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# Illuminating Our Path – Strategic Plan

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## Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools Strategic Growth Plan

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*October 2024*

# I. Introduction

The Diocese of Colorado Springs strategic growth plan for Catholic schools, “Illuminating Our Path,” is the result of a collaborative process that engaged all levels of diocesan, parish, and school leadership. This engagement included Bishop Golka, the Office of Catholic Schools, pastors with and without schools on site, school principals, faculty and staff members, school advisory council members, community representatives, and leaders.

The strategic growth plan is organized around the four pillars of *The National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*: Catholic mission and identity, governance and leadership, academic excellence, and operational vitality. These pillars provide the foundation from which the plan evolved and around which best practices have been applied for the future vitality and growth of the schools throughout the diocese.

This planning process is a unique initiative in that all of the Catholic schools in the diocese are actively involved in its development. The overall objective of the planning process is to be proactive in addressing issues that will have a long-term impact to strengthen Catholic school education in the diocese. The various goals and strategies are meant to focus on the current experience and potential future of the schools and changes that are needed to ensure they thrive looking forward. Strategies presented here are a “blueprint” or “path” for achieving the stated goals rather than a step-by-step action plan to address every aspect of school life.

Oversight for and development of the strategic growth planning process is provided by two working groups, the Steering Committee, and the Planning Task Force. Both groups received input from the various constituencies engaged throughout the process and provided leadership, direction, and expertise in leading to the development of the goals and strategies. Membership in these groups includes:

## Steering Committee

Name	Position
Most Rev. James Golka	Bishop of Colorado Springs
Fr. Kyle Ingels	Vicar General
Wayne Paton	Chief Financial Officer
Sheila Whalen	Superintendent of Catholic Schools

## Planning Task Force

Name	Position
John Colgan	Diocesan School Advisory Council
Fr. Gregory Golyzniak	Pastor of St. Peter Parish, Vicar for Clergy
Msgr. Robert Jaeger	Pastor of St. Paul Parish
Dan McCallin	Diocesan School Advisory Council
Shawn Olds	Diocesan School Advisory Council
Dcn. Rob Rysavy	Chief of Staff
Dr. Carol Walsh	Principal, St. Paul Catholic School
Sheila Whalen	Superintendent of Catholic Schools

## **II. Vision: Preferred Future for Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools**

### **Mission and Ministry**

The mission of the Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic schools is to provide excellent Catholic education in a safe, faith-filled environment, centered in the person of Jesus Christ. The schools are integral to the Church's evangelizing and educational mission. They are valued by clergy, families, and the communities they serve as an important ministry of the Diocese of Colorado Springs.

### **Faith Formation**

Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools, in partnership with families and parishes, fulfill their mission to teach and form students to be disciples of Jesus Christ. They foster a personal faith journey and growth, promote a relationship with Jesus Christ, and teach how to live the Gospel through a Catholic worldview.

### **Community**

Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools, in partnership with parishes, create a joyful and welcoming faith community gathered around Jesus Christ, as well as a learning space that promotes integrity, trust, and collaboration among all stakeholders.

### **Excellence**

Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools pursue a culture of excellence focusing on innovation, consistent growth, and continuous improvement to develop each student's God-given gifts and guide them to respond to Christ's call to lives of faith, leadership, and service.

### **Vitality**

Diocese of Colorado Springs Catholic Schools operate efficiently, are financially sound, and provide outstanding leadership, staffing, facilities, and resources to make an excellent Catholic education available and accessible.

# III. Catholic Mission and Identity

## Goals and Strategies

- 1. Catholic identity will extend beyond school to the home, the parishes, and the wider community. Schools, along with their sponsoring parishes, will be on the front line of evangelization and outreach to parents and families, drawing them into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church.**

### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Identify a staff member or faculty member (or group) at each school who can collaborate with the pastor and the principal on parent evangelization. Gather those leaders several times each year to collaborate and generate ideas.
  - 1.2. Provide training and resources to all teachers about practical techniques for extending the formation they provide to reach parents and families.
  - 1.3. Provide school parents with regular reminders and invitations about how to engage in the faith life of the Catholic parishes connected with their schools.
- 2. All parishes in the Diocese will recognize and fulfill their responsibility to help carry out the ministry of Catholic schools. Schools, in turn, will work closely with parishes in the work of evangelization and forming missionary disciples of Jesus.**

