

September 21, 2005

**Strategic Planning Commission developing guidelines
for restructuring of parishes**

“Guidelines for the Restructuring of Parishes” and “Criteria for a Vibrant Parish” were reviewed by the Diocesan Strategic Planning commission during its meeting at the Catholic Center on September. 21. The 25-member panel also continued its work on new diocesan mission and vision statements and core values.

When the strategic planning process moves into its second phase on November 1, parishes will begin to receive the planning documents. From prayer and worship to catechesis, lay leadership and involvement and more, the criteria will help to guide parishes in phase two of the process. The bulk of the planning in phase two will take place at the parish level.

Bishop Edward U. Kmiec said, “This is extremely important work that will help us to address all aspects of parish life in the Diocese of Buffalo. We want to make sure our parishes are more than a place where Sunday liturgy is celebrated. Parishes should also have formation programs for the sacraments, religious formation for both children and adults, lay involvement, outreach to those in need, good pastoral leadership, and financial stability.”

Work will continue in the next month on restructuring and vibrant parish guidelines. The commission will be considering a number of issues, including how many parishes a priest can serve, the number of Masses needed on a weekend, and how quasi-parishes, better known as missions, are functioning.

In the new diocesan mission statement, it says, “We are called to see the Eucharist as a source and summit of our lives and to invite others to sharing this vision by our witnessing to the power of the Gospel. With special concern for those who are poor, and a strong sense of social justice, our Church has a significant and unique presence in our community through the service of all generations within a cultural and economically diverse population.”

During phase two (Nov. 1, 2005, through Dec. 31, 2006), planning materials will be distributed to parishes and vicariates (divisions of the diocese) for reflection and discussion. Clusters of parishes will develop recommendations for the reconfiguration of parishes and schools within the cluster. Cluster recommendations will be forwarded to the vicariate council and vicariate recommendations will be sent to the Strategic Planning Commission between by Jan. 1, 2007. However, some restructuring of schools may be announced as early as February 2006, depending on circumstances.

The commission will review cluster recommendations for reconfiguration between January and December 2007. Those recommendations will then be forwarded to Bishop Kmiec for his input and approval. The implementation schedule will be determined as the process unfolds.

For more information on the strategic planning process, go to the diocesan Web site: www.buffalodiocese.org/plan

Strategic Plan Phase I

Mission Statement

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Buffalo are a Christ-centered learning community which nurtures academic excellence, Christian character and service to others.

Our mission is to educate individuals to reach their full spiritual, intellectual, physical, moral and social potential in an atmosphere rooted in Catholic Tradition and Gospel values.

We believe.....

- * *Central values which lie at the core of who we are and what we stand for as Catholic Schools.*
- Education is faith-based and rooted in Catholic traditions and gospel values.
- In the dignity and potential of each person.
- In the development of Christian character and service to others and the community - local and global.
- Catholic education is a life-long process that creates high expectations for academic, spiritual and moral development.

Policies

- * *Guiding principles/values based on our beliefs and mission statement.*
- We will ensure that the Catholic Identity of our schools continues.
- We will encourage ethnic diversity in student/faculty populations.
- We will provide preferential option for the poor.
- We will promote youth participation in parish life.
- We will promote and market Catholic education.
- We will promote efficient use of resources.
- We will invite and involve families to be part of the educational experience.

Areas of Concern to Be Addressed in This Plan

- Marketing
- Finances
- Catholic Identity
- Education
- Facilities
- Governance

Strategic Planning - Marketing

Strategy

We will promote the benefits and value of our Catholic Schools through comprehensive, year-round marketing.

Goal

A coordinated and collaborative marketing plan will be developed to increase the visibility of Catholic Schools.

Strategic Planning - Finances

Strategy

We will make sound financial decisions to support the viability of our Catholic Schools.

Goal

To develop an innovative, comprehensive and collaborative financial plan that includes just and equitable sharing of resources.

Strategic Planning - Catholic Identity

Strategy

We will maintain and strengthen the Catholic Identity of our school communities.

Goal

Our Catholic Identity will be interwoven and vibrantly expressed through our physical and spiritual school environment, curriculum, professional development and actions of our staff and students.

Strategic Planning – Education/Academic Program

Strategy

We will create a learning community in a faith-based atmosphere that encompasses best-practices based on current research.

Goal

To implement a plan for high quality education which fully integrates Catholic faith with high academic standards.

Strategic Planning - Facilities

Strategy

We will provide a safe and healthy learning and working environment.

Goal

To create and implement a plan that regularly evaluates the condition of our facilities and their grounds.

Strategic Planning - Governance

Strategy

We will devise a plan of governance that meets the needs and supports the values as defined in our Mission Statement.

Goal

To work through a process to understand the current system, evaluate alternatives and recommend a future system of governance.

Phase II
Strategic Planning
ACTION PLANS - FAITH

Example

STRATEGY

We will revitalize the spiritual life of our parish.

GOAL

As an interactive, inclusive community, we will celebrate heartfelt liturgy that nourishes body, mind and soul, expressing

STEP NO.	ACTION STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	ASSIGNED TO	TARGET DATE
1.0	OBJECTIVE: To identify, evaluate and develop faith leadership that includes priests, religious and laity.	PLLC	9/2001
1.1	Identify present and future leadership roles by way of a flow chart	Pastor	6/2001
1.2	Utilize a method to empower more parishioners to embrace more active roles through existing and future organizations	Committee Chair	9/2001
1.3	Explore and expand our partnership with other parishes to share spiritual and educational resources	Partnership Committee	6/2001
2.0	OBJECTIVE: To assess our liturgical life and related ministries and develop new ways to spiritually enrich our parish in its diversity.	Liturgy Committee/	
2.1	Form a committee to assess the overall liturgical life of our parish	Pastoral Assistant	9/2001
2.2	Develop an instrument or other method(s) for assessment of liturgical life		
2.3	Explore how parish organizations interface with parish life and ways for greater involvement		
3.0	OBJECTIVE: To form an active liturgy committee consisting of members of parish organizations who have an understanding of the liturgy of the Church.	Liturgy Committee/	
3.1	Develop a system of coordination of all liturgical functions	Pastoral Assistant	9/2001
3.2	Identify parishioners that are qualified to oversee designated liturgical areas to be targeted		
3.3	Develop a resource directory of ministries and ministers to include the roles and responsibilities of each		
4.0	OBJECTIVE: To develop a strong music ministry that includes a variety of people, instruments and styles	PLLC	
4.1	Explore possibilities and resources for securing a coordinator of music ministry	Search Comm. Chairperson	10/2001
4.2	Utilize parish talent		
4.3	Investigate music ministries (other religions) and telecommunications to enhance our music ministry	Exploratory Committee	10/2001
4.4	Implement ongoing music education	Coordinator	1/2002
5.0	OBJECTIVE: To revitalize our celebration of all of the Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, Priesthood and the Sacrament of the Sick) and sacramental preparation programs to effectively reach out and touch the lives of every parishioner.	Faith Formation Sub-Committee	2/2002
5.1	Investigate religious practices of other groups to enhance our sacramental programs		

(Objective #6 on other side)