

Parents receptive to Catholic high school

Detroit Archdiocese proposing building in Macomb Township  
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From a mom with a 5-month-old baby in her arms to senior citizens, Macomb County residents Thursday expressed support for a plan to build a Macomb County Regional Catholic High School in Macomb Township.

If completed, it would be the first high school built in the Archdiocese of Detroit in 30 years.

The MCRCHS committee presented facts at the 90-minute public information session at St. Lawrence Catholic Church in Utica. Two-thirds of the meeting consisted of one question after another from residents about what the high school would be like and how it would be financed.

The committee noted that the new high school would be strongly Catholic in character, would have a blend of academics, sports and extracurricular activities, would be coed, and ultimately would enroll about 900 students. The 150,000-square-foot, two-story school would open with the ninth and 10th grades in autumn 2008 and add on the 11th and 12th grades the following two years.

The meeting drew about 200 people, about half men and about half women, ages ranging from the 20s to the 70s. Susan Schudt of Macomb Township, holding her sleeping 5-month-old baby, Lucie, in her lap, told the committee that she and her husband, Joe, have three other children, up through the age of 9, and are excited about the prospect of their two sons and two daughters going to the new high school.

"I'm really excited about this," she said afterward. "This is a wonderful opportunity for our children and all the children of this area. The new school is needed."

The proposal has been in the making for nine years.

The committee said the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit has offered the land, 190 acres on the north side of 23 Mile Road just west of North Avenue in Macomb Township. That offer, estimated to be worth \$3 million, is contingent upon almost all the building, landscaping and equipping funding of \$24 million being attained ahead of time in donations or pledges.

The expected geographic area of student draw would be not only central and northern Macomb County but also nearby areas of Oakland and St. Clair counties.

The committee said that while the school would be Catholic in character and strongly Catholic in membership, it also would nurture diversity by welcoming varied faiths, ethnic groups, races and cultures.

Committee members said that while most teachers would come from the laity; a religious order would be involved in the school. The committee said negotiations are in process with the Augustians, a teaching religious order of priests and brothers with high schools in Chicago and other cities. The order, based on the Rule of St. Augustine, administered the former Austin High School of Detroit.

Seven Catholic parishes of Macomb County are official sponsors of the proposed new regional high school -- St. Isidore, Macomb Township; St. John Vianney, Shelby Township; St. Therese of Lisieux, Shelby Township; St. Lawrence, Utica; St. Francis of Assisi, Ray Township; St. Mary Mystical Rose, Armada; and St. Peter, Mount Clemens. Other parishes were listed as supporters.

A list was provided those coming to the meeting of the committee members, 19 members of the laity and six diocesan priests, with committee president Leonard Brillati available at (586) 306-9611 for further information.