

CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS
CLOSING
TRANSITION

Teacher placement to stress seniority

Editor's note — This is the sixth installment in a series of articles examining Catholic Community Schools: System Framework Plan for Monroe County, the proposed plan for the reorganization of Monroe County's Catholic Schools. This week's installment focuses on diocesan guidelines for the placement of teachers whose positions will be terminated by school closings.

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — In the next few weeks, teachers at the seven Monroe County Catholic schools scheduled to be closed this June will learn of job openings in the remaining schools throughout the diocese. According to guidelines issued by the diocesan Division of Education, teachers with seniority and experience in the Catholic School system will have first dibs on any teaching positions that open up.

When Catholic schools have closed in the past, the diocese has generally been able to place 90 percent of the displaced teachers in other positions within the school system, according to Sister Joseph Gilmory Russell, assistant superintendent for personnel for the education division.

But this year, with a larger number of teachers losing their jobs as a result of seven school closures in Monroe County, Sister Russell said she was unable to predict how many displaced teachers will find positions in the school system.

Sister Russell said 35 full-time teachers in the northeast quadrant will lose their

positions following school closings in June. In addition, seven full-time teachers at St. Anne's, and 14 full-time teachers from Good Counsel/Genesis will be displaced in June. Teachers from St. Anne's and Good Counsel/Genesis will be placed throughout Monroe County, Sister Russell said. Her office will attempt to place northeast quadrant teachers in northeast schools, she noted.

One principal expressed concern at the number of teachers who will be seeking jobs in the Catholic schools. "We're kind of flooding the field all at once," remarked Angela Fortunato, principal of St. Salome's. Fortunato also noted the unexpected closing of Annunciation, which will add seven teachers to the field of job-seekers for the 1989-90 school year. Annunciation, originally slated to close in June, 1990, is one of four schools in the northeast quadrant scheduled to close in June.

Despite her anxiety, Fortunato expressed confidence in Sister Russell's office. "I am positive Sister (Russell) will do her best," Fortunato remarked.

In its effort to place as many displaced teachers within the system as possible, the diocese will not open positions to applicants from outside the system until positions are found for those Monroe County teachers losing jobs as a result of the closings, according to Sister Russell.

Sister Russell said that every effort would be made to place northeast quadrant teachers within the quadrant's remaining schools. In addition, the diocese has issued a three-page document, entitled "Policy — Staff Changes Resulting from School Closings/Consolidations," outlining a county-wide hiring policy with regard to teachers losing jobs in the northeast quadrant. In the event of future consolidations in Monroe County's three other quadrants, these guidelines also may be applied to other displaced teachers, she said.

In brief, the guidelines stipulate that:

- Teachers with seniority will be given preference in hiring, as long they are qualified for the available positions. Hiring will be done separately for K-6 teachers and ju-

nior high instructors.

- Teachers laid off as a result of the closings will be given first consideration for open positions in quadrants other than their own, and if they are not placed, first consideration for future openings within their own quadrant for the following three school years.

If, however, a teacher who lost a job at the southeast quadrant's St. Anne's School, whose staff is not covered by these guidelines, and a teacher from a closed northeast quadrant school were vying for the same position in a third quadrant, the teacher with more seniority and such qualifications as experience and training will be given preference in hiring, Sister Russell said, though she noted that it was doubtful such a case would arise.

Where teachers will be placed will depend upon the following factors, which will be considered by the diocesan superintendent of schools, assistant superintendent for personnel, school principals and the teachers themselves:

- Teaching experience within a grade level or subject area.
- Teaching performance as measured by evaluations.
- Teaching certification.
- Additional training or education.
- Length of service with the Rochester Catholic school system.
- Total teaching experience, including public school teaching.

The wording of the guidelines, particularly one concerning "bumping," has caused some confusion among teachers and principals. At St. Salome's School, question has arisen concerning a paragraph on page three stating that, with the exception of, "cases relating to problems in performance or a demonstrated need to match particular skills and abilities with an available position, those teachers who are displaced as a result of a school closing or consolidation will not be considered for 'bumping' other teachers whose positions are unaffected. Rather the affected teachers will be considered for open positions within the quadrant..."

Fortunato remarked that the guideline

seems to state that no teacher at a school that is remaining open can be removed from a position so that a teacher from a closed school can have a job.

But Sister Russell said that, if necessary, a teacher in a school remaining open could be replaced by a teacher who lost his or her job through a closing, if the unemployed teacher is qualified for the specific job and has more seniority than the individual currently holding the position. She noted that a teacher's training, experience, performance, certification and length of service within the entire Catholic school system would play a role in determining whether or not he or she would replace a currently employed instructor. If the diocese were to "bump" a teacher in this fashion, it would then attempt to place him or her elsewhere in the system, she said.

Teachers displaced by the closings must submit to the diocese a list of three choices, in order of preference, of jobs that have become available. Those teachers for whom jobs are found will be notified of their tentative teaching assignments on June 1, although Sister Russell noted that more positions may become available throughout the summer.

Originally, the diocese planned to furnish a list of job openings to teachers by April 15, but Sister Russell said that a comprehensive list of available teaching posts had not been compiled by that date. The list will be available within a month, she said.

Nonetheless, teachers at at least one school are not banking on finding a future in the diocesan school system, according to Sister Clare Francis Mogenhan, principal of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

"I've got young teachers," Sister Mogenhan said. "They know as well as I do that their chances are slim." She acknowledged, however, that the diocese is doing as much as it can to improve those odds, a sentiment echoed by Sister Diane Marie Erskine, principal of Annunciation. "I certainly think the diocese takes care of its employees," Sister Erskine said.

When She Thought She Couldn't Manage Alone Any Longer, You Showed Her The Way.

Without children or family nearby, Celia Joffe has been managing on her own since her husband died 21 years ago.

Until, at 87 years old, in failing health, she was no longer able to take care of herself without help. Afraid she would lose the thing she prizes most—her independence—Celia began to withdraw from life.

But she learned she didn't have to give up her independence. Because a United Way agency was there. With help doing shopping, errands and—most of all—with the companionship that showed her she didn't have to be alone.

Now it's time for you to show the way to thousands more who need you. So this year when you give to United Way, remember to give the most important thing of all.

 Give it your best.

The 1989 United Way/Red Cross Campaign

