



**Diocese of Davenport**

*We have FAITH in Our Catholic Schools*

## **A Strategic Plan for Catholic School Education**

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Davenport will fulfill the Church's evangelizing mission by providing parents an outstanding education in the faith for their children. Our schools will infuse a rigorous academic program with the timeless message of Jesus Christ, and deliver it in a safe, respectful atmosphere. Our Catholic schools will promote among our students a life-long commitment to faith, prayer and virtue, a sense of social justice, greater numbers of religious vocations and a way of life based on responsible stewardship.

### **A Vision for the Next Decade**

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Davenport will remain relevant, valuable, competitive and effective for the Church, our families and society. Our diocesan schools have a long track record of success, but there is room to reach an even higher level of excellence in all of our schools. The vision of Catholic education for the next decade in the Diocese of Davenport will be achieved by development and articulation of a clear strategic plan for Catholic education promoted vigorously from diocesan leadership and carried out by pastors, teachers, principals, board members, benefactors, members of the faithful, young and old, and with and without children and parents. It will happen with the material generosity, prayers and the support of the whole Catholic community making significant sacrifices because we believe in our children and put their care and education first.

The strategic plan describes what our schools could and should be in the next three to five years. It covers the areas of 1) Mission and Catholic Identity, 2) Academic Excellence, 3) Leadership and Governance, and 4) Operational Vitality.

### **Mission and Catholic Identity**

The Church's teaching mission includes inviting young people to a relationship with Jesus Christ and deepening an existing relationship with Jesus, inserting young people into the life of the Church, and assisting young people to see and understand the role of faith in one's daily life and in the larger society. "This unique Catholic identity makes our Catholic elementary and secondary schools 'schools for the human person' and allows them to fill a critical role in the future of our Church, our country and our world" (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1997). Excerpt from *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

**Goal 1: The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Davenport will continue to be guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.**

Objectives

- 1.1 A distinctive Catholic environment of Gospel-inspired values will be integrated into all areas of the curriculum and school life.
  - 1.1.1 The tool created in 1.3 will be used to guide the evaluation of the environment and to make recommendations for each school.
- 1.2 Catholic schools will teach an understanding of the Catholic moral tradition, including Catholic Social Teaching to provide students with a moral compass and firm foundation for active participation in the Church and daily living.
  - 1.2.1 The Office of Social Action will identify approved Catholic Social Teaching materials that all staff, parents and students should be familiar with.
  - 1.2.2 The Office of Social Action will provide training of leaders at each school.
  - 1.2.3 Teachers and school personnel will educate students and disseminate information to parents regarding key Catholic Social Teaching.
- 1.3 The Office of Catholic Schools, in collaboration with school leaders, will develop a Diocesan rubric to measure the development of Catholic identity and faith formation at all schools.
  - 1.3.1 A diocesan committee of two principals, one priest, one individual from faith formation and the diocesan Director of Liturgy will develop a rubric for Catholic identity for all schools.
- 1.4 Catholic school parents, staff and students will actively engage in Christian giving and service in their schools, parishes and community-at-large reflective of the blessings of stewardship.
  - 1.4.1 The Office of Stewardship will secure approved educational materials regarding stewardship of time, talent and treasure and disseminate the information to school staff and families.
  - 1.4.2 Schools will implement strategies to emphasize the importance and visibility of living a life in response to the call of stewardship.
- 1.5 Schools will strengthen the relationship between parishes, schools and the diocese by encouraging staff, students and families to be integrated into parish and diocesan life through liturgy, service, and ministerial opportunities.

- 1.5.1 The diocesan Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry will communicate with diocesan school principals to encourage awareness and participation in diocesan youth events.
- 1.5.2 Each school community will develop a definition of what it means to be actively involved in the associated parish communities and continually remind families and staff of this definition.
  
- 1.6 The schools, supported by the priests of the diocese, will celebrate regular Masses during the school day, including Holy Days of Obligation and other special occasions, and encourage additional religious activities such as Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
  - 1.6.1 The tool created in 1.3 will be used to guide the evaluation of this objective and to make recommendations for each school.
  
