

# School Feasibility News & Notes

Vol. 1 Issue 2

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## About News and

This newsletter and others that follow will briefly *summarize* key information produced by the School Task Force to inform the Parish Pastoral Council's decision making.

However - - all members of the community are urged to read the documents in full - there's no fluff, and all of the details have significance for us.

You can request print copies by phoning the Task Force/Parish Council message line: (425) 747-6770, Ext. 199 or view the documents on our parish website: [www.stmadsophie.org](http://www.stmadsophie.org).

## If We Build Will They Come?

Studies by the School Feasibility Task Force show that needs exist for an additional Catholic school on the Eastside. Our own survey in the parish of families with children of elementary school age and the comments from our Parish Town Hall Meetings this year show a high interest in a parish school.

It is believed that some families with children in neighboring parish schools would consider utilizing the St. Madeleine Sophie School, for children not already enrolled in a neighboring parish school; but no definitive figures are available for that to date. The pastors of Sacred Heart and St. Louise have informed us that 170 children from

some of our zip codes are enrolled in their schools.

It is clear that neighboring schools do have waiting lists for many grades. It is also clear that the present schools cannot accommodate all those that wish to attend them.

Baptismal data from the Archdiocese shows that over 60 infants per year were baptized at St. Madeleine's over the past four years. From the same Archdiocesan data, we know that many of our families with children being baptized in our parish switch parishes at or before the school age of their children.

From further study, we are learning that many families leave our parish and faith formation programs, in order to register early on school

waiting lists at neighboring parishes.



**If we do "build", we are convinced that they will come!**

## Community Input

Input and advice from the whole parish community is a vital supplement to the feasibility studies. Parishioners who took part in Town Hall meetings in February brought helpful insight and gave voice to several important issues and concerns within the community. You will find information responding to these in SFTF Report #3, along with (preliminary) findings & recommendations regarding

School Facilities and Financial Feasibility; and eye-opening information on why a parish school ministry is needed at St. Mad's.

Please! Keep talking to the Council! Or write out your thoughts and send them c/o the parish office. Help make sure nothing has been overlooked or left out that needs to be considered. If you see things from a different perspective, bring that to light. This is how

community works.

And most of all, please continually pray for guidance, wisdom, courage, charity and every other gift our parish needs in order to keep faith with our mission and serve God's people well.

## Does Catholic Elementary Education Really Make A

Although religious outcomes are more difficult to assess than academic results, there have been numerous studies to try to quantify the effectiveness of K-12 religious education.

In 1992, a Catholic University professor, John Convey, published an in depth analysis entitled “**Catholic Schools Make a Difference: Twenty Five Years of Research**”. Numerous findings support the assertion that Catholic adults were in fact more involved in the practice of their Faith if they were the product of Catholic education than were their peers who did not attend Catholic schools for any appreciable length of time.

Catholic elementary education

instills a subtle discipline of soul and body that becomes the basis for much of what we build on in later life.

Adult religious practices such as receiving the sacraments, daily prayer, regular Mass attendance, stewardship, charitable service works, and involvement in church related organizations proved to be higher in those Catholics who had attended Catholic schools.

These findings and similar local studies, and the support indicated in the response to the parish survey of February 2000 are among the important indicators the Pastoral Council is using to move steadily ahead toward a school.

**“Catholic elementary education instills a subtle discipline of soul and body that becomes the basis for much of what we build on in later life.”**

## What Model Will We Base The School On?

### ***A Rich Heritage***

The school will share fully in the rich heritage of Catholic tradition, with a curriculum informed by our Faith, church teaching, and values. At the same time, it will embrace our Church's modern call to graduate students who will successfully meet the challenges and opportunities of life-long education in a more complex and diverse world.

Once completely operational, the Preschool through Grade 8 program will be fully approved and accredited to take its place as a vital segment of the parish's total educational ministry.

It will serve as a unique and dynamic tool bringing all parish members to a more comprehensive understanding of living out our gospel call.

