

Onward

News of the Catholic Schools of the Toledo Diocese

ISSUE 1

DECEMBER 2011



From the Superintendent

New day dawning for Catholic Schools

Welcome to our first edition of *Onward*,

the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) newsletter. The mission of the CSO is “supporting, challenging, and assisting Catholic schools throughout the diocese in the ministry of Catholic education.” The task is a big one and though the challenges are many, we see a new day dawning for Catholic schools.

Since July of 2010 it has been my privilege to serve as the Superintendent of Schools for the diocese and, with a staff of 11 full and part-time co-workers, we support the good work being done in our 78 schools.

The past 10 years have seen significant changes in Catholic education in our diocese. Sandusky, Norwalk, Tiffin, and Fremont moved to a unified, community school model with a local governing board. Other communities—Delphos, Mansfield, and Fostoria continue to operate parish-based preK-12 schools.

Economic pressures continue to make the investment in Catholic schools challenging one for many.

The expansion of educational options creates a highly

competitive environment while, most significantly, people’s practice of their faith has shifted dramatically impacting Catholic schools as a consequence.

Look around. Perhaps like me, you can see the mission of good Catholic schools is more needed than ever. Yes, there are challenges, but there are also tremendous opportunities.

No other system addresses the whole person as well as a Catholic school. No other system brings the light of faith to shine as well a Catholic school. We hope through this newsletter we can explore some of these opportunities in the months ahead. Feel free to call, email cs@toledodiocese.org or follow me on twitter (@diotolschools).

Your feedback is vital. This work is not for one office, or one school—but is a mission for each Catholic in the Diocese. Let us go onward in faith and embrace a new vision for the future.

CHRIS KNIGHT
SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

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Parish school structure moves to community-based groups

The traditional parish-based system of running Catholic schools is on its way out and a new community-based system is coming in.

To accomplish this dramatic shift is taking months of planning and will mean years of coordination. The effort has begun in the metro Toledo parish schools.

“Our underlying belief is that we can work together in each community for everyone’s mutual benefit,” explains Superintendent Chris Knight.

A Metro Toledo Catholic Schools Task Force has worked on recommendations with various members from the schools.

“These have been positive meetings. We see we can do more together than we could accomplish separately.

Diocesan schools throughout the nation are finding similar circumstances and are finding strength in a new vision for moving Catholic education forward,” says Mr. Knight.

Initial gatherings focused on governance issues and the formation of Community Boards. Now groups are sharing “best practices” and brainstorming practical ways to work together. “Although change is never easy, it seems once people understand the vision for building something new and strong there is a new energy,” says Mr. Knight.

“There is no grand scheme. We truly want each group to envision how they can work to best meet the needs of their students. In some places this could mean sharing resources and programs. In others it may be offering distinctly different programs in each building. We await the plans with great anticipation.”



Mission: Founded in the Catholic faith, our school ministry develops disciples of Jesus Christ who are intellectually and spiritually prepared to serve God and their community.

The landscape changes as schools work together

In metro-Toledo new educational options are in place. Some high schools now have middle grades. Currently there are both a grade 6-12 and grade 7-12 option for girls and a grade 6-12 option for boys.

The east Toledo/Oregon community came together merging four elementary and one high school into the Kateri Catholic School, which includes Cardinal Stritch High School and consists of one preK-12 school on the Stritch campus.

Two parishes, Our Lady of Lourdes and Little Flower, merged their schools into one, forming a new entity — St. Benedict School. It has a local governing board.

Such changes are not simple, but they do address a host of issues in education and strengthen Catholic education for the years ahead.

The transition to a community-based model is in its early stages and will be an ongoing process.

“It holds great promise,” said Chris Knight.

“Instead of each entity working on its own, collaboration in smaller communities will maximize resources and provide even higher quality authentic Catholic education. In these clusters new approaches to

education will be examined. In many respects the sky is the limit in ways Catholic education can address the needs of our children.”

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Oversight Board helps propel plan

The metro-Toledo parishes have an oversight Board responsible for planning, policy setting, evaluation, marketing, and public relations for the ministry of Catholic schools for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade in the diocesan schools within metro-Toledo.

The members of the board are all Catholics who offer their many skills and experiences to this important task. They are appointed by Bishop Blair. Members are:

Carol Huss, principal, St. Benedict School
Michael Downing, Vice-President of Advancement, Notre Dame Academy
Cathy Sheets, partner of Plante Moran
Lisa Gathard, CEO of Kids Unlimited
Sally Perz, President, The Capitol Link

Tom Hosler, Superintendent, Perrysburg Local Schools
Anthony D’Agostino, ACE Consulting, University of Notre Dame
Msgr. Michael Billian, Pastor, Blessed Sacrament Parish
Rev. Herb Weber, Pastor, Blessed John XXIII parish
Christopher Knight, Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Toledo

Hola? Is Your Student Learning online?

Have a student enrolled at a Catholic high school? A variety of online courses are available to him or her through The Diocese of Toledo Catholic Schools Office?

Anthony Mass, consultant in the schools office, says more than 25 online courses are offered for high school credit through the Diocesan Online Learning Initiative. (DOLI). There is also a Spanish course for children in lower grades. Information is on the Schools site.

Each course is taught by teachers certified by the Ohio Dept. of Education and the Diocese of Toledo and is offered

through the Moodle site at the Diocesan website: <http://online.cyss.org/moodle>

Go to the link for schedule information and the list of courses offered for spring and fall. By request, some courses may be offered in the summer as well. You may also contact: Anthony Mass, 419-244-6711 ext. 604 or amass@toledodiocese.org.

By the numbers

19

Number of counties in the Diocese of Toledo

78

Number of Catholic schools

20,000

Student population

26

The Toledo Diocese has the 26th largest Catholic school population in the country!

Did you know?

...more than 4,000 students participated in the fall CYO athletic program?

... all diocesan elementary schools participate yearly in an online standardized testing program known as Scantron?

...the diocese awarded 327 “One Faith, Many Blessing” tuition assistance grants of \$700 each to students throughout the diocese?

...each Catholic school in the state participates in an accreditation program requiring a new continuous improvement plan for each school every five years?

...all teacher/ministers in Catholic school are certified and licensed through the Ohio Department of Education?

Twitter: Follow Chris Knight on Twitter. Just text “follow diotolschools” to 40404 and you should receive a reply indicating that you are “following” him. Twitter is a way to communicate brief news and notes of interest. During the winter he sends an advisory when there are delays or closing of Toledo-area elementary schools. He also sends notes about new and emerging ideas in education and shares where he is traveling in the diocese.

