



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Albany Catholic Schools Receive Systemwide Re-accreditation from Global Commission

The Diocese of Albany Catholic Schools has received systemwide re-accreditation for all of its 20 schools, as announced June 17 by Cognia Global Accreditation Commission, the national organization that evaluates and approves school accreditation. Citing a “strong culture of trust and collaboration” as well as commitment to “high-quality resources” and ongoing professional development for faculty and staff,” the decision reaffirms the Diocese of Albany’s initial 2016 accreditation, which was the first of its kind among all the dioceses in New York State. The designation serves as an acknowledgement that Albany Catholic schools meet a certain standard of quality worthy of accreditation.

“Although we anticipated this announcement, we are thrilled that a global accrediting agency has once again reaffirmed what we have always known, that our Catholic schools are second to none when it comes to academics, environment, community, and more,” said Giovanni Virgiglio, diocesan Superintendent of Schools. “We thank the diocesan school board, our schools, faculty and staff, families and community partners, and administrators and diocesan officials for cooperating with the Cognia Engagement Review Team to provide the necessary evaluations, surveys, and documentation that enabled them to accurately gauge every school and our central office.”

Cognia, which previously operated under the name AdvanceEd, is the parent organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement.

“This re-accreditation is a nationally recognized mark of quality for our system of schools and each school individually,” Virgiglio added. “It demonstrates to our community our commitment to continuous improvement, our openness to external review and feedback, and our desire to be the best we can be on behalf of the students we serve.”

Led by Associate Superintendent Dr. Christopher Bott, each of the elementary schools and high schools in the 14-county diocese collected student performance data; did self-assessments; surveyed parents, students, and staff; and wrote a plan for improvement in any area that appeared to need some work. Each school also had a representative on the Diocesan

Accreditation Steering Committee, a 22-member representative team that ensured widespread engagement in the review.

Among the points highlighted in the 17-page Cognia re-accreditation report was the “widespread feelings of connectedness and partnership within the Diocese of Albany” that was attributed to the expansion of Catholic School Office services, particularly during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This included adding positions at the diocesan level to provide an additional layer of support to schools... and mental health and social and emotional learning support through the Catapult program. The addition of these positions and the strategic use of staff in the Office of Catholic Schools ensured schools could increase capacity and improve their support services to staff and families without having to absorb the full financial cost,” the Cognia report stated.

Going forward, the Diocese of Albany Catholic Schools will focus on making any improvements highlighted in the report, such as a renewed commitment to instructional practices that emphasize the development of critical thinking skills across all grade levels as well as an increased focus on inquiry-based and experiential learning approaches.

“Feedback always provides us with an opportunity to grow, which is exactly what we would tell any student hoping to improve his or her performance,” Virgiglio explained. “Growth is never something to be afraid of; we look forward to building on our existing strengths.”