### ***Academic Goals***

Among the school's academic goals is the student's successful mastery of skills enabling a smooth transition to high school and beyond. We

seek to be welcoming, inclusive and responsive to the needs of parish families, especially recognizing the economic and cultural diversity of those wishing to enroll in the program.

Special emphasis will be given to recruiting staff at all levels who themselves are active and informed Catholics and are skilled in instructing students within a broad range of learning abilities. Class size is seen as crucial in meeting our goals. An average class size of 24 is our planning target.

### ***Entry Levels***

It is expected that on the way toward reaching full capacity, the program will begin with the most recognizable entry levels (e.g., P, K, 1 and possibly 6), phasing in the remainder as demand increases.

### ***Tuition Plan***

The tuition plan will be administered so that no parish family legitimately desiring a Catholic education will be turned away for financial reasons.

### ***An Outstanding Catholic Parish***

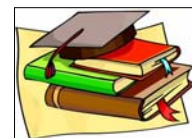
### ***Elementary Program***

A thriving St. Madeleine Sophie School will include all of the features one would expect in an outstanding Catholic parish elementary program: meaningful community service, active and involved parents assisting in all aspects of the parish and its school, CYO sports, quality liturgical experiences, and so much more.

Visit our parish web site for a comprehensive look at all aspects of the plan for a parish school.

**[www.stmadsophie.org](http://www.stmadsophie.org)**

Copies of the School Feasibility Task Force documents prepared for the Pastoral Council may also be obtained from the parish office or on the website.



## Lake Heights Site Will Not Be Available

The School Task Force has been investigating a wide range of possibilities for an initial school location, both on our parish campus and at nearby sites. One attractive option was the former elementary school property in Lake Hills, currently leased by the Bellevue School District to the Lake Heights YMCA.

Two buildings at this site were to become available in 2004, and the YMCA has expressed interest in having us locate our parish school there. The School District has, however, elected to retain the two buildings for their own use, which takes them off the market as an option for a school site.

The parish will continue to study all options for an interim school location.

We are investigating the costs and benefits of leased modular classrooms here on our own property and are pursuing other possibilities for renting nearby space.

Further issues of this newsletter will keep you apprised of the findings.

**You can find all the reports and findings of the School Task Force by going to our website:**  
[www.stmadsophie.org](http://www.stmadsophie.org)

## Contact Information:

### Write the Pastoral Council at:

4400 130th Place S.E.  
Bellevue, WA 98006

### Post your thoughts on the website:

Www.stmadsophie.org and click on School Task Force. We will post comments, questions and concerns on the website anonymously.

### Leave a Phone Message:

425-747-6770 ext. 199

- ◆ Say what you want the Council to consider
- ◆ Leave name and number for a call back and/or to speak with someone in person

### Request Print Materials:

Call the parish office: 425747-6770 ext. 104 or leave a message on ext. 199 or email:  
[Loretta@stmadsophie.org](mailto:Loretta@stmadsophie.org)

### Contact Fr. Jim Picton or a School Task Force Member.

Contact information for Task Force Members is listed in the School Feasibility Report and on the web.

Here are a few:

#### Fr. Jim Picton:

[Frjim@stmadsophie.org](mailto:Frjim@stmadsophie.org)  
425-747-6770 ext. 102

#### Bruce Laing:

[Blaing2@comcast.net](mailto:Blaing2@comcast.net)

#### Michael Ensminger:

[Michael.ensminger@par3.com](mailto:Michael.ensminger@par3.com)

### Resources:

**NCEA-National Catholic Education Association:** [www.ncea.org](http://www.ncea.org)

**Archdiocese of Seattle Schools:**  
[www.seattlearch.org](http://www.seattlearch.org)

**St. Madeleine Sophie Parish School Task Force:**  
[www.stmadsophie.org](http://www.stmadsophie.org)

*We're on the web!*  
[www.stmadepsophie.org](http://www.stmadepsophie.org)



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425-747-6770 ext. 199

Bellevue, WA, 98006

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Pastoral Council

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