

## **Washington Area Steering Committee Update**

As you know, a Steering Committee made up of representatives from each of the parishes in and around the Washington area has been working diligently since February studying past and present educational realities in our schools and parishes and developing recommendations as to how we might continue to provide for the evangelization and formational needs of our parish families. The pastors are happy to report that in mid-July the Steering Committee completed its study and made the following recommendation:

**The Washington Area Steering Committee recommends that a regional Catholic school system be created that would provide quality faith-based Catholic education in a financially responsible, affordable, and sustainable manner for the parishes and families in the Washington and Southern Warren County area.**

In addition, the members of the Steering Committee listed a number of tenets that could be included in the formation of such a system. A copy of these tenets is attached for your consideration. Finally, the Steering Committee made a suggestion that the pastors take immediate action to carefully study this recommendation and to involve appropriate individuals or groups in determining what such a system might look like from the perspective of programs, staffing, finance and facilities.

The pastors are indeed grateful to every member of the Steering Committee for the time, energy and effort put forth in creating this exciting vision of how we, as Catholic communities, might more effectively meet the academic and religious formation needs of our children. Following the Steering Committee's suggestion for immediate action, the pastors met in late July after studying the recommendation and tenets carefully. At that time, they requested the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education and Formation provide more detailed information and options in regard to what a regional Catholic school system might look like. The pastors will begin to review the information from the Archdiocesan staff in August. In fall, the pastors will then update the Steering Committee on their progress and also meet with parishioners, parents and educators. The pastors will move towards finalizing a plan after reviewing the input from these groups. The next phase in the process will move toward timeline and implementation of that plan.

As this process moves forward, please keep in mind the following points:

- No decision has been made as yet and, in the meantime, the 2018-19 school year will proceed without any change.
- While this recommendation is primarily focused on our elementary schools, it will also have positive implications for the evangelization and faith formation needs of all within our parish communities.
- Parishioners, parents and educators will continue to receive communications regarding the development of a plan.
- Parishioners, parents and educators will be involved in making this plan a reality.

The pastors ask for your continued patience and prayers in the coming months as together we formulate a new vision for our elementary schools in the Washington area.