

Dear Pastors and Catholic School Leaders,

I am writing to advise that I will be leaving the Diocese of Fall River's Superintendent of Catholic Schools position as of June 30, 2020.

Please also see attached statement from Bishop da Cunha and Roger Sullivan (Chairperson, Diocese of Fall River's Central Board of Catholic Schools).

After much prayer and reflection, I have decided to focus my professional attention on assisting the nation's non-public school students who need special education services. I am grateful for the opportunity to advocate for these students during my four years as superintendent. Through that experience I appreciated the deep need on a national scale for advocating for students with learning differences attending non-public schools. That's why I plan to devote myself to providing trainings about the federal IDEA law, advocacy, and program development assistance to non-public school leaders throughout the country.

In addition to my other duties as superintendent, I have been co-leading the USCCB IDEA national study. And I have been deeply engaged with the MA IDEA claim. I have had on-going dialogue with non-public school leaders throughout the nation and became keenly aware of the need for a national special education advocate for non-public school students.

I want to thank Bishop da Cunha and the Central Catholic Schools Board for the opportunity to serve the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Fall River. I am also deeply grateful to the Catholic Schools Office staff, pastors, Catholic school leaders, teachers, parents, and students for their partnership and collaboration. It has been my privilege to serve this Diocese. I will continue to do so until June 30.

Please be assured of my continued prayers for much success.

All God's Blessings,

Steve

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From: Bishop da Cunha and Roger Sullivan, Catholic School Board chair

To: Parents and School Community

After serving for the past four years as Superintendent of Schools, Steve Perla is stepping down to pursue other endeavors. A national search will be conducted over the coming months, led by us and the board. Steve plans to stay through the end of the school year.

Plans for the transition have begun with the Catholic Education Office staff and The Catholic School Board. The new Superintendent of Schools will inherit an organization poised for success, with schools that consistently outperform area public schools. Diocesan schools continue to be education leaders in the region, reflected in high college matriculation rates and strong performance of graduates in college, underscoring the value of Catholic education.

The Diocese of Fall River Catholic Education Office will seek a visionary and hands-on educational leader with the ability to lead its schools with integrity, a track record of building success and managing change, and a commitment to Catholic education, service and social justice.

The next superintendent inherits a collaborative, enthusiastic staff with an involved Catholic School Board and a supportive local community. At the same time, there are ongoing challenges and opportunities to address to ensure Catholic school students in the Diocese continue to have access to high quality schools that are part of the standard of excellence of Catholic schools nationwide.

The high school Academy emphasizing STEM education, which has been supported by higher education partnerships, is an initiative that will continue. The Academy has been supported by meaningful partnerships with institutions including Stonehill College, Boston College and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

A strong team is in place to continue to advocate for and to ensure services for students with disabilities who have been chronically underserved by the state. This advocacy, led by Steve, in partnership with other non-public religious schools for Jewish and for other Christian students, resulted in findings by the federal government that the state has been violating regulations and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act.

We will keep everyone informed as much as possible during the search process. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us or Diocesan Spokesman John Kearns.

We wish Steve every success and thank him for his dedicated service to our schools!

Thank you very much.

Bishop da Cunha

Roger Sullivan