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Statement
on the
Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools

September 10, 2010

Our Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools: Teachings for Life

Finally! Here is our Diocesan Plan for the future of our Catholic Schools. More than two years of study and consultation have gone into this effort to give a concrete and consistent direction to the work of Catholic School Education, here and now, in our Diocese. I'm very thankful to all who helped in so many ways. I ask your generous and prayerful support to bring this project to its full implementation for the total well-being of our children. The mission of Catholic Schools is a vital part of the mission of the Church. Jesus came, He says, "That they might have life." (Jn 10:10) Our Catholic schools have the privilege of consciously sharing the person and the message of Jesus Christ. Our Catholic schools hand on to their students "Teachings for Life."

Purpose of Catholic Schools

Catholic schools are here to assist parents in what is probably their most profound responsibility: to form holy children, and get them to heaven.

In the Catholic School this work is uniquely accomplished. The Catholic School is a community of faith, dedicated to the full human development of the child. We teach what the Catholic Church teaches. Around us in the school are many visible signs of our faith. We pray. We celebrate Mass and the sacraments. We connect what is happening in the classroom, at home, and in the world with authentic moral principles. We emphasize charity and service. The Catholic School does this like no other place can.

Why did we write this Strategic Plan now?

Many of our schools remain strong. At the same time, some of our schools have declined in numbers. Some face constant financial struggles, and some have had to close.

The decision to write and implement a comprehensive strategic plan came from our shared conviction that this was the time to plan for stability. With so many challenges arising all around us, we can not sit back and wait for the right things to happen. We have to do all we can to make good things happen.

The best time to plan is not when our backs are against the wall. The time to plan is when we know we have something good that must be fortified and protected.

The three Pillars of the Plan: Distinctly Catholic, Academically Excellent, Fiscally Stable

If schools are not academically excellent, I cannot expect parents to give them a second look. Our schools have been around and we are doing this well: our schools are accredited; our attendance is high; our student–teacher ratios are optimal; we have excellent teachers; we have the right environment, disciplined and safe, for good teaching and learning. But we don't take any of this for granted. It requires constant effort and commitment to keep it up.

The Catholic identity of our schools is our “niche.” This is the “value added” that makes the choice of our schools worth the investment. In this effort, too, we have to be determined to give families and children something very meaningful; not watered down; not some vague version of Christianity. Our schools must be unapologetically Catholic – Distinctly Catholic. And we have high expectations that teachers and parents live their faith, and that parents take their children to church.

Fiscal stability in our Catholic schools is sometimes our biggest challenge. We don't have government funding. We receive no tax money. We have become very good at accomplishing amazing things with much, much less. So how can we make sure our schools remain within the economic reach of our families?

We have to see the inauguration of this plan as a new moment of Stewardship of our schools. The good will and energy of this plan has to stretch across the whole Diocese – and challenge and inspire every household. The generations before us built our schools. Now, we have to do something powerful to make sure they keep going strong: beyond survival – we have to build something substantive to take us forward for a long time. This will be our contribution to the noble and necessary project of Catholic school education in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

Let us entrust this plan to the heavenly patronage of St. Joseph and Mary, who cared for the Savior and watched over His human growth “in wisdom and stature.” (Lk 2: 51-52)