

Controversial school closing divides parish

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Despite opposition from the parish council of St. Anne's Church, the Diocese of Rochester has decided to close St. Anne's School, at 151 East Henrietta Road, in June. The resulting controversy has divided parishioners, and may even lead one faction to call for the pastor's resignation.

School officials were notified of the diocesan decision on Saturday, Feb. 25, following two months of consultation with representatives of the Bishop's Office and the diocesan education division, said Robert Edelman, school principal.

Currently, 113 students are enrolled in

pre-kindergarten through sixth grade at St. Anne's. Edelman said school parents are being encouraged to enroll their children in the K-3 program at St. Thomas More and in the 4-6 program at Our Lady of Lourdes/Seton Junior High. Both schools are located in Brighton.

The closing has pitted the wishes of St. Anne's pastor, Monsignor William N. Roche, against the desires of the parish council. Monsignor Roche supported closing the school, citing parish indebtedness and declining enrollment.

The parish council voted 6-3, with three abstentions, on Monday, Feb. 13, to keep the school open through the 1989-90 school year. Included in the parish coun-

cil's proposal was a tuition increase. Monsignor Roche overruled the council's vote and went to the diocese for approval of his decision.

On Sat., Feb. 18, Father John Mulligan, moderator of the Pastoral Center, Sister Roberta Tierney, diocesan director of education, and Father Peter Bayer, diocesan chancellor, met with five St. Anne's representatives: Monsignor Roche; Edelman; Father George E. Gauthier, parochial vicar; Joan Powell, parish council president; and Charles Lalka, chairman of the parish finance committee. At that time, Monsignor Roche and Powell submitted their separate proposals to Father Mulligan and Sister Tierney.

Sister Tierney said the diocese chose the pastor's plan over that of the parish council

because the tuition increase called for in the council's plan would have probably led to a decline in enrollment at the school.

According to figures supplied by Powell, the tuition increases for parishioners' children would have ranged from 18-40 percent, depending on the number of children enrolled, while the tuition increases for non-parishioners' would have been 28-45 percent.

According to parish council members, the council had hoped to keep the school open at least one more year so that it would be considered in any future consolidation moves by the planning board of the southeast quadrant, to which it belongs. The Southeast Planning Board, one of four groups planning the future of Monroe

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Commission drafts plan for school reorganization

By Rob Cullivan
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The Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools has released a draft proposal calling for a significant restructuring of the Catholic school system in Monroe County.

Among other things, the plan proposes a new administrative network for Monroe County's Catholic schools, uniform tuition rates, and the replacement of the current parish-sponsored school system with a system of centralized Catholic schools, each serving several parishes.

Entitled "Catholic Community Schools: System Framework for Monroe County," the plan calls for the development of "an interdependent and resource-sharing Catholic school system in Monroe County." The draft proposal focuses on K-6 and junior high programs, though consideration is given to Catholic high schools.

William Pickett, commission chairman, noted that after meeting with trustees from the six Catholic high schools in Monroe County over the last few months, no consensus had been reached regarding reconfiguration of the high school system. It was likely that the future of the high schools would be decided by the various individual orders sponsoring each high school, he said.

The nine-member commission prepared the plan with the assistance of the Center for Governmental Research Inc., a consulting firm.

Copies of the plan have been sent to pastors and principals throughout Monroe County, who will meet with the commission over the next month to discuss the draft. The commission will then make any necessary revisions before meeting with Bishop Clark in April.

In brief, the system plan focuses on the following areas, with the most noteworthy changes listed:

- **Organization:** The plan calls for the establishment of quadrant boards to administer the Northeast, Southeast, Northwest and Southwest Quadrants. These boards will be responsible for planning, policy development, financing, public relations, evaluation and selection of school principals.

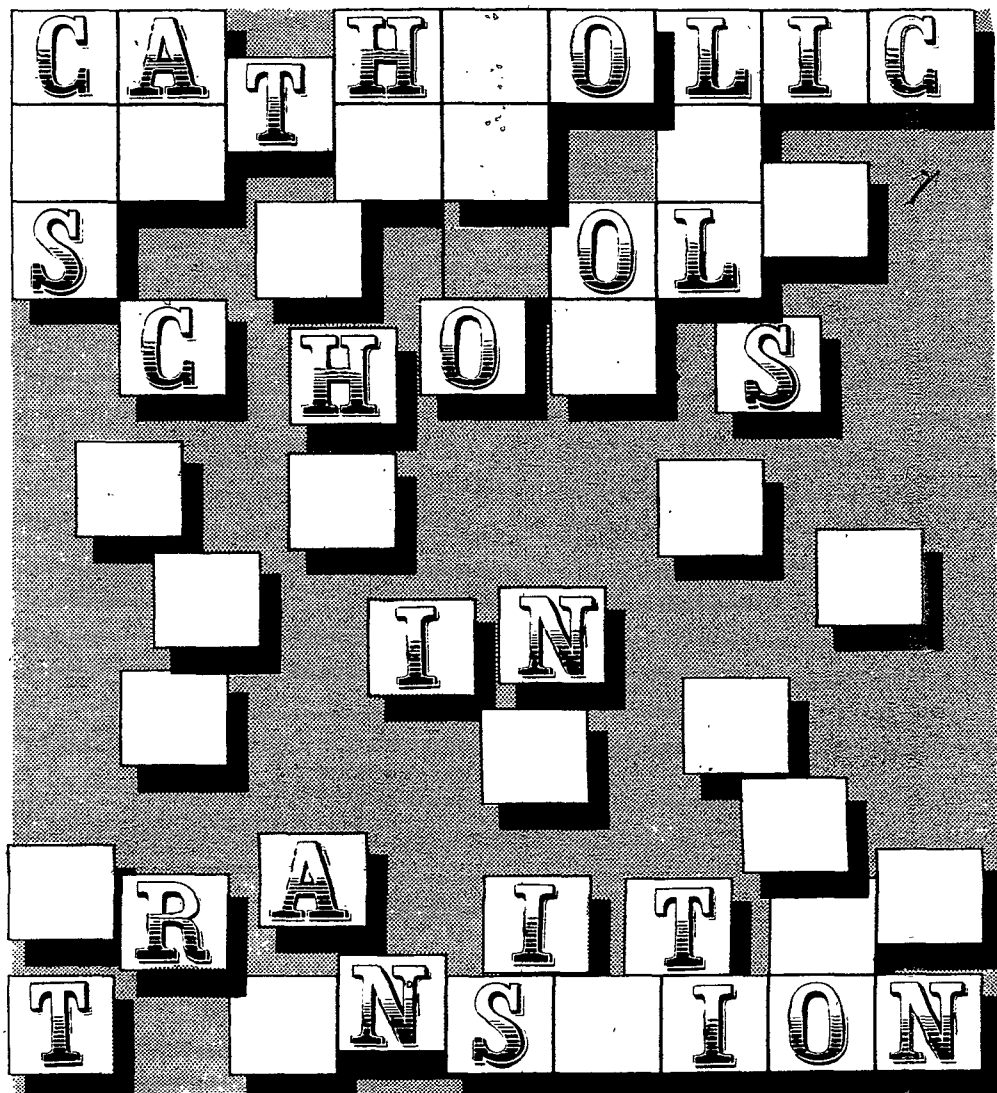
Each board would be made up of representatives of parishioners, pastors and principals. The boards would answer to the Diocesan Division of Education, the Diocesan Board of Education, and, ultimately, to Bishop Matthew H. Clark. In addition, schools would now be considered quadrant schools, as opposed to their current designation as parish schools.

