

Final Decisions

By
Bishop Joseph F. Martino
Bishop of Scranton

In response to the
Recommendations of the Meitler Consultants, Inc.
for the



Diocese of Scranton's Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools

Lackawanna/Wayne Counties
& Luzerne County

Index

Final Decisions

High Schools – Lackawanna County	3
Elementary Schools – Lackawanna/Wayne Counties	4
High Schools – Luzerne County.	7
Elementary Schools – Luzerne County	11
Governance – Lackawanna/Wayne Counties	18
Governance – Luzerne County	20
Signs of Catholic School Viability	22

Catholic High Schools in Lackawanna County

Bishop Hannan High School and Bishop O’Hara High School will close. We will establish a new single high school to serve all of Lackawanna and Wayne Counties. The history and tradition of the two schools will be blended into one new school. We will give the school a new name.

- The cost and feasibility of building a new high school on a neutral site to replace Bishop Hannan High School and Bishop O’Hara High School are being studied.
- The first phase of the feasibility study to determine potential enrollment has been completed by the Meitler Consultants.
- The second phase to determine financial support is currently being undertaken by Community Counseling Service.
- If a new high school is not found feasible, we will determine whether to locate the combined high school at the Bishop O’Hara or Bishop Hannan facility and make appropriate upgrades to the selected facility.

Rationale

- The Catholic feeder school population is declining and both schools draw most of their enrollment from their Catholic feeders (80%-89%).
- The two high schools draw from overlapping geographic areas.
- Current population and enrollment trends do not support maintaining two high schools going forward. If no improvements are made to programs and facilities at these high schools, enrollment will continue to decline.
- The current facilities are neither adequate, nor competitive with new public school facilities.
- The public image is one of limited programs and reduced quality due to cutbacks. People perceive being asked to pay more for less.
- A new combined high school has the potential to attract more enrollment which will support an improved academic and co-curricular program.

Catholic Elementary Schools in Lackawanna and Wayne Counties

The system will consist of ten elementary sites serving PreK to grade 8 at the following locations: All Saints, Marian Catholic, St. Clare and St. Paul Schools in Scranton; St. Mary Mt. Carmel School in Dunmore, LaSalle Academy in Jessup, St. Mary Visitation School in Dickson City, Sacred Heart School in Carbondale, Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green and St. Vincent School in Honesdale. The following locations will close: St. Mary in Old Forge, Holy Rosary in Scranton, and St. Anthony in Dunmore.

School	City	Grades	Capacity K to 8	Early Childhood
All Saints Academy	Scranton	PK-8	252 to 504*	Yes
Marian Catholic	Scranton	PK-8	252 to 504*	Yes
St. Clare*	Scranton	PK-3	224	Yes
St. Paul*	Scranton	4-8	280	No
St. Mary Mt. Carmel	Dunmore	PK-8	252	Yes
LaSalle Academy	Jessup	PK-8	252 to 504*	Yes
St. Mary Visitation School	Dickson City	PK-8	252	Yes
Sacred Heart	Carbondale	PK-8	252	Yes
Our Lady of Peace School	Clarks Green	K-8	252 to 504*	No
St. Vincent	Honesdale	PK-8	252	Yes

*represents single or double track

- Each school will maintain a strong Catholic identity evident in all aspects of the program.
- Each elementary school in the system will offer a comprehensive, excellent academic and extracurricular program for the age levels it serves.
- Particular attention will be given to enhancement of the middle school program through the provision of additional academic, athletic and other extracurricular opportunities.
- An individualized instruction program will be established at All Saints Academy to accommodate students with special needs in Lackawanna and Wayne Counties.
- Investment will be made in the school facilities to ensure that they are attractive, utilized efficiently, energy efficient, safe and well maintained.
- A determination will be made concerning the need to operate PreK at additional sites.
- St. Mary Visitation School will combine with LaSalle Academy and a determination made regarding the number of primary grades to be housed at the St. Mary's site.
- St. Clare and St. Paul Schools will have one principal for both programs, as will the combined LaSalle Academy and St. Mary Visitation. An assistant will be identified who is located at the site not housing the principal.

**St. Clare and St. Paul will operate as one school entity.*

A. General Rationale

- The system must operate in quality facilities at strategic sites.
- Sites selected provide geographic availability within a reasonable distance and access to transportation for most families.
- Fewer sites enable the system to operate at a higher rate of capacity increasing academic opportunities and fiscal efficiency.
- Programs for grades seven and eight will be strengthened.
- Current enrollment trends support the future viability of these sites.