### *Strategies*

- 2.1 The diocese will offer pastors clear guidance on the vision for Catholic education and catechesis. This includes outlining the goals for Catholic education, its integration within parish catechesis, and the expectations for how parishes without schools should connect with and support a Catholic school.
  - 2.2 Leadership at each school will reach out to nearby parishes without schools, sharing with those parish leaders the goals and activities of the school, and discussing ways for the parish to connect with and support the school.
- 3. Catholic schools will be staffed by faith-filled, committed educators. Schools will effectively hire for mission, and faculty and staff will receive regular formation that helps them have a heartfelt and informed faith that is connected to their life and their work.**

### *Strategies*

- 3.1 The Office of Catholic Schools will continue to provide a Catechetical Institute each year for all teachers throughout the diocese.
- 3.2 Each Catholic school will create a Faith Formation Team who will be responsible for providing faith formation for faculty and staff at their school throughout the year.
- 3.3 The diocese will provide those teams with training over the summer to communicate the vision of faculty and staff faith formation and to develop a faith formation plan for the year.

4. **Catholic schools will form students in faith in engaging, effective, and data-informed ways, both within and outside the classroom. Students' faith will be centered on knowing and loving Jesus, deepened through prayer and participation in the sacraments, and strengthened through meaningful service learning and effective curriculum integration.**

***Strategies***

- 4.1 Investigate religion curriculum resources and teaching methodologies that are engaging for children and youth.
- 4.2 Survey students about their experiences of faith, service, prayer, and catechesis in their schools. Which prayer experiences, retreat experiences, and classroom experiences related to faith do they find most engaging, meaningful, and effective? Use the results of the survey to inform planning related to curriculum and instruction.

## IV. Excellence

### A. Academics, Co-Curricular Programs

#### Goals and Strategies

1. **Catholic schools in the diocese will be structured with a PreK to 12 mindset and organized to effectively and efficiently meet the academic and co-curricular needs of the individuals and communities they serve.**

##### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Assess what curriculum and assessment each school is using, and how data is being collected and used to drive instruction. Use the information to explore a diocesan-wide curriculum and assessment that addresses grades K to 12.
  - 1.2. Initiate curriculum articulation opportunities between St. Mary's High School and the schools of the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System to ensure curricular alignment and continuity.
  - 1.3. Within the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System, explore the potential for a common middle school to allow for greater enrollment critical mass, more enrichment opportunities at all levels (robotics, co-curricular activities, clubs, etc.), and shared teacher opportunities.
  - 1.4. Reassess and identify the academic support resources needed at each school. Research areas and ways personnel and resources might be shared to achieve economies of scale.
2. **In collaboration with the Office of Catholic Schools, schools will focus on teaching and learning that is authentically Catholic and academically excellent.**

##### *Strategies*

- 2.1 Establish standards and benchmarks for each content area to ensure excellence and consistency of curriculum across diocesan schools at each grade level.
- 2.2 Establish Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in each school and diocesan-wide committees to ensure PK-12 vertical alignment is in place.
- 2.3 Integrate Catholicism into the standards and benchmarks for each content area.
- 2.4 Transition professional development focus from curriculum resources training to diocesan-wide training utilizing funding streams from Titles II and IV to cover expenses. Focus professional development on:
  - Best education practices
  - Using data effectively to drive instruction
  - Social/emotional education
  - Management of classrooms with diverse learners
  - Integration of faith into curriculum and instruction in all subjects
- 2.5 Conduct stakeholder surveys to assess the best and most effective use of technology in education. Establish expectations for teachers to use instructional approaches that integrate the use of technology into the classroom and provide opportunities for students to engage in technology-enhanced projects.

- 2.6 Maintain curriculum mapping to assure academic alignment and to foster the development of student academic skills.
- 2.7 Regularly revise the curriculum to reflect alignment with appropriate Catholic, state, or national standards.
- 2.8 Continue to focus on the strengths of traditional academic knowledge and skills and incorporate real-world applications with a focus on broader competencies: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity.

