

UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS











SUMMER 2023

The school year in review.



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families and Friends of our Catholic Schools,

I am excited to share the latest Catholic school updates with you. This has been an exciting year as we celebrate another year of increased enrollment and expanded engagement of students, faculty, and families in our Catholic schools. As I travel around the diocese visiting classrooms and attending masses and celebrations, there is a palpable feeling of joy, enthusiasm and excitement.

My visits leave me with a great sense of pride as I witness the accomplishments of our schools, our faculty, and our students. Even as we shake off the residual effects of the pandemic, our students demonstrate consistent growth as they consistently outperform their peers based on both local and national benchmarks (i.e., the Catholic High School Placement Test, the lowa Assessment of Basic Skills and Edmentum Assessment data). For this, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our teachers, administrators and staff who approach the teaching vocation with a missionary zeal. Additionally, we are tremendously thankful for the diocesan staff, the local board leaders, benefactors, and the foundations that support us.

While this newsletter only represents a snapshot of all the great things happening in our schools, I hope that it leaves you feeling the same sense of pride and excitement that I have in the Catholic schools in our Diocese. Please join me in praying for our Catholic school community as we look forward to a new and exciting school year. May God bless each of you and may Our Lady continue to shower our Catholic school family with Her blessings.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steven Cheeseman Superintendent of Schools

Other ways to stay connected

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Catholic Schools





Diocese @cathschoolsdob of Bridgeport

@cathschoolsdob

SUMMER 2023 ISSUE

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Office of the Superintendent of Schools Team

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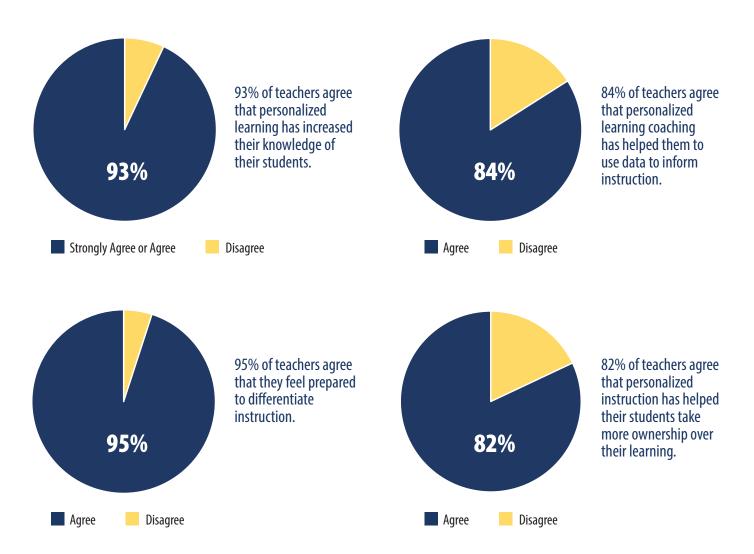
PERSONALIZED LEARNING UPDATE

We are in the fifth year of the initiative and the third year since all elementary schools¹ have been brought on board. We take this opportunity to reflect on work done, ask teachers and principals what they think about the formation and ongoing support they receive, and review student performance, academic tools implemented, infrastructure, and other aspects made possible through Foundations In Education.

To personalize learning in the Diocese of Bridgeport, we work to:

- 1. know every student as a child of God, academically, and personally;
- 2. use data to inform instruction;
- 3. personalize instruction (differentiate) to each child's needs; and
- 4. increase student ownership over their own learning.