B. Specific Rationale for Relocation of Programs

- St. Mary School, Old Forge (***combine with All Saints Academy***)
 - The school currently has only 131 students K-8.
 - The school is operating at 58% of capacity.
 - Subsidy in 2004-05 was 57% of ordinary parish income.
 - Six classes currently have less than 15 students.
- Holy Rosary, Scranton (***combine with All Saints Academy***)
 - The school currently has only 162 students K-8.
 - The school is operating at 72% of capacity.
 - Six classes currently have less than 20 students.
 - In 2004-05 subsidy was 48% of ordinary parish income which is not sustainable long term.
- St. Mary Visitation, Dickson City (***combine with LaSalle Academy***)
 - The school currently has 138 students in K-8 with 123 in PreK-4.
 - Four classes currently have less than 15 students and no class is more than 20 students.
 - The school is currently at 61% of capacity.
 - There appears to be population to support a PreK to grade 4 program here. Students in higher grades will benefit from a strong program at the LaSalle site in Jessup.
- St. Anthony, Dunmore (***combine with St. Mary of Mt. Carmel, Dunmore***)
 - The school currently has only 80 students K-8.
 - The school is operating at only 35% of capacity.
 - All classes have less than 12 students.
 - In 2004-05 subsidy was 53% of ordinary income.
- Students in these schools can be accommodated at other sites within a reasonable travel distance.

ASSESSMENT

A common formula for determining parish assessments will be utilized throughout the diocese.

- The formula will be based on parish income and will utilize a sliding scale.

Rationale

- It is the responsibility of all Catholics to provide financial support for our Catholic Schools. Therefore, all parishes will contribute to the financial support of Catholic Schools.
- Many parishes with schools are providing a level of financial support which is not sustainable and jeopardizes other important aspects of parish ministry.
- The new system will establish an equitable formula with all parishes sharing in the support of Catholic Schools.

Catholic High Schools in Luzerne County

Bishop Hafey High School, Bishop Hoban High School, Bishop O'Reilly High School and Seton Catholic High School will close. A new, single high school will be established to serve all of Luzerne County. The history and traditions of the four schools will be blended into one new school. This new Luzerne County Catholic High School will be given a new name.

Rationale – Combined High School

- Enrollment in Catholic high schools in Luzerne County will most likely be less in the future. Enrollment trends in elementary schools along with current and projected demographics will be significant contributors to decreased enrollment.
- Four Catholic high schools are too many to serve Luzerne County. One Catholic high school with total enrollment of 900 to 1,000 will be in balance with the population.
- High schools with small enrollments are challenged in these ways:
 - Achieving economies of scale to offer extra-curricular programs, competitive inter-scholastic competition, and a range of enrichment opportunities
 - Limited advanced placement and honors courses due to the cost of faculty with necessary credentials
 - Tuition rates that are competitive with other high schools but do not reflect the higher cost of a smaller school
 - Limited facilities
- The freshman class in the combined school is potentially 250 to 270 based on current enrollments.
- There will be a substantial cost savings to operate at one high school instead of four. This savings will help keep tuition affordable, hold parish subsidy to a reasonable level, and fund a quality educational program.
- The new school will offer academic courses and co-curricular programs not currently available to all students at all existing high schools. The school will be capable of meeting a wide range of student needs.
- Investing in a single Catholic high school provides the resources to maintain high academic standards, offer a competitive selection of co-curricular programs, serve a wider range of student needs, and invest in quality facilities at one site instead of maintaining facilities at four sites.

Rationale – Seton High School is not viable long term because:

- From 2000-01 to 2006-07, enrollment at Seton Catholic High School declined from 277 to 192, a loss of 31%. The school is currently under enrolled. The freshmen class comes from Catholic feeder schools almost exclusively.
- Current enrollment trends indicate that combined 8th grade enrollments in the feeder schools will remain below 100 for the foreseeable future. In 2005-06 only 45% of the Catholic elementary school graduates in Region 7 enrolled at Seton in 2005-06, 17% enrolled at Bishop Hoban High School and 18% enrolled at Scranton Prep. In 2006-07 Seton attracted 52% of Region 7 elementary graduates, indicating that the enrollment at Seton Catholic High School will likely remain under 200 students.
- Non-essential capital expenditures have been put on hold because of budget constraints.
- The public image of the high school has declined as programs have been cut.

- Parishes cannot maintain the current level of subsidy needed to support the program. Currently three parishes in Region 7 must either sell property, deplete reserves or secure a loan in order to pay their school subsidy.
- The Local Consultative Group and other interested parties provided a thoughtful and detailed proposal to maintain Seton Catholic High School. The proposal included ambitious goals for fundraising and student recruitment. However, past history, current trends and demographic projections do not support the realistic prospect that these goals can be achieved. Furthermore, neither the Diocese nor the parishes can afford to subsidize the school while these goals are being pursued.

