

# Northeast County Deanery Parish Meetings

## Questions and Answers

### **The Overall Plan**

#### **Are these recommendations final? If not, when will a decision be made?**

The recommendations are not final. Archbishop Carlson and the Archdiocesan School Oversight Committee would like to hear from parents and parishioners before finalizing the recommendations sometime in February 2017.

#### **Will there be more time for parents to ask questions?**

Yes, parents may contact the Catholic Education Office at any time to share their thoughts and suggestions. Contact information:

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#### **Who will make the final decision on the recommendations?**

After reviewing the January parish meeting input from pastors, principals, staff, parents and parishioners the Archdiocesan School Oversight Committee and the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education will send recommendations to the Archbishop for a final decision.

#### **Is there a plan beyond the 2017-18 school year? What is the plan for the foreseeable future? Is there a long term plan for the future of Catholic education in North County?**

The proposed plan is in fact a multi-year plan. The plan for 2017-18 calls for the creation of a partnership school model involving St. Angela Merici, St. Ferdinand, St. Norbert and St. Rose Philippine Duchesne Schools. In 2018-19, the plan could possibly call for the establishment of Archdiocesan Elementary Schools at Christ, Light of the Nations, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta or Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools. In addition, the two recommendations related to leadership and enhanced programs and services were designed to help all schools in the deanery to deal effectively with future challenges. All Catholic schools in North County will be impacted by the new leadership position and the funding for programs and services. With the full implementation of the proposed plan, the deanery and archdiocese will be in a much better position to make timely decisions in the coming years regarding further changes and challenges that may arise in the North County area.

#### **What is the worst-case scenario with the proposed plan? Will some schools close if nothing changes but how they are administered?**

There is no doubt that schools will close if nothing changes in the way these schools are currently administered and funded. The proposed plan is providing direction in addressing the current and future challenges facing the schools and does much more than change how schools are administered. The new partnerships being established in the plan between parishes and the archdiocese and the new investments in quality programs, services and leadership are designed to stabilize Catholic elementary education in North County in the long term. At the same time, the plan will allow the deanery and the archdiocese to assess future changes and challenges in a timely, effective and efficient fashion.

**How does the plan impact schools in the Ferguson and Spanish Lake areas of North County? The plan is not very specific about the future of these schools.**

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, Christ, Light of the Nations, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Schools will remain open for the 2017-18 school year as parish-based schools. During the next school year, the plan indicates that further consideration will be given to whether or not these three schools will be transitioned to Archdiocesan Elementary Schools in the coming years. Parents and parishioners of these schools and parishes will be kept apprised of this further planning.

**What is the measure of success of the plan? Sustained enrollment? Increased enrollment?**

The success of the plan will be measured in many ways. Certainly maintaining and growing enrollment will be one measure of success. Another measure of success will be the financial stability and viability of the schools and parishes. However, the main measure of success is whether or not the students are growing academically and spiritually as a result of their experience in the Catholic elementary schools of North County.

**Was consideration given to providing a middle school for North County?**

Yes. The option of creating a middle school at one of the school sites was thoroughly studied over the past few years. However, parents did not seem to have significant interest in a middle school model. Parents seemed to be concerned about the issue of traveling to another site and the possibility of having children in two different schools. With the new proposed leadership and organizational model changes, options such as a middle school could possibly be considered in the future.

**This plan is falling to the Catholic communities and the archdiocese to support these schools. Is there any way that the inter-faith community can be asked to support our Catholic schools in the area?**

For a Catholic school to be successful, the participation and support of all parents is essential. Non-Catholic parents and their churches must be welcomed and invited to participate in the larger parish and school community. It is clear that more effort is needed to ensure the involvement and support of the inner faith communities. This is an excellent issue that could be addressed by the Federation of Catholic Schools.

**What is the role of the Director of North County Schools?**

The Director of North County Schools will work with the Archdiocesan Elementary Schools, parish schools and partnership schools located in the North County area. This individual will serve as the main point of contact for pastors and principals and will provide oversight on matters pertaining to school operation, policies and programs and will serve as the Executive Director of the Federation of North County Schools.

**What educational background will be required of the Director of North County Schools?**

The Director of North County Schools must be a practicing Catholic, hold a Master's degree in administration/educational leadership or curriculum/instruction, and have at least five years of experience in administration/educational leadership in Catholic schools. The director must be knowledgeable of elementary school operation, instructional leadership and strategic planning. In addition, the director needs to possess strong interpersonal, communication, and community relations skills.

**Who pays the salary of the Director of North County Schools?**

The individual who assumes this role will be a member of the Catholic Education Office staff and will be compensated through that office. The parishes and schools of the deanery would assume no direct financial responsibility for this position.

