



# The Catholic Key

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Diocese of Kansas City — St. Joseph

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## SPECIAL REPORT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Teachings for life.

*“Catholic schools help build community, uniting our children, families and neighborhoods through faith and academics. It is our duty, and privilege, to shepherd this way of life and learning for future generations. Our diocese has its sights set on enduring academic excellence for distinctly Catholic schools, and our strategic plan is the road map for our future.”*



— Dr. Daniel W. Peters  
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Friends,

In its Declaration on Christian Education, the Second Vatican Council acknowledged several times the “outstanding importance” of Catholic schools in the work of forming young people. In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed the importance of Catholic schools to the Church during his visit to the United States. He made a special appeal to priests and consecrated persons, “Do not abandon the school apostolate; indeed, renew your commitment to schools especially those in poorer areas.”

As good stewards of our diocesan Catholic schools, we began a comprehensive study in 2008. We have remained single-minded in our goal: We want schools that are distinctly Catholic, academically excellent, fiscally stable and affordable. This collaborative effort by so many people has yielded much fruit – the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools.

Parents want Catholic schools for their children. They know there has to be a truth – another way that the world does not offer – a different way of approaching life that leads to eternal life. This is what our schools must provide.

As we implement our strategic plan, let us continue to pray and work together to strengthen our Catholic schools. They are an essential instrument for carrying forward the mission of the Church and an investment for generations of Catholics to come.

In Christ and Mary,

Most Reverend Robert W. Finn  
Bishop of Kansas City - St. Joseph



Community

Faith

Academics

Stewardship

Future



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS  
DIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY - ST. JOSEPH

Teachings for life.

# THE APPROACH FOR OUR **CHILDREN'S** FUTURE

A distinctly Catholic school education is a life-enriching experience that all children deserve. Children emerge from Catholic schools prepared for the future, thanks to strong academics, higher-than-average test scores, leadership skills and a firm foundation in the Faith.

In our Catholic schools, families build community in places and times where the need is great. We, as Catholics, also respond to the need to strengthen our schools and to keep them affordable for families and parishes.

Today, Catholic school education is challenged from many directions – economic, demographic and cultural. How will we shape the future of our schools? What does this mean for you, your family and your parish? The future of our schools is in our hands.

## OUR DIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

### Who We Are, Whom We Serve

Across the generations, Catholic schools remained a constant in the life of the Church in Kansas City, in St. Joseph and in rural communities. As heirs of this tradition, communities across northwest Missouri have benefited from a Church that willingly shared its gifts and resources for future generations.

### Today We Are\*

|                         |       |
|-------------------------|-------|
| Diocesan High Schools   | 4     |
| Elementary Schools      | 27    |
| Early Childhood Centers | 7     |
| School Teachers         | 1,114 |
| Students                | 9,546 |

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Catholic Students            | 84% |
| Other Faith Backgrounds      | 16% |
| European-American            | 79% |
| Other Racial-Ethnic Heritage | 21% |

*\*The diocese also is home to four private Catholic schools.*

**Do not abandon the school apostolate; indeed, renew your commitment to schools especially in poorer areas.**

**– Pope Benedict XVI**

### What We Do Best

Catholic schools reach the whole child – spiritually, intellectually and socially. Step-by-step and over time, schools form young people who are productive and prepared to lead and to serve.

- Distinctly Catholic
- Academically Excellent



I can't imagine teaching children anything without being able to talk about God and the life of Jesus.

**– Kathy Teague**

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

## The Three Pillars of Our Strategic Plan

### Distinctly Catholic

- Inspire enduring values in young minds
- Put faith into action
- Build purposeful communities centered on children

Catholic schools are centered on Christ and His Church. Here, the knowledge and practice of the Faith are intertwined with outstanding academics, hour by hour, day by day, year after year. Graduates emerge clear in Church teachings and become active participants in parish life ... for life.

**A distinctly Catholic school is centered on Christ and His Church.**

Catholic schools are a vital aspect of ministry to children and their families and require significant financial and human investments of time, talent and treasure. Much like dioceses across the nation, our diocese has been tracking challenges with shifting demographics and economic pressures that individual parishes and schools cannot address in isolation.

