

# 'Needs' First Consideration In Accepting New Pupils

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN

Poverty and educational need will be the first considerations when accepting new students into the inner city school system for September, the Council of Inner City Parishes decided last week.

Parent participation and religion will be secondary considerations, according to Sister James Lynch of the department of education. She chaired the committee of seven teachers and parents who devised criteria for accepting students to fill the 1,250 openings in the four schools that will make up the inner city elementary school system.

The meaning of poverty is specifically outlined in the accepted proposal and extends beyond an income figure.

For acceptance of a student into Catholic inner city schools poverty will be indicated by family income level, stability of income, source of income and size of family.

## Admission Policy Draws Reaction

A quick sampling of opinion on the new criteria for admission to the consolidated inner city schools elicited expressions of approval, misgivings and outright rejection.

Two pastors, a principal, a lay teacher and a parent were questioned.

The most forthright reaction was negative. It came from Mrs. Viola K. Burns, a member of the criteria committee who described herself as "a very concerned parent." She labeled the new standards "unfair and unjust," and said they were too hastily framed.

Neither St. Michael's nor the Spanish Apostolate was represented on the committee, Mrs. Burns said. She also stated that "the program is set up only for teachers with a college degree," and would eliminate "some good teachers we now have in our school who have been there for some time."

Father Benedict A. Ehmann, pastor of St. Michael's, said he feared possible misunderstanding of what the standards mean.

"The new criteria must be interpreted as criteria for acceptance into the school system and not as indicators of curriculum. Religion will not have fourth place importance," he maintained.

Father Ehmann is concerned for parishioners who have supported the school for years, lest they get short shrift under criteria that give poorer people first priority.

"The claims of the parishioners of our inner city parishes should have certain importance attached to them," he feels.

The sentiment expressed by Sister Janice Morgan, principal of one of the two schools that will close as a result of the consolidation, is representative, she said, of St. Francis Xavier's stand that religion should be first consideration for accepting children into the system.

Sister Janice, who became principal of St. Francis last September, told of the Council of Inner City Parishes executive board meeting.

"In the end," Sister Janice continued, "the accepted criteria included both poverty and religion as factors."

Closely connected to the poverty factor, according to Sister James, is educational need of a child, as indicated by the family education level, special needs and special talents of a child and family education potential.

Presently there is a total of 1,481 students in the six inner city schools. Next year, with the consolidated system of four elementary schools — Holy Redeemer, Immaculate Conception, Mount Carmel and St. Bridget's — there will be 1,250 openings.

The difference of 231 openings, according to Sister James, will most likely take care of itself. Some parents will choose other education systems, so all children presently enrolled will be able to continue, she expects.

But, if elimination is necessary, it will be asked equally of each school involved according to these criteria:

First to be cut will be children whose parents would

direct them to alternative education opportunities.

Second to be eliminated will be children with special learning advantages or disadvantages which the schools can not effectively deal with.

Third, children of higher income families will be cut.

"In the past acceptance has been on a first-come, first-served basis," the educator explained, "now the rule is, don't accept anyone until you decide you can really serve them, which makes rejection a possibility."

Three options were presented for the CICIP to consider. The Office of Human Development submitted an option emphasizing the poverty factor, and Father Daniel Brent, school superintendent, offered an adaptation of the criteria committee's proposal which emphasized the importance of religion as a factor.

Discussion at the CICIP executive board meeting Sunday, March 25, centered on concern for students from the two inner city elementary schools that will close in June, St. Francis Xavier and St. Michael's.

The criteria committee allotted 13 per cent of the openings in the total K-6 system for St. Francis pupils and 26 per cent for St. Michael's. These percentages, Sister James explained, match the two schools' present per cent of enrollment among the six elementary schools.

Another, fundamental, concern discussed after Sister James' presentation, was the philosophical question that often divides the Council: Whom do we serve, Catholics or the poor?

St. Francis Xavier, Holy Redeemer and St. Michael's student bodies are primarily Catholics while Immaculate Conception's, St. Lucy's and St. Bridget's are mostly non-Catholics.

Sister James has asked the inner city parish council if inner city Catholics have first rights to services provided by the Church, and if so, then how is the mission to non-Catholics defined.

Sister James feels a definitive answer to this question is necessary for effective ministry in the inner city.

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In Communications?	Tuesday, April 10—9:30 a.m.
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In Public Service?	Tuesday, April 10—1:00 p.m.
In Industry?	Tuesday, April 10—1:00 p.m.
In Government?	Thursday, April 12—9:30 a.m.
In Education?	Thursday, April 12—9:30 a.m.
In Business?	Thursday, April 12—1:00 p.m.
In the Home?	Thursday, April 12—1:00 p.m.

**Opening Session — Monday, April 9—8:00 p.m.**  
 Keynote Speaker—Catherine S. Long—"From Adam's Rib to Women's Lib"  
 Presiding—Dr. Alice L. Foley, President, Nazareth College of Rochester

**Closing Session — Thursday, April 12—8:00 p.m.**  
 Speaker—Carole Taylor—"One Battle to Fight"  
 Presiding—Wyoma Best, "Wyoma Best Show" WHEC-TV

**A DAY ON CAMPUS**  
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 8:30 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

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