



December 6, 2024

Dear St. Kateri School Community:

With sadness, I write to let you know that St. Kateri School will close in June 2025, at the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

Please know that this decision was not made lightly, but only after much prayer, consultation, and effort to reverse the enrollment trends. Kindly allow me this opportunity to explain to you the reality that has led to this difficult decision.

Over the past several years, great efforts have been made to create a healthy school enrollment that would be beneficial for the students, faculty, and staff, as well as for the parish, including bringing on board an experienced principal and resources to reverse the on-going trend. Dedicated parents, together with staff, have championed the school to the neighborhood with publicity and social media to try to increase the student population. Early enrollment was encouraged to boost registrations. Unfortunately, such efforts have not changed the trend of fewer and fewer students attending St. Kateri School. The lack of a critical number of students in the primary grades (K-5) has resulted in unusually small classes and simultaneously increased the expenses for the parish to an unsustainable level.

The school attendance history shown below indicates this concerning downward trend:

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Pre-K Enrollment</b>	<b>K-5 Enrollment</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>
2018-2019	98	98	196
2019-2020	105	91	196
2020-2021	52	92	144
2021-2022	74	102	176
2022-2023	63	85	148
2023-2024	71	77	148
2024-2025	53	62	115



For a balanced school budget, enrollment needs to have an average of 18 students in each grade for K-5 (excluding Pre-K), with a total of 108; this number has not been reached in the past seven years and for this school year, the school only has 62 K-5 students.

Below is a breakdown of current class size:

<b>2024-2025 Academic Year Enrollment</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Students</b>
Pre-K 3	14
Pre-K 4	39
K	15
1	6
2	12
3	11
4	11
5	7
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>115</b>
• Total PreK Enrollment	53
• Total K-5 Enrollment	62

This trending low enrollment has significant and cumulative financial effects. Tuition collected provides only a fraction of the total costs of educating our young people and operating the school. For this school year alone, the parish will spend a total of \$470,153 for the school, a total that has well exceeded the parish's budget. Additionally, cumulative deficits from the previous seven years, and now this year, have placed serious financial stress on the parish.

The details of the ongoing declining student enrollment and parish financial report was shared with the St. Kateri parish community at Masses on the weekend of October 19th and 20th, 2024. Consultations about declining school enrollment and financial challenges have been ongoing with the parish Finance Council and parish Pastoral Council. This information was also shared by letter with the members of the Diocesan Stewardship Council, the Diocesan School Board, and the Presbyteral Council.

After these consultations, it became increasingly clear that this announcement should be made to allow as much advance notice as is possible to allow families, faculty, and staff, ample time to plan for the future. Understandably, this announcement will be a source of sadness and a period of adjustment. At the same time, we will continue to

make every effort to provide the very best possible environment for our students during the remaining months of this school year, while also working to:

- Ensure that parents and students of St. Kateri School receive a warm welcome in another Catholic school of their choosing, particularly as these schools will have registration opportunities after the beginning of the new year. The Catholic Schools listed below are part of our Diocesan Catholic Schools system, are Middle States Accredited, and located near our campus:

-St. Ambrose Academy, Irondequoit

-St. Rita School, Webster

-Holy Cross School, Charlotte

-St. Lawrence School, Greece.

- Assist St. Kateri School faculty and staff with human resource support and guidance as well as possible placement in a nearby Catholic school.
- Welcome students from St. Kateri School to join the parish's Religious Education program to ensure their ongoing quality formation and education in the faith and sacramental instruction.

In closing, I must share with you that it is a particular source of sadness for me, and I know for many others, that despite the generosity and good efforts of so many in the St. Kateri School community, the school cannot continue. Yet, it remains my firm hope and prayer that our students will continue the practice of the faith at our parish as well as their Catholic school education in the years ahead in nearby Catholic schools where their minds, hearts and souls will be formed and nourished by Jesus Christ.

Please be assured of my prayers for you and I ask that in your kindness, please keep the entire St. Kateri School and Parish community and me in your good prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Fr. Lance Gonyo