



July 18, 2024

*“It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view...
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work.”
— Prayer of Oscar Romero*

Dear Colleagues in Catholic Education:

Each June, I have the honor of attending the graduations of our diocesan seniors to extend words of wisdom and encouragement as they leave the familiar and embark on the unknown. I will usually offer that as we move through our lives, we sometimes find ourselves at a crossroads, a point where we know we must make a choice about staying on our current path or moving forward in a new direction. And then I will impart that this kind of decision often is not easy; sometimes it feels downright impossible, and yet we trust that if we follow the voice of the Spirit speaking to our heart, we will not be led astray.

Little did I realize I, too, would eventually find myself at such a crossroad. After much prayer and reflection, I write to inform you that I will be leaving my positions as Chancellor and Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Albany, effective August 15. I have been appointed to and have accepted a position as Executive Coordinator and Director of Religious and Independent School Support for the New York State Education Department.

Although it will be difficult to step away from the familiarity of our system of schools and the comfort of working alongside each of you, this new role is a natural progression of the work I began in the classroom over two decades ago. Since my earliest days as a teacher at St. Casimir Regional Catholic School, I have always aspired to support more students — first those within the four walls of my classroom, then as principal of St. Mary’s Institute in Amsterdam, and eventually across our entire Diocese. I am truly humbled to be provided with the opportunity in this new role to extend that pursuit to the nearly 380,000 students across 1,800 religious and independent schools throughout New York State.

As I retrace the path that led me from the classroom to diocesan administration, I am grateful to all those with whom I worked throughout my tenure, those who inspired me on this path and collaborated with me to put students first and make our schools second to none. I am privileged to have ministered with you and proud of all we have accomplished together. I can only hope that I have positively impacted your life even half as much as you have impacted mine.

It has been a joy working with our diocesan leaders, clergy, religious, school administrators, educators, parents, students, stakeholders, parishioners, and volunteers in our extended Catholic

community. I am especially grateful to Bishop Scharfenberger, Fr. Longobucco, the Diocesan School Board, and Catholic School Office colleagues for their dependable trust and support in realizing our collective vision anchored in our unwavering mission. I take with me many fond memories, experiences, and lifelong friendships.

Although it is difficult to say farewell, I take comfort in knowing that my role is not ending, just changing. I think of the prayer that says quite accurately: “We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.” We are all, each one of us, “prophets of a future not our own,” planting seeds we never see blossom but trusting the mission and the vision all the same. That mission remains at the core of who I am.

The Diocese of Albany in conjunction with the Albany Diocesan School Board and Catholic School Office will be working to find our next Superintendent of Schools in the coming months. In the meantime, an interim leader will be identified in time for the start of the new academic year. I trust the Holy Spirit will guide these processes, just as it has guided me.

Please accept my sincere gratitude and appreciation as I leave this role to begin a new chapter in service to students across the state. Know that my dedication to our Diocese will be ongoing, as will my prayers for the continued success of our schools. While the “long view” isn’t always comfortable or easy, it is always worth the effort. Each of us is called to be bold, to be faithful, to be — as the Prayer of Oscar Romero reminds us — “a prophet of a future not our own.” Although our paths may now diverge, our mission and our goal remain the same.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Giovanni Virgilio, Jr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Dr. Giovanni Virgilio, Jr.
Diocesan Chancellor and Superintendent of Schools