**3. All schools will develop a graduate profile identifying the “return on investment” on the part of parents and guardians for their students.**

***Strategies***

- 3.1 Create a prioritized list of current competencies, skills, and values the world needs in a Diocese of Colorado Springs graduate. Use this information as the foundation for a graduate profile that will serve as a marketing tool to inform families of the benefits and outcomes of a Catholic school education in a diocesan school.
- 3.2 Develop a graduate profile based on the competencies, skills, and values identified in the “Illuminating Our Path” growth plan and reflect the unique mission, culture, and expected outcomes of each school.



## B. Faculty and Staff

### Goals and Strategies

1. **The Diocese and schools will attract and retain qualified, quality, mission-driven school personnel who witness to and live their faith consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.**

#### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Develop and implement a plan to actively recruit faculty and staff members.
- 1.2. Extend a preference for potential faculty and staff members who are practicing Catholics, are professionally prepared and qualified, and support the educational mission and vision of the Church and the Diocese of Colorado Springs.
- 1.3. Ensure faculty and staff meet all contractual faith formation and professional development activities as outlined by the Diocese of Colorado Springs.
- 1.4. All faculty and staff will be provided with appropriate services, resources, and professional development to support them in their work.
- 1.5. Ensure that the teacher supervision and evaluation system is effective in both affirming excellent teaching and assisting teachers who need or desire improvement.
- 1.6. Research best practices for formative and summative evaluation of administrators, teachers, and support staff. Select instruments and procedures that are currently successful and adapt them for effective use at the schools. Conduct written evaluations and in-person performance reviews at least annually.
- 1.7. Maintain access for teachers to workshops, conferences and continued education relative to their academic discipline.
- 1.8. Conduct faculty and staff satisfaction surveys and exit interviews or surveys annually to determine if any changes should be made or actions taken in response thereto.

## V. Governance and Leadership

### Goals and Strategies

- 1. Schools will align with a governance/leadership model that supports the long-term growth and vitality of a PreK to 12 Catholic school education in the diocese.**

#### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Implement the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic Schools System beginning in the 2025-26 school year. Schools to be included are Corpus Christi Catholic School, Divine Redeemer Catholic School, St. Gabriel Catholic School, St. Paul Catholic School, and St. Peter Catholic School. If or when new elementary schools are introduced into the Metro North and Metro South deaneries, they will become part of the Metro Catholic Schools System. (See Appendix)
  - 1.2. Continue to operate Ave Maria Catholic School, Holy Apostles Preschool, and Pax Christi Preschool as parish-based programs.
  - 1.3. Initiate discussion and planning for a systemized model of schools in the Northern Deanery as the number of new schools may increase in the future.
  - 1.4. Discuss and plan the potential for a PreK to 12 systemized model between the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic Schools System and St. Mary's Catholic High School.
- 2. Leadership roles and responsibilities of the Office of Catholic Schools and Superintendent of Catholic Schools will clearly be outlined and defined.**

#### *Strategies*

- 2.1 The Superintendent will ensure all diocesan policies related to Catholic schools are in place, up to date, and appropriately implemented at each school. Local school policies will be aligned with diocesan policies.
  - 2.2 The Superintendent will have responsibility and authority in the areas of diocesan policy development and implementation, curriculum, instruction, and assessments with all schools. In the Metro Catholic Schools System, the Superintendent will have responsibility and authority for personnel as well.
  - 2.3 Identify and delineate lines of authority and accountability among the Office of Catholic Schools, pastors of parish schools, the Metro Catholic Schools System Board of Directors, and school administrators. Develop and share an organizational chart that identifies and delineates the lines of authority and responsibility to provide clarity in collaboration and decision-making.
- 3. A new Board of Directors will provide clear and effective governance for the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic Schools System.**

#### *Strategies*

- 3.1 Develop a constitution and bylaws for the new board. The Board of Directors will be a board of limited jurisdiction with responsibility and authority in the areas of Catholic mission and identity (at the system level), strategic planning, finances, advancement/development, marketing, and enrollment management.
- 3.2 Initiate a process to identify, vet, and invite potential Board of Directors members. Membership of the Board should include the pastors of parishes with PK-8 schools, two priest representatives

from parishes without schools who are chosen by the pastors in the two Metro deaneries, and other leaders with specific areas of expertise.

