

Diocese of Erie Schools Continue Their Commitment to Student Learning with Fall Teacher Workshops

The Catholic Schools office is offering full-day professional learning workshops to all teachers throughout the Diocese of Erie in September and October. The sessions will be led by Don Smith and Becky Pepler of FIRST Educational Resources and coordinated by the CSO. In June, our diocesan principals received two days of focused training on effective instructional and grading practices. This next phase brings that learning to teachers, with each workshop thoughtfully tailored to the specific needs of the host school and focused on delivering practical, classroom-ready strategies.

Tailored to the unique needs and stage of each school, teachers may be working on:

- **Prioritizing Standards** – determining the knowledge and skills most essential for students to learn at each grade level
- **Developing Learning Targets** – writing clear, age-appropriate goals that help students understand what they are learning and why.
- **Creating Success Criteria** – defining what quality looks like so students know how to aim for success.
- **Designing High-Quality Assessments** – ensuring tests, projects, and other measures truly reflect what students know and can do.
- **Using Data to Inform Instruction** – learning how to look at student work and progress to guide next steps in teaching.
- **Strengthening Grading Practices** – making sure grades reflect learning rather than points, percentages, or compliance.

Partnering with FIRST Educational Resources brings valuable expertise to instructional practices. Both Smith and Pepler bring years of experience as educators, instructional leaders, and authors. They have supported hundreds of schools nationwide in strengthening instruction, assessment, and grading practices

“Families can feel confident knowing that teachers are investing in learning that puts students first,” said Don Smith, Director of Professional Services at FIRST Educational Resources. “The focus of these workshops is on clarity: clarity in what we teach, how we assess, and how we communicate learning to students and families.”

Becky Pepler, Director of the FIRST Education STAGR Center, added, “Every session is customized to the needs of each school. Our goal is to give teachers tools they can use immediately so that all students have the opportunity to thrive.”

By investing in this sustained professional development, Diocese of Erie schools continue to build on the summer’s leadership work and ensure that the benefits reach every classroom and ultimately, every student.