- 1.7 The religious instruction for students will be rigorous, aligned to the national guidelines and USCCB, and promote both knowledge of the Faith and a living of the Faith.
  - 1.7.1 The appropriate diocesan staff (Catholic Schools Office, outside presenters, Faith Formation Staff) will conduct an in-service for secondary school teachers of religion.
  - 1.7.2 The Office of Catholic Schools and Office of Faith Formation will develop a tool by which religious education materials and textbooks can be evaluated.
  
- 1.8 All pastors, clergy and parish leaders will be expected to support Catholic schools, actively encourage parishioners to consider enrolling their students in Catholic schools and maintain a visible presence in their schools.
  - 1.8.1 The Office of Catholic Schools along with select principals will develop opportunities for all priests, members of religious orders, and deacons associated with Catholic Schools for formation relating to the role, governance and operation of Catholic schools.
  - 1.8.2 The Catholic Schools Office and selected principals will familiarize the pastor and the principal with Catholic school-parish issues at the start of their duties.

**Goal 2: The Office of Catholic Schools will collaborate with the Office of Faith Formation to continue to provide spiritual and catechetical opportunities for educators to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and to be witnesses of the faith for their students.**

### Objectives

- 2.1 All teachers in our Catholic schools will pursue Basic Catechetical Certification as defined in the Faith Formation Guidelines. Continuing catechetical training is also required. Diocesan offices will help teachers obtain this certification.
- 2.2 The Office of Catholic Schools and Office of Faith Formation will determine the necessary Catholic faith formation for all staff members; including members with other faith traditions and Catholics, so they can share in the mission of promulgating the Catholic faith and help students receive the proper formation.
- 2.3 The Office of Catholic Schools and Office of Faith Formation will help train teachers to infuse Catholic teachings, virtues and values into all aspects of instruction across the curriculum and in all relationships.

### **Academic Excellence**

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Davenport will become a beacon for parents seeking an outstanding education for their children. Students will continue to be taught by a faculty appropriately credentialed and qualified according to diocesan and State of Iowa Standards, and continue to demonstrate academic excellence on multiple measures of assessment. Not only must our schools be competitive with surrounding districts but they must demonstrate a superior value for tuition paid.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops affirms the message of the Congregation on Catholic Education that intellectual development of the person and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand. Rooted in the mission of the Church, the Catholic schools bring faith, culture and life together in harmony. In 2005, the bishops noted that “young people of the third millennium must be a source of energy and leadership in our Church and our nation. And, therefore, we must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education” (*Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, 2005).

“The essential elements of ‘an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program’ mandate curricular experiences, — including co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, — which are rigorous, relevant, research-based, and infused with Catholic faith and traditions.” Excerpt from *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

**Goal 3: Each school will provide a comprehensive, challenging and rigorous curriculum and will be recognized in the community for its quality education.**

#### Objectives

- 3.1 Each school will maintain State of Iowa accreditation and, as part of maintaining our state accreditation, schools will continue to align their curricula with the Iowa Core

standards and continue to update and implement the religion/faith formation standards used in the Diocese of Davenport's schools.

- 3.2 Each school will create learning opportunities to accommodate students of varying academic abilities that include robust enrichment, remedial, and co-curricular programs and expanded resources for preschoolers and students with special learning needs. Where dedicated programs are not feasible, teachers will receive assistance and support in providing differentiated instruction in the classroom.
- 3.3 Each school will develop monitoring systems and remedial support services, to meet the goal of all students being proficient in reading and math by the end of third grade. Programming that runs after normal school hours and during the summer may be part of these activities and grade level retention will also be considered for those not meeting grade level expectations. Services will continue for those who fail to meet the end of third grade goals.
- 3.4 Without losing focus on the mission of Catholic school education, schools will be encouraged to explore unique or innovative curriculum offerings or specializations that meet students' and families' needs.