Bishop Finn and diocesan leaders knew the time was right for developing a strategic plan that charted the course for our future. Our Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools was built by the entire diocese: hundreds, if not thousands, of us who work, learn and live in the Diocese of Kansas City – St. Joseph.

The plan will serve as a roadmap, revealing new ways to increase enrollment, better ways to fund our schools, and new avenues for assistance for those who need it most. Our future is bright. Our mission is clear. And the strategic plan will lead the way.

The plan begins to take effect in the 2011-12 school year. In the current school year, parishes and schools will educate the community about the plan.



### Academically Excellent

- Challenge each child to succeed
- Provide each child the knowledge and skills to be productive members of society
- Build communities of learners dedicated to excellence

Catholic schools provide comprehensive programs and, of course, maintain accreditation. As lifelong learners, nearly half of our teachers hold advanced degrees. Extraordinary teachers provide extraordinary education and prepare students for next level success.

**An academically excellent school arms children to succeed and live authentically in today's world.**

### Fiscally Stable

- Being good stewards for the Church and its ministries
- Modeling the life of Jesus through stewardship
- Educating parents about their responsibilities

Our goal is to make our schools affordable for all. Through stewardship of every Catholic – those with children, those with grown children, and those who give generously to fund all missions of the Church – we can assure the future of our schools.

**A fiscally stable school enriches, expands and sustains the mission of Catholic schools for future generations.**



Catholic schooling provided structure in my life and a fundamental reason for material and spiritual accomplishments in future endeavors.  
- Larry Moore



I was blessed with the opportunity to attend Catholic schools. The integration of life with religious truth and values is what shaped me into who I am today.  
- Eileen Hutchison



From kindergarten through college, I only attended Catholic schools and the experience was formative. Catholic schooling provides the foundation that prepares students socially, morally, civically and spiritually.  
- Larry Blankinship



My husband and I are willing to make the sacrifices needed to provide our children with a solid Catholic education ... an investment that will multiply in years to come.  
- Nancy Bass



Catholic education shaped me to be a better person. Now, I know enough to understand and, therefore, respect our faith.  
- Kelsey Houser



I believe that Catholic education not only helps spur individuals beyond themselves but also surrounds them with positive examples of how to go beyond thinking and praying for positive social impact.  
- Gary White

# OUR INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE



When Catholic school enrollment peaked in 1965, no one could foresee that shifting demographics and rising operational costs would force the closing of half of all parochial schools within the next 50 years. Our plan for fiscally stable Catholic schools meets this challenge and offers hope that more schools can open.

Your stewardship of our schools ensures that children and their families experience the life-giving teachings of our Faith, and every member of the Catholic community participates in a distinct way. Just as our families gave to us, we, in turn, gladly give to them.

## Fiscal Stability: Formed by Stewardship

### Taking Financial Responsibility

We are one community, one diocese, one people. In the day-to-day rhythm of parish life, we unite to do what no one person, nor one parish, can do alone. From one can of food dropped off at the parish food drive, we feed the multitudes. From a single check written to Catholic Charities, we provide hope where it's needed most. From a solitary visitor to the elderly, homebound or sick, we offer a human touch to the lonely. We are one people united by faith to live the Gospel message.

Stewardship has always been, and will continue to be, the cornerstone for funding schools and other ministries.

### Adjusted Tuition

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. Adjusted tuition can help the school fund its annual operating budget, if needed.

Working with the diocese, principals and pastors will communicate

the adjusted tuition to school families by the end of 2010. Each family also will have the opportunity to meet with their principal or pastor to ask questions or to discuss financial concerns.

### A Future Full of Hope

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

**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 School Fund. In addition to operating support and tuition assistance, the 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 offers 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** – To serve populations in areas under-served by Catholic schools, the diocese hopes to support parishes discerning the feasibility of opening a school.



For additional information or to read the full Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools, visit [MyCatholicSchools.org](http://MyCatholicSchools.org).

Questions are welcome via e-mail to [catholicschools@diocesekcsj.org](mailto:catholicschools@diocesekcsj.org)

