

Our Lady of Hope Catholic Church
Religious Education Handbook
2017-2018



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Religious Education Program of the Our Lady of Hope Parish. The RE staff, Father Saunders, Father Farrell, volunteer Catechists and Aides thank you for entrusting your children to our care. We take very seriously the responsibility of teaching the truths of our Catholic faith, both in words and in deeds. United with your dedication to and sharing of the faith, we strive to provide an environment where your children will be endowed with the Faith, Hope, and Love of Jesus.



This Religious Education Handbook will assist you throughout the year in understanding our program and policies. Please feel free to contact us at the Religious Education Office with any concerns you might have.

Let us pray for Christ's blessings on our Catechetical efforts. May God Bless you and your families as you strive to imitate the Holy Family.

In Christ's Love,

Cathy Barshop
Director of Religious Education

Religious Education Mission Statement

Our Lady of Hope Religious Education Program strives to present the doctrine of the Catholic faith in its fullness and entirety as both knowledge to be learned and as life to be lived, with the ultimate objective being to develop adults dedicated to knowing, loving, and serving God always.

Role of Parents

It is the role of the parish to assist parents in nurturing the faith of their children. Parents are encouraged to approach the staff with ideas to meet specific needs in raising healthy and holy Catholic children and youth.

It is the role of the parents to work with and support the RE staff and Catechists in their efforts. Parents are asked to fulfill the following expectations in order to promote the faith of the children and to ensure a quality program.

A parent who would like their child to attend the program is expected to:

1. Be a registered member of a parish.
2. Be responsible for providing the parish with information regarding the child's baptism and other sacraments if applicable.
3. Attend Sunday Mass weekly with the child.
4. Take responsibility for their role as primary educator of the faith.
5. Collaborate with the catechist by sharing the faith at home and by making sure the children do any required follow-up to the lessons taught in class.
6. Teach the child the traditional prayers of the Church at home.
7. Maintain an open line of communication with the child's catechist.
8. Bring the child to class at the prescribed time and pick her/him up promptly at the conclusion of class.
9. Be punctual in bringing his/her child to class.
10. Arrive to class no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of class, and pick up no later than 15 minutes after the end of class.
11. Bring his/her child to class dressed appropriately for the weather, ready to participate.
12. Ensure that classroom behavior is acceptable.
13. Attend parent meetings when requested.
14. Be supportive of the catechist, especially in the area of discipline.
15. Read this handbook, complete and turn in the forms necessary for registration.
16. Inform the religious education staff of the rights of the non-custodial parent in the case of divorce. This is essential to ensure that the program acts in the best interest and safety of the children.
17. Inform the religious education staff of any pertinent medical and emergency information (complete on Registration form).

Role of Students

It is essential that students cooperate with the catechists and aides, as well as the RE staff. Students are asked to fulfill the following expectations in order to ensure a quality program.

A student who would like to attend the program is expected to:

1. Be punctual and prepared for class each week.
2. Arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of class, and be picked up no later than 15 minutes after the end of class.
3. Bring your textbook, activity book, completed homework assignments, and writing utensils to each class.
4. Respect your Catechists and Aides as teachers and role models.
5. Conduct yourself in a manner appropriate to a classroom environment.
6. Behave reverently when in the Church for the reception of Sacraments (e.g. Confessions), as well as during special Liturgies (e.g. Holy Hour).
7. Remember that all property and possessions found in the classroom do not belong to you and are to be left untouched.
8. Obey the No Food policy in the classroom. Exceptions are made for class parties organized by the Catechist.
9. Enter and exit the building through the main school lobby, reserving the side doors for emergencies only.
10. Do not bring electronic devices or other distractions to class. They will be confiscated.

