



Reach for the Future: A Blueprint for Excellence

Catholic Elementary Schools in the Diocese of Dallas



Catholic schools,
in collaboration with parents and guardians
as the primary educators,
seek to educate the whole child
by providing an academically excellent
education rooted in Gospel values —
one that is available, accessible and
affordable to all who desire it.



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A message from
Bishop Kevin Farrell

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Catholic schools are an integral part of the teaching mission of the Church because they assist parents in the important obligation of educating and forming their children through faith development. 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. In doing so, we ensure that students will have the foundation to live a moral and upright life to face the challenges brought on by cultural and moral changes in the world today.

Research conducted by the United States Department of Education and other agencies confirms the major impact that Catholic schools have had in the successful education of children throughout this great country. Research also shows that Catholic schools have made a major impact in closing the achievement gap for poor, inner-city, minority students and have lower dropout rates than both public and other private schools. Ninety-nine percent of Catholic high school students graduate, and 97 percent go on to post-secondary education. Catholic school students also score well on standardized tests, surpassing federal and state agency standards.

I hope you, like me, are thankful and proud of the many successes and achievements of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Dallas. And, I hope you will now join me in looking to the future and at ways to address the challenges our Catholic schools face.

While the Catholic population of the Diocese of Dallas has surged by 41% in the last 10 years, the number of Catholic elementary schools has not grown at all. The fact that 82% of parishioners in the Diocese believe that Catholic education is vital to the future of the Catholic Church indicates that all 37 Catholic schools in the Diocese of Dallas are extremely important and must be strengthened, and that additional schools need to be considered.

We are blessed that our unique Catholic identity enables us to educate the “whole person”—spirit, mind, and body—allowing our young people to play an essential role in the future life of our Church, our country and our world.

Because of the critical importance of our Catholic schools, in early 2011 I commissioned a committee made up of members of our Catholic community with different backgrounds and a variety of expertise. I asked them to address the challenges our schools are facing and to offer strategic suggestions regarding the future of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Dallas.

As you read this report, you will see that the committee’s strategic recommendations are bold yet practical. They are designed to ensure academically excellent schools that are operationally vibrant both now and into the future. These strategic recommendations are a product of an exhaustive process of candid assessment, thoughtful research, and extensive discussion among parishioners, board members, educational professionals and staff, pastors, clergy, 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, conscientious work and devotion to this monumental effort. I plan to personally oversee the implementation of these recommendations in the coming months to ensure that we have the strongest, most dynamic Catholic schools possible, available to all who desire a Catholic school education.

While we can only imagine the future lives of the babies we baptize today, we must make sure that we can promise them the unparalleled experience found only in Catholic schools. Please pray for the continued success of our Catholic schools, our educators and our students.

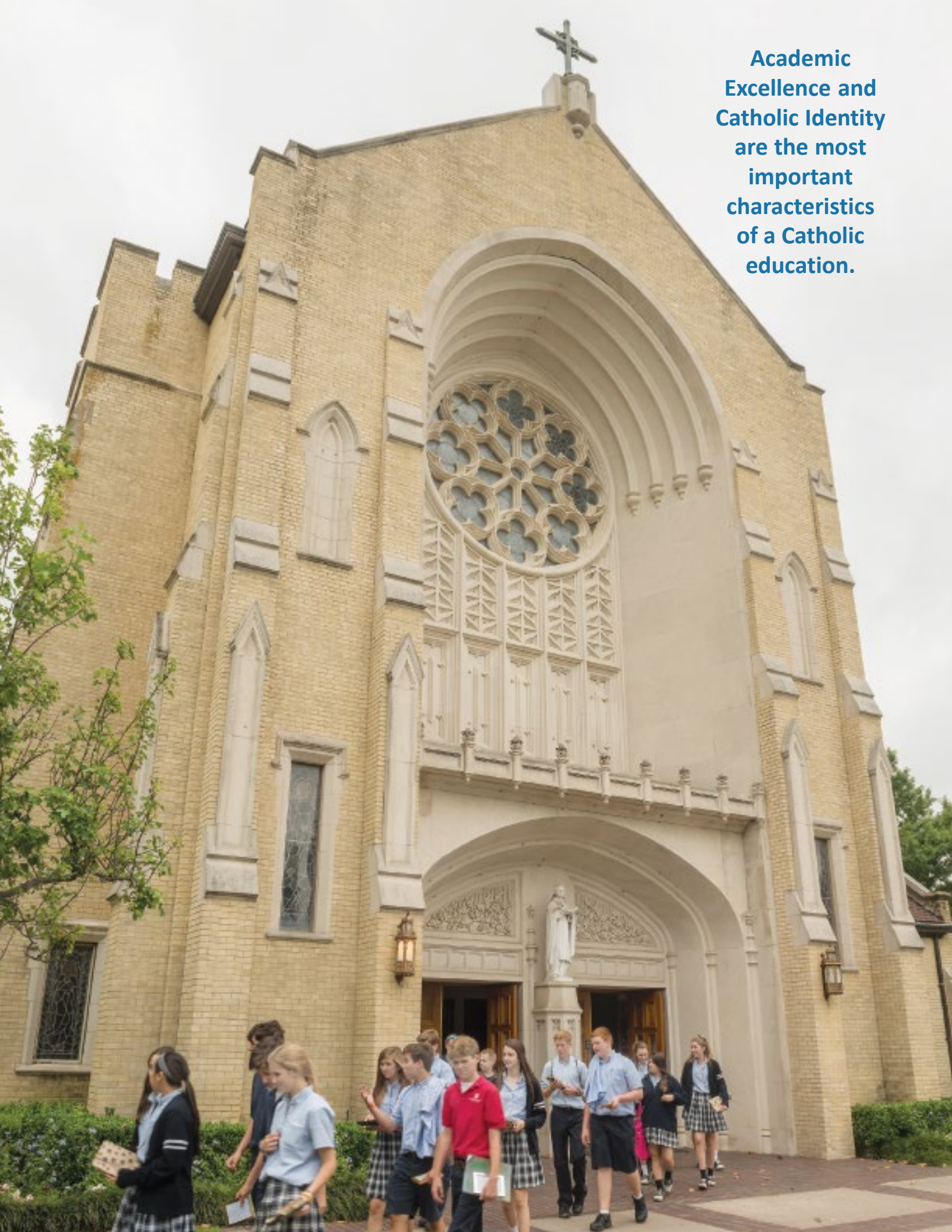
Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Farrell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Kevin J. Farrell, D.D.
Bishop of Dallas
September 2013



**Academic
Excellence and
Catholic Identity
are the most
important
characteristics
of a Catholic
education.**



Introduction: The Call

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Dallas have been educating students for more than a century, and for over 50 years in most Diocesan schools. Throughout these decades, Diocesan elementary schools have borne the fruits of Catholic education: providing an academically rigorous education within a Catholic worldview and strengthening both the Catholic community and the wider society.

