

Accreditation

Yesterday, at the end of our all-schools Catholic School Week Mass, I looked around at all of our students singing the closing hymn. From first graders to seniors, students were raising their voices in praise, and I thought once again how blessed I am to be a part of this school community. Our simple mission statement, "to nurture students to be living examples of the teachings of Christ in an atmosphere of academic excellence," speaks so enthusiastically of what we are about.

One way that we ensure our academic excellence is through accreditation. We are proud to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a division of AdvancED, an organization dedicated to education quality. Our initial accreditation was awarded December 31, 1985, and we have been reaccredited every five to ten years, according to SACS guidelines.

The accreditation standards set forth by SACS are very rigorous. According to the SACS website, www.advanc-ed.org, accreditation

"engages the entire school community in a continuous process of self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement. It invites external scrutiny and welcomes the constructive feedback of peers. It demands rigor, is based in data, and approaches documentation of results with discipline. Schools and districts benefit from accreditation through objective peer review, attainment of high standards, and engagement in continuous improvement. Through accreditation, schools and districts receive an external mark of quality; become part of an international network of 27,000 schools and districts; and gain access to a wide range of resources, professional development, and tools to assist them with continuous improvement. Perhaps more importantly, students benefit from accreditation because, through the accreditation process, their school or district has committed to raising student performance and will be held accountable for improving student learning on a continual basis."

On March 3 and 4, an AdvancED Quality Assurance Team comprised of four educators from around the state will be on our campus to conduct a quality assurance review of our school. Our faculty has been preparing for this visit for over a year, and we are excited about learning the results of the peer review.

An oral exit report of the visit, in which we are looking forward to being recommended for reaccreditation, will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 4, in our chapel, the Chapel of Saints Mary & Daniel.

As we approach the March visit, I ask two things of you, our stakeholders. First, pray for our staff and the QAR team as we enter into this most important process, and also please plan to join us for the oral exit report on March 4.

God's Blessings,

Jennifer Malone