Role of Catechists

Catechists play a unique role in helping people acquire and deepen their Christian faith. Catechists are asked to demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Promote knowledge of faith, the Liturgy and the sacraments
2. Promote moral formation in Christ
3. Teach how to pray with Christ
4. Prepare the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church
5. Promote a missionary spirit
6. Be a role model of how to know, love, and serve God

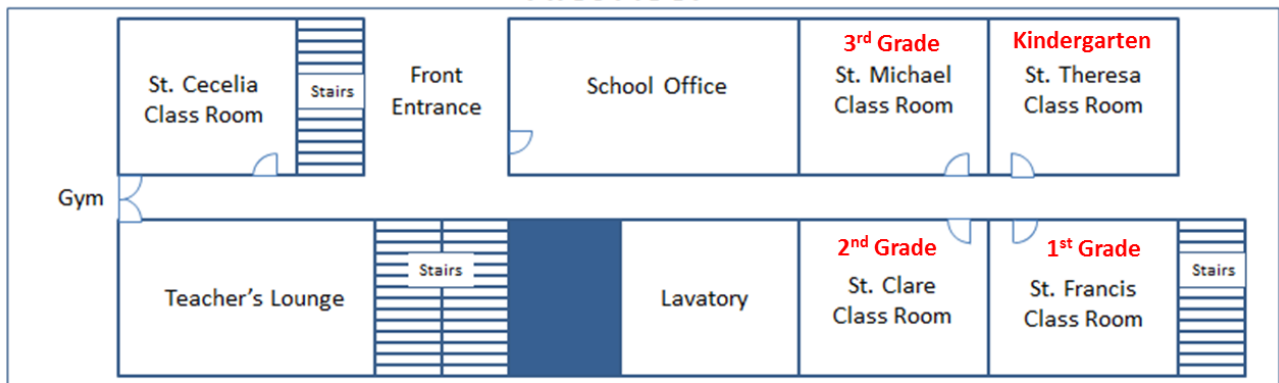
Classrooms

Religious Education classes will be held at the Our Lady of Hope School. There are nine classrooms in the building typically used by the RE Program: four on the bottom floor and five on the top. A map of the school building, including the classes assigned to particular rooms, will be distributed before the beginning of the program year. The map below shows a typical assignment of class locations. This may vary for certain sessions.

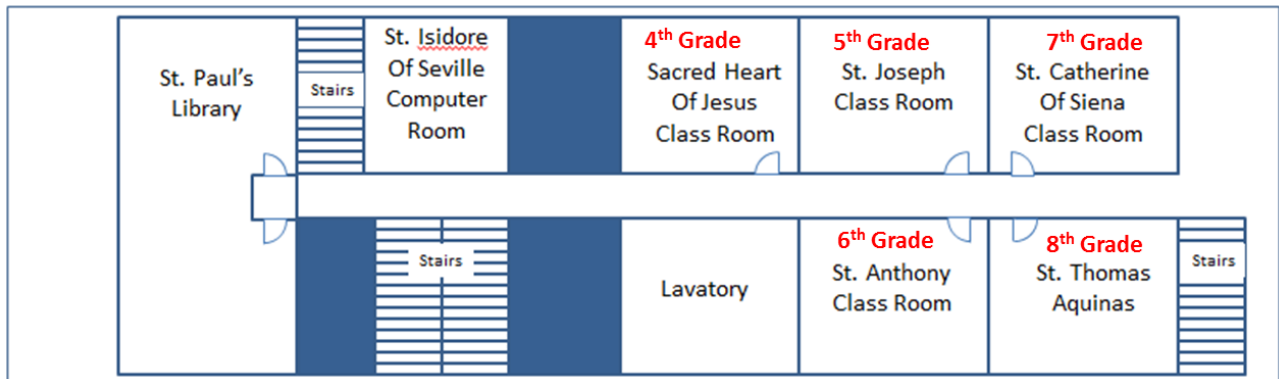
The restrooms located in the hallway near the classrooms are reserved for students only. Adults may use the restroom located in the Teacher’s Lounge on the first floor.

Our Lady of Hope School Religious Education Floor Plan

First Floor

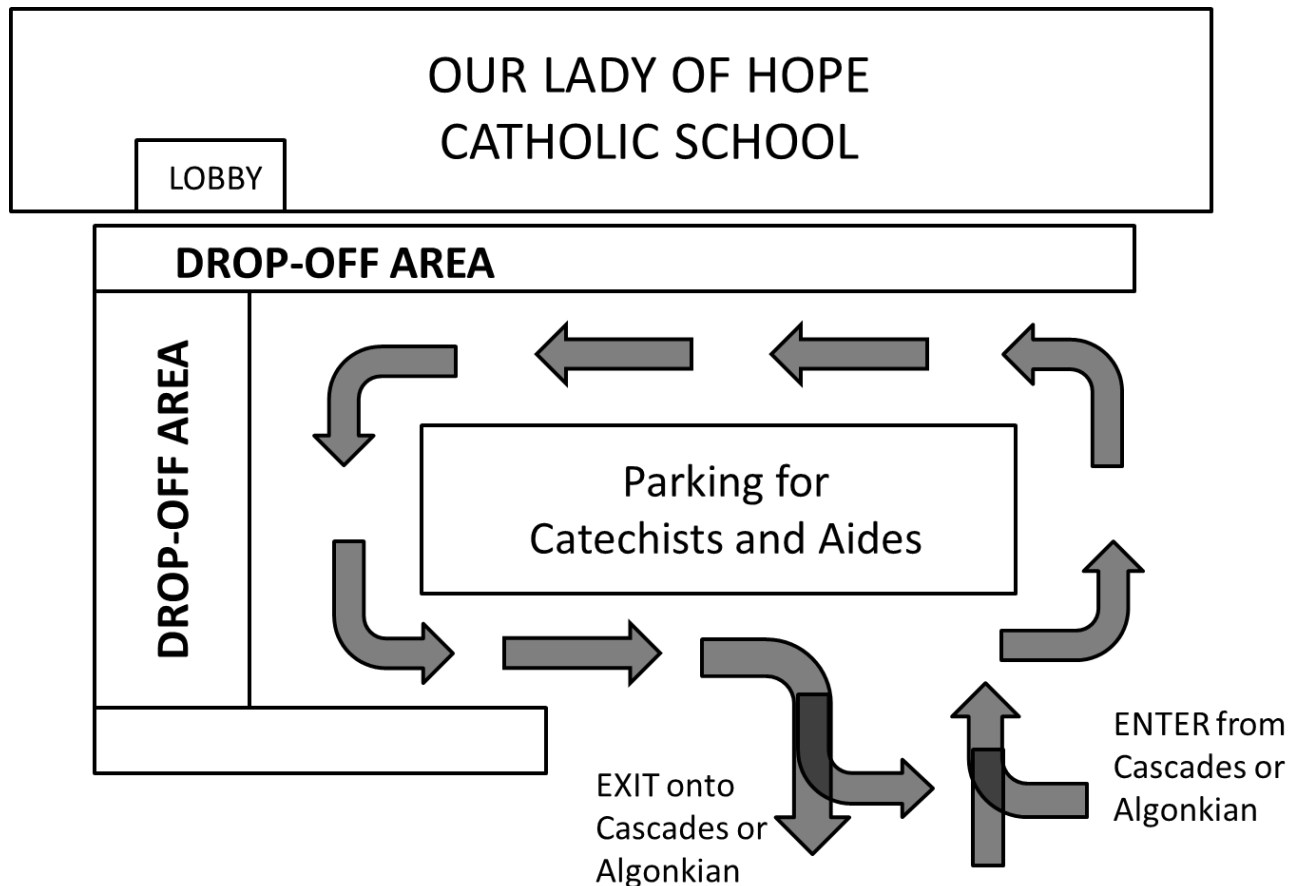


Second Floor



Arrival and Dismissal

- Catechists, Aides, and Other Volunteers may park in the upper school parking lot closest to the school building.
- Parents may park in the lower church parking lot.
- At the discretion of the parents, students in 5th through 8th grades may be dropped off and picked up in front of the school.
- During the winter months when classes may start and/or end when it is dark, please use extra caution in the parking lot.
- Parents of Kindergarten to 4th grade students must bring their child to the classroom and pick up their children at the classroom.
- All students must enter and exit through the lobby only. No student will be able to exit through the gym or east side fire exits by the playground.
- Children will not be permitted in the classrooms until a catechist or aide is present.
- Carpools: Parents who plan to carpool with other families need to notify the catechist/aide, in writing, who is eligible to pick up their child from class and specify the date(s).