Rationale – Bishop O’Reilly High School is not viable long term because:

- From 1999-00 to 2006-07 enrollment at Bishop O’Reilly High School declined from 409 to 266, a loss of 35%. 9th grade was its lowest in 2004-05 with 60 students. 9th grade enrollment improved to 75 students in 2005-06, but declined to 65 students in 2006-07.
- There is not enough enrollment in Catholic feeder schools to adequately populate 9th grade. The primary feeder schools (Gate of Heaven and Bishop O’Reilly Junior High) provided only 43 9th graders in 2004-05. All other Catholic schools together sent 21 students for a total of 64. In addition, 10 9th graders came from public schools and private schools.
- The total number of 8th graders from Bishop O’Reilly Jr. High School and Gate of Heaven School is 60 to 63 for the next two years. If the attraction rate remains at 76%, there are only 46 to 48 potential 9th graders from these feeder schools.
- There is potentially only one graduating class instead of two between Sacred Heart School and Regis Elementary which would impact Bishop O’Reilly’s enrollment.
- The school has accrued a significant debt from deficits in the operating budgets over the last three years.
- The Local Consultative Group and other interested parties provided a thoughtful and detailed proposal to maintain Bishop O’Reilly High School. The proposal included ambitious goals for fundraising and student recruitment. However, past history, current trends and demographic projections do not support the realistic prospect that these goals can be achieved. Furthermore, neither the Diocese nor the parishes can afford to subsidize the school while these goals are being pursued.

Rationale – Bishop Hafey High School is not viable long term because:

- Bishop Hafey High School experienced 33% enrollment decline from 2000-01 to 2006-07.
- Catholic elementary schools in Hazleton experienced a 55% decline over the same period.
- Subsidy from parishes accounts for about 25% of the annual income of Bishop Hafey High School. Some parishes have to borrow money or not pay other assessments to make subsidy payments.
- From 2001 to 2005 half of the parishes in Region 4 experienced a decrease in ordinary income.
- The school has a debt to the diocese with repayment built into the annual school budget.
- In 2004-05 school subsidy for over half of the parishes in Region 4 was more than 25% of their offertory income.

- Low enrollment and limited finances limit the range of courses and co-curricular activities that can be offered.
- In Region 4, the enrollment base does not appear to support a high school long term, and trends in parish income make it difficult to sustain the level of parish subsidy needed.
- While the yearly enrollment decline decreased in the last few years, the school has continued to experience an overall enrollment decline.
- Alumni have come forward to pledge significant funds for the school, but the amount needed now and to support the school on an ongoing basis is an extremely ambitious goal. Its realization is not supported by past experience.
- Neither the Diocese nor the supporting parishes have the needed funds to subsidize the school in the interim needed to implement these ambitious goals.
- The Diocese of Scranton is working with the Diocese of Allentown to provide a viable alternative for high school students. This type of cooperative effort is successful in other areas of this diocese and other dioceses.
- The Local Consultative Group and other interested parties provided a thoughtful and detailed proposal to maintain Bishop Hafey High School. The proposal included ambitious goals for fundraising and student recruitment. However, past history, current trends and demographic projections do not support the realistic prospect that these goals can be achieved. Furthermore, neither the Diocese nor the parishes can afford to subsidize the school while these goals are being pursued.

The facilities at the present Bishop Hoban High School will be utilized for the new Catholic High School for Luzerne County. Changes and improvements to the facilities will provide the best quality high school program.

- Raise capital dollars and make a major investment in facilities. Investments would include:
 - Interior upgrades to auditorium, assembly areas, instructional areas
 - Mechanical/electrical/plumbing
 - Technology
 - Site safety and reconfiguration
 - Roof replacement
 - Masonry restoration
 - Window repair
- Investigate the acquisition of land for athletic programs.
- Invest in a major new marketing, recruitment and public relations initiative.
- Assemble a leadership team with skill and vision to make the school successful.

Rationale

- Bishop Hoban facility can accommodate around 900 students. Changes in utilization of space will be needed. However, 900 can be accommodated without major modifications.
- Bishop Hoban campus is located relatively central in Luzerne County.
- A new high school facility on a new site for 1,000 students would cost many millions. The cost of upgrading and making the Bishop Hoban facility into a top notch school is a fraction of the cost of a new school.
- Bishop Hoban High School is accessible for the Wyoming Valley.
- Bishop Hoban High School draws from a wider area encompassing Regions 5 and 6 and some of Region 7. It is clear that many families are choosing Bishop Hoban High School, even from across the river. The site has been successfully marketed in recent years.

The Diocese of Scranton has made arrangements with Marian Catholic High School in the Diocese of Allentown for the Hazleton students to attend and for their parents to pay the same tuition as Allentown parishioners.

Rationale

- Marian Catholic High School is within a reasonable distance for most Hazleton students.
- Transportation from the Hazleton School District is available.
- Marian Catholic High School has a well-respected program, which includes the following:
 - religious education/religious formation program
 - strong academic programs
 - athletic and other extra and co-curricular programs

Catholic Elementary Schools in Luzerne County

The Catholic School System in Luzerne County will operate in quality facilities on strategic sites. The number and size of facilities will be in balance with current and projected enrollment. The following configuration has been determined:

School	City	Grades	Capacity K to 8	Early Childhood
Holy Family Academy	Hazleton	PreK to 8th grade	504	yes
St. Aloysius	Wilkes-Barre	PreK to 8th grade	252	yes
St. Boniface*	Wilkes-Barre	School building closed.		
Pope John Paul II ****	Nanticoke	School building closed. Retain early childhood center.		yes
SS Peter and Paul	Plains	PreK to 8th grade	252	yes
Sacred Heart*	Wilkes-Barre	School building closed.		
St. Nicholas/St. Mary	Wilkes-Barre	K to 8th grade	504	study feasibility
Regis*	Forty-Fort	School building closed.		
Bishop O'Reilly	Kingston	PreK to 8th grade	504	yes
Sacred Heart*	Luzerne	School building closed.		
Gate of Heaven	Dallas	PreK to 8th grade	504	yes
St. Jude	Mountaintop	PreK to 8th grade	252 to 504***	yes
Sacred Heart**	Dupont	School building closed.		study feasibility
Holy Rosary	Duryea	PreK to 8th grade	252	yes
Wyoming Area Catholic**	Exeter	PreK to 8th grade	252	yes
St. Mary Assumption	Pittston	PreK to 8th grade	252	yes

* Combine programs at Bishop O'Reilly facility.
 ** Combine programs at Wyoming Area Catholic
 *** indicates single or double track
 **** Combine programs at either St. Aloysius or Bishop O'Reilly Facility.

Rationale

- Most schools are regional based on the residences of the students they serve.
- Neither enrollment nor finances support maintaining the current number of schools long-term.
- Right-sizing enables more efficient use of resources and enables enhancement of programs and effective sharing of resources.
- PreK programs serve the needs of parents and act as feeders to the elementary programs.

A. Region 4

The present Bishop Hafey Building will be used to house Holy Family Academy. This building will be the elementary site for students PreK-8.

- **Invest in the Bishop Hafey Building to accommodate younger children and make the facility attractive for elementary students.**

Rationale

- A single elementary facility in a newer building will be an advantage for families. All children will be together at the same site.
- A single site is more cost effective and provides more flexibility and opportunity for program enhancement.

- A new elementary school has greater potential to attract additional students.
- The campus setting at the elementary center will be an advantage for the younger students.

Study the feasibility of establishing a PreK to grade 3 or PreK to grade 6 program at St. John Bosco Parish. It would be part of the Luzerne County School System.

Rationale

- St. John Bosco Parish in Conyngham and Good Shepherd Parish in Drums have a sufficient base of school-age students to support an elementary school if parents see Catholic education as desirable.
- The current travel distance from these parishes appears to be a deterrent to parents enrolling their young children. Once they are in the public school system, they tend to remain there.
- St. John Bosco Parish has a facility that could house a PreK to 6th grade program.

B. Regions 5 and 6

The elementary programs of Sacred Heart School in Wilkes-Barre, St. Boniface School in Wilkes-Barre, Sacred Heart School in Luzerne and Regis Elementary School in Forty-Fort will be combined at the Bishop O'Reilly facility.

- Invest in the Bishop O'Reilly building to accommodate younger children and make the facility attractive for elementary students.
- Offer an excellent PreK program that will serve as a strong feeder program.
- Continue the individual instruction program at this site as part of the newly founded system and continue it as part of the new Catholic high school.

Rationale for Bishop O'Reilly Jr/Sr High School, Kingston

- The Bishop O'Reilly facility can be readily converted to an excellent PreK-8 facility.
- Using a single facility rather than four separate ones is cost saving, freeing funds for program and facility enhancement.
- Combining the four programs allows for a school of multiple classes at each grade level, benefiting student and teacher interaction and support.
- A combined program results in a larger middle school enrollment and facility to support an excellent middle school program.

Rationale for Sacred Heart School, Wilkes-Barre

- Enrollment at Sacred Heart School was 162 at the beginning of 2006-07, down from 224 in 2000-01. Kindergarten enrollment dropped to 11 students in 2005 and 15 students in 2006, bringing average class size down to 18 students. Enrollment dropped to only 64% of capacity.
- Enrollment losses due to retention were 23 and 21 in 2004-05 and 2005-06. Retention improved in 2006-07.
- Sacred Heart Parish has over \$700,000 in debt. The financial situation in the parish is tenuous.
- Parish subsidy takes 64% of parish offertory at Sacred Heart.
- Facilities at Sacred Heart School will need \$250,000 in building repairs in the next five years. In addition, the parish needs \$3 million to repair the church.

- Sacred Heart Parish has over 1,000 registered households. Annual infant baptisms had been holding in the 40's until last year. The parish is aging and the area is not growing in population.
- Sacred Heart Parish is not financially viable to support a school.

Rationale for St. Boniface School, Wilkes-Barre

- Enrollment at St. Boniface School was 157 at the beginning of 2006-07, down from 206 in 2000-01. Enrollment in kindergarten dropped to 15 students, down from 29 a few years before.
- The school serves students from many parishes and will be increasingly dependent on families coming back to the neighborhood to maintain enrollment.
- Offertory giving is down in the parish, yet subsidy is 15% to 20% of school budget.
- There are concerns about using the facilities at St. Boniface School long-term and about the condition of these facilities. These concerns include use of the rectory for kindergarten, music, computers and other classes.

