The Diocese of Knoxville
Catholic Schools
Strategic Growth Plan
Dear fellow disciples of Jesus Christ,

Our Catholic schools are an integral and important part of the way our Church fulfills her evangelizing mission. Jesus said, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations … .” (Mt 28:19). The Catholic schools in our diocese are the present bearers of the long and sacred teaching tradition and mission of the Church. This mission is sanctified by the authority of Christ himself and is critically important to the formation of the human person. I believe that all students can benefit from the foundational principles and missional purpose of Catholic school education. I also believe that our Catholic schools are blessings to our diocese and to the people and communities they serve across East Tennessee.

For this reason, I am honored to present the Strategic Growth Plan for the advancement of the 10 schools within the diocese.

Thank you for holding our Catholic school students, schools and communities in your prayers. May God bless our Catholic schools as we continue to provide hope for the future!

Blessings,

The Most Reverend Richard F. Stika
Bishop, Diocese of Knoxville
“The Church’s teaching mission includes inviting young people to a relationship with Jesus Christ or 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.” (NSBECS, 2012).
Dear Friends and Families of our Catholic Schools in East Tennessee,

Our individual schools have had the distinct and esteemed achievement of accreditation from various accrediting agencies, including the State of Tennessee Department of Education, the regional Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the national accrediting agency AdvancED since its establishment. In 2017, the Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools embarked on the process and achieved system accreditation through the international accrediting agency now known as COGNIA. This intense process involved an internal self-study and analytical review of our schools that engaged key stakeholders and constituents across the diocese, as well as an external quality assurance review conducted by a team of Catholic school professionals from dioceses across the country. Along with achieving accreditation, this Quality Assurance Evaluative Review resulted in commendations and identified prioritized areas for future growth.

As a Catholic school system, our schools have been focusing on the strategic improvement goals developed in the 2017-2021 strategic improvement plan. For the past two years, our diocese and schools have been preparing for a Focused Accreditation Review visit by an external team to affirm and validate the continuous improvement efforts made as a system. The initiatives and outcomes are the
direct result of our internal quality improvement efforts aligned to our strategic growth plans. Each school also has individual growth plans, but the *Strategic Growth Plan* outlined in this booklet contains the system’s priorities for growth across all of the schools.

The goal of the *Strategic Growth Plan* is to provide a compelling vision and guide to our schools to ensure success in our educational mission to make scholars, leaders and saints. The *Strategic Growth Plan* is founded on the four pillars of excellence in the National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Schools: 1. Mission and Catholic Identity; 2. Academic Excellence; 3. Governance and Leadership; and 4. Operational Vitality.

Developed in collaboration with our pastors, school leaders and other parish and community constituents, the *Strategic Growth Plan* is the initial document for continuous and ongoing improvement and advancement of our schools through deliberate and dedicated discussion, reflection and action. It will allow our schools to advance the outstanding service to our families as they pursue excellence in their Catholic identity, academics and educational programs that serve the whole child.

I am thankful for the dedication and commitment of our school pastors, principals, presidents, faculty and school communities for their service and faith in our schools. It is my sincere hope that this plan will serve as a living document as we strive to serve our parishes, families and communities, but mostly those that have been entrusted in our care. As we place our hope in Christ, we can be assured of God’s plans for a future of joy and prosperity.

In Christ,

Dr. Sedonna Prater
Superintendent of Catholic schools, Diocese of Knoxville
Overview of **Accreditation and Strategic Growth Process**

**The Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools is committed to continuous advancement and growth.**

As an accredited system of schools, our schools must maintain compliance with the standards of excellence as defined by COGNIA and as verified by Internal Quality Assurance Reviews, as well as External Focus Reviews. As a Catholic School system, our schools strive to meet and exceed the National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS). To ensure fidelity to our Catholic school mission, the process begins with internal self-studies of alignment to these standards through collection of stakeholder input and analysis of all relevant data. The data review includes student achievement data, enrollment trends, finances, curriculum and instructional practices, student engagement and stakeholder perceptions. A SWOT (an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is then completed. The development of this *Strategic Growth Plan* is the essential next step in ensuring that our schools remain dynamic communities that are distinctive in their Catholic Identity and devoted to the pursuit of academic excellence and financial vitality.

*1 Peter 5:2-3*
Strategic Growth Plan Initiatives

The Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools system SWOT analysis completed over the last two years has identified three areas of focus for our system goals and growth priorities. The foundational pillar of Mission and Catholic Identity is integral to each of the initiatives and has been synthesized within each.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Initiative I: Governance and Leadership

Rationale for Goals

“Governance and leadership based on the principles and practices of excellence, are essential to insuring the Catholic identity, academic excellence and operational vitality of the school.” (NSBECS)

Goal 1: Intentional planning for leadership succession

Strategy 1: Identification of Leaders and formation of Leaders through Diocesan Leadership Academy and/or Catholic university school leadership programs.