This year we asked our teachers how personalized learning is going. Here is what they said:





WHAT'S NEXT

Data Meetings and Goal Setting

- Continue meeting with principals individually to review academic achievement data
- Adding school-level goal setting conversations that focus on individual skill categories for improvement at the classroom level

Instructional Leadership

- Form principals new to their building to lead personalized learning in their schools
- Support all principals to supervise personalized learning instructional practices
- Provide opportunities for principals to visit other schools and observe a variety of personalized learning instructional strategies

New Teacher Support

- Provide summer "office hours" and workshops on personalized learning
- Support new teachers on personalized learning expectations and practices both in-person and through the development of asynchronous online learning modules

School Leads

 Identify exemplar teachers and provide additional professional development so that they can become leaders in their own building and support new and veteran teachers

Modern Classroom Project

- Support the use of this instructional model which completely aligns with personalized learning by using blended instruction with teacher-created videos, self-paced structures, and masterybased grading
- Our coaches and six teachers are taking part in a summer mentorship program to plan and create content for this model of instruction

INSTRUCTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

One of the greatest privileges of this initiative is seeing the classes in action. Here we share just three of the many vignettes that serve as evidence of the continuing transformative impact of the Foundations In Education supported initiative.



Mrs. Sousa, the 2nd-grade teacher at St Gregory the Great School, examined her students' data and noticed that students were struggling when it came to concepts of money. Based on this discovery, she decided to create a station rotation completely based on understanding and using money. The stations included the teacher table, teacher assistant table, and technology. At the teacher table, students had to identify and count money. Mrs. Sousa differentiated her approach with each group to meet student needs. Students at the teacher assistant table had fun playing a game using money. Finally, students worked on their individualized learning paths on Edmentum. And during this time as students earned a trophy, they also earned a sticker! Students were so proud of themselves as they continued to work hard at each station and earn stickers for trophies!



This first-grade class loves to work in centers. They were working on Reading Eggs, some fun Valentine's Day activities, and differentiated reading passages to practice fluency and annotating text at the teacher's table.



The percentage of our students who graduate from our high schools.



The percentage of our high school students that go onto college or the military.



More than \$68M in college scholarships were awarded to over 800 graduating seniors from our diocesan high schools.

ENHANCING THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN OUR CURRICULUM

In the quest to create and sustain a vibrant Catholic Identity and culture within the schools, the Office of the Superintendent (OSS) has begun some exciting and meaningful initiatives.

Over the past year, the elementary schools have adopted the Education in Virtue Program, based on the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas regarding virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The content of this program is produced by the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist and is meant to support learning, teaching and practicing virtue as it becomes a way of life and embeds itself into the school culture and climate.

The Vocations Chalice Project continues to thrive in our schools. The Chalice represents an offering of prayer and hope for our students to discern a religious life in their future, as well as an opportunity to pray for the young men in our diocese who are currently in formation for the priesthood. Each elementary school has a chalice and it gets passed along to each classroom to hold for a period of time to allow classroom prayer and discussion.

The goal of the November Teacher Professional Development Day was to create more of a retreat experience to help our teachers reflect on their own faith journey so that they can grow in their relationship and knowledge of Jesus to be more effective Catholic educators.

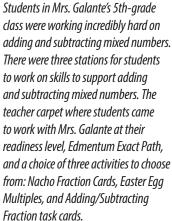
For the first time, Bishop Caggiano celebrated Mass at the St. Augustine Cathedral for all the Grade Eight students in the Diocese. Each school traveled to Bridgeport, attended Mass and then had a pizza lunch outside on the Cathedral grounds. The students were thrilled to be part of this Mass and enjoyed meeting other students from different schools.

In order to continue offering faith formation to teachers, staff and administration, The Catholic University in Washington DC has created

an Institute for the Transformation of Catholic Education. Among the many initiatives of the Institute, their Teacher Formation and Leader Formation Programs have been adopted into the OSS.

Next year, some of our key objectives for the Faith Formation Team include strengthening and expanding the Parent Ambassador Program and preparing for the introduction of the Vocations Curriculum during National Vocations Awareness Week in November.











