

415 TOWER HILL ROAD
NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI
02852
PARISH OFFICE:

E-mail:
steering_committee@sbcwickford.org

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT



Steering Committee

Tom Orsi, Chair
Jane Allen
Francis Dwyer
Martha Dwyer
Arlene Gardiner
John Gibbons
Elizabeth McGrath
Walter Pannone
Raymond Vallee

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you especially for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and hold the promise for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight.

Be present with us as we work together: make us responsive to your will and give to us a healthy pride in all we do that we may be good stewards of all things entrusted to us.

May the prayers of our patron Bernard help us to keep in mind the wise counsel given long ago "whoever would climb to a lofty height must go by steps, not leaps."

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

MEITLER REPORT

Recently, the Steering Committee and members of the School Subcommittee met with Gary Gelo from Meitler Consultants, Inc. to review the results of Meitler's study on the local interest in a new Catholic school in our Parish. After analyzing demographic data and surveying area residents, Meitler has determined that about 20 students per grade would enroll in our school if we were to build it. That's the good news. The bad news is we were hoping for 50 students per grade.

What does this mean? Well, the concern with only 20 students per grade is that there are a lot fewer students over whom we can apportion the operating and debt service costs. The subcommittee had produced a budget for a 500-student school that called for a tuition of approximately \$5,700. A tuition at this level would avoid both a budgetary deficit and a significant subsidy from the Parish to the school. However, we cannot automatically cut all costs in half just because we need to cut the number of students by 50%. Realistically, the size (and accordingly, the cost) of the building can be cut by no more than 25%-35%. Certain fixed operating costs are also not impacted by a smaller student population. Bottom line — the lower the enrollment, the higher the tuition we must charge each student. A reduction from our ideal of 50 students per grade to the Meitler-recommended 20 students per grade corresponds to a significantly higher tuition; one that we believe makes the school just too expensive.

So, at this point, any further work on "The School" is on hold. It's not exactly dead, but the outlook is not good. Certain committee members remain confident that we are missing something. They will continue to search for the solution to the funding shortfall. The architects will move forward with plans to build a church and parish center and leave room for a school in the future. Who knows, 5, 10, maybe even 20 years from now, the school plan may be more attractive. Since future parishioners deserve to be left that opportunity, we will plan accordingly.

SCHOOL SURVEY RESPONSES

Q. Catholic schools are an essential part of the life and ministry of the Church?

Agree	44%
Somewhat agree	30%
Neutral	20%
Somewhat disagree	3%
Disagree	3%

Q. Catholic schools are an effective way to help parents educate their children in the Catholic faith?

Agree	62%
Somewhat agree	27%
Neutral	7%
Somewhat disagree	2%
Disagree	2%

**More
Meitler
Information**

- ◆ The demographic data was updated from the 2000 Census by Percent Group in March, 2004.
- ◆ Surveys were sent to Catholic families in North Kingstown and Wakefield with children 12 and under.
- ◆ Surveys were also distributed to parents of children at Monsignor Clarke in Wakefield and Our Lady of Mercy in East Greenwich.
- ◆ 3138 surveys were distributed and 623 were returned for an overall response rate of 20%.

**UPCOMING
MEETING**

- ◆ Monday June 7th –Steering Committee with the Parish Capital Evaluation Committee at the Diocesan Offices in Providence.

Q. The value of Catholic schools justifies the cost to the parents?

Agree	30%
Somewhat agree	36%
Neutral	20%
Somewhat disagree	9%
Disagree	5%

Q. A new Catholic elementary school should be opened at St. Bernard's?

Agree	39%
Somewhat agree	20%
Neutral	33%
Somewhat disagree	3%
Disagree	5%

Reasons for Enrolling at St. Bernard's School:

Reason	Number	Percent
Catholic/Christian values and instruction	119	31%
Academic excellence	101	26%
Safe environment	36	9%
Convenient location	32	8%
Competent and caring staff	29	8%
Discipline	29	8%
Athletic and extracurricular activities	18	5%
Space not available in other Catholic school	10	3%

Reasons for Not Enrolling at St. Bernard's School:

Reason	Number	Percent
Can't afford tuition	165	26%
Other	110	17%
Prefer other Catholic school	89	14%
Location is too far from home	89	14%
Prefer public/private school	65	10%
Academic programs may not be competitive	63	10%
Lack of qualified staff	27	4%
My child has special needs	20	3%

Q. Assuming the tuition is \$5,700 per year for each child, do you need tuition assistance to enroll your child?

Yes	59%
No	41%

Q. Amount of tuition assistance needed?

A little	31%
Half	36%
Most	25%
All	8%

Households by income: 2004 Update to Census 2000

Income	Number	Percent
\$150,000 or more	1243	9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2417	18%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	2192	17%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	2748	21%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1481	11%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	997	8%
Under \$25,000	2152	16%