

School Report

Must Redefine Priorities & Goals

Nearly 46 out of 60 parochial schools in Monroe County may have to be closed by 1975, unless public subsidy is made immediately available, county public officials were told officially yesterday by the Diocesan Schools Office.

No change in the number or size of the parish schools of this area will occur in the next school year, diocesan officials promised.

Meanwhile meetings between staff of the School Office, the superiors of the teaching communities, Bishop Hogan and the Pastoral Office staff are studying the just-released financial figures and the results of the diocesan-wide "Attitudinal Survey" to redefine the goals of parochial education.

Principal conclusions presented to the public school officials were: "Parochial schools in Monroe County are faced with two major problems: 1) declining pupil enrollment and 2) impending financial insolvency."

Clewell, both majors in the U.S. Army, who made the extensive survey as a workshop project in their studies for Master of Science degrees in Systems' Analysis.

The immediate goals of the research were to measure "the threat of parochial school closings in Monroe County and the costs and benefits of financial aid programs that might avert closure."

Statistics were presented to prove that the public schools could expect an immediate acceleration of transfers from the Catholic system because "parochial schools' financial conditions are precarious and massive school closings are imminent."

Significantly placed against the gloomy statistics about possible school closings was the fact that the Attitudinal Survey showed that 74 percent of the 17,462 respondents in Monroe County voted that the Diocese should "continue to encourage

'The Price of Inaction ... Enormously Higher Tax'

"Both problems are critical and require immediate solution to avert massive parochial school closures."

Recommendation was formally made that a \$75 or \$90 per year subsidy per parochial school pupil effective immediately would be "the optimum solution" through 1975, both to slow down Catholic school closings and save the public from being swamped with increased school taxes.

Carefully spelling out the costs and benefits of public aid that might avert the wholesale closures predicted, diocesan officials warned that "the price of inaction now will be enormously higher school taxes" when the Catholic schools have closed down.

Explaining to public educators a "Cost-Benefit Analysis" recently prepared at the University of Rochester Graduate School of management, the diocese revealed the financial impact which continued closings of parish schools will have on the Monroe County school system.

The remote possibility of dumping some 19,000 Catholic pupils into the county's public school system next Fall could cost county taxpayers an extra \$23 million in one year, the report said.

But a "modest" state subsidy of \$75 for each parochial school, which might amount to \$1.8 million annually could keep many Catholic schools open and would save the county school districts nearly \$25 million a year, the analysis showed.

the operation of the Catholic schools."

Present at the meeting were:

Fred Painter, executive secretary of the Monroe County School Boards Association; Harold J. Kress, deputy Director of Finance of Monroe County; Dr. Charles Walker of the Genesee Valley School Development Association; Sam Itkin of the Public Schools' Business Officials Group and Alan Da-

Declining Enrollment, Finances, Big Problems

vitt, executive secretary of the N.Y. State Catholic School Superintendents.

Also Mayor Stephen May of Rochester; Worth D. Holder, executive Vice President of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce; John Hostutler, Rochester Industrial Management Council; Frederick Grasberger and Craig Smith of the Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research and Mrs. Jerry Riordan, budget director of the Rochester Community Chest.

Bishops Hogan, Hickey and McCafferty were also present with Fathers James Moynihan and William Flynn, chancellor and vice-chancellor.