**Has the Director of North County Schools been identified? If not, when will we know who that is?**

Mrs. Maureen DePriest will serve as the Director of North County Schools if the recommendations are approved. She would serve in this position for the remainder of this year and for the 2017-18 school year. Mr. Al Winkelmann and Mr. Mike Duffy will provide significant support to Mrs. DePriest during this transition

period. Another individual will be hired this spring to begin training with Mrs. DePriest during the 2017-18 school year. This new individual would then assume the role of Director of North County Schools for the 2018-19 school year.

**Can the Director of North County Schools stay informed and engaged with multiple schools and models and the individual needs of each school? Will more people be needed to assist this individual?**

There is no doubt that the Director of North County Schools will be very busy engaging with a wide variety of schools. However, keep in mind that this person will have no other responsibilities but to serve the schools of the deanery. The Catholic Education Office will oversee this position to make certain this position is providing the needed leadership and service to the schools of North County.

**How does more management mean better management? Besides some nominal costs savings what does the new layer add?**

The position of Director of North County Schools provides pastors and principals with the direction and support they requested in running a quality Catholic school. This position will hopefully relieve these local leaders of some responsibilities so that they can better serve their parishes and schools. In addition, this position helps to ensure that consistent quality is being offered at all schools of the deanery. Finally, the position allows the parishes and the archdiocese to keep close watch over any future changes or challenges that may impact Catholic education allowing for a timely and an effective response.

**How will a parish-based school be assured that they are getting the same assistance from the archdiocese in terms of enhanced curriculum and services?**

The Director of North County Schools will have an increased consultative role in the parish-based schools. This person will work closely with the principals of these schools to ensure that the curriculum and services provided by the school compare with the partnership school or the Archdiocesan Elementary Schools in the deanery. Archdiocesan funding for enhanced programs and services will be available to parish-based schools as well.

**Will the archdiocese eventually establish a few regional schools in the deanery?**

The number and types of schools that will eventually emerge in the deanery in the future is hard to predict at this time. However, the archdiocese in partnership with the parishes will provide the number of schools needed to effectively serve the Catholic and non-Catholic population in this area. The proposed plan puts in place school models and structures that will allow the parishes and the archdiocese to adjust quickly to the changing demographics and needs.

**Has consideration been given to the schools just outside of the Northeast Deanery? Could they be part of the plan?**

St. Ann Parish in Normandy, Holy Trinity Parish in St. Ann and Holy Spirit Parish in Maryland Heights will be joining the parishes in the Northeast Deanery to create the new North County Deanery. This means that these parish schools will be joining with the schools in the Northeast Deanery.

**The Partnership School**

**Why is there a need to move to a partnership model?**

Throughout the archdiocese there is serious question as to the ability of some parishes to maintain their own parish schools in light of declining enrollment, increased costs and the ability of parents and parishes to meet these rising costs in the future. As a result, if Catholic elementary education is to be maintained in this area and other areas of the archdiocese, alternative models that confront these challenges must be considered.

**What is the long term viability of this model? Do you expect these four schools to be open in five years?**

One of the key reasons for adapting this model is the belief that Catholic elementary schools can best be sustained over many years if there are many partners involved in the new school entity. This model removes the competition between schools and allows for increased effectiveness and efficiencies as a result of collaboration and cooperation in terms of facilities, resources and funding. Recent experience with this model in Southwest County at Holy Cross Academy has certainly indicated that Catholic elementary schools can be sustained for the long term through the use of this model.

**Why isn't Sacred Heart School included in this partnership model which includes all of the four other schools in the Florissant area?**

The plan calls for Sacred Heart School to remain a parish-based school. At this time, Sacred Heart School is not experiencing the same enrollment and financial challenges that the four other parishes and schools are facing. This is not to say that Sacred Heart School might not experience some of these challenges in the future and may need to consider involvement in the partnership model. In addition, it was thought prudent at this time to fully address the similar changes and challenges facing the four schools before introducing a fifth school with a very different reality.

**Would the partnership model be stronger with Sacred Heart as a partner as well?**

There was concern that allowing the participation of a school in the partnership model that is not facing the same changes and challenges could overwhelm the model and not allow for the effective implementation of the model for the four schools.

**Why are schools that seem to be supporting themselves being thrown in with schools that are not making it?**

The four schools that are being included in the partnership model at this time are facing very similar changes and challenges. However, it is also clear that some differences among these schools do exist. For example, each parish has a different amount of parish reserves and some schools have more non-Catholics enrolled in the school. Despite, these differences, it was believed that the four schools are facing a very similar future that will demand a similar solution. Putting these four schools together at this time seems reasonable and prudent for parents, students, teachers and parishes.

