

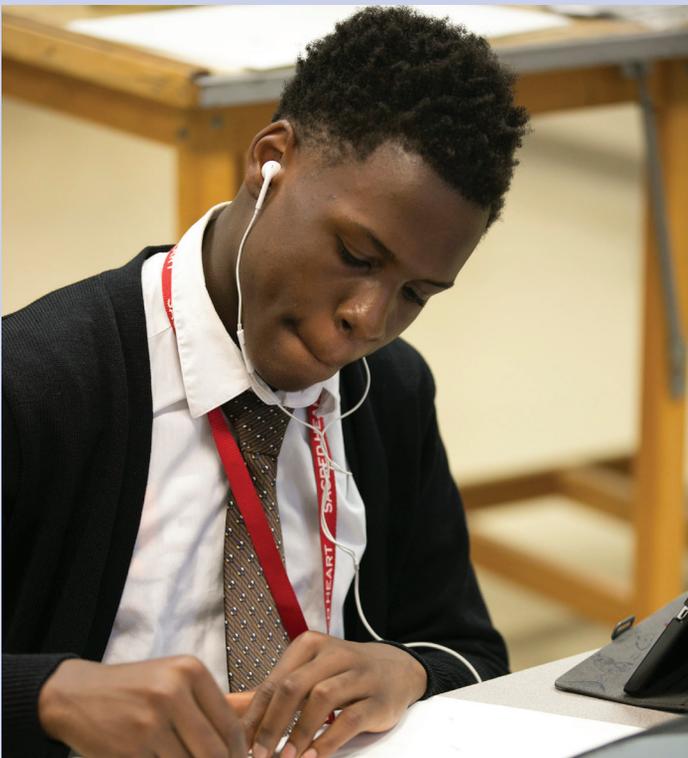
A young girl with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a light blue short-sleeved shirt and a dark skirt, is shown in profile, kneeling in a church pew with her hands clasped in prayer. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in a church setting.

our
Catholic
Schools

THE DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS

**REAL PRESENCE,
REAL FUTURE:
OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

A Vision for the Future of the Schools of the Diocese of Columbus



February 2022



DEAR FRIENDS OF OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS,

The Gospel of Matthew ends with our Resurrected Lord issuing the Great Commission to his gathered disciples. Jesus says, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). The Catholic Church has carried this commission forward for centuries through its teaching mission, which is most visible to us today in *Our Catholic Schools*.

As part of the broader *Real Presence, Real Future* initiative begun by Bishop Robert Brennan in 2019, the Diocese of Columbus is renewing its commitment to outstanding Catholic education in all areas of our diocese. This document creates a vision for the future of *Our Catholic Schools* in three key areas – schools that are unapologetically Catholic, schools that are academically excellent, and schools that are sustainable for the future.

In late 2019, through generous funding from The Catholic Foundation, Catholic School Management (CSM), a strategic planning firm, was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive study of the needs of our school system. CSM worked with us to assess the needs of our schools and to assist in shaping a path forward that would support the key goals described here. After a long process of surveys and stakeholder interviews, interrupted by Covid, the process concluded in April 2021. CSM generated a strategic plan presented as ten goals spread across three key areas. Over the past few months, the staff of the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) has been working to develop that plan into an actionable way forward. This document outlines our strategic planning pathway, with the goal of envisioning the future of our school system and the support structures for it in the Office of Catholic Schools.

The discussion of mergers or potential closures was not the focus of this planning process. Instead, any potential changes that involve structural models will be discerned with the larger *Real Presence, Real Future* consultation process so that these changes are integrated with any potential changes to parishes. The recommendations contained here focus on the many other facets of *Our Catholic Schools*.

The process leading to the creation of this vision has required a great deal of work, discussion, and prayer. We would like to sincerely thank all of the members of our planning committee, the principals and administrators of our diocese, the participants in our interviews and surveys, the staff of the Office of Catholic Schools, and all who tirelessly work to serve our Church in the ministry of education.

St. John Paul II spoke to the importance of the Church’s educational ministry: “Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom.” It is in this spirit that we move forward to continue the work of Our Lord for the children and families of the Diocese of Columbus through *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools*.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Stephan Moloney
Diocesan Administrator

Fr. Michael Hartge
Coordinator of Real Presence,
Real Future Initiative

Adam J. Dufault, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools



INTRODUCTION

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, currently the Archbishop of Vancouver, previously served the Church as the Secretary for the Congregation for Catholic Education at the Vatican. In this role, Archbishop Miller spoke about the importance of education to the evangelizing mission of the Church and the great responsibility schools have to bring children and their families to a knowledge of and love for Jesus Christ. In a speech that has been adapted into a small yet powerful booklet, Archbishop Miller defined the “Five Marks of a Catholic School,” which serve as the foundation for *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools*. These marks, followed by a brief description, are:

Has a Supernatural Vision

Archbishop Miller wrote that a truly Catholic School sees “education as a process that, in light of man’s transcendent destiny, forms the whole child and seeks to fix his or her eyes on heaven. The specific purpose of a Catholic education is the formation of boys and girls who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints.”

