805 S. Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919-7551 • (865) 584-3307 • www.dioknox.org

Office of the Bishop
Diocese of Knoxville

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is my honor to announce that our ten Catholic schools have been awarded the distinction of diocesan system accreditation by AdvancED, the global leader in advancement and accreditation. This achievement was the culmination of a rigorous two-and-a-half year internal and external review process. Each of the schools, along with the diocesan Catholic Schools Office, conducted an internal self-study according to the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools and the AdvancED accreditation standards. With this achievement, the Diocese of Knoxville joins 52 other Catholic (arch) dioceses across the nation to receive the esteemed honor of system accreditation.

The AdvancED Quality Assurance External Review (QAR) team consisted of the Lead Evaluator, Leisa Schulz, Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Louisville, and seven other professional Catholic educators, including diocesan superintendents, assistant superintendents, principals, and a university professor. During the four days of the review, the team conducted 210 interviews with Catholic school stakeholders, observed 89 classrooms, and reviewed evidence and artifacts for standards compliance, as well as, areas of excellence.

At the External Review Summary Presentation, the QAR team commended the diocese and Catholic school leadership at all levels for the pervasive Catholic identity and culture within our schools. The team observed that the schools of the Diocese of Knoxville foster a culture of shared values and beliefs that support the evangelizing mission of the Roman Catholic Church, preparing students to be scholars, leaders, and saints. The team further acknowledged the school cultures are characterized by collaboration and a profound sense of community. The team commended diocesan leadership for consistently fostering and respecting the autonomy of school-level leaders. The team also commended the diocese for their comprehensive student assessment system.

The QAR team made recommendations for further growth including the adoption and maintenance of 3-5 year financial feasibility plans for each of the Catholic schools, and the team affirmed the Diocesan strategic plan goal to develop and enact a communications and marketing plan for all the Catholic schools.

I would like to thank our Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Sister Mary Marta Abbott, R.S.M., for her leadership, along with Sedonna Prater and all of the Accreditation Steering Team, which consisted of school presidents, principals, assistant principals and lead teachers.

The final official written report from the AdvancED Accreditation Commission will be provided within the next couple of months. The Catholic schools in our diocese have much of which to be proud. Rest assured, the most important source of pride is that each and every day our schools are providing faithful witness to the mission of bringing children to Christ in an outstanding educational environment. Thank you for helping make that possible.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Richard Stika

Most Reverend Richard F. Stika
Bishop of Knoxville