**Can a parish opt out of this partnership?**

At this time, each of the four parishes is committed to studying the plan to determine if it is the right thing for that parish. Certainly if some information comes forward that would indicate that the parish would not be served well in this new model, the pastor can voice his concern. However, once a decision is made by the Archbishop, the parish is committed to moving forward with the plan. As noted in the parish presentations, the archdiocese is focusing on planning and the future of Catholic education. If a parish school does not want to participate in the planning process, then the archdiocese will not be providing operating grants to "keep the doors open" just because a parish wants their own school.

**If one school site is no longer needed, would it be absorbed into the remaining schools? If yes, how would this happen?**

Yes. If a school site must be closed, the families and students would be easily absorbed into the remaining sites. The board of directors and the Director of North County Schools would be involved in this decision and would work to ensure the transition for families and students would be as smooth and as seamless as possible. Keep in mind this model not only allows for the contraction of the number of schools, but it also allows for the addition of schools to the partnership.

**Was consideration given to including all of the schools in the deanery in this model?**

Variations of this model were considered. However, it was determined that Catholic education in North County would best be served at this time by allowing a variety of schools types to exist: parish schools, partnership schools and Archdiocesan Elementary Schools. Parishes and parents do not seem to be at the point of embracing the idea that one type of school model fits all.

**What can be done in increase enrollment in the deanery?**

Increasing enrollment has been a primary goal of the Federation of North County Schools over the past several years. Many significant steps have been taken to market the schools by the Federation and local school marketing committees. These efforts will continue. However, the archdiocese is also willing to partner with the North County schools in this effort. In the near future, the archdiocese will be implementing a marketing campaign aimed at assisting local schools and deaneries with their efforts.

**How will you ensure consistency in these four schools?**

The Director of North County Schools and the board of directors will be responsible for working with the principals to ensure that all four schools are generally following the same policies, procedures and programs.

**Enrollment**

**Will class size increase in the partnership school?**

Parents from all four schools have grown accustomed to smaller class sizes over the last several years. Lower school enrollments do provide the benefit of a lower teacher-student ratio. The plan calls for a class size at the new school of no more than 25 students per classroom.

**What happens to the partnership school if enrollment decreases as a result of the plan?**

We have projected enrollment at a variety of levels and are prepared to open the school with the locations indicated. However, if a significant enrollment drop does occur during the registration process at any school that school location may need to be reviewed immediately. Steps will be taken to grow the enrollment at all schools.

**Will the parents be able to choose the school for their children in this model?**

Parents are always free to choose the school where they would like to enroll their children.

**Will there be a plan for marketing and evangelization in this new school?**

The new partnership school will have a plan for marketing and evangelization that draws from the best strategies used by the four schools and the Federation over the past several years.

**Are more incentives being considered to attract families to Catholic schools?**

This is a very good suggestion that the board of directors may wish to consider for future action.

**Facilities**

**Each school has unique facilities, grounds, and playgrounds. How will maintenance on these very different facilities be funded?**

As one entity with four locations, maintenance issues will be reviewed and discussed with the various pastors and parishes. A lease agreement will be executed between the parishes and the new school entity to lease the building. That agreement will address who is responsible for the various building systems and property items.

## **Finances**

### **What are the main sources of income for the partnership model?**

The partnership schools will be funded by the following revenue streams: tuition, parish subsidy, fundraising, development efforts and archdiocesan funds.

### **Who is responsible for setting the tuition rate and other school fees?**

The board of directors, working in consultation with the pastors and superintendent, will determine tuition and fees for the school families.

### **Will the same tuition be paid at each school site?**

Yes, the same tuition rate and fees will be charged at each site of the new school entity.

### **Will there be a different tuition for families not registered in one of the parishes? Will non-Catholics have a different tuition scale?**

Our initial thoughts are that the same tuition will be charged to all families.

### **What will be the tuition charged at the new school? Are you expecting tuition to decrease in the partnership model? If so, how much?**

The current tuition rate at the three schools ranges from \$4,500 to \$5,350 for one child and from \$6,100 to \$7,700 for two children. Hopefully, the tuition charged at the new school would stay within the range of the existing rates and may even be a bit lower due to the larger number of students enrolled in the school.

### **Will there be a multi-child discount?**

There will be a multi-child discount at the new school for grades kindergarten through grade 8.

### **What about families that can't afford tuition?**

All current scholarship programs, *Alive in Christ*, *Beyond Sunday*, and parish scholarships, remain available to those that apply.