3.3 Provide an initial orientation and ongoing training for board members to clarify their role and responsibilities, as well as best practices for board governance.

**4. The Office of Catholic Schools will develop and build leadership capacity in the schools of the diocese to ensure the quality of their Catholic mission and programs.**

***Strategies***

4.1 Develop and implement a plan to identify potential school leaders from within the diocese. Once interest is piqued and prospective individuals are invited, sessions can be created to encourage them to consider the possibility of becoming a principal and provide direction on how to achieve it.

4.2 Establish and implement a first-year orientation program for new principals and/or experienced principals who are new to the diocese through a collaborative effort of veteran principals and the Office of Catholic Schools.

4.3 Implement a one-year mentor program for principals new to school administration providing them with guidance and support from successful and effective leaders.

4.4 Enhance the ongoing professional development and individual growth plan process and program for school administrators with ongoing leadership development as the emphasis.

4.5 The Office of Catholic Schools will work with local leadership to develop a succession plan for administrative positions to ensure continuity in leadership. The plan should account for the potential of internal and external opportunities and processes for leadership development or searches.

4.6 Initiate or identify (e.g., national programs) an effective program for the formation and education of pastors on collaborating with, supporting, and leading in a Catholic school.

**5. Each school will create a multi-year long-range plan to provide a strategic pathway to the future.**

***Strategies***

5.1 Formulate a comprehensive multi-year (3 to 5 years) plan with each school, aligned with the “Illuminating Our Path” diocesan plan goals and strategic directions. The plans for schools in the Metro Catholic Schools System would be developed through the administration in collaboration with the Board of Directors.

5.2 Design system and school plans to complement the accreditation process for the schools.

5.3 Engage the appropriate stakeholders including pastors, principals, board and advisory councils, faculty and staff, and key constituencies (parents, friends, donors), among other supporters as needed in the process to develop, update and monitor the plan.

5.4 School strategic plans will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, soliciting input from key constituencies regarding progress and necessary plan adjustments. An annual update report will be drafted and communicated addressing implementation progress and any/all adjustments to the goals and strategies. School plans will be reviewed through the Office of Catholic Schools.

5.5 The diocesan schools’ strategic growth plan, “Illuminating Our Path,” will be reviewed and updated annually, coordinated through the Office of Catholic Schools and Bishop’s office

(or designee). Pastors, principals, diocesan leaders, and school advisory council leaders, among others, should be engaged in the updating of the plan. An annual update report will be drafted and communicated addressing implementation progress and any/all adjustments to the goals and strategies.

## VI. Operational Vitality

### A. Enrollment Management

#### Goals and Strategies

1. **Catholic schools will be a first-choice opportunity for Catholic families for their children. Enrollment at all Catholic schools will grow sustainably through effective marketing and recruitment efforts. The schools will operate at minimally 85% and optimally, 90% or better of their planned enrollment capacity.**

#### *Strategies*

- 1.1. The Office of Catholic Schools will create a written marketing plan that focuses on communication to enhance the positive image of the schools, build enrollment, and support marketing and recruitment initiatives. The plan should include specific goals and strategies.
- 1.2. Each school will create a local written marketing plan that is aligned with the diocesan marketing plan.
- 1.3. As a part of the marketing plan, each school's website will be reviewed, evaluated, edited, and, if needed, redesigned.
- 1.4. The Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System will collaborate with St. Mary Catholic High School to build a strong PK to 12 image and brand.
- 1.5. Establish the role of Marketing and Enrollment Coordinator for the Metro Catholic Schools System. This position will provide direction, expertise, and support for marketing and enrollment efforts to grow enrollment and broader support for Catholic school education. If/when a system is established in the Northern Deanery, this position will also be considered.
- 1.6. All schools will designate a staff member, add a staff position (full or part-time), or create a marketing/enrollment team to support and lead marketing and recruitment initiatives.
- 1.7. All schools will implement a parent satisfaction survey process to measure attitudes, perceptions, and expectations in order to internally assess school performance, areas of strength, and areas of needed growth or change. Based on the results, strategies will be developed to address issues, enhance strengths, and make appropriate changes as needed to improve student retention.
- 1.8. Marketing in-services and training for schools will be conducted as part of an ongoing annual effort with principals, pastors, and advisory councils, marketing/enrollment staff and marketing or enrollment teams.
- 1.9. Financial assistance is a key part of an enrollment management plan, particularly in recruitment and retention efforts. The ways of communicating the cost and value of Catholic education need to be revised and re-presented so families know it is available, how to apply and what to expect. The way assistance is determined, awarded, and distributed will be reviewed to align it with enrollment growth. (See Finances)
- 1.10. Each school will develop enrollment and/or market share goals based on available and appropriate data. When efforts are limited in holding or increasing market share, considerations could include reducing the number of classes per grade, combining grades, reducing staff,

