

~To all interested parties of Catholic School Education in the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph~

Over time and as demographics have shifted, the diocese, school leaders and families committed to Catholic secondary education have imagined the possibilities for educating the next generation of students in the proud traditions of Archbishop O'Hara and St. Mary's High Schools. We have studied this question from different angles and tested many different scenarios. If you haven't read the first Insider Letter, I encourage you to **click here** <http://www.diocese-kcsj.org/docs/Insider-Letter-1.pdf> and catch up to where we are with the emerging Eastern Jackson County Diocesan Secondary School plan.

Since the March 2011 update, we have made progress on several fronts:

- Capital campaign consultants are interviewing pastors throughout the diocese to assess the feasibility of building a new high school. Once these interviews are complete, the consultants will begin interviewing parish and community leaders. They anticipate concluding all interviews in early June.
- A site selection committee is investigating potential properties along the I-470/M-291 corridor. The team has identified several suitable locations and are completing due diligence on these sites for suitability before making a final recommendation.
- A work group of clergy, educators, board members and community representatives from Jackson County continue to meet to provide vision and direction to the plan. This group also is expanding participation through forums and meetings which will begin in late summer 2011.
- Numerous subcommittees are working on key requirements ranging from curricula to facility, from continued enrollment to the legacy of alumni, and from finance to communications and marketing.
- Committee members have made several trips to other dioceses to learn how they planned and built new schools. Those findings will be used in the next steps of the planning process.

A generation in a high school is four short years. Here we have St. Mary's High School which carries a rich tradition that is over 150 years old. In the fall of 2011, Archbishop O'Hara High School will celebrate their Golden Anniversary Class. We are all needed to meet the challenge of continuing the Catholic traditions of educational excellence in both schools - now and at the new school which will serve these communities.

We are indebted to the dedicated teachers, administrators, parents and, of course, students who continue the traditions of these two academically excellent schools in their distinctly Catholic communities. They deserve our support not only for the benefit of their communities but also for the success of our new high school.

God bless you all for your commitment to Catholic education in its many expressions.

Steve Hilliard – Director of Strategic Planning
Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph