

Questions and Answers: Regina High School Closing

Why is Regina High School closing?

Regina High School is closing at the end of the current academic year due to economic realities. The projected operating cost for 2009-2010 is \$12,700 per student even after careful control of expenses, salary reductions by teachers and staff, and increased support from the Sisters of Notre Dame. We know that most of our parents cannot afford even half this amount and we cannot consistently raise the over million plus dollars annually needed to provide the program of academic excellence which has always characterized Regina.

What factors contributed to the closing?

The primary factors contributing to our closing are the economy and demographic shifts resulting in a reduced enrollment. The declining enrollment in eastern region Catholic schools, the inability of our families to meet the current tuition level, and several years of operating budget deficits have all played a role in this decision. Nearly three quarters of the current families need some form of tuition assistance.

Who was involved in making this decision?

The Board of Directors of Regina High School made the decision which was accepted by the Sisters of Notre Dame Board of Members. They have been closely collaborating to monitor the school's financial situation and the recommendation to close was made in September.

What happened to the \$500,000 that was raised in 2005 as a reserve fund?

In 2005 the Sisters of Notre Dame determined that they could no longer subsidize the school financially without jeopardizing their other commitments. At that time they invited the wider community of Regina supporters to generate a \$500,000 reserve fund to provide an initial level of financial security to enable the continued operation of the school. Once that was accomplished, the Sisters arranged for Regina to be separately incorporated in 2006, and a Board of Directors was established to govern the school. The funds raised were sufficient to meet the operating deficit for the 2005-2006 school year, with amounts remaining available to the Board of Directors for use as needed. Those funds were totally spent to fund school operations through 2008.

What is the enrollment history of Regina High School?

At its peak in the 1970's, Regina enrolled over 1,000 students. The enrollment has been below 300 for the past 15 years.

Is this related to the closing of parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland?

The closing of Regina is not related to that process. Regina is sponsored by a religious community and is recognized by the Diocese of Cleveland as a Catholic school, but it is not operated by the Diocese. Bishop Lennon and the Diocesan Education Office were informed of the closing by the leadership of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

What was the process in communicating the news to parents, students and faculty?

It is very difficult to announce unwelcome news to people who will be adversely impacted. We have tried to communicate the information to those who needed to know first. Announcements were made to the following groups:

- October 9 Regina faculty and staff
Bishop Lennon and Diocesan Education office
- October 10 Parents of current Regina students by U.S. mail
Sisters of Notre Dame by email
- October 12 Student meetings
- October 13 Parent meeting

How will this announcement affect your academic programs for the remainder of the year?

We know that the news will cause sadness for the Regina community. We do not believe it will, and we will not allow it to, disrupt our high quality educational program which will continue through the end of the school year in June 2010. Students and faculty will receive the support they need to address the transition issues that face them as they plan for next year. This support will be integrated into the educational program. We hope that the skills and strategies learned through this transition will benefit people in the future.

When will the school be closed to the students?

The school will close to students on the last day of the academic year that is scheduled to end for students on June 4, 2010.

What will happen to your current students?

The Regina High School Class of 2010 will graduate on June 1, 2010. The other students will be given assistance to select and transfer to other high schools for 2010-11.

Why did you choose to make the announcement now?

We wanted to make the announcement as soon as possible so we would have plenty of time to support our students and faculty in their transition to new schools and other employment opportunities. We wanted prospective students to know early in the recruiting season that we were not going to be open for the 2010-11 academic year. We also wanted allow time to plan some special events that would be a fitting celebration of Regina's legacy.

What will happen to the site after Regina is closed?

The Sisters of Notre Dame are the owners of the building and property. Since this decision was just made by the Regina High School Board of Directors, there have been no discussions to date on what will happen to the site.

How will this decision affect other Catholic high schools in the area?

We have no information regarding the plans of other Catholic schools. Many are facing the same financial and demographic issues. We hope that enrollment by Regina students for the 2010-2011 school year may provide some stability for other Catholic secondary schools.

Regina has relied on the financial support of friends and alumnae. How do you plan to allocate it now that the school is closing?

Alumnae, foundations, and friends have generously supported the mission of Regina High School. Donors of restricted funds will be contacted to determine the on-going use of those funds. Unrestricted funds and all donations received will be used to provide 2009-2010 tuition assistance for current students and to support current academic year programs and services.

You have an Open House scheduled for October 18. Is it cancelled?

Yes, the Open House is cancelled.

What happens to the test results for the eighth graders who took the Regina placement tests on October 10?

Placement test results will be sent directly to the student. Regina will forward the results to any other Catholic high school requested by the eighth grader's parents.

Have you informed the other Catholic high schools in the area about the closing? Will they accept your students?

An announcement was sent to all Catholic schools on October 12. We plan to work closely with the other Catholic secondary schools to provide for a smooth transition for students.

What type of assistance are you providing students in finding a new school?

Our Guidance department will work closely with students and their families to determine the best academic alternatives for each young woman. Special attention will be given to current junior class for their final year of high school.

Do you anticipate that some students will immediately transfer out of the school now that the announcement is made?

While some students may look to transfer immediately we do not believe that, for the majority, it would be in their best interest and will do what we can to discourage them from transferring before the end of the academic year. We have an engaging and challenging academic program in process and believe it would be detrimental to leave before the end of the year.

What options do Regina students have for continuing their high school education?

There are many options: Catholic, private and public schools from which to choose. We will work with each student and her parents in making the choice that is best for them.

Are you providing support to faculty and staff members in the wake of this announcement? What type of assistance will you provide faculty to find new employment?

Counselors will be available to work with faculty and staff. We plan on providing job placement seminars and support to Regina employees. Many of our faculty and staff have been with Regina for ten, twenty or more years, and we recognize how difficult this announcement will be. We are confident that even in this personally difficult situation, our professional and dedicated teachers will continue to put students first.

What will happen to employees' benefits? (Health insurance, pensions)

We plan to maintain our existing benefit programs for all faculty and staff who continue with Regina through the end of the academic year. Retirement plans can be rolled over or carried forward by the individual. We will schedule meetings with representatives of all of our benefit programs so employees have a thorough understanding of their options.