



STRATEGIC VISION *for our* CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

MISSION

The mission of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend is to evangelize and form disciples of Jesus Christ in the Catholic Church through the ministry of education.



OUR VISION

Our Catholic schools will provide a Christ-centered environment in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service of others is practiced, and thanksgiving and worship of God is cultivated.

Our Catholic identity will be seen through our integration of faith and life, reverence for truth, growth in virtue, formation in Christian discipleship, and commitment to prayer.

Our students will experience, from the first moment that they set foot in our Catholic schools, a community illumined by the light of faith and enlivened by the presence of Jesus the master teacher.

Our Catholic educators, in answering their call to Catholic education, will serve as witnesses to the truth, beauty, and joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our parents are the primary educators. The schools, working in collaboration with the parents, will help educate and form their children.



WE BELIEVE

Catholic schools are an expression of the Catholic Church's teachings based on scripture, traditions, and sacramental life.

Catholic schools call each member of the school community to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ so that all might grow in holiness, discern their vocation, and be prepared for their eternal destiny in Heaven.

Catholic schools provide an atmosphere that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of love which recognizes self-discipline and personal responsibility and affirms the dignity of all persons.

Catholic schools provide Christ-like role models who witness the teachings of Christ and the Catholic faith.

Catholic schools are committed to academic excellence, which fosters the intellectual development and the moral and spiritual formation of all faculty, staff, and students.

Catholic schools believe that each child is uniquely created in God's image, and that all children can learn.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

As Catholic educators, we participate in the evangelizing and redemptive mission of the Catholic Church. Called through Baptism and incorporated into Christ's life, we embark on a journey of bringing God's love to the world. Through the ministry of education, with the help of God's grace, we seek to accept the call of Christ to love and serve God and one another. We strive to integrate the student's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral, and social lives. Through the sacramental life and the liturgical year, love of God and neighbor transform attitudes, actions, and relationships. Our schools are communities of faith centered on the Eucharist. We continually challenge our students and one another to participate in Christ's victory over sin with lives of love, compassion, and observance of the law of God and our Church. Through witnessing our faith, we call our students to recognize the love of God in their midst and to contribute their talents in service to others, calling all to be saints and to live in communion with God in heaven.



2014-2019

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Increased Access to SIS, LMS, EIS, PD: (Assess the schools' progress and use of information technology for operation and instruction).

Diocesan School Policies were digitized and made available online to school administrators, teachers, and all interested stakeholders. Additional digital assets have been developed to provide access to online frameworks, templates, and shared documents.

To upgrade and standardize school safety across all 43 Diocesan schools, a core Diocesan Safety Committee was established. All schools now have trained Safety Academy Specialists on staff; follow standardized safety plans and protocols; implement annual inspections, planning, and drills; and assist one another in procuring needed training and resources; and, overall, diligently maintain safe schools.

A formal **Internal Review Process** was developed and implemented to ensure that all schools were visited and evaluated using the AdvancED Engagement Review Report to evaluate each accreditation domain.

The Catholic Schools Office was able to **add an associate superintendent** to help expand the services the office is able to provide to schools.

The Catholic Schools Office, along with exemplar schools, encouraged the **implementation of the 1:1 device-to-student learning model** in all schools. Support and guidance in procurement of needed infrastructure and technology resources, and encouragement of participation in eLearning laid a solid foundation across the Diocese, which proved pivotal when the Pandemic forced all schools into immediate virtual learning in March of 2020.

Our diocesan schools have **increased their capacity to share and deliver content digitally**, making communications, instructional resources, and performance data more available to stakeholders.

The Strategic Planning process for all schools was strengthened, through the guidance and increased accountability process as implemented through the CSO. Annual Diocesan School Board Inservice provided training, clear processes, and the encouragement needed to help local school boards vision, plan, and execute strategically on a continuous five-year cycle. The rotating cycle we use today was established by the CSO to annually meet with school boards to review, encourage, and approve their five-year plans.

