

Op-Ed Article Submission... November 4, 2021
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Many opinions have been circulating, as well as media attention, in regard to things that are happening around Alleman High School in Rock Island - the “school on top of the hill” as it is affectionately known by many devoted alumni, donors, families, and students.

As the Superintendent of Schools for the Catholic Diocese of Peoria, I have been the recipient of many communications where a “call to action” and a “firm response” were urgently sought. A common theme in these communications has always been, “*Why is the Diocese of Peoria ignoring us or refusing to act to save the school?*”

Well, *we are here; we never left.* It has *never* been our intention to close Alleman High School - one of the six diocesan secondary schools and the only one that serves the northwestern portion of the 17,000 miles that make up the Catholic Diocese of Peoria.

But there has been *change* for our schools, and experience tells us that people tend to resist change. As an example, past decisions on school governance resulted in a shift away from what is known in common parlance as “school boards.” Unfortunately, this change brought with it a loss of communication between Peoria and our high schools. Lesson learned.

As we move toward the future, Coadjutor Bishop Louis Tylka has called for a renewed strategic planning initiative for our six diocesan high schools. Partners in Mission (PIM), a Boston-based consulting group, has been hired to assist with the initiative during the 2021-2022 academic year. PIM has a proven track record and has already worked with Central Catholic High School in Bloomington. The year-long process will involve gathering voices, listening to opinions, and clarifying facts; and when the work is completed, a report will be shared with each of the communities in which our high schools reside.

All of us are capable of growth and conversion, and it is our hope that this strategic planning initiative will further this end in our high schools. As we move forward, let me publically acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the principal, chaplain, faculty, and staff of Alleman. They have our support.

Peoria has not left the room. *We are here. We are listening.* We are trying to move through the loss and fear that change may bring in order for *all of us* to begin again with a renewed hope and trust. For the sake of the future of the “school on top of the hill,” *let’s do this.*