

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

St. Michael, St. Joseph – St. Joseph, St. Joseph – Waite Park, St. Paul, St. Peter

School Consolidation Continues to Move Forward

The new school board continues to work on consolidating the schools of St. Peter, Paul and Michael, St. Joseph Lab, and St. Joseph Waite Park. The board has formed several subcommittees to address various aspects of school operations. These subcommittees have begun collecting data and information from each of the schools.

Given the complexities and nuances of each school and the multitude of items to be addressed in forming this new school system, the board enlisted the help of the Transition Team along with hiring a consultant, Bruce Miles. He has extensive experience helping schools through restructuring and reorganization processes. Bruce worked with the school board and transition team in two separate sessions held in February and March.

The first session focused on what the board and transition team believed the vision, mission, and work priorities for this consolidation process to be. The group envisioned a high level of parish and community excitement and support for the process and an appreciation for the work that is being done. When the process is finished, the group envisions a sense of pride and excitement in the final unified school system that will continue to offer a strong and sustainable Catholic education with best practices brought to all campuses.

The mission discussion focused on how the group will do its work. Commitments were made to deliver effective and accurate communication to parishes, staff and students and to make decisions that keep students and families first. Additionally, the board and transition team will evaluate existing school programs, personnel, and operations to identify best practices. Throughout the process, committees will stay on task, timelines will be identified, and meetings will be meaningful and productive.

There were six work priorities identified:

- 1) Create a marketing and recruitment plan to increase enrollment
- 2) Develop a budget and guidelines for financial operations
- 3) Communicate to educate our families and the public
- 4) Establish guidelines for Human Resource decisions
- 5) Develop plans to address scholarships/financial aid and affordable tuition
- 6) Review school programming, support programs, extracurricular programs, and curriculum

In the second session, Bruce Miles had the group brainstorm what needs to happen in the next 90 days to begin the work of consolidating the schools by addressing the six work priorities. It was evident that the members of the board and transition team are talented individuals who believe in Catholic education. There was a great deal of enthusiasm and discussion through these two facilitated sessions and board members are eager to get to work in creating a great Catholic school system for all of our parish communities.