

Proposal for

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Elementary Catholic School

Submitted By The Annunciation Education Advisory Council 2005-2006

2/28/2006

Revised Final 3/20/06

7580 Clinton Street

Elma, NY 14059

716-681-1327

100 Years of Tradition

Our New Model for the Next 50 Years



www.annunciation.cc

The Annunciation School Education Advisory Council is very appreciative to Fr. Emil Swiatek for soliciting our input in this very important process of determining the school's potential future. The Advisory Council has been very instrumental in creating change at the school and providing insight and advisory to key aspects of its mission for many years. The need for change is upon the school again as it transitions from its first century of continuous operation into its next.

This document is a response to the question of what recommendation(s) does the parish have regarding the school's future within the vicariate and the current restructuring.

Upon inspection, the vicariate Annunciation School is part of has a rather large and diverse geography extending all the way into Lackawanna from the Elma/Lancaster area. It would be hard to imagine a logical school consolidation that could effectively serve this vicariate. It is with this in mind and a one hundred year successful track record of continuous operation that we would recommend a plan to grow the school population.

The timing of this request comes at a critical point for the Annunciation Catholic School as, what seems to be, the eve of a third generation of a fifty year growth cycle is upon us. The first fifty year cycle started in 1905 with the establishment of the school by the Annunciation parishioners. The school operated in various facilities for fifty years until the current school was dedicated in 1955, exactly a half century after its beginning. It was last year in 2005, another fifty years later (after the new school opened), that the Annunciation Education Advisory Council came to Fr. Emil with the request to develop a capital campaign to upgrade classrooms and facilities to insure another fifty year cycle to continue the school's legacy. So our first recommendation would be to provide support for the capital campaign to proceed with the goal of gaining parity with the local public school establishments that compete for students. We have the momentum, motivation and inspiration to make the campaign a success by giving the school a much needed "face lift" and stronger academic facilities.

The next recommendation would be to support an initiative to implement a new (economic) model to increase our student population to full enrollment. The model over the past decade, or more, of increasing tuition has had the opposite effect on enrollment growth. The more tuition goes up, the more enrollment goes down thus increasing the average cost to educate a student. We believe the parish, as a whole, needs to be and can be more responsive in helping provide Catholic Formation and education for its young people. Besides the parents, if the parish is not concerned about providing our children with a Catholic education... who will?

The following pages provide greater detail into the specifics of a "new model" that would go hand in hand with a capital campaign that was initiated in 2005. Thank you for this opportunity to share our plan goals.

5 Year Vision – Educating For Eternity

In 5 years our vision for Annunciation Catholic School is to be the recognized leader in both Roman Catholic spiritual and academic education a.k.a. Catholic Elementary School Formation

- To enjoy full enrollment because we have a recognized value in the community.
- To eliminate tuition as a barrier to making this excellent education available to anyone who seeks it.
- To fulfill the spiritual and academic instruction mandated by Jesus
- To fully integrate and bond each student to the Catholic Community.
- To keep the facilities and technology updated.
- To constantly innovate our educational programs beyond minimum requirements.
- To continue the legacy of 100 years of Catholic education.
- To educate with full fidelity to the Magisterium and Diocesan guidelines.

Proverbs 22:6 Train [teach] a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Annunciation Value Proposition

There exists a profound need for continuing the Catholic formation of children eternally and temporally. Catholic Schools are the single most important thing that bond children to the Catholic community. A vibrant parish has a constant influx of young active parishioners. The successful operations of Annunciation Catholic School are critical to the parishes' vibrancy.

Annunciation School recognizes that Catholic Formation is its first mission while offering superb academics. Annunciation Parish sees this investment in its baptized Catholic children as a sacred trust and obligation, one that Jesus instructed in His great commission. It is also a most fundamental social justice issue. We will continue to strengthen our Catholic Identity and provide our students with the ability to keep their faith growing in a world of secular values and challenges. This is a most sacred duty and we will make it available to the highest number of Catholic families.

Annunciation School proposes to strengthen and purify its Catholic Identity so as to be a beacon in the community. It will be a truly holy place that parents recognize as the first choice in assisting them fulfill their duty as first teachers. Catechesis that is fully integrated in all subject matter as well as the daily practice of living Gospel values is understood to be a fulfillment of the sacred trust.

We further propose a movement away from a fundraising attitude towards one of total parish stewardship. Stewardship is a way of life and knows the Catholic formation of children in the school is an investment not a liability. It is also understood that this investment requires a return, a vibrant growing Catholic faith community. To be of the most value in fulfilling the mission full enrollment is needed. Full enrollment offers the parish community the best return on investment from all points of view.

High taxes, high mortgage commitments and material value challenges have reduced enrollment in area Catholic schools. To reverse this trend we propose removing tuition in grades K-8 as a barrier. To do this we propose reducing tuition \$100.00 per year until full enrollment of 225 students K-8 is reached for active parishioners.

We call this our "new model". It is a self-perpetuating model that will serve us for the next 50 years and beyond.

Our proposal is one of expansion, not contraction.

“Be Not Afraid” - Pope John Paul II

New Model - School Blueprint

1. Increase the number of Masses schoolchildren attend during the year. We will offer more Devotions, Adoration, Benediction, Sacred Art, Sacred silence and processions.
2. The school will be a truly Holy place at all times by all who enter.
3. We will show our Catholic Identity through integrity, professionalism and follow through in all we do.
4. Annunciation will identify and remove obstacles to enrollment
5. Demonstrate and prove the value received from Annunciation Catholic formation and education.
6. Market the school’s Catholic Identity continuously through the year.
7. Parents will be advised annually the real costs of educating each child. A collection will be taken each week earmarked for tuition support.
8. The movement toward a tuition free school will take place over a period of years first by reducing tuition by \$100.00 per year and then reevaluating as enrollment increases.
9. A 3-5% of gross income giving goal will be encouraged. Increasing the number of envelopes used will be an added benefit.
10. Other sources of support from outside the parish community will be sought such as benefits, Gala event, mail campaigns and an Annual Giving Drive.
11. Parishioners will be educated and encouraged to support politicians who favor education tax credits and/or vouchers.
12. Follow through on implementation and maintenance of existing approved development committee programs approved by Pastor and Principal.
13. Support the Catholic Identity by physical plant improvements.
14. Catholic children will learn Catholic teaching with regards to current events and issues with the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) being the reference point. Pope John Paul II called the Catechism “the sure norm for teaching the faith,” as well as a “sure and authentic reference text” for preparing local catechisms (cf. Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositum, no. 4)
15. The Catechism will be made available to school families that ask. Monthly tracts will be given to parishioners on Catholic issues with the goal of bringing their Catechesis current.
16. School must be run as a center of faith and learning not solely as a business and tactics, which discourage participation, will be avoided.
17. The school will be made more visible to parishioners through activities that are helpful to the parish and its parishioners.
18. Build awareness of Catholic music and stations to show there are alternatives to main stream media.

Matthew 28:20 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Relevant Points

