



Auxiliary Bishop Archdiocese of Philadelphia

October 29, 2021

Dear Friends in Catholic Education,

I write to share information regarding a forthcoming administrative change affecting all of our Archdiocesan high schools and schools of special education.

Sister Maureen Lawrence McDermott, I.H.M., Ph.D. recently shared her intention to resign as our Superintendent of Secondary Schools and Chief Academic Officer. Her decision was made due to health circumstances and came after much careful thought and prayer. With understanding and great care for Sister Maureen's well-being, that resignation has been accepted effective Friday, November 5, 2021.

She leaves a deep and lasting impact on Catholic education with a career spanning nearly 40 years as a classroom educator as well as an administrator at the school and central office levels. Her legacy is reflected in the many thousands of current students and alumni who have benefited from her leadership and commitment.

Sister Maureen's influence on Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and across the country has been a profound one. Her leadership has been defined by the charism of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, as well as a deep love for our Church. At every turn, and under a variety of difficult circumstances, Sister has exhibited a selfless devotion to our students, families, administrators, and teachers. Her life has been devoted to the cause of providing the best possible learning environment for our young people and she has positively impacted countless lives through her efforts.

When Sister Maureen was appointed Superintendent of Secondary Schools six years ago, I received that news with great joy. Her tenure has been one of leadership through tireless service to all those who relied on her expertise and wisdom. She oversaw programs designed to improve academic performance throughout our system resulting in year over year increases in college scholarships earned by our students. In addition, Sister labored tirelessly to bring about innovations to academic offerings and instructional methodology for all of our schools. She has been a key advocate for technological advancement, professional development, and unique partnerships with local colleges and universities. All of those efforts have already born great fruit.

Most recently, Sister Maureen was a critical force in our COVID-19 mitigation planning efforts that resulted in continuous learning for all students. That unbroken stream of instruction was due in large part to her work with the implementation of a universal learning management system and increased professional development for our teachers.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia will work in close collaboration with Faith in the Future to identify both an interim arrangement followed by an extensive national search for a full-time successor as Superintendent of Secondary Schools. Our goal is to provide continued leadership at the secondary level within the Office of Catholic Education for our school families as well as our administrators and educators at the local school level. Progress updates will be shared with you when possible.

Please join me in lifting grateful prayers of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the gift of Sister Maureen's service to our schools and in seeking the intercession of Mary, our Mother, for the preservation of her health. Her mark on Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is an indelible one.

Know of my deep gratitude for all of the sacrifices you make to provide the lifelong gift of a Catholic education to the young people attending our schools.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Michael J. Fitzgerald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Michael J. Fitzgerald
Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia