

## School Boards Are Mushrooming

By MONICA REEVES

The growing number of school boards in the Rochester diocese is an example of Catholic parents trying to make fact out of the theory that parents are the primary educators of their children.

Two years ago, there wasn't one school board of parents and administrators in the entire diocese. As the youngsters head back for the classroom this fall, however, there will be an estimated 50 school boards working for a better education for them.

The reasons for such boards are important. First and foremost is the idea of parents as the primary educators. Next is the financial angle. Long range planning for education requires careful thought if Rochester parochial schools are to represent the best combination possible of quality and quantity. Such a goal necessitates a business sense which every cleric possesses.

Father Daniel Brent, associate superintendent of the Roches-

ter diocese sums it up this way: "The school board amounts to a method of letting parents decide how much Catholic education they want to afford."

According to Father Brent, school boards of the diocese take on a similar pattern although certain practices vary. Some parishes divide up into districts for voting purposes, other parishes elect school board members as a whole. Number of board members varies from eight to eighteen. Generally speaking, both pastor and principal are given a place on the board — sometimes with, sometimes without the voting privilege.

Constitutions are then written after many long hours of debate and discussion. The Diocesan School Office does make available model constitutions but encourages each parish to draw one up which is tailored to its own unique needs.

Committees form the working basis for the school boards. Most parishes have committees concerned with finances, curriculum, personnel, student wel-

fare, facilities and public relations.

Perhaps the two most critical areas of the school board system are finances and parish interest and involvement. There must be a sustained, long-range concern on the part of parishioners if a school board is to survive. There is also the ever sensitive question of where to draw the line between administration and policy making.

Two particular points of concern for some school boards are the CCD classes and the adult education classes. The respon-

sibility for these programs is being assumed by some boards. For the future, Father Brent said that the diocese is envision-

ing the development of a three-tiered arrangement. There will be the parish school board, an overseeing area board such as now exists with the Chemung and Cayuga county boards and then a diocesan board to assume the responsibility of general coordinating factor.

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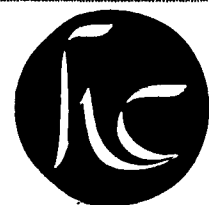
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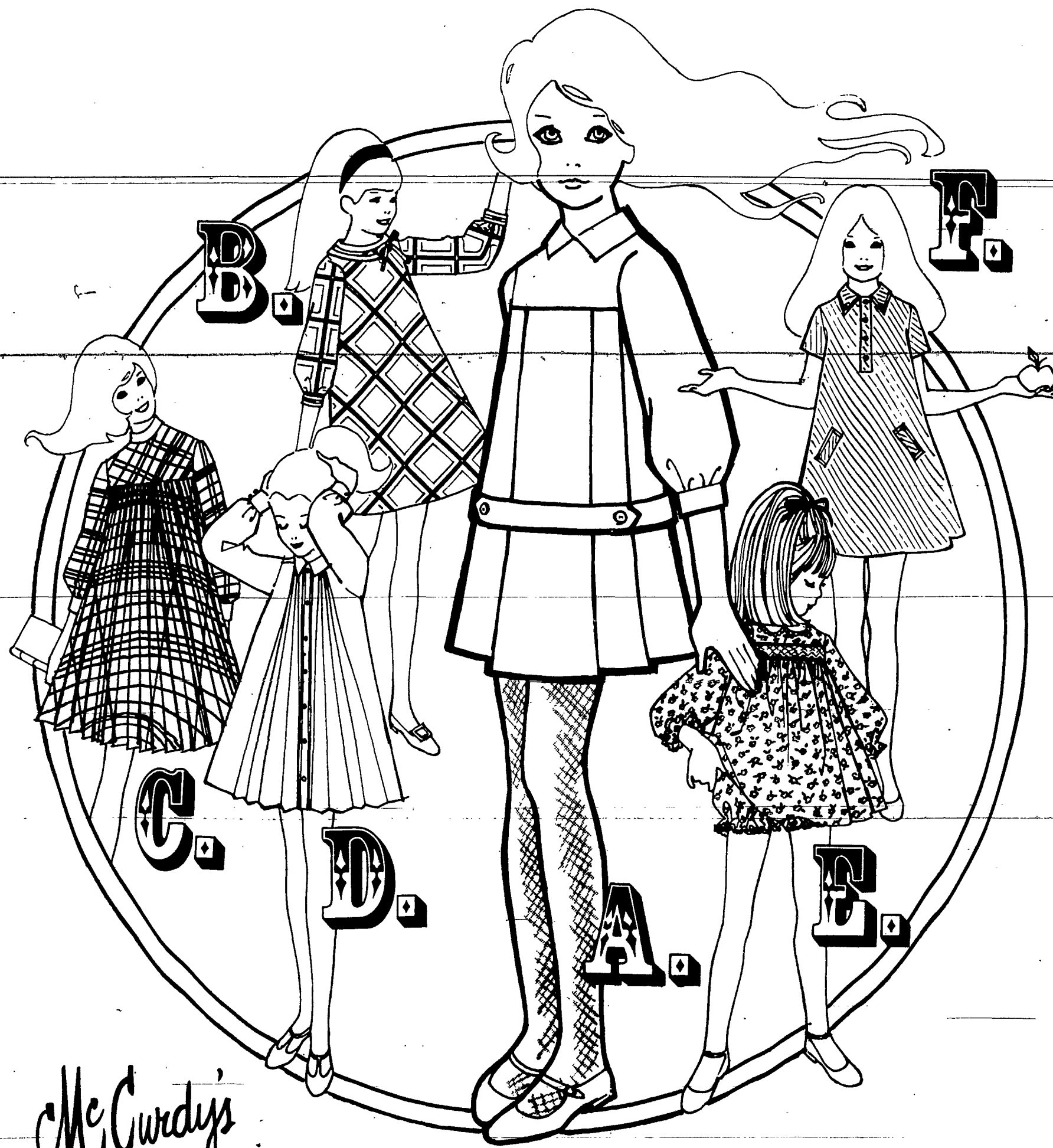
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