A celebration of that success brings with it a responsibility: to carry on Catholic education in a way that fulfills its mission now and in the future. And that mission faces challenges unimaginable to those faithful pioneers of Catholic education in Dallas: the technology revolution, unprecedented stresses on the fabric of family and society, and the reshaping of educational needs in a global community and economy. In addition, recent decades have seen changes in many of the stable features that underpinned the design and delivery of Catholic education: the loss of the religious in teaching and leadership, and drastic challenges to the parish education economic model.

In the Diocese of Dallas as elsewhere, the changes have posed substantial challenges to the mission of providing an academically excellent Catholic education. The challenges include:

- Adequate compensation for teachers and school leadership,
- Increased need for technology infrastructure,
- Maintaining, updating and building new facilities, and
- Substantial variations in the basic operational vitality of schools depending on factors such as family income, school size, and location.

Certainly, individual schools and the Diocese have sought to address these and other challenges. But school-specific or issue-specific responses are not enough. These challenges affect all our schools, and the issues and possible solutions are intertwined. The time is ripe, then, for system-wide study.

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, offer recommendations to “ensure the continued growth and sustainability of Catholic schools,” and “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.”

The Committee accepted this charge with a profound sense of responsibility and with gratitude for the chance to serve. For two years, the Committee and its subcommittees met, researched, conducted focus groups and surveys, visited schools, inspected blueprints and facilities, consulted experts and studies around the country, participated in ongoing conversations with diocesan offices, and compiled and analyzed data. From this process, the Committee produced and presented to Bishop Farrell a strategic plan for Catholic *elementary* schools.

This booklet—*Reach for the Future: A Blueprint for Excellence*—summarizes the Report on Catholic Elementary Schools. The summary includes the 16 Goals and **condensed** versions of all 41 Recommendations contained in the full Report, along with summaries of the more detailed rationales and data in the Report. As in the full Report, the Goals and Recommendations in this booklet are grouped under the following topics:

- Academic Excellence: Academic Leadership and Curriculum and Instruction
- Catholic Identity: Faith, Community, and Relationships
- Operational Vitality: School Models and Infrastructure and Diocesan Support
- Governance
- Facilities

Taken together and viewed broadly, the Goals and Recommendations relate to two questions.

First, *what are the necessary elements of an academically excellent Catholic education at the outset of the 21st century?* As the Plan makes clear in its Goals and Recommendations, these elements include:

- Superb teachers and academic leaders with the necessary expertise and resources.
- A standards-based curriculum; aligned with the knowledge, skills, and abilities our students will require in the 21st century; compatible with our students’ diverse learning needs; and rooted in the teachings of the Gospel.



Catholic education. To be sure, the parish school model continues to achieve operational vitality in several of our schools. Yet the parish model no longer can sustain an academically excellent Catholic education in *all* Diocesan schools. Further, in geographical areas that currently lack a Catholic school, the parish school model or another model might be the best choice for a new school. Thus, the Report outlines four operational models in addition to the traditional parish school model, including a regional school model, a family of schools model, a rural school model, and an academy model. Each of these models is defined more fully in this booklet and in the Report.

- Increasing Diocesan-wide support of schools through changes in parish assessments and other revenues.
- Ensuring effective governance of individual schools and Diocesan Catholic education as a whole. This requires clear definition of roles and responsibilities among the Diocesan School Board, the Superintendent of the Office of Catholic Education, local school boards, pastors, and principals. In addition, local school boards and the Diocesan School Board should be fully constituted, be reflective of the community, and possess necessary expertise.

Neither this Summary Report nor the full Plan is a static document. A well-crafted strategic plan is a living blueprint that shapes vision, kindles motivation and establishes direction. It cannot predict or fix the future. Yet it can and should guide us toward a promise of excellence, for our children and theirs to come.

- Instructional approaches that foster a high level of achievement; meet the diverse learning needs of students; make effective use of technology; and foster 21st century skills and knowledge.
- Facilities that support and sustain the educational mission and provide a welcoming and safe environment.
- A focus on Catholic values and formation throughout educational activities and among all members of the education community.

Second, to provide an academically excellent Catholic education that is accessible and affordable to all Catholic families in the Diocese of

Dallas, *what organizational, financial, and governance features are necessary?* As the Goals and Recommendations explain, these include:

- Reorganizing and expanding the Catholic Schools Office in ways that allow it to provide additional support for educational areas (such as expertise in curriculum design, early childhood education and professional development) and operational areas (such as budgeting and purchasing).
- Implementing several operational models in addition to the parish school model to the extent necessary to sustain and increase access to an academically excellent

