



Faith in Education



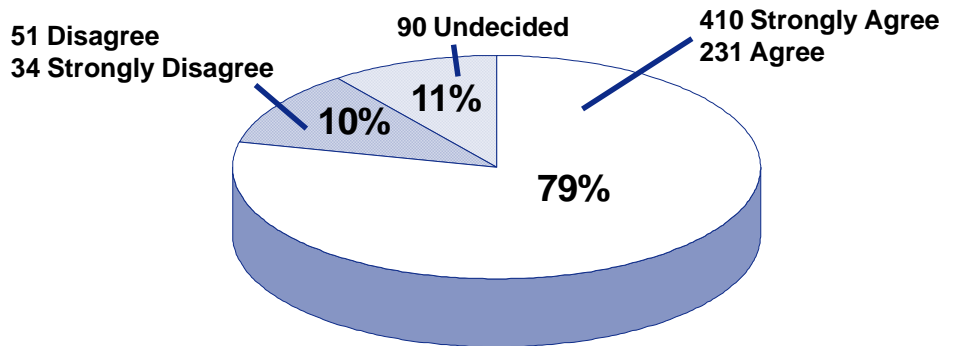
School Survey results in: wide margin of support

Last fall, all parishioners received a survey asking them to indicate their preferences for Catholic school education. An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that the time has come for an elementary school at St. Francis.

Approximately 800 parishioners returned their surveys, a surprisingly high response for a mailing of this sort. While the questions varied in content, most referred to Catholic schooling and dealt with the practical ways to finance such a venture at St. Francis. The most significant question in the survey:

I believe St. Francis would be a good location for a new Catholic elementary (K-8) school

was met with a positive response from **79%** of those completing the survey.



Inside

Message from Fr. Dan
Detailed survey results

Full details and a breakdown of responses are inside.

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

I believe that a Franciscan School, one that embraces the unique charism of our patron St. Francis of Assisi, would be an important addition to the mission of our community. As a result of many months of discussion and reflection, I have come to agree with that statement which appeared in the *Catholic School Questionnaire* sent to each of your homes last fall. I would like to tell you why.

It's my belief that education must develop what is best in children and help them become not only clever, but good. It cannot treat children as one-dimensional, with minds that remain indifferent to the critique of the heart. For me, education is essentially a moral endeavor. Teachers must teach students to think critically, not as an end in itself, but as a means to learn and to practice values that will support them as they make their way through the puzzling moral mazes of our contemporary society.

Students must be encouraged to be just, so that they will learn how to engage in self-conscious discussion about important moral issues and learn to make good judgments about what ought to be done as they confront the moral dilemmas of their culture. Education, above all, must care not just for a student's mind and body. It must care for a student's soul. In short, I believe that faith is the fundamental element that ought shape education.

That being the case, the question for me as your pastor is: ***How best can we assure that faith is the fundamental element that is shaping the education of our children here at St. Francis?***

No doubt, there are those in our community who believe in the value of public education and maintain that the religious dimension of the educational process can best be addressed in the home with the support of a strong program of faith formation in the parish. This perspective must be respected. This option will continue to be very important to our parish.

However, as increasing number of parents in our community are requesting another option. In listening to them, I believe they realize their moral obligation as parents to educate their children in the knowledge of religion and good habits, as well as piety toward God. They are asking for greater help from the parish in moral instruction of their children. They want their children to learn in an environment that emphasizes that God is the source and end of human existence. They want their children reminded daily, in geography class as well as religion class, about their purpose and destiny as God's creatures.

I believe the time has come for the parish to respond to this request. Last December the School Task Force recommended to our Pastoral Council that an Elementary School be built at St. Francis. This recommendation was contingent upon the acquisition of land and the development of a sound financial plan by the Parish and Diocesan Finance Committees. The Pastoral Council endorsed this recommendation and advised me to continue to proceed with plans for a school. I established a School Board to oversee these plans.

While I know there are major hurdles to overcome, including acquisition of land and financing the school, it is my firm hope that we will open the doors of a parish school here at St. Francis by August of 2000. In the next few months you will be receiving several *Faith in Education* school newsletters. They will contain articles about various aspects of this new ministry. We have also planned Parish School Information Meetings to present all the information we now have about a school and to listen and respond to your questions.

I believe the Holy Spirit is guiding our parish as we approach the third millennium. That Spirit speaks most directly to me through your voices. I will continue to do my best to listen to each and every voice in this rapidly growing community of ours with the trust that good decisions will be made for our future.

Yours sincerely,

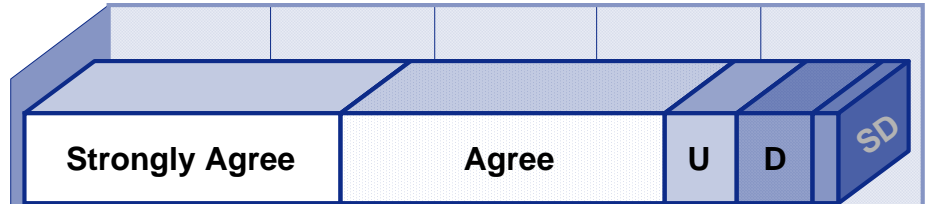


Daniel T. Kenna, O.F.M.

