

Annunciation, Our Lady of Providence and St. Michael the Archangel Catholic School Collaboration Effort

An Update and Frequently Asked Questions

After years of conversation, collaboration, and determination, the grass-root effort to continue to provide the highest quality academic program rooted in the message of Jesus Christ and in the Catholic tradition, has evolved into a remarkable movement that continues to strive to prepare our students to live a faith-filled life.

This all began a couple years ago with a desire to make a good thing even better. As the possibilities began to seem attainable, invitations to help with the endeavor were extended. Soon, it was apparent from conversations and early surveys that the parishioners desired an opportunity to continue to seek a Christ-filled, efficient, and affordable way to educate the children. From that mandate, the pastors invited input and feedback, committees were formed, a Mission was designed, and general discussions were initiated.

A Steering Committee developed including the pastors, the principals, and lay persons from each parish. The Steering Committee then invited an Archdiocesan representative (as an observer) and a Facilitator to participate in the conversations.

Recently, the pastors and parishes officially ratified this new school system that will be put in place for the 2012-2013 school year. This recommendation will soon go to the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education and Archbishop Carlson for final approval. Archbishop Carlson has expressed a keen interest in this project and the Pastors have met with him on two occasions to keep him updated. Knowing this project fits in well with Archbishop Carlson's vision for Catholic education, coupled with his being kept up to date with the proceedings, the hope is that his response is favorable and soon.

The initial committees continue to meet and work in anticipation of approval and the plan includes new committees, developed using the three parishes' laity and school staff, to answer many questions.

The effort has gone from "why?" to "how?" and your Steering Committee is committed to inviting participation on every level, providing clear communication and answering any and all questions.

The recent articles in the local media have encouraged many questions from our parishioners. In an attempt to answer these questions, this "Q & A" format will be on-going and the hope is that it will meet the need for current and accurate information.

If you have any questions, please contact one of the Steering Committee or Marketing and Communication Committee members listed below or you are always welcome, as usual, to approach your pastor. The hope is to gather questions and provide answers as clearly as possible through this "Q & A" format.

We're all in this together – it is quite an opportunity to make a good thing even better – and your input, direction, thoughts, and prayers are welcome as there is a lot of good work to be done by a lot of good people.

Answers to all of the questions listed below are pending approval by Archbishop Carlson and The Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education.

- 1) **Where will children celebrate the sacraments?** First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are parish celebrations. The students will be prepared at the school they are attending. However, the students will then celebrate these sacraments at their own parish with each school incorporating celebrations for the second grade class. The Sacrament of Confirmation could be celebrated in a variety of ways (i.e., at each parish site or at the Cathedral). Discussion of these sacramental celebrations will continue.
- 2) **How will Parish Schools of Religion be affected?** PSR programs will remain parish-based with the individual programs sharing resources with each other.
- 3) **How will before and after care programs be handled?** There will be alignment among the three schools in terms of times, costs and ages served. PreK through grade 5 students may continue attending before and after-care programs similar to what is currently offered. A middle school program might be placed in the context of extra-curricular activities or an extended day program. Discussion is underway in regard to restructuring and making these programs more consistent and coordinated.
- 4) **Will start and dismissal times be taken into consideration?** Staggering of times will be developed in regard to the start of school and dismissal. Consideration will be given to the fact that many parents will have to deal with dropping off and picking up children at two sites.
- 5) **Will there be any form of transportation (such as a shuttle) offered?** There are no plans to develop a transportation system between schools at this time. The school families are encouraged to work together and share resources (i.e. car pools) to meet their unique needs.
- 6) **What will happen to the Pre-School Programs at each site?** Pre-School programs will remain parish-based with the individual programs sharing resources with each other. The issue of whether or not the pre-schools would be included in the system or remain a parish-based program is something open to discussion.
- 7) **Will each school retain a principal?** The pastors have made a decision that there will be a president hired for the system and that each building will have a principal.
- 8) **Which site will children currently at Annunciation in grades K-4 attend?** Students currently in grades K-4 at Annunciation will have a choice to attend either site. Starting the following year, boundaries will be drawn for new families with children starting school in Annunciation's parish. These boundaries will decide which site the new families will attend.
- 9) **Is Southwest County Catholic School going to be the name of the new system?** No. This is an interim name only. A name reflecting our Catholic identity and desire to create excellent academic experience for our children will be chosen.
- 10) **New Committees...**It was also decided that the three principals will invite the school board presidents for each of the schools to determine practical issues (i.e., uniforms, lunch programs, etc.) that must be addressed during this school year in anticipation of the new system opening in 2012-2013. The board presidents will be asked to assign current members of their boards and the parish community at large to sit on a committee to address the issues.

Again, please remember that answers to all of the questions listed above are pending approval by Archbishop Carlson through the Archdiocesan Board of Catholic Education.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact any member of the Marketing and Communication Committee or Steering Committee:

Marketing and Communication Committee members:

Bill Brassler – Annunciation

Jennifer Weis – Annunciation

Rev. Bob Evans – Annunciation

Ellen Vietor – St. Michael

Mike McArthur – St. Michael

Melissa Buttice – Our Lady of Providence

Carolyn Conboy – Our Lady of Providence

Scott Hummel – Steering Committee Rep

Steering Committee members:

Fr. Bob Evans – Annunciation

A.J. Henken – Annunciation

Mike Biggs – Annunciation

Fr. Dennis Doyle – St. Michael

Ed Kopff – St. Michael

Amie Koenen – St. Michael

Fr. Dave Rauch – Our Lady of Providence

Laura Clark – Our Lady of Providence

Julie Ramacciotti – Our Lady of Providence

Scott Hummel – Our Lady of Providence