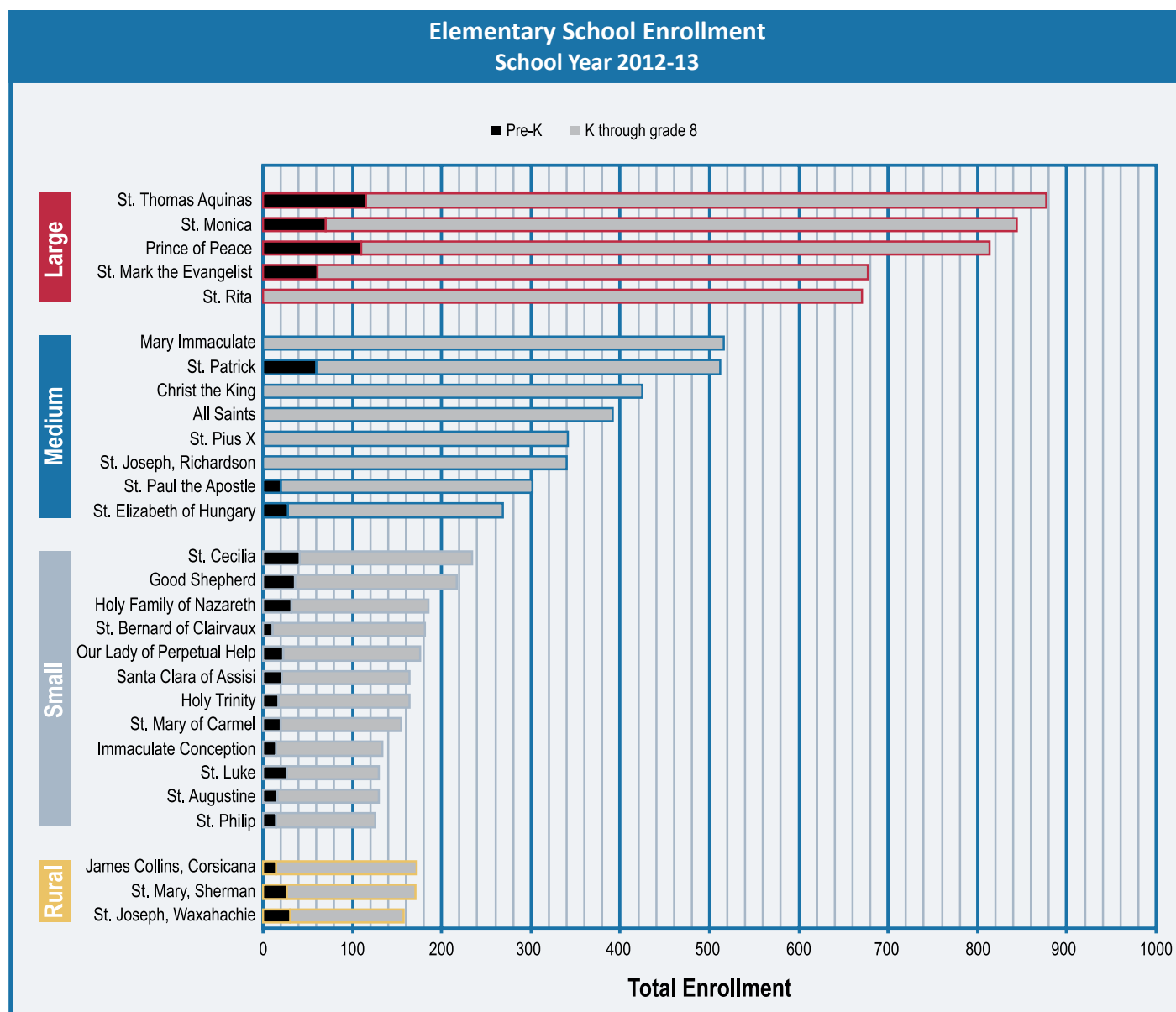
Overview of the Committee's Work

The Committee's membership consisted of the Superintendent and Auxiliary Bishop as *ex-officio* members, two priests (both longtime and respected pastors in the Diocese) and 17 volunteer professionals within the laity. The Committee members' expertise included: strategic planning and change management, education (elementary, secondary and university levels), finance and investments, corporate and Church law, non-profit, theology, human resources, architecture and communications.

The Committee's core Leadership Team included the Chair and two Co-chairs. This core, along with five other members of the Committee, formed the Executive Committee. The full Committee was divided into four specialized teams based on expertise, each team representing one of the four pillars of Catholic education—Academic Excellence, Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, and Operational Vitality. To facilitate visits to all 28 elementary schools, the Committee was subdivided into five Site Visit Teams consisting of one member from each of the four Pillar Teams.

A Framework for Study

As a framework for its study, the Committee categorized the 28 elementary schools by the number of classes at each grade level. These categories facilitated comparison and understanding of data. The categories included: **Large** (three or more classes per grade), **Medium** (two classes per grade), and **Small** (one or fewer classes per grade). Even though rural schools technically fell into the "Small Category," a fourth category (**Rural**) was created for these schools given their geographic distance from their sister schools and their dissimilar data patterns.



Data and Information Gathered

Throughout its two-year study, the Committee gathered a vast amount of data and information from multiple sources and analyzed the majority of the data using the four categories of schools: large, medium, small and rural.

External Landscape

One category of information and data came from literature relating to Catholic education. Critical documents included the letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on renewing our commitment to Catholic schools and the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*

issued to all Catholic schools nationwide (March 2012). The Committee also reviewed several strategic plans produced by other dioceses from around the country. Though informed by portions of these plans, the Committee sought to produce a thorough and professional study distinctively addressing Catholic education in the Diocese of Dallas.

Throughout the process, the Committee kept abreast of current research and happenings relating to education, both nationally and locally. Members exchanged articles and links to educational videos; read the Lexington Institute's report on "Building 21st Century Catholic Learning Communities;" spoke with

school leaders in other dioceses across the country; contacted Loyola University of Chicago's Center for Effective Catholic Education and spoke with its director; consulted an expert in technology infrastructure; and spoke with civic and public education leaders in Dallas.

Objective Data

A second category of information might be termed "objective data." This includes numbers and statistics relating to operation, governance, instruction, and academic performance. Some of this data was provided by the Catholic Schools Office, subject to appropriate restrictions on confidentiality, while other data came from individual schools in connection with their site visits. Data from follow-up questionnaires to school principals provided additional information.

Site Visits

A third category includes information gathered by site-visit teams when they visited all 28 elementary schools. Each team was assigned five to six schools across the Diocese. The teams gained insights from observing the school in operation while students were present and from conversations with academic leaders, pastors, teachers, and school council/board members.

A separate Facilities Task Force, led by an architect who served on the Committee, gathered information about each school's physical plant and operations, including capacity, condition, blueprints, and renovations. Using a common template designed by the architect, a team with architectural and construction expertise visited most of the Diocesan schools and evaluated facilities on a scale of 1 to 5 as to adequacy of space, overall condition, and 21st century learning environment.

Key Committee Events February 2011 - June 2013

Name	Number of Meetings/Visits
Strategic Planning Committee Meetings	14
Executive Committee Meetings	26
Focus Groups Meetings for Surveys (Conducted at locations across the Diocese)	16 (English) 1 (Spanish)
Site Visits to Elementary Schools	28
Site Visits to High Schools	4
Facilities Task Force Visits to Elementary Schools	23
Facilities Task Force Visits to High Schools	3



Surveys

A fourth category consists of data and analyses drawn from surveys that the Committee initiated and oversaw. The Committee retained an independent professional consultant to help design, implement, and analyze results of surveys from eight key stakeholders: elementary parents and personnel, high school students, high school parents and personnel, parishioners from all 77 parishes in the Diocese, clergy, and councils or school boards (including the Diocesan School Board). Surveys to elementary school parents and to all parishioners were available in both English and Spanish.

The survey design process started in February 2011 and included discussions with the Catholic Schools Office and 17 focus group meetings held in 11 locations. The surveys sought responses to key issues relating to academic excellence, Catholic identity, operational vitality, governance, and community. The surveys reflected high response rates and received more than 10,000 responses.

The following pages have been designed to capture in words, photographs, and illustrated data the essence of the Committee's study. The Goals of the Strategic Plan appear in their full and complete form; however, for the sake of brevity, the wording of the Recommendations has been condensed. For an Executive Summary of the full Report and the complete set of Goals and Recommendations in its entirety, the reader is encouraged to visit www.cathdal.org.



Surveying the Stakeholders

Constituency Surveyed	Languages	Dates of Survey	Number of Responses
Parents Elementary Schools	English/Spanish	May 2011	2,765
Personnel Elementary Schools	English	May 2011	528
High School Students	English	May 2011 and October 2011	1,680
Parents High Schools	English	December 2012	647
Personnel High Schools	English	December 2012	232
Parishioners All 77 Parishes	English/Spanish	February 2012	4,202
Clergy	English	September 2012	44
Elementary and High School Advisory Councils/ School Boards and Diocesan School Board	English	October 2012	291
Totals	8 Surveys		10,389

Source: Independent Survey Conducted May 2011-October 2012



Academic Excellence

Catholic education should educate the whole person, in faith and reason, in an atmosphere characterized by academic excellence. Catholic schools do not and cannot accept a false choice between academic rigor and faith formation. By their core commitment to blending faith and reason, Catholic schools aim to foster the full capacity of the mind and spirit. Our Diocesan Catholic schools are filled with principals, teachers and staff who strive to provide such an education. Yet, our network of Catholic schools faces challenges in the effort to reach consistent and enduring academic excellence. These challenges are the subject of the Goals and Recommendations in this section.

Supporting Those Who Lead – Our Teachers and Principals

Principals, assistant principals and teachers are at the heart of the teaching and learning process. In every school, these academic leaders must have knowledge, skill, time, and support for their critical roles. To ensure that our students thrive in the classroom, we must support our teachers and these administrators, giving them the tools and resources needed to focus on teaching, on attracting and retaining the most skilled faculty, and on making use of best practices to create an engaged and interactive learning experience.

