Catholic Schools Office **Diocese of Erie**

429 East Grandview Boulevard
Erie, Pennsylvania 16504-2606

September 24, 2025

Dear Teachers,

On behalf of the diocese and everyone in the Catholic Schools Office, I want to thank you for a great start to the 2025-2026 school year. We deeply appreciate your dedication and the positive momentum you've helped create as we kick off the school year. We look forward to continuing our work together and learning more about the incredible impact you have on your students each day. Thank you for your mission-driven service in Catholic education.

It is my pleasure to invite you to the **2025-CSO Fall Teacher Workshop** on a topic that is essential to the success of our students and our schools: **Effective Instructional and Grading Practices.**

This year's workshops have been thoughtfully tailored to meet the needs of each individual school. Led by Don Smith and Becky Peppler of FIRST Educational Resources and coordinated by the Catholic Schools Office, we will build upon the work initiated in June, when diocesan principals participated in two days of focused training on effective instructional and grading practices.

Together, our teachers will engage in work on:

- **Prioritizing Standards** – deciding which knowledge and skills are most essential for students.
- **Developing Learning Targets** – writing clear, student-friendly goals that help kids understand what they are learning.
- **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.

During the 2021-2022 school year, the Catholic Schools Office developed a multi-year professional development plan to support our educators in building new knowledge and skills in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment strategies. This year's workshop brings full circle the knowledge and skills developed over the past four years. Our hope is that you will see the intentionality of our plan—beginning with professional learning teams, unpacking standards, and grading with equity—and now focusing on the integration of those skills into practical application that will directly benefit each of our students.

Again, I want to thank you for your continued commitment to Catholic education and to living out the Catholic mission of our schools. May God bless you and your ministry of Catholic education in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Jim Gallagher