

Inner City Schools

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"Fifteen plans were discussed," Father Brent disclosed. The group eventually narrowed them to two alternatives, Plan A1, the alternative eventually accepted, and Plan B1, which would have left Mt. Carmel School open.

"We would have preferred Plan B1," said Father Brent, "but under the present conditions we thought A1 was the best plan that we could afford."

The group requested and received permission from the Bishop, to extend the June 21 deadline to June 24. It presented Plan A1 to the CICIP executive committee at the Sunday, June 23

meeting. The plan and the \$200,000 subsidy from the diocese were tied together.

Father Peter Bayer later in the week explained that the \$200,000 is a grant from the diocese to the CICIP and that the inner city organization can use the money in whatever way it deems appropriate.

Therefore at the Sunday night meeting, when the CICIP representatives voted to accept Plan A1 they actually were voting to put the subsidy into schools, albeit closing two. The alternative would be to close all the schools and use the \$200,000 in other ways.

Father Bayer said that the diocese had no intention of withholding the \$200,000 from the CICIP to force it into accepting Plan A1. How they use the money is their decision," he said.

Father Bayer said one of the sore points concerning the \$200,000 was due to a misunderstanding that the diocese planned to withhold the \$200,000 unless Plan A1 were accepted.

"The diocese had no intention of withholding the grant," he said. "It goes to the CICIP to be used as they wish."

The vote to accept Plan A1 was 12 yes, 1 no, 4 absentions, and 2 absent. Voting yes were: Immaculate Conception, St. Lucy's, St. Michael's, St. Francis Xavier, Holy Redeemer, the Human Development Office and the Spanish Apostolate. St. Bridget's and Mt. Carmel abstained. St. Patrick's was absent, and the Black Caucus cast the one no vote.

Voting is weighted, with two votes going to each parish and one to the other organization members.

Bishop Hogan made it clear that the decision would not be altered and that he did not believe that the CICIP fund drive would have saved the schools.

In a four-page report entitled "Factual Response Concerning the Closing of the Inner City Schools," the Pastoral Center noted that "the Catholic diocese has contributed \$1,450,396 to the Inner City parishes since 1967."

The report also stated that "in addition to the \$200,000 projected subsidy this year the Inner City is supported by the services of the Office of Human Development, Diocesan Missions, Spanish Apostolate and Catholic Charities. Of the total diocesan budget for the 12-county area 23 per cent has been earmarked for the Inner City parishes."

The diocesan position also stems from increased financial straits being felt elsewhere in the 12-county diocese, which includes the cities of Elmira and Auburn. There also is the feeling that perhaps schools are not the best way the Church can serve the inner city communities.

Still, school principals and parents were not appeased.

Sister Kathleen McCusker, principal of St. Bridget's, objected to the methodology used to reach the decision in which school officials were not consulted.

"We now have a dictatorship," she exclaimed.

The principal of St. Michael's, Sister Mary Wintish, also objected to the way the situation was handled. She said that many parents did not know of the decision until it was in the newspapers.

After parents' meetings at Mt. Carmel and St. Bridget's it was agreed that their parish councils will meet to formulate a plan to save the schools, with the hope of presenting it to Bishop Hogan. Presumably the two parishes hope to run their own independent fund drive to save the schools.

The CICIP will provide for transfer and transportation of pupils from Mt. Carmel and St. Bridget's to St. Michael's, according to its executive director, Bob Molinari.

Molinari also said that the CICIP hopes to be able to rent the Mt. Carmel and St. Bridget's school buildings to social service organizations that would benefit the community.

Many of the junior high students from St. Michael's undoubtedly will transfer to public schools.



St. Bridget's School



Father Booth and Bob Molinari of CICIP.

Diocesan Response Concerning Closing of Inner City Schools

Nov. '72—Diocese recognizes need to raise the financial support for central office programs.

Feb. '73—Diocese commissions fund development consultants to conduct survey.

Feb. '73—Diocese commits upper limit of \$250,000 for '73-'74 budget for CI-CP (represents 25 per cent of diocesan budget, approximately).

May 1, '73—Diocese receives final report of fund development consultants.

June '73—CI-CP hires consulting firm to survey needs. Projects raising \$100,000 by June '74.

July '73—Diocese prepares analysis of fund development report for distribution through Priests' and Sisters' Councils in the Fall.

August '73—Representatives of CI-CP meet with chancellor and comptroller of the diocese to discuss CI-CP's plans to raise operating expense monies.

