

Strategic Planning Community Input Session Four
Finance & Facilities
September 3, 2019

Question 1: *Do you have additional questions that we can help answer at future community meetings?*

- I also attended the Recruitment and Retention meeting, so I understood the real challenges Holy Family faces in terms of enrollment. I think this message could be emphasized at the next community meeting so people understand that action is needed at this time. If we wait or don't act, the entire Holy Family system will suffer. Enrollment will continue to decline if we are not offering an education that is unique and/or superior to the local public schools. The religious education alone is not enough to draw families when public schools are good. Our schools need distinguishing factors in our academics, fine arts, activities, and programming.
- Do the Archbishop and parish priests understand that they have an integral role as leaders to make Catholic education appealing and worthwhile? I do not get the sense that they understand.
- Need to figure out Res timing before moving forward. Not in favor of asking kids to move to Res and in temporary or packed classrooms.
- How do we keep donations to the HFCS system?
- Holy Family staff and board members need to work on establishing a notion of partnership between parishes and Holy Family. At the current time, Holy Family feels entitled to parish resources. Holy Family should consider investing in elementary schools; not giving "a gift." Child care is a community need and a revenue stream for Holy Family; it is not a parish responsibility.
- Are we taking into consideration if any of these options benefit or hurt retention of students going into the middle school and high school?
- Please explain why parish must own school buildings in the future. When did parishes vote? How many priests and board members provided input?
- What would be the lost revenue at different attrition rates? What are the number (percentage) of Holy Ghost and St. Anthony students that continue to Wahlert?
- What is the cost of losing students? That estimate needs to be included. Additionally, Holy Spirit will have a harder time making their parish assessment...consider potential lost income.
- Transportation will be an important consideration. Watch class sizes. Larger classes may drive people away.
- One of the major developments in Catholic social teaching has been the preferential option for the poor. We have an obligation first and foremost to care for the poor and

vulnerable. Not long ago we had many downtown schools. Now we are thinking of closing the last one.

- In any of the given scenarios or proposals, what is the estimated cost and timeline for facility improvements to remaining schools? How would those repairs be financed?
- What is the plan for teachers if they have to be transitioned from one site to another? Will teachers have any say?
- Will closing 1 or 2 schools ease the parish assessment for that impacted parish? There is concern that if you close a school, that parish is then in jeopardy of closing because the parish could potentially lose tithing that those families gave when their child was at that school. Is this the first step toward that?

Question 2: *As we continue to discern the best course of action for the future of our elementary schools, are there additional considerations or proposals you feel we need to reflect on in this important decision-making process?*

- It would be great to see more HF-wide fundraising opportunities besides the Circle of Celebration. More events where everyone could come together. I also think that opening an early child-care facility at St. Anthony's or Resurrection (if they build a new building) would draw more families in. Full-time summer camps for HF students may also be appealing and could be a draw for families. Our family needs child care in the summers, too, and don't necessarily want to have to readjust our kids to a new setting like St. Joseph. My younger kids go to Grandview Methodist and they offer a summer camp for school-age children. We are thinking of sending our older daughter there next summer and I know it fills up quickly with students.
- I feel you need to really take the time to reflect more on the proposal for the St. Anthony campus. Could the existing learning structure at St. Anthony's be dovetailed in with the Spanish Immersion Program? Current St. Anthony students could have a Spanish course offered to them but still keep those strong English foundational skills in some of the core subjects like reading and math to really help the student be successful. I think this would help with the future of phasing St. Anthony's into the proposed idea that the St. Anthony building would allow growth for the Our Lady of Guadalupe program. Could this proposed piece formulate into a block scheduling setup to use current St. Anthony teachers as those strong English teachers. Maybe a similar setup to what Mazzuchelli already has in place with students from all types of experience in learning a second language.
- Providing transportation to downtown students to attend open elementary school sites. Investing in the growing OLG program. Ensuring that potentially increased class sizes (assuming 2 closed schools and student transfer) is met with resources at the schools including reasonable class size and associates to support 20+ students in a classroom.