Strategy 2: Institute a formal Leadership Preparation and Mentoring Program for New Leaders (School Principals, Presidents, and Assistant School Leaders).
**Strategy 3:** Establish a new Pastor/Associate Pastor Catholic School Leadership Mentoring or Formation program.

**Goal 2:** Research and recommend Catholic school governance models and boards to ensure fidelity to the mission and operational vitality and sustainability of the schools

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**Initiative II: Academic Excellence**

**Rationale for Goals**

“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.” (NSBECS)
Goal 1: Recruit and retain highly qualified personnel and missionary disciples

**Strategy 1:** Increase partnerships with Catholic universities and Catholic organizations to recruit highly qualified personnel who understand and embrace the mission of the Church.

**Strategy 2:** Develop a competitive salary and benefit structure for each region.

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Goal 2: Adopt and implement a teacher/staff evaluation tool that is aligned to Catholic identity and mission and promotes instructional excellence and professional growth

**Strategy 1:** Research instructional performance evaluation tools that align to Catholic identity and mission and promote instructional excellence and professional growth.

**Strategy 2:** Develop a timeline for observations/evaluations of teaching faculty.

**Strategy 3:** Adopt an online platform for tracking and maintaining longitudinal data on teacher evaluations/performance growth.

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Goal 3: Implement the Franciscan University’s Catechetical Institute’s Comprehensive Catechetical Formation program to meet the formation needs of all school personnel and to provide faith formation opportunities for Catholic school families.

**Strategy 1:** Provide professional development for teachers in the ARK Assessment Protocols.
**Strategy 2:** Use ARK assessment data for teachers and students to guide professional development and Christian Doctrine curriculum mapping.

**Goal 4:** Implement the Assessment of Religious Knowledge Assessment (ARK) in Grades 2-12 for students and teachers
Rationale for Goals

“Standards for operational vitality must focus on the ‘operation’ of the school, how it works and how it is supported, in 4 key areas: finances, human resources, facilities and institutional advancement.” (NSBECS)

Goal 1: Increase Latino outreach

Strategy 1: Ensure all pastors and school leaders participate in the Latino Enrollment Institute at the University of Notre Dame.

Strategy 2: Implement the Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of Knoxville as defined for Catholic school education.

Goal 2: Increase/maintain Catholic school enrollment

Strategy 1: Involve and collaborate with constituent base through marketing and public relations.

Strategy 2: Establish ambassadors and mentors for prospective and new families.

Goal 3: Provide recommendations of best practices for collaborative budget process to promote operational sustainability in Catholic schools

Goal 4: Implement the vision of the Chattanooga Catholic Schools Strategic Plan initiative
Evaluation &
Measures of Success

Our students are our treasures and hope for the future! The direct benefactors of any improvement initiative are the students and families within our schools. Ultimately, any school advancement initiative is about how we can better serve our families and parishes in educating our students. The prioritized initiatives identified are those that we believe address our greatest challenges and provide the most effective way to advance our schools for future success.

Our ultimate measure of success will not be realized within our lifetime, as our schools have the lofty aspiration to build up the kingdom of heaven through a holistic education grounded on the principles of Catholic Christian Anthropology, values and morals. In the words echoed by our pastors, “our eternal outlook, as well as our evangelical worldview ("Go out to all nations"), encourages us to draw many into a relationship with God through the saving sacraments of the Catholic faith. Following Jesus’ teaching ministry, we strive to help all students realize their God-given talents.

The Diocese of Knoxville Office of Catholic Schools is committed to the educational and saving mission of our schools and is determined to provide all available resources and support, so each school can fulfill the mission to prepare scholars, leaders and saints. Specific measures of success for the Strategic Growth Plan initiatives are:

### Initiative I: Governance and Leadership

- Completion of leadership programs
- Creation of defined formal mentor program for new leaders and new pastors
- Creation of new school pastor handbook for pastors and associate pastors
- Recommendations for establishment of governance models and boards
Initiative II: Academic Excellence

- Partnerships established with Catholic agencies to assist in recruitment of highly qualified teachers and missionary disciples
- Completion of LEI by all new school leaders and pastors
- Creation of defined salary and benefit scale structure for each region
- Development of guidelines for madrina/padrino program to be replicated across the diocese
- Training of leaders in Hispanic community as ambassadors or padrinos
- Promotion of revenue streams for scholarships for Hispanic students to attend Catholic schools
- Development of parent ambassador program for outreach to prospective families in consistent manner
- Implementation of effective faculty evaluation instrument that aligns with our mission
- Implementation of comprehensive Catechetical Formation Program for Catholic school communities
- Revised catechetical certification documents