Rationale for Sacred Heart, Luzerne and Regis Elementary, Forty-Fort

- Enrollment declined at Regis Elementary from 182 in 2000-01 (grades K to 5) to 106 in 2006-07 (grades K to 6). Average class size is 15.
- Enrollment declined at Sacred Heart-Luzerne from 140 in 2000-01 (grades K to 5) to 112 in 2006-07 (grades K to 6). Average class size is 16.
- There are 7,500 parish households among the seven supporting parishes of Sacred Heart and Regis Elementary schools. However, these parishes baptized only 112 infants in 2004, down from 203 in 1999; almost half as many as 5 years earlier.
- The population in the zip code areas for Kingston and Luzerne is estimated at 33,870 (zip codes 18704 and 18709). The population ages 5 to 14 is 3,538. Several Catholic schools outside the area enroll a handful of children.
- The schools are located close to each other with six Catholic parishes surrounding them.

POPE JOHN PAUL II, NANTICOKE

Since demographics do not appear to show a sufficient population of students to achieve viability, students in kindergarten through 8th grade will be accommodated at either St. Aloysius or the Bishop O'Reilly Facility in Luzerne County beginning with the 2007-08 school year.

Continue the early childhood center long-term as part of the Luzerne County school system.

Rationale

- Enrollment at Pope John Paul II School was 133 at the beginning of the 2006-07 school year, down from 348 in 2000-01. The school had been double classes in each grade, and is currently single classes in each grade. Four classes are between 5 and 11 students each. Enrollment has been steadily declining, and the school has been hurt considerably by heavy losses due to retention.
- Losses due to retention have been 43 to 60 students in any particular year. Retention has been a problem across all grades.

- The population of children 5 to 13 in the zip code area is estimated to be about 1,200. Even though the nine supporting parishes have almost 4,000 parish households and the area is historically very Catholic, the trend is a decline in Catholic families with children. There were only 46 baptisms in 2004 in Nanticoke parishes, and another 14 baptisms in other supporting parishes. Baptism numbers have declined steadily over the past four years, dropping 39%.
- Religious education enrollment for all parishes in Nanticoke is under 300.
- There is little potential for a major enrollment turnaround.
- The school has a debt of \$162,000 to the diocese.
- Some of the supporting parishes are struggling financially. There is need to consolidate parishes in Nanticoke.

ST. JUDE SCHOOL, MOUNTAINTOP

A second class in Kindergarten and 1st grade will be considered if there are waiting lists and the second class can open with 20 students.

A full day kindergarten program will be added.

Plans to expand PreK programs will be continued.

Attrition from 6th to 7th grades will be addressed. Research will be conducted to determine why students are not staying for 7th grade, and reasons for attrition in other grades. Results to guide planning and marketing will be used.

Rationale

- 89% of school enrollment is registered parishioners. The school is already drawing roughly 50% of baptized children. A handful of children come from nine other parishes.
- Recent enrollment trends indicate there is not enough enrollment in kindergarten to justify continuing double classes.
- The planned expansion of the preschool may help to draw more enrollment.
- With an estimated population of 2,000 5-13 year olds in the zip code area, an 11% market share would be required to reach enrollment of 225 in K to 8th grade. It is not likely the school could support double classes per grade which suggests a 20% market share. There is no evidence the school-age population is growing.
- The facility is an advantage for the school.

GATE OF HEAVEN SCHOOL, DALLAS

Marketing and recruitment will be continued to attract 50 to 55 students in kindergarten. The decision to double classes in order to sustain enrollment in kindergarten and first grade will be determined. If less than 45 students are enrolled for both kindergarten and first grade, then one class of kindergarten and first grade will be maintained.

A study of early childhood providers in the region will determine the feasibility of expanding the pre-kindergarten program.

Rationale

- Enrollment at Gate of Heaven School was 325 at the beginning of 2006-07, up from 304 the prior year. Over the past five years, enrollment is down from 514 in 2000-01 (grades

K to 8). Enrollment in kindergarten declined from a strong 50 to 60 students to 38 in 2006-07.

- Population in the Gate of Heaven zip code area is 28,137 (18612 Dallas, 18618 Harvey's Lake, 18708 Shavertown). There are about 2,700 children ages 5 to 13 in this area. A 12% market share would result in a school with 324 students (K-8).
- The supporting parishes had combined baptisms of 119 in 2004. The number is about the same as 4 years earlier.

SS PETER AND PAUL SCHOOL, PLAINS AND ST. ALOYSIUS SCHOOL, WILKES-BARRE

SS Peter and Paul School, Plains, and St. Aloysius School, Wilkes-Barre, will continue to provide PreK to Grade 8 Education; and, they will continue to identify ways to increase recruitment and retention.

Rationale

- Both schools serve students from a variety of parishes.
- More than one elementary site is needed on this side of the river.
- Both schools are likely to gain enrollment from schools that will close.