- A vibrant school is one that enjoys full enrollment providing the best parish return on investment financially and spiritually.
- A point will be reached where systematically decreasing the charged tuition and increasing our Catholic Identity will fulfill our value proposition, which will reverse the enrollment decline and start an upward trend.
- Analysis shows that current enrollment trends downward will require an increased investment to sustain school operations. Further decreases will mean a 40% parish investment will not be possible. Our proposal is a no lose proposal, having nothing to lose and everything to gain.
- The school is close to its “critical mass” of students where continued tuition increases and small class sizes will take a bigger toll and will cause major enrollment decreases, resulting in rapidly increasing needed parish investments. The school will risk losing its vibrancy and will not be sustainable.
- At current parish giving levels (estimated) each \$10,000 reduction in tuition receipts requires approx. \$.40 per envelope currently used increase to cover.
- At today’s rates, to eliminate tuition completely parish stewardship would need to increase by only approximately \$6.00 per envelope currently used, less if greater participation.
- At full enrollment (225 students K-8) cost to educate decreases over 40% from over \$3,300 per student to under \$2,000 per student. This provides the best return on investment.
- A decrease of 15 students (at current single/family ratios) will increase needed investment by 15% from 42% to 57% next year, not counting loss of revenue from book and registration fees.
- Within the last decade parish investment was 56%. It has been reduced to 42%. Tuition has increased during this period. Enrollment has declined from 190 students K-8 to its current 132.
- Tuition currently accounts for 32% of school receipts.
- Decreasing tuition by \$100.00 per year in a controlled fashion provides the needed time for stewardship, development programs and increases in enrollment to show results. It also maintains a stable financial picture.

“In a special way, sharing in Christ’s teaching office or mission is lived out in our Catholic Schools. Why does the Catholic School hold such a central place within Catholic education? Because in a sustained manner, the Catholic school provides the opportunity for a person to be formed totally: physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. I repeat that the Catholic school does this in a sustained manner — five hours per day, five days per week. No other process of formation has this extended time frame.”

– Homily by Bishop Paul S. Loverde -1/29/06

- Current base tuition is \$1,600 per year - With full enrollment and the same 42% parish investment, tuition can be as low as \$700.00 per year. Increasing enrollment provides a definite gain back.
- Fixed expenses account for almost all school expenditures. Variable expenses are minor and have a minimal effect on student costs.
- Lancaster schools are over capacity. The area is growing. The time is now.
- The geographic area Annunciation services has seen extraordinary increases in housing and population. This is the greatest opportunity that we have seen in our entire 100-year history. We are poised to take advantage of this opportunity to make available Catholic formation amidst this growth.
- Median income in the Lancaster – Elma area is \$52,000 per year ranking us near the top in WNY.
- Development programs put in place today will require 2-4 years before substantial results are shown.
- School needs a part-time paid development person separate from day to day school operations. An investment of \$2,000 to \$3,000 annually should be budgeted.
- Many more parishioner students attend Annunciation CCD programs than attend the school. This is also true for St Gabriel’s and other nearby parishes.
- A closed school still has associated costs.
- We have already started the process of expansion rather than consolidation. Major building improvements have already been completed, including a new roof, drop ceilings, energy efficient windows, network wiring, new computer lab and a new heating system. A capital campaign was developing (now on hold per Bishop Kmiec), development efforts are ramping up, an alumni group started, and increased marketing and web presence.
- The Diocese of Wichita, Kansas has successfully implemented a tuition free model for 34 elementary schools, 23 middle schools and 4 high schools serving over 10,000 students.

“Our Catholic children - If we don’t invest in their Catholic formation, who will?”

Proposal:

1. Each year decrease tuition by \$100.00 until enrollment goals are met. There will be a point where the value proposition is met and a waiting list will develop. Full enrollment per previously agreed to development program is 9 grades x 25 students plus pre-K (60) = 285 total students.

How funded:

1. Parish giving goal 3-5% of gross income
2. Gainback by increased enrollment

Eventually a surplus would develop.

Giving Proposal

Median income in Elma, Marilla and Lancaster is \$52,000/yr.

Currently the Church receives approximately 500 envelopes per week.

500 families x \$52,000 (median income) = \$26,000,000 - 3% of this number yields over \$780,000 of parishioner giving not counting weekly cash giving.

Increasing envelope/cash participation to 700 x \$52,000 = \$36,400,000 – 3% of this number yields over \$1,092,000 of parishioner giving.

