



South Regional Catholic Elementary Schools Top 10 Frequently Asked Questions January 2021

*Catholic schools are one of the best ways that the Church brings young people into a relationship with Jesus, while preparing them for life. **Spiritual formation** encourages virtue. **Academic excellence** leads to success in higher education. **Gospel values** promote respect, compassion and service. As our communities change, the way Catholic schools operate is changing to keep this education ministry strong to serve future generations.*

1. What Catholic elementary schools are in the South region?

There are **9 schools** in the region:

- Archangel Gabriel School, Kennedy Township
- Ave Maria Academy in Bethel Park and Mount Lebanon
- John F. Kennedy School, Washington
- Madonna Catholic Regional School, Monongahela
- Saint Elizabeth of Hungary School, Pleasant Hills
- Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Virgin School, Whitehall
- Saint Louise de Marillac School, Upper Saint Clair
- Saint Margaret of Scotland School, Greentree
- Saint Philip School, Crafton

2. How does school regionalization work?

Regionalization of schools provides the opportunity for many more people, from every parish, to support a Catholic school. These schools cooperate under a new form of regional governance, with the hope of strengthening all of them. Responsibility for a school no longer rests with one parish, but becomes an educational ministry shared by every parish in the region. Schools continue to be led by **principals** while a **regional administrator** and business manager oversee operations and finances, reporting to a **regional board** made up of clergy and lay representatives of parishes in the region. Similar efforts have helped rejuvenate Catholic schools in other dioceses and archdioceses, including New York City, Boston, Saint Louis and Milwaukee.

3. What has changed with the South region incorporated?

Parish schools in the region have been run by pastors. They made decisions for fiscal year 2020-2021 regarding staffing, tuition rates, fundraising goals and other issues. On **July 1, 2020**, the schools in the region became part of **South Regional Catholic Schools, Inc.**, a new 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with a two-tiered structure comprised of a Member Board that includes **Bishop David Zubik**, and a Board of Directors responsible for the operation of schools. **Sharon Loughran Brown** has been appointed regional administrator. **Carlos Leyva III** is the regional business manager.

4. What role does the regional board play in the operations and decision-making in our schools?

The regional board is charged with making decisions about how the schools will be structured within the region and overseeing all aspects of the schools' operations in partnership with the regional administrator and regional business manager.

5. How will Catholic elementary schools in the South region be supported financially in the future?

The current funding model of **tuition, parish subsidy and fundraising** continues to be in effect as we transition the parish schools into regional schools. It is imperative that **every parish in the region** helps support and promote Catholic schools in the region through involvement in marketing, communications, enrollment building, fundraising, and other ways that will continue to emerge within the region.

6. Is regionalization just another name for merging and closing schools?

No. The primary goal of regionalization is to ensure families have access to Catholic schools that are **academically excellent, spiritually vibrant and financially sustainable**. Every parish has a responsibility for and a voice in Catholic education as we create a system of **mission-centered schools** that are affordable, collaborative and accessible within a region, ensuring their viability for generations to come. In order to reach that goal, administrators and board members will continue to evaluate each school's viability to ensure that we can provide our communities with sustainable Catholic schools. This may result in future mergers and closures, however difficult those decisions may be.

7. When and how will we learn more about decisions for the next school year? What kinds of things are being decided?

All communication regarding any changes or decisions of the regional board will be communicated via email and will be on each of the school and parish websites within the region. Registration for the 2021-2022 will be opening soon. Currently the administration is working on budgets and tuition requirements for each school.

8. Who is serving on the board in the South region? Below is a current list of board members and the parishes they represent:

- **Rev. David Poecking, President**, Pastor, Archangel Gabriel Parish
- **Patricia Bibro**, Saint Teresa of Kolkata Parish
- **Rev. Harry Bielewicz**, Pastor, Saint Isidore the Farmer Parish
- **Thomas Clark**, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish
- **Rev. Carmen D'Amico**, Pastor, Saint Oscar Romero Parish
- **Rev. Mark Eckman**, Pastor, Resurrection Parish
- **Rev. Robert Grecco**, Pastor, Saint Raphael the Archangel Parish
- **Rev. Richard Infante**, Senior Parochial Vicar, Saint Paul of the Cross Parish
- **Rev. Daniel Maurer**, Pastor, Saint Catherine Laboure Parish
- **Richard Pantaleo**, Saint Andrew the Apostle Parish
- **Charles Rakaczky**, Blessed Trinity Parish
- **Rev. John Skirtich**, Pastor, Our Lady of Hope Parish
- **Rev. James Torquato**, Pastor, Saint Philip Parish
- **Rev. Brian Welding**, Pastor, Saint Michael the Archangel Parish
- **Rev. Dennis Yurochko**, Pastor, Corpus Christi Parish
- **Linda Zug**, Saint Philip Parish
- **Rev. Paul Zywan**, Pastor, Triumph of the Holy Cross

Current vacant seats, Mary, Queen of Peace Parish; Saint James Parish; Saint Katharine Drexel Parish; Saint Matthias Parish

9. What are some of the benefits and successes of regionalization in the Diocese of Pittsburgh to date?

Regionalization has:

- strengthened Catholic identity and united communities of faith
- allowed each region to focus on region-wide comprehensive and uniform instructional programs
- improved recruitment
- begun to stabilize enrollment
- allowed for collaboration in fundraising, technology, athletics and academic programs

10. As a supporter of Catholic education, what can I do personally to help strengthen our schools?

Continue to promote the value of Catholic schools in your daily conversations. Share the facts! Our schools maintain **high standards** for student achievement and academic excellence. Our **dedicated and highly qualified teachers** integrate faith into every subject and help develop each young person's unique, God-given gifts. **Consider volunteering** in one of our schools and supporting them financially. **Spread the word** about the great things our students are doing by following us on Instagram and Facebook - [@SRCESpgh](#). **Invest** in the future of Catholic education by making a **financial contribution**. We also ask for your **prayers** as we build and invigorate the South Regional Catholic Elementary Schools.

*For more information, contact regional administrator **Sharon Loughran Brown** at sharon@srcespgh.org or 412-465-0855.*