



Taking Responsibility for Our Catholic Schools – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When does the plan take effect?

A: The plan begins to take effect in the 2011-12 school year. In the current school year, the diocese, parishes and schools will educate the community about the plan. To read or download a copy of the *Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools*, please visit www.mycatholicschools.org.

Q: Do Catholic schools receive parish support?

A: Yes. Catholic schools always have enjoyed broad community support. Parish stewardship provides generous annual financial support to elementary schools. School parents are tireless in efforts to raise funds for schools. Parish and school communities have made heroic efforts to address the average annual 6% increase in school funding needs.

As diocesan high schools are regional schools without benefit of direct support from parishes, all charge tuition. Diocesan high schools reduce some costs through school development efforts. Some students receive scholarships, and all may apply for needs-based assistance.

Stewardship has always been and will continue to be a significant means of support for elementary schools. All diocesan elementary schools receive support from parish offertory. In light of other parish needs and ministries, elementary schools receive varying amounts of support from their parishes.

Approximately half of all diocesan elementary schools charge some form of tuition to provide the school with necessary operating revenue. Even in these circumstances, tuition does not cover all costs. The remaining schools address budgetary needs through a combination of fees, parent fundraising and stewardship.

Q: So, what is “adjusted tuition” and will my school need this?

A: We may have new language but the concepts are time-tested. Stewardship is, always has been, and will continue to be the cornerstone for funding schools and other ministries. Realistically, over the years, fundraising and fees have become more necessary for schools to meet operational costs.

Adjusted tuition is the amount needed by the school to fund its annual operating budget when other forms of stewardship cannot meet the need for an academically excellent and distinctly Catholic school.

In essence, the adjusted tuition is the true cost of operating the school offset by parish stewardship, local development efforts, certain school fees, and the investment in our schools from parishes that do not have schools.



With the benefit of support from the broader Catholic community, the local parish community, and parents, schools will continue to provide superior academics in a faith-based environment. Each member of our diocesan Catholic community has a unique role in ensuring that schools remain adequately funded and affordable for families.

Q: How much will it cost me?

A: Each school will use a standard process to calculate the cost of education. After that cost is established, the amount is adjusted. In every parish, stewardship is the cornerstone of funding for all parish and school ministries. The annual parish stewardship appeal will continue to have a direct impact on the level of support available for adjusted tuition.

Sources of financial support for adjusted tuition include:

- local parish stewardship, which makes an annual investment in the school
- school community fees and fundraising
- an investment by parish communities without schools through a diocesan assessment

As each family situation is unique, needs-based assistance programs will be available. These programs will be provided through the generosity of all parish communities.

Q: When will I know the amount for my school?

A: In the coming months, the diocese will work with each school. Principals and pastors will communicate the adjusted tuition to school families by the end of 2010. In every parish, stewardship is the cornerstone of funding for all parish and school ministries. The annual parish stewardship appeal will continue to have a direct impact on the level of support available to adjusted tuition.

Each family also will have the opportunity to meet with their principal or pastor to ask questions or to discuss financial concerns.

Q: Why are we doing this?

A: While Catholic schools are a ministry of the parish, no education is free. Public schools rely on taxpayers to fund the cost of education. Private and parochial schools must forecast budgets *and* develop funding necessary to continue operations.

More importantly, we are taking an important step to continue our mission to educate children in a Catholic environment. This plan for fiscally stable schools is the Catholic communities' solution to provide affordable Catholic school education to future generations.

Along with our standards for academic excellence, we place tremendous value on our tradition of building community, uniting children, families and neighborhoods around a common purpose – purposeful communities focused on the teachings of our faith.



Q: How does stewardship impact the adjusted tuition model?

A: As the plan states, “Stewardship is not a school funding model: it is a way of life, one that models the life of Jesus.”

Through the stewardship of each Catholic – people with children, people whose children are grown, people who give generously to fund all missions of the church – we can reduce the amount of adjusted tuition. Additionally, the diocese will:

- implement a stewardship education effort that inspires all parishioners to live as Christian stewards
- facilitate financial support for Catholic schools by parish communities without schools
- develop broad-based community support from corporations and individuals

Q: When I was a child, Catholic schools were free for the children of the parish. Why does it cost now?

A: To meet the needs of a largely immigrant and under-educated population, the Catholic Church developed a network of schools staffed by members of religious communities. At a time when there were abundant vocations, this mission to educate survived through the sacrifice of vowed religious men and women. Over time, lay teachers assumed the continuation of the mission.

Q: Will I qualify for financial assistance?

A: To ensure a uniform and confidential process, the diocese will require schools to use an objective third-party to determine eligibility for tuition assistance.

Q: If I tithe to my parish, will I get a discount on my adjusted tuition?

A: Every school family benefits from each parishioner’s stewardship response. Each student benefits by having the true cost of education discounted through generous stewardship.

In addition to parish and school tuition assistance programs, the diocese is developing a robust program to support families and schools in need.

Strong City School Fund – Building upon a 20-year tradition of providing needs-based assistance for low-income children in Kansas City’s urban core, the Central City School Fund will continue this mission as the Strong City Fund. In addition to operating support and tuition assistance for the existing Central City Schools, the Strong City School Fund is poised to address the need for tuition assistance as it arises in other regions of the diocese.

Honoring Family Scholarships – To assist families with multiple children enrolled in diocesan Catholic schools, this program will offer a partial scholarship to the oldest child for each year he or she attends a diocesan high school.

Diocesan Needs-Based Assistance – As funding becomes available, the diocese will



assist qualified families with tuition assistance after local parish and school resources are exhausted.

Schools @Risk Fund – The diocese will reserve a portion of the annual investment made by parish communities without schools to address extraordinary school needs. By way of example, a school needing the emergency replacement of a boiler may qualify for funding through this program.

New School Fund – As populations shift to areas under-served by Catholic schools, the diocese hopes to support parishes discerning the feasibility of opening a school.

Q: I attend a parish without a school. How does the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools affect me?

A: Catholics always have responded to needs beyond their parish boundaries. Through our stewardship, we fuel the largest charitable engine in the country. Through the plan for the fiscal stability of our schools, each parish will support our mission to educate. Parishes without schools will make an annual investment based on parish offertory income and median household income.

Q: My parish does not have a Catholic school. Can my child attend a Catholic school in a neighboring parish?

A: Yes, your pastor or parish business manager will be able to explain your options. Please remember that some schools may be at capacity in your child's grade level. Other alternatives can be explored to accommodate your child's needs.

Q: I have questions about the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools. Who can help me?

A: In addition to your pastor or principal, please feel free to contact the diocese by email, mail or phone.

(816) 756.1858, ext. 277

catholicschools@diocesekcsj.org

Catholic Schools Office
The Catholic Chancery
Post Office Box 419037
Kansas City, Missouri 64141-6037

www.mycatholicschools.org