



November 30, 2007 - Dorchester/Mattapan Catholic Schools To Be Revitalized As Part of Comprehensive Education Initiative

Regional School To Be Named Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy

Brighton, MA - Catholic schools in Dorchester/Mattapan will be revitalized through a comprehensive plan, designed at the local level, as part of the Archdiocese of Boston's 2010 Initiative. The plan calls for the establishment of one regional school on five campuses all offering Pre K-8. The name of the school will be Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy.

Parent, teacher and principal committees worked in collaboration with local clergy over the summer to develop options that will improve, strengthen and enhance Catholic education in Dorchester/Mattapan.

After the current school year concludes, the plan will be implemented in two stages. Every student currently enrolled is assured a seat in the new regional school. Transportation and tuition are being addressed and accommodations will be made to assist families to minimize any inconvenience.

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley said, "Catholic education has opened the doors of opportunity to generations of families in Dorchester/Mattapan and across the Archdiocese. The plan being unveiled is the work of many people who have graciously contributed their time and expertise to this important effort. We ask God's blessings on the good work being undertaken to strengthen Catholic education in Dorchester/Mattapan."

Jack Connors, Chair of the 2010 Strategic Planning Committee, said, "Catholic schools in Dorchester/Mattapan have educated scores of leaders who today are contributing to the Commonwealth across many walks of life. We are committed to insuring that today's families in Dorchester/Mattapan have more opportunity to achieve greater heights because of the outstanding Catholic education they will receive here in the Archdiocese of Boston."

Dorchester/Mattapan Plan

The schools will be realigned under a new management structure consisting of a regional board and a regional director. This will provide greater resources for curriculum, staff, technology and finances and ensure the long-term viability of these schools while maintaining their Catholic identity.

The newly established Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy will consist of five campuses all offering Pre K to Grade 8. The campus school locations are: St. Angela, St. Ann, St. Mark, former St. Margaret and St. Gregory. A Power-Point version of the plan is now available on the Archdiocese's web site (www.rcab.org and click on "2010 Initiative" and then "Dorchester/Mattapan 2010 Initiative").

St. Brendan School will remain open under a new Parish Governance model, with assistance from the 2010 Strategic Planning Committee.

Families with students currently at Blessed Mother Teresa School will be encouraged to enroll at the new campus located at 790 Columbia Road in September 2008.

St. Kevin School and St. Peter School will close under this plan. The Catholic Schools Office will work with families of students from St. Kevin and St. Peter Schools to assist with students transitioning to the most convenient campus of the new regional school.

The Bowdoin Street After School Program and Teen Center, both located at St. Peter, will remain open and will receive significant upgrades and enhancements for their important mission.

The St. Ann's campus, when completed in 2009, will be the site of the first newly built Catholic school building in the



City of Boston in nearly fifty years.

The cost to implement the plan the plan will exceed \$50 million and be paid for largely through private donations.

Sr. Kathleen Fitz Simons, CND, Interim Superintendent of the Archdiocese of Boston Catholic Schools, said, "We will be implementing the plan in two stages, beginning in September 2008. The current school year will be unchanged. This plan allows us to enhance curriculum, improve technology at all campus locations, provide increased programs for families beyond the regular school day, work towards increasing teacher salaries and reinforce our commitment to families who want to preserve Catholic education in the community."

The two stages are outlined as follows:

Stage 1 - "The Cornerstone"

- Former St. Margaret campus - Begin construction in January 2008 and open September 2008
- St. Ann campus - open September 2009 (students to relocate as one school body to another campus during construction phase; Catholic School Office to coordinate and work with clergy, principals and families to ease the transition)
- Teen Center at St. Peter's (improvements to be coordinated with Catholic Charities)

Stage II - "The Beacon"

Continue educational improvements - ongoing

- Introduce new programs such as talented and gifted programs
- Introduce new tutoring programs for children with learning difficulties

Construction Improvements Phased in (Target completion Fall 2010)

- St. Gregory Campus - Completed by September 2010
- St. Angela Campus - Completed by September 2010
- St. Mark Campus - Completed by September 2010

John Fish, President and CEO of Suffolk Construction and a member of the 2010 Strategic Planning Committee, said, "We will work with one goal in mind throughout the various stages of this initiative: to deliver to the students and families of Dorchester and Mattapan a Catholic educational experience second to none. The commitment of the Cardinal, pastors and school communities has been essential in this effort and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve and be a part of this very important revitalization initiative."

Dorchester/Mattapan Pastor's Statement

In a joint statement, pastors in Dorchester/Mattapan stated:

"We are at an important and exciting threshold and are immensely grateful to so many people who have stepped forward to assist us in this effort. We especially wish to thank the parent, teacher and principal committees for working with us on this initiative. As pastors in Dorchester/Mattapan we wish to express our complete support for this plan and we pray that future generations will reap the many blessings and benefits of Catholic education."

