



## **August 22, 2005 - Archdiocese of Boston Announces Decision Regarding Little Flower Elementary School in Somerville**

**(Brighton, Massachusetts) August 22, 2005**...After much deliberation and based on the recommendation of the parish pastor, Little Flower Elementary School, 17 Franklin Street in Somerville, will not reopen. At a private meeting this evening, parents are being briefed about the school closing and what their options are for the upcoming academic year. The Catholic Schools Office announced that there is enough classroom space at nine nearby Catholic schools to accommodate all families who wish to enroll their children in one of its schools. It is the Archdiocese's hope that families will continue to choose Catholic school education for their children.

Today's announcement is due in large part to a serious decline in enrollment in the past year and financial pressures resulting from such a decline. The school was facing a deficit of \$130,000 for the upcoming year. Enrollment at Little Flower declined from 168 this past school year to 147 students enrolled in Grades Pre K-8 for the upcoming school year.

The pastor, Catholic Schools Office and the Archdiocese apologize to students, parents and school personnel for the lateness in this announcement. All efforts were made throughout the summer to avoid just this type of decision, but the challenge to overcome the financial pressures resulting from declining enrollments became unmanageable.

The Catholic Schools Office and the Archdiocese want to reassure parents that they do not expect any other closing announcements prior to the start of the 2005-2006 school year.

The principal of Little Flower School and the Catholic Schools Office will work with parents and teachers throughout the transitioning process. Contact information and seat availability for all nine area Catholic schools will be provided to parents at tonight's meeting. All of the nine area schools are ready to meet with parents this week to register children for the upcoming school year. The nine area schools are: St. Anthony and St. Catherine Elementary Schools in Somerville; St. Clement, St. Francis, St. Raphael, and St. Joseph Elementary Schools in Medford; Immaculate Conception and Cheverus Elementary School in Malden; and St. Anthony Elementary School in Everett.

Those students receiving tuition assistance through the Catholic Schools Foundation will continue to receive assistance should they transition to another Catholic school.

The Catholic Schools Office will work with teachers and staff who wish to apply for openings within the Catholic school department. The Catholic Schools Office will place teachers and staff on a priority list and alert all principals in the remaining 154 Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of the affected teachers and staff, seeking their assistance in giving hiring priority to these particular employees. Hiring is done at the local school level.

Little Flower Elementary school property is under the control of the Parish, which will decide its future use.

Last week, following the closing of St. Anthony's in Allston, 67 of the 91 students impacted choose to register their children at St. Columbkille's in Brighton, and 3 have chosen St. Mary's in nearby Brookline, plus two additional students have also applied there. One student has also enrolled at Immaculate Conception in Malden. In addition, of the 16 teachers impacted, 1 has been hired and several are currently involved in interviews for positions in Catholic schools

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