



ARCHDIOCESE OF  
**NEW ORLEANS**

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

February, 2012

As we discuss the future of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of New Orleans, we feel it is vital that every voice be heard. That is why we offered a survey of Catholic schools which was completed at the end of January inviting all to offer input into our strategic plan. That is why we are having focus groups. The consultants from Catholic University, Drs. John Convey and Len Defiore, have already met with priests; on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, they will meet with superiors of religious orders as well as school principals and presidents. That is why we will hold a series of Town Hall meetings this spring. All are invited to these meetings, which will take place throughout the Archdiocese. We want to hear from people who have children in Catholic schools, Catholics who have no children in school, and people who took their children out of Catholic schools for whatever reason.

We want a variety of ideas; we want to know where we excel and how we can improve. We want to hear from anyone living in the geographic boundaries of the Archdiocese, whether they are Catholic or not. It is vital to have this discussion because the future of Catholic education is vital for the New Orleans area. We know that Catholic education affects this community in a positive way; we know that 99 percent of graduates from Catholic schools qualify to go on to colleges and universities; and, 95 percent attend colleges and universities. We also know that these students become our leaders; we know that our future is in the hands of our young Church.

And so as we move forward with this strategic plan, led by Catholic University, we are forging not only a blueprint for the future of Catholic education in the New Orleans area; but, are also forging a blueprint for the future of the New Orleans community. Our futures are bound together.

So please come to one of our eight Town Hall meetings. If you live in the boundaries of the Archdiocese, Catholic or not, these meetings are for you! Dates, times and places will be released soon.

Finally, once the survey results, focus group results, and Town Hall meeting comments have been collected by Drs. John Convey and Len Defiore of Catholic University, recommendations will be brought to Archbishop Aymond, whose support for Catholic education is unwavering.

Although he has not seen any of this information yet, I can assure you that no schools will close next year; however, we are looking at some consolidation the following year.

We face challenges in Catholic education; and, yet I feel that with a culture of collaboration and transparency, we can come up with a solution. Working together, with many voices being heard, we can find a way forward.

I can tell you some of the things being discussed: grade level structures; how to meet the needs of all students; how to finance catholic education; but, I

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cannot give you the answers because I don't have them. The answers need to come from the people whom the Catholic Church serves. Solutions need to come from you.

Everyone will have had the opportunity to express their opinions. Every voice will be heard. We are in this together and together, we can ensure that the future of Catholic education is bright for our children and the young church.

Yours in Christ,

*Jan Daniel Lancaster*

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