

Feasibility and Planning Study Presentation for The Diocese of Alexandria Rapides Parish

March 2008



Community Counselling Service

Fund Raising/Public Relations/Research

Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

www.ccsfundraising.com

Goals and Objectives of the Study

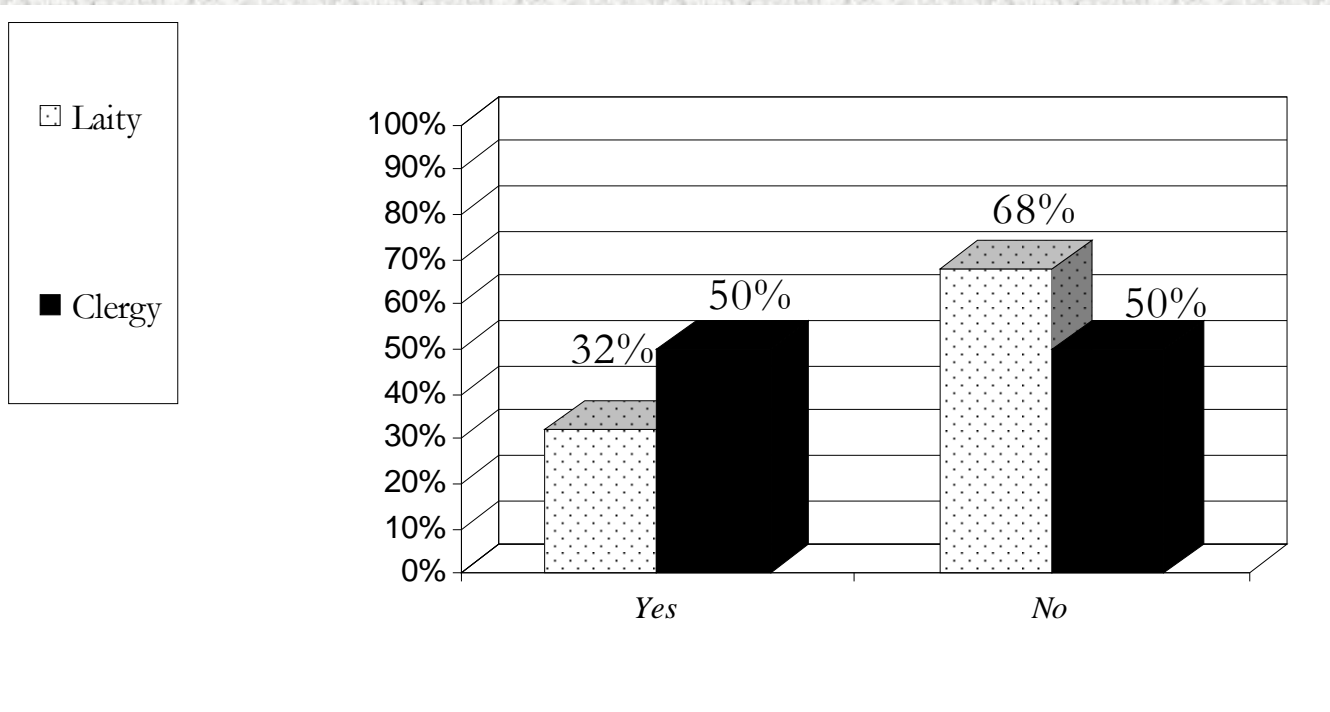
- Assess perceptions of the Diocese of Alexandria's proposed plans for strengthening Catholic education and formation, as suggested in the 2005 Catholic University of America planning study;
- Inform participants about the proposed plans and obtain additional feedback on options involving relocation and consolidation of schools, and choices for renovation and new construction of school facilities;
- Determine reactions to the proposed projects outlined in background information statements for Avoyelles and Rapides Parishes;
- Test proposed financial objective of \$6 million among Rapides Parish participants,
- Identify, educate, and cultivate potential leaders and major donors;
- Test the willingness of participants to lead, organize, make visits and provide financial support;
- Identify potential issues and obstacles to success and determine solutions.



