

CATHOLIC  
SCHOOLS  
WEEK

2022

Venango  
Catholic Jr./Sr.  
High School

CELEBRATING  
*Creation*

SUNDAY JAN. 30

CSW kick-off mass,  
9:45 am, VCHS  
gym

MONDAY JAN. 31

Wear your  
pajamas to  
school and  
enjoy a movie  
in the  
afternoon.

TUESDAY FEB. 1

Dress in as  
much green as  
you can and  
participate in  
eco-friendly  
activities.

WEDNESDAY FEB. 2

Under the Sea!

Dress for a day  
at the beach,  
but don't get  
bit during *Shark  
Tank!*

THURSDAY FEB. 3

3 on 3  
Basketball  
tournament!  
  
Dress as your  
team's mascot.

FRIDAY FEB. 4

Survey says...wear  
your best "game  
show" attire.  
  
Will you be called  
to "come on down?"  
GAME ON!

SUNDAY FEB. 6

Mass 9:45am at  
VC gym, open  
houses at both  
campuses  
11am-1pm.  
  
Bring a friend!

# ***YOU'RE INVITED!***

Sunday, Jan. 30 9:45am

CSW Kick-Off Mass

VCHS gym

Sunday, Feb 6. 9:45am

VRCS Family Mass

VCHS gym

Followed by

***Open House***

February 6th 11am-1pm

St. Stephen and VCHS campuses

***Bring a friend!***



Dear parents,

I am extremely excited for the upcoming 2022 Catholic Schools Week. We have a lot of great activities planned. On Monday January 31st both the Junior and Senior high school students will watch a movie in the gym in the afternoon.

Please sign to indicate that your son/daughter has permission to watch the movie *I can Only Imagine* (rated PG) on Monday January 31, 2022. Below is a brief summary of the movie from commonsensemedia.com

*I Can Only Imagine* is a faith-based drama about the inspiration behind the titular song, which became the best-selling contemporary Christian single of all time. The story follows MercyMe singer Bart Millard's turbulent upbringing with an abusive father, as well as how his father's eventual conversion story inspired the breakout hit. There's some heavy material involving Millard's father's emotional and physical abuse, as well as a sad (but expected) death and the exploration of grief and personal faith. Christian families who see the film will likely be familiar with the song and will appreciate the movie's messages of redemption and salvation, as well as its themes of compassion, gratitude, and integrity.

---

Student Name

---

Grade

---

Parent Signature

---

Date

Thank you!  
Ms. Chandley



# Updates from the CSO

WINTER 2022

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE NEWSLETTER

Volume 3, Page 1

## In this issue:

- ◇ Updates on the Mathematics Professional Learning Teams in our Schools
- ◇ Athletics and Student Well-being
- ◇ Celebrating Catholic Schools Week

## Contact us:

We want to hear from you! Tell us what's noteworthy in your school or system.

Send a short story or description of your event or program to Caryl Unseld at: [cunseld@ErieRCD.org](mailto:cunseld@ErieRCD.org)



Happy New Year!

Dear partners in Catholic education,

I am hopeful about the beginning of 2022 and am thrilled with the progress that has been made with so many of our initiatives this academic year. As we enter the celebration of Catholic Schools Week, I am keenly aware of the blessings we receive from all of you and the many ways in which you share your time and talents to support the mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Erie.

In this issue of *Updates from the CSO*, you will find current information regarding the work of our schools' Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). This year the PLTs are focused on refining their mathematics curriculum to promote student growth.

This issue also includes an article highlighting the vital role athletics has played in helping our students navigate the challenges of the pandemic and in promoting positive student well-being. We know that participation in sports can have a strong and positive influence on the physical and mental well-being of our students. We want to recognize the efforts our coaches and volunteers have made to promote students' safe participation in our athletic programs.

Finally, you will find an article that explains the importance of Catholic Schools Week for our community. We are excited to recognize the significant role Catholic schools play in the lives of our students, their families, and our communities throughout the Diocese of Erie.

I encourage you to share this information with your school communities so we can continue to support each other in the good work in our schools and across the diocese.

May God continue to bless our work together. I invite you to pray with me for the Spirit of Hope to inspire us as we live out our call to faith and love in Christ.

