

Heart of the Matter: Introducing New Catholic School Leaders

By Catherine Walsh

Please click on the principal's name or picture for more information.



Christopher Beza

Graduate of Notre Dame and ACE leads Sacred Heart Elementary School



Nancy Carr

Serves as principal of the newly formed South Boston Catholic Academy



Sister Alice St. Joseph, SND

Teacher of 48 years now heads St. Monica Elementary School



James Deveney

Came full circle as principal of St. Joseph Elementary School in Medford



Bob Penta

Former public school principal takes helm at Pope John Paul II's Dorchester Central Campus



Cathy Fiorino

Moved to Massachusetts to become principal of Immaculate Conception in Lowell



Mary Jo Keaney

Alumna becomes first lay principal of Ursuline Academy



Bernadette Leahy

Promoted to principal of St. Peter Elementary School in Cambridge



Cynthia McNally

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John McEwan

Coming home to Cardinal Spellman High School in Brockton



Lou Ann Melino

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Jeff Thielman

Continuing the Cristo Rey journey at North Cambridge Catholic High School



Beth Tanner

Leading a Catholic preschool in Charlestown



Ed Tyrrell

Moved from Ohio and Florida to serve as headmaster of Malden Catholic



Kathleen Tosiello

Building on tradition at Our Lady of the Assumption in Lynnfield

Christopher Beza, who at 32 is the youngest new principal in the Boston Archdiocese, isn't afraid to wear his heart on his sleeve. "The first day that I entered a Catholic school I immediately fell in love," he says. That was back in kindergarten.

More than a quarter century later, Beza is serving as principal of Sacred Heart School in Weymouth for a simple reason. "I really believe that Catholic schools are at the heart of the church, and that the church needs strong leadership in Catholic schools," he says. "I feel called to help provide that leadership. Being a principal is truly my vocation and my passion."

A native of upstate New York, Beza went to Notre Dame as a civil engineering major. His calling to a career in Catholic education came in a roundabout way – through the university's Alliance for Catholic Education or ACE program, an innovative service program designed to strengthen preK-12 Catholic education. ACE's offerings include the opportunity for Notre Dame graduates to serve as full-time teachers for two years in under-resourced Catholic schools in the southern United States while earning a Master of Education degree.

Beza had tutored underprivileged students in high school and college, and the direct, hands-on service of being an ACE teacher appealed to him. So after graduating from Notre Dame in 1999, he stayed on campus and took his first 10 weeks of intensive classes toward his Masters degree; that fall, he began his teaching assignment at St. John Berchmans Cathedral Grade School in Shreveport, Louisiana. (A second 10 weeks of classes for the Master in Education are held at Notre Dame during the summer between the two service years. ACE participants also take online courses during their teaching assignment and are supervised both in person and online by ACE administrators.)

"I discovered that I loved teaching, and that I loved running a classroom in a Catholic school," said Beza, who also found that his engineering background enabled him to be a "problem solver" in the classroom. "I was hooked." After earning his Master of Education in Secondary Mathematics in 2001, he continued on in Shreveport for another three years.

Beza's marriage in 2004 to Maureen Neville, a fellow engineering graduate of Notre Dame who like Beza also has roots on the East Coast, was the motivator for moving to Boston. Beza found a position at St. Pius V School in Lynn teaching subjects that ranged from 7th and 8th grade mathematics and 8th grade literature to religion units that focused on problem-solving and Catholic Values & Human Sexuality. He also became the school's technology coordinator, overseeing the distribution and implementation of laptop computers and SMARTboard interactive whiteboards, and designing the school's website.

Upon sensing a call to Catholic school leadership, Beza enrolled in 2006 in ACE's three-year Master of Arts program in Educational Administration – once again taking summer courses at Notre Dame and online courses the rest of the year. He earned his degree last June. "I am

so grateful to Notre Dame and ACE for its commitment to Catholic education,” notes Beza. “Generous benefactors to the program enable ACE to continue to grow.” After serving in several administrative positions at St. Pius V, including as assistant principal, Beza applied for and received the job as principal at Weymouth’s Sacred Heart School.

