

# Partners

## Diocesan teachers come together to enhance curriculum

Thirty-two teachers, working in teams of 2 or 3, will spend part of this summer developing enhanced curriculum and materials for the 20 schools in the Diocese of Rochester.

The teams will develop comprehensive course and unit overviews for all subjects, from pre-K through 8th grade. Each unit will include a time-frame, essential learning outcomes and Catholic components, learning standards students should meet as a result of the unit and a wide range of resources available to teachers.

The curriculum will be a "guiding document," says Jeffrey Green, associate superintendent of diocesan schools. The idea is to share resources, best practices and experiences widely among teachers, says Superintendent Anthony Cook, not to usurp the teachers' role as educational leaders in their classrooms.

Teachers will not be required to strictly adhere to the new guides, Cook says, but many new teachers may find it to be a helpful template as they develop their own classroom tools. And veteran teachers may find parts of the guides helpful in augmenting their own curriculum to meet the learning standards.

Over the winter, diocesan teachers had an opportunity to apply for a summer curriculum-writing position. Those selected attended a May 1 orientation in Rochester. Because teachers live all across the diocese, over the summer, curriculum-writing teams will share their ideas and develop their curriculum proposals using email, Google docs and other electronic communications tools.

In addition to the grade-level teams, specialty subject teachers (technology, music, and art, for example) will work to develop curriculum for all grade levels. And components of the preK-8 religion curriculum developed by the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis will be integrated into all subject areas as well as being taught as a separate subject.

The curriculum teams will submit their work by late July for review by diocesan schools staff. The curriculum will be further discussed among teachers at their Superintendent's Day workshop in October. And while teachers will be free to pull resources and strategies from the curriculum documents for use at the start of the 2014-2015 school year, the curriculum package will not be finalized until next spring. After that, Cook, says, there will be ongoing reviews and updates. "It's just one piece of guidance," he says. "Curriculum is a living, breathing thing."

"With the new Common Core standards, it is often difficult to get the materials necessary for the modules and lessons," says April Miller, a member of the curriculum-writing team who teaches 5th and 6th grades at Immaculate Conception School in Ithaca. "This curriculum will give teachers options for supplementary materials and alternative materials that will reach the same standards and learning targets."

"The most important thing we stress to



teachers," Cook says, "is that they will still be the decision makers." The curriculum-writing project will help make the collective wisdom and experience of teachers throughout the dioceses available to every teacher. They will have access to a variety of teaching tools, including websites, books, articles, videos and suggested field trips and classroom activities.

The enhanced curriculum is a "great opportunity for teachers to continue to integrate all subject areas, especially religion and faith-based learning," says Tricia Sadler, a 3rd grade teacher at St. Kateri School in Irondequoit.

The curriculum project complements a move to standards-based report cards for students from pre-K through grade 3 in 2014-2015. Grades for specific standards have already replaced letter grades for students through grade 2, Green says. New report cards have been designed in concert with teachers and principals

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## GARDEN CLUB ST. MARY OUR MOTHER SCHOOL, HORSEHEADS

A beautiful garden at the school continues to be a beautiful memorial to two very special people – a young student who died in 1997 and the teacher who created and then so lovingly cared for the garden for many years. It is currently being kept and carefully tended by our Stay & Play after school “Garden Club.”



## ORANGE DAY FUNDRAISER ST. KATERI SCHOOL, IRONDEQUOIT

Students at St. Kateri recently held a dress-down day to raise money for a student who is battling Leukemia. Students who donated were decked out in orange to signify their support for Leukemia Awareness.



## BIRTHDAY BAGS ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, PENFIELD

Dozens of gift bags filled with supplies for themed birthday celebrations were donated to children staying at Ronald McDonald House

# A Busy Spring at Diocesan Schools



## NEW SCIENCE LAB ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, AUBURN





LIVING STATIONS ST. RITA SCHOOL, WEBSTER



PLANT CELL MODELS  
ST. JOHN NEUMANN SCHOOL,  
ROCHESTER



GRANDPARENTS' DAY PERFORMANCE  
HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL, ELMIRA



FIELD TRIP TO ROSE HILL MANSION  
ST. FRANCIS - ST. STEPHEN SCHOOL, GENEVA



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AWARENESS POSTERS  
ST PATRICK SCHOOL, OWEGO

Students at St. Patrick participated in a Substance Abuse Awareness Poster Contest sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council No. 251.



## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

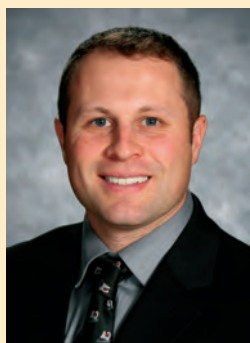
### DEAR CATHOLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES,

As the 2013-2014 school year comes to a close, I wish to thank you for the blessing of your children. I have had the good fortune to visit with many of them throughout the school year and I am excited about the future of our Catholic schools. We will continue to build on the dedication of our parents and devotion of our professional educators.

As we continue to develop curriculum resources, the Department of Catholic Schools has begun an initiative to link teachers from across the Diocese of Rochester. On May 1, 2014, 32 teachers and the Department of Catholic Schools staff gathered to begin a curriculum writing project that will culminate at the end of July 2014. Teams of teachers are working collectively to offer curriculum resources for all schools in the diocese. The result of this collaborative effort will be teacher-developed curriculum guides, which include Catholic components, student learning objectives, essential questions, activities, and recommended resources. The curriculum guides can be modified and used as a resource for our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rochester.

In addition, the Diocese of Rochester would like to announce the implementation of My Students Progress, a new student information system. This system will connect you with your child and school on a higher level than you have experienced before. I am looking forward to the transition to My Students Progress and the link it will create between our students, teachers, parents, administration, and Diocese.

Thank you for your continued support, thoughts, and prayers. I wish you and your family a happy and safe summer recess.



**Anthony S. Cook**

May God Bless,  
Anthony S. Cook III, Superintendent



### MAY CROWNING

#### HOLY CROSS, ROCHESTER

A number of diocesan schools honored Mary at May Crowning ceremonies.



## New Curriculum

### *Continued from page 1*

from across the diocese and will extend to grade 3 in 2014-2015, to grade 4 in 2015-2016, and grade 5 in 2016-2017. No decision has been made regarding the use of new report cards for grades 6, 7 and 8, Green says.

The diocesan learning standards, which include but add to both the national Common Core and New York State learning standards, will provide parents and students with a great deal of specificity so they can clearly see what skills have been mastered and where students still need work.

"Speaking for my staff, teachers are excited to have a set of guidelines that address the standards that must be met in each curriculum area," says Paula Smith, the principal and 5th grade teacher at St. Patrick School in Owego. "Teachers are very unique in their style and these curriculums will allow them to have a framework to use as much as they need it."

The grades for each standards may be a little disconcerting to parents who are used to the traditional A-B-C letter grading system, Smith acknowledges. But the new system will

give them much more information about their child's academic progress.

"It's all about feedback for growth, not about judgment," Cook says. "It will show exactly where students are and where they need help."

The standards build on each other from year to year. This is called "scaffolding," Green says. For example, the under English Language Arts, a 2nd grade student is expected to "ask and answer questions about key details in a text;" a 3rd grade student is expected to "ask and answer questions about a text using key details."

A 2nd grade student should be able to "acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters," while a 3rd grade student should be able to "distinguish personal point of view from that of the narrators/characters."

A 2nd grade student should be able to demonstrate an ability to "tell and write time," while a 3rd grade student should demonstrate an ability to "tell and write time in various forms."

"The standards on the report card will align with what is being taught, using the new curriculum guidelines," Smith says. "Teachers will be able to see if there are common areas that need more time—and know how to plan better for individual children and a group as a whole."



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**QUESTIONS?**  
CONTACT THE OFFICE OF  
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OR VISIT OUR WEB SITE  
[www.dorschools.org](http://www.dorschools.org)