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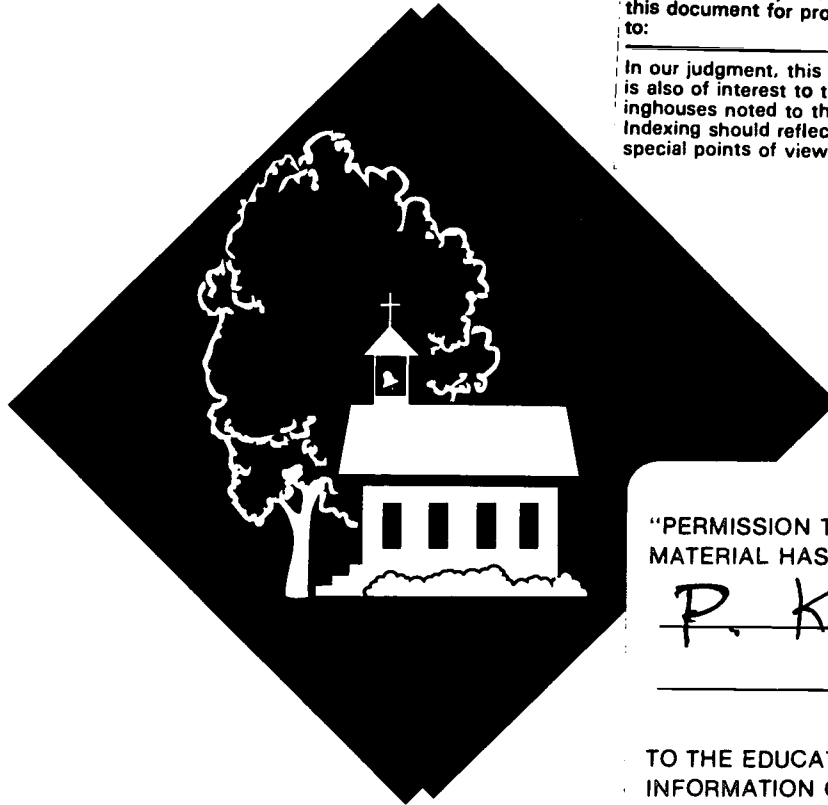
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ABSTRACT
        This book grew out of presentations at the 1997 National
Catholic Educational Association convention. "Twelve Reasons Why Small
Catholic Schools Are Successful" (Donald F. Novotney) and "Advantages of a
Small Catholic School" (Wayne A. Pelzel) focus on the advantages and climate
of small schools. "Staffing and Scheduling in a Small Catholic School" (Wayne
A. Pelzel) emphasizes faculty and staff involvement in planning, and examines
the advantages and disadvantages of three basic organizational models: the
multiage classroom, the departmental model, and the combination model.
"Teaching in a Catholic Multiage Classroom" (Kay Rasmussen Jay) describes the
advantages of multiage classes and offers advice on planning, adapting
curriculum, and assessment. "Development in the Small Catholic School" (Mary
Anderson), "The Development Committee as Ambassador for the Small Catholic
School" (Sister Ann Ganley), and "The Need for a Comprehensive Development
Program in a Small Catholic School" (Judy Howard) examine the need for, and
present examples of, creative approaches to financial development efforts.
"Information Technology: A Small Catholic School's Journey" (Kathy A.
Garlitz) discusses how one school's recognition that the information
revolution is creating a new mode of learning, led it to pursue funding for
computers, software, and teacher training. (TD)

Why Small Catholic Schools Succeed

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Editor

Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

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Editor

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Preface

About ten percent of Catholic elementary/middle schools in the U.S. have fewer than 100 students, and nearly one third of all these schools have less than 200 students. This smallness is a great strength for our schools. Teachers and principals more easily know every child and family in the school. A more homelike atmosphere is created. Students and parents feel a deeper sense of belonging in a small Catholic school.

Though the small Catholic school has many advantages, it also may have several disadvantages. The per-pupil cost may be higher because fixed expenses are spread over fewer students. Opportunities for mixing with a more diverse population may be diminished. Instructional resources may be limited.

During the 1997 NCEA convention in Minneapolis, the NCEA Department of Elementary Schools sponsored a special track for educators working in a small Catholic school. The entire St. Boniface School, 58 students, from Cochrane, Wisconsin, in the Diocese of La Crosse, held its classes at the convention for a day. This enabled convention attendees to observe how a small school operates. All who observed the classes were very impressed.

This book grew out of the 1997 NCEA convention. Several presenters were asked to write their talks so they could be shared with a larger audience. Not every aspect of a small Catholic school is covered, but several important issues are addressed. Two authors focus on the advantages of the small

school. Three writers examine the need for creative approaches to financial development efforts. How small schools schedule classes and how they work with multiage students are explained. And to show that these schools are in the forefront of educational innovation, an essay on the place of technology in the small school is presented.

The NCEA Department of Elementary Schools is deeply grateful to the authors for sharing their wisdom and insight on this important topic with the entire Catholic educational community. The Department expresses its gratitude to Sister Ann Sciannella, SND, who organized the program at the convention and then worked with the authors in preparing their manuscripts; to Tara McCallum, who proofread and edited the manuscripts; and to Beatriz Ruiz, who designed the format of the book.

The Department offers this publication to all its members in the hope that educators in small schools and larger schools will be able to adapt several of the fine programs to their situations. The sharing of ideas is a further manifestation of the community that exists among all Catholic schools.

Feast of the Assumption of Mary, 1998

James Brennan, Ed.D.   *Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D.*
President   *Executive Director*

Department of Elementary Schools
National Catholic Educational Association

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Twelve Reasons Why Small Catholic Schools Are Successful

Donald F. Novotney, Director of Schools
Diocese of La Crosse

> Small schools are racking up an imposing record. Solid evidence links them to fewer discipline problems, lower dropout rates, higher levels of student participation, steadier progress toward graduation, and more learning.
> —Mary Ann Raywid, "Successful School Downsizing" in *The School Administrator*, October, 1997

Both in the public and the private sector, research supports the advantages and successes of small schools. In our Catholic school sphere, we have known for some time that Catholic school students generally outperform public school students on standardized testing. What is especially noteworthy is a study conducted by Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D., *The Small School: Advantages and Opportunities*, published in 1988 by the National Catholic Educational Association, which found that students in small Catholic schools more frequently outperformed students in large Catholic schools.

What is behind this rather phenomenal success of small schools? I am going to suggest 12 factors, but before I do so, it is important to state what a small Catholic school is and to present some basic assumptions. As referred to here, a small Catholic school is defined as a school with approximately 100 students or less. It is assumed that a principal and staff are in place who believe in the advantages of small schools, and

that the pastor is supportive of the school. In addition, the small Catholic school has organized itself differently from a large school, and the advantages of small schools are being communicated to the public. If these are in place, then a small Catholic school will be successful, I believe, because of 12 factors:

1. **A preview and a review of learning take place in multiple-grade classrooms.** Students in the lower grades of a multiple-grade classroom get a preview of the next year's curriculum even when they are not consciously pursuing it. Likewise, students in the upper grades of a multiple-grade classroom receive a review and reinforcement of the skills and concepts learned the previous year(s).

2. **Students' self-esteem is enhanced, and self-discipline and leadership skills must be learned.** There is no place to hide in a small Catholic school. Everyone must participate, and because of the small numbers, every student has more leadership opportunities. These, combined with increased amounts of individual attention, greatly enhance student self-esteem.

3. **Discipline is less of a problem, and when problems occur, it is easier to take care of them.** Discipline in a school is easier when all of the teachers not only know the names of all the students in the school but also know their personalities and idiosyncrasies intimately. Also, small schools can afford to have more unstructured activities without fear of losing control. Finally, the small numbers allow for simple and unique disciplinary measures. For example, it is often possible for the principal or teacher to actually bring the whole school to attention with a mere glance if a problem occurs.

4. **Cooperative learning and peer-teaching and tutoring activities are inherent to the nature of the small school.** Although the advantages of these techniques are being praised and presented as innovative in current education, the fact is that they have always been in practice in small Catholic schools. Students in these schools have been taught to help each other, individually and in groups, because the teacher has had to

focus his or her immediate attention on the other grades in the room.

5. **There is required individual attention and learning.** The advantages of low student-teacher ratios, where students are given more personal attention, are constantly being reiterated in research findings. Small schools have these advantageous ratios by their very nature, thus providing more individual attention almost automatically. In addition, it is much easier to individualize learning when there are multiple grades in a classroom.

6. **Teachers are apt to give more higher-level learning and thinking assignments.** From a sheer-numbers standpoint, it is easy to understand how teachers with 8-10 students in a class, for example, can more frequently assign open-ended, problem-solving and/or essay-type projects, assignments, and tests that challenge students' critical-thinking skills than can teachers with 20-25 students in a class.

7. **Students have greater access to the programs in the school because of their small numbers.** Students basically have more frequent opportunities to make use of all curriculum-related materials and equipment.

8. **Small schools can do more with less.** This is a corollary of the above factor. Small schools cannot afford to purchase as much material or equipment as large schools can, but they do not have to. Because there are fewer students, materials and equipment, including technology, go much further and the cost per pupil for such items generally is much lower.

9. **Small schools can do more activities as a total school.** For example, large schools generally plan field trips for one or two classes or grades, but small Catholic schools can just as easily take the whole school each time. Birthdays and other special days are celebrated in classes in large schools; such days are celebrated schoolwide in small schools and on a larger scale.

10. **It is easy to integrate cross-curriculum activities and programs.** Small schools can integrate thematic units and

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cross-curriculum ideas easily, not only throughout a grade but throughout the school. Because of the small staff and ease of flexibility, such ideas can be implemented oftentimes with short notice and little planning time. Great opportunities can arise when the whole school is working on the same curriculum activities frequently.