Findings

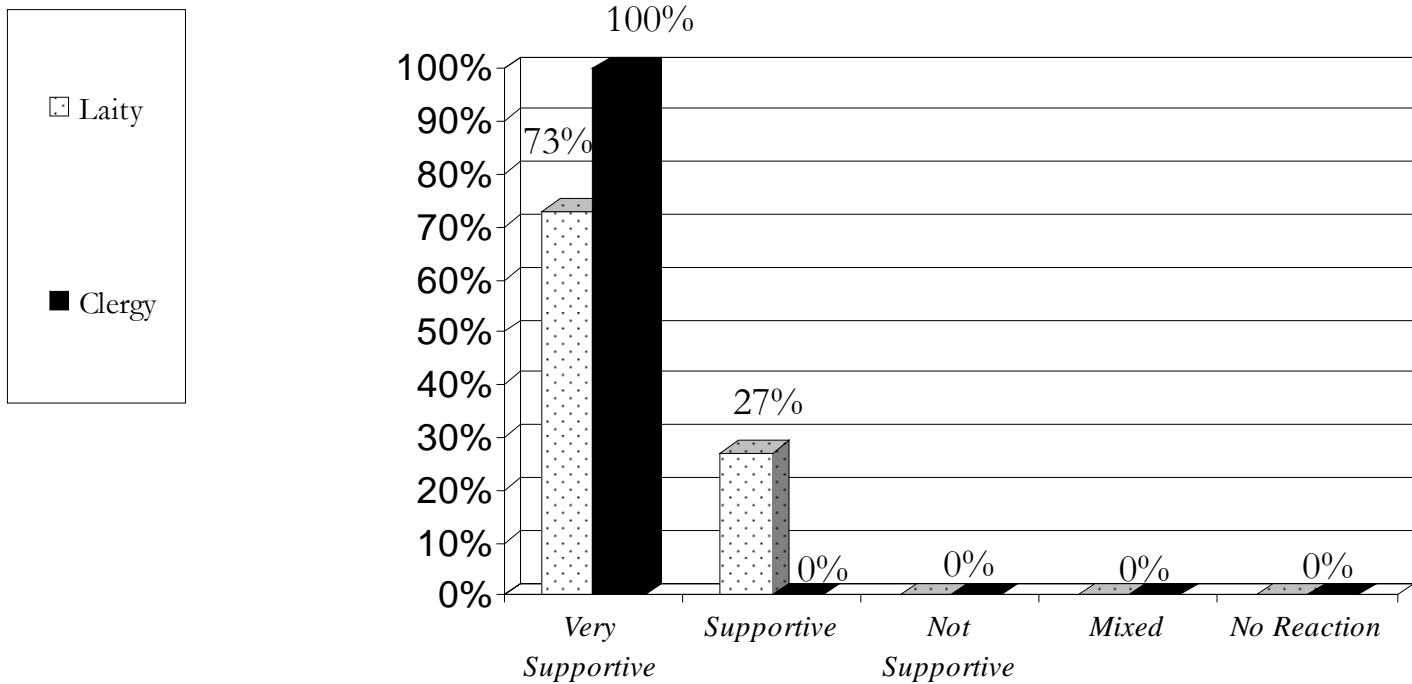
Prior to reading the preliminary background statement, did you participate in the Diocesan planning study for Catholic schools?

