

ARCHDIOCESAN DISTINGUISHED CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR 2017 – 2018

The Archdiocese of Hartford is pleased to announce that Frank P. Lacerenza, Principal of St. Mary School in Milford, has been selected as the 2017-2018 Archdiocesan Distinguished Catholic School Administrator. Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dr. Michael Griffin, shared the news during the Administrators Meeting on August 24.

An exceptional administrator who engenders respect among all members of his school community, Frank has been principal of St. Mary School for 26 years. His experience with Catholic schools began in childhood when he attended Sacred Heart School in Stamford, followed by Stamford Catholic High School. Frank earned his BA in Elementary Education and History at Iona College, his MA in Education Administration and Supervision at Fairfield University, and completed additional coursework at both Sacred Heart and Fairfield Universities.

Frank's professional experience began with teaching positions first at Sacred Heart School, then St. Cecelia School, both in Stamford. He then progressed to administrative roles, becoming Principal of St. Bernadette School in New Haven, then at St. Patrick School in Bridgeport. His tenure as Principal of St. Mary School in Milford began in 1991.

During his years as an administrator, Frank's accomplishments have been numerous, including creating development programs and alumni committees, as well as initiating Parish School Boards and shepherding schools through the accreditation process. He has chaired the New Haven and Bridgeport Clusters of Catholic School Principals, worked on many NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation teams, served on Archdiocesan principal appraisal, curriculum and assessment committees, and represented his fellow Catholic elementary school administrators on PACE (Principal Advisory Council, Elementary).

A collaborative leader, Frank has always been committed to three critical goals of Catholic school education: to proclaim the message of Christ; to develop community at every level; and to encourage service to the human community. His skills as a peacemaker, communicator, and accomplished leader have facilitated the fulfillment of these goals, while inspiring the respect and admiration of the St. Mary School family. As a man of tremendous faith who is actively involved in parish life, Frank has created a school culture with a strong Catholic identity and a warm, welcoming spirit. In Frank's own words, "As a Catholic educator, I believe Religion is more than a subject in a time slot. Rather, it is everything the school is."

Frank's support of the St. Mary faculty is outstanding, including the provision of professional development and the consistent encouragement to use creative teaching methods and to grow professionally. As an example, Frank has brought technology into St. Mary School, allowing the teachers to better personalize instruction and integrate technology across the curriculum. Under Frank's leadership, academic performance at St. Mary's is exceptional, routinely exceeding average benchmarks.

Frank is a team builder who has established a cooperative and collaborative relationship with his Pastor, Rev. Aidan Donahue, and who maintains excellent communication with school families. He is an exemplary representative of a Catholic school administrator, believing strongly that Jesus is present in everything that occurs in his school, every day. In presenting Frank with the award,

Superintendent Griffin stated, “Frank is a highly respected leader who has helped to advance Catholic school education across the Archdiocese, and we are proud to recognize an administrator who is such an inspiration to others and a positive force for change and growth.” Frank’s servant leadership is perfectly captured in his response to receiving this honor, “If I were to come up with words, it would have been to accept it on behalf of all us principals and administrators, and more importantly, to give the credit to my Pastor, his Pastoral Assistant, our entire staff, and all the volunteers who evidently have done so much that makes me look good!”