By:

- Fr. Thomas Foley, pastor of St. Ann
- Fr. Richard Conway, administrator of St. Ambrose
- Fr. George Carrigg, pastor of St. Christopher
- Fr. Paul Soper, pastor of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta



- Fr. Michael McLellan, administrator of Holy Family
- Fr. Daniel Finn, pastor of St. Mark and St. Peter
- Fr. William Joy, pastor of St. Matthew and pastor of St. Angela
- Msgr. Paul Ryan, pastor of St. Gregory
- Fr. James Fratus, pastor of St. Brendan

Emphasis on Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence

A new regional governance structure will be established by the end of January 2008. Following this step, a regional director will be hired and an initial working board put in place to manage the implementation plan and timetable.

Educational improvements will be instituted by September 2008 with a focus on an enhanced shared curriculum and academic benchmarks for all schools. In addition a new regional board will work with local clergy to create a Catholic Faith Formation plan for the school.

The new regional board will establish one tuition rate for all schools. The rate will be established in the spring and will be in line with current tuitions. Discounts will be provided for families registering more than one child and financial aid will be available to families, which qualify. The Archdiocese and 2010 Committee will work with the regional board in order to make Catholic education in Dorchester/Mattapan affordable and available.

Catholic Schools Foundation

The Catholic Schools Foundation is committed to insuring that all students in Dorchester/Mattapan who currently receive scholarships through the Inner City Scholarship Fund will continue to receive those funds once the new regional school has been established. For more than 25 years, the Inner City Scholarship Fund has been providing scholarships to needy students and their families in order to insure that they can attend Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Boston. This past year alone, the Fund provided more than \$6 million in scholarships, as well as continued to provide technology and school upgrades. The funds raised are the result of generous individuals and businesses committed to making sure children are able to receive a Catholic education that is affordable and accessible.

Teen Center and Bowdoin Street After School Program to remain open; Opportunities for Youth in Upham's Corner Neighborhood To Be Explored

As part of the Dorchester/Mattapan 2010 Initiative the Teen Center, located at St. Peter's School and operated by Catholic Charities of Boston, will remain open and be enhanced in the following ways: increased staff to be hired, renovations and upgrades to the facility, improvements to food/meal offerings, and transportation for teens from the Center.

Tiziana Dearing, President of Catholic Charities of Boston, said, "The Teen Center is a critical presence in the community. We are committed to preserving the Teen Center at St. Peter's. The stability of the Center's presence is important as we continue to reach out to families who present diverse needs across a wide landscape of issues, and to provide programming for their children. We look forward to continuing to serve the community, and to growing the range and scope of programs offered there."

Catholic Charities' Teen Center serves teens ages 13-19. Through the Center, adolescents have access to various support services, have a safe place for recreation, and are provided with work opportunities. There are approximately 300 members of the Teen Center, with as many as 145 participating in educational or recreational activities daily. While teens of all races are encouraged to participate, the program is particularly focused on the area's Cape Verdean adolescents who have been disproportionately involved in area violence.

In response to violence in Dorchester/Mattapan and the surrounding areas, the Teen Center was open for extended hours - 13 hours a day, 7 days a week - this past summer.



In addition, the 2010 Committee will work with local clergy and community stakeholders to explore potential programs and opportunities for youth in the Upham's Corner neighborhood. This will commence in the coming weeks and become a priority when the regional board is established.

Teachers and Professional Staff

Every teacher and current staff member will have a priority opportunity to be hired for the new regional school. Applications will be offered by January 2008 online through the Catholic Schools Office (www.abcso.org and go to "Employment Link"). Interviews will be conducted in January and February 2008 and positions offered by April 2008. Sr. Kathleen said, "We value all of our teachers and we will make every effort to move the process along in an efficient and dignified manner respectful of the many contributions they make each and every day in our Catholic schools in Dorchester/Mattapan."

2010 Initiative: When the 2010 Initiative was announced in August 2005 the Archdiocese stated that it believed that the most effective plan will be one developed by drawing upon the collective experience of principals, pastors and local stakeholders working with professional education experts, consultants and practitioners in the community. The Archdiocese is committed to developing a sustainable plan that will meet the needs of students and local communities now and in the future.

About the Archdiocese of Boston: The Archdiocese of Boston was founded on April 8, 1808 and was elevated to Archdiocese in 1875. Currently serving the needs of approximately 2 million Catholics, the Archdiocese of Boston is an ethnically diverse and spiritually enriching faith community consisting of 295 parishes, across 144 communities, educating nearly 50,000 students in its Catholic schools and 156,000 in religious education classes each year, ministering to the needs of more than one million patients annually in its hospitals and 200,000 individuals through its social service outreach. Mass is celebrated in nearly twenty different languages each week. For more information, please visit www.rcab.org

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