### **Will Sacred Heart School, as a parish-based school, have the same tuition as the partnership model school?**

Sacred Heart School will determine its own tuition which could be the same or differ from the tuition of the partnership school.

### **How will tuition be collected?**

An automated system will be put in place to collect tuition. Families can either pay tuition in advance, semi-annually, or monthly through this system. Any other arrangement will need to be agreed to on a case by case basis.

### **Will parishes continue to provide a parish subsidy to the new school and how will the amount of subsidy from each parish to be determined?**

Yes. Each parish will continue to invest in the new school. Hopefully, this investment will be lower than what the parishes are currently paying. Setting the parish subsidies will be one of the tasks of a new board of directors in consultation with the pastors of the parishes. The board could choose to assess each parish a flat rate or it could develop a formula that would include the number of children enrolling in the school from each parish. Both methods have been used in other schools in the archdiocese. The board could also develop a new way to assess this rate. The pastors and the board of directors, with assistance from the archdiocese, will work to ensure that the new parish subsidy is affordable for the parishes.

**Will parishes without schools support the new school?**

We plan on working with all parishes in the area to support Catholic schools in North County.

**If students from other parishes attend the new school, will the parish from which they come support the school?**

The answer to this question has yet to be determined. This and other multi-family situations will have to be discussed by the board of directors.

**Will increasing numbers of non-Catholics impact the financing of the partnership model?**

It is possible over time that an increasing number of non-Catholics could have an impact on the financing options of the school.

**What will happen to fundraising at each school? Will it need to be increased?**

The board of directors will review the current fundraising at each school and then develop and coordinate future fundraising efforts and goals. Many of the schools have significant fundraisers that will be needed to support either the parish or the new school.

**Will the archdiocese continue to fund the new school through an ACA grant?**

The archdiocese is committed to funding a strong school at multiple sites as long as enrollment remains healthy and the parishes and parents are able to continue their support of the school.

**How will the archdiocesan funding be distributed among schools?**

Keep in mind that we are talking about one educational entity that provides K through grade 8 education at four different sites. The archdiocesan funds will be given to the new partnership entity to be used as needed for all of the schools.

**Why can't the archdiocese simply provide an ACA grant to each school and allow the three schools to remain open?**

Providing an ACA grant to each school would be very difficult to sustain in the long term in light of the growing financial needs among other schools throughout the archdiocese. Funding these four schools at this level is not possible and would not be the best use of limited resources.

**Will each school have its own budget or will there be one budget for the model?**

There will be one budget that will have a cost center for each location as a way of understanding and managing costs.

**Who will develop the budget?**

The board of directors in consultation with the pastors, Director of North County Schools and the principals will develop and monitor the budget for the new school.

**Will there be transparency in the financial operation of the partnership model?**

Parents and parishioners will always have access to the financial realities of the partnership model. The board of directors and the Director of North County Schools will continue to keep pastors, principals, school families and parishes apprised of the costs and revenues related to running a quality Catholic school.

**Is the ultimate goal of the partnership model to create a school that is self-sufficient and not reliant on archdiocesan funding?**

This would indeed be a goal that the parishes and the archdiocese would welcome. It would signify the long term stability of the school which everyone will work toward. However, at this time, there are no expectations on the part of the archdiocese that this goal can be achieved in the coming years.

**Would school vouchers provided by the state impact the partnership model?**

Yes, of course, school vouchers could impact the partnership model in a very positive way by allowing more parents to afford Catholic education. In recent years, the Missouri State Legislature has not moved forward with supporting any type of school voucher initiative.

**Governance**

**How will the members of the board of directors be selected?**

Pastors will nominate individuals from each parish to serve on this board without pay. The pastors will be looking for individuals who will bring the needed talents and skills to the table. The Archbishop will then appoint the members to this board. In addition, members from the wider community could be appointed to the board. Efforts will be made to ensure that board members have the time and the commitment to grow and develop the new school.

**Will there be a school board on the parish level?**

No school board will exist at the parish level.

**How will the archdiocese be involved with the governance of the new school?**

The superintendent or his designee will be a member of the corporate board and will also work closely with the board of directors.

**Are parishes losing control of the schools? Will a partnership school model mean putting the control of this school in the hands of a disconnected Archbishop and an off-site superintendent?**

The parishes will still have input to the school through the pastors who will sit on the board of members and the board of directors. The administrators of the schools will continue to maintain open lines of communication between the schools and the parish community. Certainly, the Archbishop will be a member of the corporation, as will the superintendent. However, an individual from the Catholic Education Office will be acting on behalf of the superintendent in a very hands-on way in relating to the board of directors, the pastors and the principals of the school. This plan calls for much more involvement and oversight on the part of the Catholic Education Office than is currently exercised with these four parish-based schools.

