



Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

February 17, 2017

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to all of you who have worked, prayed and made recommendations to me about the future of our Catholic schools in the North Hills. In doing so, you have served not just our students and our diocese, but Jesus Himself.

Our Catholic schools are critical to the future, not just of our Church but of our world. They educate not just the mind, but the heart and spirit as well. We teach self-respect as well as respect for others and service to all, preparing students to be productive citizens and future leaders. Catholic high schools have a 99 percent graduation rate, with 85 percent of those graduates continuing to college. We must do everything in our power to strengthen our schools—financially, academically and spiritually—so that they can continue to benefit our children, our communities and our world.

That is why the regionalization of every elementary school in the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh is a crucial part of *On Mission for The Church Alive!* The regionalization of our elementary schools aims to create vibrant, affordable and accessible opportunities for Catholic education. It seeks to provide for the moral and spiritual formation of many more students now and for generations to come.

When Jesus commissioned His disciples, He shared with them how important it is to work together. Regionalization of schools provides the opportunity for many more people, for every parish, to support a Catholic school. These schools will cooperate under a new form of regional governance, with the hope of strengthening all of them. Responsibility for a school will no longer rest with one parish, but will be shared by every parish in the region.

Let there be no doubt about it. The purpose of regionalization is first and foremost to benefit the students and to strengthen Catholic education. This new regional form of school governance seeks to address concerns voiced by our pastors and parishioners, many parents among them, regarding the financial pressure on parishes that currently sponsor individual schools.

Among others, the benefits of regionalization include:

- strengthened Catholic identity;
- comprehensive and uniform instructional programs;
- stabilized tuition;
- improved recruitment; and,
- collaboration in fundraising, technology, athletics and academic programs.

After having carefully listened to input, especially from pastors, members of the task forces and parents alike, I am convinced that the regionalization of schools is our path for the future. The consultation in the North Hills becomes the model for what I intend to do in every other part of our diocese.

So now, that being said, let me share with you “the nuts and bolts” of what I have approved for regionalization in the North Hills.

The North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary School will be under the leadership of a board, consisting of pastors elected by the pastors of all 32 parishes in the region and lay persons chosen for their expertise by the pastor-members of the board. The board members are:

- Father Kevin C. Fazio, Pastor, Saint Alphonsus Parish, Wexford
- Father John R. Rushofsky, Pastor, Saint Sebastian Parish, Ross Township
- Father Robert J. Vular, Pastor, Saint Teresa of Avila Parish, Perrysville
- Father Timothy F. Whalen, Pastor, Saint Mary of the Assumption Parish, Glenshaw
- Father Paul J. Zywan, Pastor, Saint Alexis Parish, Wexford
- Ms. Anne Monteverde Haus, Saint Alphonsus Parish, Wexford
- Ms. Judene Indovina, Good Samaritan Parish, Ambridge
- Mr. Matthew Petnuch, Saint Teresa of Avila Parish, Perrysville
- Ms. Jane Ann Regan, Saint Ursula Parish, Allison Park

All schools in the region will be under one regional administrator, appointed by the board, who will oversee the day-to-day operations of each school. The regional administrator will be Mr. Michael C. Killmeyer, who is a product of Catholic education. He is an alumnus of Saint Maurice School in Forest Hills and Central Catholic High School in Pittsburgh. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and a Master’s in Education, Reading Specialist, both from California University of Pennsylvania, Principal Administration Certification from Point Park University and Instructional Technology Specialist Certification from Duquesne University. He has devoted the past twenty-six years of his life in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. He has taught at McKees Rocks Regional Catholic School, Saint Therese of Lisieux School in Munhall, Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin School in Whitehall and Saint Angela Merici School in White Oak. He was the Principal of Saint James School in Sewickley. In 2005, he was appointed an Educational Consultant in the Catholic Schools Office of the diocese. He has been responsible for the schools in Regional Vicariate IV, Coordinator of Title IIA Federal programs and Educational Consultant for technology, science, physical education and health.

After reviewing the recommendations from the task forces that studied all of the information and survey data available, I have approved the following recommendations for the 2017-2018 school year:

- Saint Alexis and Saint Alphonsus Schools, both in Wexford, will merge to form a new school with two campuses, and eventually will have a new name. Pre-K will be at Saint Alexis and grades K-8 will be at Saint Alphonsus.
- Saint Bonaventure School in Shaler Township, Saint Ursula School in Allison Park and Saint Mary of the Assumption School in Glenshaw will merge to form a new school with two

campuses, and eventually will have a new name. Pre-K will be at Saint Bonaventure and grades K-8 will be at Saint Mary. The Saint Ursula school building will close.

- Saint Sebastian School in Ross Township and Saint Teresa of Avila School in Perrysville will merge to form a new school with two campuses, and eventually will have a new name. In response to the specific recommendation, Pre-K and Kindergarten will be at Saint Teresa and grades 1-8 will be at Saint Sebastian. While the K-8 model is the parent-preferred model in the North Hills schools, the recommendation of Pre-K and Kindergarten at the Saint Teresa site was, in fact, reflective of that particular task force.
- Assumption School in Bellevue and Northside Catholic School in Brighton Heights will be working on strategic plans for the 2018-2019 academic year.
- Christ the Divine Teacher Catholic Academy in Aspinwall and Saint James School in Sewickley are not slated for any reconfiguration, but will operate under the same regional governing board and be shared by all parishes in the region.

Our School Advisory Councils have always been at the heart of our Catholic schools, and their enthusiastic support will be critical to the success of the new schools. The principals will be calling meetings at which the current School Advisory Council members can come together and collaborate on plans, integrating their most treasured and effective activities.

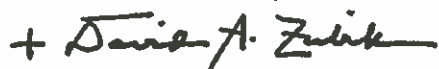
Tuition rates for the 2017-2018 school year are still being calculated. Student financial aid will continue to be available.

Eventually, every elementary school affiliated with the Diocese of Pittsburgh will be part of a similar regional structure. The elementary schools of the North Hills are the pioneers, showing the way for others to follow.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Catholic schools are one of the best ways in which the Church brings young people into a relationship with Jesus and prepares them for life.

Looking forward to our efforts together in being *On Mission for The Church Alive!*, and grateful for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,



Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

DAZ:jkb

cc: Most Reverend William J. Waltersheid, VG
Very Reverend Lawrence A. DiNardo, VG
Very Reverend Robert F. Guay, VE
Very Reverend Samuel J. Esposito, VE

Very Reverend Philip N. Farrell, VE
Dr. Michael A. Latusek
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