Bishop Rhoades, in union with the Catholic Schools Office, were early leaders in the state in **establishing the NorthEast Indiana Scholarship Granting Organization** to help families have financial opportunities for their children to attend Catholic Schools. Diocesan leadership then expanded their school choice advocacy by successfully **leading all Diocesan schools in the implementation of the inaugural 2014 Choice Scholarship Program**, which is now the largest school voucher program in the United States.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN



In 2019, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend (DFWSB) hired a new superintendent and associate superintendent, who created a first draft strategic plan (SP). Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades assessed the strategic plan. He prioritized components of the plan, determined non-priorities, and eliminated a few priorities. The Catholic Schools Office added three extra goals.

HOW THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE WORKS:

- The DFWSB's Catholic School's Office uses a strategic plan to direct major initiatives, so we decided to use Congia's new Focus Review Protocol. An outside accreditation team reviews our plan and provides recommendations to improve it.
- The DFWSB has five Strategic Priorities: SP-1-Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and the Church, Philosophy; SP-2 Aspiring Catholic Leaders - Strategic Plan; SP-3 Modify Diocesan Curriculum; SP-4 SP Diocesan Marketing and Enrollment Plan; SP-5 Operational Vitality Metrics.
- The DFWSB have three SP-Extras: 1) SP-Extra-1 Personal Relationship with Jesus Within His Body the Church; 2) SP-Extra-2 Revise Principal Evaluation Process; 3) SP-Extra-3 Catholic/Classical Literature Resources. Cognia's Focus Review Team will not assess these SP-Extra, but the DFWSB will.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Vision, Mission, Beliefs, and Philosophy

“The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith.”

Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World “Gaudium et Spes”, 11.

Create a vision statement and review and revise the mission, belief, and philosophy of our Catholic Schools.

Through our Catholic identity, we advance the evangelistic mission of the Church and provide students the opportunity to encounter Jesus in the sacraments. We help students develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ within His mystical body, the Church; form disciples of Christ; fulfill their destiny to become saints; and reach heaven.

FIVE INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

1. View the current mission and vision of the DFWSB as well as mission and vision statements from other dioceses.
2. Outline key concepts for mission, vision, belief, and philosophy that align with Bishop Rhoades' expectations.
3. Write mission, vision, belief, and philosophy of our Catholic Schools.
4. Communicate the mission, vision, belief, and philosophy of our Catholic schools to staff.
5. Embed mission, vision, belief, philosophy in all school and mission programs.

“provide students the opportunity to encounter Jesus”

THE FOUR DOMAINS

1. Catholic Identity and Mission
2. Leadership Capacity
3. Learning Capacity
4. Resource Capacity



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Aspiring Catholic Leaders

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.”

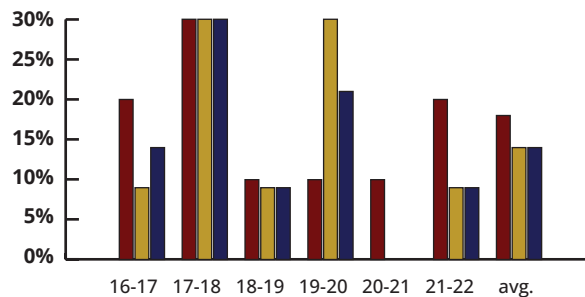
Psalm 32:8

Develop an Aspiring Catholic Leaders program to educate candidates who will excel as administrators spiritually, academically, and managerially.

The Catholic Schools Office has tracked principal attrition for the past six years, and it ranges from 5% to 30%. On average over the past six years, the DFWSB principal attrition is 14%. Sometimes we have only one candidate apply for the job. For this reason, Bishop Rhoades indicated this is a priority and the reason for the Aspiring Principals Program. We train teacher-leaders to become administrators.

DFWSB Principal Attrition Percentages

FORT WAYNE
SOUTH BEND
DFWSB AVERAGE



FOUR INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

1. Research and identify the reasons for the high turnover rate among Catholic School Leadership.
2. Identify and recruit aspiring principals within our schools.
3. Develop a diocesan curriculum/training (policies, procedures, retreats, state assurances, etc.) to accompany the academic coursework cohorts/participants are receiving.
4. Provide diocesan mentors (or PLCs) to new and aspiring principals.