creating a new school structure, and employing an “empty seats” approach with a negotiated cost for a family.

- 1.11. Action plans will be designed to establish or enhance connections with Catholic families whose children are not yet of school age and in local area preschool programs.
- 1.12. Each school will develop and implement a parent ambassador program. Ambassadors provide outreach and connections with potential families as part of the recruitment and admissions process and assist the principal, marketing/enrollment staff member, or enrollment team in building a relationship with prospective families and students. Ambassadors would also assist in orienting new families to the school.
- 1.13. School budgets will include a line item to fund marketing and enrollment management initiatives.
- 1.14. Educate all school personnel on their role in marketing, recruitment and retention and how they will be expected to contribute to these efforts. Provide ongoing in-service for principals, school staff, pastors, and advisory councils as well.
- 1.15. Develop recruiting and retention strategies with faculty, staff, administrators, coaches and student activities staff to ensure all are aware of and active in student recruitment and retention. Provide training opportunities so strategies can be effectively implemented.
- 1.16. Evaluate the effectiveness of developing transportation systems to build and support enrollment.

## B. Facilities

### Goals and Strategies

#### 1. School facilities will be fully and effectively optimized to support quality educational programs.

##### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Perform a comprehensive inspection and assessment of all school facilities regularly to ensure they are safe, clean, attractive, and in good repair.
- 1.2. Prioritize long-term capital needs and projects in order to create a facility master plan at each school.
- 1.3. Develop a multi-year, long-range master plan for each school facility based on the facility assessments conducted for each school. Include the master facilities plan as part of the school's comprehensive strategic plan.
  - As part of the master plan, the number and location of schools for the diocese will be determined based on enrollment projections and capital needs.
  - The master plan will include a capital needs assessment to provide accurate cost estimates for anticipated repair or upgrades to major facility systems, possible interior or exterior renovations, expansions or new construction, and technology infrastructure improvements.
  - The master plan will be funded through a capital improvement allocation in the annual operating budget and resources obtained by the Advancement Office or, in the future, by a major campaign.
- 1.4. Provide the level of budgetary funding needed for annual and long-term capital improvements. A special capital transfer fund will be established as part of the annual budget to develop savings for major facility improvements. The long-term objective is to annually set aside 2% to 4% of the annual operating budget for this purpose.
- 1.5. Continue the focus on deferred maintenance needs that can be funded through the operating budget.

## C. Advancement/Development

### Goals and Strategies

#### **1. The Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System will establish a comprehensive advancement program for Catholic school education within the system.**

##### ***Strategies***

- 1.1. Assemble an Advancement team for the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System that includes board members, volunteers with experience in advancement, and school staff. Provide orientation and training to each member of the team about their role and the goals and activities of the advancement program.
- 1.2. Implement an Annual Appeal, which will be a core component of the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System advancement program.
- 1.3. When feasible, add an Advancement Coordinator position for the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System.
- 1.4. With collaboration between the Colorado Springs Metro Catholic School System Marketing and Enrollment Coordinator and the Advancement Coordinator, develop communication strategies and messages to support the advancement program.
- 1.5. Compile a constituent database, drawing from the parishes and schools.
- 1.6. Develop and implement strategies for major gift solicitation.
- 1.7. Establish guidelines for each school about how much local fundraising is permitted, as well as the types of fundraising allowed and purposes toward which the funds may be directed.
- 1.8. Create a written advancement plan that details each program element above.

#### **2. Each school outside the system will develop a school-based advancement plan.**

##### ***Strategies***

- 2.1. Assemble a school advancement team that includes school council members, volunteers with experience in advancement, and school or parish staff. Provide orientation and training to each member of the team about their role and the goals and activities of the advancement program.
- 2.2. Implement an Annual Appeal, which will be the core component of the school advancement program.
- 2.3. In collaboration with those involved in school marketing and enrollment, develop communication strategies and messages to support the advancement program.
- 2.4. Compile a constituent database, drawing from the parish and school.
- 2.5. Establish guidelines about how much fundraising is permitted, as well as types of fundraising allowed and purposes toward which the funds may be directed.
- 2.6. Create a written advancement plan that details each program element above.

#### **3. The Diocese of Colorado Springs will be positioned to conduct a major campaign for Catholic education by 2026-27. The “Illuminating Our Path” strategic plan will serve as the foundation for planning elements of the campaign to enhance and strengthen Catholic education.**



- 3.1 Update the strategic plan annually and use it, or elements of it, as the case statement for the future capital campaign.
- 3.2 Complete a capital campaign feasibility study and timetable a year prior to the scheduled year to prepare for the proposed campaign.

## D. Finance

### Goals and Strategies

#### 1. The Catholic schools will be financially healthy, viable, and affordable.

##### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Develop a five-year financial projection with each school. The projection will include a forecast for enrollment, tuition and fee increases, all revenue sources, and expenses (including capital expenditures).
  - The financial projection will be updated each year, incorporating costs and income that are consistent with the school's or system's strategic plan.
  - Update the financial projection each year to guide goal setting and for anticipating long-term tuition needs and strategies.
  - Think strategically about tuition and tuition assistance, as well as about increasing other revenue sources to strengthen financial health.
  - Use the financial projection not only as a "reality check" for the implementation of the strategic plan and balancing the budget but also as a tool to develop a strategic vision to improve facilities and support curriculum for the long term.
- 1.2. Annual school operating budgets will be balanced.
  - Establish a financial planning process with timelines and responsibilities.
  - Consult the financial projection and its assumptions when beginning annual budget planning. Review the assumptions and increase factors annually.
  - Create a finance committee, whose members have the financial expertise to assist the administration, board, and advisory council in creating and administering the annual budget.
  - Share the financial status of the school through an Annual Report, as well as the cost of education, with potential and current families to maintain their awareness of what it costs to provide a quality Catholic education.
- 1.3. Increase tuition and fees each year.
  - Tuition increases will be balanced to remain affordable.
  - Tuition will account for a minimum of 65% to 70% of total annual school revenue.
  - Utilize the strategic plan financial projection to assess potential increases.
  - Consider market analysis, competition, and demographics in determining tuition levels.
- 1.4. Continue to increase funding for financial assistance to meet the growing demand for tuition support (see Goal 2). Unfunded tuition assistance may be budgeted at a maximum of 8% to 10% of total tuition revenue.
- 1.5. Continue to provide parish investment for schools. Maintaining this investment at a maximum limit of **30%-35%** of parish ordinary income will be the norm (for parishes where schools are located). Parish investment will be approximately 10-12% of the total school annual revenue.
- 1.6. Funding for schools through development and fundraising initiatives will increase each year, working toward a goal of 10% to 12% of total annual operating revenue.

1.7. Establish the role of Finance Manager for the Metro Catholic Schools System. This position will be responsible for accounting and financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting, compilation of critical success factors, strategic planning, compensation analysis and tuition management. This position will also be responsible for management of the information systems related to finance.

**2. The schools will seek opportunities and resources to serve families who desire a Catholic education in areas with resource challenges.**

***Strategies***

- 2.1 Research ways to increase funding for targeted scholarship opportunities in order to strategically attract students. For example: legacy families, students from potential neighborhood markets, Hispanic and other ethnic families, etc.
- 2.2 Initiate a transition from multi-child tuition discounts to greater financial assistance for families with more than one child.
- 2.3 Evaluate the current process for awarding tuition assistance in order to strategically award financial aid and scholarships and maintain a desired enrollment and student profile.
- 2.4 Adjust the financial assistance allocation process to include the segmenting of family income levels as a criterion for awards. Allow for an equitable level of assistance and award process that ensures available funding for middle-class families that may need a smaller level of support.
- 2.5 Increase tuition assistance in the operating budget over the next five years. Use 8-10% of tuition and fee revenue as a benchmark and an eventual goal.