Rapides Parish



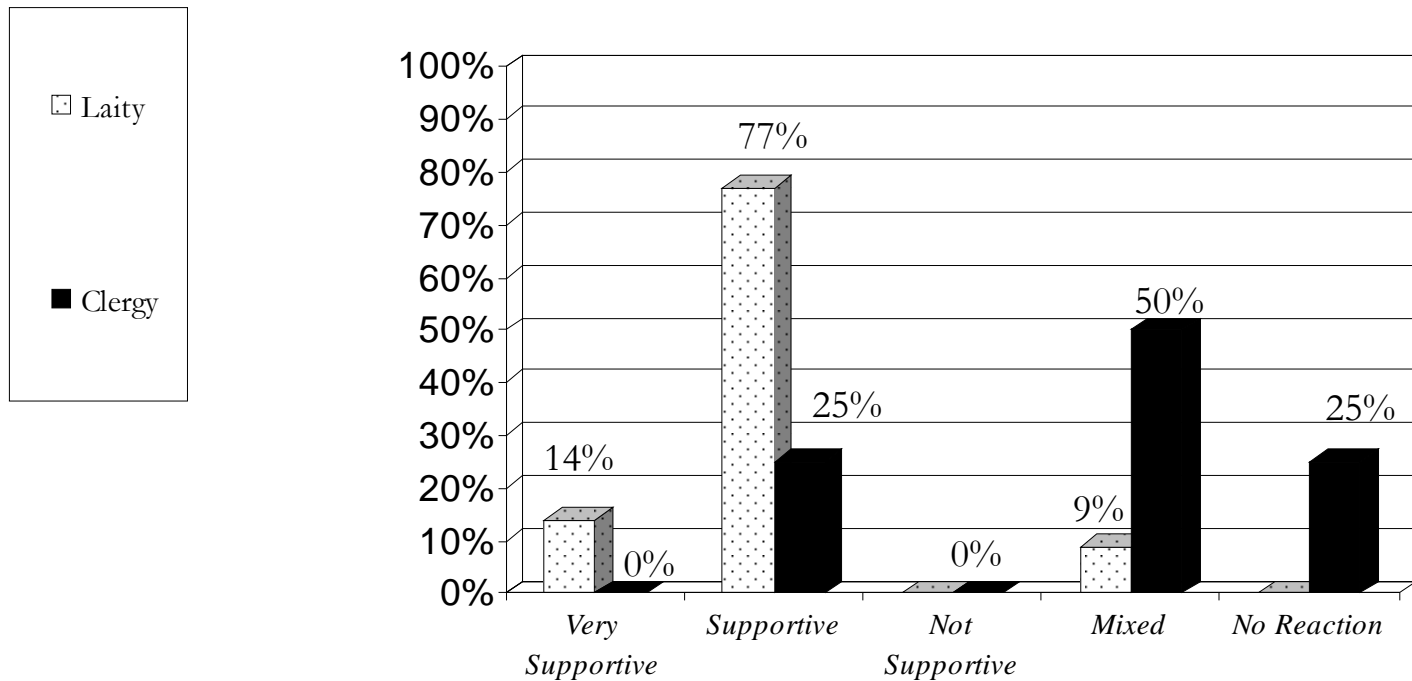
What is your overall reaction to the proposed plans for strengthening Catholic education and formation in the Diocese?

Rapides Parish



What is your overall reaction to the idea of conducting a major capital campaign effort to fund the proposed plans for Catholic education and formation?

Rapides Parish



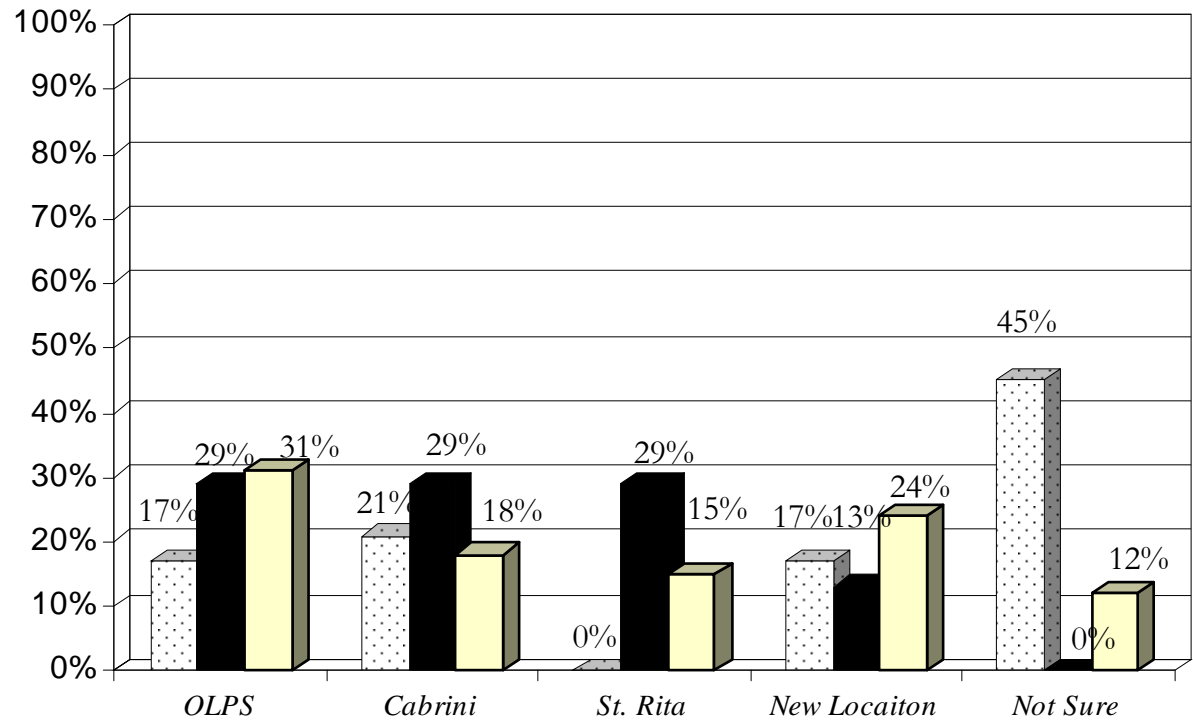
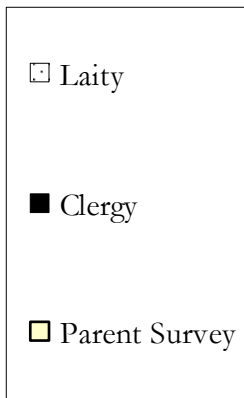
Are you in favor of . . .

