



NEWS RELEASE

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**Erie Catholic School System extends offers to teachers;
Strong enrollment boosts total number of teaching positions**

ERIE, Pa. – The Erie Catholic School System (ECSS) today extended job offers to 153 teachers for the 2017-2018 school year. Approximately 90 percent of applicants, all of whom currently work in a Catholic PreK-8 school in Erie, received offers for positions in the new system.

The offers are for preschool through grade 8 teaching positions at the six schools that will comprise the ECSS: Blessed Sacrament School, Our Lady of Peace School, St. George School, St. James School, St. Jude School (Our Lady's Christian School) and St. Luke School.

Set to launch with the 2017-2018 school year, ECSS recently increased its total number of teaching positions in response to strong enrollment across its six campuses. More than 90 percent of the K-8 students from the current nine elementary schools re-enrolled at one of the six campuses for next year. At the six schools that will continue as part of ECSS, the re-enrollment rate exceeded 97 percent. In addition, a robust number of new families are enrolling in Catholic schools for 2017-18.

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ANNE-MARIE WELSH
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1167
Cell 814.746.6889
amwelsh@ErieRCD.org

MARY SOLBERG
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Office 814.824.1171
Cell 814.969.1844
Home 814.734.1332
msolberg@ErieRCD.org

All schools will have full or part-time teachers dedicated to music, art, technology, library, physical education and guidance, in addition to full-time teachers for the core subjects of religion, math, science, language arts and social studies. For core subjects, every prospective hire is certified in their respective subject and grade level.

Whenever possible, teachers were assigned to their first choice of campus and grade level. As a result, nearly 80 percent of teachers will stay at their current campus.

“We took a prayerful and thoughtful approach to creating a fair and effective process for staffing the six campuses with the most qualified candidates from our existing Catholic schools,” said Damon Finazzo, president of ECCS. “We made a concerted effort to strike a balance between honoring experience and commitment while increasing expectations and certification requirements. The result is that the most highly qualified and experienced of an already strong group of teachers have been offered teaching positions in Erie Catholic Schools.”

Teachers who accept offers will experience an increased emphasis on professional development within ECSS. In collaboration with the superintendent of Catholic schools and the Catholic Schools Office, ECSS is planning to offer teachers new opportunities for leadership roles within their buildings, new tools and continuing education for curriculum and instructional development, and an expanded ability to collaborate with colleagues at other Erie Catholic Schools.

The Diocese of Erie proposed the formation of ECSS in 2015 as part of its *Building in Truth and Love* comprehensive plan for Catholic schools throughout the 13-county diocese. Created in July 2016, the system is led by a president who is advised by a board of directors and governed by a set of by-laws. It replaces the current array of independent, parish-based schools in Erie and provides consistent leadership, expertise, resources and accountability that strengthens all schools while enabling each to retain its unique history, community and traditions.

ECSS began building its workforce in February 2017 with the hiring of a president and six principals. Because they will be employed by the ECSS instead of individual parishes, all faculty and staff, including principals, were required to apply for jobs.

Teachers have been asked to formally accept their offers by May 30, 2017. At that point, ECSS will seek to fill any positions that remain open with qualified internal or external candidates.

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