

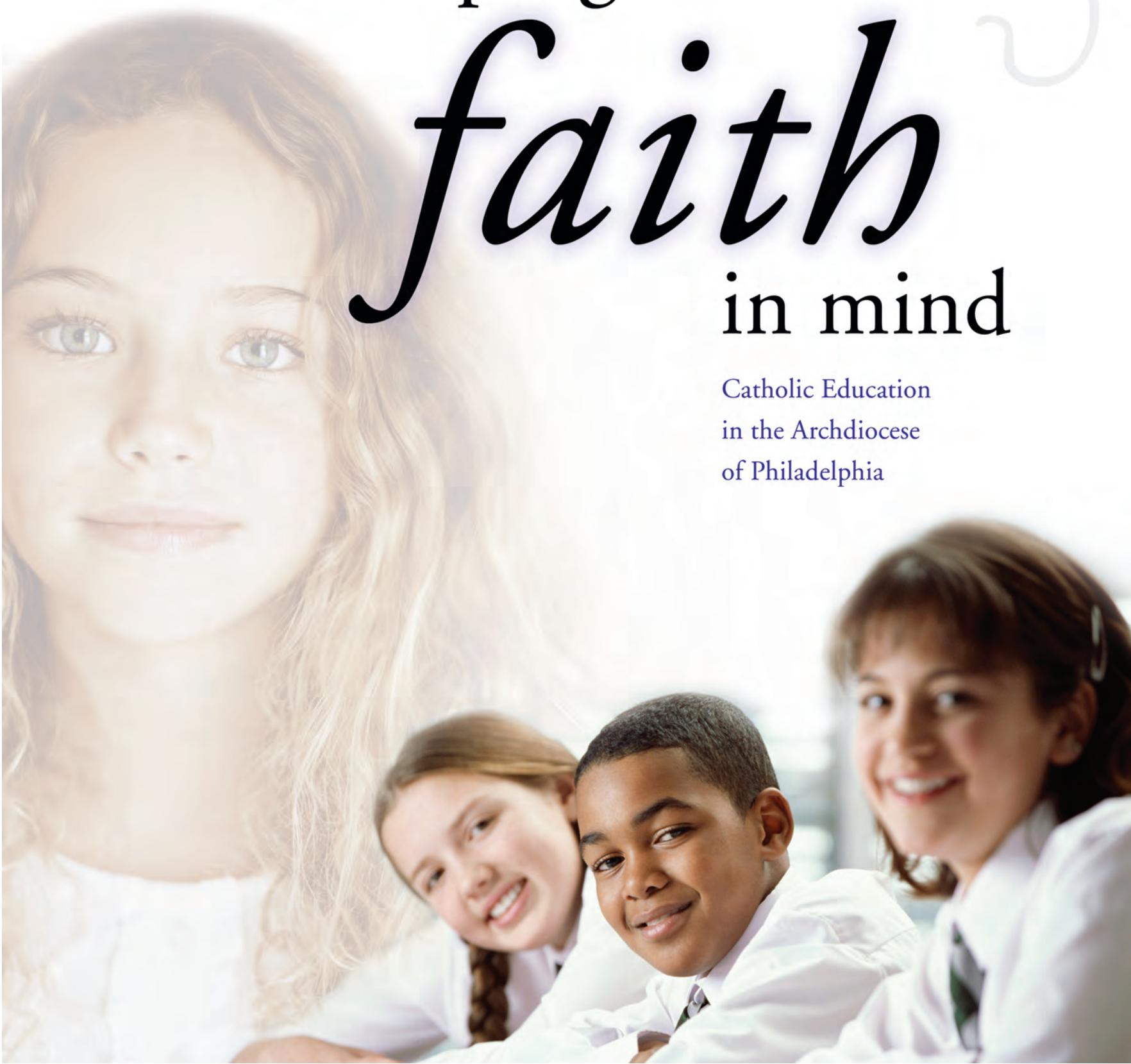


Keeping

*faith*

in mind

Catholic Education  
in the Archdiocese  
of Philadelphia



# welcome!



His Eminence  
Cardinal Justin Rigali, J.C.D.  
Archbishop of Philadelphia

## Message from Cardinal Rigali

*As a parent or guardian, you are the primary teacher of your child and have assumed an important responsibility to raise him or her in the practice of the Catholic faith. Through your guidance and example, your child will come to know our Lord Jesus Christ, encounter Him in the Sacraments, and participate in the life of the Church.*