WHAT'S NEW at the Diocese

WELCOME TO "THE ONE"

Learn more about the vision for renewal in the Diocese of Bridgeport: https://formationreimagined.org/the-one/

LET'S BE FRANK

Click here to listen to Bishop Frank's Podcast/Radio Show: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoLPXluXSvSfgwXOYdmiHK2eZhLEDOgoA

FAIRFIELD COUNTY CATHOLIC

Click here to read the latest issue: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://bptdiocese.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/june-2023-issue-reduced.pdf

BRIDGEPORT AREA HOSTS FIRST YOUNG ADULT MASS

Read more here: https://www.bridgeportdiocese.org/bridgeport-area-hosts-first-young-adult-mass/

DID YOU KNOW Saint Ignatius?



St. Ignatius of Loyola was born in 1491, one of thirteen children in a noble family in the Basque region of modern-day Spain. As a young man, he aspired to be a great soldier and courtier, but this dream was dashed when he was severely wounded in the leg by a cannonball at the Battle of Pamplona in 1521. His leg never fully healed, and he walked with a limp for the rest of his life.

While convalescing in his family's castle, he read about the life of Jesus

and the lives of the saints — purportedly the only books available to him as he lay in bed. His spiritual awakening was kindled, and he gave up his ambitions of worldly glory to pursue a deeper friendship with Jesus. This journey of conversion continued for years as he confronted his sins and discerned where God was leading him. The methods of prayer and spiritual reflection he developed during this time would eventually become The Spiritual Exercises.

Ignatius then went back to school to study for the priesthood. He concluded his studies at a university in Paris, where he met Francis Xavier and Peter Faber, and he shared his spiritual journey with them. In 1534, these early Jesuit companions vowed to dedicate their lives to God and to the Church. They were officially recognized by the pope as the Society of Jesus in 1540.

Ignatius spent the rest of his life in Rome administering this new religious order. He died there in 1556.

FUN FACT:

THE WORD "JESUIT" IS "OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ORIGIN, MEANING ONE WHO USED TOO FREQUENTLY OR APPROPRIATED THE NAME OF JESUS." IT WAS ORIGINALLY USED AS A PEJORATIVE TO DESCRIBE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS IN THE LATE 1500'S, BUT WAS LATER ADOPTED BY THE MEMBERS THEMSELVES TO INDICATE THEIR DEVOTION TO JESUS CHRIST.

ALL THE THINGS IN THIS WORLD ARE GIFTS OF GOD, CREATED FOR US, TO BE THE MEANS BY WHICH WE CAN COME TO KNOW HIM BETTER, LOVE HIM MORE SURELY, AND SERVE HIM MORE FAITHFULLY.

PARENT'S Corner

ST. SEBASTIAN ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (SSAA)

The fall of 2022 marked the second year of existence for the SSAA. The SSAA focused not only on improving and expanding in our inaugural sports of Cross Country and Track, but also successfully completed the inaugural season of the St. Sebastian Basketball League.

We continued our partnerships with Immaculate High School and St. Joseph High School with both having students, staff, and coaches come out and volunteer to help run and manage meets for Cross Country and Track and Field.

Basketball

Since the inception of the SSAA, basketball was known to be a major piece of our elementary schools' culture and athletic programs. It was decided in early fall of 2022 that the SSAA would undertake the creation of a Diocesan elementary school basketball league. The League consisted of 58 teams across four divisions and students played over 350 games.

The season culminated with the first SSAA Basketball Championships hosted at Immaculate High School on March 11, 2023. The champions not only were Diocesan Champions, but also represented the Diocese of Bridgeport at the New England CYO Basketball Championships for schools.

Our champions for the 2022-2023 Season:

Girls Junior Varsity: St. Catherine of Siena School Girls Varsity: St. Thomas Aquinas School, Grade 8 Boys Junior Varsity: St. Thomas Aquinas School, Grade 6 Boys Varsity: St. Thomas Aquinas School, Grade 8

We are grateful for the tremendous effort of the SSAA Basketball Committee.

Track and Field

This spring the SSAA held four track meets for students in grades K-8. Eight elementary schools participated with nearly 600 participants across the four meets, across four age groups (K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8). Our major improvement for this past spring was engaging a timing company, Fulton Accurate Timing, to run our timing. This drastically improved the quality of our timing, opened coaches up to focus more on their teams, and reduced the number of volunteers needed to run our meets.

Cross Country

In the fall of 2022, the SSAA hosted five cross country meets for eight participating elementary schools. Meets were held at Tarrywile Park, St. Joseph High School, and Seaside Park, and run by members of the Cross Country Committee. The Cross Country Committee has begun preliminary planning of cross country meets for the fall of 2023, with the goal of expanding participation and holding meets in each region.

For more information you can visit: www.dobathletics.org



AOUINAS FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY

The Aquinas Fellowship Community attracts faith-filled teachers, social workers, or school counselors to our Catholic Schools. As the program enters its 5th year, our schools have greatly benefited from the enthusiasm, passion, and dedication that our Fellows have contributed to their experiential, in-school, learning assignments. The Aquinas Fellows are placed in schools throughout the diocese and benefit from this exceptional program by gaining valuable experience within our schools; free housing with intentional community living that provides enrichment and support to each Fellow; a tuition-free master's degree from Fairfield University; and a modest living allowance.

We are grateful for the success of this program and we are currently seeking candidates to apply for the next cohort. Please visit the Aquinas Fellowship website at <u>Aquinasfellowship.org</u> to read more about this exciting opportunity!

Please keep our fellows in your prayers and follow their journey on Instagram | @aquinasfellowshipcommunity and Facebook | Aquinas Fellowship Community.

FOUNDATIONS IN EDUCATION (foundationsineducation.org)

Foundations in Education (FIE) is an independent, non-profit organization, incorporated July 14, 2015, to assist the Diocese of Bridgeport's ongoing mission to support Catholic education across Fairfield County. Foundations in Education, Inc. is committed to strengthen and transform the mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Bridgeport by providing tuition assistance to families in need and supporting innovation in academic programs and fostering opportunities for the professional development of school leaders. The following programs are made possible by donors to FIE:

Bishop Scholarship Fund

The mission of the Bishop's Scholarship Fund (BSF) is to help families afford a Catholic education. In this past year, the BSF awarded nearly \$2.9 million in aid to families at the Diocesan elementary schools in Fairfield County. Since its inception in 2015, the fund has awarded over \$23 million in tuition assistance!

The deadline for new families to apply to the Bishop's Scholarship Fund was extended this year. This marks the fourth consecutive year FIE has been able to extend the new family deadline due to a continued surge of interest from public school families. This extension will hopefully continue to encourage families to consider Catholic education for their children.

Leaders of Tomorrow

Leaders of Tomorrow are students who represent Catholic elementary schools across the Diocese of Bridgeport. These students have applied to the Bishop's Scholarship Fund, have demonstrated financial need, and have been identified by their principal as students of good academics, character and leadership potential.

Donors to FIE who direct their giving to Leaders of Tomorrow help subsidize the cost of a Catholic elementary school tuition for one or more students by providing a child: \$6,000 full sponsorship; \$3,000 half sponsorship; and \$1,500 quarter sponsorship.

As an investor in the education of a child, these special donors provide a life-enhancing gift and help transform the life of a student through the gracious and selfless act of giving.

Innovation and Leadership Grants

The Innovation and Leadership Grants Program promotes excellence in the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools by providing educators with grant opportunities that fund innovation in classroom teaching and provide support for professional development and leadership formation.

Now in its 6th year, this competitive program was the first of its kind to offer Innovation and Leadership grants to teachers and administrators. In February 2023, FIE announced twenty-one grant awards totaling \$120,000 to benefit Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Grants funded through this program are intended for transformative initiatives that benefit multiple grade levels and have a long-term impact on student learning which include:

- Endowment Oversight for Diocese High Schools
- Superintendent-Inspired and Donor-Provided Initiatives
 - Transforming the Paradigm of Catholic Education
 - Christopher Ripp Early Learning Program
 - Kolbe Transformation Initiative
- Angel Investor School Sponsor Program

FOUNDATIONS IN FAITH

Foundations in Faith supports Pastoral Care ministries in the Diocese of Bridgeport. Nine funds distribute funds to invigorate our Catholic faith. Funding for vocations, seminarians, active and retired priests is a priority. Foundations in Faith is also deeply committed to enhancing discipleship thus investing in faith formation and evangelization programs in the parishes and at the Diocesan level. With a deep commitment to justice, the Foundation also invests in our youth, our elderly and the vulnerable with grants supporting the works of our Catholic Schools, urban Parishes, and Pastoral Care teams in nursing homes.

In 2022-23, Foundations in Faith provided three grants benefiting Catholic Schools:

- The largest grant awarded was distributed to the Superintendent's office in the amount of \$265,500 to offset schools administrative and programmatic costs reducing tuition increases for all families
- A grant in the amount of \$50,000 was awarded to support services for special needs students attending Catholic Schools.
- A grant in the amount of \$33,500 was awarded to support St.
 Catherine Center for Special Needs

Foundations in Faith is pleased to partner with the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools providing a total of \$349,000.00 in grant awards.

For more information you can visit their website at: www.foundationsinfaith.org

FORMATION IMAGINED

The Institute for Catholic Formation draws your attention to a few great updates that happened this year.

Mixing artificial intelligence with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we launched https://catholic.chat, which you can use in your classroom, with your students, for learning or just for fun. Try it out and let us know what you think.

The Family Bible Challenge (FBC) - https://familybiblechallenge.org just completed its sixteenth season. Every family that signs up gets a reflection on Sunday to read and share with the family and then a quiz each Thursday. Join more than 15,000 families around the country who engage each season (four per year) with the FBC.

The Face of Prayer continues to inspire. Text the word PRAY to 55778 and receive an invitation to pray from Bishop Caggiano every afternoon. Each text includes an intention for the day, along with an invitation to pray the Hail Mary. Let your phone be used for good. Pause every afternoon in prayer and let it change your day.

LEAD continues to see upgrades and improvements. This year, we focused on user experience and launched a dashboard, upgraded our messaging center, and created places for people in like-ministry groups to connect with each other. Plus, we added more than 100 new formation opportunities. Visit https://bridgeport.leadlms.com/ today to start learning.

MARIAN WORK STUDY

The Marian Work Study is a new nonprofit that provides scholarships and unique internship experiences to Kolbe Cathedral High School students. The Marian Work Study Corporation is partnering with businesses from New Haven to Greenwich, and starting in September, forty students from Kolbe will be placed in industry positions they normally would not have access to.

Additionally, this internship program enhances a student's academic experience by providing experiential learning environments which produce valuable real-life skills. Our corporate mentors are skilled professionals committed to investing in the lives of our students, and their surrounding community. Students attend their internship one day per week for the duration of their academic year and receive workforce readiness training and one-on-one tutoring to ensure their success. For our pilot year, juniors and seniors will be placed in internships with prominent companies such as Assa Abloy, Titan Financial Advisors, Stamford Marriott, Peralta Designs, Hospital for Special Surgery, Yale Arts Museum, among others. This program officially launches September 11, 2023, and runs through May of 2024.

Donations to the Marian Work Study Corporation fund scholarships which offset school tuition, ensuring Kolbe students remain in a safe, spiritual, and academically challenging high school environment.

CONSIDER A VOCATION as a Teacher

Teaching within our
Catholic schools makes
for an exceptional experience
as an educator and one of
the ways in which a person
can live out their vocation to
serve the Lord. Join our team
and help make a difference.





PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 12 TEACHERS, TEACHERS AIDES & SUBSTITUTES CHECK OUT A LISTING OF OUR CURRENT OPEN POSITIONS AND APPLY TODAY

THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL DIFFERENCE

In today's world, it has become commonplace to separate one's faith in God from the duties in one's workplace. In a Catholic school, teachers can live out their faith daily in the classroom and are expected to share the faith with their students through formal lessons and religious activities that will educate your people in the Catholic faith.

