

# COURIER-JOURNAL

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## Building to close?

### Group proposes regrouping of Elmira schools

By Teresa A. Parsons

Parents asked some hard questions, but generally accepted the logic of a plan announced last Thursday to reconfigure and consolidate the Chemung County Catholic School System in three school buildings. The plan was presented by the Chemung County General Education Board's long-range planning committee chairman Jim Snyder at a parent meeting, which he said went "extremely well."

"There wasn't a question we didn't anticipate," Snyder said. "I didn't get a curveball — they were all strikes."

"People were concerned, but not boisterous. They were very attentive to the presentation," added Jim Mirando, school board president.

The proposal, which still must be officially approved by diocesan education officials, parish councils and the school board, emerged from a five-year planning process mandated by the diocese. It suggests that Saint Mary's School, now grades kindergarten-six, become the primary school for all students in prekindergarten-three. Our Lady of Lourdes would become the intermediate school for grades four-six, and students in grades seven and eight would attend St. Casimir's. St. Patrick's School would be closed.

Countywide long-range planning has been a reality in Chemung County since 1971, when the first broad consolidation was initiated. In the past, this kind of announcement has prompted "bloodbath confrontations," Snyder said. He believes logic won over emotion this time because of the presentation's excellence, a premise with which Mirando and Sister Patricia Carroll, St. Patrick's principal, agreed.

"We're only following the general pattern of how the market is looking ... we have to go with the reality of declining enrollment," Snyder said in his presentation. "Is this alarming? ... Is this unusual?"

"No," he answered.

Sister Patricia also emphasized that the plan is not intended to prop up a failing system. "This is continuing what's an already good program, to ensure the continuance of Catholic education in Elmira," she said.

Her evidence was presented to parents in the form of test scores. Citing scores from

Continued on Page 3

## Inside this issue

### No more holes in the wall

A single mother in Avon is aided by church groups in her quest to find a better way of life for herself and her child — Page 4.

### Renewal retrospective

Our series on the effects of renewal in the lives of women religious continues. This week and for several weeks to come, we will profile individual or groups of individual women religious and discuss the ways in which the directives of Vatican II have shaped their ministries — Page 7.

### Respect for Life

Throughout the United States, Catholics will celebrate Respect for Life Sunday on October 6. Our coverage of this important issue begins with a letter from Bishop Matthew H. Clark on Page 8 and an eight-page Respect for Life supplement on Pages 9-16.

### The Baptismal Call

We resume our series on the ways in which ordinary Catholics interpret their call to ministry in their everyday lives. This week, we profile Paul Hetzler, a worker at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality — Page 18.



## Leading the pack

Scott Patterson of McQuaid took the lead in Saturday's McQuaid Invitational track meet just before the one-mile mark, but was soon passed by Chris Rauber of Pittsburgh Central Catholic High School. Rauber went on to win the race, and Patterson came in fifth.

## Options presented for reorganization of urban schools

By Teresa A. Parsons

A series of options for future administration of Catholic schools within the city of Rochester was presented Monday evening, Sept. 30, to 100 leaders of those urban schools. The options, developed by the Center for Governmental Research as part of the Diocese of Rochester's Urban School Study, were based upon the need to balance cost effectiveness and quality programs with the traditional goal of maintaining parish and neighborhood ties to Catholic schools.

Specific proposals vary, from concentrating fewer grade levels in each school to consolidating schools. A host of ideas for equalizing tuitions and improving school administration are also described by the study.

"We have not endorsed any options at this point," said Sister Roberta Tierney, a member of the study's steering committee and director of the diocesan Division of Education. She stressed the preliminary nature of this report, saying "Alan Taddiken (consultant for the study from the Center for Governmental Research) is presenting here some very objective recommendations for target practice ... We want to find out if parents will still believe in Catholic education if it is not kindergarten through grade eight."

Sister Anne Guerin, assistant superintendent for development and planning, added: "The diocese hired the Center for Governmental Research. This is their research report to us. The next step is discussion of it by clusters (principals and other parish school leaders) and the inclusion of their input."

Since the Urban School Study was officially launched last April with the goal of planning together for the future of Rochester's urban Catholic schools, leaders from 20 city schools have completed profiles that assess each school's current condition and look ahead to future needs. Taddiken visited each school to clarify the survey results. Throughout the summer, principals also met in geographically oriented clusters to develop ideas, some of which appear as options in Taddiken's report.

"This is my good-faith effort based on the criteria I was asked to use (diocesan school guidelines) to come up with a plan," said Taddiken. "It was even more difficult than I anticipated. This is an attempt to put information together for the whole system ... but that information is changing all the time."

No single option is designed to address the entire city school system. Because they are already meeting diocesan guidelines used as criteria for the study, some schools — Sacred Heart, Holy Rosary and Holy Cross — are affected only minimally through suggestions about tuition or administration.

The final plan is, in fact, expected to be a combination of options, although Taddiken also has developed a system-wide plan for consideration.

The system-wide plan would create middle schools at Holy Family (6-8) and Blessed Sacrament (7-8), serving the city's east- and

west-side students respectively. Under this same plan, Our Lady of Good Counsel School on the city's west side would house grades prekindergarten through five. In the northeast, five schools — Annunciation, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Andrew's, St. Philip Neri and Saint Stanislaus — would cut back to prekindergarten through grade six. St. John the Evangelist on Humboldt Street would continue to serve that age range. In the southeast area, St. Anne's would cut back to prekindergarten through grade six.

One consolidated urban education program would be centered at St. Monica's School. This school would serve non-parishoner, non-Catholic students, pre-kindergarten through grade six.

Overall, four school buildings — Corpus Christi, St. Boniface, St. Anthony and St. Augustine — would close under the plan Taddiken recommends.

Continued on Page 3

## Important Announcement For Courier-Journal Subscribers

Starting next week, the Courier-Journal's publication date will move to Thursday instead of Wednesday. We hope this change will allow us to provide better coverage of the many diocesan events occurring on weekends and to include more news from our national/international wire service, NC News.

At this time, we also wish to update publicity people on our deadlines and policies. The Courier-Journal welcomes contributions from readers. Our deadline for most items remains noon on Thursday of the week PRIOR to publication. The deadline for our calendar of diocesan events is the 25th of the month for the calendar appearing in the first edition of the following month and the 5th of the month for the calendar appearing in the third edition of the same month.

Items for publication should be typed

or printed legibly and double-spaced. We welcome readers' phoned-in suggestions on stories. We will not, however, accept publicity releases — meeting dates, announcements, etc. — over the phone.

Photos accompanying news releases will be considered if they are black-and-white, at least 3"x5" in size, and of good quality. We will not accept any photographs that have been noticeably retouched — parts of the photo blackened in, photographs pasted together, etc.

If you know of a story that would be interesting to a large number of our readers in the 12-county Diocese of Rochester, please call us at 454-7050. Although we cannot cover every story, we will respond to as many such requests as we can. If possible, please allow us several days' advance notice so that we can schedule our coverage.