ARCHDIOCESE CHICAGO
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
faith, focus, and achievement

February 20, 2015

Dear Families of St. Cornelius, Our Lady of Victory, St. Pascal and St. Tarcissus:

We are excited to inform you that we are forming a partnership to help create a new and necessary vision for Catholic education in our schools. As you know, we were invited by the Archbishop to thoughtfully consider the possibility of our parish schools joining together to create a regional configuration of schools. Our schools were selected for this initiative because of the economics of falling enrollments and rising operating costs that cannot be subsidized by the Archdiocese in the long-term, but also because of the belief that we are strong communities of Catholic faith that can and will work together for the greater good. Catholic education is a vital cornerstone of our parishes for future generations. We were given the choice, and we chose to accept the invitation.

Over the last several weeks, each parish engaged in meaningful conversations with its parishioners regarding its school's enrollment trends, demographic shifts and budgetary projections. While we are all struggling financially, we believe that collectively we can help create this new sustainable legacy for Catholic education in Chicago. Our schools were chosen for this pilot program, and as other areas participate in future programs, they will look to ours for guidance. It is a big responsibility, and it will be challenging, but we are confident in our capabilities as we collaborate with the Archdiocese in this role.

So, what is next? Over the next few weeks, each parish will be forming a small, Local Planning Group comprised of parishioners who will work diligently through next summer. Each planning group will work in tandem with the Regional Planning Group, which will include pastors, representatives from each parish and leadership from the Archdiocese, as well as the Office of Catholic Schools, to develop a collective proposal for the Archbishop and the Archdiocesan School Board to consider and approve. Each parish will conduct an extensive self-assessment, including a review of the facilities, academic and extracurricular activities, and school and parish support. This process will require strength and sacrifice, as each parish has distinctive programs and identities. The goal is not to minimize these cultures, but to honor and preserve their unique and vital qualities, so that the sum of the parts is greater than the whole.

We are working with the Office of Catholic Schools to get the planning process underway, and we are committed to providing you with regular updates. We firmly believe that this is a both necessary and exciting evolution in Catholic education and look forward to our involvement.

We are grateful for your commitment to our schools, and are very hopeful for the future.

Sincerely,

Daniel Fallon
Pastor, St. Cornelius

Robert Fedek
Pastor, Our Lady of Victory

Paul Seaman
Pastor, St. Pascal

Michael Solazzo
Pastor, St. Tarcissus