- I believe that St. Anthony's and OLG work together on many different levels that create a strong community between the two even though there is a language difference. By moving the St. Anthony's students elsewhere would lose the strong community that we have worked hard to establish on this campus.
- One of my biggest is diversity in the classrooms. HG students have a diverse group and kids that walk to school along with Marshallese kids. How will those kids feel welcomed in the "hill" schools as some people call them... or different social status? Will there be transportation, support for those families? I know things have to change moving forward, but I still feel strong about a downtown school make sure it works for those families and the needs of those students. I think it will be great for the teachers to have other teachers to work with and students to have more students in their classes, but strongly feel we need a downtown presence and not just on the west end or east end of town. I know it's difficult for everyone and I am open, but I feel if you shift the OLG to the Anthony's building that has to help save some cost, and then you could still have a downtown presence along with Res and St. Col. I will support whatever decision the board feels is best because I respect the people making these decisions, but remember Catholic means universal and so how do we best approach this and meet the need of all social classes.
- I would like the board to faithfully and honestly consider the Catholic mission that we have to serve ALL of God's children. At Holy Ghost we have a wonderful blessing and opportunity to serve children and families who do not have a personal relationship with God. We are able to introduce God into their lives, a great Love that many of our families have never experienced before. This is the population that needs to be served. Also, with our summit learning program, we will be able to serve the needs of kids who have a significant amount of trauma in their lives. We have the opportunity to change kids lives for the better. It would also be beneficial to survey St. Anthony's parents and Holy Ghost parents to see if they would consider transitioning their child to another Holy Family site.
- Is it helpful to put together how the money saved on facilities and keeping schools open inefficiently are more available to make staying in the system attractive for families who leave?
- Yes, I fully expect enrollment increases due to the migration from public schools who are not Catholics.
- Transportation
- Eventually getting to an elementary school on the Mazzuchelli and Wahlert campus would be one of the best things you could do.
- I know there is a concern that Holy Family will become "elite" if we close/move schools, but I also think if we continue on our current path only the elite will be able to afford a Catholic education.
- Concern for ability to retain families at HG as members and retain their financial support.

- There are no easy answers. Work hard (continue to) be transparent with parishes, staff, parishioners on these topics.
- A slide on projected/actual birth rates in the last five years local/state. Helpful to have comparison to small private college numbers, and anticipated closures nationwide? This is not just a HF concern, its shifting demographics across the country.
- Transportation from neighborhoods to the remaining open schools is vital. Is it possible to have the elementary schools open early-open late to accommodate families?
- Transportation to schools. Allow growth of OLG program. Ask all Holy Family families for input - stay, transfer out, including St. Columbkille and Resurrections if class sizes increase.
- I teach Finance and Strategy at Clarke University so I understand the challenges. I think there needs to be a better explanation of the revenue implications.
- Yes, there needs to be a proposal 4 - would people be willing to pay X amount of dollars more, throughout the system, in order to keep all schools open?
- Br. Robert Bimonte, NCEA President, has stated that the Pope has said that Catholic schools can't just be for those who can afford them. We can't let our schools become elitist. We need a downtown school.
- How will any scenario change tuition? Will the \$100/year increase model be changed because of these proposals or would that change due to other factors? (Need to keep tuition affordable)
- There are other families who have one child attending the Our Lady of Guadalupe and one attending Saint Anthony's. They're on the same campus and will be impossible for my son to continue to go to Our Lady of Guadalupe if Saint Anthony's closes and my daughter has to go elsewhere. Extended care for one to go to school earlier it's just not possible and in the budget.
- Make HG a magnet school. OLG is Spanish immersion-that is a niche that sets it apart from all other schools in the area, so find that niche like STEAM and create a STEAM lab and have that be a focus of the school. Market it so people WANT to send their child there because of the benefits of STEAM.

Additional Comments:

- A community member brought up a very valid point concerning the closures of previous Catholic schools in the past. He put it very simply that we do not see the enrollment numbers for our other sites after a school closure. Families lose faith and trust in the system and decide to go somewhere else where it is cheaper and more convenient for their family. I would like to see the trajectory path of retention of students beginning from birth (in our current baby rooms) to Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten. Are we really seeing an increase of enrollment due to opening up more rooms?