Class Assignments

The RE Program offers three sessions per week:

Tuesday 4:15 – 5:30 PM

Tuesday 6:00 – 7:15 PM

Wednesday 4:15 – 5:30 PM

Classes are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. To the best of our ability, siblings will be placed in the same session. Some classes may need to be cancelled due to low enrollment or lack of volunteers.

Basic grade-level knowledge of RE formation (e.g. prayers, understanding of the faith) will be required to enter the following grade. For example, a student must pass the 4th grade Final Exam to demonstrate readiness for the 5th grade curriculum.

Our Lady of Hope has a two year sacramental preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. First Holy Communion candidates MUST complete both 1st and 2nd grades to receive the sacrament. Confirmation candidates MUST complete both 7th and 8th grades to receive the sacrament.

Curriculum

The Image of God Series (Ignatius Press) is used for Kindergarten. The *Faith and Life* Series (Ignatius Press) is used for 1st through 7th grades. The Ascension Press curriculum called *Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation* is used for 8th grade.

Each grade level has a specific Diocesan curriculum guideline which contains the required basic instructional objectives for each grade, and provides not only objectives but strategies as well. The Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines can be obtained from the Diocesan website at [http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Catholic-Schools/Religion\(1\)/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Catholic-Schools/Religion(1)/).

Prayers to Be Learned

Each class will begin and end with a prayer. The Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines assign basic prayers to be learned for each grade level. We strongly urge you to reinforce a life of prayer at home by praying the prayers found in the chart below with your child. It is crucial for students to learn these prayers in order to more fully participate in the liturgical life of the church. Each grade will review the prayers of the preceding grade. Prayers for 1st grade through the 4th grade midterm are evaluated orally. Prayers for the 4th grade final through 8th grade are written.

Grade	Prayers and Information to be Learned
Kindergarten:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genuflection ● Sign of the Cross ● Grace before Meals ● Hail Mary ● Our Father
Grade 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Glory Be
Grade 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act of Contrition ● Form of Sacrament of Reconciliation ● Guardian Angel ● Act of Faith, Hope and Love (simple form) ● Morning Offering ● Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel
Grade 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apostles' Creed ● Rosary and Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary
Grade 4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ten Commandments ● Two Great Commandments ● Examination of Conscience ● Parts of the Mass ● Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy
Grade 5:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Divine Praises ● Hail Holy Queen (Salve Regina) ● Memorare
Grade 6:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stations of the Cross
Grade 7:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prayer to the Holy Spirit ● The Angelus ● The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi ● The Regina Coeli
Grade 8:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write personal petitions for liturgical use ● See Psalms as prayers that express our needs

Academic Calendar

The school year calendar for the Religious Education Program is available on the parish website at <https://ourladyofhope.net/activity/religious-education/>. The calendar parallels closely, but not exactly, the Loudoun County Public Schools calendar. Please refer to the calendar for holidays, as well as dates for Confession and Holy Hour, and other special events.

Attendance/Absences

Please notify your child's Catechist if your child will be absent. Regular attendance is essential to the ongoing formation of your child. Student attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. For students preparing for Confirmation, no more than five unexcused absences will be permitted. For students preparing for First Penance and First Holy Communion, no more than three unexcused absences will be permitted.

Homework Assignments

Catechists are asked to assign homework weekly for the students in first through eighth grades. The Activity Book should be used in class as well as for homework. Questions at the end of each chapter should be assigned as well as the “words-to know”. Parents should assist their child with homework if needed. Completed homework should be reviewed each week in class.

Assessment

The objective of testing is to monitor student growth, group progress and effectiveness of our Religious Education Program. Parents who have concerns about their child’s progress should contact the Catechist directly.

