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For Immediate Release

[January 10, 2024]

Mount de Sales Academy Board of Trustees Announces New President

[Macon, Georgia] – Following a national search, the Mount de Sales Academy Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Brendan O’Kane as the new school president effective July 1, 2024.

“Mr. O’Kane’s deeply spiritual and collaborative approach along with his passion for academia and student engagement is exceptional,” stated the Honorable Justice Verda M. Colvin, outgoing chair of the Board of Trustees. “The search committee and the trustees wholeheartedly support him in leading Mount de Sales to even greater excellence in academics and student and alumni engagement as we prepare for the school’s 150th anniversary in a few years. We look forward to our shared governance and success.”

O’Kane will join the Academy from Loyola Blakefield, a private Jesuit Catholic college preparatory school located in Towson, Maryland where he has held leadership positions within campus ministry and student services and currently serves as the director of Ignatian mission and identity. O’Kane has led and advised Ignatian and spiritual formation programs for trustees, parents, students, and faculty and has been responsible for creating and implementing institutional strategic plans. O’Kane received a Bachelor of Arts in sociology, Master of Theological Studies, and Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Loyola University in Baltimore, Maryland.

“While there are so many reasons to choose Mount de Sales, the school’s mission and community stood out to me,” said O’Kane. “Throughout the interview process, each group I spoke with shared a common language: Mount de Sales Academy is a place where you are treated like family, cared for as individuals, and encouraged to participate together in something greater than yourself. As president, I look forward to celebrating the great work that is being done and planning what we can do even better, together, as we envision the future of Mount de Sales - a place where Christ’s love is palpable.”

The Academy is deeply rooted in the Catholic faith and mercy values of its founders, the Sisters of Mercy, who sponsor the institution. Kimberly Baxter, associate director of programs and services for Mercy Education, served on the presidential search committee and noted, “Mr. O’Kane will bring a fresh and energetic perspective to the role of president. His passion for education is palpable and he displays a commitment to forming the whole student in mind, body,

and spirit. I am confident that he will continue to ensure that Mercy, Catholic values remain the foundation of the school.”

O’Kane will succeed Mr. David Held who has led the Academy for 14 years. “Brendan is an excellent choice, and I have no doubt that he will continue the legacy of excellence that we have upheld since our founding by the Sisters of Mercy in 1876,” said Held. “The Cavalier community will benefit from his passion for Catholic education coupled with his professional experience in the Jesuit charism of educating the whole person. I look forward to working with Brendan to provide a seamless transition into the 24-25 academic year.”

O’Kane and his wife, Anita Maina, who is a licensed clinical social worker with 15 years of experience in the health and human services field, are excited to move to Macon. “We welcome the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the vibrant community and experience Macon’s southern charm and rich culture,” said Maina.

“Brendan and Anita are both passionate about their Catholic faith and Catholic education,” noted Mr. James F. Simpson, Jr., incoming chair of the Academy’s Board of Trustees. “I look forward to working with Mr. O’Kane, who has the qualities of an exceptional leader, as we prepare for the next 150 years at Mount de Sales Academy.”

About Mount de Sales Academy

Mount de Sales Academy, an independent Catholic school established in 1876 and sponsored and inspired by the Sisters of Mercy, is a Christ-centered college preparatory community of learners who are poised to discover, challenged to innovate, and motivated to serve.
www.mountdesales.net

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Photo: Mr. Brendan O'Kane