



SAINT ALBERT THE GREAT
At
Assumption Academy

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Five Compelling Advancements Announced Via Town Hall

Partnership between two suburban Roman Catholic schools quickly exceeding expectations, indicating success for the first-of-its-kind educational endeavor

Broadview Heights, Ohio – March 7, 2019 – On Tuesday, March 5, 2019, at 6 p.m., Head of School Edward Vittardi for the newly formed **St. Albert the Great at Assumption Academy** delivered his second town hall-style address since a unique partnership officially commenced between two neighboring schools, Saint Albert the Great of North Royalton and Assumption Academy of Broadview Heights, last October. During the one-hour presentation, student families, parishioners, school staff, Broadview Heights Mayor Sam Alai, and representatives from the Diocese of Cleveland, were presented with **compelling updates that demonstrated the significant amount of progress** made in the past five months and served as an early indication of success.

Staffing updates were among the first presented Tuesday evening. These included the introduction of a new principal, Richard Kaliszewski, who is currently serving as the assistant principal at the Academy of St. Bartholemew in Middleburg Heights. Three new teachers were also introduced for the 2019-2020 school year. Erica Yacobozzi of Incarnate Word Academy in Parma Heights, will join Assumption as the new Kindergarten teacher, a role that opened up following the highly celebrated advancement of the current Kindergarten teacher to the role of Director of Religious Education for the Assumption parish. Tessa Rivera will join as First Grade teacher and comes to the school from Metro Catholic School in Cleveland. Finally, Coletta Thellman, announced as the new Third Grade teacher, who holds a Master's Degree in Education Curriculum and Instruction from Cleveland State University and once walked the halls of Assumption as a student.

Second on the list of newsworthy updates was the school's **progress on fiscal goals**, including a moment to celebrate the remarkable success of two large fundraising efforts. *We Give Catholic*, a web-based campaign which took place last November, generated \$107,000 that will be applied to the 2019-2020 school year budget. A diocese-wide campaign open to parishes and schools alike, Assumption ranked #1 overall for funds raised via *We Give Catholic*. The school's annual "Night at the Races" held in February also garnered \$32,000 for next year's school operational budget. Beyond fundraising, the registration of nearly twenty new students for the 2019-2020 school year, as well as the ability to secure funding from other sources such as grants, contributed to the formation of a sound budget that displays a healthy balance of revenue and expenditure.

Next, Vittardi summarized the development of a **new master schedule**, which will create an 8-period day for all students and is expected to bring much-needed consistency across grade levels. It will also create efficiencies in the application of staff, and this streamlining will result in a significant \$130,000 cost savings in the budget.

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Security has also been under the microscope at Assumption, and several upcoming, related renovations were highlighted. Under Vittardi's leadership, the school team applied for and successfully secured grant funding to build a new secure glass entrance and new school office, which means all visitors to the school will first be funneled to and received in the school office. Raptor Visitor Management System will also be implemented, which ensures every visitor is instantly screened against the registered sex offender database across all 50 United States, as well as custody alert or banned visitor lists, to add a meaningful layer of security to the processing of visitors. Plus, for the first time in Assumption's history, all building exit doors will be outfitted with an alarm system that will be effective twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Staff will access the building via keycards, eliminating the use of traditional keys.

Perhaps most exciting for parents to hear was the myriad of **enhancements that will directly and positively impact the student experience**. Starting with the 2019-2020 school year, specials classes including Spanish will be offered to students in all grade levels, Kindergarten through 8th Grade. Recess will also be offered to all grade levels. With the school day beginning and ending a full hour ahead of Saint Albert, 7th and 8th Grade students at Assumption will be given the option to attend elective classes at Saint Albert's campus for an additional hour of student-chosen education. Electives include Tower Gardening, Video Editing, Roboloco Robotics, 3D Design, Future Entrepreneurs, Shark Tank, Trending Now, Reaching for Christ, Youth Ministry, Exercise Dynamics, and Jujitsu. Previously untapped federal funds available to Assumption have also been accessed to allow for the introduction of ZSpace Virtual Reality equipment, which will be available to students in Grades 4 through 8 and offer six hundred lessons that align well with school curriculum to create new and engaging learning experiences. Finally, a fully functional internal television studio will be introduced, made possible with the support of WJW Fox 8 and the DePiero Family of Saint Albert the Great parish. The studio will replicate a similar offering at Saint Albert's, which was dedicated in memory of parishioner and parent Kathleen Cochran DePiero. Dean DePiero and WJW Fox 8 have, once again, come together to raise the funds necessary to produce a second studio, this time at Assumption, in time for the 2019-2020 school year. The space currently used as a Library at Assumption will also be rebranded as the Learning Commons. Learning Commons will be home base for the new television studio, zSpace Virtual Reality, MakerSpace activities, and STREAM programming, as well as for traditional library aspects.

"At the heart of Catholic education is the students we serve," said **Ed Vittardi**, Principal of Saint Albert the Great and Head of School for Saint Albert the Great at Assumption Academy. "They're the future of our society, our Church, and our world. That's the reason why, when it comes to every single decision we make at Assumption, **we continuously ask ourselves, 'Is it good for the kids?'** This underscores our effort each day, with each student, all decisions."

Student families and parent volunteers like Deborah Saluan, President of the Assumption's Parent CORPS, expressed overwhelming encouragement by the progress shared during the town hall session. "We are beyond excited about the news we received tonight," **Saluan stated** following the meeting's end Tuesday evening. "**The value that's being created for our children now, as well as the value that's being created for future students and generations, is stunning;** and, we're just getting started."

About Saint Albert the Great at Assumption Academy

Anchored in faith and inspired by our Heavenly Mother Mary, Saint Albert the Great at Assumption Academy works in partnership with the Catholic Church and school families to nurture the whole child, developing the potential of students as global ambassadors in God's world. **To learn more about the genesis of the partnership between Saint Albert the Great and Assumption Academy**, visit Assumption's [online News page](#).

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