Rapides Parish

	One	Two	Three	Not Sure
Having one, two or three pre-k through 6 th grade schools in Rapides Parish?				
Laity	18%	23%	14%	45%
Clergy	25%	25%	25%	25%
Parent Survey	19%	37%	25%	19%

What would be your preference as to the location of the reconfigured school(s)?

Rapides Parish



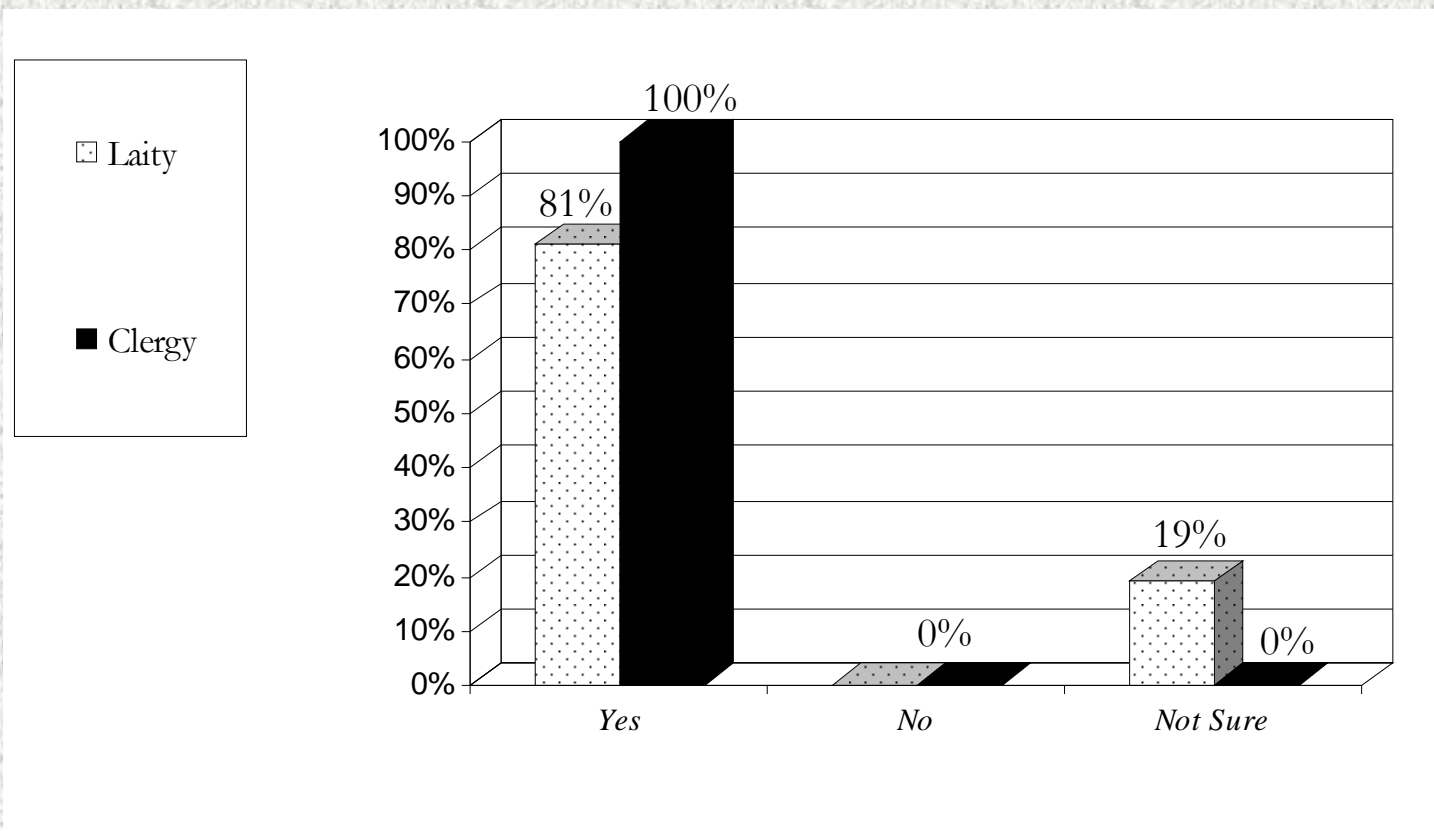
Would you . . .

