



Diocese of Springfield

Office of the Bishop

Dear Father Matthew Alcombright and the St. Mary's Parish Community,

In the last six months, your parish and high school have witnessed a change in leadership, both with the start of Father Alcombright's pastorate as well as Mr. Matthew Collins' appointment as high school principal. At the same time, our diocesan community has welcomed as our new superintendent Dr. Daniel Baillargeon. With renewed interest, there has been a significant increase in energy and direction at St. Mary's Parish School. While there are still many challenges, this vibrancy is a sign of movement in the right direction for the entire school community.

I know that there have been a number of questions from the parish community, school community, and the accreditation agency about the status of the high school. First and foremost, St. Mary's Parish School is one school community that serves students in preschool through 12th grade. It has been a part of the educative mission of the Catholic Church in western Massachusetts for more than 100 years. It is, for all of these reasons, very important to the Diocese of Springfield.

From a school viability standpoint, St. Mary's Parish School has struggled in maintaining the level of enrollment necessary to sustain the high school efforts. At the same time, the school has not had the opportunity to truly research the best manner with which to provide a high school education with the current enrollment and resources available at the school. As Catholic schools have struggled nationally to answer the same questions, models have emerged which are both sustainable financially and meet the mission-based requirements of Catholic schooling.

It is clear, then, that the St. Mary's Parish Community needs time to undertake a complete analysis to determine the best model of education moving forward. This is a very substantial undertaking and requires significant time and resources. In order to provide this time and keep the positive momentum, the diocese will provide resources so that St. Mary's Parish High School will be open for the 2019-2020 school year.

During this time, the only condition which is placed on the school is to develop a sustainable model of education which will continue to serve the families of the greater Westfield area for the foreseeable future. It is possible that difficult decisions may need to be made in determining what is sustainable; however, the Office of Catholic Schools will work with the leadership team to properly investigate and support the school during this process.

As your bishop, I am hopeful that a way can be found to build upon the successes of the elementary program and continue to provide a much-needed Catholic education at the high school level.

My prayers are with you.

(Most Rev.) Mitchell T. Rozanski
Bishop of Springfield