

Key Dates

Tuesday, January 19
Student Meetings held at K-8 Buildings

Wednesday, January 20
St. Helen Parent Meeting
6:00 p.m.
St. Helen School Cafeteria

Thursday, January 21
SS. Peter & Paul Parent Meeting
6:00 p.m.
SS. Peter & Paul Gymnasium

Monday, January 25
St. Thomas Aquinas Open House
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 27
St. Stephen Open House
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Monday, February 1
School Choice Forms returned
to current school office

Thursday, February 25
End of third quarter at K – 8 Buildings

Tuesday, March 2
Fourth quarter begins
Students begin classes at new building

“I am convinced that Catholic schools remain our strongest means of forming, developing, and educating our youth. The strength of our Church is dependent upon our ability to provide quality and affordable Catholic education. I have pledged and continue to pledge my personal commitment to do everything within my power to maintain a strong school program for our diocese.”

- Most Rev. Joseph R. Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw



Saginaw Area Catholic Schools

Most Rev. Joseph R. Cistone
Bishop of Saginaw

Rev. Robert H. Byrne
Vicar for Catholic Schools

Ms. Irene Hensinger
Regional Superintendent,
Principal, Nouvel Catholic Central
ihensinger@sacschools.org

Board of Trustees
Mr. James Wallace, Chair
Mr. Brian Buckingham
Ms. Ruth Buko
Mr. James Fabiano II
Rev. James Heller
Mr. John Kunitzer
Ms. Kathleen McGraw
Mr. James Wolohan

Ms. Nico Beer
Principal, St. Helen
nbeer@sacschools.org

Sr. Ann deGuise, OSF
Principal, St. Thomas Aquinas
adeguise@sacschools.org

Sr. Kathleen Stafford, DC
Principal, SS. Peter & Paul
kstafford@sacschools.org

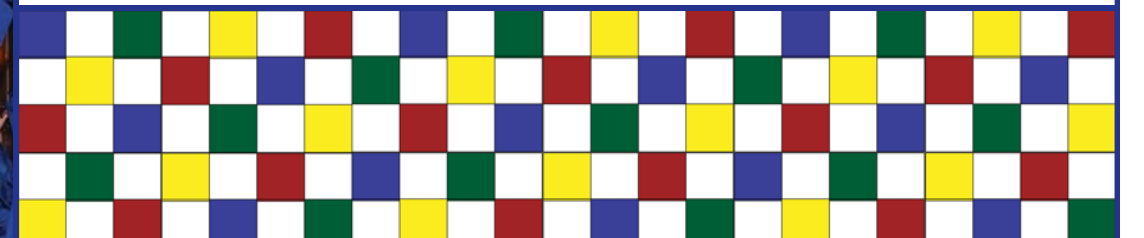
Mr. Dave Szymanowski
Principal, St. Stephen
dszymanowski@sacschools.org



Saginaw Area Catholic Schools

Building a Stronger Future for Children

As part of an overall strategic and operational plan to ensure the stability, excellence and future of Saginaw Area Catholic Schools, the SACS Board of Trustees recommended consolidating its four elementary/middle schools into two buildings. The Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone, Bishop of Saginaw, approved that recommendation December 23, 2009. Effective March 2, 2010, preschool through eighth grade students will attend either St. Stephen School or St. Thomas Aquinas School. All staff will be retained for the remainder of the school year. The faculty and staff from St. Helen and SS. Peter & Paul Schools will follow their students, to the degree possible, to facilitate a smooth transition. It is estimated that approximately \$750,000 will be saved annually, beginning July 2010, through the school consolidation. Merging schools will position Saginaw Area Catholic Schools to be able to strengthen existing programs, maximize resources, expand academic offerings and secure the future of Catholic education in the Saginaw community.



FAQs for SACS Parents

WHY CONSOLIDATION?

Saginaw Area Catholic Schools is committed to offering the best possible education while being responsible stewards of its financial resources. Like many neighboring school districts, SACS enrollment has been declining and SACS has been similarly affected by the downturn in the national, state and local economies. The consolidation of schools is necessary to secure faith-based education for children, now and into the future.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CONSOLIDATION?

- ✘ Securing the future of Catholic education in Saginaw
- ✘ Reinvesting some of the cost-savings to upgrade academics and enrichment activities
- ✘ Easing transition for students, as St. Helen and SS. Peter & Paul teachers and school staffs will accompany them to different buildings

WHY IS CONSOLIDATION HAPPENING IN MARCH?

Studies indicate it is often better, academically and socially, for children to become acclimated to a new situation during the school year. The consolidation timeline is designed to ease the transition for students. St. Helen and SS. Peter & Paul teachers and school staffs will accompany their students, to the degree possible, to a different building. They will work with students and help implement new programs. Merging schools in March will also give St. Helen and SS. Peter & Paul children an opportunity to build new relationships, become comfortable in a new building and involved in school activities. The children can then enjoy their new friends over the summer and look forward to returning to school in September.

WHAT WILL BE SAVED FINANCIALLY?

The system will see significant cost-savings: An estimated \$750,000 will be saved annually, beginning July 2010, through the school consolidation. While this change impacts the elementary/middle schools at this time, the entire SACS system has been and will continue to be under review.

WHO WILL DECIDE HOW TO PRESERVE EACH SCHOOL'S IDENTITY, TRADITIONS, AND EVENTS? WHAT WILL THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE LOOK LIKE?

A transition team consisting of school principals and representatives from Home & School Associations, School Volunteer Organizations, School Improvement Committees, and Athletic Associations is being formed to help preserve and blend the unique cultures and rich traditions alive in all of the schools. St. Helen and St. Stephen will form one transition team, and SS. Peter & Paul and St. Thomas will form another transition team.

WILL I NEED TO PURCHASE NEW UNIFORMS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR?

All uniform options will be acceptable for the remainder of the school year.

IS THERE A PLAN FOR EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATION?

Parents and students will be asked how best to celebrate graduation and honor other school traditions this year.

IS THERE A STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR THE FUTURE?

A strategic plan to address enrollment and efficiencies has been developed under the leadership of SACS Regional Superintendent Irene Hensinger and the SACS Board of Trustees. The plan will work to strengthen the schools in the following areas: Catholic identity, curriculum, finances and enrollment, marketing/communications, and physical plants.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

- ✘ Open houses are scheduled January 25 (St. Thomas Aquinas School) and January 27 (St. Stephen School) from 5-7 p.m. to tour the building and meet the principals and staff.
- ✘ All parents at St. Helen & SS. Peter & Paul will have an opportunity to select the school of their choice. A school choice form will be sent home with students. The form is due Monday, February 1, 2010, to the St. Helen or SS. Peter & Paul school office.
- ✘ Specific class assignments will be made by February 19.
- ✘ St. Helen and SS. Peter & Paul students will begin attending classes on their new campus Tuesday, March 2, 2010.



The Strategic Plan

4 Elementary / Middle Schools will be merged into 2

Saginaw Area Catholic Schools is known for providing excellence in faith formation, academics, athletics, and the arts. For more than a century, graduates have excelled in the areas of science, law, education, the arts, and public service. They have served the Church as priests and religious, and the country as servicemen and servicewomen.

Like many neighboring school districts, SACS enrollment has been declining and SACS has been similarly affected by the downturn in the national, state, and local economies.

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Merging schools in March will give St. Helen and SS. Peter & Paul children an opportunity to build new relationships, become comfortable in a different building and get involved in school activities. Studies indicate it is often easier, socially and academically, for children to adjust to a new situation during the school year. The children can then enjoy their new friends over the summer and look forward to returning to school in September.

It is estimated that approximately \$750,000 will be saved annually, beginning July 2010, through the school consolidation. Merging schools will position Saginaw Area Catholic Schools to be able to strengthen existing programs, maximize resources, expand academic offerings and secure the future of Catholic education in the Saginaw community.

