

Archdiocese plans a new high school in Macomb

BY STAN DONALDSON
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

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The Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit said it would announce plans Monday to open a high school in northern Macomb County on the same site where Notre Dame High School dreamed of breaking ground. An order of Augustinian priests from the Chicago area is expected to run the school.

Officials close to the situation said it will be called St. Thomas Aquinas High School, and the Olympia Fields, Ill.-based Augustinians of the Midwest will run it. Calls to the Catholic order Friday were not returned.

The school, at St. Isidore Church in Macomb Township, will be sponsored by parishes in Macomb County, according to a news release Friday from the archdiocese.

Archdiocese spokesman Ned McGrath said the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Education, a fund-raising group, and an organization formed to bring a school to the county called the Macomb County Regional Catholic High, are helping with the proposal.

Disclosure of the potential school opening came a day after an attorney representing supporters of Notre Dame High School filed a complaint in Wayne County Circuit Court against Cardinal Adam Maida and the archdiocese. The complaint alleges they breached a contract agreement and defamed the school's character, among other charges.

A county judge signed a temporary restraining order Friday that will keep Notre Dame open until a hearing Thursday.

Though students are not in school, the order prevents the archdiocese from selling, leasing or transferring the Harper Woods school.

Tim Vervaecke, the school's development director, said Notre Dame wanted eventual approval to move to the Macomb Township site, and "the archdiocese told us we were in the running. But when it really came down to it, we weren't."

Notre Dame administrators held a rally at the school after final exams Friday to inform parents, teachers and students about the legal action. "Nobody is going to take your school away from you," attorney Dan Henry said to about 200 people in the school's gym.

Macomb County Regional Catholic High President Leonard Brillati said the closing of Notre Dame and 17 other Detroit-area Catholic schools, announced in March, has nothing to do with the proposal to build in Macomb.

McGrath said the archdiocese has not yet received the legal complaint and declined to comment on the matter.

Contact STAN DONALDSON at 586-469-4682 or donaldson@freepress.com. Staff writer Joe Swickard contributed to this report.

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