



# THE DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

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August 26, 2017

Dear Parents:

There is always so much excitement and anticipation with our children at the beginning of a new school year with new teachers, new friends, new programs, and maybe even a new school! We, as an alliance of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Kalamazoo, share in this excitement as we look forward to the 17-18 school year.

We welcome several new members to our diocesan and school staffs:

- With the retirement of Mrs. Jane Gee after 39 years at St. Therese of Lisieux School in Wayland, we are pleased to announce that Mr. Homer (Hank) Leverette has been appointed principal of this school. Mr. Leverette has been a teacher at St. Therese for many years and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to his new position.
- We welcome Mr. Larry Hoskins as the new administrator at Lake Michigan Catholic Elementary School in Saint Joseph. Mr. Hoskins will be partnering with Mrs. Jody Maher this fall as she moves toward retirement at the end of December. Mr. Hoskins comes to us from Missouri after serving several years in education, the last two as principal of a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis.
- Mr. George Dragan joins the Secretariat of Catholic Education and New Evangelization as Associate Director of Catechetics and Youth Ministry for the diocese. Although George will be working primarily with parishes in regard to youth ministry and religious education programs, he will also be involved in schools as a member of our school accreditation teams and as a member of the Theology Curriculum Committee.

New initiatives and programs that you may encounter in your local school this year include:

- Our K-8 Theology curriculum which was originally launched in 2012 has been revised and is ready for full implementation this year. The diocesan K-8 science curriculum is now ready for full implementation and our English / Language Arts curriculum is in its second year of development and should be completed by the end of this school year. All new or revised curricula are posted on our websites as they are completed. A big thank you to Dr. Terry Nugent, our diocesan curriculum director, and the many teachers and administrators who work with her to bring these programs to completion.
- All administrators have been introduced to the *Protect Young Eyes* program which is designed to help parents (and teachers) recognize and identify internet dangers their children may be exposed to as well as to train students of all ages in internet safety. We have asked all administrators to bring this program to their schools; please check with them to see when this eye-opening presentation will be coming to your area.
- We are in the process of implementing an online Student Information System called RenWeb in all our schools in the upcoming year. This program is parent-friendly,

allowing parents to get announcements, calendar items, pictures, and other information through the parent portal, Parentsweb. Parentsweb will also allow you to view your student's homework, progress reports, and report cards online. RenWeb also features a user-friendly online application and enrollment piece to help streamline your school's enrollment process. Parentsweb is free through a browser on any electronic device. If you prefer an app, one can be purchased for a nominal yearly fee.

- We now have several schools that have attended the *Latino Enrollment Institute* at the University of Notre Dame, a program designed to assist schools in attracting Latino families into our buildings. This summer, both Saint Mary's in Niles and Saint Mary's in Paw Paw had teams attend. Nina Laney, our diocesan enrollment and retention specialist, will be working with these two schools, as well as those schools that have already sent delegations to this Institute, to share the information with our other schools to help us all in reaching out to our Latino families.

As you may be aware, all our schools are required to be accredited through the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools every five years, and four of our schools are preparing for this site-visit for the upcoming year. These schools include: Saint Stanislaus School in Dorr as well as Lake Michigan Catholic Elementary, Middle, and High Schools in Saint Joseph. This accreditation process is rigorous, involving a year-long self-study, followed by the site-visit, and then, based on the site-visit report, the school develops a school improvement plan which will guide them for the next several years. The last site-visit report, as well as the current school improvement plan, are available in your school office should you wish to review them. Please see your building administrator for more information.

We are honored and humbled by your trust in us to partner with you to love, educate, and protect your children. Thank you for entrusting us with this awesome responsibility.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your local administrator or our office for assistance.

Sincerely,

Margaret Erich  
Superintendent / Diocese of Kalamazoo