**Goal 4: The appropriate use of technology will be integrated throughout the instructional program of each school to enhance student learning.**

Objectives

- 4.1 Each school will develop a technology plan that provide strategies, action plans, and budgets for schools to achieve and sustain their technology goals. Included in the plan should be a goal for the school to reach 1:1 computer/student ratio.
- 4.2 Each school will provide in-service and support services to develop greater technology competence among teachers.
- 4.3 The Office of Catholic Schools, in collaboration with broader diocesan resources to the extent possible, will provide schools technology support.
- 4.4 Diocesan schools will set a goal of being paperless in grades five through twelve (the ability to receive and complete assignments, view rubrics and sample work online).

**Goal 5: Catholic schools will recruit, retain and motivate highly qualified teachers who model the integration of faith and daily living.**

Objectives

- 5.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will develop guidelines for determining a recommended just starting salary. These guidelines should be flexible enough to accommodate local market differences with the target set at 80% of local public school salaries.
- 5.2 A diocesan committee will be established to develop and implement a diocesan compensation model consistent with the mission of Catholic schools and sufficiently competitive to attract and retain outstanding principals and teachers.
- 5.3 When the Iowa Department of Education issues new guidelines, the Office of Catholic Schools will develop a model for ongoing teacher/administrator supervision and evaluation which will be used by all schools and be based upon current research while maintaining focus on the teacher's/administrator's contribution to the Catholic identity of the school.

**Goal 6: The Office of Catholic Schools will support strong professional development that follows the Iowa Professional Development Model.**

Objectives

- 6.1 The Office of Catholic Schools and local leadership will ensure that there is full knowledge of the Iowa Professional Development Model.
- 6.2 Local school leadership including principals, pastors and teachers will create a school culture of professional development that provides time and funding, and support increased knowledge of, and implementation of, best practices to facilitate and enhance student learning.
- 6.3 The Office of Catholic Schools will explore collaboration with St. Ambrose University and other institutions of higher education to enhance and increase professional development and continuing education opportunities.
- 6.4 Schools, through partnerships with AEAs and local service organizations, will provide professional development in meeting the needs of students with special needs and learning challenges.

**Goal 7: The Office of Catholic Schools will ensure that schools use multiple national, state and local resources, including the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, and diversified assessment methods and best practices to monitor, support, measure and evaluate student learning and program effectiveness.**

Objectives

- 7.1 School faculty, in collaboration with local school leadership, will explore and evaluate age appropriate assessments that align with the curriculum and document the growth of each student.
- 7.2 Local school leadership will provide teachers with professional development in the administration of assessments and interpretation of the data to drive and enhance instructional practices with the goal of improved student performance.
- 7.3 Local school leadership and faculty will increase the use of data analysis to guide curricular, instructional and programmatic decisions and communicate the results to school stakeholders.

### **Operational Vitality**

“Catholic schools are temporal organizations committed to the Church and the mission of Catholic education including a commitment to a culture of excellence and rigor. These schools exist in a milieu of constant socioeconomic challenges grounded in continuous need for sustainable financial planning, human resource/personnel management and professional formation, facilities maintenance and enhancement, and the requirement for institutional advancement and contemporary communication. Catholic schools must adopt and maintain standards of operational vitality in these areas and define the norms and expectations for fundamental procedures to support and ensure viability and sustainability. When a school does not maintain the standards for operational vitality, the continuation of academic excellence is in grave jeopardy. Over time, even an academically rigorous school with strong Catholic identity will not survive without operational vitality.

Standards for operational vitality must focus on the ‘operation’ of the school, — how it works and how it is supported — in four key areas: finances, human resource/personnel, facilities, and institutional advancement.” Excerpt from *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and secondary schools*.

