



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Catholic Elementary School Consultation to Begin

Last November, we made the decision to postpone All Things New changes to the Catholic elementary school footprint for the 2023-24 school year. As the faithful in St. Louis considered which parish communities should come together, we understood that elementary schools, most of which exist as ministries of our parishes, would be dependent upon the parish footprint we were working to create. Now that we have completed the first phase of All Things New and many of the parish decrees have gone into effect, we will begin consultation with pastors to consider potential changes to our Catholic elementary school footprint.

Throughout October, the Office of Catholic Education and Formation and archdiocesan Episcopal Vicars will meet with many pastors to discuss the long-term sustainability of their parish elementary schools. These meetings will be consultative in nature, and pastors will share and consider this information with parish and school leadership. Once this process is complete, pastors will return recommendations concerning their parish elementary schools to Archbishop Rozanski, much as they would under normal archdiocesan procedure.

We expect to announce school changes in early December to be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year. Because many parishes with schools are in various states of change related to All Things New, it is possible that some school recommendations may come later.

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Background information: Parish Elementary Schools in the Archdiocese of St. Louis:

- The Office of Catholic Education and Formation serves school and parish communities of the Archdiocese of St. Louis in our shared work of faith formation and academic excellence, challenging all to live the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- The Archdiocese of St. Louis and its parishes operate more than 80 elementary schools and educate more than 19,000 students in kindergarten through 8th grade.
- Our existing building structures are currently at roughly 65% capacity and, due to our expansive footprint, many of our schools are facing increased costs that are affecting tuition, declining enrollment often based on geography, increased building maintenance needs, and parishes that are unable to subsidize the cost of a school.



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Catholic Elementary School Consultation to Begin Frequently Asked Questions

How many schools will the Office of Catholic Education and Formation (OCEF) be meeting with?

Roughly one third of Catholic parish elementary schools in the Archdiocese of St. Louis will meet with representatives from the Office of Catholic Education and Formation and their Episcopal Vicar to consult on the current and future status of the school. While some Catholic parish elementary schools may be recommended by the parishes to close, others will enter a feasibility analysis phase.

How were these schools chosen?

OCEF is meeting with a cross section of Catholic parish elementary schools based on enrollment numbers, demographic trends, parish and school financial strength, and proximity to neighboring Catholic parish elementary schools.

When will pastors communicate with parishioners about potential changes?

While every parish will operate a little differently, we expect parish conversations regarding this consultation process to begin in October and continue through mid-to-late November.

How many schools are expected to be impacted?

Due to the consultative nature of this process, we do not know how broad the impact of changes will be or how many parishes will recommend the closure of their elementary schools.

What will happen if pastors decide not to close their parish school?

Pastors who believe their schools are sustainable long-term will be asked to consider their current processes, develop a feasibility plan, and engage in strategic planning efforts to create strong, viable Catholic elementary schools.