



BISHOP EUSTACE PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
Pallottine Fathers and Brothers

May 10, 2019

Dear Friends in the Bishop Eustace Community,

Following a meeting at school on Monday evening, I have received correspondence from a number of current school families and alumni. I read each email carefully with an open mind and an open heart. Based on what was shared with me, I felt it imperative to communicate with every member of our community.

There were two important themes in every email I received recently. The first was a deep, abiding love and appreciation for Bishop Eustace Preparatory School. It was heartwarming to learn the many personal stories shared with me about the impact of Bishop Eustace on generations of families who have entrusted their children to a Catholic education in the Pallottine tradition. I was also deeply touched to read time and again that you have an ardent desire to see our school thrive far into the future. The second theme was one of concern and confusion—concern for the future of Bishop Eustace and confusion regarding misinformation that has been circulating in our community.

Before going any further, please know that I am grateful to all who took time to express their concerns. I take this moment to share my own reflections and provide clarity on key points in order to eliminate confusion.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Pallottine community, I want to state unequivocally that we share your love for Bishop Eustace. There is no plan to sell the school. There is no plan to convert it to a charter school. There is no plan to close the school. We remain fervently committed to providing a holistic Catholic education at Bishop Eustace in the Pallottine tradition and that commitment is unwavering. Bishop Eustace will remain a Catholic school under the auspices of the Pallottines and we will continue to provide a high quality Catholic education to all those who seek its benefits. The Board of Trustees remains committed to providing a private Catholic education to its students following the Pallottine Mission just as it has since the inception of Bishop Eustace in 1954.

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I recognize that there has been uneasiness given administrative changes at school over the past few years. At this time, solidifying the administration of Bishop Eustace with top professionals who are the best fit for our community is a top priority. Multiple highly qualified candidates for the open position of Headmaster have surfaced during our search process. Interviews will take place with these individuals next week. Our goal is to hire and announce the new Headmaster as soon as possible. Please know that in addition to identifying a candidate with the appropriate professional qualifications, we seek an individual who embraces our mission as well as our Catholic identity and wishes to remain with us for the long-term. The Headmaster position is crucial to our ability to provide a rigorous, cutting edge academic program for the benefit of the families we serve. We will focus on the successor to our interim Head of School after the Headmaster process has concluded. Providing the school with stability in administrative leadership is critically important to all of us.

Also in terms of leadership, there has been a call from certain quarters for the establishment of a school advisory board consisting of parents and alumni who would play a supportive role to the Board of Trustees as it governs the school. Such models have been employed at other private schools in the region with varying degrees of success. The progressive philosophy of Saint Vincent Pallotti values the power of laity in leadership. As such, the Board is open to dialogue regarding the formation of an advisory board. However, it is of utmost importance to provide the school community with solid administrative leadership first.

Some emails directed to my attention indicated that the Board and the school have turned down donations and major gifts that potential donors wished to direct for specific purposes. The only instance in which such a gift was declined involved a concept in which the Pallottines would have been required to cede control of the school to a private group. As you know, the school is not for sale and neither are the Pallottines so that concept was not advanced.

Since Bishop Eustace's founding in 1954, our alumni, families, and friends have contributed substantially to the school. That generosity has permitted young men and women to benefit from the education we provide—most especially those who



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otherwise would not have been able to afford it. So, please know that I am personally very grateful to all those who wish to give general gifts, dedicated gifts, or gifts-in-kind to Bishop Eustace. We encourage rather than discourage our community to give back to the school. We all share in the responsibility of stewardship.

Responsible stewardship also means using our available financial resources in the most appropriate manner possible. As an outgrowth of that responsibility, which is under the purview of the Pallottines, a voluntary separation program was announced to all full-time employees on April 5<sup>th</sup>. That action was taken as Bishop Eustace has operated under deficit spending conditions for several years. As enrollment has declined, there has not been a corresponding reduction in staff. The voluntary separation program is designed as a one-time event open to administrators and office personnel, not only faculty. It will ensure appropriate severance based on years of service to our community. Under no circumstances will this program affect the educational offerings we provide. Rather, taking measures to operate with best practices in a business sense will ensure that we continue to provide a rigorous academic program in the college preparatory tradition. There will not be any reductions in course offerings or services that are currently available for our students. In fact, we seek to grow those offerings and services over time.

Many of you have voiced the recent decline in enrollment at Bishop Eustace as a point of concern. Neither I, nor the other members of the Board, are blind to the enrollment trend. It is one affecting private schools across the country. While the Pallottines would continue to operate the school at any enrollment level, we also want the school to grow. Recently, we decided to tackle the enrollment matter head on. We have retained the services of a local marketing firm with over two decades of experience working with Catholic institutions of secondary education and a proven track record of success. The purpose of this partnership is to help us identify the challenges we face as an institution, the areas where our image has been tarnished, and to use the best tools possible to rightly position ourselves as the premiere Catholic college preparatory school in South Jersey. The simple fact of the matter is that we do not possess the resources or the personnel to accomplish what must be done to grow enrollment consistently. Our

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partners will work hand-in-hand with staff members at school and they are getting to know our community. The first phase of the partnership involves identifying our challenges and our weaknesses so that we can overcome them. We're currently nearing the completion of that phase, which has featured extensive interviews with individuals representing all of our internal and external stakeholders. We have no intention of ignoring or running from the challenges we face. We are taking necessary steps to meet them head on.

All of us take pride in the rigorous program of academics, arts, and athletics offered at Bishop Eustace in the charism of Saint Vincent Pallotti. As we move forward, I encourage the community to come together in prayer and purpose to support each other positively. Our work will be ongoing and our commitment will be unwavering.

Mary, Queen of the Apostles, Pray for Us!

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,

Very Reverend Peter T. Sticco, SAC  
Chairman, Bishop Eustace Preparatory School Board of Trustees