

January 26, 2018

Dear Families of Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Joseph, St. Peter and St. Therese of Jesus Schools,

As we enter Catholic Schools Week, we want to share some exciting news about our efforts to provide the highest quality, sustainable and affordable Catholic education in southeast Aurora. School administrators, pastors from seven parishes and the Task Force Committee are pleased to announce the combining of our schools and creation of a **new school, Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy starting in the 2018 – 2019 school year. Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy will have two campuses, a north campus located at St. Joseph parish and a south campus located at Our Lady of Good Counsel parish.**

The facilities decision was made after a thoughtful process which included facility assessments for all four schools to evaluate the ideal locations based on size, structure, current and anticipated maintenance needs, amenities like spacious gymnasiums and other variables.

The school's name, Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy, is a reflection of what our new school will represent. Pope St. John Paul II was a great supporter of Catholic education who traveled to more countries (especially Spanish speaking countries) during his years as pope than any of his predecessors. His travels were crucial to providing a global perspective, strengthening the Catholic Church's impact around the world and reinforcing the Church's position as a diverse, multicultural entity. Our school will prepare students for faith-filled lives of purpose by offering a global curriculum that integrates new learning technologies and focuses on teaching students to identify and solve real-world problems with collaboration, critical thinking, communication and creativity.

While we are excited about the progress, there is still much work to be done to finalize Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy's launch in 2018 – 2019. Here is what we can share now:

Structure and Support

- Both the north and south campuses will offer Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade classes so that families can keep their children in the same building.
- Parents can choose to send their child(ren) to either campus.
- Both campuses will share a curriculum, ensuring consistency across both locations.
- Both campuses will share the school's colors, mascot and uniforms, which will be decided with involvement from our students and families.
- Campuses will come together for all major school events such as Mass and Catholic Schools Week activities. (We will begin to identify additional opportunities for collaboration this year to make the transition easier for students).
- Seven parishes are supporting Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy including Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Joseph, St. Therese of Jesus, St. Peter, Sacred Heart, St. Nicholas and St. Mary's.

Tuition and Financial Aid

- Tuition for the new school will be:
 - Single student: \$3,600 tuition fee, \$100 non-refundable registration fee and a \$150 books & materials fee;
 - Two students: \$6,200 tuition fee, \$200 non-refundable registration fee and a \$300 books & materials fee; or
 - Three or more students: \$7,800 tuition fee, \$300 non-refundable registration fee and a \$450 books & materials fee.

- Scholarships and financial aid programs will be available, and information on how to apply will be available soon.
- Students in the new school will be eligible to apply for the new “Invest in Kids Act” Illinois tax credit scholarship. The application process will open January 31, 2018 at 12 p.m. (noon) and can be completed online at www.empowerillinois.org.

Curriculum

- We have identified an exciting curriculum for our new school which includes:
 - Enhanced spiritual growth and guidance to build a strong Catholic foundation for our students.
 - Support for English Language Learners (E.L.L.)
 - Personalized learning plans to customize the experience for each student.
 - Global curriculum with a focus on social justice, environmental concerns, traditions, customs, religions and economic structures.
 - An expansion into new world languages (including Spanish), guest speakers and travel opportunities.
 - Specialized classrooms such as a Discovery Lab, which provides opportunities for Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math (STREAM) learning and hands on experiences, and a Resource Lab staffed with teachers to challenge and support academic growth for both the advanced and struggling learner.
 - Leveraging technologies for learning including 24/7 resources like MyOn, an electronic library providing reading measurement and assessment, and MobyMax, an electronic platform for math and language development.
- In addition to the exciting new curriculum, the new school will offer enhanced extra-curricular options and opportunities for parental involvement.

School Administration

- Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy will have two administrators - a Head of School and a Principal – who will rotate between the two campuses and share responsibilities. Each campus will also have a lead teacher to support the administration.
- We are in the hiring process for the administrative and lead teacher positions.

We will host a community meeting to answer initial questions on Wednesday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. in Aurora Central Catholic High School's cafetorium. At this time, we will also be sharing ways in which families can be involved in upcoming decisions such as school colors, mascot, uniforms and more.

We are excited with the spirit of collaboration among our seven parishes and the opportunities to build an amazing Catholic educational and spiritual experience for our students. We will continue to keep you updated as important decisions are made by sharing information regularly through School Speak for school families, announcements in parish bulletins, on our websites, via social media and in additional correspondence.

We encourage you to contact the Task Force Committee at info@faithforwardaurora.org if you would like to offer support, have suggestions or would like additional information. Most importantly, please pray that God continues to guide us in our efforts.

Sincerely,
Aurora Catholic Schools Task Force