



Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

June 12, 2020

Very Reverend Kris D. Stubna
Saint Paul Cathedral
108 North Dithridge Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Dear Father Stubna:

On May 21, 2020, you submitted to me the recommendations of the Pittsburgh-East Regional Catholic Elementary Schools, Inc. Board of Directors to merge Saint John the Baptist and Saint Joseph Schools. It is my understanding that the board's recommendation came after careful study of financial and demographic data, student enrollment trends, parish consultation and other information with the intention of creating long-term stability for Catholic school education in the Pittsburgh-East Region.

In your letter, you indicate that enrollment at Saint Joseph currently is less than 90 students and nearly 160 at Saint John the Baptist. Given the enrollment numbers and the more global concern about school funding challenges, compounded by the more recent COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact throughout the region, the board concluded that bringing these two programs together would be most optimal, creating one program that has significant enrollment for long-term viability and continuing the quality educational programs and faith formation that have been the hallmark of both schools and which our families and students deserve and expect.

These decisions are difficult ones, but I do appreciate the financial and demographic realities and the importance of taking significant steps to strengthen the ability in the region to support Catholic education for the long term. You note that this recommendation is consistent with the board's long-term strategic plan for affordability, accessibility and sustainability in the East Region for Catholic school education.

In light of the above-mentioned factors, I grant permission to merge Saint John the Baptist School and Saint Joseph School at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. In doing so, I want to recognize the wonderful contributions of teachers and staff who dedicated themselves to educating our children in the Catholic faith and of the many school families and parishioners who have worked diligently over the past number of years in support of Saint John the Baptist School and Saint Joseph School.

The permission to merge the two schools is granted with the clear understanding that every effort will be made to assist the students, and their families, at Saint John the Baptist and Saint Joseph Schools with the transition to this newly merged school. Given the importance of Catholic schools, I know you will encourage current school families and parishioners to continue their support for Catholic education.

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,

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Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh