



# The Diocese of Knoxville

Living our Roman Catholic faith in East Tennessee

MEDIA ADVISORY  
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## Dr. Sedonna Prater named superintendent of Catholic schools

**KNOXVILLE** — Bishop Richard F. Stika of the Diocese of Knoxville has named Dr. Sedonna Prater as the new superintendent of Catholic schools effective April 10, 2019.

“Dr. Prater is going to be an excellent leader for our Catholic schools,” Bishop Stika said. “She cares deeply about educating students the right way, and it only takes a few minutes with her to understand how deep that passion runs.”

“Dr. Prater has worked for decades in the Catholic school system in this diocese, both as a teacher and as an administrator. She understands the importance of a faith-based education, and she has studied all of the recent models and trends in academic achievement. As the director of curriculum for all of our schools, she has helped shape our success. Dr. Prater pushed hard for diocesan-level national accreditation, and that vision paid off two years ago when our 10 Catholic schools achieved that distinction. I have great respect for the work Dr. Prater has already done, and I am confident in her ability to lead our schools as we move into the future,” Bishop Stika added.

Dr. Prater succeeds Sister Mary Marta Abbott, RSM, who resigned earlier this year because of medical issues. Sister Mary Marta was appointed superintendent of schools on July 1, 2011. She will be reassigned by the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Mich., at a future date.

“I want to thank Sister Mary Marta Abbott,” the bishop said. “She has been an excellent leader for our Catholic schools these past eight years, and she led the mission to help our students become scholars, leaders, and saints. Sister Mary Marta was instrumental in helping our diocese gain national accreditation for all 10 of our schools. That will be a very big part of her legacy here. I am going to miss her good nature, her positive personality, and I thank her for all she has done to grow Catholic education in East Tennessee. I pray every day for her recovery, and I wish her all the best in her next assignment.”

Dr. Prater has been a professional educator for more than 30 years, with the last 22 in Catholic school education. She has served as the director of curriculum and instruction for the Catholic Schools Office since 2013. Before that, she served as principal of Sacred Heart Cathedral School from 2004-2013.

Dr. Prater is a certified lead evaluator for the international accrediting agency AdvancED and has conducted numerous quality assurance accreditation visits in public, private, and Catholic schools as a team member. She is a co-author of a 2018 National Catholic Educational Association publication titled *Serving English Learners: A Diocesan Handbook for K-12* and has published articles on the subject.

Dr. Prater has a bachelor's degree in English, a master's degree in educational administration, and has successfully defended her dissertation. She will be conferred a doctorate in leadership and professional practice by Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville in May.

"As a vital part of the Church's teaching mission, our Catholic schools have been integral to the spiritual, intellectual, and moral formation of students across East Tennessee," Dr. Prater said. "It is an exciting time in our diocese to build on this exceptional foundation as our schools, through their educational ministry, seek to expand their outreach of partnership with families, and to realize their hopes and dreams for their children."

"Thanks to the work of Sister Mary Marta, we're more unified. I believe in Catholic school education. I also believe that it is critical to the life of our Church and the formation of strong and stable families," Dr. Prater added.

There are 10 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Knoxville. The foundation schools (K-8) are St. Jude and Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Chattanooga; St. John Neumann in Farragut; St. Mary in Johnson City; St. Dominic in Kingsport; Sacred Heart Cathedral and St. Joseph in Knoxville; and St. Mary in Oak Ridge. The high schools are Knoxville Catholic and Notre Dame in Chattanooga.

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Knoxville strives to prepare scholars, leaders, and saints. Its vision states: "Empowered by the Holy Spirit and recognizing the vital ministry of Catholic education to the future of the Church and the nation, we will provide a learning environment that emphasizes quality education and spiritual growth for all."