

BERKS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

GOD | FAMILY | ACADEMICS | FUN

February 21, 2019

Dear Berks Catholic Saints Family,

I write to share the news that recently I informed our Board of Directors that at the end of 2018-2019 school year I will be taking on a new role for the Diocese of Allentown. Bishop Schlert has asked me to join the Diocesan Office of Education as the Deputy Superintendent and I have humbly accepted. I have been blessed to serve our Saints Family and the thousands of alumni from Reading Catholic, Reading Central Catholic, and Holy Name over the past eight years.

Berks Catholic is positioned well to thrive long into the future. This spring the strategic plan that will chart Berks Catholic's course over the next five years will be completed. STEM will be an important part of this plan as we look to pivot programmatically. Just recently, we have collaborated with the Berks County Intermediate Unit to provide our school a STEM coach to work with our teachers and students to organically develop curriculum and outfit our new lab in the John R. Post Learning Center. We have also partnered with a local start-up company called Trimatis, which will provide internships to our students. Berks Catholic will be an early adopter in conjunction with Trimatis to use our own recyclable waste to create 3D printer filament. The board has already begun to think about Berks Catholic's next leader and the timing of this announcement allows them ample time to have a new principal in place for the 2019-2020 school year.

Together, we have accomplished a great deal in the past eight years, by merging two amazing Catholic institutions Reading Central Catholic and Holy Name High School into Berks Catholic High School, centered on our four pillars of God, Family, Academics, and Fun. In 2011 we received the Pro Urbe Award from Alvernia University for Vision and Leadership in the Community. Our graduates have matriculated into college at rate of 95% and by June 2019 will have earned over 80 million dollars in academic scholarship monies. Graduates are also discerning the vocations to priesthood & religious life, entering the military, trade and technical schools, or taking gap years and entering the work force. We have increased our enrollment, and grown our endowment. Five years ago, we created a strategic plan in conjunction with our board of directors and many stakeholders to guide us in the areas of Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Finance, Enrollment, Development and Facilities. Our surging enrollment and strategic projections led to the kick-off of the Excellence Faith Future Capital Campaign, which raised over 7 million dollars. The result of this campaign has led to the completion of the John R. Post Learning Center (which includes a STEM lab, five new classrooms, a college like learning commons, a college and career guidance suite, and a cafeteria expansion) as well as new stadium artificial turf and all-weather track renovation. We are currently in the third year of a 1-1 I-pad initiative to enhance our 21st century learning environment. Among all of our accomplishments, there is nothing more important to our success than guiding our young Saints to strive toward gaining eternal life and leading productive lives of service in their human formation.

Berks Catholic High School, Inc.

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As I reflect on the last eight years, I am thoughtful about ways I could have been a better principal or helped more people and mindful of work still to be done. But I know going forward that our talented administrative team, devoted faculty and staff, loyal alumni, dedicated board of directors, parents, grandparents and the greater Reading-Berks Business community, all of which I am so thankful for, are poised to catapult Berks Catholic successfully into the future. With all that being said, I am most grateful for our students, #GreatSaints. The young people I have had the pleasure of working with are vital to the future of our Church and Country. It is my hope and prayer that Berks Catholic has given them God, Family, Academics, and Fun; that they come to understand the importance of learning people's names and saying the words "I love you" & "thank you"; that they are grounded in their faith, with a moral compass and are open, loving, and respectful to all.

In July when I move into my new role at the Diocese, I will not be far away and I will work to help strengthen all of the Catholic schools in the Diocese, always with a close eye on my Berks Catholic Family. God Bless you, your families, and Go Saints!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TB' with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tony Balistrere