

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

May 5, 2008

Dr. James Merkel
Ms. Margaret Neff
St. Thomas More Academy
3989 Buckeystown Road
P.O. Box 879
Buckeystown, MD 21717

Dear Dr. Merkel and Mrs. Neff,

This past year, a team of educators from the Archdiocese reviewed a myriad of materials provided to them by St. Thomas More Academy and in February visited the school for three days. This was all a part of the process to determine if St. Thomas More Academy should be recognized as a Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Last month the team submitted its recommendation to Dr. Ronald Valenti, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and Bishop Francis Malooly, Western Vicar. After consultation with Dr. Valenti, I have determined that I am prepared to offer Archdiocesan recognition to St. Thomas More Academy after one action is taken by the school leadership. I am requiring that prior to any announcement of recognition being made that the School Board and Principal must publicly acknowledge their support of a one year period (2008-2009 school year) of teacher/parent education on the Catechesis of Human Sexuality as established by this Archdiocese followed by implementation of the program at the start of the 2009-2010 school year. This should be done in written form and I am requesting that both Dr. Valenti and I receive a copy of this correspondence.

Once this had been completed, Dr. Valenti will meet with you about a Memorandum of Understanding that will clearly delineate the responsibilities of the school as a recognized Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Baltimore. This Memorandum will state that the school will have a two year probationary status as a recognized Catholic school and will include some of the recommendations made by the review team who visited the school. At the end of the two year probationary period, we will review the status of the school based on compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding,

Dr. Valenti and members of his staff will also work with you on the details of when and how this information will be shared with all of the school's stakeholders as well as with the community at large. It is my hope that all of this can be executed in a very timely manner. I am asking Dr. Valenti and his staff to the make every effort to ensure that all of the above will be completed by the end of this current academic year.

As a recognized Catholic school of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, St. Thomas More Academy will be accountable to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools with regard to all policies and regulations required of our Catholic schools. Dr. Valenti will ask one of his Associate Superintendents to work closely with the school and be the liaison between the school and him.

Please find enclosed the full report of the committee as submitted by Ms. Carol Goldbeck, Associate Superintendent and chair of the Archdiocesan Visiting Team. Ms. Goldbeck would be happy to review the contents of this report with you should you have any questions.

I look forward to welcoming St. Thomas More Academy as another Catholic educational institution that fosters the teaching mission of the Church. I ask God's blessings on all who have committed their time and talent to the apostolate of Catholic education.

In the Lord,



+Edwin F. O'Brien
Archbishop of Baltimore

cc: Dr. Ronald J. Valenti Ms.
Carol R. Goldbeck