

# School Consolidation Update

## K-8 Registration

### Registration

Very soon, we shall begin accepting applications for students wishing to enroll in grades K-8 at Marquette Academy. After the families that are presently enrolled in our school have an opportunity to apply, we shall accept applications from the general public beginning the following week. Preschool registration is presently underway. Call the school for details.

For the better part of a year, we have been gathering information and ideas from educators, parents, and successful members of the business community about how best to organize the Academy. It is not altogether unlike laying out ideas for building a new home. We start with what we would like to see in the finished product and then reconcile that with the reality of our financial situation. Our three schools need a major reorganization in order to be financially sustainable for the long term. In reorganizing things, the first question we addressed was this: What population do we intend to serve? Will Marquette Academy be a school that primarily serves a population that can afford to pay the full cost of education – or will the school continue to serve the broader community of the Ottawa area? We opted for the latter.

It is important that our public understands the way our Catholic schools are funded. Our schools have three sources of revenue: tuition, parish subsidy, and donations. The cost of educating a child is far, far more than the amount we charge in tuition. Because our three sources of revenue have not been able to meet our ordinary expenditures, we faced the question of whether we should balance the budget by substantially raising revenue or by cutting costs. We believe the option of cutting costs is appropriate given our present economic environment and the financial realities of the population we serve. Our families will see a modest increase in tuition for next year, but we will sharply cut our expenses. (Tuition figures for the Academy will be available soon.) The savings will come from reducing our buildings and reducing our personnel. We believe things can be arranged in a way that will have us on a solid financial footing for the years ahead. By our cost-saving measures at the grade school level, we will realize a savings that will enable us to have some faculty members exclusively dedicated to working with our more advanced students as well as personnel who will focus on students needing additional time and attention. Some of our hiring decisions will be based on the number of students that actually enroll. In grades K-8, we anticipate having approximately twenty-eight students per class. Through the use of additional teachers for advanced students and through the use of teacher aides, we anticipate the student to adult ratio will be approximately 14:1.

Parents are encouraged to apply to the Academy early. As stated earlier, classes will be capped at approximately twenty-eight. When a class has reached capacity, a waiting list will be created. We will consider hiring an additional teacher if the waiting list reaches fifteen students for a given class. It is entirely possible that we will not be able to accommodate all who wish to attend.

On **Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>**, Marquette Academy will begin receiving applications for students who will be in grades K-8 from families who are presently enrolled at one of our two grade schools or at Marquette High School, or who have a child with a confirmed registration for next year's preschool. The following week, on **Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup>**, we will receive applications from the general public and applications will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Interest is expected to be high and parents are encouraged to apply earlier rather than later. If you are notified that your application is accepted, you must make a tuition down payment of \$100 per student in order to secure your place. This is *non-refundable*. Completed applications may be taken to the main office at St. Columba School, 1110 LaSalle Street, Ottawa, IL 61350.