- **Program development:** The plan calls for the establishment of a consortium of such academic curriculum "leaders" as teachers, college professors, and other "experts," to develop educational programs. "Priority will be given to enhancing the science/math/technology curriculum ... by September, 1990," the draft said.

- **Multi-cultural programming:** Efforts will be made to bring in various speakers for in-service workshops; to hire more minority teachers; to develop a multi-cultural curriculum; and to continue a Hispanic program developed at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which is slated to close in June, at St. Andrew's and St. Stanislaus schools.

- **Admission and enrollment:** Preference for registering in a school will be given to those who live close to it, and to those with a historical connection to the school. This section also predicts a short-term decline in enrollment until the Catholic school system is stabilized.

- **Grade organization:** The plan calls for a K-6 configuration for each elementary school; pre-kindergarten and day care programs in elementary schools wherever possible; and a junior high program for



each quadrant.

- **Teachers/Staff:** The diocesan superintendent of schools and board of education are developing guidelines to place teachers in consolidated schools, and to help those not placed in consolidated schools.

- **Facility use/reuse:** Parishes will be requested to use the income from any school facility that is reused or sold for educational purposes.

- **Marketing/student recruitment and retention:** A market research study will be conducted this spring. After the results are analyzed, the Diocesan Director of Communications will develop a marketing plan, outlining responsibilities for quadrant boards, pastors, parish leaders, principals and school committees.

- **Finance/resource sharing:** The plan calls for establishing a uniform tuition rate for the first or only child of each family, and suggests that a second child pay half

that rate. Additional children would pay 25 percent of the uniform rate.

An education subsidy will be required from each parish, with the amount being determined by a parish's ability to pay and its share of the total student population. Criteria similar to that used by the diocesan Annual Thanksgiving Appeal will be used to determine a parish's ability to pay. A parish may use income gained by the lease or sale of its facilities as credit towards its subsidy, and it may also count the cost of maintaining parish buildings used by the Catholic school system as part of its subsidy.

Editor's note — Over the next few weeks, the Catholic Courier will feature an in-depth series on the specific proposals outlined in the above article. Emphasis will be given to the practical implications of each proposal for Catholics throughout the diocese.

Christ the King to stay open under revised plan

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Christ the King School will remain open under a revised reconfiguration and consolidation plan submitted Wednesday, March 1, by the Northeast Quadrant Planning Board to the Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools.

The new plan still calls for the June, 1989, closings of schools at Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Neri in Rochester, and St. Salome in Irondequoit. Annunciation in Rochester and St. James in Irondequoit are slated to close in June, 1990.

The plan also calls for the closing of Blessed Sacrament Junior High in Rochester, in June, 1990, and recommends establishing a junior high program at Bishop

Kearney High School by September, 1990.

Originally, the plan had targeted Christ the King for closing in June, 1990. The school was targeted because a parish representative supplied data to the quadrant planning board indicating that the school did not have enough classrooms to meet criteria for remaining open. Robert Greis, Christ the King Parish's representative, said he counted only classrooms currently being used by the school, and claimed he was unaware that his report could have included space potentially available for classrooms.

After the planning board released its original proposal on Jan. 5, Christ the King submitted revised information, reporting that the school houses nine classrooms in current use and six additional rooms that could serve as classrooms. The school thus

has the 15 classrooms necessary to accommodate a pre-K-6 program with two sections per grade.

William Pickett, chairman of the nine-member Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools, emphasized that Christ the King's remaining open is conditional. According to the proposal, the school must convert a teachers' lounge, the religious education office and two meeting rooms into classrooms, and convert several other rooms adjoining the parish center into art, music, computer, library and office rooms.

In addition, the school must submit a written agreement to the conditions by April 1; submit a proposed plan to satisfy the conditions by June 1; start any required construction by July 15 and complete it by Sept. 1.

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