Dear Friends,

Meeting an IMS student, you can’t help but wonder what the future holds for them. Fueled by unbridled enthusiasm and deep curiosity, they enter their classrooms and journey outside of their stark inner-city neighborhoods, experiencing a world of possibilities made imaginable through the efforts of parents, teachers and supporters like you.

We believe in our students. Our mission is to empower them to realize their potential and develop the tenacity to overcome their daily challenges — issues many of us can only imagine: food insecurity, personal experiences of violence, financial struggles, and household instability. Our schools are game-changing for these kids. We are unlocking a future for them through a solid education with both high expectations and strong support.

In the past three years we have constructed a new model for urban education, revitalizing 15 Catholic schools and providing millions of dollars in scholarships so that families in grossly underserved neighborhoods can access a high-quality education for their children. The national attention we have received for our success is validating, but no more so than knowing that we are introducing so many children to a world of opportunities. We do this in the Catholic school tradition of a nurturing, no-nonsense school environment based on our belief that we have a moral duty to help every child succeed.

We made this progress with the help of generous donors who believe as we do in the promise these children hold. We offer you our heartfelt thanks and sincere hope for continued partnership. If you want to see what developing potential looks like, come visit one of our schools. We promise you will be awestruck.

Warm Regards,

Brian G. McElwee
Chairman, Independence Mission Schools

Anne McGoldrick
President, Independence Mission Schools
New Worlds Await

In 2015, 467 new IMS graduates continued their education journey at Archdiocesan high schools and local private schools boosted by $2.3 million in scholarship money.
Focus on Literacy

Reading is the cornerstone of education. For students from low-income settings it is also a huge challenge. Lacking adequate exposure to books and vocabulary they often enter school at a deficit, and the problem compounds from there.

As a partner in the citywide initiative “Read! By 4th,” we promote reading proficiency as a fundamental key for student success. Our academic team has developed a student-centered model that aggressively targets reading proficiency at each grade level, during both the academic year and the summer. Ongoing benchmarking provides quick insight for teachers helping them evaluate student progress, and leverage differentiated instruction methods, such as the Wilson Reading System, to meet student learning needs. These efforts continue during the summer with programs that keep students learning and show proven results from partners like Springboard Collaborative. This combined strategy helps level the playing field for our students putting them on a promising path.

“We are thrilled to grow our longstanding partnership with IMS. First during the summer — and now all year round — we are excited to continue training teachers to effectively engage parents in their children’s reading. This approach builds lasting internal capacity by developing teachers as instructors, parents as partners, and children as readers.”

Alejandro Gac-Artigas
Founder & CEO, Springboard Collaborative
The single most important factor in a child’s academic success is a great teacher. We are proud to have nearly 300 mission-driven educators — both lay and religious — who serve our students everyday. Their work carries on the legacy of Catholic education that has lifted generations of children out of poverty. We invest in our teachers’ professional development knowing the best way to meet our students’ unique challenges is to provide our teachers the necessary tools. Our professional learning plan includes a growing menu of teacher support, training, and network-wide collaboration efforts to help our staff develop the skills of master teachers.

Amazing things happen for our students when we fully support our teachers and they have access to cutting-edge technology. At The DePaul Catholic School, students in our pilot blended learning program experienced dramatic academic growth, outpacing national averages. Innovations like this, coupled with the dedicated care of our professional educators, help set the stage for learning in all of our 15 schools.

“Our students come to us with many needs. Our teachers create the loving and safe classroom environments our students need to enable their potential and guide them to future success.”

Sister Meaghan Patterson, SSJ
Assistant Principal, St. Martin de Porres Catholic School
In our scholarship model, all families pay a portion of tuition and receive scholarship assistance.

--- Student Population ---

- 78% Non-Catholic
- 74% African American
- 100% qualify for free lunch & breakfast
- 10% Latino
- 13% Asian & Biracial
- 3% Caucasian
- $2000 average student tuition
- 36% live below poverty level
Three years ago many said it could not be done: take 15 struggling, inner-city Catholic schools and transform them into viable educational opportunities for thousands of children. Today, our schools are a vibrant, independent network with three straight years of enrollment growth, steadily improving financials and stronger student outcomes.

The IMS Model

In 2015 the Philanthropy Roundtable, a national leader fostering excellence in philanthropy, hailed IMS as a “promising new model” with a governance structure and other unique innovations that are “central to the healthy evolution” of the Catholic school system.

Our dynamic organizational framework places our independent schools at the center of decision-making for their specific student populations, needs, and goals. Each school actively budgets and manages, with central office collaboration, its own set of financials. Local boards assist in fundraising efforts at the school level, support the principal and provide local leadership. IMS’s central office works to build strong partnerships with businesses, other nonprofits, and leaders in educational programming to ensure the continued strength and efficacy of our model.
Powerful Partnerships

Our scholarship partners believe in our students and generously invest in their success by providing scholarship dollars to help bridge the tuition gap for families. In 2015 we distributed over $6.1 million in scholarship money including donations made through the state Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program.

Our partners’ generosity does not stop there. Many organizations also take an extra step by providing opportunities for experiential learning outside the classroom through field trips, leadership cohorts and summer camps like the one sponsored by helicopter manufacturer AgustaWestland. After becoming an OSTC donor and meeting students from St. Martin of Tours Catholic School, engineers from the company devised a week-long summer learning camp, giving these eager learners a fascinating firsthand view of helicopter manufacturing. From the assembly line to mechanical maintenance — and even a helicopter flight — students connected how their classroom lessons apply to real-life workplace situations.