**Will parents still have a say in their children's education?**

Yes. Parents will continue to have direct contact with the principal and, if needed, the Director of North County Schools. In addition, several members of the board of directors will be school parents.

**How will schools be added or deleted to the partnership model?**

The board of directors will consider the addition of schools or the loss of schools from the partnership. Ultimately, the Archbishop will need to approve any recommendations coming from the board of directors on these matters.

**Will a long term strategic plan be developed for the school?**

Yes. A long range strategic plan is an essential component of creating a successful school. This will be one of the primary tasks of the board of directors.



## **Name**

### **Will the new school have a new name?**

No name for the new school has been chosen. The selection of a school name will include the pastors of the parishes and individuals from these parishes. The final decision regarding the name of the new school will rest with the Archbishop. Efforts will likely be made to incorporate the parish name into the name of the new schools (i.e., Holy Cross Academy at St. Michael the Archangel Parish.)

### **If all schools are staying open, can we keep the school names?**

Maintaining the schools' names in some way will be an option that will be considered.

## **Pre-school**

### **What happens to our preschools? Will pre-schools be offered at the new school?**

Currently the four parishes are each blessed with an excellent pre-school program. Hopefully, the pre-school programs would continue to be available at each parish site. However, the question is who will operate the pre-school? Each parish could own and operate a pre-school at its own site. Another option would involve the new school operating the pre-school at each parish site. This question would be among the first addressed by the pastors and school leadership and include input from the pre-school teachers and the board of directors of the new school.

## **Programs**

### **What will the curriculum look like for this new school and who will be making curricular and instructional decisions? Will the schools each set their own curriculum or will it be uniform?**

The principals and the teaching staffs of the new school will be making curricular and instructional decisions working with members of the Catholic Education Office staff. The written curriculums of the schools will be reviewed and compared based upon the standards and benchmarks for academic excellence put forth by the archdiocese. In addition to the core subjects of Religion, English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art and Physical Education, a variety of in-school and after-school electives and enrichment programs will be offered. Technology will be infused in the learning process and STREAM initiatives will be introduced. Eventually the curriculum will look similar for each school.

### **How will you maintain the Catholic nature of the school with an increasing number of non-Catholics in the schools?**

It will be an important responsibility of the Director of North County Schools along with the pastors and principals of the schools to ensure that the Catholic nature of each school is maintained and enhanced. In addition, a Coordinator of Religious Education will be added to the staff to assist in this effort. Even if there are a growing number of non-Catholics, these leaders, working through a staff that will largely be practicing Catholics, will ensure that our Catholic faith and its traditions are thoroughly and authentically maintained.

### **How does this partnership model strengthen the Catholic nature of the school?**

This model will allow the hiring of staff such as a Coordinator of Religious Education to provide consistent oversight for all aspects of the religious education programs.

**Will non-Catholics be required to participate in the school’s spiritual activities?**

Yes. It is a Catholic school and all non-Catholic students will be expected to fully participate in the religious education program and in the liturgical and sacramental programs to the extent that they are able.

**Will the students experience many changes in this new model?**

The students will have access to the same staff and overall programs that currently exist in their schools. Changes will be introduced gradually to students with appropriate preparation and orientation to the changes.

**What determines quality in the new school? What are best practices?**

The Director of North County Schools working with the principals of the school will monitor the quality of the schools. This person will also rely on input from other professional educators at the Catholic Education Office is assessing and developing quality programs and instruction in the school that reflect the best practices in education. Best practices refer to the strategies deemed by current research as the most effective in the teaching and learning process.

**Would Common Core be introduced in the partnership model?**

The Common Core State Standards are one of many sets of standards and benchmarks for education. The curriculum for the partnership school will be aligned with the standards and benchmarks that have been developed and put forth by the Catholic Education Office through the Archdiocesan Mission Advancement Initiative. The Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment from the Catholic Education Office will assist the partnership school with aligning the curriculum.

**Will there be a common calendar for the four sites in the partnership model?**

Yes. The Director of North County Schools working with the principals will likely develop a common school calendar for all four sites. In reality, the schools have been collaborating on a common calendar for the last few years.

**Will special education programs be offered for remedial and enrichment purposes?**

The new school will include a learning consultant on staff to assist teachers with the various learning needs of the students. Enrichment classes will be offered during the school day and after school.

**What role will technology play in the new school? Will there be a computer teacher on staff at the new school?**

Technology will be integrated into the learning process at the new school. The hope would be to transition from the computer lab to a more one-to-one technology experience for children in the regular classroom setting. This will involve all teachers becoming proficient in the use of technology. Training will be provided for teachers to assist them in making this transition. Some type of computer/technology personnel will be needed to support student and staff use of technology.

**Will there be any enhanced classes or programs for middle school students?**

The plan is to offer enhanced classes and programs for all students in grades K through 8. Some electives would be provided to middle school students in order to offer choices of classes and programs both during the school day and after school.

**Will extra-curricular programs be a part of the new school? Will these programs be shared between locations or at one location only?**

It is clear that a rich and varied extra-curricular experience is provided at the current schools. The administration and staff, in consultation with the Director of North County Schools, would review the

current programs offered, explore new programs, and determine what programs will be offered at the new school, including site-specific or shared programs.

**Will teachers be required to attend professional development opportunities?**

Yes. Teachers will be required to attend professional development opportunities, both those that address school-wide initiatives and individual learning desires. Teachers in the new school will be life-long learners on a continuum of constant improvement so students receive the best possible instruction and education.

**Will the special programs and traditions from each school be continued?**

The new school will provide a full array of special programs and services including a foreign language and the latest in technology. A thorough review of the programs, traditions and services offered at the four schools has already been completed. The administration and staff will decide what programs and services will be offered to best meet the students' needs.

**What happens to each school's current equipment, materials and technology?**

Each school will maintain its own equipment, materials and technology until a full evaluation of the needs of each school is completed.

**Could the current school uniforms be grandfathered in for a few years before changing to a new uniform?**

An important aspect of the new school is unity and identity. Strong efforts will be made to blend the students together and become one community. Should the recommendations be approved, parents and students from each of the four schools will be asked to assist with uniform decisions and policy.

**Will a hot lunch program be offered at the new school?**

Yes, a full hot lunch program will be available for students throughout the week at reasonable costs at all of the school sites.

**Will new sports teams be created at the new school?**

Each parish could maintain its current sports teams and other sports related activities. Of course, many parishes are already working together to build teams with children from other parish schools. It would be likely that the athletic associations of each parish would meet to coordinate their efforts. The parishes would need to consult with the CYC for further direction and guidance.

**Will the gyms be used for CYC sports?**

Due to the large number of teams that play throughout the area, it is very likely that the gyms will continue to be used for athletic events sponsored through the CYC.

**Will the new school be offering before and after-care programs?**

Yes. Before and after-care programs will be available at each site.

**How will parents be involved in the school?**

Parents will be involved in the new school in ways similar to those in their previous schools: Home and School/PTO, field trip experiences, volunteering at school, coaching, scouts, etc. In addition, some parents may be asked to serve on the board of directors.

**Will there be a parent organization at each school or only one organization for all four schools?**

We anticipate one parent organization with representatives from each school participating on the executive committee of the organization.

## **Staffing**

### **Will there be a principal at each school site?**

Yes. A principal will be in place at each school site.

### **Who will choose the principals?**

The current principals of each school will remain in position if they so choose. If a principal chooses to leave a school, the Director of North County Schools in consultation with the pastors and the board of directors will select a new principal.

### **Will the principals be more accountable in fulfilling their responsibilities?**

Yes. The principals will report directly to the Director of North County Schools who will be present in the schools on a weekly basis and have direct responsibility for the ongoing supervision and annual evaluation of the principals of the schools.

### **How will staff be hired?**

Future staff will be hired through the application and interview process directed by the principals and Director of North County Schools. Evaluation of teachers will be the responsibility of the school principal.

### **Will additional staff be needed?**

It is important that schools provide a variety of services to meet the ever-changing needs of our students. Besides qualified, faith-filled and quality teachers, today's schools must provide coordinators of religious education, learning consultants, counselors, social workers, and nurses to work with the administration and teachers in providing the best education possible for the students.

### **Will aides be available in the school to assist teachers?**

The decision to hire aides will be determined based on the needs of the students and the needs of the teachers. Class size will also be a determining factor.

### **Will the pastors be present in the new school?**

Besides being on the various boards governing the schools, the pastors will be the spiritual leaders of the new school community involved in the sacramental and prayer life of the community. In addition, they will be asked to teach classes and be physically present in the school as much as their schedules allow.

### **Who will the parents talk to about issues or problems?**

Like any other school, the parents would first talk with the teacher if it is a classroom issue or matter and then to the principal of the school if the issue is not resolved at the classroom level. Of course, the parents are always welcome to talk to the principal on any other issue. The Director of North County Schools is another contact beyond the principal if the parent cannot resolve the issue with the principal.