“What drew me to Sacred Heart was its strong Catholic identity and tradition of academic excellence,” he says. “The school has many dedicated, experienced teachers, involved parents, and strong pastoral leadership.” Beza’s goals for Sacred Heart include maintaining and strengthening its Catholic identity and character, and increasing the access of students and teachers to the latest learning technologies.

An avid runner, golfer, and soccer player, Beza brings an athlete’s discipline and enthusiasm to his new job. “I know that being a principal is going to be challenging at times, but that it’s also going to be fun and exciting too,” he reflects. “I am very happy to be leading such a good, thriving school.”

What else you should know about Chris Beza

- His grandfather ran the Boston Marathon in the 1930s and Chris views running that marathon as a long-term goal. He is currently training for a half-marathon.
- Chris is of Irish and Czech descent.
- He hiked in Yosemite National Park with his wife over the summer.

Becoming a principal after 48 years in the classroom “was furthest thing from my mind,” says **Sister Alice St. Joseph, SND**. When she was approached by the pastor of St. Monica’s Parish in Methuen about applying for the principal position at St. Monica Elementary School, “I wasn’t sure he was serious at first,” Sister Alice recalls. “I was very happy in the classroom.”

But the nun, who has seen three generations of students come through St. Monica’s, has always been open to the Holy Spirit at work. And she has always believed that age is just a number – particularly when you’re around children. “They keep you young!” Sister Alice exclaims. So she became a candidate for the principal position, and after going through the interview process was offered the job.

Sister Alice chuckles as she shares the reaction of her only sibling. “My sister thought when I called her with ‘big news’ that I was going to tell her I was retiring! She told me I was crazy but she was also very supportive.” Her fellow Sisters of Notre Dame were delighted, Sister Alice continues. “Saint Julie, our founder, told us to teach the goodness of God to the little ones, for they are the future of God’s church. Being principal of St. Monica’s is just one more way for me to carry out God’s work.”

During her first week on the job, Sister Alice brims with enthusiasm. “I want to sell the fact that Catholic education is really viable and alive and here to stay,” she says firmly. “My goal for the school this year is to be very visible in the parish and our local Catholic community.”

Sister Alice is also celebrating her 50th Jubilee anniversary this year as a Sister of Notre Dame, and was recently feted at a party at St. Monica’s Parish. “I knew from the second grade that I wanted to be a nun,” she says. “I entered right from high school when I was seventeen.” The Sisters of Notre Dame who taught her in elementary school “were a very happy group of sisters,” adds Sister Alice. “They taught me that you never know how much positive influence you can have on kids.”

Asked about the school’s ongoing success in drawing students, Sister Alice reflects: “The whole child is what Catholic education is all about. Here at St. Monica’s we emphasize academic excellence – but also kindness, respect, and what it means to live our faith fully,” she says. “We want Christianity to be like the blood that flows through the kids – something they can’t live without. All of this takes time. It can be challenging to educate children in the Catholic tradition, but ultimately it’s a privilege.”

What else you should know about Sister Alice:

- She once spent two summers in Hiroshima, Japan, doing missionary service and two summers in Alabama (Birmingham and Huntsville) working in evangelization and day care programs.
- She holds an AB from Emmanuel College and a Masters of Leadership/Administration (CSLP) from Boston College.
- She relaxes by reading mysteries and knitting. Each year she knits dozens of scarves for the St. Vincent de Paul Society's collections for poor people, and for her parish's Christmas collection for those in need.

After 35 years of working in public schools – nearly two dozen of these years as a principal – **Robert Penta** is excited to be leading the Dorchester Central campus of Pope John Paul II Academy.

He had been contemplating the move from public to Catholic schools for several years, inspired in part by the deepening of his faith through his parish's ARISE program. He then became a candidate for several principal jobs within the Boston Archdiocese. But when Penta, who had grown up in East Boston, interviewed for the Dorchester Central position, he says, "it felt like the perfect fit, the right fit. I felt like I was coming home."