ST. NICHOLAS/ST. MARY SCHOOL, WILKES-BARRE

The addition of a PreK program will be seriously explored.

Rationale

- An excellent PreK program will serve as a feeder for the K through grade 8 program, helping to maintain a full enrollment for the future.

C. Region 7

Sacred Heart of Jesus School will close and the program will be combined with Wyoming Area Catholic Elementary School. The feasibility of maintaining PreK at the Sacred Heart of Jesus site will be studied.

Specific enrollment goals and action steps for marketing and retention will be developed for Wyoming Area Catholic School which must be energetically implemented and closely monitored. Efforts to attract new families in the surrounding areas west of the river will be a focus.

PreK to Grade 8 Education will continue at Holy Rosary School. A plan to provide and develop effective communication and marketing with all parishes, which are potential sources of students, will be further developed.

Rationale

- Current enrollment trends, population projections and baptismal data indicate that students can be accommodated at three sites.
- Sacred Heart of Jesus School draws the majority of its enrollment from Sacred Heart Parish which has averaged only 15 infant baptisms per year for the last four years.
- Wyoming Area Catholic School is a relatively new facility with land for playground and athletic fields or future expansion.

- Region parishes on the west side of the river collectively have averaged 95 baptisms a year for the last four years.
- A school will be located on the west side of the river.
- Some parishes are struggling financially and are depleting reserves or borrowing money to pay subsidy.
- Holy Rosary School had a waiting list in 2005-06. More than half of the school enrollment comes from parishes other than the sponsoring parishes in 2005-06.

ASSESSMENT

A common formula for determining parish assessments will be utilized throughout the diocese.

- The formula will be based on parish income and will utilize a sliding scale.

Rationale

- It is the responsibility of all Catholics to provide financial support for our Catholic Schools. Therefore, all parishes will contribute to the financial support of Catholic Schools.
- Many parishes with schools are providing a level of financial support which is not sustainable and jeopardizes other important aspects of parish ministry.
- The new system will establish an equitable formula with all parishes sharing in the support of Catholic Schools.

GOVERNANCE FOR LACKAWANNA/WAYNE COUNTIES

A regional Catholic school system (PreK to 12) will be formed for Lackawanna and Wayne Counties which will be supported by all parishes and governed by a board with jurisdiction over many aspects of the new system.

- All Catholic schools in Lackawanna and Wayne Counties will be brought into the system as of July 1, 2007.
- The system will operate early childhood, elementary school and high school programs in Lackawanna and Wayne Counties.
- The system will provide programs for students with special needs.
- The system will strengthen and enhance the academic program provided and will expand opportunities for students with quality co-curricular programs.
- The system will be promoted and energetically marketed, publicizing the benefits for students and parents. Marketing, development and planning activities will be system-wide.
- The system principals will work with families to address transportation, tuition and program issues in order to enroll all current students in the new system.
- The system will be financially supported by all parishes in the two counties according to an equitable funding formula.
- The system will have a chief administrator to provide leadership, coordination and oversight.
- The system will maintain school facilities and establish building use agreements with parishes who own school facilities used for system programs. Major capital projects will be planned and funded cooperatively between the system and parishes.

Rationale

- Allows for enhancement of programs, greater sharing of resources and better stewardship of limited resources.
- Enables better articulation and consistency of curriculum PreK to 12.
- Provides a more equitable financial structure for all involved in providing Catholic education and helps to maintain affordability of Catholic schools for parents and parishes.
- Provides a system in which future adjustments related to program, enrollment and finances can more easily be decided and implemented.
- Provides for greater continuity in the face of future pastoral changes, parish reconfigurations and fewer priests. Enables priests to concentrate on being the spiritual leader.
- Moves schools from competition for resources and students to cooperation in providing affordable, quality Catholic education.
- Provides greater opportunity and resources for effective marketing and development through coordinated, combined efforts.
- Provides consistent policies for admission and tuition across the system.
- Enables a common standard of accountability.
- Facilitates consistent business management and financial reporting.

- Utilizes the expertise of both clergy and laity with shared responsibility for decision-making.
- Enables prioritization of capital projects and good stewardship of available funding.
- Neither enrollment nor finances support maintaining the current number of schools long term.

The new school system will be governed by a board of clergy and lay members with delegated authority and responsibility. Authority in limited and specified areas such as mission, budget approval, etc. will be reserved to diocesan authority.

- The system will be governed by a board of limited jurisdiction with direct accountability to the Diocese of Scranton and indirect accountability to the sponsoring parishes.
- Board membership will be both clergy and lay persons with knowledge, commitment, and appropriate expertise. A process for selection of board members and terms of service will be established through the bylaws governing the board.
- The Board will have responsibility for areas such as planning, finance, policy development, public relations, marketing and institutional advancement. Authority in limited areas such as mission and budget approval is canonically reserved to diocesan authority.
- The system will have status as a public juridic person in canon law and be established as a separate civil corporation.

