

# No schools to close under revised proposals

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — No schools in Monroe County's Southeast and Southwest quadrants will close during the 1991-92 school year, Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced Nov. 26.

Under the new school-reorganization plans, St. Theodore's School in Gates will be the site for the Southwest Quadrant's junior high school, and an urban junior high will be located in the building of the former Blessed Sacrament School.

The plans, released during a Nov. 26 press conference at the diocesan Pastoral Center, also call for the Southeast Quadrant's Governance Board to determine where to establish a suburban junior high school for opening no later than September, 1993.

The reorganization plans are revised versions of plans released in January, 1990, and withdrawn the following month amid strong outcry from parents and school administrators. The original plans had called for the closing of four schools in the Southeast and one in the Southwest Quadrant.

Under the new plan for the Southwest Quadrant, Holy Family, Holy Ghost, St. Helen's, St. Pius X, Most Precious Blood and St. Theodore's will house K-6 programs beginning in the fall of 1991. The original plan for the quadrant had called for Most Precious Blood to close.



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer  
**Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, diocesan superintendent of schools, explains the school-reorganization plan during a Nov. 26 press conference.**

In addition, the new plan calls for St. Monica's School, which offers the diocese's multi-cultural pilot program, to become a K-6 school in the fall of 1992.

The quadrant's junior high school will share facilities with St. Theodore's K-6 program. Diocesan officials are currently searching for a junior high principal and expect to make a hiring decision by January, 1991.

In the Southeast Quadrant, St. Rita's, Guardian Angels and St. Boniface schools — all scheduled to close under the original plan — will remain open. Corpus Christi

School, also slated for closing under the earlier plan, has since moved to the building of the former Blessed Sacrament School.

Blessed Sacrament — formerly a junior high for the Northeast Quadrant — was closed in June of 1990 as part of that quadrant's reorganization.

Under the revised Southeast Quadrant plan, Seton Primary at St. Thomas More School and Guardian Angels will both house K-3 programs in 1991-92. Good Shepherd and Seton Catholic at Our Lady of Lourdes will offer fourth- through sixth-grade programs.

Corpus Christi at Blessed Sacrament will offer grades K-8 in 1991-92.

St. Rita's and Holy Trinity will offer K-6 programs during the 1991-92 school year. The two Webster schools will be administered separately, but enrollment figures will be managed as if they were one school. If combined enrollment declines, the two schools might be consolidated.

St. Louis, St. John of Rochester, St. Boniface, St. Joseph's in Penfield, and St. John the Evangelist schools will all have K-6 programs during the 1991-92 school year.

St. Joseph's, Seton at Our Lady of Lourdes and Good Shepherd will also house junior high programs during the 1991-92 school year. Those junior high programs will continue until the Southeast Quadrant Board determines the location for a single suburban junior high school for the quadrant.

Students from schools in the quadrant may also attend the Northeastern Junior High, which is located in a wing of the Bishop Kearney High School building.

A transition coordinator will be named to oversee the junior high program and to work with the principals in the four Southeast Quadrant schools offering junior highs during 1991-92. The coordinator will also work with the principal of the junior

high at St. Theodore's to plan that school's program and facility changes.

The proposed urban junior high school will eventually be located in the former Blessed Sacrament School. Diocesan officials said the Southeast Quadrant Board will determine whether the junior high will be part of the Corpus Christi program, or will operate under separate administration.

In deciding to cancel the previously proposed school closings, the now-defunct Commission on Reorganization of Catholic Schools in Monroe County responded to people's reactions to the earlier plans, acknowledged commission chairman William Pickett.

Pickett acknowledged that the commission's original proposals for reorganization were so unacceptable to the people who were involved with the affected schools that the plans were not viable options.

If implemented, the original plans would have produced greater efficiency and saved money, the St. John Fisher College president pointed out. He suggested that as the quadrant governance boards struggle with issues surrounding reorganization, some of the original proposals may resurface.

Brother Brian Walsh, CFC, diocesan superintendent for schools, cited the example of financial savings realized in the Northeast Quadrant as a result of restructuring already completed there.

Pickett observed that the commission already undergone reorganization, the cost for Catholic schools there would have been an estimated \$4.9 million in 1990-91, he said, whereas the approximate cost for the school year under the reorganization plan is \$3.8 million — a saving of \$1.1 million.

Bishop Clark said the revised plans for the Southeast and Southwest quadrants "will place the decisions for the future of Catholic schools ... in the hands of representatives of our people who will be looking at the total picture within a given region."

## School parents and principals greet reconfigurations favorably

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Principals, parents and pastors reacted with generally favorable comments to the Monday, Nov. 26, release of reorganization plans for Catholic schools in the Southeast and Southwest Quadrants of Monroe County.

### Southwest Quadrant

Parents and school officials at St. Theodore's in Gates greeted news of a junior high being established at the site with a mixture of happiness over being selected for the program and concern over the effect it will have on the elementary school's quality of education.

Currently, class size at St. Theodore's averages about 20 students, according to Sister Elaine Englert, SSJ, principal. That average will jump to 30 when the quadrant's junior high program opens at St. Theodore's in the fall of next year because some classrooms currently being used by the elementary grades will be allocated to the new junior high.

Grades kindergarten to six — each of which is now divided into two sections meeting in separate classrooms — will have only one room available in which to conduct each grade's classes next fall. Sister Englert said the school will probably hire classroom aides to help instructors teach the additional numbers of students in their classes.

Jim Landers, president of the parish council, remarked that he would prefer that his fifth-grade son be taught in a smaller class. But Landers expressed a sentiment common among other St. Theodore's parents: "Personally, I think (the reorganization plan's) a good compromise," he said. "It's an outcome that we can live with."

The school's K-6 program and the quadrant junior high will be operated separately. Nonetheless, interviews indicated that St. Theodore's parents look at the junior high as maintaining the school as a K-8 institution.

Previously, parents at St. Theodore's had numbered among the most vehement opponents of the proposed siting of a



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer  
**Seventh-grader Eric DiGullio reads a note sent home to parents with students of St. Theodore's School in Gates. The note explains plans for the establishment of a junior high program at St. Theodore's in 1991.**

Southwest junior high at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Rochester. Thus the fact that parents will now be able to keep their children at St. Theodore's until eighth grade is cause for celebration, observed parent Kathy DelVecchio.

On the down side, Father Gerald E. Dunn, pastor of St. Theodore's pointed out that the establishment of a junior high program at the school will result in the displacement of some of its current employees. Because the number of class sections will be halved in the elementary grades, fewer teachers will be needed at St. Theodore's, Sister Englert said.

"Some of our teachers are rather distressed because they don't know what's going to happen to them," Father Dunn commented.

James Bell, principal of Most Precious Blood in Rochester — the only Southwest school originally slated for closing under last January's plan — declined to comment

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