



North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools



March 16, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the board serving you in the regionalization of Catholic elementary schools in the North Hills, we assure you of our deep concern for fair and equitable tuition rates. We appreciate the input we received after publishing the 2017-18 tuition rates and ask for your mutual understanding as we begin this intricate work of consolidation. As we all know, this is the first time that our diocese has regionalized a large number of schools -- it is a learning process for us all.

The 2017-18 tuition rates for the three new schools were determined by the board of directors after diocesan personnel presented us with financial data during our first meeting on March 6. We acknowledge that "standardized" tuition was proposed as a benefit of regionalization during the task force, parent and community meetings held in the preceding months. Perhaps the only word that task forces should have used was "stabilized," the term used in diocesan communications regarding regionalization. This difference resulted in multiple interpretations and perhaps caused unreasonable expectations at this time.

For any confusion, we offer an apology. The reality is that any type of standardization is a complex process that will take time. At no time did any task force guarantee it would happen in the first year of regionalization.

Please know that diocesan financial personnel did pursue the possibility of establishing uniform tuition rates for the three new schools beginning with the 2017-18 academic year. Despite these efforts, however, the current disparity among tuition rates in each of the seven schools affected by these changes prohibited having a uniform rate in this first year of regionalization.

It became obvious that the gap between the highest and lowest rates was too large. If the highest rates (or near to the highest rates) were chosen, the overall tuition increase would be too severe for many families to afford. If the lowest rates (or near to the lowest rates) were chosen, it would result in the loss of close to a quarter of a million dollars in revenue, and would place an even greater burden on parish subsidies and fundraising activities.

Similar to the tuition rates, parish subsidies to schools will not significantly change for the 2017-18 academic year. It is the hope and goal of regionalization that all parishes in this region more equitably contribute to funding Catholic elementary school education, and that the parishes that historically have had schools will be relieved at least somewhat of the weighty

financial obligations to their schools. We hope, pray, and will work diligently to indeed stabilize the tuition rates, subsidies, and fundraising expectations in this new financial model as the years move forward.

Thank you for your patience as we journey together through this transition. We are all working toward more sustainable and vibrant Catholic schools with increased enrollment and participation across the region.

We thank those who communicated their concerns and offer our gratitude also to the families who are involved in the life of our schools. Your support is absolutely necessary for our sustainability.

Please keep these important transition efforts, and everyone involved in this process, in your prayers.

Yours in Christ,

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