

**OUR STUDENTS
OUR FUTURE:**
A ROADMAP FOR EXCELLENCE
DECEMBER 2014





A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP KEVIN FARRELL

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Every day I hear heartwarming stories about the many achievements and worthy endeavors our young adults have experienced throughout their Catholic high school education. The stories may be about a group of students—a school's class or team or club perhaps, but more often than not, the stories tell about personal milestones of one kind or another and of how the school shaped the outcome.

Catholic schools play a critical and irreplaceable role in the teaching mission of the Church. Today, it is more important than ever that we continue to provide an academically rigorous education, rooted in the Gospel, and rich in the cherished traditions and liturgical practices of our faith. To this end, I was delighted to bring to you in September 2013 the strategic plan for our Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Dallas in a report entitled *Reach for the Future: A Blueprint for Excellence*. Now, after completing the study of our three Diocesan high schools—Bishop Dunne, Bishop Lynch, and John Paul II—the work of the strategic planning committee, *A Mission of Excellence for Catholic Schools*, has come to a close, and

with this end-result I am very pleased to present the Committee's report, *Our Students, Our Future: A Roadmap for Excellence*.

Our Students, Our Future is meant to be a companion piece to *Reach for the Future*, and so I recommend that you read them in tandem. As with the elementary school report, you will see that the Committee's strategic recommendations with regard to Diocesan high schools are also bold yet practical. They, too, are designed to ensure academically excellent schools that are operationally vibrant both now and into the future.

These strategic recommendations are a product of the Committee's continuing process of candid assessment, thoughtful research, and extensive discussion among high school leaders, professional educators and staff, and other individuals and groups who have a stake in the success of our Catholic schools.

I am extremely grateful to the Committee members for their time and devotion throughout this four-year process. I plan to personally oversee the implementation of all recommendations to ensure that we have the most dynamic Catholic schools possible, available to all who desire a Catholic school education.

The future of the Church is in the hands of today's youth. Our Catholic high schools offer one of the most effective and sometimes the final opportunity for our young men and women to experience the integral formation of the human person—a place where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony. We pray that God will continue to bless their work.



Faithfully in Christ,

Most Reverend Kevin J. Farrell, D.D.
Bishop of Dallas
December 2014

CONTENTS

A Message from Bishop Kevin Farrell	2
Introduction	4
Overview of the Committee's Work	
Catholic High Schools and the Church's Mission	7
Defining Characteristics of a Catholic School	9
Catholic High Schools in the Diocese of Dallas	11
Recommendations	13
Catholic Identity	14
Rec. 1	Unified Mission Statement
Rec. 2	Mission-effectiveness Review
Rec. 3	Diocesan Commission
Rec. 4	Formation of Youth
Governance	20
Rec. 5	Governance Model
Rec. 6	Mission-effective Governance
Rec. 7	Board Formation and Training
Rec. 8	Board Membership
Rec. 9	Succession Planning
Academic Excellence	24
Rec. 10	Student Admission
Rec. 11	Common Admission Forms
Rec. 12	Five-class Teaching "Load"
Rec. 13	School-wide Opportunities
Rec. 14	Support for Learning Differences
Rec. 15	Collaboration & Communication
Rec. 16	Review of Accreditation
Operational Vitality	32
Rec. 17	Diocesan-wide Financial Support
Rec. 18	Centralized Shared Services
Rec. 19	Strategic Enrollment Group
Rec. 20	Standardized Tuition and Fees
Rec. 21	Teacher Compensation and "Load"
Rec. 22	Key Performance Indicators
Rec. 23	Transportation
Rec. 24	Communications and Advancement
Rec. 25	Facilities: Collaboration
Rec. 26	Facilities: Long-range Planning
Rec. 27	Expanding Catholic Population
Conclusion	42
Committee Membership	43
Acknowledgments	43

Note: *Our Students, Our Future* (High School Report) and *Reach for the Future* (Elementary School Report) are designed to be read in tandem.



INTRODUCTION

In January 2011, the Most Reverend Kevin J. Farrell, Bishop of Dallas, convened a Committee on Catholic Schools, charging it to “surface and consider issues and challenges” facing Catholic schools in the Diocese of Dallas today, to offer recommendations to “ensure the continued growth and sustainability of Catholic schools,” and to “develop a comprehensive strategic plan on Catholic schools that will provide a blueprint for Catholic school education in the Diocese for many decades to come.” In response to this charge, the Committee’s research and study included elementary and high school Catholic education in the Diocese of Dallas, with the aim of producing a report on Diocesan elementary school education and a report on Diocesan high school education. In September 2013, the Diocese of Dallas published the results of the elementary school education report in *Reach for the Future: A Blueprint for Excellence*. This high school report, *Our Students, Our Future: A Roadmap for Excellence* should be read in conjunction with *Reach for the Future*.

The Committee now presents this report on Diocesan high schools. Diocesan high schools are schools under the direct control of the Diocese through approval of the Bishop, with authority delegated through the Catholic Schools Office to the boards of directors of each school. This is not a report “on” each of the three current Diocesan high schools (Bishop Dunne, Bishop Lynch, and John Paul II). Rather, the Committee viewed the three Diocesan high schools (and any future ones) through the lens of Dallas Diocesan high school education as a whole. Through this lens, a key theme that emerged is the crucial role of Diocesan high schools in this effort identified by Bishop Farrell in his initial letter to the Committee: “to strive toward the goal of making our Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic families and their children.”

This report consists of 27 recommendations, grouped under the four pillars of Catholic education identified in Bishop Farrell’s initial charge to the Committee: Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Governance, and Operational Vitality. The report reflects a process of planning, research, fact gathering, and consultation that the Committee carried out for three years after accepting its charge from Bishop Farrell in 2011. The scope of the process included high schools as well as elementary schools. This report does not recount the full process, described in detail in the elementary school report. However, several research and fact-finding steps taken in connection with high schools should be noted:

Surveys

The Committee retained an independent professional consultant to design, implement, and analyze surveys of various stakeholders. These included surveys of: high school students in the three Diocesan high schools, as well as Jesuit College Preparatory School and Ursuline Academy, about their elementary school preparation for high school; high school parents and personnel; parishioners from all 77 parishes in the Diocese; clergy; and members (since 2009) of high school boards (including the Diocesan School Board).

Focus Groups

The Committee conducted two focus groups of parents of students in Diocesan high schools, two focus groups of Diocesan high school faculty and staff, and one focus group of students from the Diocesan high schools.



“Catholic Education is integral to the mission of Evangelization in our Church. It is the responsibility of the Catholic Community—bishop, priests, deacons, religious, and laity—to continue to strive toward the goal of making our Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children, including those who are poor and middle class.”

Source: Bishop Farrell in a letter to Strategic Planning Committee (January 12, 2011)

Site Visits & Fact Gathering

Teams of Committee members conducted site visits of the three Diocesan high schools. In addition, the Committee gathered data and information relating to the high schools through material provided by the schools and by the Catholic Schools Office.

Information & Data From Other Sources

The Committee reviewed literature related to Catholic education including the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Education* published in March 2012 (*National Standards and Benchmarks*), “Catholic Schooling and Disaffiliation from Catholicism” (CARA Report 2007), and “The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium” (Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education 1997).





CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AND THE CHURCH'S MISSION

From its inception, the Catholic Church has held that its essential mission is to evangelize—to proclaim the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. With the words of Jesus himself to the Disciples—“Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation (Mark 16:15)”—the Disciples became the first evangelizers of the Gospel message, handing down the Church’s mission to the followers of Jesus throughout the ages. Pope Francis, in his recent apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (November, 2013), states: “Evangelization is the task of the Church. The Church, as the agent of evangelization, is first and foremost a people advancing on its pilgrim way towards God....[S]he exists concretely in history as a people of pilgrims and evangelizers...”

Our Catholic high schools are one of the Church’s irreplaceable instruments of evangelization. They offer one of the most effective—and sometimes the final—opportunity for our young men and women to experience the integral formation of the human person. As such, the schools serve as places where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony. Research on the impact of a Catholic high school education on the continuation of one’s Catholic faith was recently conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. The research concluded that those who attended Catholic high school for at least three years were 53% more likely to continue their affiliation with the Catholic Church than those raised as Catholics who never attended Catholic high school. The researchers concluded that “three or more years of Catholic high schooling decreases the likelihood that young people leave the church later in life.”

Parishioners in the Diocese of Dallas affirm the link between Catholic schools and evangelization, as shown in the Parish-wide Survey conducted by the Committee in February 2012:

ACROSS ALL 77 PARISHES OF THE
DIOCESE, PARISHIONERS AGREE THAT
“CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE VITAL TO...”

82%

The **successful future** of
the Catholic Church

82%

Creating a vibrant sense of
community among Catholics

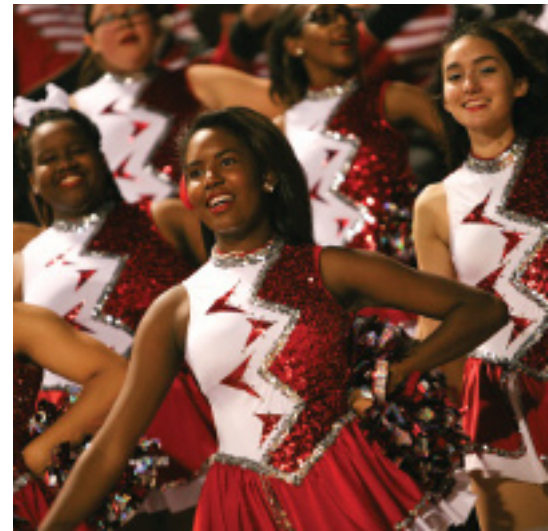
81%

Improving society

Source: Parish-wide survey (February 2012)

Defining Characteristics of a Catholic School

- **Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ:** Catholic schools should foster personal relationship with Jesus Christ and communal witness to the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor and service to the world, especially the poor and marginalized.
- **Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church:** Catholic schools should be a place of real and specified pastoral ministry in communion with the local Bishop. The environment in Catholic schools should express the signs of Catholic culture, physically and visibly.
- **Distinguished by Excellence:** Catholic schools should implement on-going processes and structures and gather evidence to ensure excellence in every aspect of its programs, life, and activities.
- **Committed to Educate the Whole Child:** Catholic schools should develop and implement academic, co-curricular, faith-formation, and service/ministry programs to educate the whole child in all dimensions (spiritual, intellectual, physical, psychological, social, moral, aesthetic and religious capacities of each child).
- **Steeped in a Catholic Worldview:** All curriculum and instruction in a Catholic school should foster: the desire to seek wisdom and truth, the preference for social justice, the discipline to become self-learners, the capacity to recognize ethical and moral grounding for behavior, and the responsibility to transform and enrich the world with Gospel values.
- **Sustained by Gospel Witness:** As much as possible, Catholic schools should recruit teachers who are practicing Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals.
- **Shaped by Communion and Community:** Catholic schools should do everything they can to promote genuine trust and collaboration... to foster appreciation of different gifts that build up a learning and faith community and strengthen academic excellence.
- **Accessible to All Students:** Catholic schools in concert with the Catholic community should do everything in their power to manage available resources and seek innovative options to ensure that Catholic school education is geographically, programmatically, physically, and financially accessible.
- **Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop:** Bishops need to put forward the mission of Catholic schools, support and enhance the work of Catholic schools, and see that the education in the schools is based on principles of Catholic doctrine. Catholic schools have a formal and defined relationship with the Bishop guided by a spirituality of ecclesial communion, and should work to establish a relationship marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority.





CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS

The Diocese of Dallas is served by seven college-preparatory Catholic high schools (grades 9 through 12) with total enrollment of 4,451 students in the school year 2013-2014. An eighth college-preparatory high school is scheduled to open in the fall of 2015. Three of the existing schools also have adjoining middle schools. Three of the seven high schools are under the direct control of the Diocese through the approval of the Bishop, with authority delegated through the current Catholic Schools Office to the boards of directors of each school. The other four existing Catholic high schools are private schools under the ownership and direction of religious orders. These schools operate in Dallas at the invitation of the Bishop and receive no direct financial assistance from the Diocese. While all graduates of Catholic elementary schools do not progress to these Catholic high schools, many do. And while these three Diocesan high schools and four private Catholic high schools do not draw all of their students from Catholic elementary schools, they do enroll many from Catholic elementary schools. The chart below shows the enrollment and enrollment capacity of all Catholic high schools for the 2013-2014 school year. Individual profiles of each of the three Diocesan high schools follow.

2013-2014 HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

HIGH SCHOOL	DIOCESAN/ PRIVATE	CO-ED/ SINGLE SEX	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL ENROLL.	CAPACITY	UNDER / OVER
Bishop Lynch	Diocesan	Co-Ed	440	658	1,098	1,150	-52
John Paul II	Diocesan	Co-Ed	359	376	735	1,200	-465
Bishop Dunne *	Diocesan	Co-Ed	208	204	412	576	-164
Diocesan HS total			1,007	1,238	2,245	2,926	-681
Jesuit Dallas **	Private	Single Sex	1,095		1,095	1,095	
Ursuline Academy **	Private	Single Sex		820	820	820	
Cistercian **	Private	Single Sex	178		178	178	
Highlands	Private	Co-Ed	60	53	113	185	-72
Private-Catholic High School Total			1,333	873	2,206	2,278	
All High Schools			2,340	2,111	4,451	5,204	-753

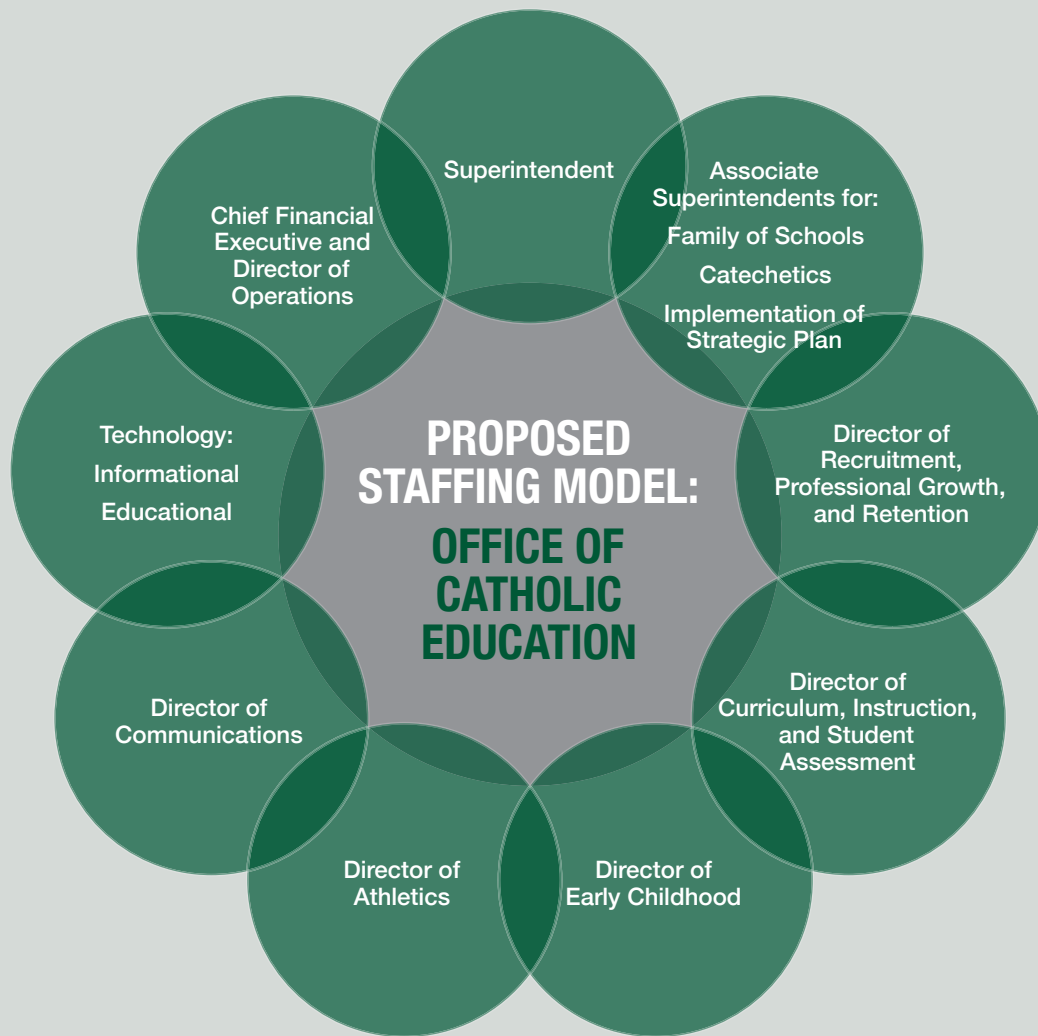
* Bishop Dunne has total capacity of 725 students, which includes 149 students in grades 6, 7 and 8. (725 - 149 = 576)

** Private high schools are assumed to be at full enrollment, except The Highlands.

Source: National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) Report



Snapshot of the Three Diocesan High Schools			
	Bishop Dunne	Bishop Lynch	John Paul II
Accreditation	Texas Catholic Conference of Education Department (TCCED) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)		
Year Founded	1961	1963	2005
Motto	Enter to Learn. Go Forth to Serve.	Veritas	Seek to Serve
Tuition (2014-15)	\$12,165	\$13,600	\$15,400
Enrollment (2013-14)	412 (Grades 9-12)	1098	735
% of Students Who Are Catholic (2012-13)	60%	78%	74%
% of Students from Catholic Elementary Schools (2012-13)	88%	67%	53%
Number of Full-Time Professional Educators (2013-14)	47*	91*	61*
* Source: Catholic Schools Office			



RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are grouped under the four pillars of Catholic education that Bishop Farrell highlighted in his initial charge to the Committee: Catholic identity, academic excellence, governance, and operational vitality. Several recommendations relate specifically to facilities; these are grouped under the operational vitality recommendations. Some recommendations closely parallel recommendations made in the elementary school report. It should be noted that throughout this Report, recommendations frequently refer to the Office of Catholic Education, a concept that was first introduced in the elementary school report. The illustration above depicts the Committee's proposed staffing model for this new Office of Catholic Education that would eventually transform the current Catholic Schools Office.



CATHOLIC IDENTITY

As the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education has stated, “[i]t is from its Catholic identity” that a school derives its key characteristics and its “‘structure’ as a genuine instrument of the Church.” Thus, it is important to focus on “the nature and distinctive characteristics of a school that would present itself as *Catholic*.”¹ As soon as people walk through a Catholic school’s front doors, they see, feel, and sense that distinctiveness. No one thing or any defined set of things necessarily makes a school Catholic, such as a crucifix hanging in the main entrance or theology course offerings. Yet, though Catholic identity may be difficult to measure, we must strive to assess Catholic identity and ensure that Catholic schools have the “nature and distinctive characteristics” of Catholic identity. Further, in the case of Diocesan high schools, all high schools, individually and as a whole, must reflect Catholic identity.

Recommendation 1

Through the Office of Catholic Education, articulate a unified mission statement for Diocesan secondary schools.

The three Diocesan high schools are not affiliated with any individual parish but instead are schools of the Diocese. Thus, the mission of each high school should align with the Diocese’s mission for Catholic high schools. To be sure, individual Diocesan high schools can and do adopt their own mission statement expressing the identity and emphasis of the school. Indeed, each of the three Diocesan high schools in Dallas has its own mission statement.² But any school’s individual mission statement should align with the Diocesan mission for Catholic high schools. Thus, it is

important that the mission of high schools in the Diocese of Dallas is clearly articulated.

In particular, a Diocesan *mission statement* can address a point on which only the Diocese, and not individual schools, can give guidance. As expressed by Bishop Farrell in his initial letter to the Committee, the Catholic community has the responsibility “to strive toward the goal of making our Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children....” A Diocesan mission statement should articulate that the mission of Catholic high school education in the Diocese of Dallas includes making a Catholic high school education available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic youth.

1 Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997).

2 **Bishop Dunne:** Working with the guidance and sponsorship of the Diocese of Dallas, Bishop Dunne Catholic School provides a unique, individualized, accelerated educational program that is shaped by fundamental Catholic values and which prepares students for higher learning, leadership, service, and citizenship.

Bishop Lynch: Faithful to Catholic Tradition and to our Dominican heritage of scholarship and service, Bishop Lynch High School fosters the well being of the total person by bringing together a diverse educational community where students are taught to strive for excellence, to seek truth, and to work for justice in the world.

John Paul II: To develop leaders who are critical thinkers and effective communicators, committed to service and rooted in faith. Vision Statement: We will make a difference in the world by walking in the footsteps of Pope John Paul II.



