

Bishop sets plan to govern, finance schools

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Bishop Matthew H. Clark has approved a governance and finance plan for Catholic schools in three of Monroe County's quadrants — southeast, southwest and northwest.

The bishop released the plan at a press conference on Wednesday, March 7, at the diocesan Pastoral Center, 1150 Buffalo Road. According to the plan, quadrant boards will begin governing Catholic schools in the three quadrants on July 1. Currently, in most cases, the schools are governed by the parishes at which they are located.

Quadrant boards will be made up of parish officials — pastor, principal and catechetical representatives — within each quadrant. Among other duties, the boards will be charged with implementing a plan to divide the sharing of school costs between parents, schools and parishes.

The plan calls for 60 percent of school costs to be financed through tuition and school-based revenues, with the remaining 40 percent of costs financed by parish support. This ratio will be phased in incremen-

tally over the next four years. According to the plan, no less than 45 percent of per-pupil costs in 1990-91 must be borne by tuition and school-based revenues. By 1994, that figure will top off at 60 percent.

The new financial structure will rely on schools using a common reporting system for revenues and expenditures. In addition, parishes that have never had a school must pay an increased minimum parish education subsidy of \$500 for 1990-91 for each parish child attending a quadrant school. The current parish subsidy is \$300. The plan also calls for all parishes to con-

tribute to the Shared Pool, created last year, which subsidizes education to the poor.

Grade reconfigurations for the three quadrants are still being worked out, according to William Pickett, chairman of the Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools, which has been reviewing each of the quadrant planning boards' reorganizational plans.

In a statement released by the diocese, Pickett noted that strong opposition to recommended grade reconfigurations for 1990-91 in the southeast and southwest in

the past few months caused the commission to delay reconfiguration recommendations until this summer. Following the bishop's approval, the recommendations will be implemented in 1991-92, the statement said.

The financial and governance plans are the latest wave in Catholic schools reorganization over the past few years which have already seen five schools close and a new junior high being established in the northeast quadrant. The northeast began implementing its reorganization plan last year.

Pay guidelines marked by several firsts

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — New diocesan salary and benefits guidelines, issued Feb. 28, are marked by some firsts designed to recognize realities in the economic and employee spheres.

In addition to a one-time salary increase for priests to offset Social Security increases and a decrease in the vesting time for lay pension plans, the new guidelines package calls for a 6-percent salary in-

crease for parish and school employees. This figure includes a cost of living increase of 4.5 percent, based on the Consumer Price Index, said Bob Mason, director of the diocesan Division of Personnel Staffing and Development.

Mason noted that the remaining portion of the salary increase recognizes a reality that has become apparent in the past three years: Diocesan salaries have been falling slightly behind consumer costs. While diocesan increase guidelines have been

pegged to the CPI figures released in each December, in each of the past three years the government has found it necessary to release new and higher figures in July, after the diocesan guidelines had already been implemented, he said.

Thus the additional 1.5 percent is designed to compensate for any additional increase in the price index that is likely to occur later this year, Mason said.

The guidelines for priests' salaries also deals with another reality not addressed before, Mason remarked. Employers must pay half of the Social Security tax levied on their employees, he said, but priests — who are considered to be self-employed — must pay the full amount of Social Security tax levied against their salaries.

Recognizing this fact, the salary guidelines call for a 7-percent salary increase for priests in addition to the 6-percent increase called for across the board. Mason emphasized that this increase is a one-time adjustment.

Lay employees who work more than 20 hours per week will also enjoy a new benefit under the guidelines. Previously, employees needed to complete 10 years of

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Exposure to bleach injures church shelter worker

ROCHESTER — A worker at Blessed Sacrament Overnight Shelter has been injured by long-term exposure to donated chlorine bleach.

Rochester Fire Department's Hazardous Materials team was called to the Monroe Avenue church's basement Thursday evening, Feb. 22, to remove "at least" 150 one-gallon bleach containers from a storeroom, according to Lieutenant Bob King. Some of the bottles had burst their tops, and were leaking, King said.

"The material was basically household (chlorine bleach)," he explained. "But you can imagine with that amount of (bleach), the odor can be hazardous.

The bleach was donated in November, 1989, by a shelter volunteer, who said he had received it from Kleen Brite Laboratories, Inc., in Brockport. The volunteer, Leslie Tandler, said he believed that the bleach had been contaminated, and that the company gave it to him to avoid the cost of disposal. Because he had signed a waiver agreeing not to sell the bleach, Tandler gave it to Blessed Sacrament shelter, which washes homeless guests' laundry.

Roosevelt Rice, a staff member at the shelter, received the donation. As he unloaded the bottles, he noticed that several were leaking, and he discarded them.



photo/graphic by Augustin & Hennessey

Rice spent many nights on a cot in the room where the remaining bleach was stored. After suffering what seemed to be a cold for several months, he said he complained to his doctor, who took a blood test.

Rice said the test confirmed that he had been contaminated with the bleach. His doctor told him he had developed bronchial asthma as a result, he said.

"My word of caution is don't take any product that's outdated," King advised other non-profit organizations.

— Teresa A. Parsons

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