*The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia support you in your role as your child's teacher in the ways of the faith. A strong spiritual foundation is developed through daily prayer, religious instruction, Mass and seasonal devotions that occur within the program of every Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. In addition, the Catholic schools provide a solid academic program that goes beyond "teaching to a test" to develop a student's full life potential. The program of Catholic education occurs in safe schools where order and discipline are valued as worthwhile habits to develop. Catholic schools offer a strong spiritual foundation, a solid academic program, a safe learning environment and an atmosphere supportive of family life and values.*

*I encourage you to review this brochure thoroughly to see the many advantages of a Catholic education and to learn about the success of Catholic schools. I invite you to visit a Catholic school to see Gospel values of faith, compassion and truth interwoven throughout the teaching and learning that occur. I am sure you will discover that your child is worth a Catholic education.*

*Thank you for all you do to provide your child with a firm foundation in the Catholic faith. May our Lord Jesus Christ bless all your efforts, and through the intercession of Mary, our Blessed Mother, may your child continue to grow in wisdom and grace.*

## Keeping Faith in Mind for More Than 200 Years

The first Catholic school established in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia was at St. Mary Parish in Philadelphia during the late eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, Bishop Kenrick (1830-1851) and St. John Neumann (1851-1860) made the establishment of parish elementary schools a priority, and by 1860 there were seventeen parish elementary schools in Philadelphia.

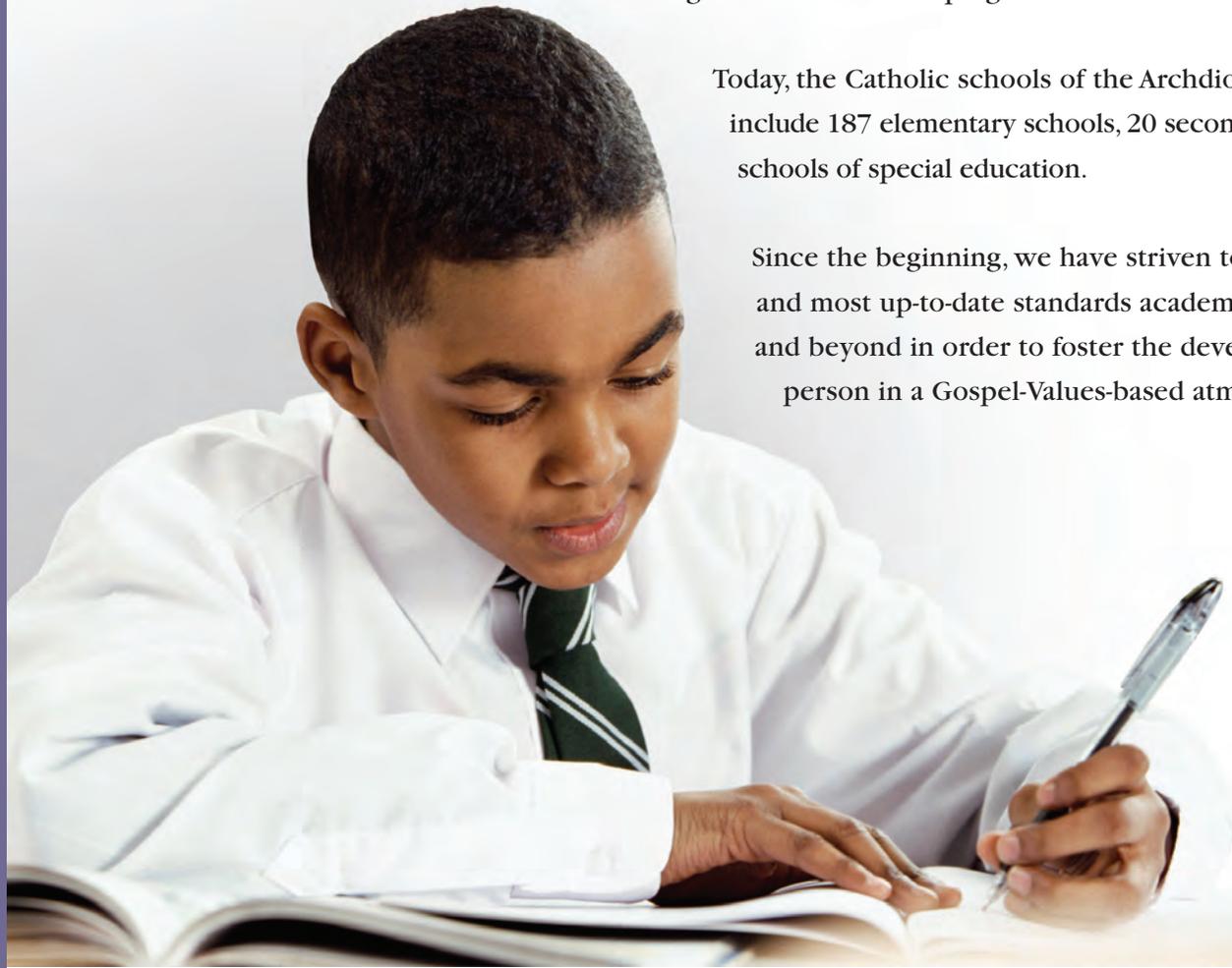
*...we have striven to maintain the highest and most up-to-date standards academically, technologically, and beyond...*