11. **The school becomes not just a community but a real family.** Teachers know not only each student's family but also each child's *extended family*. By nature, there is a real inter-dependence amongst all in the school. When one student cries, the whole school weeps; when one student celebrates, so does the whole school. Also, because of the close-knit family unity, teachers can substitute for each other, and when they do, there is little trouble because all of the teachers in the school know all of the students so well.

12. **A special and unique pride is developed in a small school.** We all know how special it is when an underdog wins an athletic contest. The underdog frequently even wins advocates during the course of the contest, and this motivates the underdog even more to succeed. This example is similar to how pride is built up in small schools. It enables remarkable success.

The nature of a small school has built-in advantages, so make the most of them. Bigger is not always better, and I suggest that the success of large schools, consolidated systems, and multiparish efforts will, in great measure, depend upon how much they incorporate the advantages, values, and virtues of small Catholic schools.

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Advantages of a Small Catholic School

Wayne A. Pelzel
Principal, St. Mary's Elementary School
Diocese of New Ulm

Education does not mean teaching people what they do not know. It means teaching them to behave as they do not behave. It is not teaching the youth the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers, and leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery and their literature to lust. It means, on the contrary, training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful, continual, and difficult work to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, and by praise, but above all, by example.

—John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, 1853

The "bigger is better" axiom that business has taught us has also been applied, somewhat regretfully, in education. In fact, this philosophy has become so pronounced that it dominates most answers to questions about how a school should be organized to be successful in today's world. Yet, in the midst of this pervasive approach to school structuring exists a beacon of light: the small Catholic school.

Clearly, the small school is a contradiction to the business industry's idea of what a school should be and of how it should operate. But then, shouldn't educational principles, instead of business principles, be the first mandate that determines school structure?

There are many educational and psychological advantages for the student in the small Catholic school. This essay will

focus on some of these advantages—advantages that make a sometimes slightly larger per-pupil expense worthwhile. These advantages will be grouped into three categories for ease of examination: academic advantage, family climate, and individual development.

ACADEMIC ADVANTAGE

Educators since the beginning of time have understood that individualized instruction has distinct benefits. Virtually all teacher negotiations include some discussion of class size. Why? Because the amount of time a teacher spends with each individual student has a direct correlation to how much each student learns.

The small school, in which the student-teacher ratio is often about 10 to 1, provides a greater opportunity for the teacher to individualize instruction and more time to get to know each student personally. Having a small number of students also allows the teacher more time to keep records of individual progress. This means the teacher will have a better opportunity to motivate, counsel, and generally support each learner in the classroom.

It seems logical that teachers in this environment also have the opportunity to ask more higher-level questions in daily assignments and on tests. Since they have fewer papers and more time to correct them, teachers are not reluctant to ask this type of question.

Although large schools may be able to offer many expanded courses, particularly at higher grade levels, in small schools students are much more likely to participate in such course offerings, even though fewer of them may be available. Also, small schools can be more flexible in all their offerings to students and, thereby, better serve their students.

Finally, although standardized achievement test scores give us a somewhat limited view of educational success, they are an important measure. It has been well documented in many studies by accepted researchers that students from small schools perform significantly better on these tests than students in larger schools.

More individualized attention, higher-level thinking, more participation in course offerings, and greater flexibility paint a clear picture of student academic advantage. All of these are supported by standardized achievement test scores that reflect that academic advantage.

FAMILY CLIMATE

Charles R. Swindoll, in *The Strong Family*, said, "Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of children." For that reason, the supportive, family-like climate of the small Catholic school is a highly desirable benefit for the child. The small school provides an atmosphere that places significant value on each student involved in the school.

Most important to the individual's significance in the small Catholic school is the fact that every student is known by every staff member. This allows for the development of important interpersonal relationships in which the entire school staff can know each student beyond the classroom and be involved with the child on the playground, in the cafeteria, and out in the bus line. In addition, the entire school staff can be knowledgeable of each student's special needs and therefore become better able to meet those needs. Students are less likely to fall through the proverbial cracks.

Not only do the students and teachers know each other, but chances are the parents also know the entire staff and vice versa. Parents generally have a greater involvement in the school. It is not uncommon to find a board member who also does volunteer work in the school. Parents are more likely to volunteer, to share responsibility for fund-raising activities, and to share a greater sense of ownership in, and belonging to, the school community.

Generally, the small Catholic school setting facilitates doing things together in much the same way that a family does things. In a small school, class trips are entire-school trips. Programs for the public become the function and focus of the entire school community, which creates a greater sense of togetherness and an enhanced sense of belonging.

The family-togetherness concept in a small Catholic school is also felt among the staff. Many times in small schools teachers share administrative duties, creating a greater sense of ownership for all that happens in the school. The entire staff communicate more frequently and effectively, and often they celebrate and participate in activities together outside school.

If it does take a village to educate a child, the small Catholic school has a decisive edge. Using the family as a model, it truly is an environment where the whole community comes together for the good of the child and where that school community makes many significant "deposits in the memory bank of the children."

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Never losing sight of the importance of the individual, the small Catholic school provides an atmosphere that nourishes the psychological development of the individual student. The small school's environment not only monitors closely that development but also provides a rich supply of opportunities for the students to increase their self-esteem and to build a sense of responsibility to the greater community.

In the small Catholic school, when a student is absent, he or she is likely missed by the entire school community. Students performing service projects within the school are likely to minister to the whole student body, which serves to develop in those students a sense of being needed and of belonging.

The opportunity to develop leadership qualities abound in the small Catholic school. Often the older students help care for the younger ones, fostering a greater sense of responsibility in the older students as well as developing their leadership skills.

Students in a small Catholic school individually contribute greatly to the common good of the school community. Each student likely has a specific contribution he or she makes to the school. This usefulness to the community creates a significant sense of belonging and serves to reinforce the individual's responsibility to the group.

In his opening paragraph of *Stones of Venice*, John Ruskin spoke about the educational process and highlighted the importance of providing example in that process. In today's varied educational settings, the small Catholic school stands by example as a model for education—education done in a family environment, holding academics in high regard and meeting the needs of the individual.

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Staffing and Scheduling in a Small Catholic School

Wayne A. Pelzel, Principal
St. Mary's Elementary School, Diocese of New Ulm

Things do not change; we change. —Henry David Thoreau

As the small Catholic school is structured and scheduled today, it must employ creative ideas to ensure its future. The small-school personnel must not be tied to conventional solutions to the challenges they face; instead, they need to use creativity when seeking new solutions to age-old problems. Most importantly, they must be willing to change, lest they become trapped in a losing battle for the school's survival.

Interestingly, there is cause for much hope for the small school in today's world. Even as convention would have the educational setting expanding in size and numbers in the pursuit of efficiency, many voices are crying out for the creation of "small schools within the large" to offer community, a sense of belonging, and security to students. The small school has the decided advantage of being able to create a sense of community and of belonging that no large school will ever be able to duplicate. Using its obvious strength, the small school must deal creatively with its most obvious disadvantage—inefficiency in staffing and scheduling.

Before dealing with this school-efficiency issue, the first matter that must be considered in the school's design of an improvement plan is its image. Creative solutions to schedul-

ing and school structure will not be accepted until the community is sold on the positive attributes of the school. Most important to this public-relations effort is that the school staff must be committed to the mission of the school and to the means that the school intends to use to carry out its educational mission. Besides the pastor, the teachers and support staff are the most important public-relations officers, and their support and commitment are no less essential to the future of the school. For that reason, the educational leadership must take great care to involve the faculty and staff in all phases of the school-improvement planning process and, once decisions are made by the planning group, must insist upon their support. In a small-group setting, one negative staff person can have the power to undermine weeks and months of positive school-improvement work.

Once the faculty and staff are involved in the school-improvement plan, they have three basic school-organization models to consider: (a) the multiage classroom model; (b) the departmental model (teachers teach specific curriculum areas at various grade levels); and (c) the combination model.

Because there is a basic understanding of these models, they will not be defined in this text. An examination of the advantages and disadvantages of each, however, is of value.

MULTIAGE CLASSROOM MODEL

The most popular choice of these models in the small Catholic school has been the multiage classroom. Although this model offers some distinct advantages, it also has some limitations. The multiage classroom clearly offers the small school an efficiency factor that can be achieved also in the conventional small-school setting. This structure creates a more favorable student-teacher ratio by placing more students of several grades in one teacher's classroom. This structure possibly has been viewed more favorably in recent years because of the popularity of the nongrading, multilevel, advance-at-your-own-pace philosophies it embraces.

One of the down sides of the multigrade classroom is the public perception of the concept in the small school. Somewhat unjustly but nonetheless realistically, this model in the small school is often viewed negatively and seen as a reduction in the quality of the school's educational program. Also on the down side is the unavoidable fact that a child will have the same teacher for several consecutive years. Three years of the same teacher is fine when there is a mutual benefit to it, but there are too many chances for personality quirks that may stifle rather than enhance a student's progress.

DEPARTMENTAL MODEL

The departmental structure in a small Catholic school deserves a close look. It offers the student the luxury of having several teachers each day. Although the student has each teacher in the school one period a day for several years, the child does not have the same teacher, all day, every day for several consecutive years, as happens in the multiage classroom. Since the student and each teacher in a departmental structure spend less time together over several years, the possibility of their personalities clashing is diminished. In addition, in this structure in a small Catholic school each teacher knows the curriculum well and sees daily the development in his or her own specific subject area of every student in the school. The math teacher, for example, is the math teacher for the entire school.

The obvious disadvantage of the departmental structure is that the same teacher is not with his or her own children during the significant parts of the school day. To ensure greater supervision, the teachers' scrutiny of, and heightened sense of responsibility for, specific students, certain classes, recess, and study times must be done in the homeroom. Communication between faculty and staff members is also essential for the welfare of the students in this model.

