



Dear SM Families,

Please read the important message below from Superintendent Stephen Perla regarding Taunton Catholic Schools.

I ask that you speak with your child(ren) about these changes this evening so that they have the opportunity to hear about them from you and not another source.

Thank you,

Michael O'Brien, Principal



Dear St. Mary Primary School Family,

Thank you for your support of Catholic school education. We are deeply grateful for your confidence in our schools.

During the past 5 years, the Taunton Catholic schools have experienced a significant decline in enrollment resulting in considerable financial challenges. Also, serious building issues at St. Mary Primary School have necessitated that we take immediate action to insure a viable and sustainable future.

As a result of these challenges, the Taunton Catholic school leaders have been reviewing the specific needs of our Taunton Catholic elementary schools. Our discussions have focused on Catholic identity, academic program, school finance, enrollment, facilities, and development.

To preserve and strengthen Catholic school education in Taunton, the following action-steps will be implemented commencing School-Year 2018-2019.

**Path Forward:**

## **St. Mary Primary School:**

Following a robust review of St Mary Primary School's enrollment trends, facility needs, finances, and the trajectory of Taunton's school-age population, it has been decided to close St. Mary Primary School as of June 30, 2018. St. Mary Primary School and Our Lady of Lourdes School will be UNITED as one new school on the Our Lady of Lourdes School's campus. This decision, although extraordinarily difficult, we believe will result in a stronger Catholic school educational program for all of the elementary school students in Taunton.

To ensure that every St. Mary Primary Catholic School student can be accommodated in Taunton, the Catholic Schools Office's Leadership Team (CSO) has worked with the Leadership Teams of St. Mary Primary School, Our Lady of Lourdes School and Coyle and Cassidy High School and Middle School to develop strong educational and facility plans.

**We are offering Our Lady of Lourdes School's tuition rates to all families who enroll from St. Mary Primary School to Our Lady of Lourdes School.**

## **Our Lady of Lourdes:**

As of the beginning of School-Year 2018-2019, Our Lady of Lourdes School will house students in grades Pre-Kindergarten-Grade 4. The Leadership Teams of both St. Mary Primary School and Our Lady of Lourdes Schools have been working to ensure a smooth transition for all students. Activities and events are being planned for this spring to unite the two school communities into one new school community.

## **Coyle and Cassidy High School and Middle School:**

Coyle and Cassidy High School and Middle School will add to its Middle School program Grade 5. First priority will be granted to those students from St. Mary Primary School and Our Lady of Lourdes School who wish to enroll in Coyle and Cassidy High School and Middle School's grade 5-program. For those students, the grade-5 tuition at Coyle and Cassidy High School and Middle School will be equivalent to Our Lady of Lourdes School's 5<sup>th</sup> grade tuition.

By all of these measures, a seamless Pre-Kindergarten – Grade 12 system (to be housed at 2 campuses) has been envisioned and will be implemented for Taunton's Catholic school students and families.

## **Visioning Committee:**

The CSO is establishing a Visioning Committee that will work with its Leadership Team to develop a roadmap for the future of Catholic school education in Taunton. The

Committee will be comprised of 15 key stakeholders representing leadership, faculty, parents, students, and key philanthropists. The Group will be convened in May 2018.

To learn more about these changes and future plans, you are invited to attend a meeting on:

**Thursday, March 22, 2018**

**Coyle and Cassidy High School and Middle School Auditorium**

**6:30 p.m.**

At this meeting, we will discuss details about the school's facilities, finances, transition and plans to offer a continued quality Catholic education for your children. We hope you can join us on March 22, 2018.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

We ask for your prayers for all those impacted by these changes.

All God's Blessings,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephen A. Perla".

Stephen Perla  
Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Fall River  
Catholic Schools Office