Rationale

- Enables priests to concentrate on being the spiritual leader rather than the chief financial officer of the school.
- Enables utilization of expertise of clergy and laity in shared decision-making.

Involvement of clergy and connection to parishes will be maintained and fostered. The responsibility of pastors and parishes for individual schools will be changed.

- Area pastors and parishes will be regularly informed of the activities of the schools in the system. They will receive a quarterly financial report.
- Pastors will be encouraged to educate parishioners concerning the importance of Catholic schools and the shared responsibility for this ministry. Parishes will support marketing and communications efforts by the Catholic school system.
- Clergy will provide spiritual care for students, faculty and families.
- Students and families will be encouraged and expected to actively participate in parish life.
- Parishes will support school families through their ministries and programs.
- Schools will be an extension of parish mission, and a means through which parishes evangelize students, their families, and the community.
- Catholic school students will be encouraged to be involved in parish ministries and service and make a contribution to parish life.
- Parishes will have influence in the Catholic school system through the governance structure.
- Parishes will support Catholic schools and families with financial needs through a fair and equitable funding formula.

GOVERNANCE FOR LUZERNE COUNTY

A regional Catholic school system (PreK to 12) will be formed for Luzerne County which will be supported by all parishes and governed by a board with jurisdiction over many aspects of the new system.

- All Catholic schools in Luzerne County will be brought into the system as of July 1, 2007.
- The system will operate early childhood, elementary school and high school programs in Luzerne County.
- The system will continue the special education program as part of the county-wide school system to serve students with special needs.
- The system will strengthen and enhance the academic program provided and will expand opportunities for students with quality co-curricular programs.
- The system will be promoted and energetically marketed, publicizing the benefits for students and parents. Marketing, development and planning activities will be system-wide.
- The system principals will work with families to address transportation, tuition and program issues in order to enroll all current students in the new system.
- The system will be financially supported by all parishes in Luzerne County according to an equitable funding formula.
- The system will have a chief administrator to provide leadership, coordination and oversight.
- The system will maintain school facilities and establish building use agreements with parishes who own school facilities used for system programs. Major capital projects will be planned and funded cooperatively between the system and parishes.

Rationale

- Allows for enhancement of programs, greater sharing of resources and better stewardship of limited funds.
- Enables better articulation and consistency of curriculum PreK to 12.
- Provides a more equitable financial structure for all involved in providing Catholic education. Helps to maintain affordability of Catholic schools for parents and parishes.
- Provides a system in which future changes related to program, enrollment and finances can be made strategically within the best interest of the region.
- Provides for greater continuity in the face of future pastoral changes, parish reconfigurations and fewer priests. Enables priests to concentrate on being the spiritual leader.
- Moves schools from competition for resources and students to cooperation in providing affordable, quality Catholic education.
- Provides greater opportunity and resources for effective marketing and development through coordinated, combined efforts.
- Provides consistent policies for admission and tuition across the system.
- Enables a common standard of accountability.
- Facilitates consistent business management and financial reporting.
- Utilizes the expertise of both clergy and laity with shared responsibility for decision-making.
- Most schools are regional in terms of the residences of the students.

- Neither enrollment nor finances support maintaining the current number of schools long term.

The new school system will be governed by a board of clergy and lay members with delegated authority and responsibility. Authority is limited and specified areas such as mission, budget approval, etc. will be reserved to diocesan authority.

- The system will be governed by a board of limited jurisdiction with direct accountability to the Diocese of Scranton and indirect accountability to the sponsoring parishes.
- Board membership will be both clergy and lay persons with knowledge, commitment, and appropriate expertise. A process for selection of board members and terms of service will be established through the bylaws governing the board.
- The Board will have responsibility for areas such as planning, finance, policy development, public relations, marketing and institutional advancement. Authority in limited areas such as mission and budget approval is reserved to diocesan authority.
- The system will have status as a public juridic person in canon law and be established as a separate civil corporation.

Involvement of clergy and connection to parishes will be maintained and fostered. The responsibility of pastors and parishes for individual schools will be changed.

- Area pastors and parishes will be regularly informed of the activities of the schools in the system. They will receive a quarterly financial report.
- Pastors will be encouraged to educate parishioners concerning the importance of Catholic schools and the shared responsibility for this ministry. Parishes will support marketing and communications efforts by the Catholic school system.
- Clergy will provide spiritual care for students, faculty, and families.
- Students and families will be encouraged and expected to actively participate in parish life.
- Parishes will support school families through their ministries and programs.
- Schools will be an extension of parish mission, and a means through which parishes evangelize students, their families, and the community.
- Catholic school students will be encouraged to be involved in parish ministries and service and make a contribution to parish life.
- Parishes will have influence in the Catholic school system through the governance structure.
- Parishes will support Catholic schools and families with financial needs through a fair and equitable funding formula.