In an academic environment, teachers matter more to student learning than any other factor. To attract, recruit and retain the best teachers and the administrators who hire them, appropriate compensation is essential, and consequently the Strategic Plan calls for adopting a new competitive compensation model. Moreover, our administrators and teachers need daily operational support in order to focus on their primary responsibility, teaching and learning. Support can appear in a variety of forms: additional learning and teaching specialists on staff at the local school, mentoring and targeted professional development programs, administrative assistance, the

sharing of best practices among and between schools, and expert human resources in pivotal areas at the Diocesan level. Thus, as part of this support system, the Plan also calls for expanding the current Catholic Schools Office to an Office of Catholic Education, allowing the most effective combination of central and school-based support for academic, personnel, and operational needs.

Goal 1: That every school in the Diocese of Dallas have teachers, assistant principals, and principals with the knowledge, skill, time, and support to lead the teaching and learning process.



Recommendation 1.1

Create a position in the Office of Catholic Education with the responsibility to recruit, develop and retain outstanding academic professionals.

Recommendation 1.2

Implement a Diocesan compensation model consistent with the mission of Catholic schools and sufficiently competitive to attract and retain outstanding teachers and principals.

Evaluation – Inspiring Goals and Actions

The Strategic Plan calls for regular and consistent evaluation of effectiveness for all teachers and administrators, as well as the institutional effectiveness of every school and the Office of Catholic Education. Thoughtful and consistent evaluation is critical to assuring the quality of teaching, fostering a teacher's professional growth, and achieving our schools' educational mission. The same can be said for our school leaders—our assistant principals and principals. Consistent and effective evaluation yields insights and inspires actions that contribute to the overall growth of our schools' academic quality.

Unless schools assess their own institutional effectiveness, the adage “not seeing the forest for the trees” will hold true. Current evaluation methods used in the Diocese are not sufficiently regular, standardized, and comprehensive. Further, the lack of financial and human resources hinders some schools from evaluating their overall effectiveness as frequently and effectively as others. All schools should actively engage in assessing their own effectiveness and should have access to comprehensive and meaningful evaluation to ensure excellence in instruction. Thus, the Strategic Plan calls for a Diocesan commission that will assist schools in evaluating their effectiveness.

Goal 2: That every Diocesan school, and Diocesan schools as a whole, achieve continuous improvement on the basis of rigorous and meaningful measures of evaluation.

Recommendation 2.1

Design and implement a common, consistent, and comprehensive annual review process for evaluating principals.

Recommendation 2.2

Design and implement a common, consistent and comprehensive annual review process for evaluating faculty, drawing on expertise and input from principals and teachers.

Recommendation 2.3

Establish a Diocesan commission:
a. To evaluate the institutional effectiveness of each school with regular, systematic and best available methods and processes.
b. To support each school's evaluation-related activities and data gathering.

Setting a High Standard for Curriculum

Catholic education aims to provide an academically excellent Catholic education for all, regardless of socioeconomic background, ethnicity, ability or need. Our parents would agree that this aim is well-founded. Of the seven key areas of Catholic education listed in the elementary school survey, the top priorities—academics, instruction, and Catholic values—were the same for parents whether they were from a large, medium, small, or rural school.

For our students to succeed in the future, they must be provided with a robust curriculum, one that is challenging, forward-thinking, and based on a standard of excellence that sets expectations for what our young students should know, understand, and be able to do. Curriculum, instruction and assessment coexist as critical parts of teaching and learning.

37% of the 600+ full-time Diocesan teachers are compensated below the Diocesan minimum, but wide differences exist among large, medium, small, and rural schools. The number of educational support staff varies significantly in Diocesan schools.

Source: Minimum Teacher Salary Schedule, Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Dallas; Diocese of Dallas Annual Report - List of All Professional Educators for school year 2011-2012





These three components require systematic and ongoing review and revision if schools are to keep pace with or, better yet, take the lead in 21st century education.

A comprehensive, challenging, and aligned curriculum should be created that incorporates STEM concepts (science, technology, engineering and math) and 21st century content and skills. In a world shaped by globalization, technology, and immense changes in access to and use of information, the 21st century skills necessary are: creativity and innovation; critical thinking; communication; problem-solving; collaboration; and information fluency.

This redesigned curriculum should also provide a stronger focus on world languages and the arts by including these two branches of learning into the core curriculum. Moreover, the design of the reading and language arts curricula will require expert attention to address the unique learning needs of our English language learners.

Goal 3: That the curriculum in all schools in the Diocese of Dallas be standards-based, challenging and forward-focused in meeting 21st century content and skills, compatible with our students' diverse learning needs, and rooted in the teachings of the Catholic faith.

Recommendation 3.1

Create a position in the Office of Catholic Education focused solely on curriculum, instruction, and student assessment.

Recommendation 3.2

Create a representative panel of expert faculty to redesign current curriculum and to formulate implementation steps and a continual review process.



Early childhood education can influence both where a child attends K-8 school and the child's readiness for K-8 education and beyond.

Recommendation 3.3

Ensure that Recommendation 3.2 includes alignment of subject and study skills congruent with high school curricula, "21st century" learning skills and knowledge, STEM sciences, and a language arts and reading curriculum that meets the needs of those with language differences.

Recommendation 3.4

As one measure of evaluating academic achievement, ensure that standardized testing is appropriately and consistently used, reflects rigorous norms and criteria, and is reported with transparency.

Taking Instruction to the Next Level of Excellence

While curriculum is what students should know, instruction is how they learn. The two are inherently connected and equally important.

Educational research agrees on the importance of instruction to the teaching and learning process, and great instruction requires attention

to and design of instructional practices by individual teachers and within the school as a whole. The call to motivate and engage all our students through differentiated instruction is loud and clear. It summons schools to pay attention to gender differences in instructional design and to use instructional strategies that take into account our gifted students, our English language learners, and our students with learning differences.

While schools often instruct the best way they can with the resources they have, they need strong central support and guidance. The current Catholic Schools Office needs adequate resources to provide for leadership in the critical areas of instruction and student assessment. With additional expertise and support from an expanded Office of Catholic Education, schools can review and implement diverse instructional styles, and they can more readily facilitate our children's educational and spiritual growth starting as early as pre-Kindergarten.



Proposed Staffing Model The Office of Catholic Education



Assumptions

- Associate Superintendent for Family of Schools has expertise in language differences.
- A regional school (or schools) for elementary children with learning differences is established. A diagnostician is on staff at each regional school or is shared between or among schools.
- A Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Institute (STEM Institute) for children in Grades 6-12 is established.
- Consider establishing an Arts Institute for elementary-age students.
- CFO/Operations is a resource and supports enrollment management, marketing, shared purchasing, facilities, etc.

Goal 4: That all schools in the Diocese of Dallas use instructional approaches that meet the diverse learning needs of students, engage and motivate students, develop the whole child's potential, foster a high level of achievement as measured by objective data, make effective use of technology, and foster 21st century skills.