Guidance on this point is critical to mission. Catholic high schools often serve as the last opportunity for our young Catholic men and women to receive a formal Catholic education. With seven Catholic high schools in the Diocese—three diocesan and four private Catholic—our young graduates of Catholic elementary schools have options from which to choose. But, currently, there is no guarantee that all successful graduates of Diocesan Catholic elementary schools will have the opportunity to be accepted into our Catholic high schools, whether Diocesan or private Catholic. Even with our Diocesan high schools, affordability and accessibility, whether perceived or real, are issues. Based on the Bishop's own words (see p. 5), it would seem that a mission of Catholic high school education in the Diocese of Dallas should include making a Catholic high school education available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic youth. Recommendations 10, 19, and 20 address the two issues of accessibility and affordability in the following sections of this Report.

Recommendation 2

Establish as a priority for the Office of Catholic Education a mission-effectiveness review process for the Diocesan Catholic high schools to evaluate each school's Catholic Identity.

Unlike the elementary schools, the three Diocesan high schools are not associated with a parish and thus do not benefit from the pastoral leadership of the parish priest. Bishop Lynch and Bishop Dunne benefited from an established Catholic tradition

provided by the religious orders that staffed those schools for many years. Because the three Diocesan schools are not affiliated with a parish or with a religious order, it falls upon the Diocese to oversee their Catholic identity – the reason for the school's existence.

At present, there is no process in place for evaluating mission-effectiveness of the Diocesan high schools except through the accreditation process by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) every seven years. Frequent and regular review processes for mission-effectiveness are commonly used by schools operated by religious orders, e.g., Jesuit, Ursuline, Cistercian, etc. By this means, an order continuously reviews its Catholic identity in light of its mission. In addition, the *National Standards and Benchmarks* emphasizes the connection between mission and Catholic identity, and the importance of ensuring fidelity to mission.

The Diocese should establish a mission-effectiveness review process, directed by the Diocese, to provide the Bishop with a vehicle for exercising vigilance over the Catholic identity of the schools and to assist the local boards in exercising their governance roles. This mission-effectiveness process should include an assessment of each school's utilizing the *National Standards and Benchmarks*. Such a process should begin with a thorough self-study that involves the collection of data, artifacts, and indicators as well as an examination of results. The review would also include a visit by an external team that would review the work of the self-study, on-site interviews with



multiple stakeholders, and an exit report written by the external team to assist the school in advancing its mission-effectiveness.

Although the mission-effectiveness review recommended here is more robust than that included in the accreditation processes employed by regional accrediting bodies (TCCED, SACS, and the Independent School Association of the Southwest (ISAS), the Diocese could coordinate its review process, as appropriate, with these accreditation processes. Alternatively, the Bishop could establish the Diocese of Dallas as the primary, if not sole, arbiter of Catholic identity for the schools in the Diocese and not rely on TCCED given that the express authority of the Bishop establishes Catholic schools.



Recommendation 3

In tandem with Recommendation 2.3 in *Reach for the Future*, establish a Diocesan commission within the Office of Catholic Education with the following purposes: 1) To evaluate the institutional effectiveness of each school with regular, systematic, and best available methods and processes; and 2) To support each school's own evaluation-related activities and data gathering. The commission's evaluation should not be limited to the assessments required for accreditation, and should be used for aspects of education within all four pillars (academic excellence, Catholic identity, operational vitality, and governance).

Distinguished by Excellence: Church documents, history, and practices, supported by Canon Law, establish that first and foremost a Catholic school is characterized by excellence. Consistent with the defining characteristics, Catholic schools should implement on-going processes and structures and gather evidence to ensure excellence in every aspect of its programs, life, and activities.

(Gravissimum Educationis 8 and 9; Code of Canon Law, Canon 806 #2: (National Standards and Benchmarks: Defining Characteristics of a Catholic School))

Evaluation of education in the Diocese currently occurs in several ways. First, on a seven-year cycle, each high school must undergo an evaluation process for accreditation from TCCED. All Diocesan high schools have also elected to be accredited by SACS. Thus, it is recommended that the commission use recent accreditation evaluations already issued by TCCED/SACS as stepping-stones for its evaluation. (See Recommendation 16 for additional information about accreditation.)

Second, all high schools in the Diocese use some standardized testing, mainly the PSAT and SAT, ACT, and AP tests, the results of which are used in a variety of ways. The current Catholic Schools Office collects these results from the testing services and has begun to use them to identify trends. (Trend analysis could help support and assist the schools in reaching academic excellence.) Third, principal and teacher evaluation takes place on a regular basis. Fourth, some schools engage in other forms of evaluation; the subject, timing, and use of the evaluations vary. For instance, some schools have studied performance over time as tied to SAT and ACT scores, college performance of their graduates, and effectiveness of a curricular change.

Although these current evaluation methods obtain important information, they are not sufficiently regular and accessible to all schools.



All schools are not evaluated with common standards that address all phases of excellence (academic excellence, Catholic identity, operational vitality, and governance).

A more robust evaluation process should gather information and establish performance measures for critical areas such as: academic performance; enrollment of students; student retention; post-secondary and higher education completion of graduates; number of students receiving tuition assistance; frequency and timeliness of communication with parents; engagement of parents in school activities; Catholic identity events for students at various class levels; effectiveness of governance; and certification methods such as the certification program for teaching religion.

Research and data collection are also important with respect to another topic relevant to Catholic high schools: eighth grade students who currently attend an elementary Catholic school or students who participate in catechetical programs yet do not plan to attend a Catholic high school. More information about this population of students could help inform the Diocese and the high schools about any issues hindering access to a Catholic high school education.





Recommendation 4

The Office of Catholic Education, in concert with the Catholic high schools of the Diocese, should assume leadership in building community and in developing partnerships among all its constituencies, both inside and outside the Catholic community, whose focus is the integral formation of youth.

The Vatican Congregation on Catholic Education has noted the challenges facing today's youth, including a lack of family structure and support, withdrawal from society and relationships, an increase in self-destructive behaviors, and economic pressures. Catholic education cannot solve these underlying problems but its mission includes providing programs and support that can help promote health, security, and resilience. The Office of Catholic Education is well positioned to provide leadership in promoting community and partnerships among high schools, youth groups, and other groups and constituencies working to foster and support the integral formation of youth.







GOVERNANCE

When considering effective governance in relation to Diocesan high schools, two dimensions must be kept in mind. One dimension is effective governance at any given high school, which requires an effective board, clear allocation of responsibility, and other qualities. But this dimension does not complete the picture of governance for Diocesan high school education. Each Diocesan high school could exhibit effective governance (such as a capable board, clear allocation of authority, etc.), but the resulting collection of high schools might still fall short of attaining the Diocese's mission for Catholic high school education. Thus, a second dimension is governance of the network of Diocesan high schools—that is, as schools within a whole that has as its aim making a Catholic education available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic families and their children.

Recommendation 5

Establish and communicate a governance model that clearly allocates appropriate responsibilities and authority among the Bishop, Diocesan School Board, superintendent, president, principal, and high school board.

The Bishop is the acknowledged administrator of the ecclesial goods of the Diocesan high schools. The Bishop has the authority to delegate, and routinely does delegate, specific authority to the Diocesan School Board, the Superintendent, each high school's president, each high school's board, and each principal. In general, under this delegated authority, the president and principal of each high school are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school, and the high school board is responsible for strategic oversight of mission and operations.

Although the points just set out are well understood, there is less clarity and understanding with regard to other issues relating to delegation and allocation of responsibility. These include: the responsibility for articulating the mission and for reviewing mission-effectiveness (the high school board only, the Diocesan School Board, or the Bishop through the current Catholic Schools Office); whether and in what respects the high school board is accountable to the Diocesan School Board; and the respective roles of the Superintendent and high school board in hiring and reviewing the high school president. High school board bylaws, supplemented by policies and procedures developed by the proposed Office of Catholic Education and approved by the Diocesan School Board and the Bishop, should clearly delineate the responsibilities of the high school board, as well as matters reserved to the Bishop and matters that are the responsibility of the Diocesan School Board, the Office of Catholic Education, the president, and the principal.

Recommendation 6

Establish mission-effective governance through a fully constituted board of limited jurisdiction for each high school. A uniform set of bylaws for the high schools should be drafted and used by each of the Diocesan high schools.

A board of limited jurisdiction is one with the authority to make decisions and act on matters other than those reserved to the governing authority (in this case, the Bishop). Typically, such a board has responsibility for budget approval, development, strategic planning and financial matters. Hiring, dismissing and evaluating the high school president typically would be a responsibility of the high school board, with the approval of the Bishop. Presently, this responsibility seems to be unclear. For example, a 2012 survey of high school board and advisory council members revealed that 72% of those who responded did not know who held responsibility for evaluating the high school president. Many matters, including hiring a principal and faculty members and managing day-to-day educational matters, including personnel matters, are the responsibility of the president or principal. Approval of certain matters, such as ownership and leasing of property, remain reserved to the Bishop. Delegating significant functions to the school board allows the Bishop to place greater focus on the high school community and spiritual matters, and allows the president and principal to place greater focus on the educational mission of the school.



Currently, the bylaws of the various Catholic high schools are different, which consequently impacts the way in which they operate internally and how they relate to the Diocese. Because the bylaws of the high school board delineate the responsibilities of the high school board, the bylaws are important in delineating the high school board's mission. A standardized set of bylaws would foster consistency in the manner in which the high school boards operate, which would assist in pursuit of the mission that is common to the Diocesan high schools.

The high school board should operate by consensus and work collaboratively with the Bishop, president and principal with the goal of enhancing Catholic identity, operational vitality, and academic excellence at each of the high schools.

Recommendation 7

The Diocese should develop programs to support and provide ongoing formation and training for the high school boards.

For boards to be effective, their members must receive training regarding matters related to board functions and characteristics of effective boards. This training should be developed by the Office of Catholic Education in coordination with the high schools. The training should take advantage of outside resources that are geared toward high school boards and should offer the opportunity for interaction among the high school boards.





Recommendation 8

The Diocese should develop and implement a process to identify and cultivate qualified candidates to serve as board members.

An effective high school board is comprised of committed members with a variety of areas of expertise. Members with experience in areas including business, finance, development, non-profits, law, architecture and education all can contribute to accomplishing the mission of the board and the high schools. The Diocese should develop a plan to identify and develop future board members who have diverse areas of expertise and ensure that the high school board always includes individuals with key areas of expertise, as noted above.



Recommendation 9

Each high school should develop succession plans for critical positions in educational and operational leadership.

As with any organization, maintaining continuity in leadership in a Catholic high school is critical. Accordingly, the school board should develop and maintain both a succession plan and a transition plan for the president, and the president should develop and maintain a succession plan as well as a transition plan for the principal and other key staff members, including the chief financial officer.







ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

One of the defining characteristics of a Catholic school is that it is “distinguished by excellence” (*National Standards and Benchmarks*). To be sure, the Diocesan high schools in the Diocese of Dallas each provide a number of excellent opportunities for their students. Research through survey results affirms this, but results also show that the Diocesan high schools could be even better. Every school does not provide the *same* opportunities, and programs that appear to be the same are sometimes not at an equal level of excellence. The breadth and depth of offerings vary from school to school, and programs emphasized in one school might not be very robust in another. Diocesan high schools should not function in the same independent mode as independent or private Catholic high schools do. Rather, Diocesan high schools should operate as one body of schools, each steeped in its own tradition and heritage, but all providing equal opportunity for students to attain academic excellence. When viewed through this diocesan lens, the goal of academic excellence yields the following recommendations.

Recommendation 10

Establish a clear understanding between the Diocesan elementary and secondary schools that every eighth grade student who has graduated from a Catholic elementary school successfully in all areas—academic, social, and spiritual—will be accepted into our Diocesan high schools.

The admission season for any educational institution is filled with excitement and a certain amount of stress for all concerned—the sending school, the receiving school, parents and even grandparents, and most of all students, for their future hangs in the balance. High school admission is no exception. As to acceptance of applicants into Diocesan high schools, the Committee’s position is that

our Diocesan high schools have an obligation to give preference to our Catholic elementary school graduates who demonstrate success.

To their credit, our Diocesan Catholic high schools appear to do just that. Collectively, the three schools accepted 95% of their 2014 freshmen applications from our Catholic elementary schools. Although this percentage is high, the fact remains that 5% of applications were not accepted. These percentages are based on a recent questionnaire to the three Diocesan high schools about their 2014-2015 freshmen application and acceptance rates from our Catholic elementary schools. Responses also indicated that there was a variance in a school’s individual acceptance rate, ranging from 92% to 97%.

If we turn our attention to the 5% population—applications from our Catholic elementary schools

that were not accepted by a Diocesan Catholic high school—perhaps the reason is because these students have not reached the level of high school readiness. If so, questions arise: how often, and why, do students graduate from a Catholic elementary school without being academically ready for high school? How is high school readiness measured?

There may be gray areas as to how success is measured—for instance, how to evaluate grades in light of potential grade inflation from the sending school, or whether to use the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores rather than scores on the Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE), which uses a more select norming group. The fact that our Diocesan high schools administer the ISEE rather than a placement test contributes to the perception that a student may or may not “get in.” Elementary and secondary schools should extensively communicate on these and other issues under the leadership of the Office of Catholic Education. Nonetheless, the Committee’s stance is that, all things being equal, a student who has successfully attended a Catholic elementary school throughout the majority of his or her elementary education should be accepted into our Diocesan Catholic high schools on a financial needs-blind basis. Whether a student actually enrolls is another matter.

An alternative explanation is that some of these non-accepted students are ready for high school but do not meet more selective application criteria. If so, another question arises: in addition to graduation from a Catholic elementary school and demonstrated high school readiness, which criteria must an applicant satisfy? In many private school settings, entrance requirements as to test scores and academic achievement reflect a “higher academic bar” than high school readiness. Higher selectivity, however, is in conflict with the mission of Diocesan high school education if that mission is to provide a Catholic education for all high school-ready graduates of Catholic elementary schools.

Finally, are there factors that contribute to self-selection by families? Proximity surely plays a role. The ISEE test requirement may act as a deterrent for students intimidated by that exam and their inability to prepare like many of their counterparts. Perhaps support needed for learning differences is not in place or tuition and fees are too costly even with financial assistance. The issues of affordability and accessibility are addressed in Recommendations 19 and 20 under Operational Vitality.



Recommendation 11

Consider using common application and teacher recommendation forms in all three of the Diocesan high schools’ admissions process.

In general, the admissions process to any school involves extensive paperwork on the part of parents and the sending school. As to the application itself, parents are usually required to complete several pages of family and child information. As part of the application process, the sending school is asked to submit student records that document a student’s performance at the school—for instance, attendance, grades, achievement scores, etc. In addition, at least two written recommendations from the applicant’s teachers, typically from math and English teachers, are also requested.

Currently, each Diocesan high school has its own unique application form, and a common teacher recommendation form is inconsistently used. It is not unusual for students to apply to more than one high school, thus requiring parents to complete separate application forms and teachers to write separate recommendations.

A common application process is not unusual in the independent school world. For years many independent schools in the DFW area have used the common application process as one of their best practices. The Committee believes that a unified approach to the admissions process is an opportunity for collaboration among the three Diocesan high schools, thus lessening the sense of competition.



Recommendation 12

As a means of increasing instructional effectiveness, implement a Diocesan compensation model and teaching “load” expectation for high school teachers that allow schools to reduce their teachers’ standard course load to five classes.

It is common knowledge that teachers need time—time to teach, time to prepare for class, time to help individual students, time to prepare tests and grade papers, and time to collaborate with colleagues. Additional time is necessary for school meetings and committee work, parent-teacher conferences, and professional development. All these activities are important, but the resulting time demands can, at some point, reduce effectiveness. Because a teacher’s course load (number of classes per day/per week, number of students, and number of different preparations) dictates the amount of time a teacher has for those other teaching-related responsibilities, a school must guard against assigning its teachers too many classes.

Best practices in teaching consider a standard course load to be five classes with two different preparations. Given the amount of essay grading, English teachers sometimes have four classes. If a teacher were to teach five classes and have,

for instance, 22 students in a class, the math is simple: 110 students whom a teacher instructs, assesses, and monitors progress in learning.

Recent research confirms the close link between teacher effectiveness and the size and nature of course loads.

Evidence concerning teaching loads suggests that it is important to consider both the total numbers of students and subjects taught by teachers as well as the diversity of student needs.... This view is based on the premise that effective instruction depends on a deep understanding of the cognitive resources brought to class by individual students, along with opportunities to both assess and monitor their learning progress. The chances of meeting either of these conditions for effective instruction diminish with increased student diversity and total numbers of students taught.

Evidence about teaching load argues for reductions in the typical numbers of students taught..., in a semester or year, from a typical 125 to 200 to something fewer than 90. Beyond the research evidence, at least one major “whole school reform” initiative in the United States and several parts of Canada, The Coalition of Essential Schools (e.g.,Sizer, 1992a, 1992b), advocates holding total numbers of secondary school students taught per teacher to about 90 as a central principle of its program.³

In response to the Committee’s questionnaire, the three Diocesan high schools indicated that teachers typically teach six classes. Depending on course subject and level (for example, AP Physics or English I), a class might have as few as 12 students in a class or as many as 24. Thus, given six classes and the number of preparations, class size will determine the full impact a teacher’s course load will have on teaching effectiveness. No matter how dedicated and skilled the teachers, course loads of six (and sometimes seven) classes reduce effectiveness, thereby compromising instruction and limiting time for individual student help, curriculum development, and collaboration.

Recommendation 21 under Operational Vitality addresses the related compensation issue.

³ Source: Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, “How Leadership Influences Student Learning”; September 2004; Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Recommendation 13

Each Diocesan high school should provide a wide range of comparable and robust opportunities in curricular and extra-curricular programs to meet the needs, talents, and abilities of their diverse student population. The Diocese may need to provide financial support where resources are more limited.

As college-preparatory schools, the three Diocesan high schools offer a wide range of traditional curricular and extra-curricular programs and activities. Yet, survey results suggest challenges (as well as strengths) in this area. For instance, there were wide variations in some parent and personnel responses as to whether the school was “delivering completely” with regard to various aspects of curricular and extra-curricular offerings. (Personnel responses were higher.) There seems to be agreement that the “basics” are offered, but parents are looking for high-level courses and an even-wider range of offerings in both academic and extra-curricular programs. The bar graphs on the following page show parent and school personnel responses as to whether the schools “completely deliver” or are “about right” in selected aspects of programs and subjects.

As to particulars, the Fine Arts seem to be a challenge in all three schools, especially music; this might reflect shortcomings in facilities. Offerings listed on each school profile vary from school to school, suggesting school-to-school differences in resources or emphases.

While there are programmatic strengths at each Diocesan high school, it is the Committee’s view that all students should have an equal opportunity to attain excellence no matter which high school they attend. Programmatic support for students with learning differences consistently receives low survey response rates from parents and personnel. Recommendation 14 specifically addresses that issue next.

Recommendation 14

That all Diocesan high schools provide a breadth of academic offerings that includes strong programmatic support for students with diagnosed mild-to-moderate learning disabilities, including learning differences.⁴

Based on its research, the Committee presented the rationale for the nation’s increased attention to students with learning disabilities, including learning differences, in its report on elementary schools. Similar rationale applies to high schools. More specific research with regard to high schools found that the performance gap between students with learning disabilities, including learning differences, and students without learning disabilities widens as students get older—especially in math and reading.⁵ Thus, early recognition, diagnosis, and programmatic intervention in school are key to lessening this performance gap before students reach high school age. With this in mind, perhaps the Office of Catholic Education should consider developing a plan that would provide the resources for such evaluation and potential intervention.

As with the elementary schools, respondents to the high school survey conducted in December 2011 “graded” their individual high school significantly lower in “completely delivering” instruction with regard to learning differences. Overall, 73% of parents said that schools did *not* “completely deliver.” When the Committee examined responses to this question from each of the three high schools, the percentages ranged from 65% to 90% of parents who said that their school did *not* “completely deliver.”

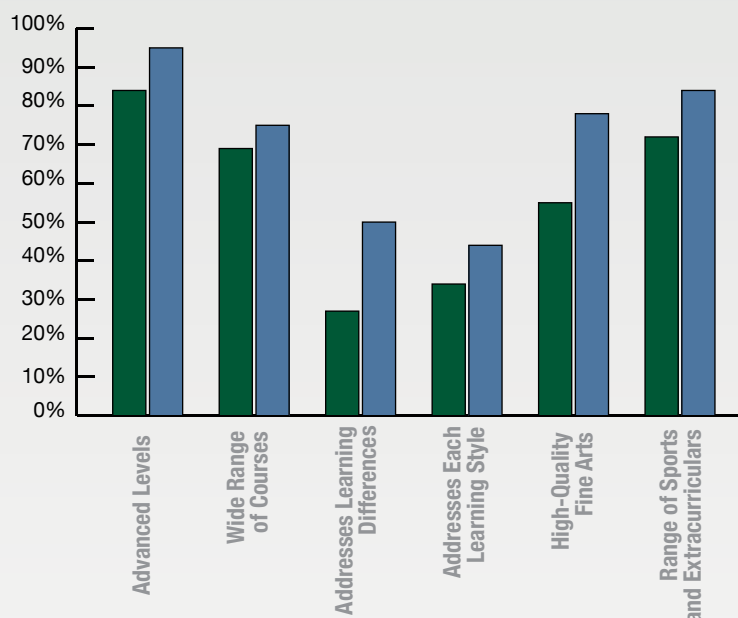
The national average of students in a school who have diagnosed learning disabilities is approximately 10%. Currently, the situation in Diocesan high schools closely mirrors the national average. On average, approximately 9% of the high school population currently enrolled in Diocesan high schools (ranging from 3% to 15% at individual schools) is reported as having diagnosed learning disabilities, including learning differences. It should be noted that individual school percentages may reflect selection bias on the part of parents to apply to schools with strong programmatic support. It may also reflect a school’s decision not to accept students with certain learning disabilities.

