

OUR HISTORY

The parochial school system in the local area had its beginnings well before Steubenville became a diocese. When Bishop John King Mussio arrived in May of 1945 to become the first Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of Steubenville, there were already about 5,000 pupils in the 35 elementary and secondary schools. In the next twenty years, the student population doubled, and 13 new schools were established. In the more than three decades that Mussio was bishop, some 22 parishes either started new schools, constructed new school buildings, moved into larger buildings, or had major renovations at their schools.

Bishop Mussio's first residency was very close in proximity to the early Catholic Central High School, which at that time was in the downtown area. His closeness to that school and seeing their need to expand to serve the growing student population brought him to ask for the support of the area pastors to move the school to another location. And so, a capital campaign was launched and by 1947 property was bought three miles west of the old school – a tract of land with only limited habitation, standing alone between Johnson Road and Garfield Avenue. Construction began in 1948, and in September 1950 the new Steubenville Catholic Central opened and graduated 171 students in the spring of 1951. Catholic Central has maintained its educational role in the community, with building expansion projects over the years.

The boom years for the local area brought many students to the Steubenville Catholic Schools, and by 1966, when schools throughout the diocese and the nation were at their peak with the largest enrollments ever, more than 2,000 pupils were enrolled in Steubenville and adjacent Wintersville's seven parochial schools. However, the following years saw a drop off of enrollment, and the first mergers of the schools began.

By the time of Bishop Mussio's death in 1978, Holy Name Cathedral and St. Stanislaus schools had closed, leaving St. Anthony and St. Peter's schools to care for students in all four downtown parishes. Meanwhile, west end parishes, including Wintersville, undertook similar moves, joining together to make a new school named Aquinas. Aquinas eventually moved into a local vacant Indian Creek School District building on Lovers Lane in Steubenville in the early 1980s. By then, the remaining two schools in the downtown had merged to make All Saints, which housed lower grades at the St. Peter's building and grades 5-8 at the St. Anthony site. Eventually, with shifting population and enrollment decline, the St. Anthony building was closed and St. Peter's became the only All Saints' location. Through all of this transformation, however, Holy Rosary School, which was close to the Catholic Central building campus, remained independent.

In 2005, the diocese underwent a series of changes with the merging of parishes and the closing of churches. The schools felt the impact and further school consolidation became necessary. By 2008, two new entities were formed, named Bishop John King Mussio Elementary and Bishop John King Mussio Junior High Schools. With the subsequent closings of St. Agnes in Mingo Junction and St.



HONORING OUR PAST

Francis in Toronto, BJKM became the central Catholic school for all of Jefferson County. Initially, there were two buildings used for the elementary students Preschool through 6: the Aquinas building on Lovers Lane and the Holy Rosary site near Catholic Central. The Junior High School housed seventh and eighth graders within a wing of the high school. Within two years, the building on Lovers Lane was closed and BJKM students were all in the former Holy Rosary building— resulting in one large campus within walking distance of one another, and adjacent to the Triumph of the Cross Church.

While there were many moments historically that required the merging and consolidation of schools in the area, Catholic schools around the nation today are seeing a revitalization. This is especially true in the Steubenville area where there has been significant growth at the elementary level and steady growth at the junior high and high school levels. We are now at a different point in the history of Catholic education in our area, and in order to respond to the increased interest we need to make a decision to help support the families that are looking once again at our schools to provide the holistic formation that has been a hallmark of a Catholic education.

Today, Steubenville Catholic Schools encompass grades Pre K -12 and are comprised of three schools: Steubenville Catholic Central High School, Bishop John King Mussio Junior High and Bishop John King Mussio Elementary. These schools integrate Catholic values, beliefs, and traditions within the context of a strong academic program. Students receive daily instruction in religion and attend Mass, stations of the cross, and benediction. They share in a variety of devotional activities, including the rosary and eucharistic adoration. Spiritual development is the core purpose of Catholic education, and that purpose is integrated throughout the curriculum. Our schools strive for academic excellence and also value athletics and the arts as essential to a well-balanced education. Though Steubenville Catholic Schools is foremost a Catholic institution, families of all faiths and traditions who share our core values are welcomed to the school community.

