



Catholic School Connections

Communicating Our Faith, Education and Service

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Distance Learning Offers Unique Virtual Experience

The Offices of Catholic Schools, Christian Formation and Information Technology are pleased to announce the successful launch and first implementation of the Diocesan Distance Learning Center (DDLCL).

On October 11th, educators from eleven Diocesan schools were able to meet virtually with personnel from the Office of Catholic Schools to participate in a training workshop. Teachers met in the regional DDLCLs at Roanoke Catholic, Bishop Sullivan High School, and the Pastoral Center in Richmond. These teachers are the dedicated mentor coordinators for their respective schools and were trained on implementing the program that supports new teachers each year. The mentor coordinators were able to discuss the program, ask questions, and collaborate with one another virtually, saving countless hours of commuting, travel reimbursement, and payment to substitutes for a full day so that educators could attend the 90-minute workshop.



▲ Virtual workshop collaboration, attended by educators from eleven schools, without the need to travel to the Pastoral Center.

◀ Eric Sund, Director of Information Technology, answering questions during a training session.

The Office of Catholic Schools plans to utilize the DDLCLs enabling opportunities for collaboration among teachers and administrators across the diocese without the need for extensive travel. Currently, plans are in place to use these centers throughout the year for our Consensus Curriculum Councils with members from all of our schools across the state who are tasked with developing curriculum for our students. Our dedicated school administrators are also exploring additional beneficial uses for this technology, such as expanding course offerings to our students and “sharing” faculty with our schools.

“Absolutely, this is very exciting information and has the potential to open so many doors for our diocese. One of the beautiful aspects of our diocese is the fact we have a footprint of over 36,000 square miles! That can also be a challenge when it comes to communication and training opportunities for our parishes and school communities. The Office of Catholic Schools has already begun to use the equipment for training opportunities. Plans are being developed for future training sessions, retreats, and the sharing of school learning resources. Kudos to the team for pulling together all of the moving parts of this initiative.” said Ray Honeycutt, Interim Superintendent.

The Diocesan Distance Learning Centers are a direct result of the generosity from donors who gave to the Living Our Mission Campaign. The Office of Christian Formation and the Information Technology Department have established DDLCLs located at the Pastoral Center to serve the Richmond Region, at Peninsula Catholic and Bishop Sullivan High Schools for the Tidewater Region, and Roanoke Catholic and Jubilee House, in Abingdon, to serve the Southwest region of Virginia.

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Our “Dream Team” Welcomes its Newest Members!



Angela Allen

Julia Crowder

Natasha Feher

Angela Allen
Associate Superintendent
of Curriculum and Instruction
Office of Catholic Schools

“I have a deep respect for the work of the administration and staff in our Diocesan schools, and I am incredibly honored to be in a position to work alongside them. I look forward to joining the Office of Catholic Schools to continue the journey of cultivating the traditions of faith and excellence in our schools.”

Angela has spent almost 20 years in the field of education working with teachers and students in various capacities in the school environment. She began her career as a classroom teacher and resource teacher prior to moving into school administration where she served as an assistant principal and principal in neighboring school divisions. Angela most recently served as the Assistant Principal at Saint Brigid Catholic School. She has a doctoral degree from the College of William and Mary in policy, planning and leadership and has a passion for lifelong learning and works to develop this same passion in others. Angela, her husband Scott, and their daughter Emory are parishioners at Saint Brigid Church in Richmond.

Julia Crowder
Coordinator for Educational Programs
Office of Catholic Schools

“I am so excited to serve the Diocese of Richmond in a role that allows me to integrate my Catholic faith and my passion for education. I look forward to continuing the mission of the Church in our schools.”

Julia will be working with curriculum and professional development as well as other special projects. Julia has a bachelor's degree in Spanish and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from VCU. She began her career as a high school Spanish teacher and transitioned to serve as an administrator in various Richmond area schools. Most recently she served the community of Saint Brigid School. Julia, her husband BJ, and their four-month old son, William, are parishioners at Church of the Redeemer in Mechanicsville.

Natasha Feher
Administrative Assistant/Data Specialist
Office of Catholic Schools

“I am excited for the opportunity to support the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Richmond and to help promote the value of a faith-based education.”

Natasha will focus her efforts on enrollment management and supporting RenWeb™, the Diocesan student information system. Natasha's career efforts have focused on administrative support services in all levels of education. She has a Bachelor's degree in History and Theology from Franciscan University of Steubenville. Natasha, her husband Steve, and their three children are active parishioners at St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church in Richmond.

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Catholic Diocese
Pastoral Center Of Richmond

The Greatest Treasure that our Families have is their Children



Students from St. Joseph Catholic School in Petersburg, VA

There is no doubt that most Catholic parents want to pass on the gift of the Christian faith to the next generation and want to do it while their children are prepared, in the best possible way, to succeed in life. Catholic schools stand out as institutions that are committed to the conviction that welcoming a child means welcoming a family. We need to continue to do this with renewed commitment in an increasingly Hispanic Church.

As the Catholic population in the United States grows steadily, thanks mainly to the Hispanic presence, the number of Catholic children in the country has never been larger. More than half of all school-age Catholics in the United States are Hispanic. Even more interesting is the fact that approximately 60% of Catholics under the age of 18 are Hispanic. Of these, more than 90% were born in the United States. However, only 4% of Hispanic school-age Catholics are enrolled in Catholic schools. The hope of Catholic families for their children today, millions of them immigrant and Hispanic, coincides with that of Catholic families in previous generations: an education that provides a strong grounding in the faith and the tools to succeed in our society. Commitment to a Catholic education of Hispanic children now will ultimately mean a stronger Church and a stronger society.

Bishop Francis Di Lorenzo, with the Office of Catholic Schools, addressed the educational needs of Hispanic families and established our country's first Diocesan Segura Initiative, in 2010, when two little girls enrolled at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School. One of these little girls is now a young woman and a sophomore at VCU with the dream of becoming a medical surgeon. This past May, five more Segura students graduated from our Catholic high schools; four are currently freshmen at in-state universities, with one receiving a full scholarship to Hollins University, and one enlisted in the US Army after being the first high school graduate in his entire family.



Today, all 29 of our private and diocesan Catholic schools are creating a welcoming environment and providing funding for 386 of our 948 Latino students. The passionate determination of our committed leadership team, a variety of recruitment strategies, and the passage of tax-credit legislation secured this outcome.

Every year, more and more archdioceses and dioceses around the country are implementing similar programs, several after consulting with us. Most recently, Bishop Brennan and the Superintendent of Schools from the Diocese of Rockville Centre of Long Island, New York met with Bishop DiLorenzo at the Pastoral Center to specifically discuss our successful experience implementing the Segura Program. Last month, Maria Baquerizo, our Segura Initiative Program Director, and Pat Patterson, Principal of Roanoke Catholic, both attended the National Summit on Catholic Schools and Hispanic Families at Boston College, hosted by the Roche Center for Catholic Education. The Summit was a national gathering of Archbishops, Bishops, priests, Superintendents of Schools, School Principals and leaders in Catholic education generating innovative, research-driven responses to a March 2016 Boston College report regarding Catholic Schools in an increasingly Hispanic Church.

Our mission is to develop and nurture the spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional growth of each student in the spirit of the Gospels and the teachings of the Catholic Church. Therefore, our schools should lead the way as models of community that embrace and celebrate cultural difference as a gift. The continued success of our Segura Initiative proudly demonstrates that it is possible to plan for the recruitment and support of Hispanic families and by doing so demonstrate the faithful stewardship necessary to build healthy, sustainable enrollments for our Catholic schools.