

Catholic School Students Learn to “Stand Up, Speak Out”



Chestnut Hill – January 14th, 2011. Catholic school students from across the Archdiocese gathered to participate in the fourth annual “Stand Up, Speak Out!” Conference. Co-sponsored by Boston College’s Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education (CCE) and the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Boston, the day-long workshop focused primarily on the development of leadership skills among middle school students. In a small group setting, the 112 students in attendance discussed common issues facing their peers, formulated action plans that could be implemented in their schools, and made a number of new friends.

As in previous years, “Stand Up, Speak Out!” didn’t just attract the students’ attention. Parents, principals, and teachers from 28 different schools within the Archdiocese were also engaged in the day’s activities. Their participation, in addition to the facilitation efforts of Boston College student volunteers, helped ensure that the “Stand Up, Speak Out!” was once again successful.



Dr. Michael Corso presided over the day’s events with the help of Dr. Weitzel-O’Neill, Executive Director of the CCE. As the Chief Academic Officer of the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations (QISA), an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting conditions that foster student aspirations in schools and learning communities around the world, Dr. Corso shared his insights and advice with the Catholic students of Boston.

Dr. Corso’s philosophy, and that of QISA, focuses on the cultivation of three major components of student development:

- self-worth**, which occurs when students know they are valued members of the school community, have a person in their lives they can trust and learn from, and believe they have the ability to achieve
- active engagement**, which happens when students are deeply involved in the learning process, show enthusiasm, and have the desire to learn new things
- purpose**, which happens when students take responsibility for who and what they want to become

The “Stand Up, Speak Out!” conference exposed students and faculty to the ways in these ideas can be incorporated into each school’s unique culture—both from the top down and the bottom up.

Chris Flieger, Area Superintendent for the Metro Boston region, was impressed by the active interest he saw exhibited by both student and adult participants. He remarked that “the Stand Up, Speak Out program is a wonderful way to engage our students in leadership development at a key moment in their education career. The conference is also a way for our eighth grade students to interact across schools and advocate for meaningful change in their schools. As an Archdiocese, we want to deepen our relationship with the program and expand it to many other schools.”



Following is a list of schools that participated in this year’s “Stand Up, Speak Out!” festivities:

- Cheverus School
- Immaculate Conception School
- Sacred Heart School - Roslindale
- Saint Jerome School
- Saint Mary of the Hills
- Ursuline Academy
- Ste Jeanne d'Arc
- Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy
- Saint Paul School - Wellesley
- Mission Grammar School
- South Boston Catholic Academy
- Our Lady's Academy
- Saint Rose School
- Boston College High School
- Saint Joseph School - Wakefield
- Sacred Heart School - Bradford
- Saint John the Evangelist School
- Cathedral Middle School
- Saint Columbkille Partnership School
- Holy Family School
- Saint Catherine of Siena
- Saint Anthony School
- Saint Paul School - Hingham

For more information about the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education at Boston College, please visit <http://www.bc.edu/schools/lsoe/cce/>. To access the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations, click on the following link: <http://www.qisa.org/>.

By Christina Sorgi, Catholic Schools Office