**3. Compensation will be competitive to attract and retain quality and qualified school administrators and faculty members.**

***Strategies***

- 3.1 Create a diocesan teacher salary scale(s) for schools to serve as a minimum guideline for schools in establishing future faculty and staff compensation. The new scale with transition timelines over the next 5 years will move to a more equitable goal as a percentage of local target levels. The scale will be flexible to account for the particular area (geographic, economic) of the diocese in which the schools are located. There could be more than one salary scale given potentially different regions.
  - Determine priorities for faculty, such as advanced degrees, longevity, multiple certifications, and ability to improve co-curricular activities.
  - Establish a base salary and lanes for attracting teachers based on your priorities above.
  - Decide if movement through the scale will reward longevity or professional advancement.
- 3.2 Conduct an analysis of employee benefits and total compensation to determine which areas are most in need of improvement and which have the greatest impact on faculty recruitment and retention.
- 3.3 Submit a plan from each school for adjusting compensation based on the scales that are to be developed with implementation to take place over 3 to 5 years depending on the gap between current Catholic school salaries and the goal established for a particular region or location.
- 3.4 Utilize the multi-year financial projection to determine potential compensation increases that are in line with revenue potential.

- 3.5 As part of the case in the major capital campaign for schools, include funding for an initial endowment investment for faculty/staff compensation. Develop means to grow this endowment on a regular basis through ongoing development initiatives.

## E. School Growth and Expansion

### Goals and Strategies

1. **Expanded and/or new Catholic schools in the diocese will be studied to meet Catholic and community population growth and demand when needed.**

#### *Strategies*

- 1.1. Establish directives and procedures that will guide those who may consider a new or expanded Catholic school in the diocese. These directives and procedures should address:
  - Rationale and case for considering the potential for a new school including community demographic analysis.
  - Conduct a comprehensive and professional feasibility study addressing and identifying need, enrollment potential, and financial feasibility (cost analysis and capital potential).
  - Create a realistic business plan to assess potential financial support and debt service.
  - Follow established diocesan policies and procedures for capital projects.

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# Appendix

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## Systemized School Model

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Bishop Golka has stated that Catholic schools are an essential ministry of evangelization and education in the Diocese of Colorado Springs. This strategic planning process, though, has determined that the current organization of the Catholic schools, particularly in the city of Colorado Springs, is not viable for the future. Doing what is best for students, their families, and the Church therefore calls us to develop a more viable organizational structure for Catholic schools.

This model will allow leaders to focus on their strengths, will provide for more equitable distribution of resources, and will thereby strengthen schools and help them to thrive.

### Description

A new corporation is created to centralize management of designated schools. This system corporation, part of the diocese, is under the leadership of the Superintendent.

The schools remain parish-based, and the Pastor remains the canonical administrator of the school.

Schools keep their name and their identity.

The Pastor focuses on spiritual/pastoral leadership and delegates the management of the school to the centralized management corporation. This allows the Pastor to truly serve as the spiritual leader he is called to be.

### Board

The Board of Directors includes the pastors of parishes with PK-8 schools, two priest representatives from parishes without schools who are chosen by the pastors in the two Metro deaneries, and other leaders with specific areas of expertise. Total size of the Board is 12-15 members. The Superintendent is an *ex officio* member of the Board. The Board of Directors is a board of limited jurisdiction, with responsibility and authority in the areas of Catholic mission and identity (at the system level), strategic planning, finances, advancement/development, marketing, and enrollment management. The Board of Directors must annually communicate to the superintendent goals and objectives for each of these areas of responsibility, as well as provide the resources necessary to accomplish them.

### Pastors

The school pastor remains responsible for Catholic mission and identity at the school level, providing direction to the school principal. Individual pastors can do more in the area of Catholic mission and identity than what is established by the Board of Directors at the system level, but not less.

