



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

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Clusters 23, 24 and 32 NEWS RELEASE

Report of the School Feasibility Study Steering Committee

On Wednesday, October 7, 2009, the School Feasibility Study Steering Committee for clusters 23, 24, & 32 met for the first time. The steering committee is a representative body composed of the pastor, the principal and a parishioner 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.

The overall purpose of the Steering Committee is to work in consultation with all of the parish School Study Committees 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. Each parish's School Study Committee is also meeting on a regular basis.

At the October 7 meeting members of the Steering Committee participated in the First Stage of the Feasibility Study process, namely, "Information Sharing and Understanding." Parish representatives on the Steering Committee were invited to present a portrait of their parishes that was both personal and informative. This portrait included a discussion of the following points:

- The Parish Mission Statement
- The Parish Pastoral Plan
- The Plan for Clusters 23, 24 and 32
- Characteristics Found in Vital Parishes (especially in the area of education)
- Standards for Quality catholic Elementary Schools within the Archdiocese
- Each Parish's 5 Year Financial History
- Each Parish's Annual Review of Catholic Education.

Having studied and discussed this information, the Parish Study Group was asked to consider the following questions as they presented a portrait of their parish:

- What do we understand about our parish and school?
- What do we still need to learn about our parish and school?
- What change needs to happen?
- What change can happen now?
- How can we best inform fellow parishioners about what we understand?

The Regional Steering Committee is scheduled to meet again in early November to continue the work of Stage One: Information and Understanding, while working towards the consideration of options in Stage Two. The Committee 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.