

C.A.R.E. Questions

Q: Will there be an independent study done of all four facilities like Fr. Atcher described at the beginning of the regional School process? Will the location be surveyed among parishioners?

A: Over 5 years ago we began in the St. Margaret Mary Deanery discussions and study to determine how to continue to best serve our parishes and schools. This study was undertaken for many reasons. Some of those being the number of priests now and the outlook of years to come, the changing demographics throughout the deanery, the expense of education and many other factors.

This work was done with the diocese and professional help needed to give as accurate and complete a picture as possible. This was followed by regional areas doing concentrated study of their situations and individual parishes to determine how to join strengths and best prepare for the future.

A steering committee was formed consisting of pastors and principals. Our area or region consisted of the four parishes of St. Margaret Mary, Little Flower, Assumption and St. Ann. St. Clare was a part of the study originally.

During this process the expertise of our diocesan finance, education and property management offices as well as the diocese of Louisville (Fr. Joe Atcher), our area Commission on Education and Diocesan Education Commission (Br. Joe Kamis, Ann Battes and Sr. Helen) have been a great service and resource. We also entered into a contract with Mr. Jim Brown to facilitate the work of the Steering committee.

After much discussion and consultation with the Archdiocese, the steering committee established advisory ad hoc committees in the areas of Finance, Governance, Facilities, Communication and Religious Education - Parish Life. Those committees were comprised of people from all four parishes with experience in the particular area. By June, 2007, and after consulting all four parishes' councils and commissions, the Steering Committee unanimously moved to recommend to the Archdiocese that a new regional school be formed. Through the summer and Fall, the committee weighed the benefits and risks of when to move in this direction, whether to start with two campuses first, three for a year, or move into one site right away.

After much discussion and analysis, we as a steering committee came to the decision announced recently to form the regional school at the former site of St. Ann School. As a final scrutiny, the Steering committee walked through the facilities and determined the St. Ann building to be

the best for the future school based on all the accumulated input and final considerations.

Q: Why was the original plan for two campuses abandoned?

A: As indicated above, there was much consideration given to the possibility of a two campus school. There were five reasons why it was decided to go with one campus. The first being the capacity to handle the number of students at one site. The facility chosen can accommodate 870 students. The second is financial. The savings for all four parishes by using one campus is substantial. These savings enable us to keep tuition affordable and have the funds to further serve the full parish. Our school families are about 25% of the total parish numbers. Also, it is centrally located, it was the newer building of the three sites, and it has a one floor plan. Another critical factor in the deliberations was the conclusion that we thought it unwise to have to make another change in a year or two by starting with two school sites.

Q: What are the plans for the buildings of Little Flower and Assumption?

A: The use of buildings not used as the primary site, are open to many possibilities. These are all vibrant parishes with one school. Each parish will decide the best use of its facilities, e.g., adult spiritual formation, religious education, social events and other ministries. The gyms (including stages and fields) of course will be needed and used for athletic programs of the school and parishes.

Q: The children's spiritual activities - will they be in the parish or school?

A: While the new school will have its own program for spiritual activities in support of its Catholic identity (e.g., masses, prayer services, etc.), the celebration of the sacraments such as First Communion, First Penance, Confirmation, will take place in the home parish of the student according to plans for each parish's celebrations. Catechesis for these sacraments is primarily the responsibility of each parish with the new school providing supportive catechesis through its religion classes, etc. It is expected that the pastors and their respective staff members will arrive at a unified plan for receiving each sacrament (grade/age level of reception, time of year, etc.).

Q: What will be the impact to the parish communities if Assumption and Little Flower schools close?

A: The parishes will continue. Each parish has a Catholic Elementary School - located on the former St. Ann campus.

Q: Is there a process in place to help us through the grieving process and to assist us in helping parents and students through the tran-

sition to the new school?

A: The Steering Committee clearly understands and has acknowledged that our parishioners and school parents may feel a sense of grief and loss. The committee is exploring processes that could be used in each of the parishes.

Finances

Q: Has a financial impact study been done?

A: A financial impact study was completed and presented at the combined meeting of parishioners on November 12th.

Q: Will savings from reduced headcount be offset by insurance costs?

A: Savings result from an increased enrollment as the cost per pupil goes down when enrollment increases. All Parishes in the Archdiocese are covered under the Archdiocesan Self funded Property, Casualty, and Liability Program. Insurance rates will not be affected.

Q: What about losses due to decreased enrollment?

A: Any losses to parishes due to decreased enrollment by families who do not participate will be offset by the reduced expenses.

Q: Will there be additional costs to St. Ann facility for increased capacity?

A: There will not be any significant increase in cost to St. Ann parish. All cost associated with the new school would be handled by the new school. There are no major costs in getting ready for the increased enrollment. The facility cost will not be increased for normal operations as it relates to the parish. The main increase in cost for the new school will be in the consumables like toilet paper, paper towels, etc.

Q: Will the financial liability of St. Ann's be imposed upon the other parishes?

A: No! Each parish is responsible for its existing financial liability if any.

Q: Where will the funds come from to replace state funded equipment that would be lost?

