

Catholic schools form alliance

Collaborative will assess region's needs, possibly manage some school

By Scott Elliott

Staff Writer

Tuesday, October 02, 2007

DAYTON — With the formation of the Catholic Education Collaborative, the 21 Catholic schools and 27 parishes of the Dayton deanery hope to increase their collective buying power, fundraising prowess and academic achievement while setting a joint vision for the Catholic schools in the region.

"The Catholic Church cannot solve its issues on education at individual parishes and schools," said Bro. Raymond Fitz, the former president of the University of Dayton. "They have to work together to solve problems."

Primary goals will be securing Catholic education in the center city and guiding when and how schools will partner and potentially consolidate or close, depending on demographic trends.

Under the plan announced Monday, the collaborative will be a stronger, more interdependent partnership of Catholic schools that have operated in Dayton for most of the past century as a loose network of self-governing, church-based operations.

The deanery includes all of Montgomery County and parts of Greene and Miami counties. Ann Battes, superintendent of Catholic schools in Dayton, will also be president of the collaborative.

"Catholic education has always excelled, but the benchmarks that were used historically no longer works — local benchmarks," said Frank Hoge, retired Dayton-area managing partner for the former Coopers and Lybrand accounting firm, now called PricewaterhouseCoopers. "We need to be comparing to other countries. We're great now but we're looking at a different level of excellence."

The collaborative will be led by a board that includes Fitz, Hoge and Fr. Dave Brinkmoller, dean of the deanery. They envision some Catholic parishes turning over management of their schools to the collaborative within two years.

"We realize there will be some reconfigurations that are going to be needed in the future," Brinkmoller said. "We're not at the point yet where we have the information to know what the next moves will be."