The Committee reinforces the notion that having a strong program in place for students with *mild-*

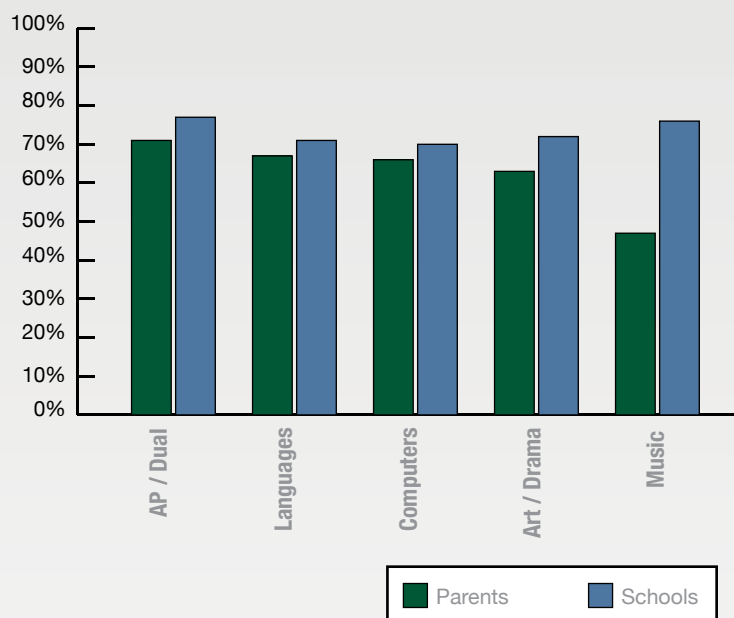
4 The Notre Dame School in Dallas educates students with profound learning disabilities.

5 Source: *The State of Learning Disabilities (Third Edition, 2014)*, National Center for Learning Disabilities

SELECTED ASPECTS OF ACADEMICS AND INSTRUCTION “SCHOOLS DELIVER COMPLETELY”



SELECTED SUBJECTS AND PROGRAMS “ARE ABOUT RIGHT”



Source: High School Parent and Personnel Surveys (December 2011)

to-moderate learning disabilities and differences fortifies a school’s inclusivity and mission to evangelize, both hallmarks of Catholic identity. The Committee also points out that when a school provides strong support for these students, it is responding to the Bishop’s call to be available and accessible to all those who desire a Catholic education. While the Committee recognizes that schools have limited funds, this specialized area of learning should, nonetheless, remain a high priority for every Diocesan high school, and thus, they should plan accordingly to allocate the necessary resources required.

The Committee applauds two of the three Diocesan high schools that have demonstrated a strong commitment to providing support for their students with learning differences and disabilities. This support comes in the form of accommodation plans, resource centers, specialized classes and labs, and tutoring. The Committee recommends that all existing and future Diocesan high schools follow the commitment of Bishop Lynch and Bishop Dunne in providing strong, innovative support for their students with learning disabilities.

Finally, the Committee recognizes that the three Diocesan high schools are not equipped to educate students with *moderate-to-severe* learning disabilities/differences, nor should they. There are schools in the metroplex that specialize in educating students with those needs.

Recommendation 15

Seek ways to strengthen opportunities for collaboration and communication with other Catholic schools in the Diocese as well as with the Office of Catholic Education.

Diocesan high schools have, to a substantial extent, operated independently of each other and of the Office of Catholic Education for many years. From site visits and questionnaires, the Committee gained insight about the degree of collaboration between high schools and the potential for more. The high schools readily admit that they enjoy their autonomy, yet there has recently been an expressed desire on the part of the three high schools to work more collaboratively with each other, especially in the area of technology. Progress has already been made in that arena. However, when asked about the degree of collaboration in various areas, all three high schools indicated, in questionnaire responses, that there is little or no collaboration. Further, site visits revealed that schools saw little need for assistance from the current Catholic Schools Office.

Greater collaboration between the high schools could bring substantial benefits. Likewise, an enhanced Office of Catholic Education could serve as a conduit for support and assistance for the high schools. The importance and benefits of



collaboration are reflected in several benchmarks in the *National Standards and Benchmarks*. Two benchmarks are cited below:

- *Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction to result in high levels of student achievement. (Benchmark 7.7)*
- *The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence. (Benchmark 6.4)*

Granted, these benchmarks pertain primarily to measuring excellence within individual schools. Nonetheless, the collaboration and communication cited in these benchmarks should extend beyond the walls of any given school and include other

Diocesan high schools. The Committee recognizes that forms of collaboration are already in place, but there are additional opportunities for collaboration. For instance, the Diocesan high schools could reach out to the Catholic elementary schools and the private Catholic high schools in the Diocese that share mutual experiences. In addition, Diocesan high schools could explore the possibility of offering online credit courses (e.g., Algebra I and Spanish I) to Catholic elementary schools that do not have the resources to provide these subjects themselves. Online credit courses in singular subjects (for instance, Chinese or Computer Science) might also be shared among the three high schools.

Another likely benefit of enhanced collaboration and regular communication would be an increased sense of community among this network of high schools and the Diocese. As one of the “Defining Characteristics” of Catholic schools, the *National Standards and Benchmarks* identify being “Shaped by Communion and Community.”

Catholic schools should do everything they can to promote genuine trust and collaboration among teachers, with parents as the primary educators of their children, and with governing body members to foster appreciation of different gifts that build up a learning and faith community and strengthen academic excellence.

Recommendation 16

As part of the Diocese’s long-term vision for the future of Catholic education, the Office of Catholic Education should lead the Diocese of Dallas in undergoing an in-depth study and review of the TCCED accreditation process and requirements.

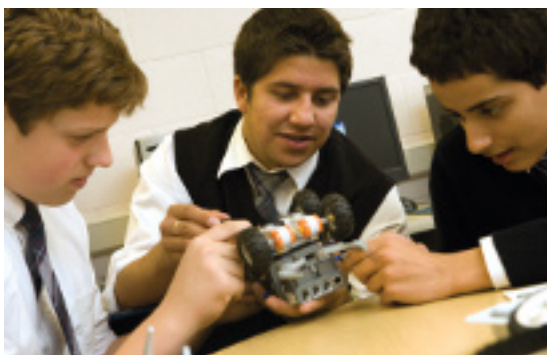
Currently, all three Diocesan high schools are accredited both by TCCED and SACS. TCCED accreditation is required by the Diocese, and SACS accreditation is important given its widespread recognition by colleges and universities across the country. The TCCED accreditation process includes Catholic Identity; the SACS process does not.

The accreditation process is labor intensive for each individual school, requiring interim progress reports, a year-long self study prior to the year of visitation, and preparation for the visitation team itself. Prior to the 2013-2014 school year, the high schools underwent two separate accreditations, each with its own cycle, procedures, and visitation teams.

Given the cost and burden of two separate cycles of accreditation, merging the timeline and, to the extent feasible, the procedures for accreditation could reduce cost and time burdens. Under a very recent plan for a merged approach, TCCED will set the cycle, determine procedures and forms that schools should use, and send its own visitation team; SACS will accept TCCED's report on the school and thus also give its stamp of approval for a SACS accreditation.

Any merged approach, however, should include the range and strength of the components of each accreditation process. In particular, a legitimate concern presented by the proposed merged approach is reducing the rigor and comprehensiveness that a national accrediting agency such as SACS brings to the process. Further, TCCED's restrictive time allotments and graduation requirements in each subject (including theology) seem to add an unnecessary constraint to the academic day and to the opportunities that otherwise might be available to students. The Committee understands the necessity for our Diocesan students' meeting the requirements for entrance into state colleges and universities, but high school graduation requirements have recently been under state revision. The Committee is recommending that the Office of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Dallas be the flagship for initiating an up-to-date review and perhaps revision of how to meet TCCED's current requirements until such time that the Diocese no longer relies on TCCED for accreditation purposes.

The Diocese should continue to explore best options for accreditation processes. If the Bishop or his delegate chooses to assess and monitor Catholic Identity in Diocesan schools, then schools would have more choice in what association will accredit them. An example of a merged process might be using TCCED to evaluate Catholic Identity and SACS to evaluate other components. Alternatively, ISAS is a nationally recognized association and has close to 100 member schools in the Southwest (elementary and secondary), including Cistercian and Ursuline Academy. Perhaps ISAS would consider working with TCCED to include a Catholic Identity component for our Catholic high schools.







OPERATIONAL VITALITY

Operational Vitality refers to the operational and financial resources needed to operate an academically excellent elementary or high school. Such resources include accounting, advancement, communications, enrollment management, financial projections, insurance, human resources management, and purchasing.

Operational vitality is critical to the Bishop's stated mission of making Catholic education available, accessible, and affordable to all who seek it. When seen through a Diocesan-wide lens, operational vitality is important to each school and to the "whole"—that is, the Catholic high school education provided in the Diocese of Dallas. Thus, it is important to evaluate operational vitality not only as to individual schools but also as to the network of Diocesan high schools. Further, this evaluation must take into account long-term operational vitality, mindful of trends, needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Recommendation 17

Increase Diocesan-wide support of schools through a change in parish assessments and other revenue sources, including the Diocesan and parish capital campaigns. Enhance transparency as to how assessments and other revenue sources are used to support schools.