“CSFP is proud to be a partner and supporter of IMS. Knowing that the children we serve have access to such a great and affordable network of quality schools is fundamental to our mission. It can only strengthen the outcomes and future for these students, their families and our city.”

Ina Lipman
Executive Director, Children’s Scholarship Fund Philadelphia
A Brush With Greatness

Students from two IMS schools had a brush with greatness as the first artists painting the commemorative mural celebrating the historic visit of Pope Francis to Philadelphia. Children from St. Malachy and St. Veronica joined thousands of volunteers across the region and pilgrims from around the world in the creation of this lasting testament to the pontiff’s inspiring message of hope. The mural now graces the new home of St. Malachy School, which will open its doors in September 2016.

An Evening Full of Stars

In a gala like no other, Philadelphia news-makers and over 1,000 supporters came together in a rollicking celebration of our students and their future hopes and dreams. The Dancing for Our Future Stars gala not only raised critical funds for our operating needs, but also shed light on the important contributions IMS schools make in our city. The dedication of all the volunteers involved was incredible, but it’s hard to top the dancing nuns!

Network Connections

One of the secrets to our success is our network of dedicated local boards. These groups of individuals serve as invaluable resources to our schools and offer the opportunity to make a real impact. In 2015 our nearly 200 local board members convened for the first ever IMS Congress to celebrate their advancements for their school communities.
Our Schools

1 St. Helena-Incarnation
6101 N. 5th St., Philadelphia
Claire Frosch, Principal | Paul Sullivan, Board Chair

2 St. Frances Cabrini
405 N. 65th St., Philadelphia
William Cascarina, Principal | Anthony Cellucci, Board Chair

3 St. Gabriel
2917 Dickinson St., Philadelphia
Sister Noreen James Friel, IHM, Principal
George Sumner, Board Chair

4 St. Thomas Aquinas
1631 S. 18th St., Philadelphia
Vince Mazzio, Principal | Dan Pickens, Board Chair

5 St. Malachy
1419 N. 11th St., Philadelphia
Steve Janczewski, Principal | Joseph Fox, Board Chair

6 Our Mother of Sorrows | St. Ignatius of Loyola
Gr. 4-8 | 1008 N. 48th St., Philadelphia
Sister Owen Patricia Bonner, SSJ, Co-Principal
Pre-K-Gr. 3 | 636 N. 43rd St, Philadelphia
Rosemary Haenn, Co-Principal

7 St. Rose of Lima
1522 N. Wanamaker St., Philadelphia
Sister Rita James Murphy, IHM, Principal
Susan McCrery, Board Chair

8 St. Martin of Tours
5701 Loretto Ave., Philadelphia
Sister Ellen Giardino, IHM, Principal
Bob Adams, Board Chair

9 St. Veronica
3521 N. 6th St., Philadelphia
Sister Eileen Buchanan, IHM, Principal
Hollie McDonald, Board Chair

10 The DePaul Catholic School
44 West Logan St., Philadelphia
Katie Reilly Wardlow, Principal | Sean Flynn, Board Chair

11 Holy Cross
144 E. Mt. Airy Ave., Philadelphia
Bryan Werner, Principal | Steve Jurash, Board Chair

12 St. Raymond of Penafort
7940 Williams Ave., Philadelphia
Patricia Wright, Principal | Sean Tamba Matthew, Board Chair

13 St. Martin de Porres
2300 W. Lehigh Ave., Philadelphia
Sister Nancy Fitzgerald, SSJ, Principal
Jack Donnelly, Board Chair

14 St. Cyril of Alexandria
716 Emerson Ave., East Lansdowne
Sister Barbara Montague, IHM, Principal
Ed McKeever, Board Chair

15 St. Barnabas
6334 Buist Ave., Philadelphia
Sister MargaretMcCullough, IHM, Principal
John Doyle, Board Chair
Brian McElwee (Chairman)
President; Valley Forge Investment Corporation

Bishop Michael Fitzgerald
Auxiliary to the Archbishop of Philadelphia; Archdiocese of Philadelphia

James Broussard
Owner & President; Dynamic Risk Assumption Incorporated

William P. Curtis, Jr.
Partner; Porter & Curtis, LLC

Linda DeJure
Former E.V.P.; The Reinvestment Fund

John Donnelly
Former CEO; L.F. Driscoll

John Figge
JOF Investments

Lauralee Howley
Executive Director; Howley Family Foundation

Michael S. Jackson
Partner; Tax Grant Thornton, LLP

Br. Richard Kestler, FSC
President; West Catholic Preparatory High School

Dr. Mary McDonald
President; MCD Partners and architect of the Jubilee Catholic Schools, Memphis, TN

Richard Nourie
Former Principal & Senior Vice President; Johnson & Higgins

Daniel Pickens
Partner; BA Securities, LLC

Ken Phelan
Chief Risk Officer; U.S. Department of the Treasury

Michael Rashid
Former President and Chief Executive Officer; AmeriHealth Caritas

Marc Richman
Managing Director, Private Wealth Advisor; Morgan Stanley, Private Wealth Management

Joseph Stapleton
Partner; Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, LLP

Gerard H. Sweeney
President & CEO and Trustee; Brandywine Realty Trust

Michael Young
Founder; Young Capital and Classic Management Incorporated
Our mission is to provide sustainable, affordable, high quality Catholic education to children of all faiths in underserved urban neighborhoods through a new model of governance, funding and accountability for the member schools.