Institute for Catholic Schools Launches Newsletter

Consistent with its mission to serve the local Church, St. John’s University and The School of Education established the Institute for Catholic Schools in 2009 to collaborate with local dioceses on ways to support and enhance Catholic primary and secondary education. The overarching purpose of the Institute is to foster long-term sustainability and the growth and excellence of Catholic education by assisting local dioceses in enhancing the administrative and academic infrastructure of schools. External funds have been committed to the Institute by friends and alumni of the University, enabling St. John’s to use its university faculty, graduate-level scholars and Catholic school personnel.

We look forward to sharing news about our programs and people through this newsletter. Stay tuned.

Curriculum Leadership Teams Prepare for New Curriculum

Curriculum Leadership Teams comprised of principals and teachers from 15 Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Brooklyn, nine schools from the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and four schools from the Archdiocese of New York started their school year early this summer by spending the week of August 19–23 preparing for the second year of implementation of the New York State Common Core Learning Standards at St. John’s Queens campus.

Each school’s Curriculum Leadership Team is composed of the school principal, an upper and lower grade math teacher, and an upper and lower grade English language arts teacher. The main intent of the Curriculum Leadership Team program is to increase the confidence of teachers as they look at new and innovative ways to implement the changes in curriculum that are necessary to help prepare today’s students for college and careers in the 21st Century. Their attendance and enthusiastic participation in the program is a testament to their dedication to Catholic education.

Since the Curriculum Leadership Team program’s inception in January 2010, administrators and faculty from St. John’s University and representatives from the diocesan school offices in the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Brooklyn and the Diocese of Rockville Centre have shaped the Curriculum Leadership Team program.

Through the three years of its existence, the Curriculum Leadership Team Program has provided high-quality professional development to 95 schools in the three dioceses servicing more than 100 administrators, 400 teachers and close to 10,000 students. Each year, the program continues to deepen and evolve along with our understanding of the new educational standards.

– Anthony Biscione,
Senior Deputy Superintendent of Schools,
Diocese of Brooklyn

Historic Meeting of Deans

Deans of Schools of Education at 19 Catholic universities from across the country gathered in New York City on June 9, 2013 for a meeting hosted by St. John’s Dean Jerrold Ross, Ph.D.
The purpose of this historic assembly was to strategize ways in which Catholic higher education, especially deans of Schools of Education, could play an even greater role in supporting and sustaining a seamless Catholic education at a time when Catholic elementary and secondary schools are facing great challenges, as well as great opportunities.

“Catholic schools need to retain their identity, their traditional values, their adherence to social justice and response to the needs of new populations who are ‘the hurting people of society,’” affirmed the deans in a consensus statement.

While many Catholic colleges and universities sponsor various institutes and centers to serve Catholic elementary and secondary schools and boards of directors, the intent of this meeting was to go beyond the scope of these organizations.

Reaching beyond their traditional purview of helping shape curricula, train school leaders, and certify teachers, the deans proposed partnering with K–12 schools to generate new knowledge and thought and help curtail the decline of these schools through strategic planning and promoting 21st-Century learning in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), the arts and humanities, and global understanding.

A tangible product of this meeting will be a position paper entitled, “Catholic Education: A Call to Conscience.” It is the deans’ hope that the message contained in this paper will reach a wide audience at the national level.

**On the Horizon**

Our distinguishing quality is that we go into schools to work with students and teachers in their classrooms…Project TIE

More than 85 percent of Catholic Schools have school boards (ncea.org). The St. Vincent de Paul curriculum correlates to National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools

The next issue of this newsletter will describe each of these programs.