



The following information is provided as background information on Messmer Catholic Schools assuming the management responsibilities for St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy. For additional information, please contact Jane Koepke, advancement director, at 414-264-5440, extension 1235, or jkoepke@messmerschools.org.

Why is Messmer interested in St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy?

Late in 2006, Archdiocese of Milwaukee officials contacted the board of Messmer Catholic Schools and asked if Messmer would be interested in assuming the management responsibilities for St. Leo. The demand for increasing resources, particularly in the area of administration, for one of the two stand-alone schools operated by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee was one of the reasons the archdiocese reached out to the Messmer leadership.

After careful consideration and a thorough due-diligence, the board of Messmer Catholic Schools determined that St. Leo offers an excellent opportunity to expand Messmer's successful school management programs to the St. Leo students.

We are taking the proven educational model we use at Messmer Catholic Schools and will apply it to St. Leo.

When will Messmer assume leadership of St. Leo?

Messmer will begin its management responsibilities in the near future, while ensuring a smooth and orderly transition with the least disruption for the students and staff. Through the remainder of the school year, Messmer will maintain close contact with the St. Leo students, parents and employees with updates on the transition.

Is Messmer planning to move St. Leo to a new building?

A facility assessment is underway. We will continue to study the options available to us and will share all information with the students, parents and staff affected.

Will the name of St. Leo change?

While we certainly respect the tradition and history of the St. Leo name, we also want to ensure that the names of our schools help people understand the model of education in place at each of the three campuses is consistent. At this time, a name change is under consideration, but no final decision has been made.

What will happen to the current St. Leo students?

The St. Leo students will benefit from enhanced educational opportunities offered by Messmer Catholic Schools. We will fully advise parents and students of our progress in that area.

What is the history of St. Leo School?

St. Leo School was established in 1908 and operated until 1970. The school was re-opened in 1977 as an effort to help revitalize St. Leo Parish. St. Leo School remained open until 1985, when it became an elementary grade school site for the Central City Catholic Grade School System.

What is the history of the Catholic Urban Academies?

In 1985, the Central City Catholic Grade School System was created with the support of these parishes Holy Angels, St. Agnes, St. Boniface, St. Elizabeth, St. Gall, St. Leo, St. Michael, St. Rose and St. Thomas Aquinas. There were two primary grade sites – St. Leo and St. Rose – and one middle school site – St. Thomas Aquinas. In the spring of 1994, the Central City Catholic Grade School System ceased operation.

In the fall of 1994, Catholic Urban Academies opened with two K4-8th grade sites at St. Leo and St. Rose. The Academies were separately incorporated and managed by the Archdiocese, in collaboration with a board of directors, principals, teachers and parents.

What happens to the shared sports teams with St. Leo and St. Rose?

The current shared extracurricular activities should remain in place for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year. While we are aware of the important roles that these activities play in the student experience, we have focused our energy on finalizing the transition of the educational arena. A decision on this will be determined at a later date.

What will happen with the current staff and faculty at St. Leo?

Current employees of St. Leo who are employed by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and directly affected by the management change are welcome to apply with Messmer Catholic Schools. With our planned growth, we will be looking for additional qualified educators who meet our rigorous standards.

Will Messmer staff be shuffled to St. Leo?

We do not anticipate any staff changes at Messmer. However, we will draw on the talents of our current staff to ensure a smooth and orderly transition.

Is Messmer planning to assume control of other schools?

Messmer Catholic Schools is, first and foremost, dedicated to providing a high, quality Catholic educational opportunity to the children of Milwaukee. We are not actively searching to expand. The current role with St. Leo was an opportunity presented to us by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Is this a takeover of St. Leo's?

No. Messmer Catholic Schools was not actively searching to develop another preparatory school. The entire process began when the Archdiocese of Milwaukee approached Messmer Catholic Schools.

What are Messmer's plans for St. Leo?

Messmer Catholic Schools believes that the St. Leo Catholic Urban Academy serves a critical role for the children of Milwaukee. It is our goal to build on the long history of St. Leo by enhancing the quality educational opportunities that Messmer Catholic Schools can offer.

How can Messmer Catholic Schools reverse a decline in school enrollment in Catholic schools in Milwaukee's central city?

Messmer Catholic Schools has a proven track record of providing a quality educational product to the parents and students of Milwaukee. We currently have a waiting list of children who want to attend Messmer Preparatory Catholic School and Messmer High School, so it is clear that there is a strong demand by parents.

Our track record also shows that there remains a high demand for our educational programs. When Messmer Catholic Schools assumed the management responsibilities for Blessed Trinity in 1999, the school's enrollment stood at fewer than 170 students. When we upgraded and moved the facilities into the Messmer Preparatory Catholic School, enrollment increased to more than 400.

What is the timeline?

Messmer Catholic Schools is working with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to ensure a smooth and orderly transition. We expect the entire process to be finalized during the next few months. All information will be shared with current and prospective students well before the end of the current school year.