



# DIOCESE OF WORCESTER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

## Holy Name/St. Peter-Marian Merger

### Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: January 22, 2020

**1. Goals and Rationale:** What prompted the decision to combine the schools and what are you hoping to achieve?

- Declining birth rates since the Great Recession have resulted in 2 million fewer school age children nationwide, a demographic reality affecting private schools across the U.S
- Massachusetts population declines due to relocation to other states was the highest in the nation in 2019, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates.
- The reality of declining enrollment at both schools forced us to ask the question of how to sustain a rich Catholic high school experience for the greatest number of students.
- Aside from reducing the financial costs of running two under-enrolled schools, and assuring that tuition was kept as affordable as possible for families, we recognized that we could offer a stronger academic program and a richer student experience if we brought the two student bodies and the resources of both schools together.
- Our goal is to offer an affordable and academically excellent Catholic education to as many students as possible within a single junior-high/high-school community that will be stronger, in every sense, together.

**2. Campus Siting and Timeline:** Where will the new, combined school be located?

- A formal Facilities Review was launched in December 2019, under the direction of SAAM Architecture, the firm retained by the Diocese to assess the condition, relative strengths and weaknesses of each physical plant, and every facility on the two existing campuses.
- **A comprehensive analysis of the needs, costs, and opportunities represented by both campuses under review is expected to be completed by mid-February 2020.**

- At the same time, another advisory partner, Meitler & Associates, is analyzing demographic data including where our students reside, and how they commute.
- Current transportation services will be continued. Based on demand and feasibility, transportation services may expand to meet families' needs.
- The sale of one campus and the financial commitment of the diocese will permit capital improvements to the physical plant of the campus selected.
- We are prepared to make significant capital investments, as resources and enrollment permit, to upgrade facilities to serve the combined student body with a best-of-class learning environment.
- Once the facilities assessments and cost analysis that is currently underway concludes, **a siting decision is expected to be made by early March 2020.**
- The Diocese will work with SAAM Architecture to develop a renovation plan and schedule and this will be communicated to families as soon as possible.

**3. School Leadership:** How will the administrative team be appointed and when will it be put in place?

- Our goal is to select an experienced and qualified team of administrators to lead the new school and deliver an excellent learning experience.
- Michael Clark will serve as Associate Superintendent and Head of School.
- We hope to announce the appointment of a **principal, an assistant principal of student life, an assistant principal of ministry, and an athletic director before the end of February 2020.**
- The search process has been opened and is being led by a selection committee that includes representation from the Catholic Schools Office and Catholic School Board.
- Internal candidates have been invited to apply, and we are hoping we can select qualified candidates from our internal pool, but will conduct an external search, if necessary.

**4. Faculty, Coaches, Staff:** How and when will the selection and appointment take place?

- As soon as the Administrative Leadership is appointed, we will undertake a thoughtful and transparent process of staffing the school with educators who will deliver strong programs of instruction as well as athletic and extracurricular activities that enrich student life.
- **Announcements regarding initial faculty appointments will be made in Spring 2020. Additional hiring may ensue over the summer.**

**5. Program of Academic Study:** Will there be changes to the curriculum?

- The two schools have had distinct curricular standards and requirements for graduation. **To assure that rising seniors in the Class of 2021 meet their graduation requirements, we will blend the program of studies for the 2020-2021 academic year.**
- A process of curriculum review to make sound decisions about any changes will commence in 2020 for the following academic year (AY21-22).
- This exercise will be conducted by a committee that includes faculty representation, and will be done in conjunction with the 10-year New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) school re-accreditation self-study process that both schools were mandated to begin in 2020.
- **We do not anticipate cutting any existing AP or accelerated course offerings and, based on enrollment, may be able to add to course offerings.**
- We are commitment to maintaining class sizes at appropriate levels so that students benefit from both individualized instruction and right-sized learning cohorts in the classroom.

**6. Athletics and Extracurriculars:** Will they change? Will there be cuts?

- By bringing the two school communities together, **we expect to enhance opportunities to participate in athletics and extracurricular clubs and activities.**
- We may be able to add Freshman and JV squads to some sports that have previously lacked them.

**7. Tuition and Financial Aid:** How will this impact the cost for Families?

- We are deeply committed to making a high-quality Catholic education affordable for the students and families we serve in our diocese.
- **Tuition for the 2020-21 Academic Year will be \$9500 for Grades 9-12 and \$8800 for Grades 7-8.** Rates for international students will be announced at a later date.
- **We plan to sustain a constant level of financial aid for students and families who qualify, apply, and demonstrate need.**
- The Diocese will **begin accepting student financial aid applications on February 3** through FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment. At the time the new school site is announced, the Diocese will provide a deadline for financial aid applications and a date by which financial aid awards will be communicated.
- The projected goal of the Diocesan Legacy of Hope campaign estimates that an additional \$4 million will be added to the Diocesan financial aid endowment that helps fund tuition assistance for families that demonstrate need.

**8. Identity:** What about the school name, mascot, uniform? Who will we become now?

- We will engage a cross-section of stakeholders, and seek significant student input, in the naming of the new school, the selection of mascot, colors, uniforms, and other branding elements of the new school's identity.
- All policies, including the code of conduct, the uniform policy, and other aspects of school life will be reviewed and consolidated before the close of the current academic year.
- **Decisions about the school name, mascot, colors, and uniform/s will be announced by June 2020.**

**9. Oversight and Communication:** How will I be kept informed? What are my opportunities to participate in and have input in decision-making? How will we stay on track?

- A Steering Committee, with working subcommittees, is being appointed by the Superintendent to ensure a smooth a transition.
- We have retained additional expertise and support services to assure the frequency and transparency of our communication with you.

- **Regular updates will be delivered at two-week intervals in February and March** so that families are apprised of pending decisions about administrative leadership, campus selection, planned capital improvements, and other important developments.
- Additional e-news updates will be broadcast as milestones are achieved.
- A portal has been added to the Catholic Schools Office Website (<https://schools.worcesterdiocese.org/>) where the latest news and FAQ's will be accessible.
- An email box (**CSO@worcesterdiocese.org**) has been established and will be monitored for questions, comments, and requests