



## PASTOR NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

Dear Pastors,

The images and stories in this newsletter provide glimpses of daily life for nearly 63,000 students from the Catskill Mountains to Staten Island, and all areas in between. Every day, the tireless efforts of dedicated adults in each building instill a desire to succeed, which results in ever-improving test scores, excellence in the arts, and a deeper understanding of, and relationship with, God.

As I step into the role of Interim Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of New York, I wish to express my gratitude to Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan for his confidence and support while our national search for a long-term superintendent continues. I also thank Dr. Timothy J. McNiff for his decade of tireless service to our great schools. His hard work and leadership ensured that Catholic education in the Archdiocese of New York will continue to thrive and excel for generations to come.

As a lifelong Catholic educator, first as a Catholic school teacher, then as principal and now in administration, I understand that our pastors are irreplaceable partners in Catholic education. You are the shepherds on the ground, providing daily spiritual guidance for so many of the families who send their children to Catholic schools.

Going forward, we will continue to innovate our approach to teaching and learning, led by our dedicated principals, faculty and staff who work to create a culture of learning and a determination to succeed.

With gratitude,

Mr. Michael J. Deegan  
Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of New York



### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

Timothy Cardinal Dolan celebrated Catholic Schools Week 2019 with a Mass and tour of Our Lady of Pompeii in Manhattan. Events and observances were held throughout the archdiocese and across the nation, as Catholic schools opened their doors and welcomed their communities to highlight the beautiful traditions, values and academic-excellence that define Catholic education.





From left to right: Sr. Nancy Usselmann, FSP; Msgr. Edmund J. Whalen; Georgia-Renee Boamah; Obinna Nwako; Robert Astorino.

## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HOLD SPIRITED DISCUSSION ABOUT MEDIA AT THE SHEEN CENTER

The third annual high school student leadership conference - an interactive dialogue titled *The Media Landscape: A Catholic Lens* fostered a thoughtful discussion on reconciling the current media culture of incivility and “fake news” with our calling as Catholics to seek truth and compassion. Student representatives from 32 Catholic high schools heard from a panel which included: Director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies in Los Angeles, Sr. Nancy Usselmann, FSP; Vicar for the Clergy of the Archdiocese of New York and former principal of Monsignor Farrell High School, Msgr. Edmund J. Whalen; Cardinal Spellman High School student, Georgia-Renee Boamah; and Regis High School student, Obinna Nwako. Rob Astorino, former Westchester County executive, CNN commentator and Cardinal Timothy Dolan’s delegate to the Mother Cabrini Foundation, served as the moderator.

The discussion included opportunities for questions and comments from the audience, and students openly discussed topics such as the Covington Catholic controversy, how minorities are portrayed in the media, and the line between free-speech and hate-speech.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS EARN ACCREDITATION

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York have once again proven our academic excellence, earning accreditation from AdvancED. The Office of the Superintendent hosted the review team from March 19–21, at which time a rigorous evaluation of academic programs and processes took place. In order to make its determination, the review team listened to presentations from regional superintendents, principals and teachers that offered a cross-section of our schools and established their adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards.

To earn accreditation, systems must meet the AdvancED accreditation standards, implement a continuous process of improvement, and host an external review team once every five years.

In addition to presentations, a team of trained professionals from across the nation reviewed policy documents and performance data, interviewed community stakeholders, and conducted site reviews at several schools. All of these efforts resulted in our approval for accreditation.



Parents understand that, in choosing Catholic Schools, they are choosing a path that develops well-rounded individuals. Not just academically. But spiritually. This is something that was put to the test this March when the Office of Catholic Identity answered questions and made presentations to the AdvancED accreditation review team with positive results. The team's meticulous analysis found that Catholic identity permeated all aspects of the educational programs in our archdiocese.

### CATHOLIC IDENTITY STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATES

Catholic Identity subcommittees for each region, in collaboration with the Catholic Identity Priests Advisory Council and the Catholic Identity Principals Advisory Committee, continue to build upon The Catholic Identity section of *Pathways to Excellence II*. They are working on specific objectives, strategies, action steps and timelines for every goal.

This February, we launched one of our *Pathways to Excellence II* initiatives, which includes an effort to engage local clergy and religious in our schools' faith formation programs. We have established plans and guidelines to invite priests, deacons and religious to offer opportunities for students to experience the grace of the sacraments and other liturgical and spiritual experiences.

### REGIONAL FIELD DAY 2019

The third annual Regional Field Day for 6th and 7th grade students will be held on May 8th at St. Joseph Seminary. The day will begin with Mass, which will be followed by games and activities on the grounds of the seminary. Regional Field Day is meant to foster an understanding and appreciation of the fact that though students come from all different regions and backgrounds, we are one archdiocese.

### ADVISORY COUNCIL



**SR. JUNE CLARE TRACY,  
O.P., ED.D.**

*Executive Director, Office of  
Catholic Identity*

### ARCHDIOCESAN CATHOLIC IDENTITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Fr. Jack Arlotta

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Deacon Robert Gontcharuk

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### A DOZEN REASONS TO CHOOSE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

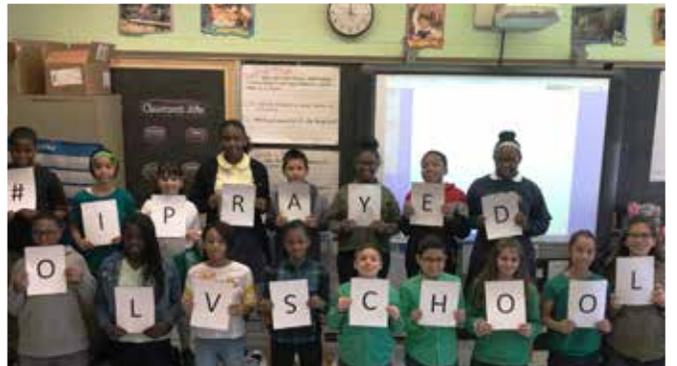


THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
[NCEA.ORG/CSW](http://NCEA.ORG/CSW)



# #IPRAYED

A new social media campaign called #IPrayer was launched on Ash Wednesday and will continue through Lent. The campaign, which puts a faith-based twist on the #IVoted campaign, encourages people to use “#IPrayer” after praying. To help launch the campaign, Timothy Cardinal Dolan created a video urging all to join our students in posting on social media after they pray with the “#IPrayer,” hashtag.



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