting the cost. I know their commitment is based on a strong belief in the value of their investment, and on the certainty that their child will receive a firm foundation in faith along with excellence in academics.

Our families’ belief in their investment is substantiated by research and data illustrating the extraordinary accomplishments of which the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford may boast:

- A 99% high school graduation rate;
- 99% of high school graduates pursue higher education;
- Above average national standardized test scores;
- High school graduates include the following: National Merit Scholars, Advanced Placement Scholars, Governor Scholars, and National Honor Society Members.
- The average incoming eighth grade Catholic school student tests at nearly a tenth grade equivalency.
- In addition, there is a tremendous presence of Catholic school students offering service to the greater community.


Despite these spectacular findings, a Catholic school education remains a financial challenge to many. As Sr. Dale McDonald of the National Catholic Educational Association states, “The affordability issue is an over-arching concern. Fiscal pressures have been the key factor in the declining number of schools as well as student enrollments.”

In our efforts to sustain the ministry of Catholic school education, we must be active stewards of the fiscal realities; maintain rigorous academic standards; be aggressive in marketing, and forthright in our commitment to advancing the educational mission of our Church – the fundamental purpose of our Catholic schools.

During the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas, we must be beacons of light and hope. Knowing that God is always faithful to us in the midst of challenges, we can anticipate HIS light shining forth; and truly believing that the Christ child, who we celebrate on December 25, provides us with hope in our continuous journey of educating children and youth in the faith.

On behalf of my entire staff, we extend to you and your loved ones a most holy and blessed Christmas. Know that I am deeply grateful for the tremendous work you are doing in sustaining Catholic school education during these turbulent economic times.

Merry Christmas, and good health and happiness in the New Year!
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.

Please pray for:

The repose of the soul of **John L. Carrier**, the father-in-law of Ken Przysiecki, Director of School Finances, Office of Catholic Schools, Bloomfield. May John Carrier’s soul rest in peace!

**Patrick Gore**, the son of Ginny Gore, Principal of St. Anthony School, Bristol, who will be deployed to the Middle East on December 2. Please keep him and all of the brave young men and woman who are away from their families in your prayers, especially at Christmastime. May God bless them and their families!

Congratulations to:

**Sister Kathleen Kelly, RSM**, Principal of Holy Trinity, Wallingford, who was nominated by the Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce for the 2008 Athena Award for professional excellence, community service, and for actively assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills.

**Dominic Corraro ’80**, a foreign language teacher and Department Chairperson at Notre Dame High School, West Haven, who was awarded the prestigious Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC®) of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts, “Local Heroes Award.” RMHC® awarded a $500 grant to Notre Dame High School in his honor.

**Donna Doherty**, Principal of St. Mary – St. Michael School, Derby, on the birth of her granddaughter, Neave Katherine, on October 28, 2008. Best wishes to all!

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.

**Advent:** Yesterday was the first Sunday of Advent. The liturgical season of Advent is marked with a spirit of anticipation, expectation, preparation, and longing. The **Advent Wreath**, a venerable European tradition, can be a way to involve students in learning about Christian preparation – not only for celebrating our Lord’s birth, but also for making our hearts truly ready to receive Him. These four weeks of Advent lead us into the celebratory season of Christmas when God’s peace breaks through humanity’s broken soil. The fostering of the Advent season involves pastors, administrators, teachers, and campus ministers to provide the school community with many spiritual opportunities as well as reaching out to those less fortunate.

**The Prayer of the Month**, which was written by the eighth grade class at Assumption School, Manchester, will be featured on the Office of Catholic Schools’ website for December.

**Jubilee Year of St. Paul:** The Office of Religious Education, the Office for Divine Worship, and the Office of the Diaconate, have co-sponsored a workshop in celebration of the Jubilee Year of Saint Paul entitled, *The Conversations of St. Paul*. This workshop will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2009 at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The workshop facilitator is Reverend Frank J. Matera, Ph.D. For details, please contact Patricia Keck at the Office of Religious Education, info@orehartford.org or 860.243.9465. Registration deadline is January 20; fee is $10.00 (The fee is not applicable to priests, deacons and deacons’ wives.)
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 2008-2009 School Year:
- St. Augustine School, Hartford, opening exists presently

For the 2009-2010 School Year:
- Sacred Heart School, New Britain
- Academy of Our Lady of Mercy Laurelton Hall, Milford (President Opening)

Save the Date: John Cattelan, the Director of the Connecticut Federation of Catholic Schools Parents, requests that principals and liaisons mark their calendars for the following dates. More information will follow:

- Catholic Schools Civics Week, January 5 – 9: All Catholic school students and their parents will be asked to write letters to the Governor and their state legislators requesting support of legislation that affects our Catholic schools. In the past two years, students and parents have written over 8,000 letters.

- Press Conference, January 12: At a press conference at the Legislative Office Building, the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents will announce a Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and a coalition in support of this proposal. All are invited to attend.

- Catholic Schools Day, January 22: Last year, over 200 students, parents, and teachers attended this event at the Legislative Office Building. We hope to double the attendance in 2009.

Memorandum of Understanding Destroyed – Electricity Bidding: As announced in the October 1, 2008 newsletter, due to the low response rate and the requirements of a reverse auction, electricity bidding on behalf of the schools will not go forward. Please be aware that the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the school administrator, which authorized Dale R. Hoyt, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, and Paul Connery, General Manager of The Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, to act on behalf of the principal, has been destroyed. The principal will be responsible for procuring electricity from alternative suppliers.

Lay Ministry Agreements: The Lay Ministry Agreements have been temporarily removed from the Office of Catholic Schools’ website pending the approval of the revised and/or new policies. Once approved, the agreements will be aligned to reflect the revisions.

