



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIocese OF BRIDGEPORT

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February 5, 2012

Dear Parishioners,

Education in our faith is the most important gift we can share with our children. It is my hope that your children are attending one of our excellent religious education programs or are students in one of our outstanding Catholic schools. Since we have just completed the national celebration of Catholic Schools Week, let me focus on some of the accomplishments of the 38 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport:

- Catholic schools are places where children learn the teachings of Christ and His Church, and grow in their relationship with God through prayer and generous service to others.
- They are safe environments where every child receives individual attention and works cooperatively to live the Gospel values and to succeed academically.
- Forty percent of our Diocesan elementary schools have received the Blue Ribbon of Academic Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education. This means that their students perform on a nationally standardized test in the top 10% of all students in the nation.
- 98 to 100 % of all Catholic high school students not only graduate but continue their studies in post-secondary schools.
- Our Catholic schools provide their students with twenty-first century skills, where STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) as well as world languages are becoming the norm.
- Our Catholic schools had a 5% increase in enrollment this year, and some schools have had to create waiting lists for new students.

The National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management, in its latest publication, *FROM ASPIRATION TO ACTION: SOLUTIONS FOR AMERICAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS*, wrote: "Schools are thriving in [the Diocese of] Bridgeport. At least 12 of them have been designated U.S. Blue Ribbon Schools. Test scores have improved dramatically, and almost all of the grade 8 inner-city cluster students met or exceeded state goals for reading. Compare that to only 36% of their public counterparts and you have grasped the stunning accomplishment that has unfolded in Bridgeport Catholic schools."

Finally, let me sincerely thank you, the parishioners, for your support of our Catholic schools, and also the members of the School Advisory Boards, clergy, parents, administrators, teachers, staff and alumni for all they do to create a place where young people learn to be future leaders in the world and in the Church. Indeed, our Catholic schools exemplify the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints."

Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Bishop of Bridgeport