



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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Clusters 23, 24 and 32 NEWS RELEASE # 4

Report of the School Feasibility Study Steering Committee

On Wednesday, December 9, 2009, the School Feasibility Study Steering Committee for Clusters 23, 24, & 32, met to begin Stage 2 of the study. The School Feasibility Steering Committee is a representative body composed of pastors, principals and parishioners from the parishes of Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Epiphany of Our Lord, Saint Gabriel, Holy Spirit, Saint Monica, Saint Nicholas of Tolentine, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Saint Richard, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Stella Maris, and Saint Thomas Aquinas parishes in South Philadelphia. Each of the parishes has also established a Parish School Study Group. The overall purpose of the Steering Committee is to work in consultation with each of the parish's School Study Committee in order to develop a plan which will ensure, in the best possible way, excellent, accessible, more affordable and sustainable Catholic elementary education within this part of South Philadelphia for both the immediate future and long term.

At the most recent meeting members of the Feasibility Study Steering Committee stated options that had come out of deliberations of each parish's School Study Committee. The options represent a choice. The Parish Study Committee, having completed a realistic assessment of the parish school and its ongoing ability to provide a quality Catholic education according to the four fold criteria of "excellent, affordable, accessible and sustainable," decided on one of the following options:

- **Determine to remain open and independent. (That is, not accepting students or subsidy from other parishes.)**
- **Determine to remain open with assistance from other parishes. (That is, accept students and subsidy from other parishes.)**
- **Determine that the parish cannot continue to sustain a school as it is and therefore close the school.**
- **Determine that the parish cannot continue to sustain an independent school as it is and therefore consolidate with a neighboring parish school and / or form a "joined" school with one other parish.**
- **Determine that the parish cannot continue to sustain an independent school and therefore work to form a stronger regional school with one or more parishes.**

Once the members of the Feasibility Study Committee presented the decisions of the Parish School Study Committee, members agreed, although not unanimously, to form smaller feasibility study groups made up of parishes within the same cluster to begin the next stage of the study process. In this stage the four Feasibility Study Committees will work to create a plan to sustain the choice for how best to maintain excellent, affordable, accessible and sustainable Catholic education for the children of our parishes and region.

Parishioners are asked to keep this process in their daily prayers. You are also encouraged to speak with the members of the Parish Study Group within your parish about any ideas, observations or concerns you may

have as a result of this information or the feasibility study process. The names of your parish School Study Committee can be located in parish bulletin or contacted through the parish pastor or rectory staff. Hearing from as many members of the community is vital to this process.

The Regional Steering Committee is scheduled to meet again in early January and will continue to meet on a regular basis, every three or four weeks, to deliberate on the outcome of the feasibility study. At a point when fully considered options have been created, parishioners will have the opportunity to review and comment on them through each parish's School Study Committee before a final recommendation is prepared. The Steering Committee's recommendations will then be presented to His Eminence, Justin Cardinal Rigali.