

June 7, 2022

Dear Catholic School Families,

As we close out the 2021-22 school year, I want to thank you for choosing a Catholic education for your child. I also want to acknowledge the effort and commitment of our Catholic school staff, faculty and administrators. Our schools were blessed to have a year that was generally free from significant disruptions associated with COVID-19. As we look to the 2022-23 school year, it is my goal that our schools not only continue to transition back to “pre-COVID” operations, but work to be better and stronger than we were before the pandemic. Early data indicates that we are well on our way to this goal. The 2021-22 academic year saw a 6.5% increase in total enrollment. There is discussion of potentially adding new classrooms and/or grade levels, as well as waiting lists at specific grade levels, at multiple schools across the diocese. With your continued prayers and support I know we can continue this growth and most importantly, the opportunity to evangelize. Below you will find a brief update on important and noteworthy items related to our Catholic schools.

Our Catholic Schools: Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence Initiative

- Since the formal announcement of this initiative, the committee, in addition to many other important tasks, has been working to formalize a strategic plan and bylaws that will guide the Diocesan School Council. As part of the development of these documents, we have sought input from pastors, directors of parish life, principals, as well as school committees and boards. The Diocesan School Council has been established and will formally begin its work in July with a training and orientation process.
- The Office of Catholic Schools is currently working to establish committees that will support the Diocesan School Council in four key areas: Catholic identity and academic excellence, marketing and enrollment, financial vitality, and people and governance. These working committees will address and support areas of need and opportunities for growth in each area. If you have specific experience professionally or personally that you feel could aid this effort, please consider applying. A brief application can be found [here](#). The committees will meet at least four times per year. Virtual attendance is possible.
- Interviews for the new positions within the Office of Catholic Schools (Catholic identity and curriculum, marketing and enrollment) are scheduled to occur during the second and third week of June.

The Class of 2022

- First, congratulations to all of our Catholic school graduates of 2022. A special thank you to all who sacrificed to make a Catholic education possible for these students. Attending a milestone event like graduation is one of the highlights of my role as superintendent.
- To date, our high school graduates have earned over 3.6 million dollars in scholarships.
- College acceptances include, but are not limited to: Aquinas College, Central Michigan University, Franciscan University, Lourdes University, Michigan State University, Purdue University, Temple University, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, University of Detroit Mercy, University of Kentucky, University of Michigan and University of Notre Dame.
- A number of graduates are pursuing trade-specific educational opportunities. We also have a graduate who will be serving in the United States Army.
- In the class of 2022, we had two National Merit Scholar semi-finalists and one finalist.

End of Year Mass for Middle School / Upper Elementary Students

Traditionally in May, the diocese has celebrated a Mass with all of our 8th grade Catholic school students. This practice has been on hold over the past two years due to the pandemic. I am very pleased that we were able to

celebrate that Mass this year. At the request of our principals, the guest list was expanded to include the highest grade level at each elementary building, as not all of our schools offer middle school. This Mass is a great way to close out the school year and for some of our students, depending on geography, it also serves as a way to recognize the completion of their Catholic school journey. I am grateful for Bishop Gruss, who gave of his time not only to celebrate Mass but also to meet and speak with students afterward. (Pictures from that celebration can be seen [here](#).)

Middle and High School Students Have a Voice in the Synod Process

As the young adults of our communities are our future diocesan leaders, I am very pleased that many of our Catholic schools were intentionally included in the synod process. Deacon Gary Patelski visited directly with, or gathered information from, each school with an 8th grade or high school. The Office of Catholic Schools has reviewed the student feedback to determine how we can best serve our students. In some instances, suggestions shared through this process have already resulted in changes at the local level. The insights gained through the school visits will be included on the diocesan report, which is scheduled to be sent to the Vatican at the end of June.

Let MI Kids Learn

The Let MI Kids Learn petition drive did not submit petition forms/signatures to the Board of Elections by the June 1 deadline. Although the minimum number of signatures needed (340,000) for submission was reached, the organization leading this effort decided to continue to gather more signatures in an effort to ensure that the petition drive can withstand any challenges related to valid signatures. It is estimated that 7% of the signatures gathered to this point came through school and parish efforts. My sincere appreciation to all those who supported this effort. If you have not yet signed a petition and would like to do so, to obtain a form, please contact our office at (989) 797-6617.

Looking to 2022-23

- *Catholic Schools and Alumni Mass scheduled for September 18:* Tentative plans are underway for a Mass on Sunday, September 18, at the cathedral to recognize and celebrate the past, present and future of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Saginaw. Supporters of Catholic education, former students and graduates, as well as current students and families, are encouraged to consider attending the Mass and light reception following Mass. Members of the Office of Catholic Schools staff and Diocesan School Council will be on hand to share an update on the efforts underway to support Catholic schools.
- *Theology curriculum update:* Once the new Catholic Identity and Curriculum Director is in place, one of the first efforts that will be undertaken is a review of our theology standards and related resources. With the recent changes to the timing of the sacrament of confirmation, it is appropriate to update our standards, especially at the middle school level.
- *Staffing:* The field of education in general is continuing to experience challenges related to filling open teaching and administrative positions. The same is true for mid-Michigan and our Catholic schools. Early postings for our schools for the upcoming school year have generally received limited responses. I am working with my colleagues from across the state, the Michigan Association of Nonpublic Schools (MANS) as well as the Michigan Nonpublic Schools Accreditation Association (MNSAA) to address this need.

I hope you and your family have a healthy and blessed summer.

Respectfully,



Cormac Lynn

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