## **Other Concerns**

### **What is going to happen to the parishes without a school?**

The parishes will remain. There are no plans to close these parishes. It is important to remember that while the school is an important ministry of the parish, it is not the only ministry. For many years a great deal of parishioners' time, energy and money has gone into maintaining the school. Of course, parishioners did this willingly and gladly. However, as a result, the parishes did not always have the resources to address such issues as adult education, health needs of the parish, evangelization outreach, etc. Under the partnership school model the parishes will have the ability to direct more resources to the other spiritual and temporal needs of the members of the parish. In other words, the parishes could

become more vital and meaningful not only for parishioners but for other members of the neighborhood community.

### **The Archdiocesan Elementary School**

**What trigger points have to happen to move a school from a parish school model to an “AES” model? The parishioners and school families must have direct input to any major change from our current parish school model.**

Archdiocesan Elementary Schools are created when the parish can no longer provide any substantial funds to subsidize the school thus forcing the school to close. In addition, the parish and school must be in area where few other Catholic school options are available and few other school options exist for providing quality education. Before a decision is made to create an Archdiocesan Elementary School from a parish-based school, the parish and school families would be consulted for their input and advice.

### **Enrollment**

**Will class size increase in an Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

The plan calls for a class size of no more than 25 students per classroom.

**Now we have a dedicated, local marketing team with heavy focus on their efforts to bring in new students. Under this new model, who will be responsible for the intense marketing efforts? Will we struggle to maintain and increase enrollment without their local ownership of marketing? Or, does the local school maintain their responsibility?**

The responsibility of growing enrollment will be a joint effort for the Director of North County Schools, the Federation and the individual schools. This type of partnership will be a powerful tool in growing the enrollment of the school.

**Are you factoring the numbers of children (families) you will lose when you start telling them where to go to school after you close/combine? Case in point: 2005 St. John & James with 200 students and Good Shepherd with 200 students. The plan was for the combined school to have 400 students. That did not happen. So, in the end unless a school stays open you will most likely lose a larger position of these students.**

We are sensitive that any change in where Catholic schools are located has implications for future enrollment. We will be taking into account how such change may cause a decline in enrollment. At the same time, we will strive to work with individual families in understanding their concerns and challenges. Efforts will be made to accommodate those concerns and challenges in order to retain these families as part of a Catholic school community.

**Will an Archdiocesan Elementary School require a certain minimum percentage of Catholic students? Will parishes in the more wealthy areas have control over how this is organized? St. Louis is still pretty racially divided. There are areas in this archdiocese that could care less about educating minority students in the Northeast Deanery.**

An Archdiocesan Elementary School does not require a certain minimum percentage of Catholic students. In fact, some of the current Archdiocesan Elementary Schools enroll almost 100% non-Catholics. In addition, the decision to educate non-Catholics in North County does not rest with wealthy parishes in other areas of the archdiocese, but, instead, rests with the Archbishop of St. Louis. Archbishop Carlson has made it very clear that we have a responsibility as the Church of St. Louis to provide a quality education in areas where Catholic and non-Catholic families have limited access to quality schools.

## **Finances**

### **Who will set tuition for the Archdiocesan Elementary Schools?**

The tuition will be set by the Catholic Education Office.

### **How will tuition be collected in an Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

Our primary method of receiving tuition payments will be an automated system put in place to collect tuition. Families can either pay tuition in advance, semi-annually, or monthly through this system. Any other arrangement will need to be agreed to on a case by case basis.

### **What will be the tuition charged at the new school? Are you expecting tuition to increase or decrease in the Archdiocesan Elementary School? If so, how much?**

Hopefully, the tuition charged at an Archdiocesan Elementary School would stay within the range of the existing rates.

### **Who makes up the difference in monies that were raised by parishioners of our parish? Will parish scholarships still be available? What would be our incentive to continue school fundraisers?**

Hopefully the parishes could continue to provide financial support or scholarship assistance to the school and its families. Parishioners would be motivated by the same desire that is motivating them now: to ensure the Catholic faith is passed on to future generations.

### **Who manages the funds raised through school and parish fundraisers?**

The funds coming from school and parish fundraisers would go through the accounting services of the school that are provided by the Archdiocesan Finance Office.

### **Do you foresee that the Archdiocesan Elementary School model will reduce parishioners' donations to education relying on the "Big Archdiocese" to take care of everything, effectively making it more costly to operate the school? Or, alternatively will centralizing development allow for hitting bigger sources of donations more effectively.**

Hopefully, parishioners will stay engaged with the school in terms of their time, talent, treasure and prayers. In an Archdiocesan Elementary School, efforts are made to inform and include the parishioners in school events and activities. Parish interest and support is welcomed and encouraged. Likewise the school would hope to reach out in service to the parish community.