Penta brings a wealth of experience to the job. He had served as principal of two different elementary schools in Arlington from 1994 to 2008 – Brackett Elementary School and Peirce Elementary School. During his tenure at Brackett, its students achieved the highest MCAS testing scores in the state for three consecutive years. Penta also oversaw the closing, relocation and re-opening of the new Brackett School. Later, at Peirce, he met the needs of a diverse student population, including those who participated in Boston's METCO program. (METCO enables children from the inner city to attend participating public schools in the Greater Boston suburbs.) As director of Title 1, he was responsible for a \$331,000 federal grant for the two elementary schools and the Germaine Lawrence School for Girls, a special needs school in Arlington. And he knew how to go after other monies for the Arlington schools as well, winning \$60,000 in competitive grants.

Penta's background also includes serving as an elementary principal in the Gloucester Public Schools from 1986 to 1994, and teaching in the Reading Public Schools at the elementary level from 1974 to 1986.

His transition to Pope John Paul II Academy's Dorchester Central campus could not have gone more smoothly, Penta says. "I'm thrilled to be here and my principal colleagues within the Academy have been fantastic," he says. "I have felt a powerful sense of being part of a community ever since I stepped into the job." Being able to share his Catholic faith openly with colleagues of all levels, as well as with students, has already been a rich experience, continues Penta. "It's a blessing to be able to talk freely about my beliefs, to be able to impart Gospel values even to the kids who are not Catholic."

His goals for the new school year range from updating Dorchester Central's school library to working closely with colleagues throughout Pope John Paul II Academy on continuously improving teaching skills and student performance. "I want to give our kids expectations of the very best education available, a Catholic education that encompasses not only the brain but also the heart and soul," says Penta. "I want the kids to know that – right in

the heart of Dorchester – this kind of education is possible.”

What else you should know about Bob Penta:

- He earned a C.A.E.S. (Certificate of Advanced Educational Administration) from Boston College’s Lynch School of Education in 2005. (The C.A.E.S. involves a planned Program of Studies consisting of at least 30 hours beyond the Master’s degree.) He received a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from Wheelock College in 1981 and a B.S. in Elementary Education from Northeastern University in 1974.
- He has been married for 27 years to Joanne. The couple has three daughters, Courtney, Kimberly, and Emily.
- He is currently a Eucharistic Minister and CCD co-teacher for the 6th grade at Saint Theresa Parish in North Reading. He has been a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 4544 in North Reading for more than 25 years.

Mary Jo Keaney, an alumna of Ursuline Academy in Dedham, was overwhelmed with emotion last spring when she was named the school's first lay principal in its 63-year history. She hadn't envisioned this path. Perhaps it wouldn't have happened if she hadn't been so moved a couple of months earlier upon learning that Ursuline's long-time principal, Sister Mercedes Videira, O.S.U., was retiring.

"When I read the news in a letter to Ursuline alumnae, I wept," says Keaney, who had had the nun for Spanish in high school and had always revered her. The letter also stated that the school was searching for candidates for the principal's job and Keaney didn't hesitate, despite already being a principal of a school she loved – Saint Peter's Elementary School in Cambridge. She phoned Ursuline's president Rosann Whiting immediately to say she felt called to apply for the position. "I had to try to give back in some way all that Ursuline had given to me," recalls Keaney, who has long lived by the Ursuline motto of "**Serviam**" or "I will serve."

How did Keaney go from being from a 13-year-old student who liked to slide down the banister at Ursuline Academy to becoming the school's principal at the age of 45? It's a fascinating story, and glimpses of it are contained in the Commencement address that Keaney gave to Ursuline's Class of 2006. She told the new graduates that the school was where she "learned to love learning for learning's sake." She recalled in her speech how two Ursuline nuns – Sister Ursula Binnette and Sister Dorothy Doyle – helped her to fall in love with Latin and Greek, subjects that Keaney subsequently pursued at Bowdoin College and Harvard University.

"There was magic in Sister Ursula's class – wonderful stories, beautiful art work, a secret passage into the mystery of the ancient mythological world and the Greek language..." recalled Keaney. "There was sophistication in our Latin class with Sister Dorothy, the school's elegant and gentle principle, who always had cookies ready for us when we attended class in her office. What's not to love about a class with snacks that takes place in the comfort of the principal's office?"