- If we do not do something to address the enrollment and finance crisis, all of Holy Family students will suffer. We need to strengthen existing offerings to ensure the system survives.
- Phil, you did a great job tonight! Great job! You keep bringing us back to the process - invite people to write and not respond to the desire to hash it out here! Tensions low! Nice. Proposal 3 - not 5 because I do not have enough knowledge to know what would be best overall: Do everything at once or phase schools.
- Just as a suggestion, for people who throw barriers in the way of progress, the best way to engage them in coming up with another solution. Absent their participation with solutions, these questions are not always helpful.
- Focus on transportation! DBQ Community Schools are very difficult to work with for bussing.
- I think any option other than proposal 3 is just delaying the inevitable. Although I think proposal 3 is the best option of the 3 given, I think ultimately all grades on 1 campus is the most long-term viable way.
- Proposal 4: I would like to see more financial information, but one possibility might be to shut down the 3-5 grades at Holy Ghost and St. Anthony. Keeping K-2 at each school would keep some of the vitality of each parish. It would hopefully keep more students in the system. Since neither building at each parish is going to be shut down, there are no cost savings for facilities. It would save about \$400,000 per year in salaries and benefits (based on your proposal).
- Another version of proposal 4 would be to have an option where we say tuition increases by a number to keep all schools open.
- We need to follow the gospel teachings of Jesus and the teachings of our Pope and the USCCB and serve those who need us the most. We must have a preferential option for those with little voice or means.
- I rank proposal 2 higher, or support it at a higher level because I feel it is important to maintain an east side school. I rank proposal 3 lowest because of the higher degree of disruption and the negative effect on staff (greater reductions).
- Catholic education should be possible for everyone. Our Catholic faith is for everyone and Catholic education should be the same. I fear that by closing Holy Ghost, people will view Holy Family as a private school system first and a Catholic school system second. I teach at Holy Family because it is Catholic and I feel called by my faith to do so. We are called to serve everyone, and if we close down a school that serves the downtown neighborhoods, it seems as though we are closing down our faith to those in that area as well. Our current culture has many people who don't think they need God in their lives, and it is our job as Catholics to help evangelize.

- Our Lady of Guadalupe use the Saint Anthony's building for library, gym and the cafeteria. If Saint Anthony is closed would the Our Lady kids use that building or that building still have to be heated and in use for the Our Lady kids still causing expenses?
- I worry that if Holy Ghost is closed we are no longer serving a population that Catholic schools are meant to serve both the poor and the immigrants, which is why Catholic schools were started in the first place. We have worked hard over the last few years to build a relationship with the Marshallese to help them feel comfortable and accepted in a school when they haven't before. I worry that we will be too elite. Just this week at the Hempstead vs. Wahlert volleyball game, Hempstead students were chanting "why so privileged" to the Wahlert students. When we lose our socioeconomic diversity we are perpetrating the elitist image. My main concern with proposal 3 is that we have no clue how it will impact the system. Closing only 1 school would allow us at the very least to see them impact with enrollment and teacher attrition. While it would leave uncertainty for the school that remains open, it will allow the system as a whole to see the possible impact and try and come up with more creative solutions to solve the problem in the future.
- This is a difficult decision for me. My heart wants HG to remain open, but my head fully understands the numbers. I know that we should close both schools because if you close 1, you will have to go through this process again in a year or 2. I also know that HG could expand their preschool and early childhood and it is year round, which is crucial for not only the North side of town but Dbq in general. By closing SA, OLG can expand which really provides something no other school in DBQ offers and it will only continue to grow. But we will lose the only downtown Catholic school in DBQ-one that is absolutely filled with diversity. The small schools like HG act as an incubator for new technology and learning processes for HF. Our population is not wealthy and most is barely lower middle class. They walk their children to school and closing the school won't have them walking their kids to St. C and Res. They will go to Fulton or Marshall or Prescott. We will not get those families back. We already deal with the perception that HF is elitist and white upper middle class. By closing the school that is the most diverse and recognized for its welcoming of other cultures it is not helping that perception.
- I appreciate Holy Family considering the long-term implications of keeping all current Holy Family Elementary sites open vs combining some of the student populations. Primary question if Holy Family decides to transition both Holy Ghost and St. Anthony students at the same time, what does that mean for St. Columbkille and Resurrection? There have been discussions of building a new elementary school on the Resurrection location. Would this occur before the transition? And then would St. Joe's be the only campus for infant through school age summer/non-school day care? Or if a new Resurrection facility is built, would Holy Family consider adding a daycare/summer care/non-school day care facility on the Resurrection campus for west-end location

families? And will current Holy Family (Holy Ghost & St. Anthony) staff's jobs be eliminated or would best attempts be made to relocate staff to Resurrection/St. Columbkille's/St. Joe's? We deeply value our dedicated staff (as I'm sure you do) and want them to remain part of Holy Family if at all possible. Thank you for seeking families' input on this decision!

- As a teacher and parishioner at St. Anthony, I would love to see our school remain on site - but I understand the difficulty and thought that has gone into the proposals. I will support what the board and majority of those involved feel is best for our system.