



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

January 2009

Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools

Catholic Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP FINN

Dear Friends in Christ,

If our Diocese were starting its Catholic school educational ministry from scratch, it would likely look very different than it does today. The management and feasibility consultants would issue their reports and a business model would emerge. But today's schools are a legacy that evolved out of a great need of our people. Largely from poor and under-educated immigrant stock, we grew schools where the Church could rely upon the commitment of the religious. The unwritten mission statement of this experience probably could have read: *We Are All In This Together*. We came together, we sacrificed, and our schools prepared our Catholic people to face the world formed in the faith and stronger for the journey.

Our Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools effort is poised to help us answer the burning issues before us for this next leg of the journey. For nearly a year, we have been working to develop a plan for distinctly Catholic, academically excellent and fiscally stable schools. With the benefit of experienced consultants and input from priests, school administrators, and a variety of advisory committees, we are discussing how

to ensure that present and future students enjoy the benefit of a Catholic education. As good stewards of a valuable resource, we must address the shifting demographics and economic realities that affect our ability to maintain and advance our schools.

Because our schools are resources for the entire Catholic community, we must approach solutions in the spirit of shared responsibility. I continue to ask for your prayers to guide us as we seek the facts and are open to new ideas. We are all in this together.

In Christ and Mary,

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



Catholic Schools for the Third Millennium Must Be . . .

Distinctly Catholic • Academically Excellent • Fiscally Stable

CHARTING THE COURSE TO “FISCAL STABILITY”

More than a generation ago, it was simpler to fund a Catholic school. Largely because religious women and men served without regard for pay, communities were able to offer high quality educational opportunities for virtually no cost. Today’s realities are vastly different and require the best fiscal planning efforts to ensure the continuation of the mission.

A blue ribbon committee of pastors, parish business managers, and financial advisors have met with Meitler Consultants to begin crafting recommendations for achieving and maintaining the financial health of our schools. The Finance Committee examined parish and school demographics and financial histories. Based on this information, the following principles emerged:

- Catholic schools are a mission of the entire Church.
- In terms of being affordable for families, Catholic schools must be more available than they are today.
- In order to realize the future vision for superior academics, competitive compensation for staff, quality facilities, up-to-date technology, revenue must grow.
- Full enrollment is essential for cost-effective operations. Affordability is tied to cost per pupil.
- In general, parish income will increase at a slower rate than the increase in the cost of Catholic schools. Under a traditional formula, parish subsidy will slowly fall behind the need.
- In general, parishes with schools will not be able to give larger shares of offertory income to support the school.
- Parish financial support should not be taken for granted. Proclaiming the value of a Catholic education is critical for community support. Schools must exercise good stewardship of precious resources.
- For the fiscal stability of Catholic schools, a consistent funding plan is needed across the Diocese.
- Funding models should not result in competition among schools for students or financial support.



PASTORS & PARISH ADMINISTRATORS MEET WITH BISHOP

Collaboration and consultation are hallmarks of the strategic planning effort for Catholic schools. In mid-January, Bishop Finn met with more than 40 pastors and parish administrators to discuss the progress of study and to seek feedback on ideas that have surfaced to strengthen Catholic schools in the diocese. Input from this meeting will bolster community input into the final plan.

The group included pastors of parishes with schools, and those whose parish ministry does not include a school.

In addition to discussing the Catholic identity and academic outcomes of our schools, the agenda also addressed ways to fund Catholic schools in the future.

On February 17, representatives from every parish and school will convene to discuss a preliminary draft of the strategic plan. This meeting will ensure that the plan submitted to Bishop Finn enjoys broad community support..