Rapides Parish

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Support a Diocesan campaign to raise funds for renovation and upgrading Holy Savior Menard Central High School?			
Laity	86%	9%	5%
Clergy	100%	0%	0%
Parent Survey	70%	11%	19%
Be in favor of a campaign effort that allocated a portion of the funds raised to an endowment for improving teacher salaries and benefits across the Diocese?			
Laity	95%	5%	0%

The proposed campaign would likely involve raising funds in each church parish in a phase-by-phase approach: Would you support this approach in your parish?

Rapides Parish



Laity

If a major capital campaign is undertaken, would you . . .

Rapides Parish

	Yes	No	Possibly
Accept a leadership position?	14%	62%	24%
Solicit a few prospects?	19%	48%	33%
Consider making a gift?	91%	0%	9%
Recommend that plans for school renovation and construction in Rapides Parish move forward?	86%	5%	9%

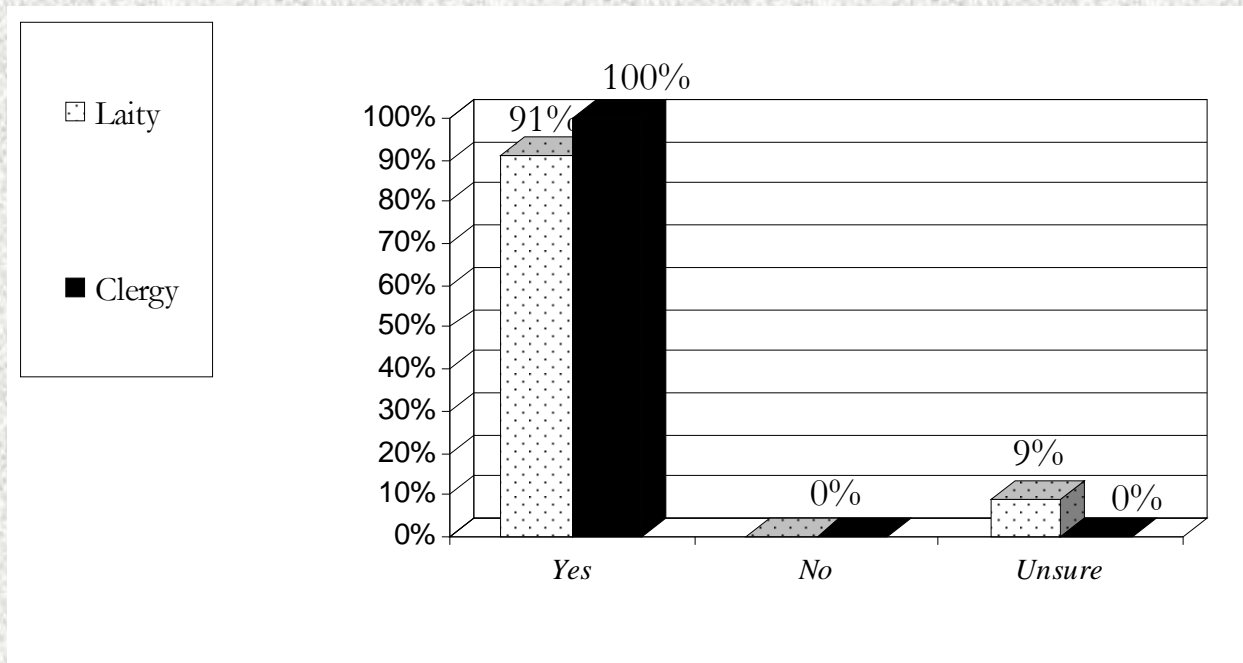
Clergy Would . . .

Rapides Parish

	Yes	No	Possibly
Other pastors in the Rapides church parishes support a major campaign effort?	25%	0%	75%
You speak about a campaign from the pulpit?	100%	0%	0%
You organize a leadership committee of campaign volunteers in your church parish?	75%	0%	25%
You be willing to solicit a few prospects in your church parish as part of a major gift effort?	75%	0%	25%
You consider making a personal gift to the campaign?	100%	0%	0%
You recommend that plans for school renovation and construction in Rapides Parish move forward?	100%	0%	0%

Would you consider a gift to the proposed campaign?

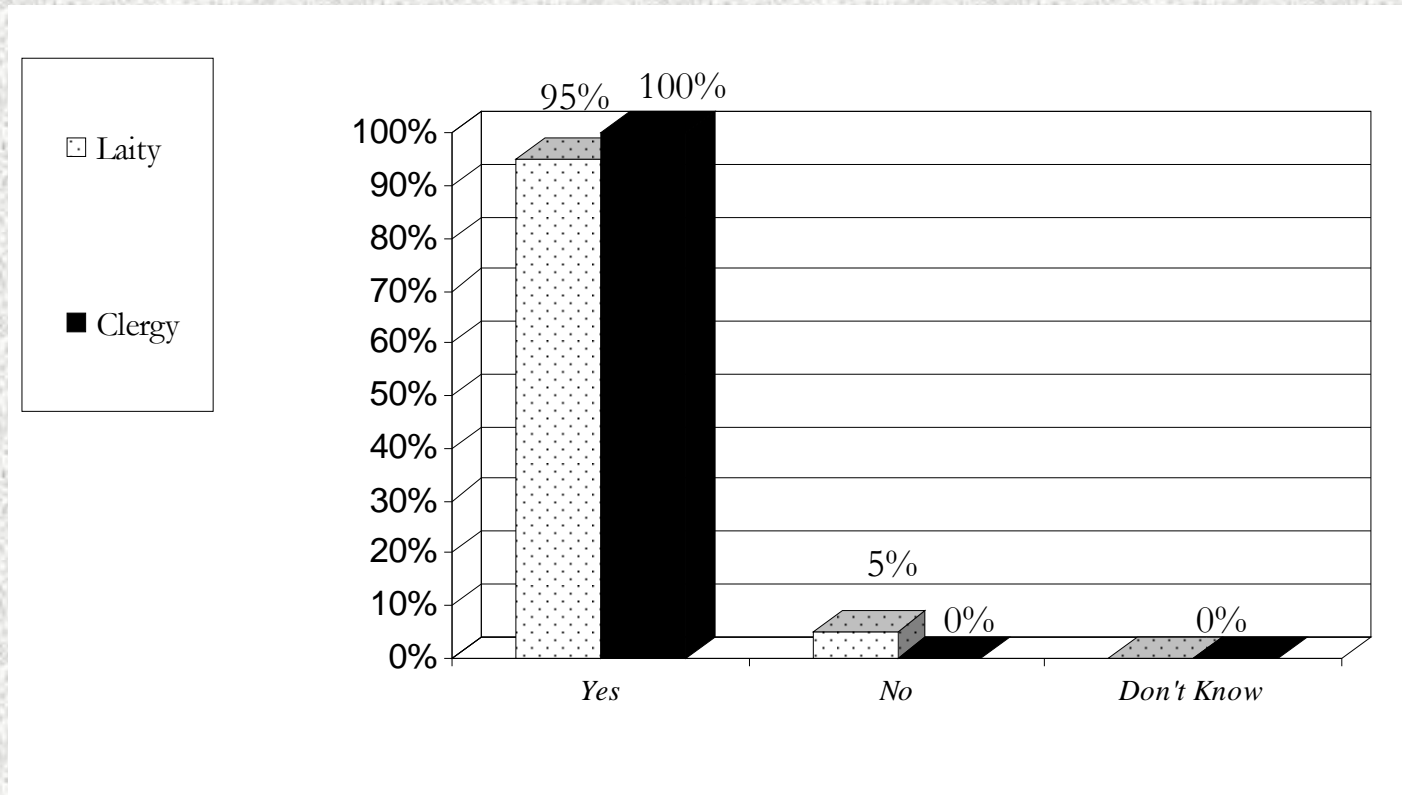
Rapides Parish



Of the seven (7) interviewees who gave an indication, the range of estimated gifts was from \$220,000 to \$340,000, with an average estimated gift of \$31,429 to \$48,571.

Do you foresee any obstacles or issues that would prevent the Diocese from conducting a successful capital campaign at this time?

Rapides Parish



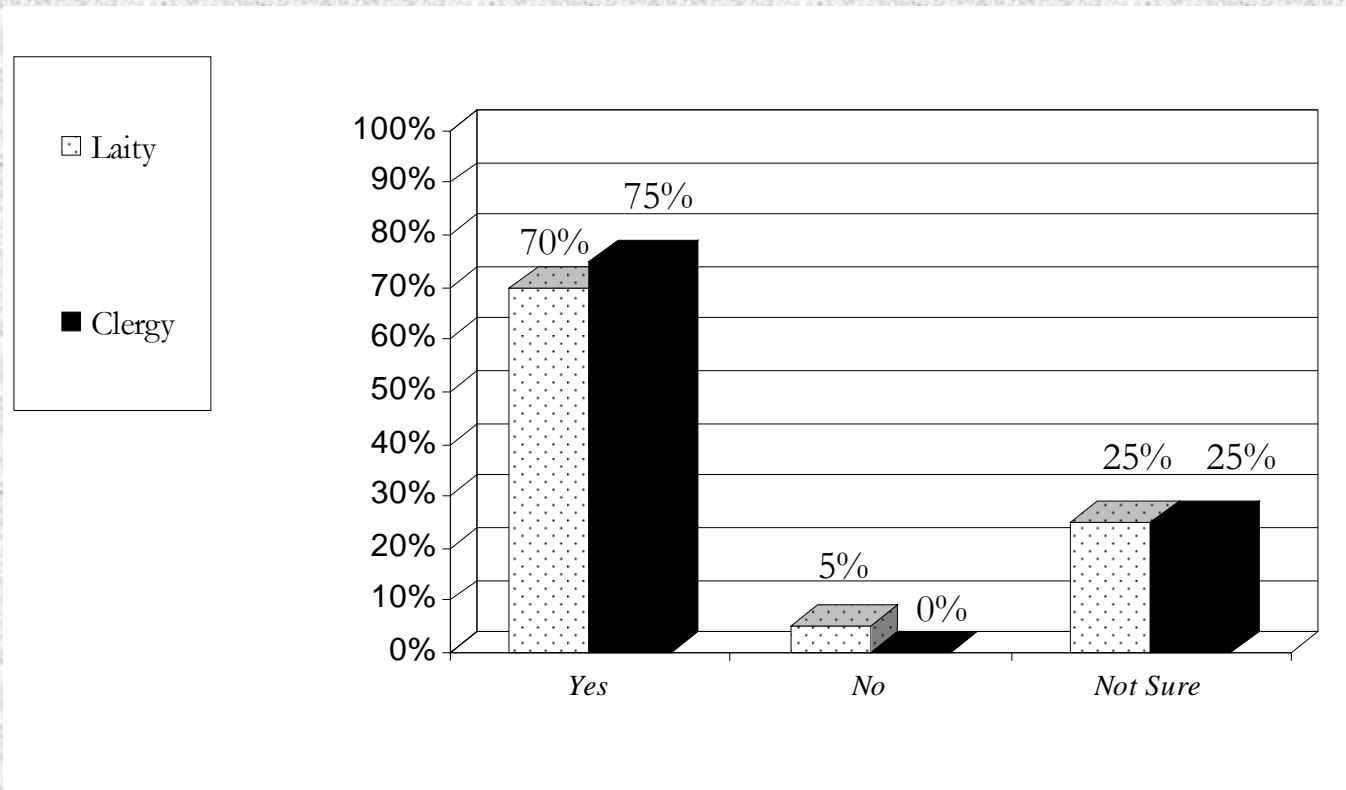
Obstacles or issues . . .

