



Article - Vision Statement #3:

"We will provide a strong, continuous Catholic and academic experience commensurate with the National Shrine Parish."

The guest writer for this week's article is Michael Keith, chair of the Unified School Board.

As Monsignor Easton has described previously in the Herald, the Master Plan had its roots in the Unified School Board as a way to coordinate the many changes and activities needed for the ongoing development of our parish educational system. At the start of the process, it became clear that a more comprehensive approach was needed since the facilities that support our educational mission also support a large number of other parish functions. Likewise, the church and its associated facilities are at the core of support for our educational activities throughout the parish. After all, our education as a parish community never ends. It continues with every Mass, every parish function, and every sacrament that we observe. It was with this basic vision of a continuous educational experience in mind that led to the process of developing the Master Plan.

Two of the supporting ideas within the Vision Statement are: 1.) that we develop a parish model of education, and 2.) that the schools, religious education, and parent clubs will become four elements within the body of Catholic education at the parish. The remaining ideas supporting the third Vision Statement include: 3.) that enrichment of the current educational experiences will require expansion to accommodate larger groups and activities, and 4.) that we will integrate the 13 Mile campus into the parish system. The Master Plan is a road map toward the future of our parish community as an educational entity. It lays the groundwork for potential expansion, efficiency, safety, and integration.

The idea of a model of education is not only for our parish and its standing as a National Shrine, but for the community and Vicariate. It is anticipated that the Vicariate will depend more heavily on Shrine into the future as resources and demographics change. The model not only includes the facilities associated with Catholic education, but the goals and mission statements within the strategic plan for the parish.

The preliminary Master Plan contains elements for expansion at both our school campuses. Proposed changes include: new facilities for sports activities, physical fitness, multi-use classrooms, science labs, performing arts, conference rooms, common gathering areas, and an increase in parking spaces, just to name a few.

The plan also includes ideas for increased efficiencies and safety in the day-to-day operations of the facilities. These include multi-purpose use of office, meeting, and conference room spaces, improved flow through the facilities with the use of new stairways, elevators and accessible entries, as well as improved traffic flow surrounding the buildings. Traffic and parking needs are evident when dropping off children at the school buildings, trying to park for Masses, or at other major parish functions. These additions and improvements allow for the increased academic opportunities of the students in our schools and religious formation programs. Moreover, the preliminary Master Plan more easily facilitates use by members of the entire parish community to enhance their widely varying activities, which makes this parish a most unique and enjoyable place to worship.

Only a few of the many ideas included in the Master Plan have been mentioned in this article. However, I believe that the vision of an inclusive educational experience befitting our status as a

National Shrine, along with the needs at the parish level, is well supported. I encourage everyone to review the proposals, think of ways in which the ideas may enhance your never-ending "educational" experience, and explore ways to involve yourself in this exciting time in our parish history.