

Options presented

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Options were based on balancing several key goals: maintaining parish and neighborhood bases for schools; providing high-quality education within a framework of moral and religious values; and adhering to diocesan criteria in the areas of enrollment, finance and buildings.

At the same time, the options address five areas in which action is necessary for urban schools. They are nonparishioner-based schools, low enrollment, tuition pricing, administration, and educational programming.

"The status quo cannot continue," said Sister Roberta. Such factors as small class size and inefficient use of faculty, administration and buildings have contributed to a dramatically increased per-pupil cost — an average of \$1,146 per city school student. The range of per-pupil costs and tuitions are also uneven. Costs range from a low of \$735 to a high of \$1,899, with tuitions citywide varying from \$500-\$1,000 per pupil, with an average of \$470 per year.

Because of the inequity among the schools' tuitions, parents increasingly select schools based on cost considerations, rather than on neighborhood or parish connections — a phenomenon known as school shopping.

Part of the reason for increased costs is an enrollment decline of 27 percent during the past 10 years for kindergarten through grade eight. Although that trend has slowed since the period 1970-75 (when the enrollment decline was 54 percent), it has continued steadily. In the past year, city Catholic school enrollment dropped 5.3 percent in those grades.

A related concern is class size. Although diocesan guidelines suggest 20-25 students per full-time teacher, some class sizes are as low as 8-10.

The New York State Regents' Action Plan is also forcing improvement of programs, dictating new social studies and science curricula as well as technology awareness and increased foreign-language instruction. In addition, to remain competitive with public schools, Catholic junior highs will have to offer high-school level courses in five subjects.

In the area of administration, Taddiken has recommended options in which principals and marketing/recruiting staff would be shared by several small schools. He also suggests that finance and facility coordination could be similarly shared if those functions were more clearly defined at the school level.

He also recommends two additional educational programs, the Spanish bilingual program and learning support centers. "They (these programs) represent one of the strengths of the Catholic elementary system: its ability to be responsive and timely in offering new or alternative programs," the study says. "Additional programs of this type should be identified and implemented."

The proposed St. Monica's school, Taddiken said, is an attempt to clarify Catholics' attitudes toward a new kind of Catholic school. So far, its innovative character has been hidden behind assumptions that schools like Corpus Christi, St. Monica's and St.

Augustine's are still parish schools when, in fact, they are not. All serve high percentages of non-Catholics — St. Augustine's, 51 percent, St. Monica's, 90 percent, Corpus Christi, 82 percent. In addition, all have "potentially serious problems" with finances, enrollment and class size.

Consolidating them into a single school encompassing grades K through six, and specifically directing them toward low-income minority families, would clearly test the level of support for that kind of evangelization and service among Catholics. The school would depend primarily on outside parish and diocesan support rather than a specific parish tie. St. Monica's was chosen because of the building's size and generally central location. The combined school would be administered by a board of representatives from St. Augustine's, Corpus Christi and St. Monica's schools.

Other large-scale options in the report call for maintaining a stronger urban presence and parish/neighborhood connections. This goal could be accomplished by keeping all schools open, and initiating prekindergarten-six programs as well as two regional junior highs. Thus, all urban Catholic schools would be operated by a city school board with representatives from each parish and a central office that would handle tuition collection, payroll, purchasing, fund raising, building maintenance and money management.

A similar option breaks schools down even further — primary, prekindergarten-three; intermediate, grades four-six; and middle schools, seven-eight.

Several of the options provide full-day prekindergarten and kindergarten programs, the only levels at which enrollment has increased both city- and diocese-wide. Although the study reported a concern that need for these programs will not expand, Taddiken said he personally believes there is room for growth in the market, especially for quality programs.

Once the principals, pastors, parish councils, school board and finance committee members who attended Monday's meeting digest the Urban School Study report and begin to form reactions, steering committee members will continue their efforts to gather parish-level reaction.

The committee is depending on its parish leadership group to present options to the parishes and to report back. "Structurally, I think it's the best we can do, even though it's unwieldy," Sister Anne said of the size of Monday's gathering.