Leadership within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia also envisioned a continued Catholic education for secondary students. In 1890, Roman Catholic High School was opened as the first high school for young men followed by the establishment in 1912 of John W. Hallahan High School for young women. During a 22-year growth period from 1945-1967, 15 high schools were opened.

In 1951, Cardinal John O'Hara responded to the requests of hundreds of parents who sought education, and particularly education in the faith, for their children with special needs. As a result, St. Katherine Day School and Our Lady of Confidence School were opened in 1953 and 1954, respectively. In 1989 the Office of Catholic Education established the first regional resource room programs for students with learning disabilities.

Today, the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia include 187 elementary schools, 20 secondary schools, and five schools of special education.

Since the beginning, we have striven to maintain the highest and most up-to-date standards academically, technologically, and beyond in order to foster the development of the whole person in a Gospel-Values-based atmosphere.



## Teacher Qualifications

Our full-time elementary school teachers are required to meet the following minimum qualifications, supported by the necessary documentation:

College education with a baccalaureate degree

Instructional I Pennsylvania state certification

Current state police and child abuse clearances

FBI check

Eighteen college-level theology classes (at least six from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary)

Three independent letters of recommendation

One recommendation from parish pastor

Personal interviews with Archdiocesan and parish administrators

Recognized as practicing, participatory Catholics

## The Value of a Catholic Education

While rooted in the teachings of Jesus, our schools inform and guide students spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically—in a supportive atmosphere that affirms the dignity of all persons within the school community. That wholeness is the value of a Catholic education.

While many schools can offer solid academics, we prepare our young people to be faithful, loving family members and responsible adults who stand ready to be leaders of their communities and of the world.

## Teaching Beyond the Test

*Our dedicated teachers focus not on “teaching to the test,” but on realizing each student’s true academic and life potential....*

So much of what passes for education these days seems to be based on preparing students to memorize facts and figures, pass tests, and meet institutionally-established academic standards. Our dedicated teachers focus not on “teaching to the test,” but on realizing each student’s true academic and life potential. They teach for success in life rather than merely on tomorrow’s exam. This means making sure all students feel they are in a positive, supportive environment where their individual needs and strengths are recognized, valued and nurtured.

## The Value of Gospel Values

Gospel Values are at the heart of a Catholic education. These Values are not just taught in religion class, but are woven throughout the daily experience. From the classroom to the lunch room to the athletic field, our students are constantly immersed in Values like Justice, Truth, Faith, Service, Forgiveness, Compassion, and Hope.

So, when your children are learning about microbiology and anatomy, we teach respect for life. When they learn about social studies, we teach about the importance of justice. When they’re learning computational skills in math, we teach about the ethical implications of twisting numbers and how to handle such situations when they’re encountered.

## An Education for Life

No parents should have to face the difficulty of teaching their children all the right things in their home, only to have them surrounded by contradictory messages and role models every day when they walk out the door. A Catholic education ensures that the same values you stress to your children are the ones they're taught and surrounded by in school and during extra-curricular activities.

The education your children receive in our schools will help shape the way they view themselves and the world for the rest of their lives, providing the skills and values they'll need to meet life's challenges. While "character development" and community service may be a trend elsewhere, they've been a part of our teaching for more than a century.

The friendships your children establish will be with other children who appreciate and reinforce the same values as well. These are the values and friendships that will carry them into adulthood.





## A Rewarding Academic Experience

Academic excellence has been a hallmark of our Catholic schools for more than two centuries. We are totally committed to giving our students the academic and intellectual skills they need to thrive in the classroom, in the work force, and in daily life. That means giving them the benefit of dedicated teachers, contemporary curriculums, up-to-date books, materials and resources, and state of the art technology.



## Contemporary Curriculum and Resources

- Current textbooks and resources in every school. Copyright dates are all 2001 and beyond, with most closer to 2005 and 2006.
- Programs balance emphasis on basic skills—math drill, language sheets, etc.—with higher order thinking skills and technology.
- Consistent curriculum across all schools.
- Online curriculum guidelines let parents see what children are learning at any point in the school year.



