



Sacred Heart Catholic School in Lincoln to consolidate

Bishop James Conley has accepted the recommendation to consolidate Sacred Heart School in Lincoln with the surrounding Catholic schools of each family's choice, beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

Over the last 10 years, the Diocese of Lincoln has provided direct subsidies to Sacred Heart School totaling more than \$2 million, from donations and campaigns. In that time, Sacred Heart School has worked diligently with the diocese attempting to create a sustainable financial future, as the current level of diocesan subsidy was unsustainable.

Father Leo Kosch, pastor of Sacred Heart School and chief administrative officer of the school, consulted with the parish and finance councils of Sacred Heart Parish, officials of the diocese, and several other Lincoln-area pastors. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts, Sacred Heart School could not envision a responsible way to sustain operations or address the financial realities of maintenance and upkeep of the facility.

In November, Sacred Heart School outlined a plan for remaining open. The plan involved a number of necessary financial "pillars" which included: successful fundraising; proceeds from the new Good Shepherd Scholarship; tuition from students transferring from the consolidated St. Mary School; the additional enrollment of new students; the ongoing financial support by several parishes and foundations; and finally, "Save the School" campaign pledges made in recent months. Each was essential for the continued success of Sacred Heart School.

"I am deeply saddened at the loss faced by our students, our faculty and staff, and all their families," Father Kosch said. "I am especially saddened that the amazing education provided by our dedicated faculty and staff will cease, here. Current students at our school will be invited to attend other Catholic schools in Lincoln. Ms. Laura Knaus, our very dedicated school principal, will meet with every school family to aid in determining the best educational plan. She will also work with staff members to assist the transition."

As painful as the consolidation is, Father Kosch said, "we pray it will strengthen the other Catholic schools in Lincoln in their mission and outreach to those in need, because the Good Shepherd Scholarships will follow our low-income students to the Catholic school of their choice at other Lincoln parishes. Sacred Heart Parish will also help fund the education of its parishioners at other schools."

In the coming months, Father Kosch will meet with his parish council to discuss the future they envision for both the parish as well as our facilities.

All donors to Sacred Heart's "Save the School" campaign will be contacted to determine what should be done with their donations. The funds may be reallocated toward scholarships for students to attend other Catholic schools. Funds can be added to the Sacred Heart Endowment to assist with long-term support for the Catholic education of our parishioners. Donors may also request a refund.

Sacred Heart School opened in 1928 and currently serves approximately 150 students in grades pre-K through 8. The school employs 16 faculty members and five additional staff.

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