



August 30, 2017

Dear Families of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Sacred Heart, St. Joseph, St. Mary, St. Nicholas, St. Peter, and St. Therese of Jesus:

Our highest calling is to provide our children with a strong foundation in their Catholic faith and prepare them with a first-class education critical to their success and happiness. All our parish and school families take that charge very seriously.

In an effort to fulfill our vision and responsibility to provide the highest quality, sustainable and affordable Catholic education in southeast Aurora, our parishes have formed a Faith Forward Aurora Task Force to evaluate ways in which our schools can collaborate and consolidate resources to achieve that Catholic vision both now and in the future.

The Task Force was formed in response to the findings of the Faith Forward Strategic Plan, a two-year strategic planning process to strengthen Catholic education in our region and address trends affecting our schools. Key findings included declining enrollments, shifting family values, inconsistent education delivery, and unsustainable levels of subsidy and tuition. To read the full report, www.ceorockford.org and click on the "Faith Forward" link.

Our Task Force, which includes pastors, principals, Parish Council, Education Commission and parish and school Finance Council members, has been meeting since early June to work on a plan to develop a thriving Catholic education program on the southeast side of Aurora. In that time, we have accomplished the following:

- Started facility and financial assessments of each school to determine combined resources and obligations.
- Started identifying ways to enhance the educational program so that our children have a strong foundation in the Catholic faith and the skills necessary for success.
- Begun investigating ways to maintain an affordable tuition while offering a quality Catholic education.

While it is still early in our process, here is what we can share:

- **The Task Force is considering various models of collaboration, including consolidating into one school with two campuses.** The one-school, multi-campus model is one that has been successfully implemented in other regions around the nation, yet there is much to be done, and many decisions still to be made as we consider this and other alternatives.

- **There will be no changes for the 2017-18 school year.** We look forward to welcoming back our current families and are still accepting enrollments for new families at all four schools.
- **We anticipate sharing additional details from the Task Force this fall.** We will actively solicit input, feedback and your involvement as we continue to collect information, review alternatives and develop recommendations.
- **We recognize how important it will be to keep our parents and parishes involved and informed throughout this process.** We anticipate sharing information regularly through announcements in parish bulletins, through School Speak for school families, on our websites, via social media and in additional correspondence.
- **We are excited with the spirit of collaboration among all of our parishes and the opportunities this presents to build something amazing for our students.** While we are addressing significant challenges, this is also an opportunity to create a solution that strengthens Catholic education in our region, and better prepares our students for success and happiness as Catholic people.
- **We are establishing official communication channels where parish and school families can stay informed and be in contact throughout this process.** The official website for this process is www.faithforwardaurora.org.

We encourage you to contact the Task Force if you would like to offer expertise, have suggestions or would like additional information. Most importantly, please pray that God continues to guide us in our efforts.

Sincerely,

The Faith Forward Aurora Task Force