



North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools



August 31, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We hope this finds you enjoying the last few days of August and looking forward in anticipation of the new beginning of the school year for the North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools.

The NHRCES Board of Directors continues to work on the many aspects of schools' regionalization. At our August 16 meeting, we focused on the areas of fundraising, website progress, signage, finance and outstanding school administration items.

Fundraising

Tara Aiello, Development Consultant, reviewed the three fundraising goals and roadmaps with the board based on input from the respective principals and Andrea Vescio, NHRCES Business Manager. The goals are aggressive; however, the schools continue to work with the respective parent organizations to identify additional potential fundraising opportunities.

The participation of parents as well as parishes in fundraising activities is imperative to reach the necessary funding. In the past, parents would fundraise a specific dollar amount in conjunction with their tuition payment. Although there is no stated requirement, parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the fundraising efforts for the benefit of their schools. The gift card program remains one of the most significant and popular vehicles for fundraising. We ask you for your consideration and support in this coming year.

Streamlining the gift card programming remains a priority. A meeting of the coordinators on July 29 focused on four key areas: purchasing, selling, technology for tracking and selling, and standardization of credit percentages. The goal is to have a revised program developed by December of 2017.

Website Status

The NHRCES website is under development with an anticipated launch date no later than early September. Each school is working with Fr. Nick Vaskov, Executive Director for Communications for the Diocese of Pittsburgh, to create and refine their respective sites. Parent volunteers and our principals are providing initial content. They will also have access to the site for necessary updates. The Board requested and was provided access to the beta site to review. Pages are being developed to accommodate teachers' needs as well as specific organizations such as the athletic association, etc. Principals will conduct final reviews of the sites before the initial launch and will be responsible for reviewing all content changes going forward.

Representatives from the diocesan web provider, eCatholic, will visit our school locations to take photos of the children in action so as to personalize each schools' webpages. While a template exists for each school, the board reinforced the need for flexibility in design to reflect the personality of each school.

Signage

As we launch three new schools, signage to reflect the name changes is being managed on both a short-term and long-term basis. In the short term, banners will be placed in very visible locations on the six campuses to identify each location by the beginning of the school year. Additionally, designs and price quotes are being sought for permanent sign removal and replacement. The Board wants to have this completed by the spring of 2018.

Financials

The seven pastors of the original North Hills schools met with Finance representatives of the diocese in early August to discuss the financial implications of the schools regionalization. The discussion focused on the amount of subsidy that each parish could provide based on the estimated expenses at this time. While estimated expenses are very close to pre-launch projections, enrollment remains a key factor in calculating both expenses and income. Encouragingly, enrollment continues to increase.

At this time, the Diocese Financial group is verifying estimates provided by each parish. The Board feels strongly that we should continue to pursue a regionalized approach to expenses consistent with the regionalized approach to schools. Based on the analysis, the Board will discuss the impact in further detail with the Diocesan Catholic Schools Leadership.

Administrator Update

- Jessica Rock has been named the new Blessed Trinity Academy principal. We are very excited to have her join the NHRCES system.
- Uniforms for the 2017-18 school year will carry over from the 2016-17 school year. For 2018-19, each school's SAC is evaluating uniforms for their respective school.
- Based on enrollment increases, a number of open teacher positions (full time and part time) have been identified. Dependent on their area of specialty, displaced teachers have been offered positions for consideration.
- Finally, the first NHRCES Teacher In-service will take place on Tuesday, August 22, 2017, at Holy Cross Academy

Next Meeting - The next board meeting will be on September 13.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we forge this journey to revitalize Catholic Elementary Education. We are excited to officially begin our journey with the opening of the official school year!

Yours in Christ,

NHRCES Board of Directors

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