Recommendation 4.1

Review, assess, and improve all instructional approaches as to the elements in Goal 4.

Recommendation 4.2

Enhance the ability of the Office of Catholic Education to provide leadership and support in specialized areas critical to instruction.

Recommendation 4.3

Expand the current Catholic Schools Office to provide leadership in early childhood education. Require or strongly encourage all Diocesan schools to implement a pre-Kindergarten program.

Meeting the Needs of all Students with Learning Differences

Over the last 30 years, dioceses and individual Catholic schools have increased their attention to special education. It is estimated that 15 percent of the U.S. population, or one in seven Americans, has some type of learning disability. Among school-age children, more than 6 percent currently receive special education services because of learning disabilities – almost 3 million students nationwide.

These students often require flexibility in instruction and learning environment. Standard classroom education can fail to meet the needs of special education students, often marginalizing their potential. Our survey showed that all Dallas Diocese elementary schools – large, medium, small, and rural – received the lowest academic ratings by parents and personnel in the area of meeting special learning needs. Catholic education can and should respond to the call for inclusion by studying the needs for special education and planning the most effective and accessible response.

Goal 5: That options for Catholic education in Dallas Diocesan schools will become more widely available for children with special learning needs, including children who are unable to succeed within a general education setting.

Recommendation 5.1

Evaluate if existing resources, strategies, and programs meet the needs of students with learning differences. Create a comprehensive plan to increase and strengthen instruction, taking into consideration public school resources and programs.

Recommendation 5.2


Conduct a feasibility study for establishing educational learning centers or schools for children with diagnosed learning differences.



Catholic Identity

Catholic identity is pervasive in all we do and is essential to developing the whole student—mind, body and soul. As stated by the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education, the fostering of Catholic identity “should be the aim of all those who make up the educating community.” The Catholic community of Dallas agrees with the importance of this aim. For parents and school personnel, Catholic identity ranks among the most valued characteristics of Catholic education. And high percentages of both parents and school personnel conclude that their schools “deliver completely” on Catholic practices and values.





An overwhelming percentage of parents and school personnel “graded” their school with an “A” (meaning “excellent”) in Catholic practices and values.

Source: Parent Survey May 2011, Personnel Survey May 2011

Developing the Whole Student

The following Goals and Recommendations seek to build on and sustain our schools’ success in fostering Catholic identity. In addition to the stated recommendation for curriculum and instruction, this Strategic Plan supports the use of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition as lenses through which students think critically and ethically about the world. The Plan also suggests the appropriate use of Catholic culture and faith in visual and performing arts, music and architecture, along with suitable inclusion of theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings in the curriculum.

Goal 6: That students who attend our Catholic schools have abundant and meaningful opportunities to develop a deep relationship with God through study, service, and spiritual practices.

Recommendation 6.1

Implement the religious education curriculum and instruction of the Diocese; treat religion classes as an integral part of the academic program; and ensure that faculty who teach religion meet appropriate certification requirements.

Recommendation 6.2

Develop a Diocesan policy as to the level of involvement of Catholic schools in sacramental preparation.

Fostering a Close Parish Community and School Relationship

An education rooted in Catholic identity requires a strong spiritual community among all who participate in the child’s education. Community can never be assumed; it must be supported and nurtured. Closer relationships between parish and school, and between priest and principal, strengthen our community. School leaders and teachers as well as council/board members and parents—so critical in shaping an education rooted in Catholic identity—should have access to ongoing adult faith formation. Teachers and school leaders also should have access to resources and training relating to issues arising from cultural and other differences.

Goal 7: That all constituencies in each school collaborate in fostering Catholic identity, and that faith formation and a welcoming Catholic environment be made available to all members of the school community.

Recommendation 7.1

Familiarize the pastor and the principal with Catholic school-parish issues at the start of their duties.

Recommendation 7.2

Provide opportunities to all religious (priests, members of religious orders, deacons) for development and formation relating to the role, mission, governance, and operation of Catholic schools.



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: Parishioner Survey February 2012

Recommendation 7.3

Enhance spiritual formation opportunities for council/board members, teachers, principals, staff, and parents.

Recommendation 7.4

Offer adult support and formation that encourages an inclusive school community. Consider adult support and programs through the Office of Catholic Education and the Diocese.

Supporting and Caring for Our Students and Families

The Vatican Congregation on Catholic Education has noted the challenges facing today’s children, 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 healthy, secure and loving lives. The Catholic educational community is called upon to build partnerships between our schools and families, offering programmatic support at the school level or, depending on the topic and need, at the Diocesan level.

Goal 8: That every school, together with the Office of Catholic Education, serve as a resource for the care and support of children, especially in times of distress.

Recommendation 8.1

Develop and strengthen programs that support a child’s well being and consider an educational component for parents.







Operational Vitality

“Operational vitality” refers to what it takes financially to operate an academically excellent school—including paying salaries, maintaining and renovating facilities, providing technology, and keeping the lights on.

Sustaining Excellence – Operational Models

Without operational vitality, a school cannot be sustained over time even if it has strong Catholic identity, a challenging curriculum, and dedicated teachers and parents. Since the beginning of Catholic education in the Diocese of Dallas during the late 19th century, the financial model underpinning all elementary schools has been the parish model. At the outset of the 21st century, the parish model continues to achieve operational vitality in our large schools and many of our medium schools. Under this model, a school’s revenue comes from tuition that, to a large extent, covers the cost of education when supplemented by a substantial subsidy from its parish, dedicated endowment fund, fundraising, gifts, and other sources of revenue.

Yet the parish model no longer can achieve operational vitality in all Diocesan schools, most notably the small and rural schools. These schools generally do not benefit from economies of scale, sufficient tuition income, substantial parish subsidy, endowments and the like. Even though the “per pupil cost” at the small and rural schools approximates that of the medium and large schools, the academic offerings and facilities generally do not afford the students the same opportunities. This lack of financial resources impacts both academic and operational effectiveness. And, as if these challenges were not enough, the small schools compete heavily with charter schools, which offer an education at no cost. Catholic education falls short of its mission if its availability or academic excellence depends on the size of school, income level, or geography.

The Strategic Plan outlines and recommends several models in addition to the parish model to meet the mission

of the Catholic Church to provide an academically excellent Catholic education to all who desire it.

Goal 9: That Catholic schools in Dallas consider alternative operational models in addition to the traditional parish school model, to the extent necessary to sustain and increase access to an academically excellent Catholic education.

Recommendation 9.1

Make use of four new operational models in addition to the traditional parish school model: a regional school model, a family of schools model, a rural school model, and an academy model.

Recommendation 9.2

Establish a standard model of tuition and fees appropriate for each category of school

The **Parish Model** should continue to function for schools that can sustain operational vitality under the model. Under the parish model, the school is affiliated with a single parish, has a school board drawn from the parish, and is led by a principal hired by the pastor and the Superintendent. With full to near-full capacity enrollment in two or more classes at each grade level, a school operating under the parish model serves students in the parish but also is open to others.