**Goal 8: Each Catholic school will develop a clear understanding of its financial vitality with clear knowledge of current income and expenses, including elements such as tuition revenue and tuition assistance, parish investment, fundraising and development, salaries and benefits, direct and indirect instructional and administrative costs, operational expenses and cost per pupil. Financial vitality should take into account enrollment capacity, future projections, and knowledge of the finances of the parishes and the community.**

#### Objectives

- 8.1 Our schools will operate with balanced budgets year-to-year and, if possible, accrue some savings for future capital projects recognizing budgeting differences between parish schools and regional schools.
- 8.2 The Office of Catholic Schools will convene a committee which meets regularly to examine issues unique to the future of small Catholic schools. The group will study and recommend best educational practices in these situations, the training needed by teachers and ways to deliver Catholic school education with effective and sustainable staffing scenarios.
- 8.3 The Office of Catholic Schools, in cooperation with local school leadership, will remain apprised of the developments in the local public schools and determine how the Catholic schools will continue to meet its constituents' needs in the future.
- 8.4 The Offices of Catholic Schools in cooperation with other diocesan offices will expand development efforts to focus on marketing, the annual fund, planned giving and business partnerships especially in our schools without development offices.
- 8.5 The Office of Catholic Schools will establish a diocesan level committee (including pastors and school board members) to review all different tuition models such as locked in, stewardship and cost-based to determine the best model for diocesan schools.

**Goal 9: Catholic schools will be valued as a critical mission and responsibility of the entire Diocese of Davenport.**

Objectives

- 9.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will form a committee to determine funding models that are equitably supported by parishes whose families utilize Catholic school education.
- 9.2 The Office of Catholic Schools, in conjunction with the appropriate diocesan consultative bodies, will determine an equitable and just method for parishes that are sending students to other parish schools to assist in funding those Catholic schools.
- 9.3 For general Catholic school education support or focused support, such as retirement or health insurance for staff, the Office of Catholic Schools along with other diocesan leaders will continue to advocate for diocesan-wide funding options such as utilization of a portion of the Annual Diocesan Appeal (ADA) to support Catholic school education and/or capital campaign for Catholic school education.

**Goal 10: The Office of Catholic Schools will continue to work on behalf of each Catholic school to optimize funding from the local public school districts, state and federal government sources (such as title programs) and with leadership of local schools to promote legislation favorable to the financial support of Catholic school education.**



## Objectives

- 10.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will ensure that all parents, pastors, and board members possess a firm understanding of what resources Catholic schools already receive in the State of Iowa.
  - 10.1.1 The Office of Catholic Schools along with the directors of the STO and the Executive Director of Iowa Alliance for Choice in Education (ACE) and The Iowa Catholic Conference will develop a white paper outlining the current sources of governmental funding assistance that schools already receive and share this information with the families of school children, boards and pastors in the Diocese of Davenport.
- 10.2 The Office of Catholic Schools and local school leadership will push for increases to state transportation assistance and textbook funding, and for increases in tuition tax credits and the income levels for Student Tuition Organization eligibility.
  - 10.2.1 A steering committee promoting the Catholic school related issues will be formed to get talking points in the hands of all board members, principals and pastors to use in personal contacts with members of the Iowa Legislature.
- 10.3 The Office of Catholic Schools and local school leadership will lobby for passage of legislation establishing Educational Savings Accounts (ESA) in Iowa that benefit Catholic school education.
- 10.4 A committee promoting legislative issues in the Diocese of Davenport Catholic schools will be formed to ensure that a presentation on ESA's is done in every local school jurisdiction.

**Goal 11: The Office of Catholic Schools and local school leadership will spread the “good news” about the value of Catholic schools.**

## Objectives

- 11.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will promote the value of Catholic school education and the achievement of our Catholic school students and faculty through the use of data enlightened by personal stories using traditional and new media aimed to attract prospective families and remind the wider community of the value of Catholic education.
- 11.2 The diocesan superintendent will regularly communicate directly with the pastors with schools, teachers, staff and parents who have chosen a Catholic school for their children to maintain a more cohesive message regarding issues of importance to Catholic education or education in general.

- 11.3 Catholic schools will identify changing demographics and develop appropriate marketing, communication and models to serve the needs of the community.
- 11.4 Local schools will implement family mentoring programs to help families assimilate into the school and parish communities.