Be Founded on Christian Anthropology

The Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church. It calls for the fullest development of all that is human. Archbishop Miller wrote, “The Gospel of Jesus Christ and His very person are to inspire and guide the Catholic school in every dimension of its life and activity.”

Be Animated by Communion and Community

A Catholic school must be a community of faith. This vision of community involves four key aspects: teamwork among all involved; the cooperation between educators and bishops, the interaction of students with teachers; and the school’s

physical environment. All of these aspects work together to form a community grounded in faith, strengthened in prayer, and inspired by the love of the Lord.

Be Imbued with a Catholic Worldview throughout its Curriculum

A true and complete education should develop every student’s intellectual, physical, psychological, moral, and religious capacities, which are all the needs of the human person. All instruction must be authentically Catholic in content and methodology across the entire program of studies, fostering love for wisdom and truth, integrating faith, culture, and life.

Sustained by Gospel Witness

Catholic educators are expected to be models and serve as witnesses to Christ and the Gospel. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI: “The central figure in the work of educating, and especially in education in the faith, which is the summit of the person’s formation and is his or her most appropriate horizon, is specifically the form of witness. This witness becomes a proper reference point to the extent that the person can account for the hope that nourishes his life and is personally involved in the truth that he proposes.”



“ A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints.”

- Pope Benedict XVI

The key goals of *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools* utilize Archbishop Miller’s Five Marks as a foundation that was enhanced by listening to the voices of our diocesan community, including parents, students, administrators, teachers, priests, and many other partners. This plan contains three key focus areas that encompass the primary needs of our diocese. Each focus area contains several goals that define the vision for our system of schools. This section is followed by action items that are concrete and measurable steps to be completed within the next three to five years.



The focus areas for *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools* are:



This document elaborates on the goals and actions that support each of these focus areas. This plan should be viewed as a vision statement, outlining the direction of *Our Catholic schools* during the next three to five years. It is subject to change or modification due to unforeseen events and to continued refinement over time.

Please continue to pray for *the Real Presence, Real Future* initiative, *Our Catholic Schools*, our clergy, our educators, our families, and the future of the Diocese of Columbus.





CATHOLIC *INSPIRED BY FAITH*

The first planning area nurtures and celebrates the Catholic identity of our schools. Every school within the diocese must be inspired by faith and imbued with a strong, unwavering Catholic identity. The mission of our schools is to form disciples of Jesus Christ for success in this world and in the next.

The goals that support this area and the action steps contained in each are:

Ensure an inspired Catholic community of school leaders, teachers and staff.

Evangelization Plan. Implement the Evangelization plan for schools, developed through the Evangelization arm of *Real Presence, Real Future*, to build and strengthen hearts for our Lord among all educators. This plan includes large-scale, encounter-oriented gatherings every three years supplemented by local prayer groups, formation activities, and retreats.

Catechetical Institute. Continue to grow and deepen the established partnership with Franciscan University of Steubenville's Catechetical Institute to provide the required ongoing catechetical formation for all educators.

Recruitment and Retention. Design and implement strategies for hiring for mission and cultivating talent from within to fill leadership roles. Partnerships with excellent Catholic universities and with national and local lay apostolates will be established, building a pipeline for those called to serve as Catholic educators. OCS will also cultivate the formation of future administrators from the talented and inspired teachers of our diocese.

Diversity. The Diocese of Columbus is committed to developing strategies to recruit people of diverse backgrounds to teach and lead Catholic schools. A focused, concentrated strategy will be defined to improve diversity of hiring within all Catholic schools.

Partner with pastors and other clergy in their vital role of school leadership.

Pastors' Council. Recognizing the critical importance of the pastors with schools in the mission of Catholic education, OCS will establish a Pastors' Council to advise, guide, and engage the clergy of the diocese in our schools.

Pastor Support and Engagement. Provide professional development, continuing education, and the sharing of best practices for all interested clergy who are engaged in the ministry of education. OCS recognizes the need to provide the right tools for the growth and sustainability of Catholic schools. Additional opportunities for the engagement of priests in the high schools will continue to be implemented. This will include the service of clergy and religious as chaplains, teachers, and providers of pastoral care to students and staff.

Engaging Seminarians. The Diocese of Columbus is blessed by the presence of the Pontifical College Josephinum. This provides an opportunity to engage future priests in the ministry of Catholic education through workshops, service opportunities, and visits to schools. The schools of the diocese will be enriched by the witness of those called to Holy Orders and vocational discernment groups and guidance.