The daughter of a teacher and a business executive, Keaney has a richly eclectic background. After receiving a Master of Education degree from Harvard in 1987, she spent five years at Newton Country Day School, serving as a secondary school Latin and English instructor and – in addition – as Director of College Guidance. Keaney then went to John Hancock Financial Services, where she worked as a Customer Service Manager for a year. A decade-long stint followed at Harvard, where Keaney was a member of the admissions committee at the Graduate School of Education and a supervisor in student financial processes. She taught CCD in her parish during this time, and when an opening arose for a principal at St. Peter's Elementary School in Cambridge in 2004, she applied for the position and was accepted.

Her four years at St. Peter's were "simply incredible," Keaney says. One of the legacies she is most proud of is building up the school's arts program. "Helping kids find their passion is important, and music and theater can be a key part of that journey," she says. Keaney, who became known as the "singing principal," stood in the midst of the middle school children's choir when it performed at the 19th Annual Inner City Scholarship Dinner last winter. She was delighted when 87 out of the school's 210 students became involved in the production of the play "The Lion King" last spring. "That's a pretty big indication of passion and involvement," she says.

Leaving St. Peter's wasn't easy, concedes Keaney. "It broke my heart," she says. But she couldn't turn down the invitation to lead her alma mater.

"Ursuline gave me a foundation that was fantastic *in every way* socially, spiritually and academically," she says. "Because the Academy sets the bar very high in every area – the arts, sports, the classroom and in being a joyful community of faith – because it requires students to commit to the unique song, the unique talents, which God has put into their heart and soul, Ursuline forever changed my life. That is why I had to go back."

What else you should know about Mary Jo Keaney

- She has been married to Paul Keaney, the award-winning Executive News Editor of the Boston Herald, for 21 years. The couple has two children, Laura, a sophomore at Providence College, and Paul, a freshman at Villanova University.
- Her favorite book is *The Life You Save May Be Your Own: An American Pilgrimage* by Paul Elie. The book examines the lives of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton, Walker Percy, and Flannery O'Connor – and Keaney has read it several times.
- She re-read *The Odyssey* over the summer to prepare for teaching an independent study course to students at Ursuline.

Nancy Carr – *Serves as principal of the newly formed South Boston Catholic Academy*

Before becoming the new leader of South Boston Catholic Academy, which was formed by the merging of St. Brigid and Gate of Heaven elementary schools, Nancy Carr served as principal of St. Brigid's for two years. Coincidentally, her parents were married at St. Brigid's and Carr was baptized there, made her First Communion there, and went to first grade and second grade there. An innovative, energetic leader who looks to the future, Carr was excited to be chosen as South Boston Catholic Academy's first principal after a competitive interview process. "It's wonderful to see how the students, faculty and staff are really coming together to build a dynamic, academically strong and faith-filled community," she says. Initiatives Carr started at St. Brigid's are already bearing fruit at South Boston Catholic Academy, she says, including a self-funded extended-day program, expanded technology in classrooms, and a strengthened Spanish curriculum.

What else you should know about Nancy Carr

She receives "a lot of support" in her work from her first-grade teacher, Sister Evelyn Hurley, age 94, who lives in the parish residence near the school. Carr has been married for 28 years to Daniel and has three children, Daniel, Colleen, and Margaret. Her daughter Colleen just started her first teaching job at the Columbia campus of Pope John Paul II Academy. Carr loves to walk and is in a book club.

James Deveney – *Came full circle as principal of St. Joseph Elementary School in Medford*

Fifty-one years after Jim Deveney took his seat as a first grader at St. Joseph's, he is back at the school as its first lay principal. And the way the job came about, says Deveney, made him believe "there was something in the stars – my coming back to St. Joseph's seemed to be part of God's plan." He had spent 32 years in the Medford Public Schools, with 20 of those years as a middle and elementary school principal. Just two weeks after he announced his retirement from the Medford Public Schools last spring, the principal position at St. Joseph's became available. A product of 16 years of Catholic education, Deveney recently participated in the ARISE program at Saint Raphael Parish in Medford. And he was thrilled when his former 8th grade teacher, Sister Vincent de Paul, visited him in the St. Joseph principal's office recently. "She asked if I was still talking and I said, 'Yes! That's why I'm still here.'"

What else you should know about Jim Deveney

His three young granddaughters are "the absolute loves of my life," says Deveney. He and his wife Anne have been married for 30 years and have two adult daughters; the couple enjoys theater, movies, Cape Cod and dining out.

Catherine Fiorino – *Moved to Massachusetts to become principal of Immaculate Conception in Lowell*

Cathy Fiorino had deeply enjoyed her former job as a principal of a Catholic school in Branford, Connecticut. But when she felt called to return to her native Massachusetts for family reasons, she found a school that she loved just as well – Immaculate Conception in Lowell. “What excites me most about my new assignment is the wonderful spiritual and community atmosphere that permeates our school,” she says. “The pastor, faculty and staff, parents and children have been so inviting.” A former nun, she has been an educator in Catholic schools for the last 30 years. Fiorino is eager for Immaculate Conception School to continue to focus “on the three R’s – religion, respect for others, and responsibility in our duties as teachers, students and staff.”

What else you should know about Cathy Fiorino

She is single and loves Boston/New England sports teams. “I’m glad to once again be living close to where the Red Sox, Patriots and Celtics play,” she says.

Bernadette Leahy – *Promoted to principal of St. Peter Elementary School in Cambridge*

Bernadette Leahy has spent all 16 years of her career in Catholic education (so far) at St. Peter's School. She served for the last five years as Vice Principal, and before that she was a teacher for 11 years. (Seventh and 8th grade math, science and French were her subjects, and she also served as a resource teacher who developed "Individualized Education Plans" for students with special needs.) Being appointed to the top spot this year when former principal Mary Jo Keaney (see profile) stepped down "was very exciting," says Leahy. A product of Catholic schools, she stays in Catholic education for a simple reason: "I have a strong belief in the importance of children learning about their religion while also learning about academic subjects and the world around them," she says.

What else you should know about Bernadette Leahy

She has been married for 40 years to Eugene and has three adult children. She runs for exercise and reads about a book a week, usually mysteries. "I'm always looking for suggestions for good books to read," she says.

Cynthia McNally – *Promoted to principal of Trinity Catholic Academy's Upper Campus*

Cynthia McNally had worked for 31 years in the Brockton Public Schools – as a math and technology teacher, math department head, and a Central Office administrator. At Central Office she was Assistant to the Superintendent, and in that capacity led the administrative intern program, which trains the district's principals, assistant principals and department heads. Training over 100 administrators during her 14 years at Central Office “was one of my proudest accomplishments,” says McNally. Other responsibilities included fundraising and working closely with the Brockton School Committee on policy and procedural issues for the district. Although she retired from the Brockton Public Schools in 2007, McNally is on the faculty of the Educational Leadership Program at Bridgewater and Fitchburg State Colleges. And in 2007, McNally saw another opportunity she couldn't resist. Trinity Catholic Academy had just been formed from three underperforming and under-enrolled schools – and it needed help in designing an academically strong curriculum. So McNally came on board and came up with a plan that doubled classroom time for English Languages arts and math, and extended the school day – making it nearly a half hour longer than the average public school day. She also became Curriculum Director for Mathematics & Science, Pre-K – 8th grade, with responsibilities that ranged from helping student achievers of all levels become better performers and analyzing student test scores to overseeing teacher development and evaluation. Becoming the Upper Campus principal this year has been very exciting, says McNally, who attended Catholic schools for 13 years while growing up and is extremely active in her parish, St. Thomas More in Braintree. (She has been a Eucharistic Minister for 27 years and is also a member of the Finance Committee; she has also served as a Director of Religious Education for three years.) “I'm having a wonderful time as the principal of Trinity Catholic's Upper Campus!” she exclaims. “I just love greeting our children and parents each day and working with such a wonderful faculty and staff.”

What else you should know about Cynthia McNally

McNally and her husband of 39 years Daniel have visited all 50 states in the United States. The couple has two adult children.

