

# LC community challenges administration

## Information meeting gets heated

BY JOE BOLAND  
For The Reporter

LANSDALE— Monday night the Lansdale Catholic community delivered its message loud and clear to the administration.

Parents, students and alumni gathered in the school's cafeteria to voice their opinions and concerns on the school's decision to join the Philadelphia Catholic League, and it was very evident that the majority of those in attendance, especially those who spoke, were extremely upset.

The meeting, which was organized by the community, was mediated by the administration and members of the advisory board in response to the rumored rally that was to be taking place.

Principal Linda Robinson kicked things off with a Power Point presentation outlining the reasoning behind Lansdale Catholic's decision to move to the PCL. She opened up her prepared statement by addressing the audience.

"I understand that many people were offended by the process we took, and for that, I apologize," Robinson said. "It was never our intention to do so. We were following a protocol that would have allowed us to inform our coaches and parents before the

official announcement, but our plan was disrupted when the story was leaked to the media."

Robinson went on to describe the process and reasoning for the move. She discussed how the distance is not much different between the PAC-10 and PCL. She said, many of the schools in the PCL are closer.

Robinson also said joining the PCL will afford the student athletes more media coverage which could help them in gaining scholarships for college.

President Rev. Joseph L. Maloney followed with a prepared statement of his own.

Maloney emphasized that the move will allow LC to link closer to its sibling schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and allow the students to become more connected with other Catholic students.

Maloney also apologized to anyone who was offended.

Then it was the community's turn to ask questions, and things really started to heat up.

There were concerns brought up about safety, competition and travel. Also, the majority of speakers were clearly upset that they were completely left in the dark on the entire process.

There was a handful of people who stepped up to the microphone and expressed their

support in the decision and backed the administration. That sentiment was the minority, however.

Every point Maloney and Robinson hit on in their presentations was questioned at one point or another during the meeting.

"How does who we play enhance our Catholic identity?" one student asked.

Maloney responded by saying Catholic identity is who Lansdale Catholic is as Catholics, and as Catholics, it is a member of the Archdiocese.

"Lansdale Catholic has a unique and proud heritage," Maloney said. "But we must understand Lansdale Catholic would not exist without the Archdiocese of Philadelphia."

A parent brought up the point that LC is only comparable to size with about three of the schools in the PCL.

Another parent was curious as to why the parents were the last to know about the move. Why was it kept a secret?

Maloney and Robinson tried to address those questions, but they never really answered them.

A topic that brought about a heated discussion involved the safety of the students. Many parents were concerned about

sending their children to high-crime environments to compete.

The administration said it understood those concerns but assured parents that their children will be safe.

Another parent pointed out that while some distances may be similar to PAC-10 schools, it will take longer to travel the heavy volume roads to get to the opposing PCL schools, which would mean students will have less time to focus on academics.

Again, Maloney and Robinson tried to quell the worries, but never fully addressed the situation.

But the main topic that seemed to upset those in attendance the most was the lack of communication the administration put forth during the entire process.

“You keep telling us you were following a process,” one student said. “Where do the students that choose to come here and the parents who pay

the tuition and athletic fees to allow this school to exist fall in this process?”

Maloney seemed at a loss for words. All he could do was apologize again to the crowd.

“We did not intend to keep you out of the loop.” He said. “I understand your faith in this administration is shaken, but it was not our intent to hurt anyone.”

The meeting came to a head when long time LC football coach Jim Algeo’s wife, also the mother of former girls basketball coach Maggie deMarteleire, who resigned over the PCL move, took the mic.

“Right now LC stands for lack of communication,” Algeo said. “For 15 years Maggie took no pay for coaching. She put in hours of her time for the students, and not one administrator called her in after her resignation. I’d like the administration to meet with her and show her the respect she deserves.”

Algeo received the loudest ovation from the crowd the entire night.

Numerous parents pleaded with the administration to rethink the decision and to find a way to bring deMarteleire back.

Maloney and Robinson made it clear their decision to join the PCL was final, but that was about all they made clear in the hour and a half meeting.

While a few in attendance expressed support of the administration, the majority of those present were opposed to the decision and they were left with questions unanswered.