GF Catholic School System Proposal

Context: There is a rich history of Catholic education and three excellent schools with dedicated, caring educators. However, the two elementary schools have lost enrollment share and have struggled to break even the past few years while competing for the same families and teachers. Even this year, both schools are using savings or are counting on high collection numbers in order to make their budget work. Both schools are located in aging facilities, neither of which is large enough to house the combined preK-8th grade student population. Meanwhile, the schools are not driving students to Central Catholic HS, which sits in a financially precarious position. Previous studies and task forces have recommended different levels of consolidation. The Task Force unanimously agreed that the current system needs to be altered.

Recommendation:
1. The schools should build a new preK-8th grade building housing all students next to Central Catholic HS when they are able to raise the money.
2. A centralized form of governance should be set up with a lay board. The board should represent all 3 entities and should be charged with developing school policies, budget and financial matters, marketing and fundraising, strategic planning, and hiring a Chief Administrator (if/when needed).
3. The Holy Spirit school building should be utilized as the pre-K-4th grade site. This would allow the schools to pursue growth in the early grade years and utilize the large playground.
4. The OLL school building should be utilized as the 5th-8th grade site. This would allow the schools to present an alternative to the public schools and utilize the larger gym and locker rooms.
5. The following are assumptions of the Task Force:
   a. The current parishes (HS and OLL) would continue to support the schools financially and spiritually at the same levels.
   b. The other two parishes in GF would be invited to participate in this endeavor.
   c. The lay board should be set up immediately and would be charged with developing a one-year plan, a five-year plan, and a twenty-year plan for all aspects of the transition.
   d. We will try to preserve employment for all current faculty and staff. We will depend on the current faculty and staff for input to collaborate on all internal matters related to the new elementary configuration.
6. Timeline:
   b. If we began work this fall, the reconfiguration could occur in the fall of 2017.