Lou Ann Melino – *Excited to be in one of Pope John Paul II Academy's regional schools*

A seasoned principal of seven years, Lou Ann Melino is thrilled to now be leading the Mattapan campus of Pope John Paul II Academy. "There's such strength in numbers, and to be the head of one of five campuses working together in one school is very exciting," she says. Sharing resources and collaborating with other principals within the Academy has already been "rejuvenating," according to Melino, who had the sad task of overseeing the closing of two Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. "Working with the other principals to get ready for the school year was very helpful because we could compare notes on everything from how to best implement new teaching programs to how to best build a community of Christian faith in our schools." Melino's career in Catholic education spans more than 30 years (she took time off to have a family) and she is delighted by innovations like regional schools. "I believe that Catholic education is only going to get stronger in the future," she says.

What else you should know about Lou Ann Melino

She has been married to her high school sweetheart, Robert, for 33 years and has three adult children. She is also an avid Bruins, Patriots, Red Sox and Celtics fan. "My grandmother used to take me to Bruins games when I was a kid," Melino says.

Beth Tanner – *Leading a Catholic preschool in Charlestown*

The poet Emily Dickinson believed that people should “dwell in possibility” – and it’s a philosophy that Beth Tanner, Good Shepherd Preschool’s new principal, embraces. As Director of Early Childhood Education for a large nonprofit in Greenwich, CT, she spent seven years helping 50 teachers to realize the possibilities of a developmentally based curriculum that addressed the needs of 200 children with a range of abilities and an array of cultural backgrounds. Tanner also served as a volunteer facilitator for a separate nonprofit that helped grieving children, and she has a background as an elementary school teacher. Eager to relocate to the Boston area to be near family, Tanner was “thrilled” when she found a principal position at a Catholic preschool. “My faith has always been the foundation of how I try to live my life, and I am incredibly excited about gifting a sense of that faith and peace to the children of Good Shepherd Preschool,” she says. Tanner’s goals include helping the children to learn to appreciate and love the Mass, and teaching them the ‘Our Father’ and ‘Hail Mary’ prayers in English and Spanish. “I have been an educator for about 20 years now and I feel that children, especially very young kids, have the unique ability to celebrate the Grace in our world.”

What else you should know about Beth Tanner

She is single, has a Bichon dog, and lives a mere 172 steps from Good Shepherd Preschool. She loves watching the sun come up over the boats in the Navy yard in Charlestown. “Ever the dreamer, I like to pretend that a boat called the ‘Lucky2’ is mine because I can’t believe how lucky I am to be here in Boston and working at the most beautiful little school in town,” says Tanner.

Kathleen Tosiello – *Building on tradition at Our Lady of the Assumption in Lynnfield*

Back when she was a Catholic school student, Kathleen Tosiello loved school so much that her parents used to tease her that she “should just bring a bed to school and stay there!” Tosiello has spent most of her 22-year career to date in Catholic schools – 19 years as a teacher and three years as a vice principal and acting principal. Her administrative positions were at Our Lady of the Assumption, and when she was appointed principal of the school last June, Tosiello was the first lay person to serve in that role. “One of my most important goals is to build on traditions of the Franciscan Sisters of Philadelphia, who founded the school,” says Tosiello. “Because of the Sisters, this school is a very hospitable, inclusive and family-oriented place. It’s also a school that promotes academic excellence and believes that Catholic education is deeply relevant to our times.” Expanding technology within the school is another goal of Tosiello’s; she is also excited about Our Lady of the Assumption’s new art and music program and the school’s “fabulous science lab.” Notes Tosiello: “There is so much excitement and wonder about learning at our school, and a rich living out of our Christian faith. We are very fortunate!”

What else you should know about Kathy Tosiello

She is a widow with three adult children; her daughter Kassie works at Mission Grammar School in Roxbury in admissions and development. Kathy loves history and recently read *The Dark Tide: The Great Boston Molasses Flood of 1919* by Stephen Puleo.