Signs of Catholic School Viability Key Objectives

I. Catholic Character

- 1.1 An appropriate mission statement reflects the Catholicity of all school programs and activities.**
- 1.2 A fully developed religion program having qualified teachers is in place. The teachings of the Catholic Church are integrated across the curriculum.**
- 1.3 Parents and their children are expected to attend Mass regularly and participate in parish life.**
- 1.4 The Catholic identity of the school is clearly manifested through the leadership of the principal. Faculty and students observe the truths of the Catholic faith through regular participation in Mass and the Sacraments. Daily prayer, service projects, and personal growth opportunities further enhance the spiritual element in their lives.**
- 1.5 The school is perceived as a vital ministry of the parish(es). The parish(es) support the school through interest, involvement and subsidies.**

II. Academic Program

- 2.1 The school is fully accredited by the Middle States Association. The school offers a marketable academic program that is competitive with other schools (non catholic) in the area.**
- 2.2 The superior quality of the academic program is comprehensive in scope to include art, music, technology, languages, and physical education programs.**
- 2.3 Technology is up to date and incorporated throughout the curriculum.**
- 2.4 Teachers are appropriately degreed, qualified, and competent for their respective courses. Religion teachers are practicing Catholics, and, except for unusual circumstances, all faculty members are practicing Catholics. All faculty members have appropriate state and religious education certification. Teachers participate in professional development programs.**
- 2.5 The student/teacher ratio is cost effective and provides sufficient staff for a positive learning environment. The average number of students per homeroom is 25. The maximum number is ordinarily 30.**
- 2.6 The school provides for the needs of the students on all levels of learning. The annual Diocesan standardized testing program is analyzed to assure that the school is providing a quality academic program for its students.**
- 2.7 The curriculum is aligned with Diocesan and state standards and is assessed and updated on a regular cycle. Textbooks, technology, and resources are reviewed and assessed annually to maintain a quality academic program.**
- 2.8 Professional and spiritual development programs are in place and full participation is required, for example, through the Pastoral Formation Institute, Christian Formation Days and others.**

III. Physical Condition

- 3.1 The school facilities provide space for extra curricular programs, especially for students in sixth through eighth grades. Facilities are attractive, sufficient and appropriate to provide quality educational programs, including library, gymnasium, multi-purpose room, computer/science labs (internet access), and playground areas. High school facilities also include adequate parking for faculty and students as well as maintain appropriate athletic fields.
- 3.2 A five-year plan is an appropriate time frame for maintenance and capital improvements. A funding plan is established for capital projects.
- 3.3 The property and facilities are attractive, safe and clean, conducive to the learning experience. The school will be well-lit, and ventilated (heating and cooling).
- 3.4 The utilization of space is reasonable in terms of finances and programs.

IV. Enrollment and Growth

- 4.1 An enrollment constituting one class per grade (K-8) is maintained (approximately 225 students) to be cost effective. All schools will operate at 90% or better of their capacity. For K-6 programs (approximately 175 students) is anticipated to be cost effective. (*High school enrollment will be determined at a later date.*)
- 4.2 Enrollment in Pre-Kindergarten program will be reported separately due to the various styles of the program.
- 4.3 Enrollment trends and demographic data demonstrate the number of students that can be maintained or increased in the geographic area served by the school. Parish(es) baptismal records are continually monitored to assess the long range viability of the school.
- 4.4 The school, in conjunction with the Diocese, has effective marketing, recruitment, and retention programs.

V. Financial Condition

- 5.1 The parish(es) and parents show evidence of a willingness to support the school financially. The support is dependable.
- 5.2 Revenue from all sources (subsidy, tuition, fundraising) is sufficient to achieve a balanced operating budget. The school maintains a balanced budget (including 10% of total operating budget annually placed in reserve).
- 5.3 Local resources of funding are available for tuition assistance in addition to the EITC and diocesan funds.
- 5.4 The school has established long range financial planning to include the establishment of endowment funds, alumni support, grant requests, and corporate sponsorships.
- 5.5 The salaries of lay faculty are sufficient to attract and retain qualified teachers. The school is able to hire a sufficient number of faculty members who are qualified and willing to serve in a Catholic school. Salaries and benefits are within Diocesan guidelines. Salaries are increased annually.
- 5.6 A tuition formula includes a family plan in both the elementary school and the high school throughout the PK-12 program.
- 5.7 The Pre-Kindergarten is self supporting and makes a positive financial contribution to the school's operating budget.

VI. Leadership

- 6.1 The principal, pastor(s) and lay/religious faculty provide the leadership necessary for the viability of the school.**
- 6.2 The school has a strategic plan and it is reviewed and updated annually; successful implementation is evident.**
- 6.3 An active school governance board works with the principal and pastor(s) to maintain an active and viable school.**
- 6.4 The school follows all Diocesan policies.**
- 6.5 The principal is an active member of a Catholic parish and serves as the educational and spiritual leader of the school.**
- 6.6 The school has the appropriate administrative staff necessary to maintain a quality and viable Catholic school, encompassing these areas: religion, academic/curriculum, guidance, co-curricular, development, marketing, and others that may be particular to a school and as stated in the Diocesan governance policy.**