



November 18, 2020

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## **BISHOP MCDEVITT HIGH SCHOOL TO CLOSE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

With great sadness, the difficult decision has been made to close Bishop McDevitt High School at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Comprehensive Sustainability Study**

Beginning last summer, Faith in the Future initiated a sustainability study as part of its ongoing strategic planning processes aimed at determining the overall health of each high school in the Archdiocesan system. It engaged a group of highly qualified and independent professionals to undertake this process. The study examined current and projected enrollments, regional demographic trends, future ability to provide a quality academic program, capacity figures and finances. After reviewing the findings, evaluating every option and praying often, the group recommended to the senior leadership of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia that Bishop McDevitt, as well as John W. Hallahan, should close at the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. The recommendation was accepted by Archbishop Pérez after careful study and consultation.

We believe that closing the school at this juncture, although deeply painful, is in the best interest of our students' education, their families' investment, and the future of both.

### **A Message from Archbishop Pérez**

"Today is one of great sadness," said Archbishop Nelson Pérez. "Catholic education is a precious gift that bears lifelong fruit to all those who receive it. The closure of any Catholic school is deeply painful, most especially for the students, teachers, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters so intimately connected to them. I know that today's announcement will weigh heavily on every member of the Hallahan and McDevitt school communities. I share in that grief. Understanding that this moment is one of extreme difficulty, I pledge that we will provide every possible assistance during this transition and that the rich legacy of these schools will be upheld. I have an obligation to ensure that each of our students is being provided with the best educational experience possible and that their teachers and coaches are provided with the resources to fulfill that mission. Given circumstances, those resources were depleting rapidly and could not be restored. My prayers are with all of you and my heartfelt gratitude goes out to our school families for choosing the gift of Catholic education as well as the faculty, administrators, and staff working each day to provide it."

### **Enrollment Challenges**

Despite our strong legacy, Bishop McDevitt today is one of the smallest schools in our system. The student population has dropped below 365 and the school is currently operating at just 40 percent capacity, with forecasts pointing to a continued decline. Without taking action, declining enrollment would have caused tuition increases to accelerate rapidly to cover school operating expenses and prohibited these schools from offering an affordable educational experience.



Declining enrollment would have also put the quantity and diversity of academic courses and extracurriculars at risk, which all families expect and deserve.

### **Impact of the Pandemic**

Undoubtedly, the global pandemic has changed our world in countless ways. While this decision was not made as a direct result of COVID-19, the uncertainty it has caused reinforces the need for action at this time.

### **Your Education Remains Our Priority**

Our first priority is – and always will be – our students. We are committed to doing everything we can to provide needed guidance, resources and support to Bishop McDevitt students and families during this time of transition. Our teachers, administrators and support staff will help students learn about, select and enroll in another Archdiocesan high school. There are many in close proximity to Bishop McDevitt and all are prepared to accommodate additional students

next school year. Every effort will be undertaken to help families be in a position to continue their student's education at the Archdiocese of Philadelphia school of his or her choice.

### **Preserving Our Legacy**

Bishop McDevitt High School, dedicated in 1958, has a rich history and many cherished traditions. For more than 60 years, it has provided an excellent academic, faith-based education to thousands of young men and women. Alumni and their parents remain dedicated and involved far beyond graduation, because they believe wholeheartedly in our mission of creating an environment that promotes spiritual, intellectual and social growth and prepares students for global citizenship.

This school has been a model for Catholic education in Philadelphia for decades. We promise to preserve its legacy, honor its traditions and support students, parents and alumni in any and every way we can.

### **FAQs**

This page will continue to be updated with information as it becomes available. Please check back throughout the coming days and weeks for frequently asked questions and answers, links to resources and more. To submit a question, please email [questions@archphila-occe.org](mailto:questions@archphila-occe.org).

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