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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE

Dear Friends,

As we conclude this week celebrating our Catholic schools, I would like to take a moment to offer my profound gratitude. Looking around the Diocese of Knoxville, it is very easy to notice the positive impact our Catholic schools have on their communities. People, like you, who have been involved in our Catholic schools, provide a strong backbone for our Diocese. Your involvement makes a difference. No doubt, that involvement is helping our Diocese grow.

Assisting families in the role as primary educators of their children so all can deepen and grow their faith is a responsibility of our Catholic schools. We joyfully embrace that opportunity to help the entire family grow spiritually, academically, and socially.

I also understand that there is a sacrifice associated with your commitment to Catholic education. As your Bishop, I am grateful for your willingness to make this sacrifice. We strive to make sure the quality of the experience is worth the sacrifice. We believe the children and young adults influenced through Catholic education are a credit to their communities, their families, and themselves today -- and will be tomorrow. Many people talk about our children as the future, but I always say they are our Church today. Many studies have been done about the positive impact of a Catholic education on the continued practice of our faith throughout adulthood.

As you are already aware, the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office is currently involved in the most in-depth self-evaluation ever associated with our schools. The reward for that self-evaluation will be an accreditation by the internationally recognized AdvancED and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

That process has involved an internal self-analysis of all aspects of our schools and at the way the Diocese supports its schools. The process has included the opportunity for stakeholder input, and for some of our school leaders to visit and evaluate other schools and even other diocesan schools offices. This has helped us identify areas in which we can become even stronger. More importantly, it has helped us affirm just how wonderful our Catholic schools already are – because of you.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement with Catholic schools. That involvement is making a difference in your child, your family, your parish, your community, your diocese, and your world. We hope you will consider sharing your thoughts about Catholic education with others so that we will have the opportunity to minister to even more families.

Sincerely in Christ, .

Most Reverend Richard F. Stika  
Bishop of Knoxville

**“The Catholic school’s proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith.”**

*– His Holiness Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965*