

New associate superintendent named

After nearly three decades working for the Maryland State Department of Education, including 14 years as the deputy state superintendent of administration, Dr. A. Skipp Sanders is joining the archdiocesan school system as an associate superintendent.

Dr. Sanders will succeed Sister Barbara Spears, S.N.J.M., Aug. 1, serving as a liaison between the archdiocese and 25 schools in the eastern, western and urban vicariates.

Dr. Ronald J. Valenti, superintendent of Catholic schools, said the new associate superintendent will also monitor the strategic plan for the Catholic school system and work closely with two soon-to-be launched programs: a leadership initiative for pastors and principals and a mentoring program.

"His experience and his involvement in the political realm and his experience in professional development, teacher certification and other areas will enhance our office," said Dr. Valenti.

While in the public school system, Dr. Sanders worked very closely with State Superintendent Dr. Nancy Grasmick, acting as a chief operating officer. He was actively involved in budgets, teacher licensing and preparation, personnel issues, human resources and audits for the state system.

"I have worked under the superintendent of the century in public education," said Dr. Sanders, 65. "I feel the time has come to apply some of the things I've learned in a new setting."

As a young man, Dr. Sanders aspired to the priesthood and was a seminarian at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Roland Park for several years before deciding against becoming a clergyman. He would have been the first African-American ordained to the priesthood in the Baltimore archdiocese had he continued formation.

“In the seminary, I learned a very humanistic and holistic approach to education,” said Dr. Sanders, who attends Mass at St. Vincent de Paul in Baltimore.

In his new role, Dr. Sanders said he hopes to “promote a general vision and a sense of collaboration without stepping on the autonomy of individual Catholic schools.”

Catholic schools serve as a “viable option for people of ordinary means to get the kind of education they prefer for their children,” said Dr. Sanders, who has also taught in Baltimore public schools.

Dr. Sanders is married to Pamela Sanders, principal of St. Ambrose School in Park Heights. He holds a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from St. Mary’s Seminary, a master’s degree in theology from St. Mary’s Seminary and a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of Pennsylvania.