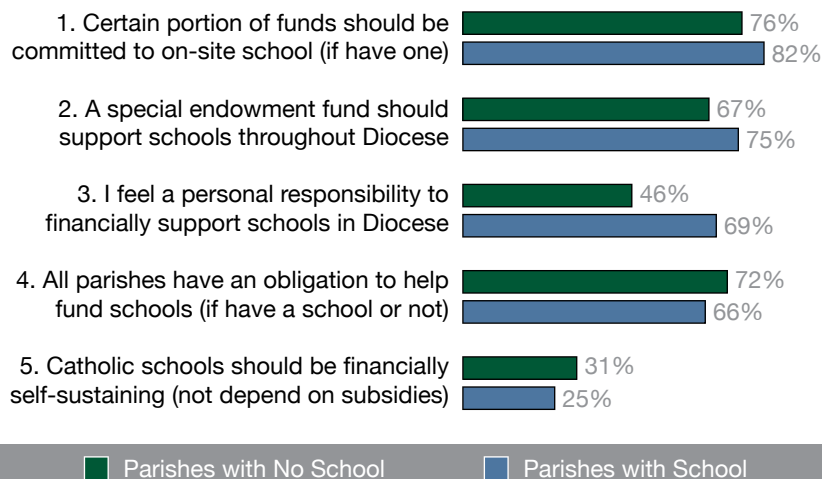
"By reason of their evangelizing mission, Catholic schools should be available to all people who desire a Catholic school education for their children. Catholic schools in concert with the Catholic community should do everything in their power to manage available resources and seek innovative options to ensure that Catholic school education is

geographically, programmatically, physically, and financially available." (National Standards and Benchmarks: Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools)

Every school in the Diocese should have sufficient educational resources, human resources, and financial support to carry out the mission of providing an available, affordable, accessible, and excellent Catholic education. This will require financial support from the Diocesan community. Such support is consistent with the community's confidence in the importance of Catholic schools to the future of the Church. To gather facts with regard to the understanding of the Diocesan community's commitment to Catholic school education, a survey of parishioners in all 77 parishes in the Dallas Diocese was conducted

in February 2012. More than 4,200 parishioners from parishes with elementary schools as well as parishes without schools responded. The data from the survey with regard to five questions is shown in the following chart:

DIOCESE OF DALLAS SURVEY OF PARISHONERS IN FEB. 2012



When asked whether respondents agreed with the statement “All parishes have an obligation to help fund schools whether or not they have a school,” 66% percent from parishes with schools agreed, while 72% of respondents from parishes without schools agreed. Responses to other questions also reflect the Catholic community’s belief in the need to support Catholic education. Be that as it may, at present there is inconsistent support from the Diocese and its parishes for the Diocesan high schools. A survey of the high schools in 2014 indicated that they received varying levels of support from several area parishes for the most recent school year.

This recommendation for additional Diocesan-level support is consistent with the expressed views of parishioners and critical to the mission of the high schools. Unlike the elementary schools, the Diocesan high schools are not affiliated with any one parish and serve all students of the Diocese. Thus, the high schools should benefit from any parish assessment dedicated to the Catholic schools through support offered to the Office of Catholic Education. Further, the Committee recommends that high schools should receive funding that directly supports each high school’s tuition assistance efforts.

Recommendation 18

Through the Office of Catholic Education or the Diocesan Business Office, provide Diocesan high schools with greater centralized shared services and methods of best practice. As well, the Office of Catholic Education should lead collaboration efforts among its network of high schools.

The limited number of professionals in the current Catholic Schools Office hinders the ability of the office to lead or participate robustly in programs for sharing services, gathering and applying best practices, and continuously promoting collaborations that can improve the efficiency and quality of Catholic high school education.

Under current practice, each of the three high schools are “on their own” with regard to many operational matters. While the high schools do share ideas in several areas, there is not a consistent and comprehensive effort to operate as one body of schools in obtaining necessary expertise at the best economic value.

The high schools would benefit from the Office of Catholic Education’s support as to functions such as accounting, event planning, advancement, communications, advertising, marketing and enrollment process management, purchasing, facilities evaluation and planning, insurance, human resources management, technology, and transportation. With regard to communications, advancement, and event planning, an important role of the Office of Catholic Education’s specialists should be to gather and maintain a listing and calendar with details of all the advancement programs, events, and fundraising communications so that the schools can access this information and gain advice from the specialist in applying best practices. Overlap and conflict with other parish, diocesan, and schools programs for advancement would thus be avoided.

The Office of Catholic Education should provide leadership for greater collaboration and coordination among the three Diocesan high schools as well as between the Diocesan high schools and the elementary schools. Areas for fruitful collaboration include purchasing (taking advantage of pricing negotiated by the Office of Catholic Education for items such as textbooks, computer software, classroom equipment), and services (schools could benefit from pooling their clout and negotiate

beneficial contracts for items such as maintenance, food service, and technology).

In addition, the Chief Financial Executive in the Office of Catholic Education could support each high school's CFO. Examples of such support include:

- Assisting in setting budgetary goals to meet the mission of the school
- Ensuring that financial pressures do not compromise academic programs
- Assisting with human resource issues
- Procuring professional services for legal matters, audits, and security evaluations
- Providing templates for individual school websites and processes for creating and maintaining them
- Records retention and management
- Complying with safe environment practices of the Diocese
- Data security and backup

Recommendation 19

Establish within the Office of Catholic Education a Strategic Enrollment Group supporting recruitment efforts by both the elementary and secondary schools. This Group would monitor growth, demographic diversity, and underserved populations across the Diocese, and also act as liaison with all parish religious education programs (Catechesis/CCD), thereby identifying areas for expansion and those with financial need.

The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups. (Benchmark 13.2)

Establishing a Strategic Enrollment Group will allow the Diocese, as part of its long-term planning process, to identify areas of financial challenge and growth, as well as to facilitate the sharing of best practices in enrollment and recruitment among the Diocesan schools. Additionally, this group would serve as an active liaison with the Diocesan religious education programs (Catechesis/CCD) for identifying possible students for both elementary and secondary schools from this yet untapped resource. Currently, there are more than 43,000 elementary- and high school-aged children who

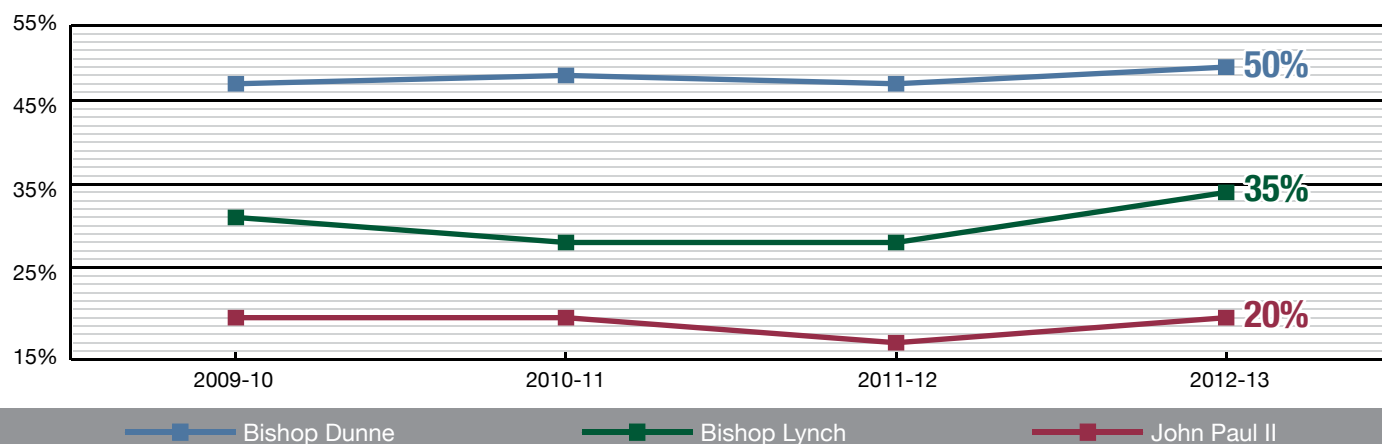


participate in Diocesan catechetical programs. Accordingly, given the number of participants, there is an excellent opportunity here to collaborate in recruiting activities among Diocesan elementary and secondary schools and parish catechetical services.

The Tuition Assistance graph on the following page illustrates the challenges that Diocesan high schools face in offering enrollment to disadvantaged students. This challenge will only increase if the Diocese moves to a standardized tuition and fees model as recommended in Recommendation 20. Thus, another role of the Strategic Enrollment Group should include identifying and integrating into future plans the establishment of any Catholic-based special schools that provides an accessible and affordable education to high school-age students. An example of this is the current plan already approved by Bishop Farrell for Cristo Rey Network to establish a private Catholic high school in the Dallas area. In keeping with the Cristo Rey mission, this school will provide a quality education for students who are economically disadvantaged and can pay for their tuition through a work-study program. This type of high school reaches students who are not able to afford Catholic high school education even with tuition assistance levels provided to qualified families. Such a school will provide opportunities to expand the overall mission of excellence in evangelizing the future generation of our Catholic faith.

Strategic enrollment management and coordination will provide ongoing guidance and data on several key issues. One issue is the relationship between existing high schools and the elementary school population. Considered simply on a numerical basis, the eighth-grade Catholic school population appears to match the number of places for Grade 9 in Catholic

PERCENT OF STUDENTS RECEIVING TUITION ASSISTANCE



high schools. Given the number of open places in two of our Diocesan high schools, it would seem all of our Catholic elementary students would have a place in our Diocesan high schools if they so choose. (See High School Enrollment Table on page 11.)

A more detailed understanding of access pathways to high school would benefit the Diocese and its mission for high schools. Unlike the elementary schools that draw their students largely from their parishes, the three Diocesan and four private Catholic high schools compete against each other for students from across the Diocese. There were 1,099 students who graduated from Catholic elementary schools in May 2014. Of these students, 73% plan to attend a Catholic high school with 27% attending other schools. Of those attending Catholic high schools, the enrollment is split between the Diocesan and private Catholic high schools at 37% and 36% respectively. The map on the next page shows the enrollment pattern of the 410 students to the Diocesan high schools.

A second issue is the capacity of Catholic high school education. Currently, the total number of eighth grade students in Catholic elementary schools (as well as eighth grade students at Bishop Dunne, Cistercian, and the Highlands) closely matches the capacity of the seven Catholic high schools in the Diocese. The Catholic population within the boundaries of the Diocese of Dallas has grown 41% in the past 10 years. Additional and larger regional elementary schools will be needed to meet the future needs of parishioners who desire a Catholic education for their children. As our Catholic elementary schools grow to meet this need, more capacity in our Catholic high schools will also be necessary.