A **Regional School Model** is a possibility for parishes that seek to consolidate their resources to support a school for their children. A cluster of parishes without schools might opt to build a new regional school instead of individual parish schools. Or a group of parishes with existing schools might form a single school on one or more campuses. In either case, the school operates as a separate nonprofit

entity, is affiliated with the Diocese, and remains connected to all parishes in the region. A regional school is co- led by a president, a principal, and a school board. The school serves students from regional parishes and is open to students from other Diocesan parishes.

The **Family of Schools Model** is proposed for existing schools that, under the parish model, are not able to achieve operational vitality for sustained academic excellence as completely independent operations. Under this transitional model, several existing schools will be linked through shared administration, finances, and business practices. Further, the schools may share faculty, staff, and some academic programs. In

addition, the family of schools may receive targeted assistance that, depending on need, could include greater tuition assistance, additional instructional support, or assistance in core operational services. Affiliated with the Diocese, the family of schools has a school board drawn from members of parishes within the group and, as necessary, from the Diocesan pool of potential board members with appropriate expertise.

After a family of schools has been in operation for several years, the family of schools might transition into another model. For instance, schools might grow sufficiently to operate under the parish model, might form a regional school, or might become part of an eventual academy model.

The **Rural Parish Model** should continue to function as a parish school with additional support from surrounding parishes with students attending the school. Currently, the Diocese includes three rural parish schools that are geographically distant from other schools in the urban and suburban areas of the Diocese. One of these schools, founded in 1877, is the longest operating school of the Diocese.

The **Academy Model** refers to a school that serves students from all parishes, with adequate financial support from the Diocese through subsidies, tuition assistance, or both. (By contrast, a regional school primarily is supported by the parishes in the region served by the school.) Affiliated with the Diocese, the academy model is operated as a separate non-profit entity. Leadership is provided by a president, a principal, and a school board that serve at the pleasure of the Bishop.

The academy model could become the best model for our children in two contexts. First, the academy model might be the direction taken over time by a family of schools; that is, to become a school united on one campus in a state-of-the-art facility with curriculum, instruction, programs, and educators all targeted for the needs of the student population. The school then would serve students from the family of schools as well as students from other Catholic schools in that region. Given the student population, this academy school will require significant financial support from a variety of sources, including the Diocese. Second, if a feasibility study supports the need for a school dedicated to learning differences, the academy model could be the best approach to meet the needs of those children who may be better educated in this special learning environment.

Cost of Education Financial Data

CATEGORIES	LARGE	MEDIUM	SMALL	RURAL
Average Cost Per Student (actual)*	\$7,070	\$7,611	\$6,688	\$7,728
Average Tuition Payment Per Student**	\$5,864	\$5,465	\$3,709	\$3,331
Percent of Cost Funded by Tuition	83%	72%	55%	43%
Tuition Range for First Student of Parishioners	\$5,310 – \$6,108	\$4,375 – \$7,050	\$3,800 – \$5,650	\$3,500 – \$4,370
Family Median Income (2010 Census)***	\$104,333	\$76,210	\$49,488	\$53,743

**Based on actual results reported for 2010-2011 school year, before depreciation.*

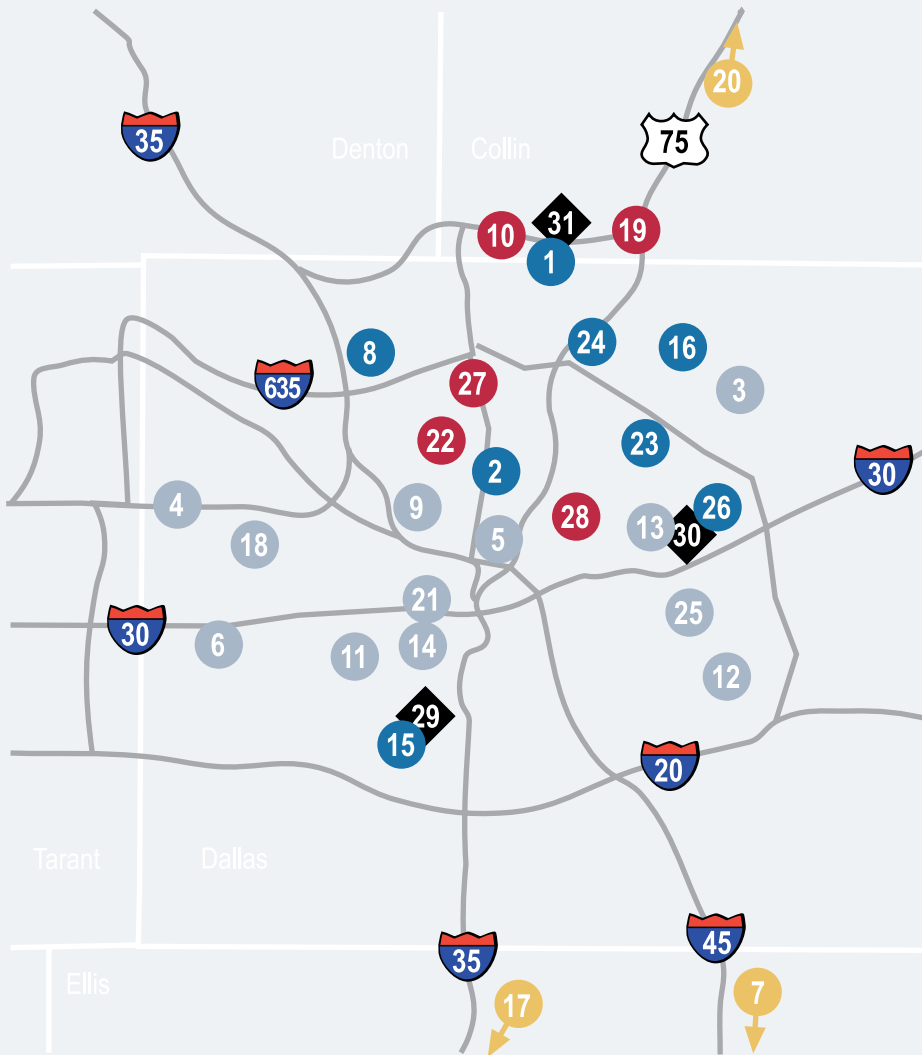
***Average Tuition Payment includes funds awarded to families through tuition assistance.*

**** Represents the median income of families (from the general population) that reside within the boundaries of these parishes.*



Diocesan Schools of Dallas

- Large School ● Medium School ● Small School ● Rural School
◆ High School — Highways (Freeways)



- 1 All Saints
- 2 Christ the King
- 3 Good Shepherd
- 4 Holy Family of Nazareth
- 5 Holy Trinity
- 6 Immaculate Conception
- 7 James Collins, Corsicana
- 8 Mary Immaculate
- 9 Our Lady of Perpetual Help
- 10 Prince of Peace
- 11 Santa Clara of Assisi
- 12 St. Augustine
- 13 St. Bernard of Clairvaux
- 14 St. Cecilia
- 15 St. Elizabeth of Hungary
- 16 St. Joseph, Richardson
- 17 St. Joseph, Waxahachie
- 18 St. Luke
- 19 St. Mark the Evangelist
- 20 St. Mary, Sherman
- 21 St. Mary of Carmel
- 22 St. Monica
- 23 St. Patrick
- 24 St. Paul the Apostle
- 25 St. Philip
- 26 St. Pius X
- 27 St. Rita
- 28 St. Thomas Aquinas
- 29 Bishop Dunne HS
- 30 Bishop Lynch HS
- 31 John Paul II HS

An additional six private Catholic schools are also in the Diocese:

- Cistercian Preparatory
- Jesuit College Preparatory
- Mount St. Michael
- Notre Dame School
- The Highlands School
- Ursuline Academy of Dallas



Enhancing the Infrastructure through Collaboration, Expansion, and Sharing—The Office of Catholic Education

The infrastructure that supports our schools is critical. Regardless of a school's location or size, effective operation requires services such as purchasing, accounting, budgeting, and enrollment management. Indeed, the demands and importance of these specialized services will only increase given changes in 21st century educational techniques, the projected growth in the Catholic population and school-age children, and the need to implement additional operational models for our schools.