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

Lessons That Change Writers: Nancie Atwell, best-selling author of numerous educational books including, In the Middle, is coming to Hartford for a one-day workshop for teachers of grades 5 through 9. Nancie is a master teacher with extensive experience in the classroom where she puts to practical use all of the methods and ideas she will share. Her students have been touted for exceptional writing under the premise that good writing can be taught and learned. This workshop will be held on May 1, 2009. Register early to ensure a spot for a teacher, department chair, or administrator at http://pd.heinemann.comworkshops/products/HWNA05.aspx#register.

Technology Integration: Net Trekker d.i.: This educational search tool has been voted #1 in K – 12 schools, nationwide. Net Trekker easily facilitates differentiating instruction for kindergarten students through seniors in high school by using best practices in technology. Visit http://school.nettrekker.com, to get a firsthand look at the many features that Net Trekker d.i. offers. For more information, contact Sharyl Barnes at sbarnes@netTrekker.com, or toll free at 877.517.1125, ext. 3023. Contact Karen Tyler at the Office of Catholic Schools for the username and password to access the Net Trekker site, ktyler@adh-ocs.org or 860.242.4362 ext. 132.
Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee: In October, the Knights of Columbus mailed each principal a packet regarding the annual Spelling Bee for students in grades four, five, and six. The State Final is scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2009 at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary. Individual schools are asked to notify Ron Scoville, the State Chairman, no later than December 23 of their intention to participate. Winners’ names at the school level should be forwarded to Mr. Scoville no later than January 23, 2009 so that regional competitions can be scheduled in February and March. We encourage all of our schools to participate. For more information, call Mr. Ron Scoville at 860-745-6541 or Larry Duffany at the Office of Catholic Schools at 860.242.4362 or lduffany@adh-ocs.org.

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.

Website Resources: In this electronic age, the school website has become a critical aspect of every school’s marketing efforts. The Office of Catholic Schools is planning to compile a referral list of web content management resources for schools to utilize that will include individuals and companies that host, design, and/or manage websites. If your school has had success with a particular person or company in the creation and maintenance of an effective school site, please share their contact information with Anne Clubb via e-mail at aclubb@adh-ocs.org, and she will circulate it among our schools. Many of our schools are struggling to create an attractive, updated, user-friendly site on a “shoestring budget” and would benefit from any recommendations that another school could offer.

Elementary School Open House Dates: Each year, the Office of Catholic Schools publishes the Open House dates for the elementary schools in the January issue of The Catholic Transcript. Elementary principals are reminded to submit their school’s open house dates to Anne Clubb via dnewell@adh-ocs.org no later than Friday, December 5 in order to be included in this listing.

High School Collection Alert: The High School Collection will be taken in all parishes of the Archdiocese of Hartford on the weekend of January 17/18, 2009. Letters regarding the collection will be sent to all pastors in December, along with posters promoting the collection. Copies of these posters will also be sent to each of our schools, and we ask that you display them prominently in order to raise public awareness of and support for this important collection.

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.

Preliminary Elementary Budget Template: The Preliminary Budget template and supporting documents for 2009/2010 will be posted to the Office of Catholic Schools’ website by the end of December. If you have any questions regarding the template, please contact Jim Giangreco at 860.242.4362, ext. 139, or via e-mail at JLGiangreco@adh-ocs.org. Preliminary Budgets are due Monday, February 16, 2009.

DUE DATES

NOW DUE

Final Elementary School Budgets for 2008/2009 to Ken Przysiecki via jlgiangreco@adh-ocs.org
Compilation Reports for 2007/2008 to Ken Przysiecki via jlgiangreco@adh-ocs.org
Asbestos Letter of Notification fax to Leslie Nelson at 860.242.8683, and retain copy in the School’s Management Plan
Asbestos Six (6) Month Inspection Report mail to Leslie Nelson and retain copy in the School’s Management Plan
Periodic Inquiry and Source Reports to Anne Clubb via dnewell@adh-ocs.org
Elementary School Open House Dates to Anne Clubb via dnewell@adh-ocs.org

DECEMBER
23 Register for the Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee with the State Chairman
# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## DECEMBER

1. Archdiocesan School Board Meeting, Office of Catholic Schools, 6:30 p.m.
2. Office of Catholic Schools Christmas Reception, Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, Alumni Lounge, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
4. Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents, Board of Trustees Meeting, Office of Catholic Schools, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
   *Note change in location from Middletown.*
25. Christmas Day (Office of Catholic School Closed)
26. Christmas Holiday (Office of Catholic Schools Closed)

## JANUARY

1. New Year’s Day (Office of Catholic Schools Closed)
1—31. Catholic Schools Month, Archdiocese of Hartford
5—9. Catholic Schools Civics Week, Letter Writing Campaign to Governor and State Legislators
12. Press Conference to Announce Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship, Legislative Office Building, Hartford
14. Secondary Administrators Meeting, Office of Catholic Schools, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
14. Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools, Trustee Meeting, Chancery, 4:00 p.m.
17—18. High School Collection, All Parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford
19. Martin Luther King Day (Office of Catholic Schools Closed)
22. Catholic Schools Day for Students and Parents, Legislative Office Building, Hartford
24. The Conversations of St. Paul Workshop, the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

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The mission of the Office of Catholic Schools is to further the advancement of Catholic education for students in the Archdiocese of Hartford by providing service, support, guidance, and direction to pastors, presidents, principals, teachers, boards, parents, and other stakeholders of Catholic schools.

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Rejoice in the spirit of Christmas, which is **PEACE**; the miracle of Christmas, which is **HOPE**; and the heart of Christmas, which is **LOVE**.

-Office of Catholic Schools Christmas Message