Accompany our families and students in faith.

New PK-12 Religion Curriculum. OCS will produce a new, comprehensive religion curriculum for use in Pre-K through 12th grade classrooms. This curriculum will be the diocese's first to be designed specifically for Catholic schools and will embrace Archbishop Miller's Five Marks to provide a rich, formative, and faith-filled framework for this critical course of study.

High School Visitations. Recognizing the unique role of the Bishop in his leadership of ten diocesan owned and operated high schools, a program for annual evaluative visitations of each school's theology and campus ministry offerings will be developed. The goal of these visitations will be to engage those serving in these ministries, dialogue with them about the Bishop's vision, and share the best practices for forming our students in their faith.

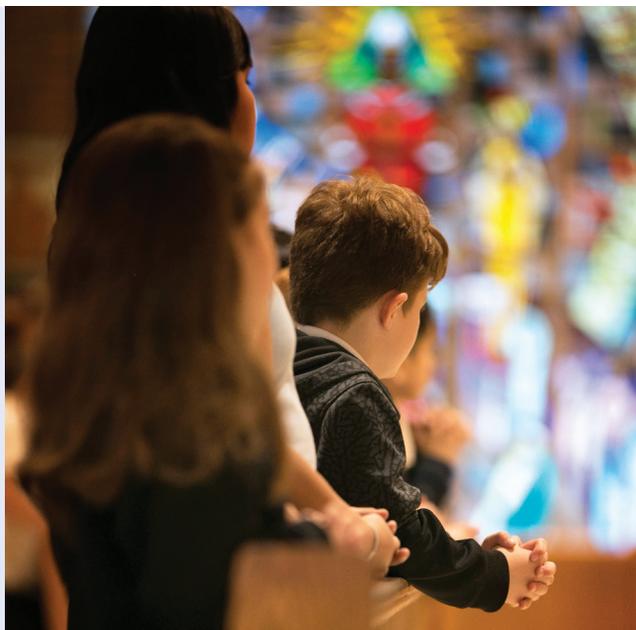
Engagement with Diverse Communities. Celebrating the growing diversity within the Diocese of Columbus, schools will work to engage and embrace all people of faith, overcome language barriers, and grow in cultural knowledge. OCS will also strengthen the existing partnership with the Latino Enrollment Institute of the University of Notre Dame to better engage the growing Latino population of the Diocese of Columbus in *Our Catholic Schools*.

Service to Students with Special Needs. Building on the locally-developed SPICE (Special People in Catholic Education) program and our Inclusion Network, OCS will work to better serve all students who desire a Catholic education through improved partnerships, structures, and training.



“ It is of utmost importance, therefore, that the Church's institutions be genuinely Catholic: Catholic in their self-understanding and Catholic in their identity.”

— Saint John Paul II



EXCELLENT *DIFFERENT BY DESIGN*

The second planning area challenges our schools to be excellent in every way. *Our Catholic Schools* must offer the people of the diocese an outstanding Catholic education, steeped with the Catholic worldview to form well-educated men and women of faith for the future of our world. In order to accomplish this tremendous goal, we need schools that are well-informed, well-run, and well-trained in Catholic pedagogy.

The goals that support this area and the action steps contained in each are:

Refine instruments and practices to support data-informed progress.

Data and Reporting. Develop better methods for collecting, assessing, and reporting data from every school, including frequent stakeholder surveys. This information will be used for better planning and decision making, as well as more frequent and detailed reporting to the people of the diocese through online data dashboards and annual reports.

Establish school governance models that respond to contemporary challenges.

New Models. Design, implement, and grow new models of school governance where needed and appropriate. Collaborative, regional governance models will support school performance and efficiency in some areas, while more diocesan, centralized models can benefit particular schools in others.

Board Training and Development. Renew the role of school advisory boards, provide standardized models and training on the best practices for boards, and encourage collaboration between boards.

Guide the ongoing academic excellence of Catholic schools.

Professional Learning Communities. Recognizing the incredible work of more than 1,200 educators in the diocese, OCS will utilize technology to better connect teachers and staff to one another, forming communities. These connections can be used for professional development, networking, collaborative planning, and faith formation.

Alternative Curriculum Models. Explore and implement new curricular models to better serve the needs of the families of our diocese. Allowing choices in curriculum will strengthen the role of the parents as the primary educator of their children, as defined in the Catechism, and increase the number of students served by *Our Catholic Schools*.

Enhance the understanding of the benefits, value, and enduring need for Catholic education.

