

Education Is a Call to Responsibility

By Sr. Roberta Tierney
Director of Education

This week the Courier-Journal is featuring a Back To School issue. The thought of "back to school" generates a variety of reactions from the readers; reactions ranging from disappointment that the carefree days of summer have passed so quickly to excited anticipation for the days ahead.

We live in the time of "proposition thirteen" — a time when our institutions, particularly our educational institutions are called into accountability. This call to accountability leads to a rededication to responsibility. It has been evidenced by our state in the recent mandates from the Board of Regents for competency testing as a requirement for a secondary school diploma. In our own diocesan Catholic elementary schools, we have developed an extensive program on quality and standards through our "Project Upgrade".

However, education is not equated with academic performance. Education is an ongoing process of total growth and development. It cannot be relegated to five hours a day and ten months of the year. We cannot pass the responsibility for education to the individual classroom teacher without recognizing our role as "educator" each time we touch the life of another.

As the final stages in preparation for opening school take place in each building — be it pre-school annex or university lecture hall — may we be aware of our influence in education. We call first to parents who have had more hours of influence in the education of a child before formal schooling than the school will have in twelve years. The strength and support of the family; the sense of belonging — of being wanted, needed and loved — is one that is rooted in the early years of life and cannot be replaced.

Once this strong foundation is built, parents need be concerned about the quality and character of the educational institution to which they entrust their children. Involvement and interest in school programs and policy decisions is an obligation for parents. As our public school systems introduce programs in value development and sex education, Catholic parents and the public at large should play an active part in the selection of programs and materials. Participation in the activities of the district school board is an extension of the influence of parents on the education of their children.

For over ten years, our diocese has strongly endorsed the role of education committees education committees or parish school boards in the

policy information for our schools. We urge administrators to be accountable for their responsibility to work cooperatively with the collegial decision making groups. Membership on the local education committee or school board extends beyond parents with children in the school and is open to the parish or those serving the institution.

A key person in the role of total education is, of course, the teacher — the man or woman who has the direct and specific responsibility to foster the learning process in each child. Every teacher has experienced his or her own reactions to the phrase "back to school" from the time of early education, preparation for teaching and the actual experience of being a teacher. The call to responsibility for a teacher is greater than academic knowledge and training; in our Catholic schools it is a call to ministry — a call to follow the example of the Master Teacher not merely in what one says, but in the way one lives.

Our philosophy of Catholic School Education is stated clearly in the Bishops' Pastoral, To Teach as Jesus Did. The goals of teaching the Gospel message, building community and offering service can only be promulgated by men and women who are examples of this commitment. The adage,

"I can't hear what you are saying because you are so loud", applied directly to teachers and their influence on students. We look to our teachers to be witnesses in their lives and we offer our support in their ministry.

Finally, we call to our young people to be responsible. The sacrifices of your parents, the dedication of our teachers, the vision of your community cannot make education a success in your life — you can! The opportunities that are yours today will not be repeated. You have been given unique gifts and talents; you are the steward of those gifts and have the responsibility to use and develop them. Your parents and teachers are with you to help you, but you must reach out and beyond to forage your special identity.

The events and outcomes of the 1979-80 school year are not known to us. Our role and responsibility is known; our call is to respond to what that responsibility asks of us. May we continue to move together to offer the opportunity to grow in faith and to live in truth, charity and hope!

It was in making education not only common to all, but in some sense compulsory on all, that the destiny of the free republics of America was practically settled. — James Russell Lowell

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Notre Dame High School To Celebrate 25th Year

By Martin Toombs

Elmira — Notre Dame High School will mark its 25th year when school opens next month.

Three events have been planned to celebrate the anniversary. On Sept. 21, special ceremonies will take place at the annual Homecoming football game. The opponent will be Elmira Free Academy.

On Feb. 10, a Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Matthew H. Clark at 4 p.m. in anticipation of the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the school's patronal feast.