School Survey Questions

Part 1: Agree/Disagree Responses

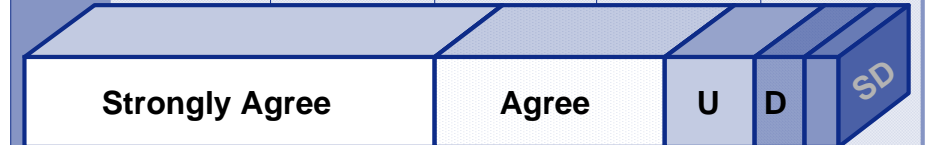
Parochial education is an essential part of the Catholic Church's mission.



Catholic schooling is an important way to help parents educate and nurture their children in their faith.



I believe St. Francis would be a good location for a new Catholic elementary (K-8) school.



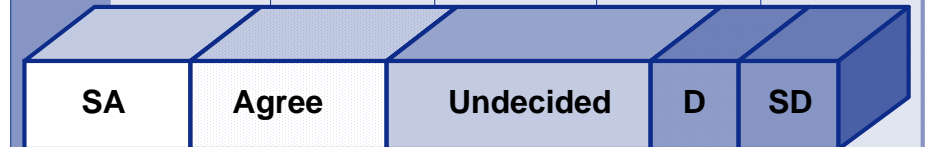
I believe a Franciscan School (one that embraces the unique charism of our patron St. Francis of Assisi) would be an important addition to the mission of our community.



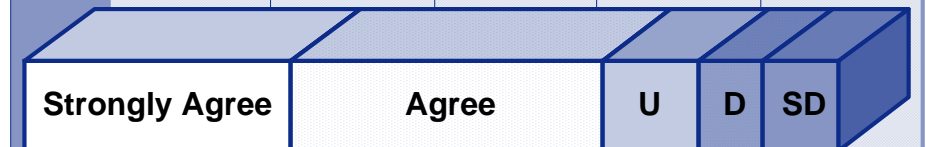
The value of Catholic Schools justify the cost.



I would be willing to make a financial pledge during a capital campaign to help build a Franciscan school at our parish.



I would be in favor of using a portion of regular parish income to help financially support a school at St. Francis.



I would be in favor of using a portion of regular parish income to provide tuition assistance for needy students.



0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

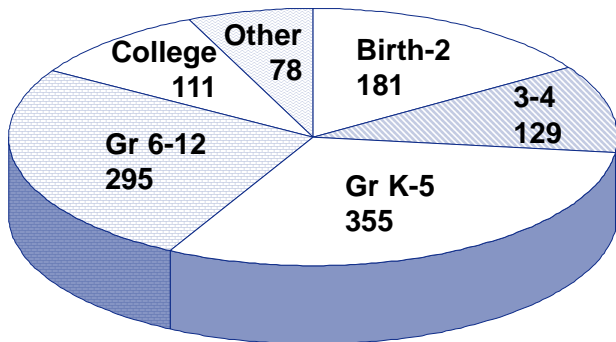
Legend: SA=Strongly Agree U=Undecided D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree



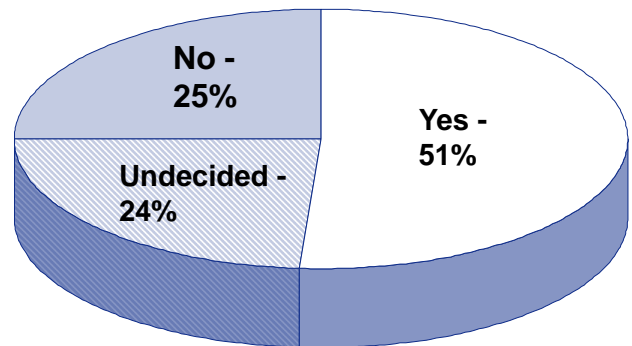
School Survey Questions

Part 2: Other responses

How many children do you have in each age category?



If a Franciscan elementary school were to be added to the parish would you plan to enroll your children?



I do support a Franciscan elementary school in the parish because (check no more than 3):

Catholic values and instruction	476
Academic excellence	462
Christian/Franciscan environment	410
Discipline	239
Safe environment	183
Increased parent involvement	111
Athletic opportunity	13
Miscellaneous	21
Total checked	1915

I do not support a Franciscan elementary school in the parish because (check no more than 3):

I cannot afford the tuition	90
I prefer public elementary school	74
Academic program not competitive	62
Negative parochial school experience	41
I am concerned with church finances	35
Athletics are better in public schools	26
I prefer supporting other causes	21
My child has special needs	19
I prefer other private elementary schools	10
Miscellaneous	19
Total checked	397