Catechists will also evaluate student progress based on homework assignments as well as periodic tests of textbook chapters. An evaluation of a student’s progress will be provided to the parents two times a year: at the end of the first semester and at the end of the school year. Parents are asked to sign the first semester report card and return it to their Catechist. Report cards will include evaluating the child’s understanding of the material covered in class as reflected by test scores, completion of homework assignments, prayers mastered, class participation, and behavior.

For promotion to the next grade level, the student must earn a passing grade for the class, as well as score at least a 70% on the midterm and final exams. Exception – there is no formal assessment for Kindergarten.

Classroom Discipline

Students are expected to treat adults and peers, as well as private and Church property, with respect at all times. Furthermore, every child has the right to education in an environment conducive to learning. Thus, it is necessary to establish order in the classroom.

In the event that a student's classroom behavior is disruptive, the catechist should:

- Speak to the child in private (perhaps briefly stepping out of the classroom) and try to encourage the student to change their behavior;
- Avoid embarrassing the child in front of classmates;
- Enforce assigned seating from the very first day and physically separate students, as space allows;
- Talk to the parents if necessary;
- If the student continues to be disruptive, send the student to the Director of Religious Education who will speak to the student.
- If this attempt is not successful, the parents will be contacted and asked to work with their child and the catechist to correct the behavior.
- If this does not work, the parent **MUST** accompany the student to class until the student's behavior is acceptable for the classroom environment.
- If school or private property is willfully damaged by a student, he/she and parents will need to make appropriate restitution.

Dress Code

Students, as well as Catechists and Aides, are expected to wear modest clothing appropriate for the classroom, with particular emphasis on the days that Adoration, Confessions and Holy Hour are scheduled. If a student violates this policy, his or her parents will be immediately notified. The parent should bring alternative clothes for the student to change into so that he or she may return to class.

Inclement Weather and Cancellations

If Loudoun County Public Schools cancels school for the day, dismisses school early due to inclement weather, or if county afternoon and evening activities are cancelled, then Religious Education classes are likewise cancelled. If classes are cancelled by the parish for whatever reason, an email will be sent to each family as soon as possible. When in doubt contact the Religious Education Office at 703-433-6564.

Classroom Parties and Celebrations

A small celebration at Christmas and the end of the year is permitted. These are the only two dates when food should be brought to class. ***Please alert Catechists of any food allergies your child may have.***

Health Issues and Medication Policy

Should a student become ill while in class, parent(s) will be contacted according to the information provided on the student registration form. Religious education staff will make every effort to keep the child comfortable until he/she is picked up. Medications will NOT be administered to the child by RE staff or catechists.

Children are NOT to bring medications with them to religious education classes without advance permission of the religious education leader. It is the responsibility of parent(s) to notify the religious education leader immediately of any changes in allergies or dietary restrictions. For children with severe medical conditions, parents are asked to remain on-site in case of emergency.

Catechists are asked to report any significant injury to the religious education staff immediately. If an injury occurs, first aid will be administered, and if deemed necessary the parent(s) will be contacted. If the injury requires immediate professional medical attention, the RE staff will call the appropriate emergency services, followed by a call to the parent(s). A first aid kit is available in the school lobby.

Learning Disabilities / Health Related Problems

If your child has a learning disability or health-related problem, this information should be annotated on the child's registration card. It will remain confidential, but this information will be passed on to the catechist to aid in the education of your child. The RE staff and Catechists will work with the parents to address any learning or behavioral challenges. Please call the Religious Education Office with concerns or questions.

Home-Schooled Students or Students Attending a Catholic School

The RE Program definition of Catholic home-schooled students are those being home-schooled in all academic subjects by their parents, not just religion. Home-schooling families are encouraged and welcomed to participate in our Religious Education Program. This is a wonderful opportunity to foster a sense of community with the parish and interact with other Catholic children in a controlled and caring environment.

Home-schooled students and students enrolled in a Catholic school are not required to attend Religious Education classes as part of sacramental preparation; nevertheless, they must formally apply and register to be enrolled in the parish First Communion or Confirmation class and must fulfill all other sacramental requirements. Families are required to attend all First Communion and Confirmation parent meetings. ***Please contact the Religious Education Office for a list of the sacramental requirements.*** Note that families will be obliged to pay the sacramental preparation fees but not the Religious Education class tuition.

