



ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

SECRETARIAT FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

222 North Seventeenth Street • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-1299

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

October 8, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

It is with great sadness that we write to inform you that the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is announcing the closure of Cardinal Dougherty High School at the conclusion of the 2009-2010 school year (June 2010). After studying the current and projected enrollments, future ability to provide a quality academic program, regional demographic trends, school capacity figures and the finances of the Archdiocesan high schools, the Office of Catholic Education, in consultation with the Board of Education of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, recommended the closing of Cardinal Dougherty High School and Northeast Catholic High School. After much thought and prayer, Cardinal Justin Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia, accepted their recommendation.

The decision was related directly to a steady decline in Cardinal Dougherty's enrollment, which, over the last ten years, has declined by more than 43% and is projected to decline by an additional 34% over the next three years. The school's physical plant is the third largest in the Archdiocese and is simply too large for the projected enrollment in the region. Without action, declining enrollment would compromise the overall quality of your child's educational experience at Cardinal Dougherty. As enrollment drops, we are unable to hire enough teachers to offer students a diverse curriculum beyond core subjects.

By uniting the current study body of Cardinal Dougherty with our remaining Archdiocesan high schools, we can not only retain but improve the quality of the educational experience in our schools. A strong, healthy enrollment opens the doors to stronger faith formation programs, more competitive academics, improved extra-curricular offerings, and a more well-rounded social environment for all of our students.

We know this is extremely difficult. As educators, it causes us great pain to see these schools close. The Office of Catholic Education, along with your school administrators, is committed to doing everything possible to assist our students during this time of transition. We will assist students to explore and enroll in nearby Archdiocesan high schools, many of which are within reasonable traveling distance of Cardinal Dougherty. More information about open houses and registration will be forthcoming.

We extend our heartfelt support and prayers to your family and thank you for your commitment to Catholic education. We thank the Archdiocesan priests, women religious, lay faculty, staff and administrators who have served the Cardinal Dougherty school community so faithfully for these many years. Please also know that we are steadfastly committed to furthering the Archdiocese mission of offering a Catholic education to all families who desire it for their children.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Richard McCarron
Secretary for Catholic Education

Ms. Mary E. Rochford
Superintendent of Schools