



## Superintendent of Catholic Schools named for the Diocese of Erie

ERIE—The Most Rev. Lawrence Persico, bishop of Erie, has appointed James Gallagher, 39, to the newly established position of superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Erie, effective Aug. 8. This is the first major administrative position filled as part of *Building in Truth and Love*, the comprehensive plan for diocesan schools announced by Bishop Persico earlier this year.

“In developing the pastoral plan, we heard the call for a stronger Catholic Schools Office,” Bishop Persico said. “I am confident Jim will provide strong, pastoral leadership. I am impressed by both his extensive background, and his commitment to Catholic education.”

Father Nicholas Rouch, diocesan vicar for education, said Gallagher brings with him a wealth of experience improving schools throughout the region, as well as experience with strategic planning.

“We are delighted to welcome him to the team. He is passionate about helping educators find ever better ways to enrich student learning,” Father Rouch said. “I know we will be blessed by his professional expertise, his deep Catholic faith and his witness as a husband and father.”

The superintendent will oversee key aspects of school operation including Catholic identity, academic quality, budgeting and major personnel decisions. In addition, he will lead the implementation of *Building in Truth and Love*. He will report directly to Father Rouch.

Gallagher comes to the new position from the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit located in Edinboro, which acts as a liaison between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the 17 public school districts in Crawford, Erie and Warren counties. Since 2013, he has been the IU’s director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, addressing the needs of 54,000 public school students in the region. The Intermediate Unit also provides various services for Catholic schools in the diocese.

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**ANNE-MARIE WELSH**  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
Office 814.824.1167  
Cell 814.746.6889  
[amwelsh@ErieRCD.org](mailto: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](mailto:msolberg@ErieRCD.org)

Gallagher takes on the new role just as the ambitious strategic plan for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie is being implemented.

“I’m a systems thinker,” he said. “I think it’s going to serve us well in terms of seeing the big picture and how pieces are interconnected. I want to work toward a common vision.”

He said listening will be a priority as he develops relationships, determines areas of strength within the system and creates a path through collaboration.

During the 2015-16 academic year, the Diocese of Erie operated seven Catholic high schools and 30 Catholic elementary/middle schools with 566 full-time teachers educating 7,732 students.

“My goal is to bring folks together and make sure we have Catholic education in the diocese for a long time,” he said.

A graduate of Gannon University, Erie, he earned a bachelor’s degree in social studies/secondary education in 2002.

From 2002-07, he taught geography, economics and history at Iroquois High School, Lawrence Park.

Gallagher received his instructional technology specialist certification from Clarion University of Pennsylvania in 2009, and his K-12 supervisory certification as well as his M. Ed in educational leadership from Gannon University. In June, he passed his superintendent certification exam.

He brings a strong Catholic perspective to his new position as superintendent of Catholic Schools. After graduating from Archbishop Hoban High School in Akron, Ohio, he volunteered with the National Evangelization Team, St. Paul, Minn., offering retreats at elementary and high schools throughout the country. He has attended two World Youth Days, and plans to travel to Poland later this month for his third, this time with family members including his wife and three of their children.

Upon his return, Gallagher plans to begin his work by visiting schools and administrators throughout the diocese.

Gallagher lives in Millcreek with his wife, Diane, and their seven children who range in age from 5 to 16; one attends McDowell High School, one attends Mercyhurst Prep School and five attend St. George Catholic School in Erie. The Gallaghers belong to St. Joseph/Bread of Life Community, Erie.

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