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St. Joseph Catholic Schools Approve Plan for a Revitalized Future

Plan receives strong support from Bishop James V. Johnston, parish leadership and more than 300 stakeholders

St. Joseph, Missouri – As Catholic schools prepare to reopen across the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, a new plan to revitalize Catholic education in St. Joseph, Missouri has been officially approved.

Following a 12-month process involving a 50-person steering committee, more than two dozen listening sessions and input from more than 300 stakeholders in the St. Joseph community, St. Joseph Catholic Schools is today officially kicking off its Vitality in Catholic Education plan with the start of the 2020-21 school year.

A team of parish pastors, school principals, and other lay leaders, will continue meeting to discuss the recommendations from the plan with the intent to establish a full roll out in the 2021-2022 school year.

“Our Catholic schools are treasures which offer a unique partnership with our families, helping to raise happy, holy, healthy children that are wise and good and prepared to meet the challenges of life,” said Bishop James V. Johnston, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph. “Our schools are not only about educating the mind but also the heart, forming the whole person, helping our children to become who God wants them to be, and we do that in a wholesome, religious environment. We are obligated to do all we can to ensure the vitality of Catholic education in our diocese and I’m so proud to see this renewed focus in the St. Joseph area.”

The Vitality in Catholic Education plan emphasizes the development of the whole student in Catholic teachings and values and seeks to stabilize, and eventually increase, enrollment to reach more students across the St. Joseph area.

“I am grateful for the many members of the committee who put a lot of time and effort into forming a workable plan. Collaboration is truly messy work involving a wide variety of people who are passionate about their ideals and hopes, and I am so proud that even with all the challenges and setbacks, they persevered,” said Fr. Christian Malewski, pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in St. Joseph. “I am most passionate about the possibility of forming a unified vision and mission among our Catholic schools. It’s vitally important that we all know

what we're about and what our ultimate goal is – to help form young people to be true disciples of Jesus who will continue to live their faith out in the world and continue to build up the Church as a whole.”

The plan presents six values and operational recommendations for implementation beginning with the 2021-22 school year and into the next several years:

1. Focus on our mission to create disciples in Jesus Christ by educating the whole person, mind and heart, to become who God wants them to be in a wholesome, religious environment and by aligning school culture to this mission.
2. Improve academic performance through best practice and innovative teaching, including incorporating Classical Education practices.
3. Inspire our students into a living relationship with Jesus, feeling loved, safe, and with a sense of belonging in God's family, with a focus on what is true, good, and beautiful.
4. Implement an innovative and ambitious marketing and enrollment growth plan to inspire parents and students to become partners in our mission of helping our students to be disciples of Jesus Christ and become the person God wants them to be.
5. Operate our schools as a system that ensures long term viability and collaboration including establishment of a system board and President.
6. Align our resources, including our teachers and staff, our facilities, and finances, to ensure the most effective and long-term achievement of our mission.

Pat Modlin, implementation director for St. Joseph Catholic Schools Vitality Plan, said, "St. Joseph has had Catholic schools for over 120 years. This plan, endorsed by Bishop Johnston and the Pastors of our schools, is innovative and will transform how Catholic education is delivered, ensuring we'll have Catholic schools here for another 100 years. Having a vibrant and exceptional educational choice available to the St. Joseph community is important for our Catholic families and also non-Catholics who want more options for their children."

Modlin will lead the ongoing work of the Implementation Steering Committee, made up of the Diocesan Schools Office plus the pastors and principals of the Cathedral of St. Joseph, St Francis Xavier Church, and St. James Catholic Church, along with these members of the core team:

- Mission & Catholic Identity - Fr Christian Malewski
- Governance - Sally Sanders
- Academic Excellence - Ann Lachowitz
- Operational Vitality - Tom Roetto
- Student Experience - Michelle Conard
- Facilities - Todd Meierhoffer
- Marketing - Kristi Bailey
- Communications - Mary Ann Didde

Learn more, including how to enroll, at stjosephcatholicschools.com or St. Joseph Catholic Schools on Facebook.

About St. Joseph Catholic Schools

The mission of St. Joseph Catholic Schools is to build and foster a thriving, collaborative & sustainable K-12 Catholic School System in St Joseph, Missouri that educates the whole person through unique attention to academic and spiritual formation, based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. St. Joseph Catholic Schools teaches its students the lessons they will need as they strive to share with the world their gifts and talents, so that in all things God may be glorified. stjosephcatholicschools.com

About the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph was established in 1956 when the Dioceses of Kansas City (founded in 1880) and St. Joseph (founded in 1868) were combined. Led by Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr., the Diocese is home to nearly 124,000 Catholics in 88 parishes and 10 missions across 27 counties in northern and western Missouri. Under the guidance of Bishop Johnston, the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph continues its mission to announce the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to live and serve in charity in northern and western Missouri. kcsjatholic.com