A: Just as existing individual schools have access to federal and state auxiliary funds the new regional school will have the same access. Additionally it has not yet been determined if equipment can be transferred or must be returned.

School Funding

Q: How will the new school be funded?

A: A detailed cost budget will be prepared for total school operations. The cost per pupil will be determined by dividing the total cost of operations by the number of students enrolled. Tuition and/or Fees will be charged on a Parishioner & Non Parishioner basis similar to present policy at the individual schools. Each Parish will provide a per student subsidy determined by the difference between the cost per pupil and the tuition charged:

Example (this does not represent actual cost)

Cost per student	\$2950.00
Tuition Income	\$2250.00
Subsidy per student	\$700.00
Parish X # of Students	200 x
Total Subsidy Parish X	\$140,000.00

Q: What parish will we be required to support if the new school will be at St. Ann facilities?

A: Your Parish support should remain with your parish.

Q: Will there be fundraisers at the new school? Or is that a Parish function?

A: Major fundraisers such as festivals will continue on a parish level. The regional school through its support groups, such as PTA, could provide fund raisers for specific needs within the school similar to existing school fund raisers for programs or special school needs.

Q: What happens to the festival? Other fundraisers? Will the funds that are raised at the 2008 festival still go to the Parish or to the Regional school? Or a combination of both?

A: As answered above each individual Parish shall continue its own festival and whatever fund raisers it chooses. Each parish receives these funds and determines how its funds are used. However it is obvious that the school subsidy requirement will make it necessary to use festival revenue along with other parish funds to meet the subsidy obligations.

Implementation

Q: When will the name for the new school be determined? Will the students and parents have input? Who will design the logo?

A: A committee will be organized as soon as the proposal is approved by the Archbishop. Students and parents will be involved.

Q: What is the timeline for major milestones (appointing a principal, teachers, open registration, tuition, etc.)

A: Once approval is given, a search committee with equal representation from each of the four parishes will be formed as soon as possible. The principal will hire the teachers and staff in consultation. These positions will primarily be filled by former employees following an interview process.

Q: Who will determine which teachers stay? What criteria will be used? Will parents have input?

A: The newly hired principal will be responsible for the above.

Q: Will positions be open to teachers outside the three schools in this effort?

A: If needed.

Q: Has a salary scale been established for the new school?

A: Yes, a salary scale comparable to the one currently being used.

Q: Who will be the cafeteria workers?

A: This will be determined as needed and from the present staffs.

Q: Can St. Ann facility handle 31 classrooms (763@25 per class)?

A: Yes

Q: Does the St. Ann facility have a hot lunch cafeteria?

A: Yes.

Q: Is the kitchen large enough? Is there enough equipment?

A: Yes

Q: Any room for expansion at St. Ann's?

A: Yes

Q: Will the other Parish Centers be utilized for school activities?

A: Yes

Q: Will Athletic facilities be utilized at all three campuses?

A: Yes

Q: What will start and end time be for schools?

A: This still needs to be determined.

Q: Will there be bus service?

A: General Transportation Rules

- Non-public students receive same service as the public students.
- 30 minute timing is from assigned public school to non-public school requested.
- A small number of students on a bus may allow an "impractical to transport" ruling
- Parents may ask for re-imburement in lieu of busing but amount is very small.
- District must accommodate the starting time of the school. Students must arrive within a reasonable time BEFORE the start of the school day.
- Students must be picked up within a reasonable time AFTER a full day of school.
- Students need to be supervised loading and unloading (cost re-imburement issue)

Details of Ohio's laws on busing can be found at <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3327>

Q: What about class size and how will it be determined?

A: If enrollment is 600 or more students, we would anticipate three homerooms for each grade, capping class size at 25 students in Grades K-3 and 30 students in Grades 4 - 8.

Q: What will tuition be?

A: As earlier announced, the tuition for the school years, 2008-2009 and 2009 - 2010, will be \$2250.00 for one student, which is the current in-parish tuition.

Q: What will tuition be for non-parish and non Catholic students?

A: The tuition will reflect current parish practice (i.e., appropriate per pupil costs).

Q: Will the parishes contribute to tuition if students go to other schools?

A: Present students who choose to enroll in schools other than the regional school will not be subsidized.

Q: Who will we pay our tuition to?

A: This still needs to be decided.

Q: How will schools verify parish affiliation? How will the "active

parishioner" rules be applied and enforced?

A: The answer to these two questions is that we will use the same policy as currently used in each parish and as defined in each school's Handbook.

Q: Will Title 1 still be available?

A: Catholic Schools in Ohio are blessed to receive funding from the State of Ohio. The Ohio Legislature grants auxiliary funding and cost reimbursement funding. Auxiliary funding is based on the average daily membership enrolled in a nonpublic school. For example, 300 students times the amount determined by the legislature, 300 x \$? = auxiliary funds. It is mandated that auxiliary funds be used for student learning. Historically, schools have chosen to purchase services like school psychologists, speech and language therapists, intervention specialists, and nurses with auxiliary funds. The Archdiocese suggests that schools not allocate more than 70% of auxiliary funds to purchase services for students. The remaining 30% of auxiliary funds are used to purchase technology, textbooks, and student learning materials.