The next step, scheduled for the end of November, is to draw together two or three recommendations from the input received and return those to the school clusters for approval. Also in November, surveys will be sent to all school parents to gauge their responses to the narrowed options.

With help from Taddiken, a consensus plan will then be developed and referred in December to Bishop Matthew H. Clark for his approval. The bishop's proposed plan will later be returned to parish councils for their approval and input. Implementation of the study is still set to begin in the 1986/87 school year.

Elmira schools

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tests routinely given to third and sixth graders, Sister Patricia demonstrated that Catholic school students consistently scored above their counterparts in Elmira's public schools and above the diocesan average.

One of the first questions from parents was "Why close St. Patrick's?" In response, Mirando cited utility costs — the highest for any building in the system — as one reason. The total amount saved over five years, including other maintenance costs, should be \$220,000 he said.

St. Patrick's is also the most marketable building, thanks to its central downtown location. That location was one strike against keeping the junior high there or moving other grade levels there, according to Sister Patricia.

"Our concern was for safety with the traffic in the area," she said, noting that in addition to busy streets, the area also includes three or four taverns, one of which is directly across the street from the school.

Finally, Mirando pointed out, the inside of St. Patrick's building was vastly underused, with 12 classrooms and only 130 students this year. On the other hand, outdoor space for a play area was limited. St. Casimir's, where the junior high will be relocated, is in a more residential neighborhood and in addition to a large outdoor recreational/athletic area, has a gym and auditorium indoors.

Despite the savings gained by closing St. Patrick's, tuition is not likely to go down. "What it means is that it won't go up as

fast," Mirando said. Although finances were not a major part of Thursday's presentation, the five-year plan does express the board's commitment to reaching a 50:50 tuition split between parishes and parents.

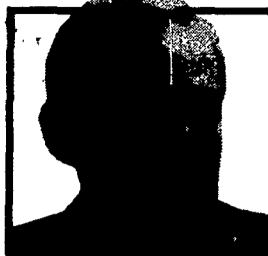
A major concern for planners was the additional busing required by the plan — particularly of primary-age students.

"We were concerned that we'd get a strong reaction from parents," said Sister Patricia. "What we got was understanding of why."

From her standpoint as a principal, Sister Patricia is concerned that the public realizes her junior high program is not closing, but moving. "My program is dependent on the students and the staff — it's not the building," she said. "I hope my junior high will be strengthened by the move."

To get her message across, Sister Patricia plans an open house on Thursday, Oct. 3, for parents of current and prospective students. Seventh-grade parents will gather at 7 p.m. with the eighth-grade parents' meeting at 8 p.m. Parents of sixth-graders are welcome any time, she said.

Snyder's concern now is that the plan be as well represented during the next month to parish councils and to parishioners who are not parents. On October 10, the school board will formally table the five-year plan for discussion. The board will then vote at its November meeting. Snyder hopes to have diocesan approval in time for the December budgeting process. Implementation would then come in the 1986/87 school year.



Along the Way

Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Sunday evening.

I thank God tonight for the gift of life we share in his beloved Son and for the strength and warmth of the Holy Spirit who teaches and lights the way for all people of faith.

With an awareness of those precious gifts I think about the week just passed and ...

... I remember with gratitude: all of you who gathered at Saint Alphonsus in Auburn, Saint Thomas More in Brighton and Good Shepherd in Henrietta to help launch our fifth annual Catholic Thanksgiving Appeal. That always requires a great amount of work by many people and your cooperation and support make that work a joy;

... a visit with Jane Kenrick, RSM, who has spent nineteen of 25 years of religious life in Chile and returns there tomorrow;

... Father Rick McNally S.S.C.C., the dynamic young pastor of St. Peter and Paul in Rochester who came in to make a video tape of his religious community's work in our diocese;

... our Sisters of the Cenacle with whom I celebrated today the 100th anniversary of the death of their beloved foundress;

... the parish staff and community of faith at Saint Joseph's, Cayuga, with whom I celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation on Friday;

... the priests with whom I live and with whom I enjoyed this evening in laughter and relaxation.