Here is a closer look at these organizational structures in a hypothetical 35-student school offering grades 1 to 6:

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Multigrade Classroom Model

Teacher A: grades 1 and 2

Teacher B: grades 3 and 4

Teacher C: grades 5 and 6

Part-time principal

Total staff needed: 4

Strengths: efficient; affordable; reasonable student-teacher ratio

Weaknesses: students are too long with one teacher; lots to teach to two grades; less community acceptance, unless handled carefully

Departmental Model

Teacher A: math, penmanship, religion

Teacher B: social studies, art, science

Teacher C: reading, language arts, spelling, phonics

Part-time principal

Total staff needed: 4

Strengths: efficient; affordable; students do not have the same teacher all day

Weaknesses: potential difficulty with following individual students

Combination Model (author's personal preference)

Total staff needed: 4 (3 teachers and a part-time principal)

Each teacher has a homeroom and teaches religion class to the homeroom students

Students end the day with their homeroom teacher

Other subjects are divided among teachers; same teacher teaches a specific subject to the entire school

The organizational structure of the three models above would allow for one of the teachers to also serve as the part-time principal.

Small schools are advised to consider using these simple strategies to conserve time in specific subject areas. One method to consider is *cycle teaching*, which involves the teaching of a specific item, lesson, or unit simultaneously to more than one grade level during the first year and then not teaching

that lesson or unit until the cycle is taught again. For example, students in grades 2, 3, and 4 all prepare for their first Communion during the first year. The Commandments are taught during one of the following two years, and the Creed, during the other. The fourth year sees the cycle begin all over again. In this situation, the small school only needs to prepare students for first Communion every three years. This method also works well in science, social studies, physical education, music, and art. Time duration in cycle teaching can be anywhere from two years to four or even five years, depending on the material and the grade levels of the students involved.

Small schools can also benefit from developing their own simplified curriculums. The trick is to find the time and expertise to do curriculum development with a small school staff—a matter that is, at the very least, another chapter for this book.

Courses also need to be grouped to save time and staff energy. Science, physical education, and health in parts can be grouped quite well; reading, spelling, and language arts go well together.

Lastly, the small school should consider itself a classroom in and of itself. Rather than all four teachers preparing Advent prayers and activities, this can be done easily as a total school. Prayer services, feast days, holidays, manners, field trips, self-esteem, drug education, health instruction, movies, and even story reading can be done as a total school. These activities build school community and save teachers time and energy.

Time-saving and teacher-energy-saving techniques are important to the small school's structure and schedule. More importantly, however, the small school must be willing to use creativity to change to meet its challenges. A competent and dedicated staff, an effective public-relations program, and creative solutions to the school's challenges of scheduling and staffing will do much to ensure the future of the school.

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Teaching in a Catholic Multiage Classroom

Kay Rasmussen Jay, Teacher (Grades 1 and 2)
St. Patrick Elementary School
Diocese of Des Moines

I have been a teacher at St. Patrick's Elementary School in Missouri Valley, Iowa, for 11 years. This is my seventh year of teaching in a combination first-and-second-grade room. I will share some of the advantages of a multigrade classroom for the students and the teacher, discuss how to adapt and integrate the curriculum for multiple grade levels, and discuss how to measure student achievement effectively.

Because of our small class sizes, St. Patrick's School has combination classrooms for first and second, third and fourth, and fifth and sixth grades. Two things have helped me to adapt to the multigrade classroom: First, I attended kindergarten through sixth grade in a rural, two-classroom grade school where the teachers had three or four grade levels in their classroom; second, I student-taught in a special-education resource room where I worked with students in kindergarten through fourth grade and had to adapt the curriculum to their specific needs.

Teaching in a combination classroom may be accomplished in two different ways. In a *multiage* classroom, the teacher presents a lesson to the whole group and then teaches mini-lessons to smaller groups that may be able to complete more challenging tasks or that need extra practice. When students do projects, they are grouped so that younger and older students work together. In a *multigrade* classroom, there are two

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or more grade levels in the classroom, but the subject matter is presented to each grade separately—the teacher teaches first-grade reading, then second-grade reading; first-grade science, and then second-grade science; and so on. I use a combination of these two methods in my classroom. I will give some sample lessons later in the chapter.

ADVANTAGES OF THE MULTIAGE/MULTIGRADE CLASSROOM SETTING

Generally, only schools with small class sizes have used the multiage classroom setting. Recently, however, some larger schools have begun trying multiage classrooms, or at least have been doing some multiage grouping for some subject areas, because of the advantages for the students and teachers.

The multiage setting provides continuity for the student and teacher from year to year. Usually a group of students will stay with the same teacher for two or more years, so there is a comfort level between students and the teacher from the first day of school. It does not take as long to get to know each other at the beginning of the year if there are only a few names, faces, and personalities to learn. This setting makes it easier for the shy child because the teacher and many of the students are already familiar. It is easier for the child with attention deficit and/or hyperactive disorder because he or she already knows the schedule. For the child who has a broken family structure or a changing home environment, a sense of family and belonging—at least one room and group of people—is a constant in that child's life.

The multiage classroom helps the teacher to get off to a running start at the beginning of the year. Since the teacher already knows the strengths and weaknesses of the returning students, he or she will only need to do more in-depth evaluations of the new students. Also, the teacher will get into classroom routine faster because most of the students already know the rules, expectations, and class schedule. The new students catch on very quickly by watching the "veterans" as they get books and materials and hand in papers.

When I make my seating chart, I alternate the first- and second-graders so that the first-graders have a buddy they can ask questions of and watch to help them know what to do. As a result, the second-graders learn a lot of leadership skills because I rely on them to help the first-graders adjust to their new classroom.

The teacher already knows most of the parents and students. Having met them at open houses, parent-teacher conferences, the Christmas concert, and various other school events, the teacher already has an open line of communication.

If a student has a physical or learning disability, the teacher already knows the special needs of that student. For example, this is the second year that I have had a student who has diabetes. Last year his mother came in before school started and talked to all of the teachers about his condition. I know she was very apprehensive (and so was I!) the first few days of school, as I learned about his testing and what to do about his snacks. Because we are a small school we do not have a full-time nurse, so I supervise this boy's blood sugar tests three times a day. This year when school started, we were all very comfortable with the situation, and a quick phone call brought me up to date on changes in his testing routine.

The teacher has more flexibility when accommodating the various performance levels among the students in the classroom. We expect the students coming into our kindergarten classrooms to be at different maturity levels, academic levels, and social levels because of their family structures, previous experiences, social opportunities, and participation in Head Start or preschool programs. When those same students walk into the first-grade room, however, we expect them all to be at the same reading level and to know the same math concepts. In reality, teachers know it just does not work that way.

The teacher may have students who are able to work at a higher grade level for some or all units in math or reading. Instead of having them do the same assignments as the other students in their grade or having them go to another room and

teacher for a lesson, which can be difficult to schedule and difficult for younger students to adjust to, the teacher in a multiage classroom can accommodate those students who can do the same work as other students by setting up flexible, multiage groups. In addition, if an older student is having difficulty with a concept, that student can join a lower group when the teacher covers that concept with it in a review. Flexibility is essential in these groups so students may move in and out of them, depending on what they already know and still need to learn.

The teacher will have fewer discipline problems. If the advanced students are challenged instead of bored, and if the students who need extra time to master a concept are given more time to practice before they move on to a new concept, then disciplinary problems will decrease.

Having older students in the room can be an incentive to some of the younger students. The younger children hear the other lessons and want to be able to do "harder" math and read the "neat" stories in an upper-level reading book. On the other hand, last year I had a first-grader who did some math lessons with the second-graders. This kept the second-graders more motivated because they did not want a first-grader to outdo them. This year that same student is doing third-grade math, which makes the other second-graders want to learn about thousands, so they are working really hard on hundreds. The first-graders look up to the second-graders, and they are so proud of themselves when they finally get to second grade and can do the lessons they heard the second-graders doing the year before.

Having many of the same students from year to year allows the teacher to connect lessons, field trips, stories, and activities from previous years to new learning. Through the year the second-graders remind me about a lot of the things we did the year before. They remember more than I do at times! It is wonderful to hear that they actually remember the things I say and the activities that I do with them.

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The multiage classroom helps to foster independent working skills and working skills for the future. When I am working with a small group, the other students may not interrupt unless it is for an emergency. Instead, they have to read the instructions again to try to figure out what to do, ask someone else for help, or put a question mark by the problem and talk to me after class. Our children need to learn problem-solving strategies so they can work on their own. Our children also need to have experiences working with people of different ages, who have different ideas and use different working styles.

There are many advantages to the multiage classroom environment, but before you implement this type of program, there are a few things to consider:

- Teaching more than one grade level and having students working at different levels are challenges. You are constantly doing informal assessments to see if a student is ready to move on. This can be overwhelming at first.
- If multiage classrooms are going to be implemented in your entire school, you may want to begin the process with just one subject. Each teacher would be assigned a group, and students would move to that teacher for that subject. Remember to evaluate students as you go along. There may be some students who can move up to another group sooner or even skip a group or two, if concepts suddenly click. Remember: Groups should be *flexible.*
- If multiage classes are new to your school, make sure that you educate the parents and demonstrate how the students move from classroom to classroom or how you teach a multiage lesson and then break into small groups for more practice on individual needs. Some parents are concerned if they have children in both grades in the same classroom. I have had siblings in the same room several years, however, and never have had a problem— usually they just ignore each other. Make sure the parents have a chance to voice their concerns and to get

feedback from you. Let parents know that *you* know what you are doing, so that they will be supportive.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE
THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

In her 1996 book *Teaching and Learning in the Multiage Classroom*, Tabitha Carwile Daniel emphasized that there are three very important areas of student behavior that the teacher needs to teach on the first day of school: discipline, procedures, and routines.

