

March 1, 2011

Most Reverend Jerome E. ListECKI
Archbishop
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

AND

Kathleen Cepelka, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Re.: Reconfiguration of Our Catholic Schools

Dear Archbishop ListECKI and Doctor Cepelka,

We are writing to inform you of our decision to reconfigure the two Catholic schools on the north side of Sheboygan, Saint Dominic School and Holy Family School, so as to form one new Catholic school. Moreover, we seek your acknowledgement that our decision is well within the Archdiocesan expectations for parish Catholic schools and that we comply with the intention of the Archdiocesan pastoral planning found in Vision 21st Century.

Consultations

We made this decision after consulting with the Archdiocesan Schools Office that conducted a study of our schools, the parish councils of the three parishes that sponsor the existing schools (Saint Dominic Parish, Holy Name of Jesus Parish, and Saint Clement Parish), and the school committees of Saint Dominic School and Holy Family School.

School structure

The new Catholic school would operate as a merged parish school, sponsored by the three north side parishes. The new Catholic school would not be a separate corporate entity. The two existing schools would cease to exist. In addition, the current employment of the principals, teachers and staff of the existing schools would terminate, although these persons are welcome to apply for positions in the new Catholic school.

Time line for implementation

The new Catholic school will come into existence on July 1, 2011 and begin school operations, including classes, with the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year.

Rationale for the reconfiguration of the schools

In September 2009 our three parish councils requested the Archdiocesan Schools Office to study our schools as our parishes dealt with financial struggles, and the schools experienced rising costs and declining enrollment. Today, the parishes and schools continue their financial struggles and the schools continue the drop in student enrollment (Saint Dominic School: from 172 students in 2001-2002 to 120 today [-30%]; Holy Family School: from 192 students in 2001-2002 to 180 today [-6%]).

Thus, as a result of the study by the Archdiocesan Schools Office we see the following four reasons as the basis of our decision.

1. Enhance educational opportunities for the children: (a) greater opportunity to group students according to their needs; (b) more opportunities for socialization among the students; (c) more diversity of interests among the students; (d) improved access to instructional resources for each age group, e.g., technology, science lab, foreign language, leadership development, and fine arts; and (e) for the middle school students, more immediate preparation for high school.
2. Reduce the school operating expenses by an estimated \$100,000 per year.
3. Expand the collaboration between the three north side parishes that will enrich the Catholic faith community.
4. Provide space in what is now the Saint Dominic School building for a tri-parish ministry center for Christian formation: religious education, youth ministry, and adult faith formation.

Facility usage

This new Catholic school will own no land or buildings. Actually, the new Catholic school will be housed in the building on the campus of Holy Name of Jesus Parish that currently houses Holy Family School. Consequently, the school building at Saint Dominic Parish would no longer house a Catholic school but the intended use of this building is mentioned above.

Governance structure

We will form a working Planning Committee that will help us implement the reconfigured school. In this regard, the Planning Committee will work closely with the Archdiocesan Schools Office. With the assistance of the Planning Committee, we will hire a principal who in turn will be the key person in selecting the teachers and staff.

Before the end of the current school year, a Transitional School Committee will be established to assist the Planning Committee and the principal with the necessary details to prepare for the opening of the school year. This Transitional School Committee will continue by serving as the School Committee, according to the policies of the Archdiocesan Schools Office.

Financial considerations

The School Committee will prepare the annual budget and submit it to the pastors for approval. However, the budget for the first year will be developed by the Planning Committee and given to the pastors for approval. The budget process will include the tuition and fees.

Funds that are donor-designated for the specific use of the new Catholic school will be maintained in separate bank/investment accounts and separate general ledger accounts. In no way will these funds be commingled with parish funds. Examples of donor-designated funds are: gifts, bequests, and proceeds from the annual appeal, parent fund raisers, and sports activities.

Given that the building in which the new Catholic school will operate is a parish asset (not a school asset), all capital expenses are the responsibility of the parish that owns the building.

The following procedure will be used to collect tuition: either: (1) paid in total by July 31, or (2) collected by FACTS (a revenue collection service that withdraws funds from a family-designated checking account according to a time schedule determined by the family [M, Q, S]). Holy Family School has been using FACTS for many years problem-free. Using FACTS eliminates all collection problems for the office staff. Most importantly, if a situation develops such that a withdrawal amount needs to be altered, a person on the Holy Name parish staff has the password to go into the FACTS system and do so.

The excess of the school expenses paid over the school revenues received equals the subsidy, which is to be paid by the three sponsoring parishes. Advice will be sought from the Archdiocesan Schools Office and the Archdiocesan Finance Office to assist the Planning Committee to identify and evaluate alternative subsidy allocation methods that would encourage student enrollment. The pastors will decide which allocation method will be used.

Other area parishes that wish to send small numbers of students to the school would pay a per-student subsidy that is set each year to be the difference between parishioner tuition rate and the most recent average total cost per student.

Families who are not members of one of the three sponsoring parishes and whose parish does not choose to send children to the school would pay an out-of-parish tuition.

School name

No name has been chosen for the new Catholic school. In the near future, two or three options will be determined and submitted to Archbishop ListECKI for him to decide the name of the school.

We believe that this reconfiguration of our schools is the right thing to do. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Reverend John Radetski, Pastor of Saint Dominic Parish

Reverend James Connell, Pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Parish and Saint Clement Parish