For the year 2013-2014, the number of ninth grade students in all seven Catholic high schools was 1,128. If the 41% growth in Catholic population in the boundaries of the Diocese over the past 10 years continues for another 10 years, and if this Catholic population provides students to Catholic high schools at the same level as the current population, the demand for Catholic high school capacity might reach 1,800 students in the ninth grade by 2025. It is plausible to conclude that one (and possibly two) additional high schools will be needed to serve the need for Catholic high school education in the Diocese of Dallas.

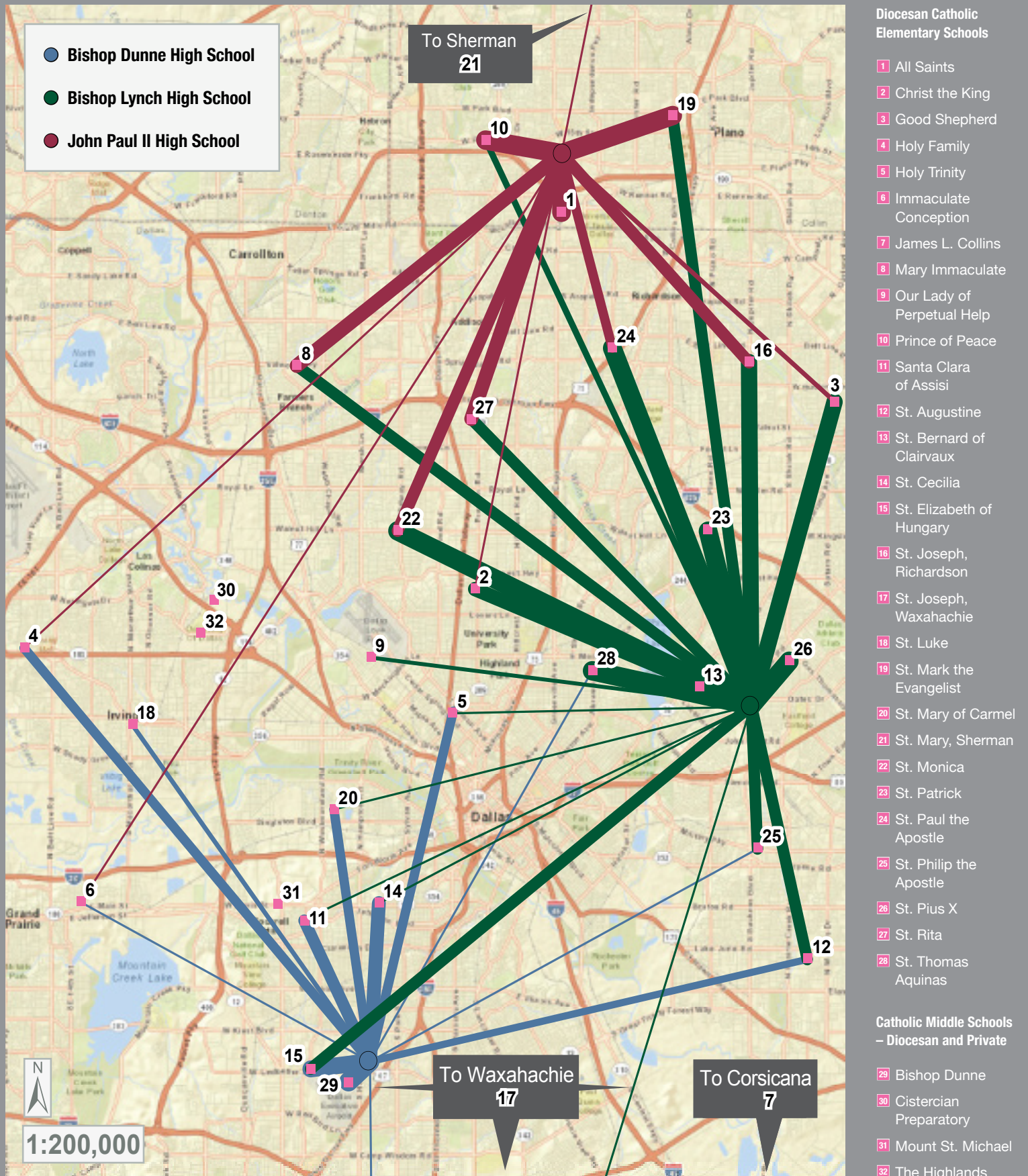
Recommendation 20

Examine the feasibility of implementing, over time, standardized tuition and fees for the three Diocesan high schools.

The concept of standardizing tuition and fees for the three Diocesan high schools raises both practical and conceptual issues. After a study of these issues, a goal of standardizing tuition and fees might seem unwise or impractical. Alternatively, a study of these issues might show sufficient benefits of and a practical pathway towards standardizing tuition and fees. Recommendation 20 simply suggests that a study of this topic is warranted. As a matter of mission, a standardized tuition and fee approach would signal a unified mission and the equality of benefits of attending any of the high schools. As a matter of Diocesan-wide promotion and perception of the schools, a standard approach would have benefits.

Many practical considerations will also need to be evaluated. If all three schools have full enrollment

2014-2015 FRESHMEN ENROLLMENT IN DIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOLS FROM CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



and similar teacher-pupil ratios and teaching loads, the cost of education per pupil should be quite similar. Because full enrollment is a desirable and realistic goal, and because the expectation of similar teacher-student ratios and teaching loads seem appropriate in a Diocesan network of schools, a similar per-pupil cost is an appropriate premise. Nonetheless, any effort to standardize tuition would need to take place over a number of years. As the work of the Strategic Enrollment Group begins to yield results, high school enrollment should increase, generating more tuition revenue. To be sure, the cost of high school education per pupil will also increase as teachers are paid more, as teaching loads become more consistent with Diocesan standards, and as schools implement 21st century education techniques. Likewise, the expansion of educational offerings across all three schools will add to the overall educational cost. These additional costs—partly the result of increased quality for all schools—will necessitate more tuition assistance based on family income levels. In sum, as Diocesan schools and Diocesan leadership encounter and address these changes, the time seems ripe to study the feasibility of standardizing tuition and fees.

As indicated in the chart below, average tuition and fees, as well as the cost of education per student, varies significantly by school. While the lower average for Bishop Dunne includes the middle school students, the gap between cost per student and tuition/fees per student varies significantly between the schools. Additional information provided in the previous graph under Recommendation 19 shows that the percentage of students in these schools who receive tuition assistance varies significantly. This clearly illustrates that the path to standardized tuition

for the three high schools will take time because of the connection of tuition change with the availability of tuition assistance for families who qualify due to family household income.

Recommendation 21

In concert with efforts to achieve continuous improvement in academic excellence, the Diocese should examine and move to standardize teacher compensation as well as teacher “loads” for its network of high schools, consistent with the goal to increase instructional effectiveness in Recommendation 12.

By providing a just and competitive level of teacher salary for the recommended teacher “load” of five classes (Recommendation 12), moving toward a standardized teacher compensation as stated in Recommendation 21 will reduce the need for teachers to take on additional classes for an added stipend in order to make up for a shortfall in the base salary. Currently, among the three Diocesan high schools there are wide differences between starting base salaries (bachelor’s degree with one year or less teaching experience) for teachers who are expected to teach six classes.

The Committee averaged the 2013-2014 starting base salaries at each of the three Diocesan high schools and found that one school is paying 83% of that average dollar amount, another is paying 92%, and the third is paying 125%—the last percentage being much more in line with the competitive market. To draw the best and the brightest faculty, it is critical to set a competitive starting salary in all

2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR			
	COST OF EDUCATION PER STUDENT	TUITION AND FEES	TUITION AND FEES (% OF TOTAL COST PER STUDENT)
Bishop Dunne	\$14,207 *	\$10,292 *	72% *
Bishop Lynch	\$13,499	\$12,277	91%
John Paul II	\$17,411 (\$18,985 with interest on debt)	\$14,618	84% (77% with interest on debt)
* Includes Bishop Dunne’s Middle School Source: Published Audited Financial Statements			

of the Diocesan high schools since increments for additional years of experience are typically based on this starting salary.

Further, examination of teacher compensation by the Diocese should include a study of salaries of surrounding school districts. It should be noted that the Dallas, Garland, Plano and Richardson Independent School Districts average a starting base salary of approximately \$48,000. It should also be noted that a standard teacher “load” of five instead of six classes would require additional teachers at each of the high schools.

Recommendation 22

With the goal of providing guidance for the leadership of individual high schools and for planning as to Diocesan high school education in general, the Office of Catholic Education should establish performance measures and initiate operational planning and reporting on an annual basis.

Each high school measures performance in a number of different areas and by various means; the school reports this performance to its leadership and boards. Yet individual high schools and the schools collectively could benefit from use of a more standardized set of performance measures, reported on a regular basis in collaboration with the Office of Catholic Education. Furthermore, high schools individually and collectively could benefit from a compilation of data across various areas and through standard processes. For instance, performance measures should include:

- Tracking the number of students who go from Catholic elementary to Catholic high schools
- Tracking the graduates of Catholic high schools who matriculate to college, junior college, and other places of education
- Important data for regular collection might include:
 - ♦ *Enrollment*
 - ♦ *Student performance*
 - ♦ *College readiness*
 - ♦ *High school graduation rate*
 - ♦ *Characteristics of student population*
 - ♦ *Student retention*
 - ♦ *Student participation in the Arts, STEM sciences, athletics, and community programs*

Performance measures and the sample data presented above are critical for regular and



consistent analysis of institutional effectiveness. Diocesan high schools currently act independently on these issues which, if centralized on an oversight basis, would provide connectivity and guidance of best practices in such areas as accounting, finance, and enrollment management and advancement.

The Committee found that some data is readily available at individual high schools but is not regularly nor collectively gathered. Such areas included: base salary schedule at each school; admission statistics (sending school, number of applications, acceptances, and yield enrollment); the number of students in the high schools who have learning differences; and tuition assistance offered by each school.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

	NUMBER OF BUSES TO TRANSPORT STUDENTS TO AND FROM SCHOOL DAILY	NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED	ANNUAL FEE FOR SERVICE
Bishop Dunne	2 buses	47	\$750
Bishop Lynch	7 buses (11 stops)	225-250	\$850
John Paul II	2 buses	16	\$900

Recommendation 23

Establish a process in the Office of Catholic Education for continuously gathering and evaluating information on the transportation needs of students attending or potentially attending the three Diocesan high schools.

Transportation is an issue for each high school, and wide differences exist in the approach each school takes to provide transportation for its students. A process within the Office of Catholic Education for gathering and evaluating transportation-related information could benefit each school in its own decisions. Further, information from this process could allow the Diocese to consider additional transportation-related options.