Discipline. Students need to know what you expect, and they need guidelines to follow so that classroom disturbances can be minimized and learning can be maximized. Have the students help you determine the classroom rules. The rules must be specific, so that the students know which behaviors are acceptable and which are not. Discuss why rules are necessary, and let the students know the consequences of not working during work time, what happens when they do not behave in a group, how to behave during center time, and how to use the center materials appropriately.

Procedures. Having specific ways of doing things in the classroom will help it run more smoothly all year. Asking older students to demonstrate different procedures and having the new students practice them will save time later in the year. Complete the following steps:

1. Set up procedures for entering the room in the morning and for leaving for lunch, for recess, for fine-arts classes, and at the end of the day.
2. Go over emergency procedures for fires and tornadoes. Practice them before the principal calls a practice drill, so that you can talk about any problems that arise.
3. Let students know how you will get their attention during work time or center time. I use the simple words, "Stop" and "Go."
4. Show the students where different materials—math manipulatives, computer disks, stencils, drawing paper,

handwriting paper, textbooks, dictionaries—are located.

5. Demonstrate, explain, and practice the traffic pattern in your room to help prevent children from running into each other and tripping over one another.

6. Explain procedures for restroom and drink breaks. I have tape on the floor to indicate where the students are to line up. I just nod my head or motion with my hand to let them know they may go, which does not interrupt the small group that I am working with.

7. Show the students what to do when their work is done. Where does it go? What do they do next? What do they do if they placed a question mark by a problem? I ask them to come and talk to me after I finish a class.

8. Demonstrate clean-up procedures for centers and free time.

9. Discuss the loudness levels for work time, small-group time, center time, free time, and tell students what your signal will be if they get too loud.

10. Demonstrate the meanings of sign language you will use to handle situations without disturbing the whole room. We made up our own signals, but if you or a student knows some that are used in a formal system of sign language, everyone could learn those as a group. The children think signals are fun, and using them reduces noise in the classroom.

Routines. A routine helps everyone to know what to do, without having to explain every day. It also helps to lessen the anxiety of new students and shy students, and it provides structure for children with attention deficit or hyperactive disorder and for those who may have little structure at home. Preferably, your routine should be the same each day, but if that is not possible, try to have a set routine at least at the beginning and end of the day. The presence of more than one grade level and of students working in different groups and on different assignments mean there is a lot of activity in the room. Students new to this setting may feel a bit lost or be easily

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distracted at first, so a routine helps everyone to stay focused. Try to divide the classroom into separate areas for independent work, group work, center work, and free time, so that when a student is in an area, he or she knows what type of work or activity should be done there.

ADAPTATION AND INTEGRATION OF THE CURRICULUM FOR MULTIPLE GRADES

How you develop and implement a multigrade curriculum design will depend on whether your school does multiage teaching between classrooms or does it in a self-contained multiage room. It will depend also on the number of grade levels you have in your room(s) and on whether multiage teaching will include all subjects or just a few. Be open to changing your design from year to year and even throughout the year, if something is not working. No two classrooms of students are the same—you have to be able to adapt as you get to know your students. Be flexible.

At the beginning of the year, go through the curriculum guides for the grades you will be teaching. Think about the skills and concepts the students should have learned the year before, because if they do not have the previous year's skills, you will need to do some reviewing. You may also have some students who have mastered some skills over the summer, so look for growth in your returning students. It is your responsibility to find out where each student is academically and to move the child as far as you can toward or even past the current grade's goals.

Below are some of the practices and lessons I implement in my classroom.

EVALUATION

During the first two weeks of school, I meet with each student to evaluate some basic math, oral language, and reading skills. We.start writing in our journals the first day of school so I can see how well the students copy the date from the board and how well they compose their own thoughts to write a

sentence to answer a question. Can they formulate their own question? Is their handwriting legible? What grammar skills do they already have? After I have done my own evaluations, I talk to the previous teacher (if applicable) and look at the student's records and portfolio to see if the level of ability I am seeing is consistent with what was seen the year before.

I try to avoid making quick judgments about what a child can do. It will take new students a while to adapt to their new classroom environment, my teaching style, and the other students in the room. I have found that most of the first-graders in my room are a little intimidated by the second-graders for about the first month. The first-graders, in the beginning, let the second-graders answer all of the questions and volunteer for everything. I have to draw the younger ones out. I ask them to help me as often as I can and call on them to answer questions that I know they can answer. This gives them a feeling of success, and they become more self-confident. I watch them closely during work time. They may be too shy to ask a question, unless I initiate the help.

Reading and spelling. For reading, I use our literature-based reading book for each grade level and combine whole-class instruction with small-group instruction for more individual help on specific skills. Last year, for instance, I had a kindergartner who came in for second-grade reading. She could read anything that I gave her, but we considered the subject content of the stories, her comprehension level, the activities that come with each story, and her social skills before placing her in a reading group. This year she is using a third-grade reading book, but she does some reading activities with the first-graders.

For spelling, each week I start with a basic list from our reading story. For example, in second grade our reading story may focus on consonant digraphs, like *sh* and *ch.* Then I will add words from lessons that week in other subject areas, such as science and social studies; sight words that the students should be memorizing; and words that they have trouble with in their story writing and journal entries.

English. Our English lessons are interwoven with reading and spelling. I use a spin-off of the Daily Oral Language program. This program consists of writing a sentence on the board that has grammatical, spelling, and punctuation mistakes and then having the students try to find the mistakes and write the sentence correctly. We do this as a whole class, so that the first-graders are introduced to the concepts. I create my own sentences that relate to something we are studying that day or week, taking into consideration the skills the students need to learn for grammar and punctuation and also incorporating spelling words for the week. At the beginning of each year, the second-graders do most of the correcting, but eventually the first-graders start finding the easier mistakes. After we correct the sentence using the proper proofreader's marks, the students write the sentence on paper and that is their handwriting lesson for the day.

Math. After I do the math evaluations, I take the students' math books apart and put them in folders in the order I plan to do the chapters. I do not always cover lessons in the math book in the order they are presented, or even page by page within a chapter. Some students are able to skip chapters, especially some of the beginning chapters that are a review of adding and subtracting, or they are able to do a quick review of those chapters as they go on to other math chapters. We all work on the same concept at the same time, but the students work at various levels of difficulty. For example, when we study addition, one group may be learning how to add 2 + 1 while another group is adding 7 + 9 and yet another group is adding 25 + 49.

I use dominoes a lot as a warm-up activity for our math time. Some students get one domino to add or subtract the two numbers shown, others get two dominoes to add or subtract two-digit numbers, and more advanced students may even get three dominos to add. To incorporate reading skills and higher-level math skills, I have the students use the numbers represented on the domino to create an adding or a subtracting story problem.

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Theme approach. Parents and other teachers always wonder how I fit in all of the lessons each day. Teaching with a theme approach—combining different subjects into one lesson—works great in a multiage classroom. For our math/science lesson one day, we might graph our favorite fruits. I would draw a big graph on the board for the students to copy onto their graph paper. Then we would use the graph to answer questions about their favorite fruit, least-favorite fruit, and so on. That same day or the next, I might pull out a graphing lesson from their math book for extra practice. I might also point out to the students how they use math all day: when they choose the colors and patterns of the clothes they are going to wear that day, when they find the TV channel and the time of their favorite cartoon, when they divide a group of people into two equal teams on the playground, when they go to the store to buy a birthday present or a treat. Sometimes I pull out the pages that fit in other lessons on the subject areas that I am teaching. If we are learning about maps in social studies, for example, we might do some of the math chapter on measuring to find the distance between two points on a map.

When we study the food pyramid, we take a week to focus on each food group. The week that we learn about the bread and cereal group, we use the bread theme in religion, reading, math, social studies, and science. We start the week by reading about Jesus feeding the 5,000 and by reading *The Little Red Hen,* and we discuss the behaviors of the disciples and of animal friends. We also discuss which ingredients we need to make bread, and we discuss having to measure the ingredients, mix them together, and finally bake the dough. Some of the students may not be familiar with the ingredient yeast, so we look it up in the encyclopedia to find out more about it and I let them touch yeast and smell it. For a writing assignment that week, the students write a recipe for baked bread, including the measurements with measuring cups and spoons, the temperature of the oven, and the baking time. In social studies, we learn about farming communities and how foods are processed for sale in stores. On the last day, I bring my bread

machine to school, and we measure the ingredients, bake bread, and eat it. Also that week the students bring in empty food containers and we set up a classroom store. We price the items and use them for math lessons about money.

Talk to other teachers, read educational journals, access the Internet, and just brainstorm ideas for activities and lessons that mimic real life, so you can use these resources to help the students see the relationship between schoolwork and how math, reading, science, etc., are used every day in a person's life. This will make the lessons more meaningful and memorable for the students.

ASSESSMENT IN THE MULTIAGE CLASSROOM

Multiage teaching requires continuous assessment because you are not just going through a book page by page but incorporating many different math and language concepts into all of your lessons. You have to know which students are ready to move on to a new concept and which ones need a little more time to practice a concept. I keep a lot of old workbooks and sample books in my file so that I have supplemental work for practice and review. I also visit my local teacher-supply store often and check the sale table for individual activity books. Like most teachers, I never throw anything away. My closets can attest to that.

Portfolios are an excellent way to keep track of student progress. I keep a clipboard on my desk that has adhesive labels on it. After I teach a lesson or as I walk around the room observing work, activities, or free time, I make notes on the labels—one label per child. After school I transfer these adhesive labels to a notebook that is divided into sections for each child so I can quickly see what I will need to review in future lessons.

