



### 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

**March 2009**

# Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools

Catholic Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

## PARENTS & TEACHERS ARE PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

BY BISHOP ROBERT W. FINN

Catholic schools share the mission of the Church. Since their beginning, they have carried out this work of holistic education: excellent academics, healthy human values, and Catholic faith. We always keep these goals in mind.

In looking at the Catholic Identity of our schools, our strategic planning study for Catholic schools affirms that which has served us well. In every school I visit, there are marks of our Catholic purpose. Our students attend Mass, celebrate Sacraments and Catholic devotions, and are engaged in service to others. The spirit of faith is very much alive in our activities.

The recommendations in our school study also will strengthen vital elements of our "Catholicity." This doesn't mean that non-Catholic students and families don't fit within our schools. Indeed, many families choose our schools precisely *because* they value this environment. Most remain committed to their own faith. But they often come to appreciate that Catholic values are essentially authentic *human* values.

Thanks to our school planning study, we plan to add two important practices in our schools. These have to do with the *expression of commitment* parents and teachers make to assure the right formation of our children.

One practice is the teachers' **Catholic / Christian Commitment of Faith**. For many years a similar component (Christian Commitment Statement) has been a part of every teacher contract. In the future this statement will expand as a more formal statement of the teachers' dedication to the work of education and formation. I would

hope that this commitment could be expressed and "celebrated" each year in a parish or school Mass.

The Teachers' Commitment Statement begins, "As a teacher in a Catholic School, I am directly involved in the formation of youth in the name of the Catholic Church. In carrying out these solemn responsibilities as a teacher, I will conduct myself in a manner that does not contradict her doctrinal and moral teachings."

While we ask much of our teachers, it also is important that parents live up to their role as "first teachers" of their children. In this way, teachers and parents will work together for the authentic formation of our young people.

A Parents' Statement is being formulated now, similar to ones used already in some schools. This **Covenant Agreement** commits parents to participating and taking their children to Holy Mass on Sundays and Holydays. For non-Catholics, this means attending services of their choice every week.

I believe that this will help secure – ever more deeply - the Catholic identity of our schools. It will strengthen us all in the example we give each other and assist our children to grow into the maturity and responsibility of their faith.



## Catholic Schools for the Third Millennium Must Be . . .

Distinctly Catholic • Academically Excellent • Fiscally Stable

### GROUPS STUDY, DISCUSS AND BUILD CONSENSUS

Over a year ago, the diocese launched a strategic planning process to ensure the long-term viability and vitality of its Catholic schools. Trends that underscored the need for planning included: shifting demographics, declining enrollments in many areas, aging facilities, rising costs, and growing populations in areas with no Catholic schools. To meet these challenges and to build a vibrant future for Catholic schools in the diocese, the desired outcome is a long-term plan for distinctly Catholic, academically excellent and fiscally stable schools.

The diocese engaged **Meitler Consultants** to develop a comprehensive situation analysis and to assist consultative groups in forming practical solutions to recommend to Bishop Finn. A nationally-known firm, Meitler Consultants has worked with more than 100 dioceses in strategic plan development. To ensure that there was broad understanding of the process and planning goals, the diocese hosted an informational meeting for pastors and school administrators at the beginning of the project. Additionally, the consultants visited each school and interviewed school and parish leaders.

Throughout the process, a 21-member **Planning Committee** has met regularly to review the implications of data, to critique potential solutions, and to review feedback from the broader community. Additionally, a **Steering Committee** of diocesan leaders offers input and guidance.



#### Plan Incorporates Community Input

- **October** - 130 parish and school leaders review key findings and the situation analysis
- **November - January** - task force develops recommendations for school funding
- **January** - Bishop and 40 pastors review school funding models
- **February** - 200 parish and school leaders review recommendations for Catholic identity, enrollment and marketing, academic excellence, leadership and governance, facilities; funding models; and draft plans presented for clusters of schools
- **February** - consultants meet with Central City School Fund board of directors
- **March** - school boards and parish pastoral councils prepare written comments on the components of the strategic plan
- **April** - Bishop hosts a final consultation with pastors
- **April** - final draft delivered to the Bishop for consideration