

# News Notes...

## From the Office of Education



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### From Our Director of Catholic Schools



#### Faith Focus

The Catholic Schools of our Diocese have taken up the torch to act upon the vision of Bishop Daly, responding to the mission of Vocation, Formation of children and youth, and Growth in holiness. With renewed momentum we will engage the children of the Diocese, forming them as disciples.

Our schools have implemented a new and comprehensive Religion curriculum with common resources supported by Bishop's vision for our faith formation. We began our journey of

implementation with the Know Love Serve Assembly last fall. Teachers from the various schools in the Diocese gathered in their grade level bands to create innovated Religion lessons that embed community service, English Language Arts standards and technology.

Putting our Faith and Catholic tradition in the forefront of all we do, Principals meet monthly using the lens of our faith as the focus for all of our administrative decisions. Principals have also engaged in individual and collective faith formation with a fall and Advent retreat focused on prayer. We are blessed to have such faith-filled dedicated leaders and teachers in the Catholic Schools of Eastern Washington.

#### Office of Education

As we delve into the new calendar year, we would like to share the work the Office of Education has been providing for Catholic Schools. Fall has been a busy and highly productive season for the office. With our primary focus on supporting teachers, principals, and pastors, we are strengthening relationships and providing support within our Diocesan schools. Below are some of the goals we have accomplished and are working toward:

##### **Strengthen Relationships With Pastors Through:**

- ❖ Dialogue with each pastor on the implementation of the Pastor Handbook for Catholic Schools
- ❖ Pastor and Principal Collaboration Session scheduled for February 28, 2018
- ❖ Creating sessions for pastors with schools to collaborate and be supported in their work

*Continued on page 3*

## *From Our Commissioner of Accreditation & School Improvement...*



Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) Accreditation in the diocese began in the early 90's as tool for school improvement. It was a process for our schools to reflect on themselves, looking at their accomplishments and areas of growth. Now for over two decades, schools have completed self-studies, created action plans and opened their doors to an outside groups of educators to verify and validate the school's reality in areas including Catholic Identity, student learning, curriculum, governance, resources and long range planning. The accreditation process goes hand in hand with the schools' strategic long range plan where goals from the accreditation process become part of every schools' plan.

Accreditation is a valuable process but takes time and energy of the entire school community. One important thing to remember is that accreditation does not ask of us anything that we are not already doing to strengthen student learning and make our schools as strong as possible. Our goal this year is to utilize the accreditation process, which clearly directs us, to streamline and "intertwine" what we are already doing in our schools. Accreditation offers not only the direction but tools and templates to help us.

Kathy has been working closely with the schools to build the foundation in preparation of the school visit and overall school improvement. Kathy has trained principals and faculty on the yearly Catholic Identity review as well as how to accomplish the Curriculum In Depth study. She has spent time at schools, modeling the dialogue process, using discussion and writing prompts, which is the pinnacle to the growth process. Kathy and Katie are training faculty on curriculum standards and mapping/planning to insure that faculty are understanding the standards and analyzing data on curriculum to accurately reflect student learning.

Next on Kathy's agenda is to serve on a secondary visiting team in Sacramento. The secondary process focusing on high schools, WCEA Ensuring Educational Excellence (E3), is relatively new to our diocese. DeSales High School and Gonzaga Prep engaged in this process in the last two years. Serving on this high school team will enable us to learn this new process to assist our schools.

One of our diocesan goals is to have more administrators and faculty serve on a visiting team. To participate in a team is a great way to learn the protocol and the requirements needed to write the self-study. There is value to understanding the work of the visiting team and their focus during their three day visit at the Catholic school. Kathy and Katie encouraging principals and teachers to serve on teams. The more schools understand all sides of the process, the more confident they are when writing their self-study and on their work between visits. More importantly they understand the components that help schools become stronger, providing an environment where all students can learn and grow.

from page 1

**Providing Teacher Support Through:**

- ❖ Teacher mentoring groups to assist with teacher retention, professional growth, collaboration with other teachers from various Catholic schools, and central office support
- ❖ Working with principals to better support teachers in their growth

**Providing Principal Support Through:**

- ❖ Creating a Principal Handbook which will provide guidance on various school matters and will evolve annually to meet the needs of our administration
- ❖ New Principal mentoring which assists with principal retention, professional growth, and better collaboration with other Catholic school principals
- ❖ Offering “hands on” support for all Principals (e.g. financial, advisory council training, long-range planning, curriculum planning/articulation)
- ❖ The School Task Force, a new model supporting the schools. This task force focuses on chosen topics pertaining to Diocesan school-wide issues. Members will be selected for their expertise regarding the specific focus topic. This task force will be used in lieu of the Diocesan School Advisory Committee, DSAC.



As a graduate of Catholic schools, grammar through university, and a former teacher and high school president for almost twenty years, I have experienced first-hand the academic excellence, extensive extracurricular activities, and the disciplined learning that occurs each day. And this all happens within the context of the beauty and tradition of our Catholic faith. As the Church, we must do all we can to share this blessed opportunity with generations to come.”

Most Reverend Thomas A. Daly  
Bishop of Spokane