The different forms of assessment you use should all work together to show you, the child, and the parents a complete picture of the child's learning abilities—strengths and weaknesses. Results of standardized tests give you an idea of the information the student has learned and of what he or she

remembers on a given day; the progress report/report card shows you how the student has performed during a quarter; and the portfolio, containing the work, activities, and projects completed, shows you the student's progress in the day-to-day setting.

If a child has a low standardized test score but has day-to-day classroom abilities that are much higher, consider test anxiety: Was the child tired or not feeling well that day? Were there external forces that made it difficult for the child to concentrate? If a child's scores are high but classroom work is average or below, perhaps the child needs to be challenged or there is something holding the child back in his or her daily work. The key is to look at as much information about the child as you can before putting a grade on a progress report or having a conference with parents or moving a child to another group for instruction.

The multiage classroom provides unique opportunities for the students and the teacher, but it requires a lot of brainstorming, planning, preparation, and constant assessment of the student's abilities and of the way you present the subject matter. It challenges the teacher and the students to do their best when working one-on-one and in different-sized groups.

Each year, I think I learn as much about teaching in a multiage classroom as the students learn about the different subject areas. I want to pass on to my students the joy and love of learning that my teachers passed on to me in that little two-room schoolhouse in rural Nebraska.

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Development in the Small Catholic School

Mary Anderson, Principal
Christ the King School, Archdiocese of Omaha

Development for small schools is a vital component for the strengthening and survival of the total school program. Development is not something to be worked on for just one or two years; it is an ongoing process that evolves as the school changes. Indeed, it is a journey, rather than a destination.

One of the key components to a development program is strong leadership. Quality leadership from the pastor and administrator will build support from all the stakeholders involved in providing Catholic education in the community. For small schools, it can be difficult to find a leader who is not only committed to providing a quality academic and spiritual education but also willing to guide the school's development. Most schools are not able to afford a development director, so in many cases the principal has to step in and become a mini development director.

The administrator of the school plays an important role in the goal-setting process of the school, and development involves setting long- and short-term goals. In order for the administrator to be successful in implementing and evaluating goals, they must have the support of pastors, teachers, students, parents, directors of religious education, and anyone involved in providing Catholic education in that community. Without the support of all stakeholders, goal-setting and development programs become impossible tasks.

As a leader, the administrator must identify the school's core group of supporters. These are the people whom the principal can depend upon to help accomplish the goals and develop the school's programs. These people will offer historical knowledge, financial assistance, and probably the most valuable resource an administrator, pastor, or teacher can have—priceless moral support needed to effect change in the school. Find these people in the community and use them effectively. Find their areas of interest and expertise, and use that information when developing programs. With their help, so many things can be accomplished. Many times, these are the people who will keep the school focused when things become difficult. Selecting key leaders as a support group and channeling their efforts in projects that need strong leadership can save much time and energy.

Development for small Catholic schools should start with an overall review of the school. Start by asking really tough questions of the school and the programs it offers. This information can identify the areas to concentrate on when working on a development plan. Look at many areas of concern, but always carefully review financial needs, building needs, and student and faculty needs. These are areas of focus that, when overlooked, can cause larger problems with long-term development.

Budgetary and financial needs are one of the areas that all schools, public and private, must address in school development. Look at what is being done not only to meet daily financial needs but also to meet the school's long-term goals and needs. Whenever working with budgeting and financial matters, it is very important to remember that we all must be good stewards of the money that is allocated for Catholic education. Look at some of the following areas:

- How can current funds stretch farther? (For example, use scratch paper, have students provide supplies, have families purchase library books instead of treats for

their child's birthday, have teachers develop a wish list for their rooms at Christmas time.)

- Are there alternative ways of finding funds and funding sources for special projects in the community? (For example, grants, civic groups, endowments.)
- What are the school's current needs and wants? Does the community know what these things are?
- Is the school visible in the community?

By asking some of these questions, you may be able to find alternative ways to fund projects. Small schools have financial concerns and issues that are certainly unique, but fighting obstacles can also create opportunities. It is possible to provide an excellent Catholic school education and keep costs to a minimum. Development can be a lot of hard work, but it is also very rewarding.

Once you have a good development plan in place, it is amazingly easy to add to the plan. One thing can lead to another, and before you realize it, many things will happen as a result of one isolated gift. A wonderful story that illustrates this point occurred as a result of a small gift turning into a much larger plan. Our school's playground was very run down. All of the equipment was either homemade or donated to the school years ago. The ground under the play area had little or no gravel, so the playground really became a safety issue. It also gave the appearance that the school itself was old and run down, which was not the public image we wanted to project in our community. A local civic group generously donated several thousand dollars' worth of new equipment for us to install after I approached them for their help. We still had many other tasks to take on, however, before the playground could be completed. Ten loads of playground gravel needed to be donated, and a drainage problem needed to be resolved. Finally, after letting the community know what was needed to complete the project, we had a new playground that was a beautiful addition to our school and parish and that reflected

the quality Catholic education that was taking place within our school.

There are several things that can be done to plan for a school's financial future. Endowments are a financial tool that not only keep on growing but, more importantly, continue to give financial support for generations. Endowments are an excellent long-term development program. When setting up an endowment, state a specific need for the money and set up guidelines for its use. Let people in the community know what the needs and goals are for the fund. Once an endowment is in place, it becomes easier for people to give to the school. Memorials can be designated for the school's endowment, or if people want to give a donation that is nonspecific, that too can be designated to the school's endowment fund.

One of the most valuable financial resources any school has when working on endowments are its former students and alumni. This fact has been proven time and time again by high schools and colleges, but elementary schools need to take a serious look at tapping into this resource. By implementing an annual fund-raiser that requests the alumni to make an annual donation of $25 or more, a sizable endowment fund will build up over time. This type of fund-raiser is also a low-cost endowment drive requiring little more than an annual mailing. It is important to remember that nearly all former students will have fond memories of their grade school, and if asked to help out, they can and will be very generous.

Financially, there are key people with resources in every community. Find these people and establish a bond of trust. In smaller communities, just as in large parishes, there are those people that have strongly supported Catholic education through good times and bad. Often they remain an untapped resource simply because they do not know the school's needs. Communication with the parish about the school on an annual basis, either in the form of an annual report or an open house, can pass on the "seeds" that are needed to find donors and supporters in your parish community.

It is very easy to do an open house after a Saturday evening mass. Invite the entire parish. This will allow those who might not come to a Thursday night open house an opportunity to stop in and have a look around the school and the classrooms. For people who do not have school-age children, this may give them an opportunity to reacquaint themselves with the parish school. You can even add a huge parish dinner that evening and invite all to the dinner and open house. By opening up the school and inviting others in, you are showing these people how their donations will help educate children through the teachings of Christ.

One of the best times of the school year to address the parish and talk about the school's successes is during Catholic Schools Week. Share with the parish what wonderful things are happening in the school. Tell the parish where you currently are in your development plan, and where you see the school going in the future. Small things, like having the students of the school sing at the Sunday mass for the opening of Catholic Schools Week, are a wonderful form of public relations and a great way to celebrate with the parish. Be prepared to give back to the community as well. An excellent project for middle-school-aged students is to have them volunteer to rake leaves and clean up yards in the spring and fall for elderly parishioners. Show the parish that the school is not *always* asking for money, but that the school gives much back to the community.

Another area to consider when reviewing goals and long-term plans is a total review of your building needs. Often, small schools are located in rural communities or lower-economic areas and have not had the funds available for building needs. Buildings are small; therefore, there is little room to expand as classrooms take on the additional needs of technology and instructional equipment. If your building is old, not only is space difficult to find, but electrical, plumbing, and even heating and cooling needs are a concern. Structural changes and building updates in an older school present unique problems simply because of the age of the structure. You really need to

review your building needs at least once every five years. Building and construction costs need to be well thought out, with plans that are developed years in advance. Finding the funding for these capital expenditures usually requires as much lead time as possible because of the enormous costs involved. By failing to plan, you may be planning to fail.

Small schools, simply because of their size, also need to review their teacher and student needs. Many small Catholic schools, in order to survive, have had to become very creative in the manner in which they are organized. Small schools use a variety of ways to lower costs that can directly affect teachers and students.

Small schools, because of their low numbers, use multi-grade classrooms. This form of classroom organization can be a concern for parents who will worry about their child's educational opportunity. By reassuring parents about the quality of education provided, and stressing the positive outcomes that their child will receive, a principal can dispel any of the parents' concerns.

Multigrade classrooms can also affect the school's abilities to recruit and retain quality classroom teachers. Teachers who have taught in these schools will state what a wonderful teaching style multigrade classrooms can be for teacher and student. Teachers are given the freedom to individualize the instruction to meet the needs of all the students in their classroom. Small Catholic schools offer new teachers a wonderful place to grow, to develop their teaching skills, and to experience a unique sense of community that develops in small schools. It is so easy to become a part of a Christian family, where generations of children all have a link to their past, present, and future.

Becoming aware of other concerns for students and teachers will help in the development process. Students and teachers may have social needs that will need to be addressed. Sometimes teachers feel very isolated in a small school. By giving the faculty a professional day to visit other schools and see how other teachers are performing, a principal reassures them that they are very valuable to the school. Students may

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also have social concerns because of the small number of students in their school. It is easy to link up with the public school in the area for different events and socials.

Good communication between public and private schools in isolated areas is an absolute must. Be aware of what the local public school is doing. Anything it does to its programs will in some way·have an impact on the local Catholic school. It is always best to be proactive rather than reactive.

Having a clear vision of a quality Catholic educational program for the school is vital to the success of a small school's development program. Children are the future of the Church, and schools, no matter how large or small, prepare these children, through the teachings of Jesus Christ, for their roles in the future as good parishioners, as followers of Jesus, as productive members of the civic community.

