



**Statement from Jason Budd, Chief Negotiator for the Office of Catholic Education,
Regarding Ratification of Teacher Contract**

Earlier today, the Secondary School System of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the Association of Catholic School Teachers, Local 1776 (ACT) reached a two-year agreement on a new contract for full-time, lay high school teachers in the seventeen Archdiocesan secondary schools serving the five-county region.

The Office of Catholic Education (OCE) is pleased that the general membership of ACT ratified the contract today. It was exciting to have our students and teachers back for the 2020-2021 school year on schedule earlier this week. The hybrid instructional model we have in place is designed to support the health and safety of our school communities and enhance the academic achievement levels of our students. With today's announcement, we are able to move forward without interruption for the benefit of the students and school families we serve.

Since July 2020, the focus of the OCE negotiating team has been to achieve a contract focused on the young people entrusted to our care. The newly ratified labor management agreement allows schools to continue to thrive by providing a means to respond efficiently and effectively to the rapid pace of change that is a natural part of the 21st century educational landscape. It also provides the latitude to respond effectively and rapidly and to the unique circumstance of a pandemic.

We are deeply grateful to our teachers for voting to extend their contract earlier this week. It enabled them to be present for their students while the negotiating teams resolved outstanding issues. That course of action truly demonstrated their commitment as Catholic educators. We are also thankful to our teachers for ratifying the two-year agreement which included some additional professional responsibilities, a salary increase and no change or increase to the medical benefit plan.

OCE is most thankful for the sacrifices school families make for their children and takes its responsibility seriously to create classroom environments where excellence in faith formation, teaching and learning is paramount.