



Office of Catholic Schools

May the Peace of Christ be with You!

On behalf of the Bishop, the Office of Catholic Schools, and your administrators, I want to thank you for your ministry to educate and guide our students. Each year at this time we dedicate a week to show our appreciation nationally for all the hard work teachers do throughout the country. This week highlights all the work you do but Teacher Appreciation is not just one week a year but 365 days a year.

Most people have no understanding of the time it takes to prepare an engaging lesson that is developed with each student in mind so they can absorb what you are teaching. They don't understand what it means to always be "on" and there is little patience when you have a bad day. The times you are not feeling well but the expectation is that you still perform at 100%. Teaching is probably the most powerful profession that impacts our society and yet the most under appreciated. It is also one of the only professions where everyone feels they are an expert and tells you how to do your job simply because they attended school as a child.

As a Catholic school teacher, your world frequently evolves around your students because of the love you put into your ministry. Without you, Catholic schools would not be successful in passing on our Catholic faith to future generations. Your impact is not temporal; it is eternal because you are the hands and face of God regardless of your subject area. As I have said before, your teaching is an act of hospitality and reflects the love and mercy of God. Each day you welcome the students into your classroom and each day they have an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and be better than they were the day before. How powerfully this reflects our own relationship with God as He welcomes us each day with mercy allowing us to grow and hopefully learn from our mistakes.

You teach in the footsteps of the Master Teacher. The philosopher Paulo Freire wrote, "Education...is the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically with

reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.” As Jesus changed the world through His teachings, you have been commissioned, through your baptism, to do the same. You are transforming the world in small ways each day while setting our students free with the truth of our faith. You have the most important job in the world because your actions today change our tomorrow.

You are invested in helping your students learn and grow. You educate the whole child: mind, body and spirit. You teach because it is a ministry, not just a job. You spend extra time helping a student to grasp a concept without a second thought. You are a dedicated individual with a passion to share your God-given talents with your students. You live the Gospel message of "Go and teach all nations." You are not just an educator of the mind, but also former of the soul. Thank you for your devotion to your profession, your faith and your students. Live the teachings of your faith and be an example of a Christ-centered life in a chaotic world. You are truly a gift from God to whom we are very indebted. May God bless you with abundant joy and keep you in the palm of His hand.

I am so happy that you chose to teach in a Catholic school and I feel privileged to serve you as your Superintendent.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henry Fortier". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, prominent initial "H" and "F".

Henry Fortier
Secretary for Education/
Superintendent of Catholic Schools