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The Development Committee as Ambassador for the Small Catholic School

Sister Ann Ganley, SSND
Special Assistant to the Archbishop
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

If I could have one of my dreams come true, I would have a full-time director of development in my school of 300 children. Even then, I would use a team approach to get tasks done. Having a development committee, with or without a director, is the key to success in a development program, for it is like having multiple directors of development.

In 1993 I became the principal of an elementary school of 135 children, kindergarten through eighth grade. The sixth and seventh grades had 13 and 8 children respectively, and there were meetings going on with the neighboring Catholic school to consolidate the two schools. When these meetings were completed, the decision was made not to consolidate. My decision then was to form a development committee to meet the request of the parish council to strengthen the entire school, but especially the middle school component (grades 6 through 8).

A development committee of 12 to 14 people was composed of volunteers and those invited to membership. The first meetings focused on determining the purpose of a development program in an elementary school, revisiting the philosophy and mission statement of the school, and brainstorming for a five-year long-range plan. I learned from these meetings that the school's programs, strengths, and weaknesses were not known by the school community. How to communicate what the school had to offer was the challenging task of the committee.

No one person had all the ideas, gifts, or talent for the task at hand. Achievement of our goals took teamwork, so subcommittees were formed. Over the next three years, one group was responsible for producing a video of the school, and another worked on brochures about the middle school, the school as a whole, and other programs. A subcommittee developed a newsletter to go to parents, friends, and alumni of the school. Another group reworked the school budget so that the school was responsible for 60 percent of it and the parish, 40 percent; previously, it had been the reverse. Another subcommittee developed a five-year plan for the development committee, focusing on finances, curriculum and academic excellence, public relations, additional programs, and enrollment.

Over the past four years additional programs have strengthened the school. In the 1994-95 academic year, an all-day kindergarten was begun, replacing the half-day kindergarten. Some doubted that this was a need or that it was educationally sound. Not only has it been successful, but the 1997-98 school year opened with two all-day kindergarten rooms. As a result of this increase, the school committee will study the feasibility of adding classrooms for grades 1 through 5 over the next five years.

A preschool program was begun in 1995. After two years, it has reached capacity enrollment. This is a program for three-, four-, and five-year-olds and serves as a feeder for the regular day school.

In 1996 the extended-day program (K through 6) was established to support families in need of before- and after-school day care for their children. Another one or two years of operation will help us decide if this is a viable program.

It is through its development efforts that the school has become financially solvent and that most grade levels are at capacity with waiting lists.

As a result of dialogue in the development committee regarding the need for students to stay current with technology, a technology subcommittee of parents and teachers was formed. The entire school has been wired so that each classroom has access to the Internet. A proposal was accepted by USWest for

a grant of $9,000 for the education of teachers to advance computer literacy.

Gifts totaling $25,000 in three years are evidence of a successful public-relations effort to communicate our excellent educational programs and of the untiring efforts of teachers and parents to advance the mission of the school.

One of the challenges of fund-raising in a parish elementary school is being sensitive to the financial backing that parishes already request of their parishioners. We reviewed the existing fund-raising programs that the school was involved in. We decided to heavily market the scholarship fund, a fair-share tuition program, the adopt-a-student tuition fund, and the marathon for nonpublic education. The only fund-raiser added in a four-year period was the SCRIP program, in which the school sells gift certificates for various retail stores and receives a percentage of each dollar sold. The average amount of money raised through this parent-led endeavor is about $13,000 a year. This program is supported not only by parents of the school but by many other parishioners.

It is important for a development committee to continually evaluate the various programs it commits to. The adopt-a-student tuition fund program is the only one that is not viable at this time. This program did not have the interest of the parents and so was discontinued. Because we can never lean on our laurels, the development committee works hard at keeping these programs in the forefront so that interest remains strong.

The next step of this development committee is to establish an endowment fund. We believe that just tuition and gifts will not safeguard or secure the strong financial support that is needed as we move into the future.

The main criterion for candidates for membership on the development committee is that they support the mission and philosophy of the school. It would not hurt if they also have some skills in marketing or the media.

The committee consists of mothers and fathers of students, faculty, administrators, and parents of future students of the

school who will work as a team. Their enthusiasm, experience, and dedication make them outstanding ambassadors of the school.

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The Need for a Comprehensive Development Program in a Small Catholic School

Judy Howard, Principal
Sacred Heart School, Archdiocese of Portland

This is the story of Sacred Heart School, founded in 1882 by the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel, Oregon, to serve the local rural community.

Sacred Heart School is located in the town of Gervais, Oregon, with a population of under 1,000 people. The children actually within the city limits make up less than 10 percent of the school population. Thus, the majority of our students come from rural areas within our parish boundaries and three neighboring parishes that do not have their own school.

From the school's beginning until 1990, Sacred Heart staff taught grades 1 through 8 in four classrooms with four teachers, each teaching two grades. Enrollment capability during this time was 120 students, many of whom were third and fourth generation attending Sacred Heart School.

Our story begins in the late 1980s with our life-and-death struggle to keep the school's doors open. In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, our school was blessed with maximum or near-maximum enrollment, but as the last of the 1980s came, we suffered a consistent drop in enrollment for two or three consecutive years. Everyone stood back and watched this happen, but our biggest mistake was not addressing the problems in their infant stages. As a result, we created a hole that was almost impossible to fill.

Now the question is, "What exactly caused the enrollment to drop?" Listed below are what we believe were the major contributors to the decrease:

- The parish pastor would not allow us to raise tuition but instead took any additional monies needed from the parish as subsidy.
- A lack of communication existed between staff, parents, and parishioners.
- Tensions had built up between some staff members, parents, and our parish pastor, causing some families to leave.
- The final blow came with the departure of our religious teachers, causing parents to take their children from the school due to their perception that we could no longer be classified as a Catholic school without a religious staff.

To give somewhat of a history of how all this took place, we will have to go back to the fall of 1989. With a 20 percent drop in our school population, it was discovered that we were going to have a $20,000 deficit in the school budget to make up just to finish out the school year. At that time our new parish priest, Father Donald McHugh, formed a task force with the sole purpose of streamlining the school budget in order to find additional funds needed to complete the school year. Through prayers, communication, and a lot of fund-raising, this was accomplished. At the end of the year we all breathed a sigh of relief and looked optimistically to the upcoming year.

Next, Sacred Heart began its 1990 school year and again was dealt a heavy blow. Student enrollment dropped again by almost 20 percent. At that point, we were devastated and did not know what we were going to do to turn this spiraling downward trend around. That same fall, however, the good Lord answered our prayers when we were notified by the Arch-diocese of Portland in Oregon that it would be sponsoring development classes for all Catholic elementary schools. Our

parish pastor strongly encouraged us to attend, as did the superintendent of Catholic schools for the archdiocese. These were the very same classes currently taught across the United States by Sister Kathleen Collins and formulated by the National Catholic Educational Association. In essence, what this did for us was to breathe life back into our school by giving us the tools and knowledge to move forward.

Also beginning that same year, the most important, immediate result of the development classes was the unification of parents and parish. This was done through communication to parents and parishioners. Prior to this, due to a lack of communication, rumors had been rampant concerning the problems the school was facing. Because of this hurdle, we had to report information accurately and without glossing it over. This communication itself helped the school greatly to regain respect, credibility, and support of parents, parishioners, and the community, which we so desperately needed.

We constantly gave reports to every entity in the parish: The school advisory council started reporting monthly to the parents club, the pastoral council, and the parish administrative council. The school advisory council posted its minutes in church for all to see and made copies available to take. Even after doing all this, we felt more had to be done simply because we were running out of time and financial resources. What could we do? Through the encouragement of our parish pastor, the idea was born to talk in person to all parishioners via the pulpit and tell the story of the dire straits we faced, of how we felt we got to that point, and of what we were doing to alleviate the situation and move forward. In retrospect, our goal at the time all of this was taking place was simply to be able to keep our school open.

We knew we could leave no rock unturned. A school newsletter was formulated and distributed to reach out to our local rural community to make them aware of the school's plight. The newsletter was distributed to parents, parishioners, alumni, and anyone else we could possibly think of. The irony of being so candid was that we never really asked for money,

but as the year progressed, the school received donation after donation, giving Sacred Heart a new lease on life.

To supplement the donations from the parishioners and community, fund-raisers were always an integral means of supplying the needs of the school. That very year, a number of new fund-raisers were adopted to offset the cost of education with such a limited number of students. Since that time, the school has retained the most profitable ones and discontinued those that did not return sufficient funds for the investment of time involved.

In addition to the donations and fund-raisers, we were all well aware that we had to give ourselves some kind of insurance policy and long-term financial stability. Through our aggressive fund-raising that year, along with seed money from our parish, an endowment fund was born, which is doing very well to date.

After addressing our short-term funding for the school, we were still faced with a very obvious dilemma. Our student enrollment capability was 120 students in grades 1 through 8, but we had less than half of capacity. Our enrollment would have to increase or we would cease to exist, no matter how much fund-raising we did. The superintendent of schools for the archdiocese told us that by all good business sense, the archdiocese should have closed our school, with enrollment being so low. We pleaded our case, however, and through sheer tenacity, we were just too stubborn to let go.

Recruiting and acquiring additional students was the next piece of the puzzle that we had to focus on. We felt our best recruiters would be our own children currently in Sacred Heart School and their parents.

Since our town and the rural area were at a zero-population growth with no change on the horizon, we looked beyond our boundaries to neighboring parishes within a 15-mile radius that had no Catholic school of their own. The potential for growth was there. We promoted visitations to our school for all interested parents. With our credibility reestablished, our parents encouraged young families to attend these visitations.