Most elementary schools range from Preschool through 8th Grade, so the bond between school and home grows to be very strong. It is a true gift to meet a child at 4 or 5 and watch that child grow academically, spiritually, and physically for the following years. The ties become stronger as siblings are added; the school is truly a "family."

Parents who invest in Catholic school education for their children have a strong trust in the teachers and this strengthens the partnership.

Students in Catholic schools tend, more often than their peers in other schools, to view their teachers as caring, to find their coursework stimulating, and enjoy a positive self-image (The Assessment of Catholic Religious Education, NCEA).

The Diocese of Bridgeport schools work in partnership with local universities. As a full-time teacher in one of the diocesan schools, a teacher is eligible to pursue a Master's degree in education from schools such as Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, Fordham University, and Grand Canyon University at a reduced tuition rate. This can be a huge savings as getting the advanced degree is necessary to attain professional certification.

Some of the schools also offer tuition discounts for the children of teachers who are employed in Catholic schools.

RFNFFITS

- To streamline the hiring process, the Diocese of Bridgeport is now offering fingerprinting services at a reduced price, at our offices, which allows teachers to complete their onboarding process and get their fingerprints done during one appointment.
- A benefits plan that includes medical, dental, and vision.
- Access to a Customer Benefits Center which allows access to a professional customer service representative to assist with questions.
- Reduced tuition programs available at Fairfield University, Sacred Heart University, Fordham University, and Grand Canyon University
- · Wellness programs with various health preventative offerings
- Retirement and Medicare Plan assistance
- Travelers Personal Insurance Employee Discount Program
- Verizon Employee Discount Program

SUPPORT

Professional development opportunities are offered at the diocesan, school, and individual levels all year.

Coaches provided through the Office of the Superintendent provide on-site and virtual support in the following areas:

- Instructional practices
- Data use
- Lesson planning
- Lesson modeling
- Co-teaching
- Classroom management
- Personalized Learning Plans











SCAN HERE



SHARE WITH US
THE REASONS
YOUR
CHILD(REN)
SMILED
THIS PAST
SCHOOL YEAR!



















DIOCESAN AND DIOCESAN SPONSORED SCHOOLS

BETHEL

St. Mary School

BRIDGEPORT

Catholic Academy of Bridgeport

St. Andrew Academy St. Ann Academy St. Augustine Academy St. Raphael Academy

Kolbe Cathedral High School

DANBURY

St. Gregory the Great School St. Joseph School

St. Peter School

Immaculate High School

FAIRFIELD

Assumption Catholic School St. Thomas Aquinas School **Notre Dame High School**

St. Catherine Academy

GREENWICH

Greenwich Catholic School

NEWTOWN

St. Rose of Lima School

NORWALK

All Saints Catholic School

RIDGEFIELD

St. Mary School

SHELTON

Holy Trinity Catholic Academy

STAMFORD

Catholic Academy of Stamford

Cardinal Kung Academy

STRATFORD

St. James School St. Mark School

TRUMBULL

St. Catherine of Siena School

St. Theresa School

St. Joseph High School

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS LOCATED IN THE DIOCESE

Independent schools in the diocese function independently of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools but are bound by Catholic identity requirements of the Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport.

FAIRFIELD

NORWALK

Fairfield College Preparatory School **Regina Pacis Academy** **STAMFORD**

Mater Salvatoris Preparatory School

Villa Maria School

GREENWICH

Sacred Heart Greenwich

All schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport are fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, a globally recognized standard of excellence. In order to become accredited, each school is asked to engage in a thorough and rigorous self-examination lasting 12 to 18 months led by a team of peer evaluators, who are faculty and administrators from other accredited institutions. The team summarizes its finding in a written report which addresses the institution's results. In the self-study, the school measures and verifies its achievements and identifies ways in which the institutional objectives can be perfected using the Standards for Accreditation as a guide.



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