Rapides Parish

- # Challenges with elementary school loyalties.
- # Churches with schools not willing to give up what they have.
- # Lack of cooperation among priests.

Would you recommend that a \$6 million campaign be conducted?

Rapides Parish





Evaluation

Evaluation

Necessary elements for a successful campaign:

1. A detailed, persuasive case;
2. A group of strong, committed leaders and volunteers;
3. A sufficient pool of prospects available to the Diocese with the potential to make gifts at leadership and major gift levels;
4. An effective campaign plan and timetable;
5. Experienced professional staff to conduct the campaign.

Case for Support

- # Final decisions regarding school locations and consolidation need to be made.
- # Lack of detailed information on project costs evoked concern about support for campaigns, but the commitment to Catholic education is strong.
- # Addressing the need to improve teacher salaries and benefits is broadly endorsed, but not necessarily through an endowment effort.
- # Transparency and accountability for how the funds will be used is necessary to make a strong case.

Leadership & Volunteers

An organized volunteer network will be needed to conduct campaign activity in the church parishes. Pastoral support for a campaign will also be vitally important to educate and motivate all members of the church parish community.

Prospects for Giving

- # There is some consensus among respondents about those who are seen as being the best possible donors in each civil parish.
- # Initial gift indications are not sufficient to establish the momentum and impact needed for reaching the stated goal \$6 million in Rapides Parish.

Campaign Readiness

The most common issues or obstacles to a campaign's success cited were:

- ❖ Territorial competitiveness between church parishes (in Rapides).
- ❖ Competing campaigns
- ❖ The current economic downturn



Recommendations

Recommendations

- ❖ The Diocese of Alexandria should be encouraged by the very positive results of a multi-faceted feasibility study. CCS believes there is a willingness and a certain degree of readiness for campaign efforts to improve the quality of Catholic education in both Avoyelles and Rapides Parishes.
- ❖ At this time, however, CCS cannot recommend campaign efforts to raise \$6 million in Rapides Parish. A campaign for a lesser amount could be organized if necessary decisions are made regarding project priorities in the Diocese.

Recommendations

- ❖ There is greater consensus for conducting a campaign for Holy Savior Menard High School than for consolidating the elementary schools at OLPS, Cabrini, and St. Rita. While a campaign for the \$2 million in suggested improvements to the school could be done, in our opinion it would be advisable to assess the overall needs of the school and determine if a more comprehensive effort with a larger goal would be wiser.

Recommendations

- ❖ Individual church parish controversies aside, the most forward-looking plan for ensuring quality Catholic elementary education in Rapides Parish would be to build a new elementary school for all students from pre-K through 6th grade. The location most frequently cited in the study was along the Rte 28 corridor. Also mentioned were the land adjacent to St. Rita's and the land at St. Frances Cabrini.
- ❖ A campaign for a new elementary school campus for students from the three church parish schools would likely eclipse the \$4 million estimate used in the study and thus, would be most challenging, particularly if church campaigns being considered at this time are permitted to move ahead.

Recommendations

- ❖ A plan that would allow OLPS to conduct a campaign for improvements to its school would narrow the need for consolidation to St. Rita's and St. Frances Cabrini's schools. With buildings and land available at Cabrini, it appears to be the most practical choice for a consolidated school. An evaluation of its physical plant done during the summer months or with a temporary relocation to the St. Rita facilities would be advisable before determining the best course of action.

Recommendations

- ❖ CCS remains committed to providing assistance to the Diocese in determining the best fund raising solutions in pursuit of their educational system goals. At this time, we believe that alternative considerations regarding school locations and capacity must be evaluated and major decisions made before specific campaign recommendations can be given. We are happy to continue as a partner in this process.