**Goal 12: The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Davenport will be housed in facilities that express a clear Catholic identity, and are safe for students, well equipped with modern technology, well-maintained, climate-controlled and in clean, good physical condition.**

Objectives

- 12.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will study the areas or opportunities for expanded, renovated, relocated, and/or new schools.
- 12.2 The Office of Catholic Schools will provide a tool with which schools can conduct an assessment of the current facilities with regard to structural integrity as well as Catholic identity, building safety, security, cleanliness and future needs.
- 12.3 All schools will develop plans to become climate-controlled.

**Governance and Leadership**

“Central to the mission of the Church is the work of Catholic school education. The success of this mission depends on key components of effective governance, which provides direction or authority, and leadership, which ensures effective operations. Catholic school governance and leadership can be seen as a ministry that promotes and protects the rights of the school community. Governance and leadership based on principles of excellence are essential to ensuring the Catholic identity, academic excellence and operational vitality of the school. Although governance models vary based on the school, those who serve on the governing body or leadership team in Catholic schools provide for an environment for the teaching of the doctrine and Sacred Scripture, the building and experiencing of community, the serving of others, and the opportunity for worship.” Excerpt from *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

**Goal 13: The Office of Catholic Schools will support the development of local boards and pastoral leadership to advance the mission of Catholic school education.**

Objectives

- 13.1 The Office of Catholic Schools, in conjunction with a committee of pastors, board members, and administrators, will develop a program to support ongoing professional development for new and existing school board members to include an introductory video and/or messages conveyed through other technological means.

- 13.2 Board members will annually review and adhere to the roles and responsibilities as delineated by the bylaws.
- 13.3 The Office of Catholic Schools will present each board with a Board Member Manual at the first meeting of each new board that allocates appropriate responsibilities and authority among pastor, principal or president and school board.
- 13.4 The diocesan Board of Education will review the process used by schools to select members for school boards and make appropriate recommendations.
- 13.5 The election process for local boards of education will be reviewed by the Vicar General, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and diocesan superintendent and any changes will be recommended for the 2016-17 school year.
- 13.6 The Office of Catholic Schools will collaborate with diocesan leadership to offer educational opportunities for seminarians and new pastors regarding the leadership role pastors and priests have in Catholic schools.
- 13.7 The diocesan superintendent will determine with the diocesan Director of Vocations how best to meet the needs of seminarians and new pastors as they relate to Catholic schools.

**Goal 14: The Office of Catholic Schools will work with school leaders to identify, train and mentor potential Catholic school administrators.**

Objectives

- 14.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will develop its partnership with St. Ambrose University (SAU) and other universities/colleges to develop a program for the recruitment and training of emerging Catholic school principals and leaders.
- 14.2 The Office of Catholic Schools will provide new principals and principals new to the diocese an orientation and mentoring process.
- 14.3 The diocesan superintendent will arrange a meeting with SAU educational leadership personnel to begin the process for development of a mentoring process for diocesan principals.
- 14.4 The diocesan professional development committee will survey the needs of new administrators and design a system of support.

**Goal 15: The Office of Catholic Schools will be adequately staffed to ensure effective support to schools.**

Objectives

- 15.1 In addition to the two current positions, consideration will be given to hiring an individual who might take some of the following responsibilities: assistant superintendent, information technology specialist, marketing director, development director and special needs resource coordinator/trainer.
- 15.2 The Office of Catholic Schools will survey administrators to determine the additional staffing needs for the Catholic Schools Office, research the staff at comparable dioceses, and make recommendations to the Vicar General and CFO.
- 15.3 The Office of Catholic Schools will take the leadership in ensuring that all diocesan policies, procedures, forms and plans are updated by the fall of 2016. This work includes cross-references as necessary with diocesan offices/areas outside of Catholic schools.
- 15.4 The Office of Catholic Schools and Office of Faith Formation will develop committees consisting of existing principals, faith formation representatives, and Board of Education members to update the following forms plans and policies:
- Review and update the *Policies for Faith Formation and Education Programs in the Diocese of Davenport*
  - Review and update the *Faith Formation Guidelines* document