Still, it was up to all of us involved to promote our school. We handed out flyers during Sunday masses and visited with the parish pastor of St. Mary's in Mt. Angel, Father Edmund Smith, who, after talking with us, was receptive to our invitation and even promoted our school from his pulpit. St. Mary's is a large parish in a predominantly Catholic community, serving as a residence for the Benedictine Abbey and Seminary and for the Benedictine Sisters convent, giving us the potential for tremendous student growth.

Even after such aggressive student recruitment, there was still something missing. After researching various other Catholic schools in our area, we decided it was imperative that we develop our own kindergarten. We sincerely felt that the best way to bring children to our school would be to start with a kindergarten that would feed students into grade 1. Prior to this inception, the public school system had performed this task for us.

After three consecutive years of student decline, the decision to start our kindergarten program was implemented. Sacred Heart School was still in a very fragile state of existence, and with absolutely no extra funds available, our kindergarten was born on a shoestring and sheer faith. In retrospect, it was the best move we ever made to jump-start our school.

Our first year's kindergarten class consisted of eight students, which elated us. In addition to the kindergartners, our enrollment in grades 1-8 increased from 47 to 67 students. The results of all our recruitment work and our new kindergarten were truly godsends for us. The kindergarten, from its beginning, has operated at a loss and continues to do so, but the dividends have been returned to us tenfold in growth and stability.

Due to limited space, the kindergarten could not be held in the main school building, causing us to use the meeting room above the gym adjacent to the school building. We knew this was a temporary placement that would have to be addressed in the near future. Because of the kindergarten's location we decided to try writing a grant proposal to add on to the school

in order to have our kindergartners in the same building as all our other students. We were very fortunate to recruit the aid of John Bucknum, a very well known grant writer, who was sympathetic to our cause.

Our initial grant proposal took approximately a year to formulate, but it was unsuccessful. Once again, we were dealt a big disappointment. Instead of quitting, we spent another year rewriting the proposal, and we resubmitted it with a very different outcome. We did not get all the funding we requested, but we did receive two thirds of the cost of the project, putting it within reach. Currently, we are approximately two months away from breaking ground for our two-classroom addition.

Another facet of development, not yet mentioned, is our five-year plan. Many of the key elements of this plan have been touched on. In essence, a five-year plan is a road map telling your school where it is today and where it hopes to be over the next five years. This is extremely important to give direction to the school.

Staff members, parents, school advisory council members, and parishioners compiled the information needed to format the five-year plan. The reason for this participant diversity was the need for a perspective from inside as well as outside the school. A number of individuals were involved over approximately a year, gathering all the information needed and making this task a major undertaking. The rewards were well worth the investment of time, however, because from that point, it has been just a matter of reviewing and updating the plan each year. Once again, the importance of the five-year plan cannot be overstressed.

Seven years have passed, and after jumping major hurdles to keep our school in operation, our enrollment today is 108 students. I have highlighted below what we feel are the key development areas that we applied to put life back into our school.

- Formulate a five-year plan
- Conduct active school marketing and student recruitment

- Communicate often and accurately with the school's publics
- Review the budget often
- Build and maintain credibility by keeping promises
- Operate the school as a business
- Cultivate parent involvement in the school
- Establish goals with the best interests of the school and children in mind
- Take most of the burden for operating the school
- Take some risks to improve the school
- Pray a lot and never lose faith

Most important of all, implement the school's development program *now.* Do not wait until you are in dire straits, as we were. We know development is every bit as important to us now as it was then.

We sincerely hope that our story and experiences will in some way help you to improve your own school, because the turmoil we had to go through, we wish on no one.

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Information Technology: A Small Catholic School's Journey

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St. Mary's Catholic School, a kindergarten-through-sixth-grade school currently enrolling 173 students, is located in Noble County in northeast Indiana, approximately 25 miles north of Fort Wayne. Only 12 percent of the county's population have some type of post-high school degree, and over 70 percent live in rural areas.

According to the school's report "Indiana Department of Education Division of Performance-Based Accreditation School Improvement Plan 1993-1994," since 1863 St. Mary's has had "the mission to provide a supportive environment in collaboration with parents for the sound and full education of its students" (St. Mary's School, 1994, p. 7). Its commitment to educate and prepare its youth for successful entry into the 21st century is real and observable, with consistently above-average state and national test scores.

During the accreditation study of 1993-1994, the staff, parents and supporting community documented the critical need to update the technology program in the school. Although 99 percent of the parents believed that St. Mary's offered a strong academic program, only 28 percent believed that the computer program was adequate. As a result of this study, one of the five goals of the current five-year plan of the accreditation report addresses this concern: "The administration, faculty, and students of St. Mary's School demonstrate computer lit-

eracy from an adequately developed computer program" (St. Mary's School, 1994, p. 134). Thus began the challenging opportunity to move all members of the school community into the information age of the 21st century.

In 1993, St. Mary's School had only eight Commodore 64 computers (purchased between 1982-1985), two Macintosh LCII computers, and one Macintosh LCIII computer. The student population of 150 utilized the Commodore computers for drill-and-practice work and the Macintosh computers for very simple word processing, critical thinking, and problem solving using MECC programs. The secretary was just beginning to use word processing, spreadsheets, and databases in the school office. Two faculty members had computers at home, one with a modem, and they used them for word processing and managing school grades. The 1994 Fall Survey of Parents showed that over 40 percent of families had a computer at home, of which 35 percent had a CD-ROM drive and 33 percent had a fax modem.

At this time, the report *Technology in Public Schools: 1993-1994* (Quality Education Data, 1994) determined that 4.3 million computers were in schools during the 1993-1994 school year. A 1994 survey found that the ratio of students to computers in school was 125 to 1 in 1984, but 14 to 1 and dropping rapidly in 1994. Schools spent almost $2.5 billion on technology in the 1993-1994 school year (Schurman, 1994). All stakeholders of St. Mary's School knew that the use of computers had exploded during the last decade, but St. Mary's had not kept up.

Many futurists, including Thomas Kuhn, believe that today's students are entering an information revolution that will surpass the industrial revolution in its impact on the societies of the world. They and all other people are living in one of the very few "transforming eras" in human history, which involve a major paradigm shift in humanity's way of thinking and acting (Zukowski, 1995). Experts predict that by the year 2011 the body of existing knowledge will double every 70 days (Skolnik, Larson & Smith, 1993). In his new book, *The Road Ahead,*

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Microsoft founder Bill Gates, when discussing the information highway, stated, "We are watching something historic happen, and it will affect the world seismically, the same way the scientific method, the invention of printing, and the arrival of the Industrial Age did" ("Gates Sees Future," 1995).

The global classroom is fast becoming a reality. Students soon will be able to access worldwide computer networks using notebook-sized computers that will contain a cellular phone, radio, television, modem, and compact disc player. Some researchers see complete curricula becoming available on CD-ROMs, ultimately replacing textbooks as the primary source of information for students (Lumley & Bailey, 1993). Obviously, St. Mary's School could not continue its level of excellence without acknowledging this paradigm shift and addressing its own inadequacy by acquiring and fully utilizing a complete system of information technology.

In the spring of 1994, Sister Theresa Renninger, OSF, the principal of the school, organized a technology committee and delegated responsibility for the committee to the fourth-grade teacher. Committee members included the principal, the fourth-grade teacher, the recently hired part-time computer coordinator, and parents, one of whom was very experienced in grant writing. The committee spent the summer of 1994 researching technology issues and developing a five-year technology plan that included not only a vision, goals, and objectives in line with the school's mission but also a full-funding proposal.

Although St. Mary's School is an independent Catholic school, it has strong ties with the East Noble School Corporation. A large majority of its students go on to one of the East Noble middle schools after leaving sixth grade. All stakeholders were very aware of the Buddy Program in the East Noble Corporation. Through this program, every fourth- and fifth-grader in the corporation takes a school computer home to use for two full years. The East Noble Corporation was one of only four corporations in Indiana that had the Buddy Program in all of its elementary schools in 1994.

Parents of St. Mary's students were especially interested in the impact of the Buddy Program on East Noble students. They were very cognizant of their option of sending children to one of the six elementary schools in the East Noble Corporation. Administrators in the East Noble Corporation reported that the East Noble Buddy Program students had indeed acquired measurable skills beyond those of other East Noble students, including a much more independent learning style. Parents of St. Mary's students were very emphatic in their wish that their children have comparable learning and computer skills when they entered the seventh grade in an East Noble School. Despite the claims of increased and better learning through the Buddy Program, the committee made its first strategic decision by determining that St. Mary's School had neither the financial resources nor the personnel to pursue the Buddy Program. Although many parents were disappointed, the committee decided to concentrate time, effort, and financial resources on technology for the school only. Even after narrowing the focus to this, they knew that there were many obstacles to overcome.

Since St. Mary's School is a private school, it is not eligible for the state and federal funding that is available to the East Noble and surrounding schools. Although St. Mary's spends only $1,550 per year to educate a student, compared with East Noble Corporation's $4,170, financial constraints are always a reality. All funding to operate every aspect of the school comes from either tuition or parish support. Thus, very early in the planning process, the committee made the decision to write a grant proposal to the Dekko Foundation to help fund the technology project. The foundation required an extensive technology proposal, with bids on the hardware, software, and peripherals necessary for the school projects and a definite plan for integrating the technology into the curriculum. Fulfilling the strict requirements of the Dekko Foundation was the catalyst that highly motivated the committee to do the necessary research for a project with the scope and depth that was needed to take the students of St. Mary's School into the 21st century.