To improve the infrastructure supporting these services for all schools, the Strategic Plan proposes an expanded and reorganized Office of Catholic Education. The proposal would enable a centralized, shared services approach to these essential yet specialized activities. A shared services approach could improve quality, lower costs, and facilitate the development of common performance standards. The proposed Office also should include a full-time financial executive, reporting to the Chief Financial Officer and providing additional support to the Superintendent in the management of this growing \$100 million per year system for the 28 elementary schools and 3 Diocesan high schools. In addition to its operational benefits, this expanded infrastructure will serve the need to free our teachers and principals to focus on their primary responsibility—teaching and learning.

Increasing the infrastructure that supports all our schools is consistent with Catholic principles and with the viewpoints of Diocesan parishioners. In *Renewing Our Commitment to*



Most parishioners from all **77** parishes agree that ***all*** parishes should help fund Catholic schools:

66% of parishioners in parishes with schools
72% of parishioners in parishes without schools

Source: Parishioner Survey, February 2012

Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops stated:

The burden of supporting our Catholic schools can no longer be placed exclusively on the individual parishes that have schools and on parents who pay tuition. This will require all Catholics, including those in parishes without schools, to focus

on the spirituality of stewardship. The future of Catholic school education depends on the entire Catholic community.

According to a survey of all 77 parishes in the Diocese, parishioners widely agree that the Catholic community should share the responsibility for funding Catholic education.



Goal 10: That every school in the Diocese have sufficient educational resources, human resources, and financial support to carry out the mission of providing an affordable, accessible, and excellent Catholic education.

Recommendation 10.1

Increase Diocesan-wide support of schools through a change in parish assessments and through other revenue sources. Remain transparent as to how assessments are used to support Diocesan schools.

Recommendation 10.2

Expand the Office of Catholic Education to include resources and professional expertise necessary to provide or support the common operational needs of schools.

Recommendation 10.3

Through the Office of Catholic Education or the Diocesan Business Office, provide greater centralized shared services for Diocesan schools at shared or no cost for selected schools as to functions such as accounting, facilities evaluation and planning, purchasing, advancement, communications, marketing and enrollment process management, insurance, technology, and human resources management.

Recommendation 10.4

Establish the position of chief financial executive in the Office of Catholic Education

Recommendation 10.5

Establish performance measures and initiate operational planning and reporting on an annual basis to provide guidance for the leadership of individual schools and for planning as to Diocesan education.



Promoting the Importance of a Catholic Education

Schools in the Diocese of Dallas do many things right. Catholic schools strive to provide an academically rigorous education, emphasize service to others and the education of the whole child, educate children from a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and foster Catholic identity among our students and the Catholic community.

The Catholic community in the Diocese of Dallas strongly affirms the importance of Catholic schools. Parishioners in all Diocesan parishes agree that Catholic schools are vital to the future of the Catholic Church, to a vibrant community among Catholics, and to improving society overall. Yet, those who support Catholic education cannot assume that others know the benefits of Catholic schools. In a recent Boston College study that reached 12 recommendations for sustaining urban Catholic schools, the first

recommendation is the need to “make the case for Catholic education by articulating the value and worth of Catholic schools in general and urban Catholic schools in particular.” Using various channels and methods of communication, the Catholic community must tell the story of Catholic schools thoroughly, persistently, and convincingly.

Goal 11: That, on an ongoing basis, education and initiatives be directed at increasing awareness and understanding of the mission and role of Catholic education, not just as to its “direct” beneficiaries but also as to the Catholic community, the wider community, and the Catholic Church in the world.

Recommendation 11.1

On an ongoing basis, plan, implement, and evaluate education and initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of the critical role of Catholic schools for the Catholic community, the wider community, and the Catholic Church in the world.

Governance

Strong leadership and effective governance are critical to the future success of Catholic schools. Whether at the Diocesan or local school level, each board must consist of committed individuals with expertise and experience in diverse areas such as finance, development, strategic planning, and communications. These boards will provide the Office of Catholic Education and individual schools with oversight and strategic support to foster academic excellence, Catholic identity, and operational vitality.



Diocesan School Board Delegated Responsibilities

- Advancing the mission of Catholic schools
- Oversight of Strategic Plan
- Periodic reporting to Bishop
- Monitor the existing models of governance
- Recommend policy to the Bishop and Superintendent
- Provide strategic direction and advice for advancement, marketing, finance, and other corporate management matters.
- Work to develop and strengthen the capacity of local school boards
- Establish a communications process that enables the DSB to interact effectively with the Diocesan schools and their respective boards.

Source: Strategic Planning Committee – Governance Pillar Team and Recommendation 12.1. For full and complete set of the Goals and Recommendations go to: www.cathdal.org.

Defining the Structure of Leadership

According to Church law, a school board may take the form of a consultative board or a board of limited jurisdiction. While both board structures are consistent with Church law and Catholic teachings, the Strategic Plan suggests that a Diocesan School Board of limited jurisdiction is more effective than a consultative board in assisting, guiding, and planning for the long-term viability of Catholic schools. Such a board provides more clarity as to function and responsibility and empowers the Diocesan School Board to use its special areas of expertise.

As for the elementary school boards, whether under the consultative board model or under a board of limited jurisdiction model, delegation of responsibilities and clarity of roles are required to empower pastors, principals, and boards to lead within their proper spheres of responsibility.

Goal 12: That the Diocesan School Board will serve a strong oversight function to help assure the long-term viability of Catholic Schools in the Diocese.

Recommendation 12.1

Structure the Diocesan School Board as a board of limited jurisdiction, delegating specific functions and responsibilities that empower the board.

Recommendation 12.2

Ensure the Diocesan School Board is reflective of the Catholic community, is dedicated to Catholic school education, and possesses the necessary expertise to fulfill its functions.

Determining the Role and Responsibilities of Governance

The roles and responsibilities of the Diocesan School Board, the Superintendent of the Office of Catholic Education, the local school boards, the pastors, and the principals must be clearly defined to ensure effective governance of the schools.

