“The target of the Steering Committee was to provide the Pastoral Council with a complete proposal and implementation plan for the 2018-2019 school year for consideration tonight. In the course of our project several challenging issues have been encountered. There is considerable work to be completed in the finance portion of our proposal, and the legal organization proposal was finalized in early December. In addition, more research should be completed regarding the utilization of the existing campuses and the distribution of grades to each of the campuses. This includes visits to other Catholic schools who have experience in campus consolidation and budget formation.

Therefore, we offer the following phased approach for your consideration. First, we recommend a new legal organization be formed to support the establishment of a new school. The legal organization will consist of the Archbishop as sole member of the corporation, a Board of Trustees which will include the Pastor of the Tri-Parish cluster and a Board of Directors. With your approval, work on this organization will begin immediately. We recommend implementation of the new organization for the coming school year, 2018-2019. Taking this step immediately will help the new school organization to fulfill the State of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction, requirements for the School Choice, in which both of our schools participate.

We recommend delaying the unification of the student bodies of the two schools until the 2019-2020 school year. This phased approach will allow the new administration to become established and provide additional time to ensure the financial plan and facilities usage plan can be properly investigated and vetted. This phased approach model has been implemented successfully by other parishes in the Archdiocese and the Archdiocese is supportive of this concept. Our next proposal to Pastoral Council will include the details of the organization wherein we will present the structure, articles of incorporation and the bylaws for your approval. We are targeting the March 20, 2018 Pastoral Council meeting for this recommendation. Following your approval, the Board of Trustees and Board of Directors will be determined. The method for selection of these Boards will be established in the corporate bylaws. While the legal work is being completed, research on finances and educational models will be completed with other schools and parishes.

Tonight, the Steering Committee is asking for your approval to move forward with establishment of a new legal organization with the understanding the unification of the two student bodies will be delayed until the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.”

I want to express my gratitude to the members of the Steering Committee: Bob O’Neill, Committee Chair, Anna Newbury, Barbara Scherrer, Jacki Scholze, Jennifer Robson, Kendra Gabriel, Loretta Jackson, Mario Denoto, Mary MacDonald and Sebastian Rebollar. I would also like to thank the members of the individual Task Force Committees. I am confident that the work we have begun will ensure the future of Catholic education in Burlington.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

[Signature]

The Very Reverend James T. Volkert
Pastor St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Charles
January 17, 2018

Dear School Communities of St. Charles and St. Mary,

On Tuesday, January 16, the Tri-Parish Council met and received the recommendation from the School Unification Steering Committee for the unification of St. Charles and St. Mary Schools.

In April of 2017, the principals of St. Charles and St. Mary prepared a presentation for the Pastoral Council to gather their opinions about a consolidation. The council asked that a Steering Committee be formed to study consolidation, and the School Unification Steering Committee began meeting in May of 2017. The Steering Committee has 10 members, and 10 Task Forces were formed to fully research the needs of unifying our two schools.

In light of the Archdiocesan vision for regional planning and collaboration, which has resulted in Catholic School Systems such as Seton Catholic Schools in urban Milwaukee and Sienna Catholic Schools in Racine, we have chosen to take a proactive approach toward collaboration for our Catholic Schools in Burlington to ensure their long term sustainability and viability. In the last five years three area grade schools have closed due to low enrollments. As the number of school-age children in our community has decreased, our enrollment is following a similar trend.

Evidence that we are stronger together is shown through our Athletic program consolidation. Burlington Catholic Athletics is a vibrant and successful program with more than 150 student athletes and collaborative leaders from both St. Charles and St. Mary.

In fall of 2017 a survey was sent out to school parents. The survey included positive feedback and reflected no strong opposition to unification. As parents expressed in the surveys, it is important that our priority continues to be our Catholic faith-based education with strong academic emphasis.

The purpose of this unification process is to create a model that strengthens and grows Catholic education in our grade school, promotes PreK-12 Catholic formation and education with a strong, vibrant partnership with Catholic Central High School.

Please read the following recommendation that has been presented to the Tri-Parish Council and has my full support. I want you to be aware that our school leaders and our School Unification Steering Committee are continuing to work for a unified school that is sustainable and viable, and looks to the future of Catholic education in Burlington. I ask you to join me in prayer and support of this exciting and vital endeavor.