



August 9, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As summer begins to wind down, we hope that you are enjoying some reenergizing vacation time with your families.

The Board of Directors of the North Hills Regional Catholic Elementary Schools continues to work on the many aspects of schools' regionalization. At our July 6 meeting, we focused on the areas of fundraising, communication and finance.

Scrip Program/Fundraising

Tara Aiello, our development consultant, provided an update on progress to date on standardizing our gift card program, also called Scrip or Manna. Tara convened a group of 10 gift card program managers along with NHRCES Business Manager Andrea Vescio. Only one of the 11 schools does not have a gift card program. Currently a wide range of gift card options and operating processes are being used. A review of the best practices across all programs is proceeding to streamline and standardize the process including naming the program, vendor selection, technology options, etc. The target date to have the revamped system in place is December 2017 so there is sufficient time to train program managers and educate school families for an April 2018 launch.

Another meeting with gift card managers was scheduled to take place on July 27. In the meantime, all families are strongly encouraged to continue to use the existing gift card programs to earn tuition credit for the upcoming school year and to support the NHRCES fundraising goals established for each school. The fundraising goals are based on estimated enrollments and associated expenses. Additionally, individual parish participation could be offered to the 32 parishes in our region to support the NHRCES.

Communication and Marketing

Efforts are under way to create an overarching NHRCES website. Within the site, each of the three new schools will have their own website designed from a similar template. Nick Vaskov, Executive Director for Communications for the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the school principals and Tara Aiello are working to gather input on the key information needs of the schools. The board STRONGLY stressed the need to launch the website ASAP to facilitate the sharing of information and news for each school, and to enhance the marketing of NHRCES as the new school year quickly approaches.

Financial Review

Representatives from the Diocese reviewed the current financial status for the completion of the 2016-2017 school year and the anticipated operating costs for 2017-2018. Actual expenses are coming into clearer focus and appear to be very close to pre-launch projections. Enrollment is the key factor in calculating both income and expenses. As of the date of the last meeting, enrollment continues to rise.

The financial impact on the seven parishes with schools consolidating this year remains significant. The board stressed the need to pursue a regionalized approach to expenses, consistent with the regionalization of the schools. The Diocese finance staff will be reviewing the anticipated operating expenses, income and various startup costs like school signage with the seven parish pastors and appropriate finance council members. Recommendations will be prepared based on these discussions and will be reviewed at the next board meeting.

Also, the terms of the school building lease agreements and detailed maintenance responsibilities are being reviewed by the Diocese, board members, pastors and finance council members.

Administrator Update

Michael Killmeyer continues to monitor enrollment closely so teacher staffing needs can be addressed quickly. The Board has asked Mr. Killmeyer to monitor the workload of administrative support staff to ensure proper coverage at each school building. No changes in staffing are anticipated at this point. However, late registrations in August may require the hiring of additional personnel.

The following additional update was provided to the board:

- Three candidates were interviewed for the principal position at Blessed Trinity Academy. Jessica Rock was selected and approved by the Diocese. She started work on July 18.
- Mascots and colors for the three newly merged schools were approved on July 7.
 - Blessed Francis Seelos Academy – Saints, navy blue, red and white
 - Blessed Trinity Academy – Bulldogs, royal blue, red (crimson/apple), white
 - Holy Cross Academy – Hawks, navy blue, gold, white
- An Interim Employee Manual was presented for review by the board.

Next Meeting - The next board meeting will be on August 16. Thank you for your continued support and patience as we forge this journey to revitalize Catholic elementary education.

Yours in Christ,
NHRCES Board of Directors

Rev. Kevin C. Fazio, Pastor, St. Alphonsus Parish, Wexford (President)
Matthew Petnuch, St. Teresa of Avila Parish, Perrysville (Vice President)
Judene Indovina, Good Samaritan Parish, Ambridge (Secretary)
Rev. John R. Rushofsky, Pastor, St. Sebastian Parish, Ross Twp.
Rev. Robert J. Vular, Pastor, St. Teresa of Avila Parish, Perrysville
Rev. Timothy F. Whalen, Pastor, St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, Glenshaw
Rev. Paul J. Zywan, Pastor, St. Alexis Parish, Wexford
Anne Monteverde Haus, St. Alphonsus Parish, Wexford
Jane Ann Regan, St. Ursula Parish, Allison Park

Cc: Very Rev. Lawrence A. DiNardo, Vicar General/General Secretary
Dr. Michael Latusek, Superintendent of Catholic Schools
Dr. Lillian Naccarati, Assistant Superintendent
Michael Killmeyer, Regional Administrator
Sr. Patrice Hughes, Educational Consultant
Anna Torrance, Esq., Secretary for External Affairs