At the Diocesan level, the Diocesan School Board performs the functions specifically delegated to it by the Bishop. These functions may include strategic planning, development, finance, communications, legal, facilities, and academic expertise, as well as oversight. The Diocesan School Board should act by consensus and



work collaboratively with the Superintendent toward the goal of improving each Diocesan school and the Diocesan school system as a whole. The Superintendent is responsible for day-to-day operations of the schools, including curriculum development, principal and teacher recruitment and development, and financial supervision.

A clear understanding of responsibilities and authority of pastors, principals, and school boards is critical to effective governance at the parish school level. At the parish school, while the pastor is the acknowledged administrator of the ecclesial goods of the parish, he can, and should, delegate specific authority to the school's principal and to the school's board. The principal of each parish school is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school. Each parish school board performs functions delegated to it by the Bishop and pastor. Delegating significant functions to the school board and educational responsibility to the principal allows the pastor to place greater focus on the parish community and spiritual formation.

Schools operated in the regional schools, family of schools, and academy models will be co-led by a principal, a school board and, in the case of regional schools and academies, a president. School boards under these models will be constituted by the Bishop. School board members for a family of schools will be drawn from members of parishes within the family of schools, and, as necessary, from a pool developed by the Diocese of potential board members with appropriate expertise. A clear understanding of responsibilities of the president, principal, and school board will be critical to governance at schools operated under each of these models.



69% of clergy in the Diocese believe it is UNREALISTIC to expect pastors to effectively handle both school and parish responsibilities effectively.

Source: Clergy Survey September 2012

Upon the establishment of the school, relative responsibilities of the president, principal, and school board should be defined, with the understanding that the allocation of responsibilities will be consistent with those at the Diocesan School Board and the parish school boards.

Each school board, regardless of the model, should operate by consensus and work collaboratively with the pastor, president, and principal with a goal of enhancing Catholic identity, operational vitality, and academic excellence at the parish school.

Goal 13: That each Catholic school implements appropriate governance through a fully constituted and effective school board, principal and pastor (in the case of the parish school model).

Recommendation 13.1

Allocate appropriate responsibilities and authority among pastor, principal, president and school board, giving authority over educational operations to the principal or president, and specific functions of corporate management to the board.

Recommendation 13.2

Develop programs to support and provide ongoing professional development for new and existing school boards.

Recommendation 13.3

Develop a pool of willing and qualified candidates to serve as board members.

Recommendation 13.4

Create succession and transition plans for critical positions in educational and operational leadership.



Facilities

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.

Evaluating the Buildings in Which Students Learn

Of the 28 elementary schools in the Diocese of Dallas, 20 have been in operation for more than 50 years. A careful review of our elementary school facilities confirms a need for improvement to support 21st century learning. The Strategic Plan calls for annual evaluation and robust planning for facilities and technology. Because evaluation of the physical environment should take place regularly and consistently across all schools, the Diocese should take the lead in developing categories and standards for evaluation.

Goal 14: That educational facilities in all schools meet the needs for education, administration, safe environment, and technology; are up to date in learning environment attributes; and meet current environmental-green building expectations.

Recommendation 14.1

Evaluate school facilities annually and prepare and update a long-range plan for each school. Establish evaluative categories that relate to necessary features that might be needed or required.

Recommendation 14.2

Include technology and technology infrastructure as part of the annual facilities review.

Recommendation 14.3

For each school that is on parish property, establish an acceptable-use agreement for the mutual use of parish property and facilities.

Collaborating Across Schools

Working together creates efficiencies because we exchange information, share best practices, and make decisions as one. The future holds great things for our young elementary students, but it also brings about the inevitable – aging facilities and infrastructure. Creating the physical environment that supports 21st century learning requires collaboration and complete transparency. Collaboration across the Diocese, and led by the Diocese, is critical to continuous improvement of facilities and technology.

Goal 15: That facilities in Diocesan schools be continuously improved through a collaborative process led by the Office of Catholic Education and includes participation by school facilities managers, maintenance supervisors, and specialists.

Recommendation 15.1

Create a system that encourages collaboration when considering facilities, technology, purchasing, and maintenance and repair.

Planning How We Serve Our Students in the Future

Our Catholic community is growing, yet our elementary schools, the majority of which are more than 50 years old, are aging. The intangible factors of pride, passion, and commitment to Catholic education from the caring staffs of our schools will not stand up to the march of time as it relates to facilities preservation. Care and upkeep of our existing schools are critical, but so is actively weighing the pros and cons for construction of new schools. Together the Diocese and our parishes can create a plan for the future of our facilities, one that takes into consideration the growth in our Diocese and schools as well as the educational needs of our students.

Goal 16: That long-range planning take place relating to replacement of existing facilities (given the aging of schools) as well as the development of new schools to serve our expanding Catholic population.

Recommendation 16.1

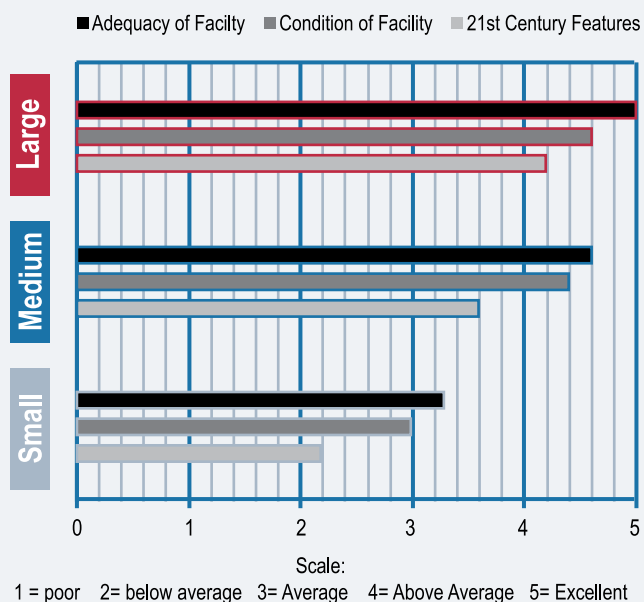
Engage in long-range planning for the replacement of existing facilities.

Recommendation 16.2

Develop long-range plans for developing new schools.



Rating of School Facilities



Note: Rural Schools not visited

Source: Strategic Planning Committee Facilities Task Force

Conclusion

In recent decades, vast changes have swept across the societal and educational landscape. To respond to these changes as they affect Catholic education in the Diocese of Dallas requires examining all four pillars (academic excellence, Catholic identity, operational vitality, and governance), across all schools, and in light of 21st century realities. In early 2011, Bishop Farrell charged the Committee to undertake such a study. The result is the Report summarized in this booklet. Through its Goals, Recommendations, and rationales, the Report seeks to address the goal that Bishop Farrell has identified as essential: ensuring the availability, to all Catholic families in the Diocese, of an academically excellent Catholic education for decades to come.

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Schools and Parishes

All Saints	St. Bernard of Clairvaux
Bishop Dunne High School	St. Elizabeth of Hungary
Christ the King	St. Gabriel
Good Shepherd	St. Mary of Carmel
Holy Trinity	St. Monica
Immaculate Conception	St. Rita
Jesuit College Preparatory School	St. Thomas Aquinas
Mary Immaculate	The Hockaday School
Our Lady of Perpetual Help	Ursuline Academy of Dallas

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