Sincerely,

Superintendent



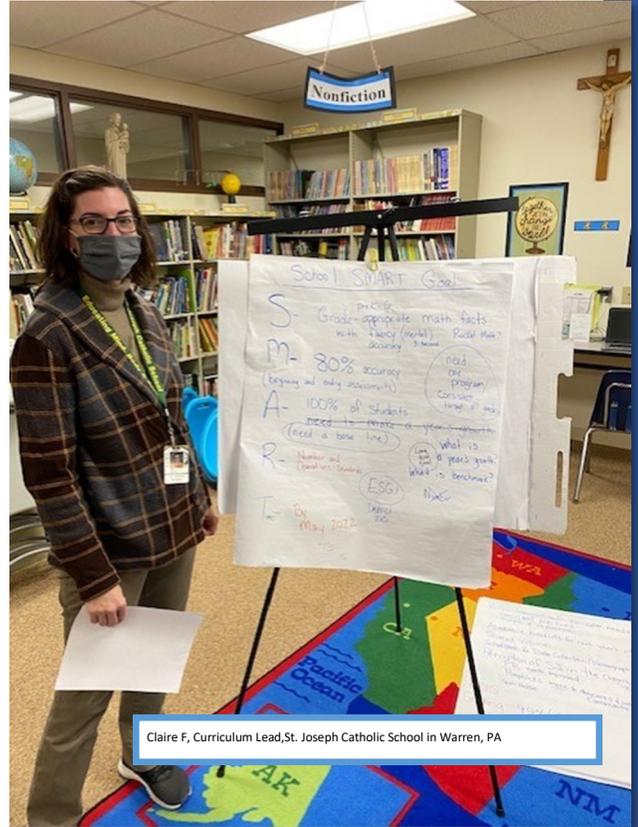
## We Are a Professional Learning Community!

At the start of this school year, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie adopted the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. The PLC model emphasizes the importance of educators coming together in school-based Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) to engage in meaningful discussions about how to best support all students' learning needs.

Recently, teachers across the diocese have come together to focus on mathematics. The teachers serving on school-level mathematics PLT are working collaboratively to explore math standards and curriculum, analyze student assessment data, and explore best-practices and new instructional strategies.

In each of our schools a teacher has volunteered to be the PLT Curriculum Lead. The work and leadership these teachers are providing is impressive. They have risen to the challenge and are facilitating discussions, participating in ongoing professional development trainings, and learning about the new NWEA Map Growth student assessment data.

Currently, the PLTs are in the process of reviewing and organizing the most essential mathematics standards by grade level to ensure students are getting the foundational skills they need to be successful mathematicians. Also, the PLTs are analyzing student data from our new NWEA MAP Growth Assessment and using this information to guide their daily instruction.



Claire F., Curriculum Lead, St. Joseph Catholic School in Warren, PA

*"I am so pleased that this is all taking place. Data is so important, and we are finally training our teachers how to read and use data for effective instruction" -St. Luke School Teacher*

According to building administrators and teachers, the work of the mathematics PLTs has already begun positively impacting change. *"I am so pleased that this is all taking place," says H.K. from St. Luke School. "Data is so important and training our teachers how to read and use data will improve the effectiveness of instruction." LB from Immaculate Conception School in Clarion is looking forward to the future. "Teachers are taking steps needed to further understand what curriculum is and how to apply the standards while meeting the needs of their students," she says.*

Curriculum Leads also have been collaborating with the CSO directors and other lead teachers in the diocese through monthly networking sessions. During these sessions, Curriculum Leads have an opportunity to connect, pose questions, give and receive feedback about their progress, and gather the tools necessary to continue moving the work of their PLTs forward.

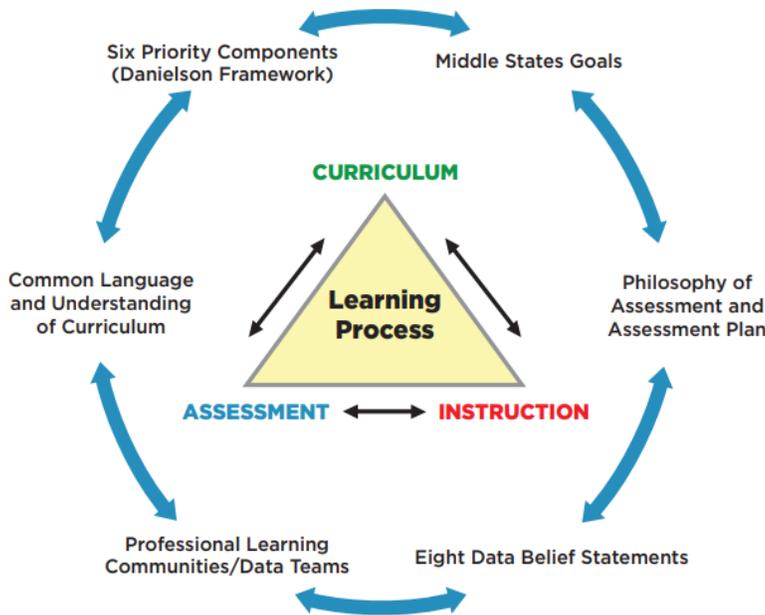
In just a few short months, the PLTs have made important and positive progress toward meeting the common Middle States accreditation goal of ensuring each school's mathematics program is at a level where students are making a minimum of one year's growth or are at benchmark for grade level by the 2027 school year.