Besides Father Daniel Brent,

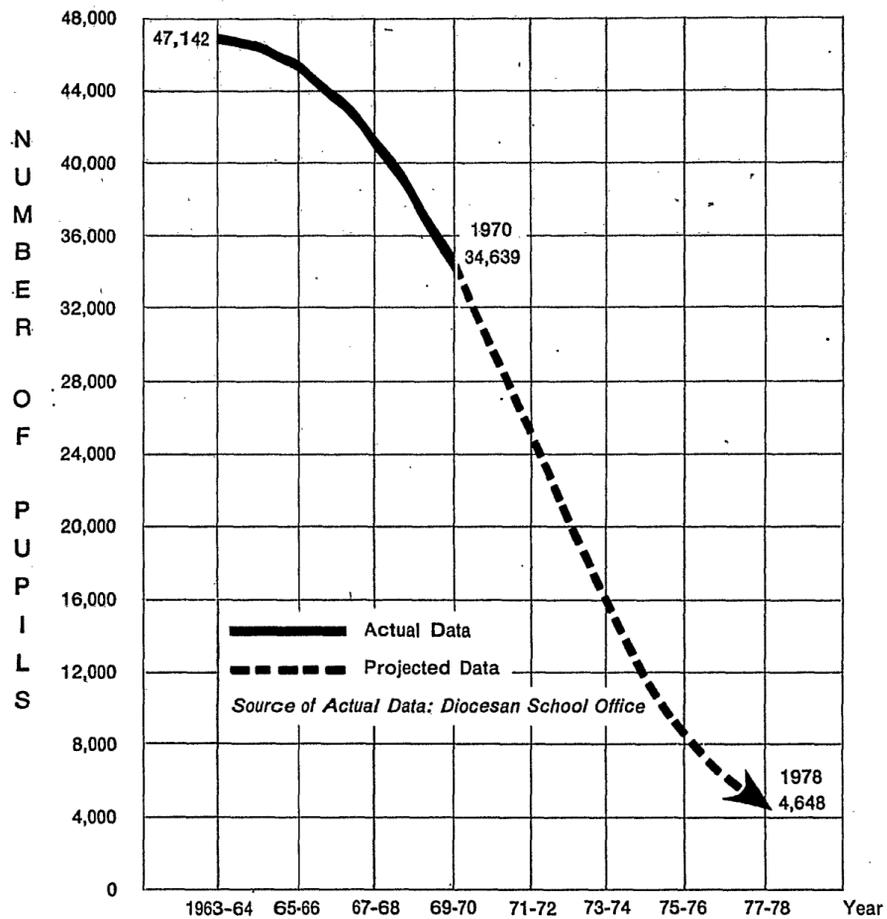
'Modest State Subsidy' Could Alleviate Problem

The 78-page report was prepared for the diocese by Robert H. Alsheimer and Robert M.

diocesan superintendent, and the entire School Office staff, Fathers Albert Shamon and

Going Down!

ROCHESTER DIOCESE - ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS PUPIL ENROLLMENT



Gerald Connor represented the Office of Education and Father Daniel Holland the Office of CCD.

Mother Agnes Cecelia and her advisors from the Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters Mary de Pazzi and Mary Peter and advisors for the Sisters of Mercy, Sister Mary Beatrice for the Provincial Superior of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, represented

public schools in all achievement tests except 3rd grade arithmetic," the report said.

Contradicting skeptics on the quality of the Catholic schools, the analysts declared: "We have been unable to find any evidence of the Catholic school achievement levels being inferior to those of the public schools within Monroe County. Our evidence points to just the opposite."

They said flatly: "Even Catholics do not know how good their schools are. Catholic pupils are the higher achievers in the state-tests we have examined in Monroe County."

Sister Patricia Donovan, of the diocesan school office who guided the cost-analysis study, said that the top-level meeting was intended "to convince the public school people in Monroe County to help the cause of Catholic education in Albany."

What local educators can accomplish with the Legislature in time to help themselves or

ly \$1 million for parish schools of the Rochester Diocese and probably collectible in March 1971, will help some schools but will be too late and too small for the most needy ones.

The cost-benefit report also indicated that beyond any state subsidy per pupil or per school, the Pastoral Office and the diocesan school's office must come up with a reorganization plan that will help put a floor under the rapidly diminishing school rosters.

This report and the results of the "Attitudinal Survey" which collected some 27,000 questionnaires across the diocese in March are the first steps in Bishop Hogan's administration to accept the responsibilities of planning and leadership in the education field.

The report cited the declining enrollment in diocesan schools as a principal cause of the "threat of massive closings." Data showed a 26 percent decline in pupils from 1963 to 1970 and projected an astound-

'Catholic School Pupils Are Higher Achievers'

the parochial schools is admittedly unclear.

Although preliminary measures for the repeal of the Blaine Amendment of the state constitution were passed in January 1970, public balloting to remove the restrictions against using public funds for religious schools cannot occur before November 1971.

In the interim a new law was enacted this Spring which will provide state funds for nonpublic schools at rates of \$27 per pupil per year (grades 1 through 6) and \$45 per pupil annually (grades 7 through 12).

These benefits, totalling near-

ing 73 percent decline from current figures in the next 6 year period.

"The failure of the diocesan schools to attract a significant portion of the available Catholic school age population" and to hold them may be due to the competition of the high caliber of the public school districts of the county, the statisticians said.

But another cause diocesan educators hinted was the changing composition of staffs in the parochial school. An increase of lay teachers over Sisters has lowered the laity's appreciation of the religious school for their children.