

Education

Leading educator promotes school goals

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Catholic school supporters must state their case more often and more effectively to their fellow Catholics and the wider community to ensure the survival of Catholic education into the 21st century, according to a leading Catholic educator.

In particular, pastors need to know that Catholic schools serve as an important tool for evangelizing their communities, said Dr. Robert J. Kealey, executive director of the Elementary School Department of the National Catholic Education Association.

Kealey was interviewed Aug. 5 from his Washington, D.C. office. He was a speaker at the University of Rochester's fifth annual Institute on Catholic Education, which took place July 7-8. The institute is presented by the Office of Professional Development of the Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Kealey noted that many Catholic pastors in recent years have become disenchanted with Catholic schools because of the financial challenges they present. Yet, Catholic schools generally demand parental involvement, and through that involvement, Catholic schools foster a growth in the family's faith, he stressed.

"I think what I'm finding among priests today is that when they look at the issue, and put aside the finances, they can see the value of Catholic schools," he commented.

To encourage Catholic education to flourish, Kealey outlined five goals that the National Catholic Education Association has set for Catholic schools to reach in the next century.

The areas the goals cover are as follows:

• **Catholic Identity** - Catholic schools must strive for superior



standards of academic excellence while integrating gospel values and church teachings into students' lives.

• **School and Society** - Catholic schools must open up to an increasingly diverse world, encouraging students to think beyond their own communities and the United States to think about the whole world.

• **Governance and Finance** - Schools must ask the entire community for support and direction, whether that support and direction comes from school parents or others.

"It is not just the parents who must support Catholic schools," Kealey said. "All of us by our baptism are called to evangelize. By going and assisting Catholic schools, we are carry-

ing out that baptismal mandate."

Catholic schools should also cultivate contacts with members of the business community who can serve the schools by providing expertise in such areas as public relations and fiscal management, he added.

• **Public Policy** - Catholic education supporters must organize to press for legislation promoting the right of parents to choose whatever school they want for their children, and to have that right supported through such measures as tuition vouchers and tuition tax credits.

Kealey asserted that Catholic schools save the United States \$15 billion annually in educa-

tion costs that otherwise would have to be met if all three million Catholic school students went to public schools. Yet, such politically powerful public school teachers' unions as the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have spent millions of dollars to defeat legislative school-choice initiatives throughout the country, he lamented.

"They're afraid that if parents are really given this ability, that they will go and look for schools that are best for their children," Kealey said.

• **Leadership** - The final goal calls for Catholic schools to cultivate lay leaders who can guide the school into the next century, he said.

NCEA takes on diversity at gathering in Anaheim

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

ANAHEIM, Calif. - The challenges of forging unity among an increasingly diverse population were presented at the National Catholic Educational Association convention last April in Anaheim.

More than 12,000 people, from teachers to superintendents, took part in at least one day of the 91st annual conference. Jitters over recent California earthquakes contributed to a drop in attendance from last year's 13,000.

School integration is no accident, said two administrators from De La Salle High School in Chicago.

"You could force students to integrate, but it probably wouldn't happen," said one administrator, De La Salle principal James Gay. "We can work to create an environment where diversity is second nature. Our students are used to seeing and working with an ethnically diverse mix."

Bishop Wilton D. Gregory of Belleville, Ill., said that creating unity amid diversity "is not an easy endeavor."

But Catholic educators "have a vital responsibility to serve youth according to the design of God's plan. That means more than (merely) tolerance," he said.

Agreeing was Bishop John S. Cummins of Oakland. "Unity is a carefully nurtured goal," he said. "The outreach is endless."

Technology is leading to increasing enrollments

DAYTON, Ohio - St. Raphael School in Louisville, Ky., had expected to enroll 470 students this fall, but instead, teachers are preparing to welcome at least 525.

Principal Paul Dezarn attributes the 12-percent increase to the school's aggressive pursuit of technology in the classroom. "It's turning these kids on. It's phenomenal," he said during an annual conference cosponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the University of Dayton.

Teachers and administrators from 19 Catholic schools across the nation met at the University of Dayton July 7-12 for the technology-focused "New Frontiers for Catholic Education III."

Dezarn and representatives from four other schools that participated in last year's gathering came to the '94 confer-

ence to report on the progress their schools made during the year. Representatives from the remaining 14 attended to learn about technology and develop long-range plans for their schools.

In all, 36 Catholic schools have participated in the ongoing project, with veterans of the project advising newcomers. They have found that using technology in the classroom reflects the changes in how today's students learn and how teachers teach.

Kindergarten students at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary School in Belmont, Mich., make cartoon starfish dance with a click of a computer mouse.

Sixth-graders at St. Joseph School in Decatur, Ind., use computer models to control and then vary amounts of light, food and heat to simulate how germs grow in real conditions.

And teenagers at St. Gertrude High School in Richmond, Va., videotape their news-style interviews of students as gladiators in the Roman Coliseum and coverage of the Sistine Chapel's reopening to bring history to life for their world studies class.

"When we look at the culture in which we live, it's an audiovisual culture," said Sister Angela Ann Zukowski, director of the Center for Religious Communication at Dayton and one of the organizers of New Frontiers.

"When we start to think about how young people learn today, they learn through this audiovisual culture," said Sister Zukowski, a member of the Mission Helpers of the Sacred Heart. "Print is important in teaching, but print is only one element. For that reason, we need to change."

Apprehension can be an ob-

stacle for teachers facing new technology, the schools report. Some teachers respond well to self-instruction on new equipment; others rely on fellow teachers to guide them.

"I went from doing absolutely nothing (with technology) to actually enjoying it," said Nancy Carrig, who teaches government and world studies at St. Gertrude. "Once you start, it gets easier every time," she said.

The technology - printers, CD-ROMs, laser discs and computer networks - can represent a substantial investment, and it has given Catholic school officials a new awareness of potential donors and sources of funding.

With a little research, sometimes on the Internet computer network, and self-promotion, New Frontiers schools have found industry, foundation and community resources

that offer grants, gifts of equipment and no- or low-interest loans.

But the program's initial focus is for schools to use the equipment they already possess. "We encourage people to start where they're at and to use well what they have," Sister Zukowski said. "We also want them to think about where they'd like to be in four or five years."

Identifying "strategic partners" to help them meet their long-range goals can mean making contacts among parents who have technological ability as well as seeking out foundations that provide grants to purchase equipment, she said.

School representatives attend the New Frontiers conference on scholarships provided by IBM, Josten's Learning Corp. and the McGivney Foundation.