As seen in the chart above, there is currently a wide range in the number of buses each of the three high schools has to transport students to and from school. Moreover, the condition of these buses varies significantly. Through an ongoing process recommended here, the Diocese could, for instance, consider whether shared funding for transportation is an option.

Recommendation 24

As an important priority, the Office of Catholic Education should identify the need for communications and advancement activities that continuously define and enhance the value and perception of a Catholic education.

Communication and advancement activities are critical for several reasons: reinforcing the community's sense of shared value about Catholic

education; witnessing to the importance of Catholic education; and sustaining and increasing financial development for Catholic education. Some of the high schools make a significant effort to track and make available information on how many of their graduating students go on to higher education, where they attend, and scholarships awarded after graduation. However, there does not appear to be a centrally led, collaborative effort to gather and publish such information for all of the Catholic high schools, including private Catholic high schools, to celebrate achievement. Collecting and publishing such information (for instance, on the website for Diocesan schools) could strengthen the overall perception of Catholic high schools and promote the benefit of Catholic education to the widespread Catholic community. This will require a collaborative, ongoing process led by the communications director in the Office of Catholic Education.

The responsibility for gathering this information should be coordinated with the activities of the Commission for Institutional Effectiveness, as put forth in Recommendation 3, to ensure that sufficient information is gathered in a reliable manner and is available as a part of the annual evaluation of effectiveness.

While positive perception of Catholic education has existed for hundreds of years, 21st century education and communication techniques have made the definition and sustainability of a school's perceived academic excellence much more important than it once was. The competition in some areas from publicly-funded magnet and charter high schools adds another challenge to the efforts required to continuously define and communicate the true value of Catholic education, particularly at the high school level. In those areas of the Diocese where the population is rapidly

growing, additional challenges are caused by the recently-built public high schools funded through public financing in independent school districts.

An ongoing process of defining and communicating the value of Catholic education should include the following:

- Gathering information on accomplishments of our schools, students, and teachers, as well as others involved in Catholic education
- Gathering data and recording stories highlighting experiences and accomplishments of those who have benefited from a Catholic education
- Organizing, analyzing and managing the information gathered for use in communications to families with students in Catholic schools, the Catholic community at large, the wider community, and perhaps the global Catholic Church
- Leading the effort to enable each school to utilize 21st century technology in multiple channels of communicating

Recommendation 25

Create a system for collaboration among existing and future high schools with regard to facilities, including educational environment, technology infrastructure, purchase of services and materials, and maintenance and repair issues.

Facilities and technology play an important role in the teaching and learning process, in fostering community, and in reflecting Catholic identity and values. As more students are welcomed into the classrooms of our Catholic schools, the state of our facilities—buildings, classrooms, auditoriums, and technology—must be evaluated on a consistent and regular basis. Proper attention to the physical environment also requires developing a facilities plan to address growth, educational needs, aging, and safety. An additional challenge is that 21st century educational environment is accelerating the rate of change in upgrades to facilities and technology. Further, public funding of newly built public schools and charter schools presents an increasing challenge for all Catholic schools. Given the skills required and the importance of cost-effective procurement, it no longer is effective for each school to take care of its own needs in the areas of facilities, technology, supplies, and services. The Office of Catholic Education should lead an ongoing effort to regularly share matters of

concern, best practices, and short- and long-range plans for facilities maintenance, improvements and procurements.

Recommendation 26

Engage in long-range planning for the maintenance and replacement of existing facilities to meet the mission for Catholic education.

The current state at Diocesan high schools is that each high school has some type of plan for improvements and replacement of facilities. The range of these plans varies from immediately-needed improvements to plans that extend for five years or more, as recently developed at John Paul II. In addition, the plans range from collections of informal notes to a formal plan with estimated costs and the estimated schedule for beginning and completing the projects. As the Diocese considers needs for new elementary and secondary schools, the importance of an annually updated plan for each school in a standard format will increase. When a school is challenged with how to finance necessary repairs and improvements, options for financing these costs through Diocesan support should be explored and considered in the context of the mission for Catholic education in the Diocese. (*National Standards and Benchmarks: Standards 10 & 12.*)

Recommendation 27

Develop long-range plans for developing new high schools to serve our expanding Catholic population.

With the current 41% growth in the Diocesan Catholic population over the last 10-year period, planning beyond the sustainability of existing schools has become even more important. Surveys of parents and parishioners have reinforced the importance of Catholic education.

Long-range planning is not a one-time analysis or projection, but an ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, and presenting information from parishes, census data, and other sources, while regularly projecting where and when growth will occur. This planning has special importance for high school education given the size of high schools and the broader geography from which they draw their students. Should the rate of growth in the Catholic population over the last 10 years continue or decrease only slightly, an additional Catholic high school in the Diocese will be needed in the near future.



CONCLUSION

The three Diocesan high schools in Dallas have different histories, traditions, and locations, but each is integral to the goal of Diocesan high school education in Dallas: to make a Catholic high school education available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic families and their children. This goal is critical to the Catholic Church because Catholic high schools offer one of the most effective and sometimes the final opportunity for our young men and women to experience an environment that develops and integrates faith, culture, and life.

With awareness of the critical role of Catholic high schools, and with deep respect for the faithful work of Diocesan high schools in Dallas, the Committee respectfully submits this Report. The Recommendations and data in the Report respond to Bishop Farrell's charge to "provide a blueprint for Catholic school education in the Diocese for many years to come."

A MISSION OF EXCELLENCE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

High School Subcommittee

**R. Andrew Bennett, Karen A. Drawz, Michael A. Earsing,
Vernon R. Mullen, Joseph C. Murphy, Margot Brito Murphy,
Paul O. Pederson, Daniel P. Novakov, Ellen Smith Pryor, James S. Ryan**

Full Committee Membership

* Margot Brito Murphy Chair Attorney	* Karen A. Drawz Co-Chair Retired Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs The Hockaday School	* Paul O. Pederson Co-Chair Retired Partner PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP
R. Andrew Bennett Senior Project Manager and Project Designer BOKA Powell, LLC	* Joseph C. Murphy Retired Partner Pricewaterhouse Coopers, LLP	
** Sister Gloria Cain, S.S.N.D. Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Dallas	* Daniel P. Novakov Shareholder Greenberg Traurig, LLP	
Rev. Tom Cloherty Pastor Prince of Peace Catholic Community	Ellen Smith Pryor Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs UNT Dallas College of Law	
Rev. Msgr. Robert E. Coerver Pastor St. Rita Catholic Community	Alice Rodriguez Executive Vice-President JPMorgan Chase	
Cristina Danze Freelance Writer and Special Contributor The Dallas Morning News	* James S. Ryan, III Partner Jackson Walker, LLP	
** Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel Auxiliary Bishop of Dallas	Brian Schmisek Director of the Institute of Pastoral Studies Loyola University Chicago	
* Michael A. Earsing President Jesuit College Preparatory School	Founding Dean of the School of Ministry University of Dallas	
Jean Nash Johnson Freelance Writer and Editor	Maria Valadez Grants Director Dallas Women's Foundation	
Tom Kendall President Kendall Milagro, Inc.	Raymond E. Wooldridge Private Investor; Chairman of the Board Reeves Bancshares, Inc.	
* Vernon R. Mullen Vice President of Human Resources Billingsley Company	* Executive Committee ** Ex-Officio	

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Strategic Planning Committee, A
Mission of Excellence for Catholic Schools,
wishes to acknowledge that this project
would not have been possible without the
cooperation, support, and assistance of:

Bishop Dunne High School Bishop Lynch High School John Paul II High School

To **Kate Dailey** and **Molly O' Sullivan**,
Ed Leyden and **Evelyn Grubbs**,
Thomas W. Poore and **Steve Mininger**,
as well as countless members of their
staff and faculty who professionally and
expeditiously assisted with all facets of
this study – from site visits, to requests for
information, photographs and the like,
we are deeply grateful.

We are deeply grateful to:

Ellen Smith Pryor,
Committee member, for serving as
chief editor of this publication.

Bill Keffler, Sr. Gloria Cain, S.S.N.D.
and the staff members of the Pastoral
Center and Catholic Schools Office

**The Committee also wishes to
acknowledge the contributions of the
following who provided their expertise
and assistance to us during our study.**

Kenneth Cichocki, CPA
(Pillar Solutions Group)

Karen Dougherty, survey consultant
(Dougherty Insightings)

Joseph Howard, graphic artist

Dr. John T. James, consultant
(Associate Professor, Education Department,
Director of Catholic Educational Programs,
Saint Louis University)

Karen Park, administrative assistant

Jim Reisch, photography
(Jim Reisch, Photographer)

John Schalekamp, facilities assessment
(Schmidt & Stacy Consulting Engineers)

Scott Sires, mapmaker
(Geospatial Technology Program, Professor
and Coordinator Brookhaven College)

Tom and Kim Vander Heiden
(VH Printing)

**For their generosity and
hospitality in hosting meetings:**

Jesuit College Preparatory School
(Special thanks to **Linda Soich**)

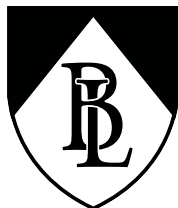
BOKA Powell, LLC

COLLEGE-PREPARATORY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS

— DIOCESAN HIGH SCHOOLS —



Bishop Dunne High School
3900 Rugged Drive
Dallas, Texas 75224
214-339-6561
www.bdcs.org



Bishop Lynch High School
9750 Ferguson Rd
Dallas, Texas 75228
214-324-3607
www.bishoplynch.org



John Paul II High School
900 Coit Road
Plano, Texas 75075
972-867-0005
www.johnpaulihs.org

— PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS —



Cistercian Preparatory School
3660 Cistercian Road
Irving, Texas 75039
469-499-5400
www.cistercian.org



The Highlands School
1451 E. Northgate Drive
Irving, Texas 75062
972-554-1980
www.thehighlandsschool.org



Jesuit College Preparatory School
12345 Inwood Road
Dallas, Texas 75244
972-387-8700
www.jesuitcp.org



Ursuline Academy
4900 Walnut Hill Lane
Dallas, Texas 75229
469-232-1800
www.ursulinedallas.org



OPENING IN FALL 2015

Cristo Rey Dallas College Prep
1054 N. St. Augustine Drive
Dallas, Texas 75217
214-991-0704
www.cristoreydallas.org



**CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF DALLAS**

The Catholic Diocese of Dallas

3725 Blackburn Street
Dallas, Texas 75219

214-528-2240 (P)
214-526-1743 (F)

info@cathdal.org

www.cathdal.org