October '73—Diocesan Development proposal is presented to the Consultative Bodies for their recommendation to Bishop Hogan.

Nov. 20, '73—CI-CP approaches diocese for Bishop Hogan's endorsement on a \$1,600,000 Endowment Campaign.

Dec. 14, '73—Bishop Hogan calls four representatives from CI-CP and four from diocesan office staff to work out a cooperative plan that will benefit the entire diocese. Group agrees to draw up models that are mutually acceptable.

Jan. 2, '74—Joint Committee meets and presents models. They agreed to concept that the CI-CP Fund Development Program should be included in the Diocesan Fund Development Plan. They agreed to the absolute necessity of the passage of the Diocesan Fund Development Plan by the Priests' and Sisters' Councils. They agreed that CI-CP would prepare a modification of both models and present them at a Jan. 7 meeting.

Jan. 7, '74—Joint Committee meets and does not agree on one plan or timetable.

Jan. 17-30, '74—Joint Committee meets to prepare presentation for Feb. 5 Priests' Council.

Jan. 30, '74—Diocese loans \$50,000 to CI-CP parishes to cover their accrued expenses.

Feb. 5, '74—CI-CP presents case to priests. CI-CP projects that '73-'74 deficit will be \$34,000.

Feb. 15, '74—Joint Committee (including 4 Sisters from Inner City Schools) agree to seek Priests' Council approval as the basis of an endorsement of their proposal. Committee calls on fund development consultants to come to a meeting and comment on the specifics of the implementation of the CI-CP Development Plan.

Feb. 21, '74—Letter sent from CI-CP to all Priests' Council Members states: (a) Projected deficit for '73-'74 was \$100,000. (b) Actual deficit will be \$55,000. (c) To raise \$100,000 would be an unbelievable task. (d) Endowment method would accrue only interest earned and not principal.

March 5, '74—Priests' Council endorses CI-CP Fund Development Plan working within the framework of the Diocesan Office of Fund Development as it develops. Stipulates an absolute ceiling of \$200,000 on diocesan funds to CI-CP for '74-'75.

March 15, '74—Joint Committee meets and discusses incorporation of CI-CP and an outline for the Fund Development Program.

March 26, '74—Bishop Hogan endorses the Endowment Campaign of CI-CP.

April 1, '74—Joint Committee agreed to employ the services of Fund Development Consultant seeking advice on a cooperative plan.

April 23, '74—Committee was reduced to four members: Father Raymond Booth, chairman of CI-CP; Robert Molinari, executive director of CI-CP; Father Peter Bayer, director of Planning for the diocese; John Ritzenthaler, treasurer of the diocese.

April 30, '74—Joint Committee agrees to follow advice of consultants when their report is completed.

June 3, '74—Joint Committee meets and hears consultants' report.

June 5, '74—Joint Committee reviews consultants' report.

June 8, '74—Joint Committee agrees to accept the conclusions of the consultants' report and have one joint united effort. Unanimously accepted. Agreed to meet June 18, '74.

June 11, '74—CI-CP discloses actual projected deficit for year ending June 30, 1974 to be \$80,000. Teachers' pay held up.

June 13, '74—Bishop Hogan notified of deficit and of hold on teachers' pay. Calls immediate meeting of CI-CP pastors.

June 14, '74—Bishop Hogan meets with pastors and mandates that they develop a plan to: (a) Cover the \$80,000 deficit. (b) Show how they plan to operate within a balanced budget for '74-'75. Bishop requested response by June 21, 1974. States "I am not suggesting that consultation with councils and representatives will not be needed, but because of seriousness of the situation and time frame, smaller group might be more effective to develop plans."

June 17-22, '74—CI-CP pastors meet and develop models of plan.

June 19, '74—CI-CP pastors requested extension of time from the Bishop to Monday, June 24, '74. Extension granted.

June 23, '74—CI-CP conducts Executive Board Meeting and votes to close St. Bridget's, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and cancel the Junior High program at St. Michael's, thus going to a three school K-6 program. The vote: 12 "Yes", 1 "no", 4 absentions, 2 absent.

SUMMARY

I. The Catholic Diocese has contributed \$1,450,396 into the Inner City Parishes since 1967.

II. In addition to the \$200,000 projected subsidy this year the Inner City is supported by the services of the Office of Human Development, Diocesan Missions, Spanish Apostolate, and Catholic Charities.

III. Of the total Diocesan Budget for the 12 county area 23% has been earmarked for the Inner City Parishes.