



## Diocese of Pittsburgh

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### Office of the Bishop

March 8, 2019

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Our Catholic schools are critical to the future, not just of our Church but of our world. They educate not only 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!*, helping to ensure families have access to Catholic schools that are academically excellent, spiritually vibrant and financially sustainable.

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, from 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.

Among others, the benefits of regionalization include:

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

Following the regionalization of elementary schools in the North Hills region, effective Monday, July 1, 2019, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation known as Pittsburgh-East Regional Catholic Elementary Schools, Inc. (PERCS) will be established to govern Catholic elementary schools in the city and eastern suburbs. A two-tiered structure will consist of a Member Board on which I will serve, and a 15-person Board of Directors whom I have appointed:

- Father Lawrence D. Adams, administrator of the Good Shepherd, Madonna del Castello, Saint Maurice and Word of God parish grouping;
- Father Frank D. Almada, administrator of the Saint Colman, Saint John Fisher and Saint Jude the Apostle parish grouping;
- Janet R. Ciramella, Ph.D., parishioner in the Saint Raphael, Sacred Heart/Shadyside parish grouping;
- Father Christopher D. Donley, administrator of the Saint Benedict the Moor, Epiphany, Saint Mary of Mercy and Saint Patrick-Saint Stanislaus parish grouping;
- Father John B. Lendvai, administrator of the Saint Alphonsus (Springdale), Holy Family, Holy Martyrs, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Our Lady of Victory and Saint Joseph (Natrona) parish grouping;
- James V. Maher, Jr., Ph.D., parishioner in the Saint Bede, Saint Charles Lwanga and Saint James/Wilkinsburg parish grouping;
- Mrs. Mary-Peg Miller, board secretary and parishioner in the Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Resurrection (West Mifflin), Saint Rita, and Saint Therese of Lisieux parish grouping;
- Father Terrence P. O'Connor, administrator of the Saint Angela Merici, Corpus Christi, Saint Patrick (McKeesport) and Saint Robert Bellarmine parish grouping;
- Father Kevin G. Poecking, administrator of the Saint Irenaeus, Saint Januarius, Saint John the Baptist (Plum), Saint Joseph (Verona) and Our Lady of Joy parish grouping;

- Lisa J. Sciuolo, Esquire, parishioner in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Saint Maria Goretti, and Our Lady of the Angels parish grouping;
- Mr. Lawrence E. Scott, parishioner in the Transfiguration and Saint Victor parish grouping;
- Mr. Thomas Smith, board vice president and parishioner in the Saint Agnes, Christ the Light of the World, Holy Trinity and Saint Joseph (Duquesne) parish grouping;
- Father Kris D. Stubna, board president and administrator of the Saint Paul Cathedral, Saint Regis, Saint Rosalia and Saint Stephen parish grouping;
- Father Thomas A. Wagner, administrator of the Saint Mark, Saint Michael and Queen of the Rosary parish grouping;
- Father Edwin J. Wichman, senior parochial vicar of the Saint Bartholomew, Saint Bernadette, Saint Gerard Majella, North American Martyrs and Saint Susanna parish grouping.

All schools in the region will be under one regional administrator, soon to be appointed by the board, who will oversee the day-to-day operations of each school. The regional administrator will, in turn, hire a business manager to supervise the schools' finances.

The current elementary schools in the Pittsburgh-East region are:

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|---|---|
| —Saint Agnes School, West Mifflin*            | —Saint Maria Goretti Catholic School,<br>Bloomfield/Friendship/Garfield |
| —Saint Bede School, Point Breeze              | —Mary of Nazareth Catholic School, White Oak                            |
| —Divine Mercy Academy, Monroeville            | —Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament School,<br>Natrona Heights      |
| —East Catholic School, Forest Hills           | —Saint Raphael Elementary School, Morningside                           |
| —Saint John the Baptist Catholic School, Plum | —Sacred Heart Elementary School, Shadyside                              |
| —Saint Joseph Catholic School, Verona         | —Saint Therese of Lisieux School, Munhall                               |
- \* closing at end of current school year

Tuition rates for the 2019-2020 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.

Thank you for your prayers for and support of our Catholic schools. Catholic education is at the heart of the Catholic mission. Catholic schools are one of the best ways in which the Church brings young people into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Our students learn that God is present in their lives and in the world.

Grateful for our continued efforts together in being *On Mission for the Church Alive!*, and 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 Frederick L. Cain, VE

Very Reverend Philip N. Farrell, VE  
Anna B. Torrance, Esquire  
Dr. Michael A. Latusek