

School parents upset about busing

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Catholic and other nonpublic school parents and administrators in Rochester are concerned about a city plan to bus students needing special education to public schools this fall.

In an effort to cut the cost of delivering special-education services to nonpublic school students, the city will no longer pay for special-education teachers to teach in nonpublic schools, according to Barbara Jarzyniecki, executive director for public engagement and communications for the city school district.

Jarzyniecki said the school district spent almost \$800,000 last year to provide such services to Rochester children attending

nonpublic schools outside the city. She did not know how much was spent at nonpublic schools in the city. Although she didn't know how much the new plan would save the district, Jarzyniecki said providing special-education services at public schools only would cost "a lot less" than delivering them in nonpublic schools.

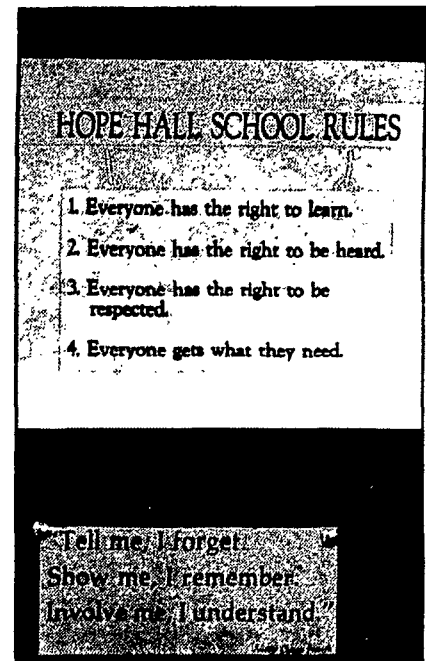
Federal and state laws mandate that public school districts provide special-education services to nonpublic school students. However, the laws do not mandate that school districts provide such services to the children at their home schools.

Among the parents most visibly upset about the new busing plan are those whose children attend Hope Hall. The alternative nondenominational school for children with learning difficulties is in Gates.

Hope Hall has 110 students in grades two through nine. They come from 19 school districts in Monroe County as well as three communities outside Monroe County. A group of Hope Hall parents criticized the busing plan at a city school board meeting on Aug. 19. The parents claimed the amount of time their children will spend on buses will inordinately disrupt their learning.

Sister Diana Dolce, SSJ, Hope Hall's executive director and principal, said the services the Rochester students use include speech, language and physical therapy. She called the new plan "ludicrous," and noted that no other public school district whose students attend Hope Hall has made a decision similar to Rochester's.

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Catholic Courier

DIocese of Rochester, New York ■ VOL. 110 NO. 46 ■ THURSDAY, August 26, 1999 ■ 75c ■ 12 PAGES

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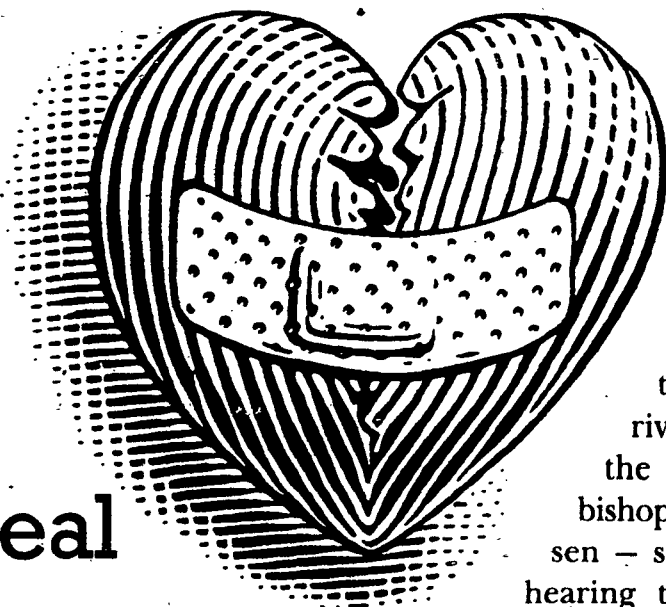
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reconciliation

...the work of God



Heal a broken relationship

Reconciliation may be central to the church.

But it is often painful, Bishop Matthew H. Clark acknowledged during his keynote talk to pastoral leaders at Leadership Days at the New York State Chiropractic College in Seneca Falls Aug. 18.

Just look at the church's history, the bishop noted: The East-West schism of the 11th century, the Reformation of the 16th cen-

tury, the former rivalry of popes, the various ways bishops have been chosen — some less about hearing the Spirit than making political and ecclesial peace, and other challenges.

Such examples "are enough to indicate the church in every age strives to manifest the peace, harmony and reconciliation gained in Christ, but falls short," Bishop Clark said.

Still, he noted, reconciliation certainly continues to be central to the church's mission and ministry.

"The church is the sacrament of the reconciling Christ," he said.

In addition to being the focus for the Aug. 17-19 Leadership Days, which included the bishop's address, "The Church as Living Witness of Reconcilia-

tion," reconciliation is a key theme for the Jubilee Year 2000.

The year 2000 should be "a year of reconciliation between disputing parties, a year of manifold conversions and of sacramental and extrasacramental penance" Pope John Paul II said in his 1994 apostolic letter, "As the Third Millennium Draws Near."

"Let no one in this jubilee year wish to exclude himself from the Father's embrace," he stated in his 1998 bull announcing the Jubilee Year. "Let no one behave like the elder brother in the Gospel parable who refuses to enter the house to celebrate (Lk 15:25-30). May the joy of forgiveness be stronger and greater than any resentment."

In the diocese

At Leadership Days Aug. 18, after congregational singing led

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STORY BY KATHLEEN SCHWAR