Initiative III: Operational Vitality

- Implementation of Chattanooga Strategic Plan, Hope for the Future
- Partnerships established with Catholic agencies to assist in recruitment of highly qualified teachers and missionary disciples
- Development of guidelines for madrina/padrino program that can be replicated in schools across the Diocese.
- Development of budgeting guidelines/best practices
- Professional development for pastors, school leaders, bookkeepers, etc., in budgeting process.
- Revised catechetical certification documents
- Creation of defined salary and benefit scale structure for each region
- Implementation of e/uniFB00ective faculty evaluation instrument that aligns with our mission
- Professional development for pastors, school leaders, bookkeepers, etc., in budgeting process.
- Implementation of comprehensive Catechetical Formation Program for Catholic school communities
- Revised catechetical certification documents

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21
Our Schools

Preschool Through Eighth Grade
At Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, we know the good news of Jesus through the teaching of scriptures and Catholic traditions. We love by demonstrating our living faith and respecting the dignity of all human beings. We serve by being stewards of God’s creation through service to our school, our parishes and our communities.
St. Jude Catholic School shines to glorify God. The success of St. Jude Catholic School is because of the strong parish foundation, exceptional faculty, excellent curriculum and families who share their children along with their own time and talents.
Anchored in love, St. Mary’s Catholic School exists to promote Gospel values, academic excellence and service to others. Our positive, supportive learning environment promotes imagination, exploration, personal growth and achievement.
As a ministry of our Catholic community, St. Dominic Catholic School believes in the blessings of faith through Jesus Christ; inspires spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth; and celebrates God’s gracious gifts.
For almost 65 years, Sacred Heart Cathedral School has developed students to their fullest potential in mind, body and soul. The school offers an innovative and challenging curriculum in a diverse, welcoming and Christ-centered Catholic environment. In the classroom, in the arts, and on the fields and courts, Sacred Heart educates the whole child and charts them on a life of service.
Saint Joseph School, in cooperation with parents and parish communities, teaches and nurtures the Catholic faith. The school is dedicated to academic excellence through a curriculum that promotes the growth of the whole child and service to others – a place where we are committed to: “Holiness as a way of life.”
St. John Neumann Catholic School’s mission is to serve God with loving hearts, joyfully embrace our Catholic faith and to nurture individual and academic excellence for students in preschool through grade eight.
St. Mary’s School is where the journey matters! Our community is united to provide a Catholic education in a Christ-centered environment, dedicated to academic excellence and promoting truth and charity in service to God and others.
Our Schools

High School
Knoxville Catholic High School has been inspiring young people through the ministry of Christ since 1932. Today, the campus in the heart of West Knoxville features best-in-class facilities, a distinguished faculty and a steadfast commitment to Catholic education. KCHS graduates are not just ready for college, they are equipped to meet real-world challenges and forge new paths. Go Irish!
As the area’s only Catholic High School and first independent school, Notre Dame is a welcoming, inclusive high school committed to exceptional education rooted in Christian values reaching back nearly 150 years. Equally as important as excelling in academics, NDHS fosters a prayerful and comprehensive value-based educational program that helps direct young adults of all faiths on the right path.
Our schools are family-centered and student-centered with all decisions, traditions and teachings originating from the Catholic Church. The unique cultures of our Catholic schools synthesize faith and reason by promoting a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history. In partnership with parents, the school strives to “create a community school climate that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life.” (Archbishop J. Michael Miller, Secretary, Congregation for Catholic Education) We interact in positive ways while respecting the views and needs of others.

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it.

Proverbs 22:6
Our experience as humans is shaped by our interconnectedness. Catholic school students learn to build community in all areas of life by experiencing relationships developed from fellowship in friendship, trust and love. Our schools serve God by placing our personal needs second to the service of others. We believe that work has dignity and contributes to the community.

As each one has received gifts, so use them to serve one another as faithful stewards of the many-colored tapestry of God’s grace.

1 Peter 4:10

We love because He first loved us.

1 John 4:19
Our schools bring out the best in others through leadership and guidance in a collaborative, community-based environment. The love of God helps the growth of leadership.

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

1 Timothy 4:12
Our schools strive to do the very best in all endeavors. We prepare, support and assist our students to glorify God and to be successful members of society.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and is there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Philippians 4:8
CORE VALUES

Dignity of Individuals

Our schools believe that God created each person with dignity and love. Because the Catholic school mission is so clear: Teach children the truth; develop the whole child spiritually, emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively; and cultivate an environment of love, respect and personal self-discipline; the result is a place where students can thrive.

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14
Our schools are open, honest and trustworthy. We seek to be fair and loyal to our calling, to those we serve and to those who serve us. We seek to overlook the faults of others and continue to strive to love them as our Lord has asked.

Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

Hebrews 13:18
Empowered by the Holy Spirit and recognizing the vital ministry of Catholic education to the future of the Church and nation, we will provide a learning environment that emphasizes quality education and spiritual growth for all.

Our new *Strategic Growth Plan* will be the vision and direction for our schools as we grow and transform to meet the needs of our students and our communities. We are grateful to all who participated in the self-study process and to all who continue to support our schools. Enlivened by the Holy Spirit and working together, we can achieve our mission of inspiring scholars, leaders and saints!

God bless,

Jamie Goodhard
Accreditation and Special Projects Coordinator