PRESS RELEASE
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MAYOR, ARCHDIOCESE ANNOUNCE OFFICIAL PLANS TO TRANSITION TWO PRIVATE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS INTO PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
Innovative approach sets a first-of-its-kind national precedent

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard joined Msgr. Joseph Schaedel, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis (ADI) today in recognizing the Mayor’s approval of St. Anthony and St. Andrew & St. Rita schools becoming Mayor-Sponsored public charter schools.

The ADI is the first in the nation to propose converting private, Catholic schools to secular, public schools that they themselves will continue to operate.

“Having the Archdiocese operate public schools - in a secular way - while maintaining the same level of excellence, is an innovate approach to school reform,” said Mayor Ballard. “If we as a city truly desire to reform public education, we must welcome a variety of organizations and people into the fold and allow them the opportunity to create high-quality public schools.”

At a time when six schools with the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies were at risk of closing their doors, the ADI worked to develop the charter school plan to safeguard the future of the schools. By transitioning both St. Anthony and St. Andrew & St. Rita schools to public charter schools, each institution will have the opportunity to continue their service in education for their students and their community.

“This innovative plan we will undertake has been carefully considered and very thoughtfully crafted to preserve these two schools,” said Msgr. Schaedel. “This plan keeps these schools open in the neighborhoods and among the people they’ve served for decades and where they are certainly anchors and community centers. It provides the greatest educational opportunities to the children of our city.”

The Mother Theodore Catholic Academies submitted a prospectus and letter of intent to the Indianapolis Charter School Board in December 2009, and their full application for charter was completed in February 2010.

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Upon review, the application received unanimous approval by the board. Following recommendation by Mayor Ballard, the City-County Council voted in favor of the charter application earlier this month.

An independent board consisting of seven community leaders makes up the ADI Charter Schools, Inc., which will oversee the two schools to ensure all aspects of governance and operational activities comply with federal and state laws. All current employees of the two schools must re-submit applications for employment.

“Transforming these two schools is the right thing to do to keep these schools open. It is in the best interest of the children, whose interest in this matter is paramount,” said Connie Zitnan, Director of the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies. “As charter schools, our children will be presented with continued individual, unique and proven learning opportunities here in their own neighborhoods.”

For more information on Mayor-Sponsored Charter Schools visit www.indy.gov/mayor.

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