



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 12, 2023

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Archdiocese Receives No Parish Recommendations for School Closures Many Elementary Schools to Develop Feasibility Plans

The Office of Catholic Education and Formation and Episcopal Vicars recently met with one-third of archdiocesan pastors of parishes with elementary schools to evaluate their school's long-term sustainability. This analysis included enrollment trends and projections, building capacity, parish subsidy and other financial support of the school, and proximity to neighboring schools. Pastors were asked to share the data and gather feedback from their parish leaders and parishioners. After a period of discernment, all pastors have recommended to Archbishop Mitchell T. Rozanski that their schools remain open for the 2024-25 school year.

Pastors who recommended remaining open as a standalone school have been asked to submit long-term feasibility plans to the archdiocese by February 1, 2024. The Office of Catholic Education and Formation has provided pastors and their parish leaders with a feasibility plan template that outlines strategies to be taken to ensure the long-term viability of the elementary schools. These reports will be compiled after close consultation with their respective parish communities and will require the consensus and endorsement of their parish council, finance council, and parish advisory school board.

Feasibility plans should include specific goals and steps for the next three school years regarding projected enrollment; school costs for faculty, staff, programs, and supplies; sustainable funding sources; building conditions and capacity; staffing levels; and other considerations. For example, each parish will be asked to consider whether they are unable to support other parish ministries due to their financial investment in the school. Schools must consider how their plans impact neighboring and nearby parish schools.

Archbishop Rozanski will review the feasibility reports and may suggest additional revisions or amendments. It is possible that some parishes may elect in February to reconsider their decisions to remain open.

As the Archdiocese of St. Louis guides this process to plan for the future, Catholic education will remain an integral part of our mission. The Archdiocese of St. Louis will continue to financially support our viable schools through The Annual Catholic Appeal, Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation, the Roman Catholic Foundation of Eastern Missouri, and other philanthropic efforts. We humbly ask the Holy Spirit to guide us, and we ask you to keep the mission of Catholic Education close in prayer this Advent season.

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