*"Teachers are taking steps needed to further understand what curriculum is and how to apply the standards while meeting the needs of their students. I am looking forward to the future." Immaculate Conception School Teacher*

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Erie

**Formula**

**FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH**



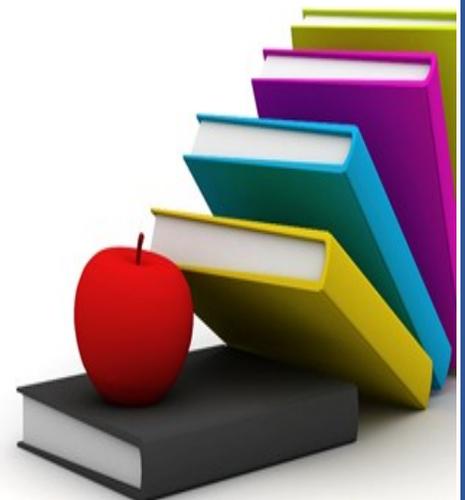
**We are all one  
Professional Learning Community  
in the Diocese of Erie**

Comparable to each diocesan school, the CSO directors also have created their own PLT. The CSO PLT meets weekly to ensure each member, in their role, is supporting all schools in the successful implementation of their mathematics PLTs. Each week the CSO directors work collaboratively to determine the best ways to provide meaningful professional development, resources, and collegial support so that our schools can successfully implement the school-level PLTs.

According to Jim Gallagher, “Implementing the PLT model in the office has reinvigorated my love for education. It reminds me of why I became a teacher in the first place — to focus on student learning and make a difference. The way in which my team can collaborate in the PLT and have the opportunity for meaningful conversation about mathematics education is refining the focus of our work. I am excited to see the positive outcomes in all of our schools.”

**Meeting the needs of our schools  
through differentiated Professional Development**

To meet the individual needs of Catholic schools across the Diocese of Erie, the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) is updating its professional development model. The CSO is restructuring when and how these opportunities will be offered. Over the last several years, teachers participated in August workshops and a Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Day (CIA Day) in the spring. Moving forward, administrators and teachers will participate in professional development focused on meeting the diocesan Middle States goals and on the components of the Formula for Student Achievement and Growth. Additionally, the CSO has developed a three-year plan that will provide support for individual schools to identify and receive professional development specific to their needs.





## United in Sports, Catholic Identity, and Resiliency

Perhaps Nelson Mandela put it best when he said, “Sports has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way little else does.” During the pandemic, our athletic directors, coaches, volunteers, athletes and their families have worked hard to adhere to healthy COVID-19 mitigation strategies. This cooperation has allowed students to regularly participate in athletic programs, which in turn has provided a venue for students to take part in physical activity, healthy competition, and experience team unity.

What most profoundly separates our athletic programs from other excellent programs in the region is our ability to bring teams together in a faith-filled environment. Our Catholic values and identity are interwoven into our athletic programs. Through the cooperation of our teams and the community, athletes have continued to have the ability to connect with their coaches. These men and women dedicate time to ministering to our student athletes as they are developing their Catholic values.

Pope John Paul II said, “Sports contribute to the love of life, teaching sacrifice, and respect and responsibility, leading to the full development of every human person.” Athletics have always offered an opportunity for players to face adversity and build resiliency skills that they can take with them as they move from our schools into the larger community. Coaches have modeled resiliency and strength as they have flexibly navigated the last two years. Each school’s athletic staff have worked closely together to create safe practice-day and game-day protocols for all involved. If you happen to see a coach or athletic director, please take the time to say thank you for the considerable efforts put forth.



## Celebrate Catholic Schools Week with us

Since **1974**, National Catholic Schools Week has marked the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. This year, Catholic Schools Week runs from January 30 through February 5, using the theme *Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service.*

Catholic Schools Week is an important and highly anticipated celebration where schools can share their history, mission, and the Catholic values they emphasize as well as what their students love about the school and the impact the school has on their community.

Each day of Catholic Schools Week, schools across our diocese will participate in activities aligned to daily themes. This year, the daily themes include:

- Sunday, January 30 – Celebrating Your Parish
- Monday, January 31 – Celebrating Your Community
- Tuesday, February 1 – Celebrating Your Students
- Wednesday, February 2 – Celebrating the Nation
- Thursday, February 3 – Celebrating Vocations
- Friday, February 4 – Celebrating Faculty, Staff and Volunteers
- Saturday, February 5 – Celebrating Families

Catholic Schools week is a time set aside to showcase what sets Catholic education apart from other schools. Catholic Schools Week is also a time to celebrate current students and welcome new students, to share the pride we have for our educators, and to continue to strengthen our ties to our community so that we can fulfill our mission of providing a faith-filled and academically excellent education. Thank you to all who make Catholic education possible and for helping us to live out our great mission to teach children in the faith.



**Catholic Schools  
Week 2022**  
**January 30–February 5**

[www.NCEA.org/csw](http://www.NCEA.org/csw)  
**#CSW22**

### Many Gifts, One Nation

*"Yours is a great gift to the Church, a great gift to your nation."*

*~Saint Pope John Paul II*

NCEA (National Catholic Educational Association) initiated a *Many Gifts, One Nation Day of Giving to Catholic Schools* as part of the annual Catholic Schools Week celebration in 2018. This national Day of Giving invites all people who have been positively impacted by Catholic school education to financially donate to local Catholic schools.

This year the annual *Many Gifts, One Nation: A Day of Giving to Catholic Schools* begins Tuesday, February 1 at noon EST and continues through noon EST on Wednesday, February 2.

If your school is a member of NCEA and opted in for the annual Day of Giving, you may want to consider making a donation. Contact your school to see if it is registered and is participating.

# a dozen reasons to choose Catholic Schools

- 1. We offer an education that combines Catholic faith and teachings with academic excellence.
- 2. We partner with parents in the faith formation of their children.
- 3. We set high standards for student achievement and help them succeed.
- 4. We provide a balanced academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.
- 5. We use technology effectively to enhance education.
- 6. We instill in students the value of service to others.
- 7. We teach children respect of self and others.
- 8. We emphasize moral development and self-discipline.
- 9. We prepare students to be productive citizens and future leaders.
- 10. We have a 99 percent high school graduation rate. 85 percent of our graduates go to college.
- 11. We cultivate a faculty and staff of people who are dedicated, caring and effective.
- 12. We provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
[NCEA.org/csw](http://NCEA.org/csw)



PARENT

# NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2022

## FUN TIPS TO BUILD LITERACY

- Play word games like “I spy” when running errands
- Sing songs and nursery rhymes
- Read aloud to your children
- Check out your local library’s free events
- Practice storytelling
- Take advantage of windows of opportunity, such as reading cereal boxes, signs, and menus
- Make a game of naming all the things in a room that start with a certain letter

## FUN TIPS TO BUILD NUMERACY SKILLS

- Read and sing numbers
- Ask your child for help in counting out and distributing items, like snacks or silverware.
- Teach your children their address and phone number.
- Point out different shapes throughout the day.
- Use a calendar to talk about the date, days, months, and the weather
- Sort items based on size, color, or other categories



## LITERACY

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak, and listen in ways that allow us to communicate effectively in many ways to different audiences.

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening help us make sense of the world. Starting in the earlier years and throughout their lives, children can read almost anything! They can write and talk about ideas and information as they read, question, reflect, and even look at pictures to create their own story!

## NUMERACY

Numeracy is the ability to understand, use, and communicate mathematical information and ideas to a variety of audiences. These skills are the foundation for developing logical thinking and reasoning strategies for everyday activities, including cooking, shopping, understanding time, and playing sports.

## MAKING THE MOST OF PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES

Communication between home and school is essential to every student's education. When parents and educators can work together to identify concerns and celebrate successes, students benefit from support in all areas of their lives. Preparing before the meeting is one way to use this time to truly connect with your child's teacher. Try these tips to make the most of your parent-teacher conferences:

- 1) Write down your questions before the meeting and prioritize the ones that are most pressing.
- 2) Ask for explanations of terms you don't understand. It is the teacher's job to inform you without relying heavily on 'education-talk'.
- 3) Share the concerns and successes you see at home in your child's learning and growth.
- 4) If there's time, ask for a demonstration of strategies or technology that can be used at home.

## SETTING NEW YEAR'S GOALS

As we begin 2022, it's fun to make new goals for the brand new year! Your child can make small goals to work towards as well! Here are some examples of some New Year's goals for children

- Read a book or chapter every night
- Research a topic that you are really interested in
- Commit to a new routine either in the morning or at night
- Learn a new hobby

## 21ST CENTURY SKILLS:

### PERSISTENCE

Let's talk about persistence! Persistence, sometimes known as grit, is about working tirelessly toward challenges and maintaining effort and interest despite failure and obstacles.

Here are some ways you can help your child persist:

- Model persistence so your child observes it.
- Try focusing on praising effort, not just final outcomes.
- Offer guidance if you notice your child is becoming frustrated, without jumping in too much.
- Break down challenging tasks into smaller tasks so children can work for shorter periods of time and not become frustrated.
- Point out times when your child persisted through a challenging task. What was the outcome? How did they feel?



**Have you tried coding? If not, it's a great time to learn! Coding is computer programming and a lot of fun! You must have persistence coding to keep running your code to see if it works! Here are some websites you can visit:**

- [Scratch](#) – create and share stories, games and animations
- [Code.org](#) – encourages all children to learn coding
- [Legos Bits & Bricks](#) – puzzle games that help kids learn coding using Lego bricks