Marketing and Communication Plan. OCS must continue to prioritize telling the good news of Catholic education throughout our diocese. Enhanced social media tools, improved website design, the cultivation of local initiatives, and greater partnerships with Catholic and secular media will enhance the visibility of Catholic education throughout our state. Additionally, the diocesan Profile of a Catholic School Graduate will communicate the vision of our goals for every student in the Diocese of Columbus.

“ We shall steer safely through every storm, so long as our heart is right, our intention fervent, our courage steadfast, and our trust fixed on God.”

— Saint Francis de Sales, Patron Saint of the Diocese of Columbus



SUSTAINABLE *READY FOR THE FUTURE*

The final planning area creates a foundation for the future of Catholic education in our diocese. This area largely involves financial strategies and processes. Our schools must be made ready for the future, open to strategies to increase viability, and sustainable in order to continue to serve a world that needs our schools more than ever before.

The goals that support this area and the action steps contained in each are:

Support the operational success of Catholic schools.

State Resources. The State of Ohio has long been a nationally recognized leader in school choice and private school student support. OCS will continue to leverage all available state resources and to advocate for the rights of the parents in our schools.

Training Resources. Continue to provide direct support and training to school leaders, volunteers, and staff for adoption of contemporary best practices in ensuring the success of school marketing, enrollment, and development programs.

Sustain the long-term accessibility and distinction of Catholic schools.

Improve Operations. Provide ongoing and regularly updated policies, procedures, and guidelines for operational plans that support achievement of identified benchmarks for health and safety, security, technology infrastructure, and facilities and financial management.

Foundation Partnership. Engage and develop a plan with The Catholic Foundation for the initiation of a targeted campaign to fund diocesan-wide tuition assistance through growth of endowed funds for this purpose and supported by a detailed vision that gives form to the impact Catholic schools will have on the diocese decades into the future. Educate the Catholic school community of supporters on a regular basis as to the role of The Catholic Foundation, school endowments, and options for planned giving.

Celebrate Success. Identify and adopt a regular cycle for the conduct of a diocesan-wide opportunity to honor significant partners in the mission of Catholic school education.

Build a sustainable funding structure for school viability and vitality.

Funding Model. Build upon models from other dioceses that will help schools to better implement funding and tuition strategies to meet the costs of education. New approaches must be reasonable and fair while maintaining our commitment to serve all students who desire a Catholic education, regardless of family finances. An improved diocesan tuition assistance fund and distribution plan, the diocese's new Scholarship Granting Organization status, and a commitment to long-range advancement strategies will support the extensive work to be done in this area.



Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

– Saint John Paul II

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

All Saints Academy
Bishop Fenwick
Bishop Flaget
Blessed Sacrament
Holy Spirit
Holy Trinity
Immaculate Conception, Columbus
Immaculate Conception, Dennison
Notre Dame Elementary
Our Lady of Bethlehem
Our Lady of Peace
Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Sacred Heart
St. Agatha
St. Andrew
St. Anthony
St. Bernadette
St. Brendan the Navigator
St. Brigid of Kildare
St. Catharine
St. Cecilia
St. Francis de Sales
St. James the Less
St. John the Evangelist
St. Joseph Montessori
St. Mary, Columbus
St. Mary, Delaware
St. Mary, Lancaster
St. Mary, Marion
St. Mary Magdalene
St. Matthew
St. Matthias
St. Michael

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

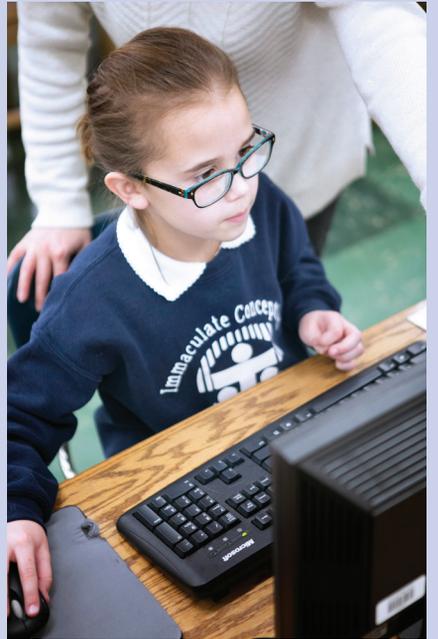
St. Patrick
St. Paul
Sts. Peter and Paul
St. Pius X
St. Timothy
St. Vincent de Paul
Trinity Catholic
Tuscarawas Central Catholic Elementary

HIGH SCHOOLS

Bishop Rosecrans
Cristo Rey Columbus
Bishop Hartley
Bishop Ready
Bishop Watterson
Fisher Catholic
Newark Catholic
Notre Dame Jr/Sr
St. Charles Preparatory
St. Francis DeSales
Tuscarawas Central Catholic Jr/Sr



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