

June, 2015

To the Catholic community of Baldwin County:

I am very grateful for the warm welcome you gave me when I was announced as principal of St. Michael Catholic High School in March and I am thrilled to begin this project with you this summer. My thanks to Archbishop Rodi, Superintendent Byrd and the pastors of Baldwin County for their support. Thanks especially to those of you who have worked so hard and contributed so generously to bring us to this point!

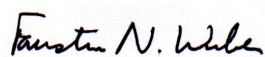
I look forward to building an outstanding Catholic high school with you. Yes, it will be academically excellent. Yes, we will strive to build a broad, successful athletic program. Yes, we will provide opportunities for students to discover and develop their artistic and musical talents. Yes, it will be a vibrant community of faith that is authentically Catholic while welcoming of those from other faith traditions, with frequent opportunities for students to pray, worship and serve others.

And yes, we have much work to do! I'll be meeting with pastors early on to solicit their leadership in the formation of the school. We'll need to form an advisory committee to assist in the creation of school budgets and policies. I'll be asking students from our elementary schools to help us choose a school mascot. I envision a committee to help us select a school uniform, and another to propose designs for a school logo. I'll begin the hiring process for faculty and staff in October in anticipation of the August, 2016 school opening. I project two important parent organizations: A PTO and a Booster Club, to help us secure volunteers and funding for needed projects. We'll need volunteers to assist us with advancement, transportation, admissions, athletic programs, and to serve as adjunct faculty. This will truly be a project for all of us.

In explaining his choice for our school name, Archbishop Rodi said: "In the bible, St. Michael the Archangel is leader of the forces of good. We want our school to be a place that will prepare our young people to be leaders for good--in their families, in their communities, and in their Church."

Let us be bold, then, in creating these leaders! I believe we must embrace the evangelical challenge of the gospel and talk about this challenge openly with our students and families. Our culture underestimates kids, inflates their grades, gives them trophies for everything. Deep down, beneath the veneer of (sometimes) apathy, they want more. They want to become "new creations," and to be "transformed, by the renewal of (their) minds." (Romans 12:2). They want to make a difference--like all of us, they want to live *full lives* that matter! If we speak openly and optimistically of this gospel challenge with them, if we build a culture of high expectations, prayer and support to live this challenge out, St. Michael can become a school that frees young people of the gravitational forces that inhibit them from soaring to become the magnificent persons God created them to be.

May God help us build such a school! I can't wait to get started with you!



Faustin N. Weber
Principal, St. Michael Catholic High School