During its study, the committee became aware that fundamentally different thinking about computers and learning began to appear in the literature of the 1990s. Throughout the 20th century, educators believed that there was a set deposit of knowledge to be given to the students, usually through textbooks and teacher lectures (Mecklenburger, 1990). The focus of education was literacy, with little attention paid to information literacy with its skills of assessing, analyzing, synthesizing, applying, and even creating information (Adams & Bailey, 1993). Recently, however, Lumley and Bailey (1993) spoke of information as "the currency of the 21st century" and insisted that students must learn how to acquire, analyze, and apply the rapidly expanding amount of information available to them. Rather than be content with the traditional textbooks and classroom lectures, educators must now learn to incorporate technology, including computers, into their classrooms and allow for the new mode of learning, that of interacting, managing, and creating information.

Having studied the literature, the technology committee of St. Mary's School decided to integrate emerging technology into each classroom rather than add a computer lab. The community of St. Mary had recently completed a building project of $1,010,800, so a computer lab easily could have been part of the design. Though Dyrli and Kinnaman (1994b) summarized that the "general consensus is that the best technology mix includes multiple organization strategies: full labs, mini labs, and stand-alone systems, all connected by school-wide networks" (p. 50), the committee was well aware of its budget restraints.

While still firmly believing in giving each student a strong foundation in "the basics," the faculty of St. Mary's School agreed with Lumley and Bailey (1993) that these basics are the point of departure for learning the skills necessary to properly manage the information explosion society is currently experiencing. The technology committee, after careful consultation with the faculty, therefore decided that this best could be accomplished by adding networked computers to the seven

classrooms and the new media center of St. Mary's School. Thus, the core of the original grant proposal to the Dekko Foundation was a request for set of five networked computers for each classroom.

One of the biggest obstacles schools face when trying to integrate technology into the curriculum is the lack of training for staff members and even staff resistance. Staff development must include much more than training people in the use of the hardware and software. Lumley and Bailey (1993) insisted that "all educators must rethink authentic learning, curriculum, and assessment in order to be successful in technology integration."

Furthermore, although there are some pioneers—individuals and school corporations—there is presently no one blueprint for technology-based learning. This "new vision of learning cannot always be supported with hard, indisputable facts" (Lumley & Bailey, 1993, p. 121). In order to help the staff of St. Mary's School overcome any real or imagined computer anxiety and to give them unlimited opportunities to experiment with computers, the technology committee also requested in the Dekko Foundation Grant Proposal a Power Book Portable Mac computer and a printer for each faculty member. With these tools, teachers, in the privacy and leisure of their homes, could begin to make the radical shift necessary for implementing technology into their individual classrooms.

Thoroughly aware that teacher training is as important as procuring hardware and software for the school, the technology committee also wrote a provision for teacher training into the original Dekko Foundation Grant Proposal. Funded training originally included release time for classes in word processing, the use of databases, spreadsheets, HyperStudio, and the use of the modem and other peripherals such as the scanner and the QuickTake 100 camera for the Macintosh. Realizing that no teacher would master in three-hour courses all that was presented, the committee also encouraged teachers to help each other as they became technologically literate. Finally, the

computer coordinator presented classes for the faculty and worked individually with staff members at their convenience.

Another major decision facing the technology committee was the types of hardware and software to purchase. Obviously, Apple Computers has a large percentage of the educational market. Of the more than 49 percent of the St. Mary's families who had computers in 1995, however, 85 percent of them had IBM-compatibles with the Windows operating system. The committee met with Apple and local Windows representatives and received bids from each.

The Dekko Foundation itself made the final decision when it stipulated that we purchase only Apple products. Part of its rationale behind this determination was that it had funded much of the East Noble School Corporation's technology project, which included all Apple products. The foundation also offered to all St. Mary's teachers free technology training along with the East Noble School Corporation's teachers and access to the East Noble local area network (ENET), which now has access to the Internet. A final factor in the decision to purchase Apple hardware and software was that the Fort Wayne-South Bend diocesan local area network (Impresso) is also a configuration of Apple products.

Choosing Apple as the main vendor for the project made software selection much easier, since Apple offered software bundles with its computers. The committee made the decision to purchase either Elementary Reference Bundles, Teacher Solution Bundles, or Early Language Bundles with each computer as well as ClarisWorks for all computers in the building.

In June 1995 the Dekko Foundation funded the first phase of the grant proposal submitted in February 1995. With this first-phase funding, each teacher, the computer coordinator, and the principal received a PowerBook Portable Mac and a printer and training in ClarisWorks, HyperStudio, and telecommunications. The home and school association purchased two Power Mac 5200s with built-in CD-ROM drives and a printer for each classroom. Since these computers can read DOS and Windows files, students can work either at school or on their

home computers. The fourth-grade teacher and the computer coordinator offered a computer camp for the students during the summer of 1995, and teachers began using the classroom computers in their daily lessons during the 1995-1996 school year. Since all computers were on carts, it was possible to assemble all 14 of them plus the 10 PowerBooks into a temporary lab in the gym, where students went twice a week to get acquainted with the basics of the Macintosh system and with the purchased software.

In the fall of 1995, members of the technology committee attended a two-day workshop sponsored by the Dekko Foundation. During this workshop, the foundation outlined guidelines for requiring a specific curriculum plan to be submitted before further funding would be awarded for technology. After careful planning and consultation with the diocesan computer coordinator, the committee decided to focus on one of the five goals written in the school's 1993-1994 accreditation report: "Students communicate effectively both with oral and written skills" (St. Mary's School, 1994, p. 129). During Christmas vacation, the fourth-grade teacher wrote a second phase to the original grant proposal, and it was submitted to the Dekko Foundation in January 1996. This proposal requested $33,398, with matching funds to be given by the home and school association of St. Mary's School. The association committed the proceeds from one bingo night per month (approximately $2,000 per night) for two years.

In March 1996, the Dekko Foundation awarded St. Mary's School the requested amount. These funds allowed the committee to purchase additional computers, so that each classroom had the originally requested five machines. The committee also purchased seven additional computers for the media center, additional software, headphones for each computer, a QuickTake 100 camera, an Apple Color One Scanner with O-foto software, a large-screen TV to be used with the AV computers, 25 Brother SuperPowerNotes with word processors and spreadsheet software, a color printer for each classroom with local networking, and a Power Macintosh 5260/100LC for the

office. Funding also covered in-house training (96 hours for teachers and 50 hours for the computer coordinator) and appropriate tables for the classroom computers. Finally, the computer coordinator and the fourth-grade teacher offered a 1996 summer computer camp for the students to introduce them to the SuperPowerNotes and the QuickTake camera.

Teachers began integrating all purchased hardware and software into their individual curricula during the 1996-1997 school year. Younger students use *Easy Color Paint* for drawing and learn word processing, the use of graphics, and how to do research using multimedia CD-ROMs. Students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades use the 25 SuperPowerNotes to write, edit, and revise most written assignments (reports, themes, letters, stories) and to take spelling tests. Computers are used extensively in math and science for graphing and for mandatory science fair projects. Students in the fifth and sixth grades also create multimedia projects for social studies, language arts, and graduation presentations. All students attend one "computer class" per week when the computer coordinator assembles 12 computers in the media center; most often, however, computer use happens in the classrooms. Students in grades 3 through 6 advance their keyboarding skills using the *Type!* program, which is on each machine.

The technology committee is currently planning phase III of the grant proposal. It will call for the networking of the building, access to the Internet via satellite, media center management software, and recordkeeping software for the office. The committee is also preparing to submit its technology plan to the state of Indiana in order to be included in the Universal Service Program. Through this program, schools and libraries are eligible to receive up to $2.25 billion annually in discounts toward the purchase of modern telecommunication services, including internal connections and Internet access.

The Dekko Foundation has recently awarded St. Mary's School two other grants for technology. The first included $15,000 for video-conferencing hardware and software to be used with St. Francis College in Fort Wayne. The technology

committee is discussing with the faculty of St. Francis ways to use this equipment in the teacher-training programs of the college, with St. Mary's School serving as a telecommunication site for student teachers. The staff of St. Mary's would like telecommunication consultation with St. Francis faculty for aid in helping learning-disabled students at the school. This could be in the form of in-service and/or individual faculty and parent conferences.

Finally, the Dekko Foundation has notified St. Mary's School that it has been awarded $32,000 for a grant proposal written during the summer of 1997 by the music teacher and the fourth-grade teacher. This grant will fund a piano lab with 30 Yamaha electronic piano keyboards with headphones, benches, and footstools, all scheduled for installation before January 1998. All keyboards will be wired to a master unit that the music teacher will use. This will insure that students will graduate from St. Mary's School with some proficiency in playing the piano.

"Schools that fail to integrate modern technology fully and systematically into the classroom curriculum will eventually be left behind, unable to meet the educational needs of the students they were created to serve" (Dyrli & Kinnaman, 1995, p. 46). The administration of St. Mary's School believes the truth of this statement and therefore requested the creation of the technology committee in 1994. Throughout a year of research the entire St. Mary's staff, spearheaded by the technology committee, learned much about the shifting paradigm in education and how St. Mary's School could adjust to this by building on the existing mission and goals and the current curriculum of the school. This adjustment culminated in the writing of a three-phased grant proposal to the Dekko Foundation. Each of the first two phases received funds which were matched by the St. Mary's Home and School Association.

This is only the beginning of a long and complicated process that will take St. Mary's School into the 21st century. All stakeholders firmly believe that no one is able to describe completely and accurately what the school will be like at that

time. The administration is well aware that the staff must be willing to learn and change, to develop and experiment, if it is to serve present and future students. The administration must also seek continuous funding for technology projects. Living in a "transforming era," when "the working assumptions on which people have depended become so inappropriate that they break down and are replaced by a more appropriate set (Zukowski, 1995) is exhilarating and frightening. As educators, the administration and staff of St. Mary's School must strive to stay abreast of this transformation, if they are to continue to fulfill the mission of the school to provide a "sound and full education of its students."

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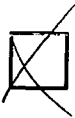**(202)337-6232; fax (202)333-6706; www.ncea.org**