Cost reimbursement funds are determined by state mandates. If the State of Ohio mandates that nonpublic schools perform certain actions, then the school is reimbursed for the performance of those actions. Fire and tornado drills are an example. Drills are mandated by law for public and nonpublic schools. Faculty and staff record drills and other mandated actions quarterly. These quarterly records are tabulated and sent to the State each June. Cost reimbursement funds are sent directly to the school and may be used as the school/parish determines.

Auxiliary and cost reimbursement funds are not given to nonpublic schools in every state. The Ohio Legislature has been generous with this funding because of the strong lobbying presence of Catholic educators and voters who keep their legislatures informed of their wishes. Always keep your legislatures informed of how vital these funds are to Catholic Schools.

Title funds are federal funds. The most well known of these funds is Title 1. Title 1 funding is determined by a complicated formula that relies on the low income count of a school population. Each year, families are asked to complete a form that includes information about their income. Each school tabulates their forms and determines the number of families that meet the low income criteria. That number determines how much Title 1 funding the nonpublic school receives.

Title 1 funds are to be used to supplement the school's reading and math curriculum. Each school creates an individual plan that targets the areas that school chooses to address.

Q: What about the EdChoice (voucher) program?

A: Ohio's EdChoice Scholarship Program - <http://EdChoice.ohio.gov>

The Ohio EdChoice Scholarship Program was created to provide parents with a choice. Students who attend or kindergarteners who would attend low-performing public schools are eligible for the scholarship. In our area, the schools are Mount Airy, Chase, and Pleasant Hill in Cincinnati Public Schools and Greener and Mount Healthy Junior High in Mount Healthy Schools.

Ohio can provide up to 14,000 eligible students with EdChoice scholarships. For 2008-09 school year, the scholarship amount is \$4,375 for elementary students and \$5,150 for high school students.

The first step to apply for an EdChoice Scholarship is to apply for admission at a participating nonpublic school. The nonpublic school must accept each student for them to be eligible for the scholarship.

At Little Flower School, our Education Commission reviewed our admission policy and ratified an eleven-step process for admission. Admission requirements include mandatory academic testing to be sure each applicant is on grade level and a record review of past behavior and academic success.

In 2007-08, thirty students were admitted to Little Flower School utilizing an EdChoice Scholarship. Nineteen of those admitted were kindergarten students and the majority of those were already Little Flower parishioners. One family already had three children enrolled at Little Flower and were blessed to have their fourth child enter Kindergarten tuition free with the EdChoice Scholarship. A single mother who had become discouraged by being the only parent to attend a PTA meeting at Mount Airy was delighted to be awarded an EdChoice Scholarship. Over \$100,000 in tuition will be paid by the State of Ohio for these EdChoice Scholarship students.

Will the new school accept EdChoice Scholarship students? Yes, these students may choose to attend the new regional school.

Will the new regional school accept additional EdChoice Scholarship students? This decision will be made after registration for current students is complete. If space is available, EdChoice Scholarship students may be considered for registration.

Source: Ohio Department of Education website:
<http://www.ode.state.oh.us>

How to Apply for an EdChoice Scholarship

The EdChoice Scholarship Program provides state-funded scholarships to public school students from school buildings that have been rated in ac-

ademic emergency or academic watch for two of the past three years. Community (charter) school students that would be assigned by their public school district to these schools are also eligible to apply, as are all public school students and incoming kindergarten students that will be assigned to these schools in the next school year.

Students that are currently attending non-public (private) schools and home-schooled students are not eligible to apply.

If a student is eligible for the EdChoice program, the first step is to apply for admission at a participating private school. Parents of eligible students can and should apply for fall admission at the participating private school now. Students must first be accepted at a participating private school for next school year and then apply for an EdChoice Scholarship.

Q: Will there be any kind of latch key program? What will be the cost?

A: Yes there will be a latch key program. The cost is yet to be determined.

Q: Will there be a speech therapist? Psychologist?

A: Auxiliary services personnel, e.g., speech therapist, a psychologist, nurse, reading and math instructional specialist, will be decided by the new administration.

Q: What about special school activities? Will there be a NJHS at the new school? Drama club? Chess club? Science club?

A: The new principal with input from teachers will assess what has been popular and successful at the four parish schools and make a decision. Some activities may remain at the individual parishes.

Q: Will all new text books have to be purchased so all students in a grade level use the same books?

A: An inventory is in process, final textbook decisions will be determined. All students will use the same books in their grade level.

Q: Will all the libraries at the various closing schools be combined into one?

A: The library at the regional school will contain the best books from all three school libraries.

Q: What about Sports?

A: After Archdiocesan approval, a committee will be formed to study the recommendations of the Parish Life ad hoc committee and will formulate a plan for athletics in the new regional school/parishes.

You can now volunteer online to help with the regional school effort at www.CareNews.org. While you are there, you can also sign up to have every C.A.R.E. newsletter emailed to you automatically as they are issued, as well as ask more questions or leave comments and feedback for the Steering Committee."