

Archdiocese of Detroit

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In Detroit and Suburbs

Nine Catholic Schools Close; Five Others Merge into Two Schools

Declining enrollments and budget pressures have forced the closure of seven elementary and two Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit. An additional five elementary schools have merged into two schools. The communities affected are Detroit, Eastpointe, Harper Woods, Madison Heights, Redford, and Romulus.

“All of these changes are the result of a planning process that’s been underway at the parish and vicariate levels for months, in some cases, years,” said Sr. Mary Gehringer, OSM, superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of Detroit.

“The decisions to close or merge were based on recommendations made at the local level. Given the demographics, projected enrollments and financial situations of the schools, it was determined they could no longer be scholastically viable,” Gehringer explained. “The school communities were informed of the decisions, as they were made, during the course of the spring.”

The following is a listing of the schools that have closed or merged. The numbers in parentheses represent enrollment for the 2003-04 school year just ended. Enrollment projections for the 2004-05 school year were even lower.

The seven elementary schools that have closed are Our Lady Queen of Peace, Harper Woods (94); St. Agatha, Redford (158); St. Aloysius, Romulus (56); St. Christopher, Detroit (63); St. Gerard, Detroit (130); St. Veronica, Eastpointe (145); and St. Vincent Ferrer, Madison Heights (110).

The two high schools that have closed are Benedictine in Detroit (150) and St. Katharine Drexel in Redford (72).

The five elementary schools that have merged into two schools are all located in Detroit. St. Juliana (154), St. Jude (128), and Eastside Vicariate (97) are now East Catholic Elementary. The school has two campuses, one at the former St. Jude site and the other at the former Eastside Vicariate site.

Our Lady Queen of Angels Elementary School is both the location and name of the school that resulted from the merger of St. Cunegunda (121) and Our Lady Queen of Angels (49).

Catholic students were in the minority at most of the schools that have closed or merged. Enrollment at the schools totaled 1,357 students and represented approximately 3.1 percent of the nearly 43,600 students enrolled in archdiocesan schools during the 2003-04 school year.

Students from the closed schools who wish to continue a Catholic education have already transferred to other parochial schools. Gehringer indicated that the sponsoring parishes of four of the closed schools would be leasing their buildings to charter schools: St. Scholastica (Benedictine High School), St. Gerard, St. Veronica, and St. Vincent Ferrer.

Even with these closures and mergers, there will be 139 schools in operation in six counties of the Archdiocese of Detroit during the coming 2004-05 school year. For information about all of the Catholic schools located in the Archdiocese of Detroit, call 313-237-5770 or visit www.aodonline.org.

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