Monsignor Takes Issue with Report on Schools

Phasing Out of Diocesan Schools Advocated


"The proof of the pudding must be performance, and the performance of Catholic schools has, on the whole, been above average," the monsignor said.

"This is substantiated by the results of high school placement tests of Science Research Associates, a nationally prominent testing organization, given in the diocese of this year," he said.

The test as given in eighth grade, sixth month. The diocesan average showed that the pupils tested averaged an ability of reading, ninth grade, third month; language arts, eighth grade, sixth month; social studies, eighth grade, ninth month; math, ninth grade, second month; science, ninth grade, third month.

COMPOSITE SCORE

The composite score of pupils in 25 elementary schools, eighth grade, urban and rural, in eight civil parishes were eighth grade, ninth month, the test being given in the third month of the eighth year, and all pupils tested averaged three months above the national average, he said.

"The presence of some 14,000 in our parochial school systems seems to indicate a powerful interest on the part of parents in the quality of education the Catholic schools are dispensing," he added.

"A key consideration in assessing the value of Catholic education in the diocese is one far removed from the narrow yardstick of certification and degrees," he said.

"The academic performance of graduates of Catholic schools does not present such a dismal picture," he added.

The monsignor said the publication of "what was admittedly a private 11-page report was premature in the sense that had the report been assembled for the purpose of presenting a complete picture to the public it would have included many of the elements that it did.

He said, "it would seem a half-baked measure to take such a private report intended for a single specific private study and issue it to the public as though it were a complete statement of the Catholic school system. It is not."

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

He said, "The educational performance at St. Aloysius School" where the report originated by what was then a parish education committee of the diocesan lay congress, "is one of the finest in the diocese of Baton Rouge. It would seem ironic that the question of closing Catholic schools should arise in such a successful context," he said.

"One of the healthy indications evolving in the matter is the fact that former parish education committee of the lay congress at St. Aloysius did get a chance to voice its sentiment even though it was engulfed by an overwhelming majority of parents who disagreed with the committee and this is what the lay congress is actually trying to do, to provide a hearing, not only for the vast number of parents and families who have a deep dedication to the Catholic schools, but also to the minority who fortunately feel free to dissent as the tiny minority in St. Aloysius Parish has done," he said.

The 11-page report which included the recommendation to discontinue all parochial schools in the diocese of Baton Rouge, was submitted to the diocesan education committee by the St. Aloysius committee.

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