And on May 1, a special arts and cultural program will be staged as part of the anniversary observance.

The school's enrollment has stabilized in recent years, Sister Mary Walter Hickey, principal, noted, even as it declines in area high schools. Classes will open for 590 students representing 440 families.

Fifty seniors will be taking advantage of a new program offering this year. "Future Shock," a career education program, was added to the curriculum late in the year, Sister Mary Walter reported, at the urging of Manny Panosian, a local businessman.

Susan Holahan, guidance counselor, explained that students will meet three times in each six-day cycle for a semester. For two of those classes, they will meet with a representative of an occupation. During the term the students will get to meet

persons active in a broad range of jobs. During the third class, they will meet with a school guidance counselor, who will address such issues as job applications, interviewing, resumes, and the availability of training and education necessary for the various fields.

Miss Holahan noted that although the program was added late and was restricted to seniors, it was oversubscribed an hour after sign-ups opened. She noted that for coming years, they hope to move the program to the junior year, when it possibly could be more helpful.

She explained that the "Future Shock" title came from graduates who said that they didn't realize how difficult competition for jobs

would be. The course will attempt to give the students a better understanding of the job market, she said, and realistic expectations.

Sister Mary Walter noted that four new teachers will be joining the faculty, and two of them are Notre Dame graduates. Mary Lewis, who will teach Business courses, and Victor Caroscio, who will teach English, are returning to their alma mater. Ron Norman, who has been coaching at the school, now will be a Math teacher, and Kim Griffin will be a new Spanish teacher.

She also noted that Brother Edward O'Donnell, a Carmelite from the monastery in Waverly, will be teaching theology part-time beginning in September.

Ithaca School Given New Look

Ithaca — Students returning to Immaculate Conception School Sept. 5 may have trouble recognizing their classrooms. Sister Campion Bush, principal, explained that the ceilings have been lowered in all the classrooms from their previous height of 15 feet to nine feet. The top section of windows has been blocked off and insulated and the lights have been lowered. As part of that work, all the rooms have been redecorated.

Meanwhile, work is underway to place the 25 new students, mostly in the middle grades, the school has gained. Controversial school closings and then re-openings in the public school system have

caused some parents to transfer their children to Immaculate Conception, raising the school's enrollment from 200 to 225.

The faculty has been working to make sure that the new students are placed in the proper grouping for their classes. This increase also has meant that a new fifth grade teacher has been hired and there will be two fifth grades this year.

Sister noted that kindergarten will be a full day this year and the teacher will have an aide for the first time. She also reported that all academic programs are continuing from previous years.

SCHOOL CALENDAR 1979 - 80

Sept.	4	Faculty Orientation
	5	Opening of School
	21	Teacher Conference Day
Oct.	8	Columbus Day
Nov.	1	All Saints Day (Full Morning Session)
	12	Veterans Day
	14	Book Exhibit - Afternoon
	22-23	Thanksgiving Recess
Dec.	24-Jan. 1	Christmas Recess (School closes at the of the day Fr. Dec. 21)
Jan.	2	School Reopens
	14	Martin Luther King Day
Feb.	18-22	February Recess
March	14	In-Service Day
April	3	Holy Thursday (Full Morning Session) Easter Recess Begins
	14	School Reopens
May	15	Ascension Thursday (Full Morning Session)
	30	Memorial Day
June	19	Last Day of School for Students
	20	Last Day of School of Teachers

NOTE: Morning sessions: Tues. June 17, Wed., June 18, and Thurs., June 19 for Elementary School Students.

If schools have been closed because of adverse weather conditions so that the number of instructional days fall below the minimum required by law, make-up days will be scheduled in the following order: Tues.-June 17; Wed.-June 18; Thurs.-June 19; Fri.-Feb. 22; Thurs.-Feb. 21; Wed.-Feb. 20; Tues.-Feb. 19; Fri.-Apr. 11; Thurs.-Apr. 10.