Becoming an Archdiocesan Elementary School, a school often has access to other sources of fundraising revenue beyond the parish.

## **Governance**

### **How would the school board be developed?**

At this point the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education serves as the governing board of an Archdiocesan Elementary School. In the future, consideration will be given to forming a local board of education for the individual school.

## **Pre-School**

### **Will pre-school programs be provided at the Archdiocesan Elementary Schools?**

Hopefully, the pre-school programs would continue to be available at each parish site. However, the question is who will operate the pre-school? The parish could own and operate a pre-school at its own site. Another option would involve the Archdiocesan Elementary School operating a pre-school at the site.

## **Programs**

### **How will parents be involved in the Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

Parents will be involved in the new school in ways similar to those in their previous schools: Home and School/PTO, field trip experiences, volunteering at school, coaching, scouts, etc.

### **What will the curriculum look like in an Archdiocesan Elementary School and who will be making curricular and instructional decisions?**

In an Archdiocesan Elementary school, the principal and teachers will work with the Director of North County Schools on curricular and instructional decisions. In addition to the core subjects of Religion, English/Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art and Physical Education, a variety of in-school and after-school electives and enrichment programs will be considered. Technology and STREAM initiatives will be introduced.

### **In an Archdiocesan Elementary School will the curriculum address all learning abilities of the students?**

The learning needs and abilities of children will be addressed through a variety of teaching and instructional methodologies and enrichment/remedial programs.

### **How does the Archdiocesan Elementary School model strengthen the Catholic nature of the school?**

In an Archdiocesan Elementary School, the Director of North County Schools will oversee the day-to-day operations of the school. This will allow the pastor of the parish to focus on the religious and sacramental needs of the faculty, staff, students and families as opposed to daily operations.

### **What determines quality in the Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

The Director of North County Schools working with the principals of the school will monitor the quality of the schools. This person will also rely on input from other professional educators at the Catholic Education Office is assessing and developing quality programs and instruction in the school that reflect the best practices in education.

### **How will parents be involved in planning for the Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

Parents will be involved in the new school in ways similar to those in their previous schools: Home and School/PTO, field trip experiences, volunteering at school, coaching, scouts, etc. In addition, some parents may be asked to serve on an advisory board.

### **Will there be a parent organization at the Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

We anticipate a parent organization or a parent advisory board will exist in this school model.

### **Will Hispanic parents have an opportunity to express their needs and concerns about the school?**

An Archdiocesan Elementary School will attempt to understand the needs and concerns of all of its families.

**Will the language barrier for parents and students be addressed in an Archdiocesan Elementary School?**

The school will work with families on language needs (i.e.: translation services for parents; ESOL services for students).

**Staffing**

**What happens to the teachers currently employed at the school?**

Those teachers currently on staff at the school will remain in position unless they choose to move to another school or unless they are not renewed by the current principal of the school.

**Will teacher retention be a problem?**

We do not expect teacher retention to be a problem. We hope to be able to maintain a majority of the teaching staff.

**What happens to the janitors, cafeteria workers etc., if a business is hired to handle those services.**

Consideration will be given to maintaining these employees on staff at the school in some capacity or the company that is hired will be asked to consider them for employment.

**Other Concerns**

**My concern is the separation of the Florissant schools from the ‘other’ schools - How will we foster cooperation/collaboration within these different models? I am concerned we are segregating the poor.**

The Director of North City Schools along with the Federation will provide the glue necessary to maintain effective communication and cooperation between and among all the schools of the deanery. In addition, archdiocesan leadership and funding provided through the proposed plan is aimed at ensuring that all the schools in North County offer quality programs and services to their families no matter what their economic background.

**Has any thought been given to developing a transportation plan for the schools in Northeast County?**

At this time, there are no plans to provide any type of bus transportation for students attending the Catholic schools in North County. This may be an issue that the board of directors may wish to address if enough parents express an interest.

**How do you plan to keep people tied to the school and its history/legacy? No matter what is decided, the school families have to be involved. How do you plan to keep all families engaged in the school?**

Maintaining contact with families and keeping them engaged with the school will be major concern for the Director of North County Schools and the principals of the school sites. These individuals will be working to maintain and enhance the relationships with parents and parishioners who have been so very loyal to their schools and parishes. A wide range of strategies currently used and some new strategies will be put in place to build relationships and to maintain the legacy and traditions of the individual schools.