



School Study Timeline

Spring 2008 - Consultants visit schools and meet with pastors and school administrators.

Summer 2008 - Research community demographics and analyze school trends.

Fall 2008 - Spring 2009 - Consultants meet seven times with advisory groups, conduct two focus groups, and refine strategic direction.

School Study Goals

A successful effort will lead to the long-term vitality and viability of our Catholic schools. The ultimate goal is to ensure that schools are:

- distinctly Catholic
- academically excellent
- fiscally stable

September 2008

Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools

Catholic Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP FINN

Dear Friends in Christ,

In 2005, the US Bishops reaffirmed the importance of Catholic schools for the future of the Church and of society, declaring that Catholic schools provide “an education that no other school can supply – excellent academics imparted in the context of Catholic teaching and practice.”

To strengthen and sustain the Catholic schools of our own diocese, we began a comprehensive study and strategic planning effort last spring. Our goal is to develop a prudent plan and to take reasoned steps that ensure that our schools are distinctly Catholic, academically excellent, and fiscally stable.

Based on successful past experience, our diocese engaged Meitler Consultants to guide us through the critical steps in developing this plan. In addition to a 38-

year history of successful planning projects in 110 dioceses, Meitler consulted with us in developing our *Northland Pastoral Plan for Parishes and Schools* and the *Northeast Deanery Plan for Parishes, Schools and Hispanic Ministry*.

In accord with principles of sound management, we want to “focus on opportunities, not problems.” This planning process was undertaken not in crisis mode but in the spirit of strengthening and leading Catholic education in the fulfillment of its mission for decades to come.

In Christ and Mary,

Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, DD
Bishop of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

DIOCESAN PLANNING OFFICE ANIMATES THE PROCESS

In recognition of the considerable human and financial resources already committed to strategic planning, the diocese established an Office of Planning in March 2008. As director, Dave Woolwine is charged with coordinating planning activities and assisting parishes and schools with implementation. A career educator, Woolwine brings 28 years of experience as a school administrator and, most recently, as an Associate Superintendent of Schools.

In addition to working with two consultative committees and project consultants on the school study, Woolwine also is responsible for:

- advancing the objectives of the *Strategic Plan for Northland Parishes and Schools*; and,
- serving as a resource for the *Deanery 3 Pastoral Plan and Hispanic Ministry Task Force* as each group realizes benefits from collaboration.



Catholic Schools for the Third Millennium Must Be...

Distinctly Catholic • Academically Excellent • Fiscally Stable

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE “DISTINCTLY CATHOLIC”

- Catholic schools are valued and supported by all parishes and recognized as an important ministry of the Church. Parishes and schools work collaboratively to develop strong supportive relationships.
- Catholic doctrine, morality, and virtues are taught and integrated across the curriculum and are evident in school life.
- A vibrant spirit of faith community, respect and service is evident in each school.
- Each school is an effective vehicle of evangelization and ongoing faith formation where parents are recognized and involved as partners in the spiritual and academic formation of their children.
- A clear statement of its Catholic, Christ-centered mission guides each school, and the entire school community understands this mission and works to carry it out.
- Graduates know and understand the beliefs of the Catholic faith and make decisions based on Catholic teaching and moral principles.
- Ongoing professional development for staff incorporates a strong personal faith formation component and strategies to integrate Catholic teaching and virtues into all subject areas.
- Catholic schools welcome students of other faiths while not compromising their Catholic identity.



- Schools value and serve a diverse population - ethnically, racially, economically, and in ability. Enrollment reflects the diversity of the parishes and local community served by the school.

One Measure of Success

Annually, schools involved in re-accreditation administer the Assessment of Catechesis Religious Education (ACRE) test to 5th and 8th grade students. ACRE measures knowledge of the faith, beliefs, attitudes and practices of the faith. The test is based on the pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

5th Grade Composite Score on ACRE

76% - Diocesan Catholic School Students
71% - National Catholic School Average

8th Grade Composite Score on ACRE

76% - Diocesan Catholic School Students
72% - National Catholic School Average

ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) provides leadership, direction and services that help Catholic schools fulfill the evangelizing, catechizing and teaching mission of the Church. In recent years, declining enrollment, shifting demographics, and growing concerns about financing Catholic schools and keeping them affordable are the trends at the forefront of discussions at the national and local levels.

High School Enrollment Trends

The NCEA confirms that Catholic high school enroll-

ment across the nation declined 1% from 2002-03 to 2007-08. Within our diocese, enrollment increased 4% during the same time period.

Elementary School Enrollment Trends

From the 2002-03 to 2007-08, the NCEA reported a national Catholic elementary school enrollment decline of 14%. During the same time period, elementary schools in the diocese charted a 12% decline in enrollment.