

School plan meets resistance in quadrant

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Last week, the Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools released a reorganization proposal that calls for the closing of four Catholic schools in Monroe County and the establishment of two regional junior highs.

The plan also calls for the reconfiguration of the remaining schools to house grades kindergarten through six, and for a uniform tuition rate for schools within the southeast quadrant.

The draft's section on school consolidations calls for the closing of the following schools:

Corpus Christi, Rochester — Grades K-6 of the school (currently K-8) would be moved to Blessed Sacrament in the fall of this year. This move would include the placement of Corpus Christi's current staff and faculty at Blessed Sacrament, noted William Pickett, president of St. John Fisher College and chairman of the reorganization commission.

St. Boniface, Rochester — This K-6 school's student body would be consolidated with St. John's, Humboldt.

Guardian Angels, Henrietta — The K-3 school would close, with its students

transferred to Good Shepherd.

Currently configured as grades 4-8, Good Shepherd would become a K-6 school with the addition of students from Guardian Angels.

St. Rita, Webster — The K-8 student body would move to Holy Trinity (K-8), which would become a K-6 school next fall.

In addition to the school closings, St. John of Rochester, currently K-8, would become a quadrant junior high. Seton Catholic's Primary School, located at Rochester's St. Thomas More Parish and currently housing grades K-3, would become the quadrant's other junior high.

The plan was released on Wednesday, Jan. 10, and school leaders are preparing their responses to it for a meeting with the commission on Jan. 24. Following that meeting, the commission will take the plan, along with the leaders' input, to Bishop Matthew H. Clark, who is expected to determine final approval of the plan by month's end.

Pickett stressed that the plan is only a draft and noted that the schools' input would be crucial in determining the final makeup of the quadrant's reorganization. Some school leaders are already preparing

to challenge the commission's recommendations.

Catherine Kress, principal of Guardian Angels, said she was "stunned" by the proposal to close her school. "I was surprised when our school was listed to be closed because we have been consolidating ... for the last 12 years," she said, referring to the consolidation of the parish schools of Good Shepherd and Guardian Angels in 1978.

At that time, Good Shepherd became a 4-8 school and Guardian Angels a K-3 in order to head off any future crises stemming from declining enrollment. Kress noted that enrollment in her school has actually increased 25 percent in the last three years, and that she had planned to replace her two current half-day kindergarten programs with two full-day ones next year.

Pickett acknowledged that the enrollment figures he had from Guardian Angels may have not been up-to-date and said that currently the Center for Government Research, which provided technical assistance to the commission, is looking into the problem.

That's good news for Sister Helen Lynch, RSM, principal of Good Shepherd, who was concerned that adding more stu-

dents to her school would limit classroom space for special education.

"I would need to use 14 of the 15 available classrooms," she said, noting that 10 rooms currently are used as homerooms, and that the remaining rooms house computer and music classes.

Sister Lynch echoed Kress' contention that the Rush/Henrietta schools were already consolidated, and she criticized the commission for proposing the establishment of only two junior highs in the quadrant. She pointed out that the commission's Catholic Community Schools Plan, released last year, stated that the establishment of regional junior highs in each quadrant was only a recommendation, not a mandate.

Pickett responded by noting that the commission believes regional junior highs are the preferred model of 7-8 education because of the unique needs of junior high students.

"It's better to have (junior-high programs) in a way in which you have groupings of 2-300 students in a building," he said adding that larger schools are more likely to feature a variety of educational programming.

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Bishop Hickey's resignation accepted

By Karen M. Franz
Editor

Pope John Paul II has accepted the resignation of Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey. The action was officially announced in the Jan. 16 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper.

Bishop Hickey submitted his resignation upon his 75th birthday last October, in compliance with Canons 401 and 411 of church law, which call for bishops to resign at age 75.

Bishop Hickey was ordained June 7, 1941, and Bishop Fulton J. Sheen appointed him vicar general of the diocese in 1967. The Dansville native was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Rochester and titular bishop of Rusuccuru (an ancient diocese of northern Africa), on March 14, 1968.

Although the resignation procedure has attached the word "retired" to the beginning of his official title, little else will change for Bishop Hickey, according to Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

"He will be serving in a variety of ways, generally speaking, continuing to do all of the things that he does now except that officially and canonically he will be the retired auxiliary bishop of Rochester rather than the auxiliary bishop of Rochester," Bishop Clark explained.

"At the two moments in his life when Bishop Hickey was expected by the church to step forward to submit his resignation from pastoral posts, he has done that with good spirit and promptness. He resigned from (the pastorate) at St. Thomas More at age 70 and has now retired as auxiliary bishop at age 75, as he does all things, with grace and peacefulness," Bishop Clark ob-

served.

"His disposition, and mine too, is that he continue, for so long as he may wish to do so, to carry on the ministries he has done so well," he added.

As a result, Bishop Clark said, no significant practical change would take place within the diocese as a result of Bishop Hickey's retirement. He added that Bishop Hickey will continue to serve as one of the diocese's two vicars general.

Although he said he might ask the Holy See for another auxiliary bishop at some point in the future, Bishop Clark said he has no plan to make such a request at this time because the diocese now has two retired bishops continuing in ministry — Bishop Hickey and Bishop Joseph L. Hogan. "Both are very generous and beloved persons who offer a great degree of ministry to our people," Bishop Clark said.

The ongoing ministry of Bishops Hogan and Hickey gives Bishop Clark time to consider the prospect of requesting another auxiliary. "I would like to take some time to think that decision through, consult about it ... discuss it with advisers, and take some good time to think and pray about it," Bishop Clark said.

He noted that the Vatican has begun to weigh all requests for auxiliary bishops by such criteria as whether the auxiliary would share on a collaborative basis in the overall governance of the diocese or would simply function as an assistant, and whether the diocesan bishop planned to entrust the auxiliary with duties that could not be canonically performed by priests or others within the diocese.

Under certain circumstances, for example, church law permits a bishop to appoint

any priest to perform confirmations. "It doesn't make a lot of sense to ask for an auxiliary just to do confirmations, and I would not do that," Bishop Clark said.

"I have never, ever conceived of Bishop Hickey as simply a confirming-person; I have always conceived of him as a collaborator in the work of overseeing diocesan life," he said. "The reality of his ministry is far more than (administering confirmation), and I would want any other auxiliary bishop to be in the same position."

Now twice-retired, Bishop Hickey said that in addition to his ongoing work as general manager of the *Catholic Courier*, he would continue serving the diocese "on the pastoral side" — participating in consultative discussions, presiding at confirmations, and representing the diocese at various cultural and civic functions.

"I really would like to see the *Catholic Courier* firmly established as a free newspaper," added the general manager, who looks upon himself as a liaison between the paper and the diocesan administration. "One of the main purposes of my staying on is trying to help the *Courier* reach to the heights."

Bishop Hickey does, however, anticipate having more time to travel, and is thinking of a rail trip to the West Coast. Frequently, he also visits his two sisters living in Westchester County, N.Y.

"I anticipate a little more free time



where I can travel and take in some concerts. I've never been able to do much of that," he said.

Bishop Hickey said that "a common understanding" has blocked any plans for retirement parties in his honor, following a lengthy series of festivities to mark his 75th birthday last fall.

"I think the next one we'll aim for will be the 50th anniversary of ordination in 1991," he said. "There's a limit to the number of parties you can have."

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