



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
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NEWS

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## **Catholic Elementary Schools Will Merge in Continuing Plan for Regional Sustainability**

As part of the regional school board's efforts to strengthen Catholic schooling in the south region of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, four elementary schools will merge for the 2021-2022 school year. Bishop David Zubik made the decisions based on recommendations from South Regional Catholic Elementary Schools (SRCES) leaders.

- Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin (Whitehall) and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary schools (Pleasant Hills) will merge, with the use of the Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin campus as the main site of the newly merged school.
- Saint Margaret of Scotland (Green Tree) and Saint Philip schools (Crafton) will merge, with the newly merged school to be located at the Saint Margaret of Scotland campus.

In his letter of acceptance, Bishop Zubik confirmed his understanding that the recommendations came after careful study of financial and demographic data, student enrollment trends, consultation with parish and school communities, and consideration of other important and relevant information in determining the best possible way to continue to provide a Catholic school education for the children in the south region.

"Each day I thank God for all who faithfully support our Catholic schools. They serve our students, our diocese, and Jesus Himself," Bishop Zubik said. "Catholic schools are vital to the future of both our Church and our world. They educate minds, hearts, and spirits, teaching the value of service as they prepare young people to become productive citizens and future leaders."

The mergers reflect the efforts of the new regional governing board, SRCES, to provide for the affordability and accessibility of Catholic schools. With regional governance, all of the parishes in a geographic region support Catholic school education and all have a voice in forwarding the mission of those schools. In 2017, regional governance was launched in the North Hills, where it has stabilized enrollment and finances. SRCES was first an advisory board and then in July of 2020 became a governing board for the South Region and is well on its way to achieving stability of enrollment and finances of the schools in that region.

"This decision comes after more than a year's deliberation and many, many hours of study. While change can be difficult, we can bring together the best of the past to support a strong future for the newly merged schools," said Father David Poeking, President, South Regional Catholic Elementary Schools.

"Our goal remains to provide families with spiritually vibrant, academically excellent and financially sustainable Catholic schools for generations to come," said Michelle Peduto, Director of Catholic Schools.