"If we do nothing, in the next three to five years some schools will close," he said.

Options
Taking advantage of the Archdiocesan resource system, possible options were developed, he said, based on the steering committee’s recommendations for the pastors’ requests.

Current programming was reviewed at each of the six schools and models were developed for enhanced programming and staffing.

Cost projections were then developed based on 11 system options. Duffy said, with the largest cost savings coming when schools close.

In the end, the pastors recommended two options:

Option B, which designates St. Francis Borgia Grade School as the middle school for grades six through eight and the other five schools continue to operate serving kindergarten through fifth grade with enhanced educational programming.

Under Option K, which keeps Borgia as a middle school, and Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Gertrude as K-5 schools with enhanced educational programming.

Under Option K, the other three schools would remain parish-run schools, but not be part of the new system. Those students would be eligible for the three schools that would make up the new system. Staff also could apply for positions within the new system.

How long those parish-run schools would be able to sustain operations is not known, Duffy acknowledged later in the meeting.

One other option, which the steering committee recommended, is Option B1, which keeps Borgia as the middle school and the other five schools open as K-5 schools, but the educational program would remain relatively the same.

School system
Under all options, the schools (except the parish-run schools in Option K) would operate under a regional school system.

This includes a standardized curriculum/instructional program and a calendar for all schools in the system.

All administration, teachers and support staff would also become employees of the regional system. All employees would include reimbursement to parishes for use of space/classrooms.

Christian service or other-ship requirements would be established for families to qualify for a parish subsidy.

Preschool, after-care and athletics/extra-curricular programs would continue under all three options in some form, but details were not provided at the meeting.

The name for the regional system was not discussed either.

Enhanced programming
Enhanced educational programming would include non-teaching administrators. Some schools currently have administrators who also teach.

There would be a director of faith formation, instructional coaches, technology coordinators, school counselors and nurses.

Quality degree and certified administrators and teachers would be hired in all positions. Currently, there are some staff members who do not hold certification.

Under enhanced programming, there would be increased contact time with students; enhanced technology/infrastructure and integration; and improved climate and culture.

The presenters said only Option B1, which keeps programming relatively the same, would result in a cost savings, estimated at $250,000.

The other two options would both result in higher costs due to enhanced programming.

At the end of the presentation, people could submit questions in written form that were collected by the presenters.

Next steps
Following the other town hall meetings, all of the questions submitted, will be reviewed and