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## **JESUIT SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION BOARD VOTES TO APPROVE ESTABLISHMENT OF JESUIT SCHOOLS NETWORK OF NORTH AMERICA**

### ***Longtime Jesuit Educator Fr. William Muller, SJ, Named as Organization's First Executive Director***

(Washington, D.C., April 14, 2015) -- The board of directors of the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA) voted today to establish the Jesuit Schools Network of North America. The Jesuit Schools Network will replace JSEA as the organization charged with providing services and programming to the 80 Jesuit pre-secondary and secondary schools in the U.S. and Canada.

Prior to the founding of the Jesuit Schools Network, Jesuit schools were affiliated with the Society of Jesus through their membership in JSEA and through their relationships with their local Jesuit province. The Jesuit Schools Network combines both roles in one organization, a historic new paradigm where Jesuit schools are networked within a province and with a central networking organization.

With the approval of the board, Fr. Timothy Kesicki, SJ, president of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the U.S., named Fr. William Muller, SJ, as the Jesuit Schools Network's executive director. The former president of Verbum Dei High School in Los Angeles and Bellarmine College Preparatory in San Jose, California, Fr. Muller currently serves as a secondary/pre-secondary advisor to the Jesuits' California and Oregon provincials. He will assume his role as executive director of the Jesuit Schools Network this summer. The organization will be headquartered in Washington, D.C., as its predecessor, JSEA, has been.

"For several years, Jesuit provincials have been strategically considering how best to respond to the needs of the people of God in our many apostolates," said Fr. Kesicki. "The Jesuit Schools Network represents an exciting, historic moment in addressing the growing needs and desires of one of our strongest apostolic ministries in Canada and the U.S. Fr. Bill Muller is an outstanding leader, and he will hit the ground running. He's as excited about this new opportunity as we are to have him on board."

Fr. Muller said, "Vibrant relationships between and among Jesuit schools and Jesuit provinces are essential for the care and support of Jesuit secondary and pre-secondary education. I am thrilled to be a part of shaping this new way of proceeding. What we do in Jesuit education is so important – called by God to provide the young women and young men in our schools with reasons for living and hoping, helping them to discover a faith that urges them to service."

The JSEA has sponsored national and regional workshops, conferences, seminars, research and leadership formation since its founding in 1970, and that programming will continue under the Jesuit Schools Network. Like JSEA, the work of the Jesuit Schools Network will be focused on providing programs and services that enable member schools to sustain their Ignatian vision and Jesuit mission of educational excellence in the formation of young men and women of competence, conscience and compassion.

Fr. Kesicki praised JSEA's President Fr. James Stoeger, SJ: "The Jesuit provincials of Canada and the U.S. are grateful to Fr. Stoeger for his tremendous work – first as JSEA Vice President from 2008 to 2011 and more recently as JSEA president for the last four years." Fr. Kesicki also thanked Fr. Edward Fassett, SJ, secretary for secondary and pre-secondary education at the Jesuit Conference: "I'm grateful for Fr. Fassett's strategic leadership during this time of transition."

### **About the Society of Jesus in Canada and the United States**

Founded in 1540 by Saint Ignatius Loyola, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) is the largest order of priests and brothers in the Roman Catholic Church. Jesuit priests and brothers are involved in educational, pastoral and spiritual ministries around the world, practicing a faith that promotes justice. In Canada and the United States, there are 30 Jesuit colleges and 80 pre-secondary and secondary schools with a shared goal of developing competent, compassionate and committed leaders in the service of the Church and society. Jesuits minister in parishes and at retreat houses and serve as chaplains at prisons, hospitals, nursing homes and in the military. In Canada and the U.S., the Jesuits are represented by the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, headquartered in Washington, D.C. For more information on the Society of Jesus, visit <http://jesuits.org>.