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Suburban officials see Urban School Plan as 'blueprint' for future

By Teresa A. Parsons

Recognizing that what's learned from the Urban School Study also applies outside the city lines, diocesan education officials held an informational session for suburban school leaders on Tuesday, August 20. Nearly 100 principals, school board members and parents gathered at St. Theodore's Church in Gates to hear a summary of the need, rationale and process for school planning in the City of Rochester.

"It has become apparent as the process has unfolded that there is a tie-in with the schools that you represent. We want to ensure that from this point on, developments that occur make sense to you," said Bishop Matthew H. Clark. "All the evidence suggests that unless we cooperate fully with one another ... we are in jeopardy."

Long-range planning on a countywide basis is too unwieldy a process for officials at the Pastoral Center to handle at present. But it's only a matter of time before suburban Catholic schools undergo the same kind of evaluation. Meanwhile, the possibilities for collaboration between schools don't stop at city lines either.

"Many of you are going to hear from an urban parish — many of you already have. What we're really trying to do is open up a dialogue with you," said Father John Mulligan, a member of the Urban School Study steering committee. Describing the need for clear, consistent communication, he said "We need to know who are your constituencies, who are the people you can help us communicate with? With your help, I'm convinced we will succeed."

Mary Caffrey, principal of Holy Trinity School in Webster, said she was anxious for long-range planning help from the diocese for the suburbs. Caffrey, a member of the Southeast Suburban Association of principals, which includes areas from Webster to Avon, expressed concern about how long it would take to start working on a suburban study since the implementation of the city plan is expected to take several years.

Most suburban principals who were contacted after the meeting said that diocesan officials had done a good job of keeping them informed about the study.

"We should not be complacent in the suburbs, we should be planning," said Sister Pat Pullman, principal at Our Lady of Lourdes School. "It's something I appreciate watching in advance since I look forward to a similar process."

"The need is much more immediate in the city than in the suburban schools," said Thomas Oberst, principal of St. Pius the Tenth School in Chili. "But it's good to set the stage for all parochial schools to have to consider changes for our schools ... The urban school plan can very easily be a blueprint for our planning process."

Oberst said that although Chili and Greece are two areas bucking the trend of declining enrollment, schools there must still respond to changing enrollment patterns. Ironically, schools there are facing the "problem" of expanding enrollments.

All Catholic schools are also up against considerable pressure from the New York state Regents' Action Plan. The plan calls for more specialized programs in languages, computer studies, science and social studies and technical careers, especially at the junior high levels.

Results of the state-required general competency test have shown that scores are up and Catholic school students have continued to fare well, Oberst said. But he added that schools will have to continue giving their students the necessary background to meet tougher public school requirements.

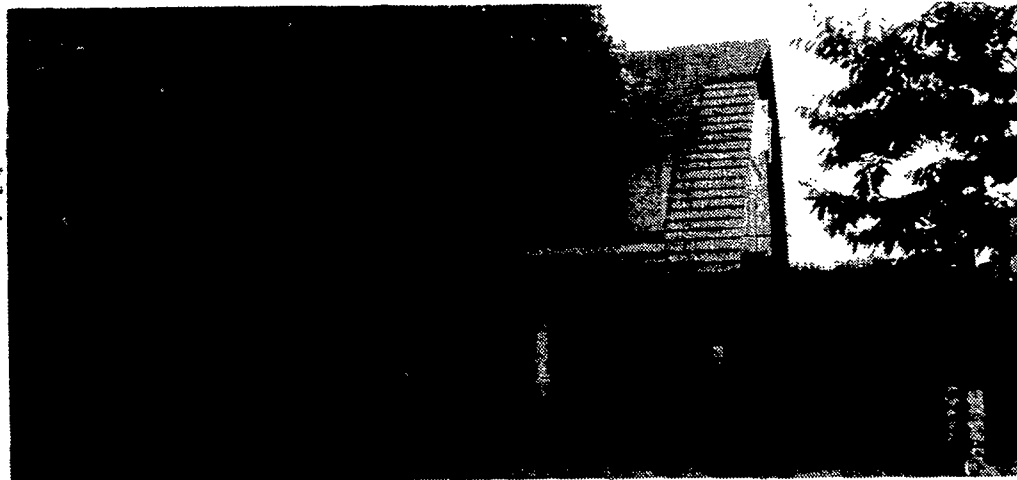
Sister Roberta Tierney, diocesan director of education, said the steering committee has begun to refine information gathered for the Urban School Study and hopes to have several optional plans developed and ready to present to urban school leaders by the end of September.



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Local trivia whiz returns victorious

Sister Carol Cimino, SSJ, was crunched by the media as she returned to Rochester from Los Angeles August 21, where she won \$9,989 and a refrigerator playing the television show "Jeopardy." Sister Carol, director of development at Nazareth Academy, has donated the cash she won to the school and plans to give a refrigerator to her parents. She will appear on episodes airing December 9, 10 and 11.



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Group Home Proposed

This house at 3930 St. Paul Boulevard is the site of a community residence for adolescents proposed by St. Joseph's Villa. See Page 4 for the details.

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Third Encuentro

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