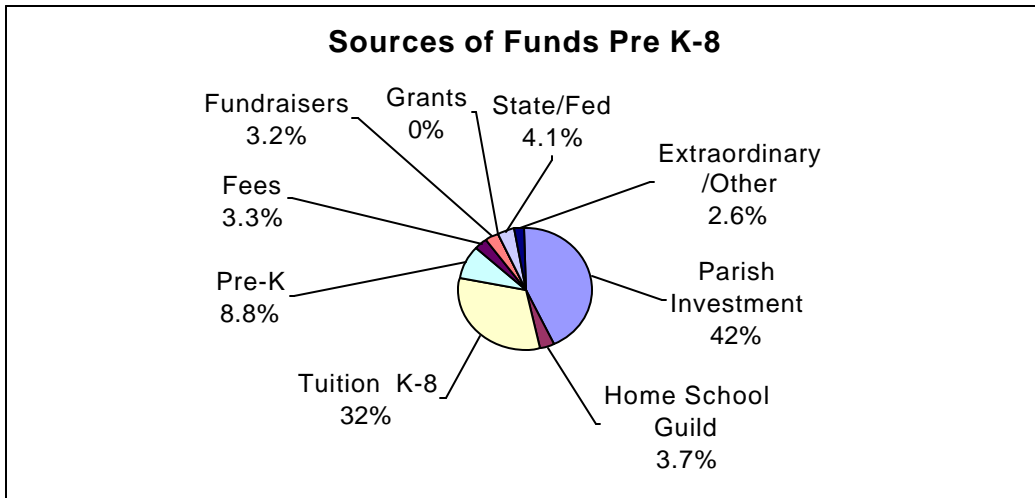
If this extends to full parish participation 1500 envelopes x \$52,000 = \$78,000,000 - parish families only 1-1/2% giving is needed or a weekly envelope of \$12.82

We recommend the parish set a 3-5% giving goal for each family whether they attend Mass or not. Full participation yields over \$1,500,00 per year generating a substantial surplus.

The Catholic school provides a priceless opportunity for our children and young people to be formed into the image of Jesus. May we continue to support our Catholic schools and at the same time, allow God to mold all of us ever more fully into the image of Jesus His Son and Our Saving Lord.

Amen! – Homily by Bishop Paul S. Loverde – 1/29/06

Current Sources of Funds



From Budget 2006-2007

Pre K-8

1. Parish Investment – 42%
2. Home School Guild – 3.7%
3. Tuition K-8 – 32%
4. Pre-K – 8.8%
5. Fees – 3.3%
6. Fundraisers – 3.2%
7. Grants
8. State/Fed – 4.1%
9. Extraordinary/Other – 2.6%

“Our schools play a primary role in worship and service in the life of the parish and of the community. The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith ... and is not simply an institution which offers an academic instruction of high quality, but, even more importantly, is an effective vehicle of total Christian formation.’ ... As our children become educated in Catholic schools, they will be drawn deeper into a love of Jesus Christ and recognize the importance of giving service to the Church, the community and to those most in need.” – Homily by Bishop Paul S. Loverde -1/29/06

Development Committee Action Plan

Stewardship

1. Move from fundraising to total parish stewardship
2. Catholic formation is the duty of all parishioners
3. Catholic formation is an investment

Programs

1. Major donors
2. Capital campaign
3. Grants
4. Memorial Gift Process
5. Endowment growth
6. Planned giving – (Leave a Legacy)
7. Annual Giving Drive
8. Sponsor a child
9. Alumni giving

Marketing

1. Expand free and paid marketing to larger radius
2. Word of mouth campaign
3. Increase visibility to parish
4. Baptismal letters from birth
5. Professional brochure
6. Invitations
7. Publicize the accomplishments of alumni

Execution and transmittal

1. Investment in a development person or firm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic School Education Advisory Council 2005-2006

Members:

Mark Phillips - Chair

Mary Beth Morgan - Vice Chair

Mary Beth Mann - Secretary

James Serafin

Jeff Nawotka

Ex-Officio Members

Pastor - Rev. Emil Swiatek

Principal - Mary Jane Liszewski

Vice Principal - Mary Kay Schaub

Home School Guild President - Ruth Reilly