



C.A.R.E. News

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Regionalization – A Success Model

Do you have any questions about the “regional school” structure being investigated for use by our four parishes?

The C.A.R.E. Steering Team cordially invites you to attend a presentation / discussion regarding the regionalization of Catholic Elementary Schools ... A success story from the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky.

**Reverend Joe Atcher, the Vicar of Education
Archdiocese of Louisville, KY**

**Thursday, March 22, 2007
7:00 p.m.**

**St. Ann Church
2900 West Galbraith Road
Cincinnati, OH 45239 513-521-8440**

Father Atcher’s discussion will help clarify how the “regional school” approach was used successfully in the Louisville elementary schools.



Reverend Joseph Atcher



Reverend Joseph Atcher, Executive Director, Office of Lifelong Formation and Education, Archdiocese of Louisville, will be at St. Ann Church to describe the successful regionalization of 16 Catholic Elementary Schools in the Louisville area

over the past several years. Reverend Joseph Atcher was the sixth of eleven children born to Francis A. and Mary Louise Atcher. He attended catholic elementary and high schools in Louisville, Kentucky. Additional info from Rev. Atcher is below.

“I began working in school planning when I was the Assistant Principal of our High School in Mundelein, Illinois. When I became the Principal of our School in Encino, California I walked into a school that was bankrupt with a \$500,000 bank loan at 14% interest. Through the help of a lot of great supporters we were able to bring the school out of bankruptcy, pay off the loan, and in four years to also create an endowment of \$200,000, along with major physical plant improvements including air conditioning the building. While at Encino, several other schools closed in the vicinity so that our own planning became very important. Since that time there has been ongoing planning at that school and has enabled to school to increase its enrollment. As the Principal of Mount Carmel High School in Chicago, I oversaw a multimillion dollar campaign to create new living quarters for the Carmelites on the staff and to build a science and computer center for the school. We also did the planning that has now resulted in the building of a multimillion dollar convocation center, and is currently renovating the main building that was built in 1928. The total cost of the new construction is in the area of \$15 million dollars for this school. While I was there besides building the new areas, we also acquired approximately three city blocks so that we could expand the campus.

As a secondary principal in these different places, we were always looking at and planning for how best to market and recruit students for the schools. When the elementary schools started closing, we were involved in the planning process that would help to create educational alternatives for those who might be losing their local school.

While in New Jersey, as the associate in one parish and the pastor of another, they were beginning to

do studies of the possible changes that they would have to make to their schools due to demographic shifts and declining enrollments. This is the first time that I ever heard of the Regional School plan and was directed to Rockville Center which is probably the first diocese to use this model in the United States. They have been using this model for almost twenty five years, and have shown success with it.”

Archdiocese of Louisville – Current State

There are five regional schools in the Archdiocese. These schools would have been formed from what were 16 previous parish schools. One of the schools became a regional school by default - it is in the rural area and all of the other schools in the area closed that were around them. Three of the schools were born from three different parishes coming together to form a regional school. The fourth was formed with two campuses under a single administration from four parish schools. The oldest of the regional schools is Notre Dame Academy. It is both enrollment and financially stable, something the other single parish schools were not. It has continued to plan each year and to forecast enrollments so that it can meet the needs of the students. While the schools from which it came were declining in enrollment, losing services and programs for the students, the regional school has consistently been able to afford to increase services due to the level of enrollment of the school. The second two school that were formed St. Andrew Academy and St. Nicholas Academy, St. Nicholas having a north and south campus, have continued to retain enrollments according to projections and have been financially stable offering full programs to the students. St. Nicholas has ten different language groups identified and receives ESL support. The newest regional school, John Paul II Academy has succeeded in its first year through some administrative difficulties. It currently has an interim principal, but despite the difficulties all have said that this has been a very sound process for them and that the stability that it has brought has been important to the families.

To learn more about this successful regionalization process, please join us Thursday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m.

***St. Ann Church
2900 West Galbraith
Cincinnati, OH 45239***