Security and Emergency Procedures

The school building will be secured during Religious Education classes. Side and emergency exits are locked at all times. All students, parents and adult volunteers must enter and exit via the school lobby only. The school lobby is manned by the Religious Education staff. In the event the staff is unavailable, the lobby doors will be locked. If a child needs to be picked up early, arrangements should be made ahead of time and the catechist notified.

In case of emergency, the catechist's main responsibility is the evacuation and safety of the children. There are established emergency procedures which will be practiced as drills during the year.

Sacraments and Liturgy

Confession

The opportunity for Confession will be offered three times during the school year: near the beginning of the new school year, during Advent and during Lent. All students in 3rd through 8th grades participate. **Students are expected to memorize the Act of Contrition and know the proper procedure for the sacrament.** All families are encouraged to go to Confession on a monthly basis. Second graders will be afforded the opportunity for Confession during classes before their First Holy Communion.

Children's Holy Hour

An integral part of our Religious Education Program is the Children's Holy Hour, which takes approximately 25 minutes of the class session. Please refer to the RE calendar for specific dates. Participation will include 3rd through 8th grades. Proper manner and dress in God's house is stressed and reviewed prior to the Holy Hour. Parents are encouraged to attend. Children will return to the classroom for dismissal.

Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic Adoration will be offered during Confessions. Students will have the opportunity to examine their consciences and to pray before our Lord in the monstrance after receiving the sacrament.

May Crowning

The Religious Education Program celebrates each May with a traditional May Crowning honoring Mary, the Mother of God. Each class session will have its own May Crowning. Every child will present a flower to a statue of our Blessed Mother. Flowers are provided by the parish or may be brought by individual students if they wish. There will also be a time for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and benediction.

First Penance & First Holy Communion

First and Second grade Religious Education classes together constitute the two-year formation period for the receptions of First Penance and First Holy Communion. The sacrament of Penance is first received in February or March of the Second grade year; a student receives her/his First Holy Communion during May of that same year.

Students in 2nd grade are expected to complete a Mass Attendance form each week. The form is very “child friendly” and age appropriate; most catechists use this form as a discussion starter during class. The Mass Attendance form must be returned to the catechist on a weekly basis for record keeping. Failure to complete these forms, and most importantly, failure to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, may jeopardize the child’s timely reception of the sacraments.

Please call the Religious Education Office for more information.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Seventh and Eighth grade Religious Education classes together constitute the two-year formation period for the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation will be received in September by the rising 9th grade class. Please call the Religious Education Office for more information.

Catechist Profession of Faith

Catechists and Aides are a visible witness to the Catholic faith. By request of the Bishop, they are asked to make a Profession of Faith, which is simply the public proclamation of the principle truths of our Catholic faith, expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, together with the truths taught by the Church which are not contained in the Creed itself. The Profession of Faith takes place during the first week of classes.

Diocesan Policy on Child Protection and Safety (for Volunteers)

The Diocese of Arlington has a policy to prevent child abuse and sexual misconduct. The website for the Diocesan Child Protection Office is <http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/child-protection/>. Volunteers who have significant contact with children are required by the diocese to comply with this policy. The safety and protection of all children is of paramount importance.

All RE volunteers and staff will comply with this policy. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the parish Child Protection liaison, Jackie Regan, at (703) 433-6570 or jregan@ourladyofhope.net.

“Protecting God’s Children” Diocesan Formation in Christian Chastity

The Diocese of Arlington has implemented a program as part of their Child Protection Policy called “Formation in Christian Chastity.” The Diocese requires all students in grades one through eight participate.

Formation in Christian Chastity helps children develop an awareness of the dignity of the human person and the integrity and holiness of the human body. All lesson plans used can be found on the Diocese of Arlington website: <http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Child-Protection/Youth-Training-Programs/Formation-in-Christian-Chastity/>.

Parents may review any of the material that will be taught in the classroom and will have the option of opting out of the lesson. The specific class day for teaching the program will be announced in early fall.