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**DIOCESE OF
ROCKFORD**

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PRESS RELEASE

Catholic Diocese of Rockford and Aurora Task Force Committee Announce Creation of New School

AURORA— The Catholic Diocese of Rockford has been working on its *Faith Forward* Strategic Plan, which outlines objectives and goals to strengthen Catholic education throughout its 11-county region. The Diocese, in collaboration with the Aurora Task Force Committee, today announced the combining of four schools, Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Joseph, St. Peter and St. Therese of Jesus Schools, and the creation of a new school, Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy, starting in the 2018 – 2019 school year. Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy will have two campuses, a north campus located at St. Joseph parish and a south campus located at Our Lady of Good Counsel parish.

Seven parishes will be supporting the new school including Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Joseph, St. Therese of Jesus, St. Peter, Sacred Heart, St. Nicholas and St. Mary's.

"We are excited about the collaboration between these seven parishes in Aurora and the opportunity to build the best Catholic educational experience for our students," said Michael Kagan, superintendent of schools for the Catholic Diocese of Rockford.

The Aurora Task Force Committee, which includes pastors, principals, Parish Council, Education Commission and parish and school Finance Council members, has been meeting since early June, 2017 to develop a plan for a thriving Catholic education program on the southeast side of Aurora. The facilities decision was made after a thoughtful process which included facility assessments of all four schools to evaluate the ideal locations based on size, structure, current and anticipated maintenance needs, amenities like spacious gymnasiums and other variables.

The school's name, Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy, is a reflection of what the new school will represent. Pope St. John Paul II was a great supporter of Catholic education who traveled to more countries (especially Spanish speaking countries) during his years as pope than any of his predecessors. The school will prepare students for faith-filled lives of purpose by offering a global curriculum that integrates new learning technologies and focuses on teaching students to identify and solve real-world problems with collaboration, critical thinking, communication and creativity.

The Aurora Task Force will be hosting a community meeting on Wednesday, February 7 at 7:00 p.m. in Aurora Central Catholic High School's cafetorium. During the meeting, Task Force Members and a



**The Strategic Planning
Process for Catholic
Schools in the
Diocese of Rockford**

representative from the Diocese will be available to answer initial questions and share ways in which families can be involved in upcoming decisions such as school colors, mascot, uniforms and more.

"This process has been long, but the end result is going to be amazing," said Father Etheredge, chair of the Aurora Task Force Committee. "We are confident the opportunities provided by the new school will equip our students with a strong foundation in the Catholic faith and the necessary skills for future success."

About Catholic Diocese of Rockford

Established in 1908, the Diocese of Rockford is comprised of 105 parishes in Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, JoDaviess, Kane, Lee, McHenry, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties in Northern Illinois serving a Catholic population of more than 300,000. For more about the Catholic Diocese of Rockford visit www.rockforddiocese.org.

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Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy Fact Sheet

As part of the Catholic Diocese of Rockford's Faith Forward Strategic Plan to strengthen Catholic education throughout its 11-county region, four Catholic schools in Aurora will combine to form the Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy, starting in the 2018 – 2019 school year. Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy will have two campuses, a north campus located at St. Joseph parish and a south campus located at Our Lady of Good Counsel parish.

Faith Forward Findings

[Faith Forward](#) is the result of a strategic planning process to strengthen Catholic education and address trends affecting our schools.

- The Aurora-area schools have not been immune to the declining enrollments affecting schools throughout the Diocese and nation.
- The schools are not within the minimum ranges for school enrollment, parish subsidy, and tuition to sustain long-term viability and provide the world-class education the students deserve.
- The Faith Forward Strategic Plan has provided the information we need to reevaluate our schools and develop a plan to address the immediate and long-term needs for the future of Catholic education in Aurora.

Structure and Support

- Seven parishes are supporting Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy including Our Lady of Good Counsel, St. Joseph, St. Therese of Jesus, St. Peter, Sacred Heart, St. Nicholas and St. Mary's.
- Both the north and south campuses will offer Pre-Kindergarten through 8th grade classes allowing families to keep their children in the same building.
- Parents can choose to send their child(ren) to either campus.
- Both campuses will share a curriculum, ensuring consistency across both locations.
- Both campuses will share the school's colors, mascot and uniforms, which will be decided with involvement from students and families.
- Campuses will come together for all major school events such as Mass and Catholic Schools Week activities. (Schools will begin to identify opportunities for collaboration this year to make the transition easier for students).

Tuition and Financial Aid

- Tuition for the new school will be:
 - Single student: \$3,600 tuition fee, \$100 non-refundable registration fee and a \$150 books & materials fee;
 - Two students: \$6,200 tuition fee, \$200 non-refundable registration fee and a \$300 books & materials fee; or
 - Three or more students: \$7,800 tuition fee, \$300 non-refundable registration fee and a \$450 books & materials fee.
- Scholarships and financial aid programs will be available and information on how to apply will be available soon.
- Students in the new school will be eligible to apply for the new "Invest in Kids Act" Illinois tax credit scholarship. The application process will open January 31, 2018 at 12 p.m. (noon) and can be completed online at www.empowerillinois.org.

Curriculum

- There will be an exciting curriculum for the new school which includes:
 - Enhanced spiritual growth and guidance to build a strong Catholic foundation for our students.
 - Support for English Language Learners (E.L.L.)
 - Personalized learning plans to customize the experience for each student.
 - Global curriculum with a focus on social justice, environmental concerns, traditions, customs, religions and economic structures.
 - An expansion into new world languages (including Spanish), guest speakers and travel opportunities.
 - Specialized classrooms such as a Discovery Lab, which provides opportunities for Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts and Math (STREAM) learning and hands on experiences, and a Resource Lab staffed with teachers to challenge and support academic growth for both the advanced and struggling learner.
 - Leveraging technologies for learning including 24/7 resources like MyOn, an electronic library providing reading measurement and assessment, and MobyMax, an electronic platform for math and language development.
- In addition to the exciting new curriculum, the new school will offer enhanced extra-curricular options and opportunities for parental involvement.

School Administration

- Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy will have two administrators - a Head of School and a Principal – who will rotate between the two campuses and share responsibilities. Each campus will also have a lead teacher to support the administration.
- The Diocese is in the hiring process for the administrative and lead teacher positions.

Registration

- Registration for Pope St. John Paul II Catholic Academy is now open.
- Interested families can register by (insert details) or can also contact (insert) to schedule a tour.