John McEwan – Coming home to Cardinal Spellman High School in Brockton

John McEwan attended high school at Cardinal Spellman, met his wife in freshman homeroom (they didn't date until many years later) and spent the first five years of his career at the school, teaching English and religion and chairing the religion department. He then went on to a public school career. McEwan worked in Kingston for 23 years, serving as a teacher and then winning "Principal of the Year" in 2000 for the State of Massachusetts before moving on to Dover-Sherborn, where he served as a headmaster for a year. The last leg of his public school career was in Whitman-Hanson, where he served as Superintendent from 2001 to 2009 and built a new high school that became a state-wide model for other schools. "I feel like I've been prepping for this assignment as President of Cardinal Spellman my entire career," says McEwan, who notes that he is a parent of a Cardinal Spellman graduate and that he has a cousin on the faculty. "I have a powerful sense that I have come home, that I have been called to give back whatever I can to the school."

What else you should know about John McEwan

John loves to read and to travel. His favorite book is *To Kill a Mockingbird*. He and his wife Margaret, who have been married for 37 years, are taking a long-postponed honeymoon to Greece this year. The couple has three children and two grandchildren.

Jeffrey D. Thielman – *Continuing the Cristo Rey journey at North Cambridge Catholic High School*

Becoming president of North Cambridge Catholic High School, which is a Cristo Rey school, was the logical next step for Jeff Thielman. After all, he had been part of the Cristo Rey dream from the beginning. Based on the vision of some Jesuits and lay business leaders in Chicago in the mid-1990's, Cristo Rey schools are partly funded through a unique work-study program that enables low-income students to earn tuition while both working and going to school. Thielman served as Director of Development of the first Cristo Rey school. He was then the Executive Director of the Cassin Educational Initiative Foundation, a family foundation that created Cristo Rey high schools and college prep middle schools in urban neighborhoods. Mostly recently, as Vice President of the Cristo Rey Network, Thielman established an umbrella organization that supports 22 Cristo Rey schools across the U.S. And now, at North Cambridge Catholic, he is helping students at one Cristo Rey school – kids who might not have a chance elsewhere – to realize their potential. “We have good kids from poor backgrounds who want to make it,” says Thielman. “By giving them the chance to rub elbows with a variety of professionals in the workplace, they’re gaining a better sense of what they can do with their lives.” The school’s commitment to both the Catholic faith and academic excellence inspires the students, Thielman believes. “Our students know that we are going to push them academically and that we are going to support them spiritually. That’s a big part of North Cambridge Catholic’s success.”

What else you should know about Jeff Thielman

He is married to Christine and has two children. While working as a Jesuit International Volunteer in Peru from 1985 to 1989, Jeff founded *Center for the Working Child*, which offers health, education, shelter, and food services to street children and families. He is fluent in Spanish.

Ed Tyrrell – Moved from Ohio and Florida to serve as headmaster of Malden Catholic

A native of Akron, OH, Ed Tyrrell spent the bulk of his career as the Headmaster, President and CEO of The Summit Country Day School, a Catholic pre-K Montessori through 12th grade school in Cincinnati, OH. Prior to that, he was Supervisor of Education for the Summit County Board of Education in Akron, OH – and he also taught in both public and Catholic schools. Tyrrell retired to Naples, FL, with his wife in 2003, and for a while he was content to play golf a couple of times a week and take it easy. “But then I found myself asking, ‘Is this what I want to do with my life?’” recalls Tyrrell. “Naples is called ‘paradise’ because of its beauty, but it’s also referred to as ‘God’s waiting room’ because a lot of older people die there!” With his wife’s encouragement, Tyrrell began to look around for a new job. (“I had been doing some consulting, but it wasn’t enough,” he says.) A neighbor in Naples who ran a search firm for private schools told him about the opening for a headmaster at Malden Catholic. “I came up and met the boys, their teachers and the other staff, and I was very impressed,” recalls Tyrrell. “The school’s commitment to academic excellence and Catholic spirituality, and its commitment to implementing a new strategic plan, made me realize I could make a difference here.” His first weeks as a Bostonian has been a “bit of a culture shock,” admits Tyrrell. “But I love the school and I’m enjoying my new career.”

What else you should know about Ed Tyrrell

He has been married for 40 years to his wife Kathleen and has four adult children and eight grandchildren. Besides golf, he loves to cook and to read. “I loved the book *1776* and I’m looking forward to reading *John Adams*,” says Tyrrell.