## Real-world Results

Our commitment to academic excellence is more than just a noble notion. It produces impressive real-world results and offers our students outstanding real-world opportunities. Here are just some of our recent noteworthy academic achievements:

- Archdiocesan students entering high school finished at least 11 points above the national average on all nine content areas of TerraNova testing in the last school year
- 52% of Archdiocesan students who take high school AP courses receive eligibility for college credit in that subject
- In 2006-07 TerraNova testing, Archdiocesan high school students scored an average of 16 points higher than the national average
- Since the turn of the century, Archdiocesan students (20 high schools) have received over \$1 billion in scholarships
- Total scholarship amount awarded to Archdiocesan high schools' Class of 2007 was \$210 million
- 94% of the Archdiocesan high schools' Class of 2007 is attending college, compared to 76% of public school students in the five-county area

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## On Top of Technology

The Gospel Values and academic principles that distinguish a Catholic education are far from new, but that doesn't mean a Catholic education is behind the times. On the contrary, in areas where modernity and innovation are imperative, like technology, our schools are decidedly future-focused.

Technology is fully integrated in classrooms from kindergarten through 12th grade, and our technology curriculum correlates with the National Technology Standards for Students (NETS). Every student gains a solid grasp of computer and technology skills, regardless of course of study or career goals. In addition, all of our schools are covered by an Acceptable Use Policy, which promotes safe and ethical use of the internet.

Computer labs, state of the art hardware and software, and wired and wireless Internet access are among the technological advantages commonly found at Archdiocese schools. Others include:

- Interactive white boards
- Digital video
- LCD projectors
- Mobile laptop carts with 16-24 laptops
- Laptop classrooms
- Wireless networks
- Palm Pilot programs
- Video conferencing
- Laptops for teachers





### **An Environment for Learning and Growth**

The years between pre-kindergarten and 12th grade are among the most important of your children's lives—not just educationally, but spiritually, psychologically and socially. Their experiences, both in and outside of the classroom, will help shape the way they view themselves, others, and the world.

This is why a safe, supportive environment with dedicated teachers are such a vital part of the Catholic school experience. Our schools and teachers create a positive environment where children can learn, grow and develop without negative influences, fear, or strife.

Progressive staff training and development programs ensure teachers and administrators at all Archdiocesan schools stay informed and in step with the very latest educational advances and support services.

Staff development offerings are consistent across the Archdiocese. Curriculum committees, made up of teachers and administrators, organize and offer numerous training and education services for teachers to attend.



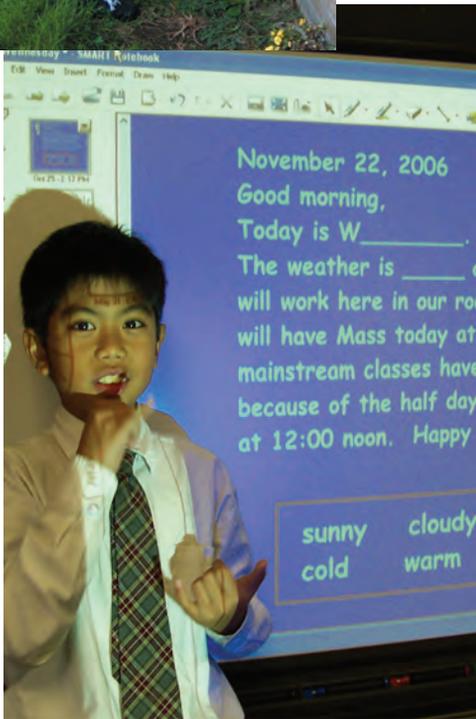
## Nurturing Special Needs

We are committed to ensuring children with special needs receive the uncompromised benefits of a Catholic education. That means meeting their needs spiritually, academically (cognitively), emotionally, and psychologically.

Our schools for children with cognitive impairments provide training in life skills and functional academics to help them reach their full potential in and outside of the classroom. Our sensory schools strive to meet the needs of students with visual or hearing impairments. Our Elementary Learning Disabilities Program is designed to meet the needs of students with specific learning disabilities.

In two of the Archdiocesan high schools, we offer programs for secondary students with learning disabilities. These programs provide learning strategy classes and offer supplemental support for other subjects of study. Several of our high schools also offer a Best Buddy Program, in which high school student volunteers “buddy up” with students from our special needs schools in activities like sports, music, dance, arts, crafts, and occasional parties.

Our special needs teachers and staff are carefully screened and selected for their unique educational qualifications and commitment to special education.



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OFFICE OF  
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EDUCATION

*Keeping faith in mind*

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