I remember with renewed hope: the first meeting of our new Diocesan Board of Social Ministry. It is a group of accomplished and committed persons

from all parts of our diocese. I am sure that they, with the assistance of our superb staff, will provide exceptional leadership for us all;

... the continuing work of our Diocesan Board of Education. They are well into their second year of activity and are now engaged in issues of considerable substance. It is my hope that you will become more and more aware of them as they begin to reach out into the community;

... the inaugural meeting of the Guild of Black Catholic Women which was held today at the Interfaith Chapel of the University of Rochester. I am deeply delighted by this initiative and ask your prayers that God will bless us all through their new group.

As I look to the events of a new week I ask your prayers for the following events which are the principal entries on my calendar: meetings on Monday and Tuesday at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Brooklyn, with representatives from the Priests' Councils of the dioceses of New York state and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious of New York state; a meeting on Wednesday in Geneva with our own Priests' Council; confirmation at Saint Catherine's, Addison; and the Run for Catholic Schools, sponsored by the Catholic Parents' Federation.

It will be a busy enough week which won't be lacking in challenge or interest. If it is half as rewarding as last week, it will be a blessing to experience it.

Thanks so much for all of the good favors mentioned here, for your continued prayers, love and support.

Peace to all.

Obituary:

William F. Ouweleen, St. Ann's administrator

William F. Ouweleen, former vice president for operations at St. Ann's Home/The Heritage, died early Sunday morning, Sept. 29, after an extended illness.

Mr. Ouweleen, a summa cum laude graduate of Michigan's Ferris State College's William F. Ouweleen pharmacy school, joined St. Ann's in 1968 as director of the pharmacy, and in 1973 was promoted to assistant administrator. He later became vice president, a position he held until he fell ill in June.

Sister Marie Michelle Peartree, president of St. Ann's, cites Mr. Ouweleen's faithful service to the home and calls him "a wonderfully gentle, outgoing and kind man."

"He was responsible for areas that touched their (St. Ann's residents') lives directly, and he was always searching out ways to improve their quality of living," she said, terming him a "very, very giving man who was tireless in his efforts."

"He is sorely missed and has been missed ever since he became ill on June 14," Sister Marie Michelle continued. "The employees are very saddened by his death, and I feel a tremendous personal loss."

Residents of St. Ann's also remember Mr. Ouweleen with fondness. "He will never be replaced," said resident Rose Ritzenthaler. "He was very dedicated to us. It's too bad he couldn't be with us longer. He was remembered everyday in our prayers since he



became ill."

"From the first day, he made me feel at home," said Lois Sackett, another resident. "He had a special touch of making people feel good. He always remembered my name and said hello."

In addition to his work at St. Ann's, Mr. Ouweleen was highly involved in parish activities at St. Ambrose Church, serving on various parish committees, bingo, the annual parish festival, and as a lector and Eucharistic minister. "I can't think of a thing he didn't serve on," said Father James J. Marvin, St. Ambrose pastor. "He never said no to me; anything I wanted, he said yes."

Father Marvin noted that Mr. Ouweleen was dedicated to the good of his family, church and community. "He was one of the most beautiful Christian men I have known in my lifetime, and I am happy to have known him as a brother."

Mr. Ouweleen was a member of the New York State and American Associations of Homes for the Aging and the Rochester Aero Modeling Society. An avid builder and flyer of remote-control planes, he taught model building to many children, including residents of Hillside Children's Center.

Mr. Ouweleen is survived by his wife, Gina; four sons, William B., Kevin M., Mark S. and Michael R. Ouweleen; his mother, Mildred Ouweleen, and sister Joyce Penny, both of Michigan; aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews.

Mass of Christian Burial was Tuesday, Oct. 1, at St. Ambrose. Those wishing may offer Masses, or make contributions either to St. Ann's Home/The Heritage or the William F. Ouweleen Memorial Fund c/o Columbia Banking, 31 Main St. E., Rochester, N.Y. 14614.

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