THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA
OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

15 October 2026

Dear Catholic School Family,

I am delighted to share that our Archdiocesan School Advisory Council, and in turn, the local school Advisory Councils, has earned the Cognia Board Governance Certification, a new distinction recognizing effective school boards and councils as they demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement and student success. We are the ***first*** non-public district to earn this recognition!

This certification, launched in 2025, is a first-of-its-kind opportunity, and is significant because it provides an independent review of how our councils fulfill their responsibility to support our Catholic schools. Cognia evaluates boards and councils on research-based standards that focus on a clear vision and strategic direction, collaboration with school leadership and the community, responsible stewardship, and the use of data to support student success.

For our families, this recognition provides another assurance that the leadership of our schools is committed to thoughtful, mission-centered decision-making, and continuous improvement.

At the heart of this work is our Catholic mission and our commitment to the students and families we serve. Our Advisory Councils' role is to ensure that our schools remain faithful to that mission while providing the leadership, oversight, advice, expertise in various fields, and the support necessary for every student to flourish. Our Council understands that their role is ultimately about stewardship – protecting and advancing the mission of our schools supporting our school leaders and ensuring that our decisions remain focused on the formation and success of every student.

I am grateful to the members of the Archdiocesan Schools Advisory Council for their time, commitment, and willingness to engage in the rigorous process that included reflection and analysis, review of evidence, stakeholder input, and an external engagement review. Cognia's standards examine areas including collaboration, strategic planning, governance responsibilities, policy development, communication, professional learning community engagement, and data- informed decision-making focused on student success.

The Council's work is also guided by the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (NSBECS). These standards recognize that strong Catholic schools need a clear Catholic mission, academic excellence, effective leadership, and operational viability including the people, finances, facilities, and planning needed to serve students well into the future.

This certification is an affirmation of the commitment of the Archdiocesan Schools Council, and the Councils at each individual school, to the mission of Catholic education and to the students and families we are privileged to serve. This is not a "finish line" but another step in our ongoing journey to strengthen our schools and provide an excellent Catholic education for our students.

Blessings,
Patty Childs
Superintendent of Schools

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