Pastors exercise their authority in the areas of strategic planning, finances, advancement/development, marketing, and enrollment management at the system level as a member of the Board of Directors rather than at the individual school level.

Pastors are bound by diocesan policies approved by the bishop.



School principals are hired by the superintendent in collaboration with the school pastor and must be approved by that pastor. Principals report to and are supervised by the Superintendent, with dotted line reporting and communication to the Pastor of the school in the area of Catholic mission and identity.

## Superintendent

The Superintendent has responsibility and authority in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and personnel. All central system staff report to and are supervised by the Superintendent.

The Superintendent reports directly to the Bishop and has dotted line reporting to the Board of Directors. As a result, the Superintendent is responsible for communicating to the Board the information it needs in its designated areas of responsibility, and is also responsible for implementing the goals and objectives set by the Board in those areas.

## Funding

Funding is provided through tuition/fees, parish investment/support (based on an agreed-upon formula), development/fundraising, other third source income.

All parishes in the two Metro deaneries provide a level of financial support for the schools.

The Board of Directors approves the budget for the system.

The system works toward common tuition (PK-8) and a common salary scale within three years.

Schools are allowed their own local fundraising.

Parishes retain ownership of buildings and are responsible for ensuring facilities are maintained in accordance with established standards (including safety/security standards).

Tuition can be paid through a third-party contractor (e.g., FACTS Management).

## Areas of Systemization

Areas of systemization or centralized operations include:

- tuition management
- financial accounting and reporting
- marketing and development (support and resources)
- human relations (personnel recruitment, professional development, staff allocation, hiring/termination)
- implementation of Safe Environment policies
- implementation of security plans, policies, and procedures
- purchasing (bulk purchasing can provide some cost savings)
- sharing of staff and costs for some specialty teachers, interventionists, and IT personnel, among others
- substitute teachers





- processing and use of Title funding for professional development

## Leadership and Staffing

### Central staff

- Superintendent
- Finance Manager
- Marketing and Enrollment Coordinator
- Possible: Accountant
- Possible: Human Resources
- Possible: IT Specialist

In addition, all principals and teachers (all employees) are employees of the system corporation. Principals must be approved by the Pastor of the school.

Principals report to and are supervised by the Superintendent, with dotted line reporting and communication to the Pastor of the school. All central system staff report to and are supervised by the Superintendent.

## Schools Included

This system will initially include the four PK-8 schools in Colorado Springs (Corpus Christi, Divine Redeemer, St. Gabriel, and St. Paul) as well as St. Peter in Monument.

Ave Maria Catholic School in Parker, Pax Christi Catholic Preschool in Lone Tree, and Holy Apostles Catholic Preschool in Colorado Springs will not be part of the system and will continue to function as individual parish schools.

It is possible that St. Mary Catholic High School could be incorporated into this system in the future.

## Advantages

- Pastors are spiritual leaders and not administrators or chief financial officers.
- There is a more consistent and collaborative approach to education, with a common standard of accountability.
- There can be more equitable distribution of personnel, technology, and other resources.
- Resources of multiple parishes are brought together to sustain quality programs. Parishes with and without schools have an investment in Catholic education.
- There is consistent financial reporting with the same fiscal metrics for financial health and viability. Having fewer individual school bookkeeping staff is more cost effective.
- Gain efficiency and economies of scale with common marketing programs and staffing, among others.
- Schools are governed by a Board of Directors with real authority, resulting in ownership, involvement, and commitment.

- It may be possible for a system to serve special needs students in a way individual schools could not afford.
- While each school maintains a unique identity, the system is able to market the schools as a unified PK-12 system with a common identity as well.
- Because each school remains parish-based and the Pastor remains as the canonical administrator, there is the potential for a strong sense of ownership and investment by the parish.

## Challenges

- Trust in the transition from the traditional parish/school-based operations to a more centralized model can be a challenge.
- Schools and parishes need ongoing reassurance that each of the schools is still led by a pastor.
- It can be a challenge to achieve a common direction, strategies, and policies when bringing multiple schools together.
- Attention must be given to the selection and training of an effective Board of Directors.
- Some parishes may not be able or willing to maintain school facilities at the level consistent with the educational vision for the school established by the Board and Superintendent.