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“ train teacher leaders to become administrators ”



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Modify Diocesan Curriculum

“But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them.”

John 8:2

Modify the Diocesan Curriculum Maps in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, utilizing collaboration and data analysis to allow our teachers to use their collective best to improve instruction and analyze student achievement.

The Curriculum Committee started out reviewing all courses in the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE) MOODLE to share a common knowledge base, identified high priority standards as well as analyzing Janet Hale's curriculum resources to build pacing guides and frameworks.

THE DIOCESAN CURRICULUM CONSISTS OF:

1. Collaboration with grade level and subject level teams.
2. K-8 Schools organized in cohort PLC teams.
3. Scaffold development of assessments. Year one and two cohorts develop common assessments, and progress to common assessments based on feeder schools, and finally the diocesan assessments.
4. Data Analysis where teachers will triangulate data (NWEA, ILEARN, IREAD3) and identify Multi Tiered Support Systems interventions to ensure student growth.
5. Instructional strategies will be an organic menu built into the framework to reflect student learning achievements.

“allow our teachers to use their collective best”

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- 3. Learning Capacity**
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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Enrollment Management Plan

“He said to them, ‘Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.’”

Mark 16:15

The CSO and 43 Schools will create Enrollment Management Plans to increase enrollment.

The DFWSB started to collect enrollment data back in 1957. At that time, we had 21,486 students. For School Year 2021-2022, we have 12,538 in our elementary and high schools. The decline occurred when the number of religious teaching in our schools dwindled and the laity assumed their roles. Our enrollment has flattened out, which is perplexing because Indiana has a robust voucher program and state tax income reduction incentives. For these reasons, increasing enrollment is a top priority of Bishop Rhoades and the CSO, because of the evangelization that occurs in our schools. The diocese and CSO has invested time, talent, and treasure to help schools increase enrollment.

“increasing enrollment is a top priority”

FOUR INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

The Diocesan Marketing and Enrollment initiatives include three partnerships and an Enrollment Management Plan as a product.

1. Partner with 86 Creative to conduct branding strategies.
2. The Diocesan Secretariat for Communications has partnered with the CSO to create a Marketing Toolkit that our schools access premade and customizable materials, videography, and stock photography. The website has won awards.
3. The CSO has contracted with Partners in Mission to conduct a series of four workshops. The workshops have will cover the following strategies General Marketing, Target Marketing, Micromarketing, Recruitment, Application, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation. Our schools will determine whether to pay for consulting upon the completion of the four workshops.
4. The CSO and the diocese will develop Enrollment Management Plans by the end of November.

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Operational Vitality Plan

“The achievement of this specific aim of the Catholic school depends not so much on subject matter or methodology as on the people who work there.”

The Catholic School, 1977

Develop Marketing and Enrollment Plans at the Diocesan and school levels to increase enrollment.

The DFWSB must develop and monitor the strength and sustainability of our schools. One way to do this is to develop an Operational Vitality Metric. The Operational Vitality Metric looks at enrollment, tuition, revenue, instruction, administration, plant, affordability, and liquidity to determine areas where the CSO can help schools with areas of concern. An overall score indicates areas of need to help determine the sustainability of a school.

FIVE INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

1. Develop an operational vitality metric at the diocesan level.
2. Pilot the operational vitality metric with partner schools.
3. Implement the operational vitality metric for all schools.
4. Examine ways to expand operational vitality into a data-warehouse with cross-school analysis and other planning tools.
5. Utilize data-warehouse / existing metric to support future school strategic planning efforts.

“ develop and monitor the strength and sustainability of our schools ”

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY EXTRA 1

Personal Relationship with Jesus Within His Body the Church

“The Catholic school forms part of the saving mission of the Church, especially for education in the faith.”

Cf. SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World “Gaudium et Spes”, 11.

“By faith, man completely submits his intellect and his will to God. With his whole being man gives his assent to God the revealer. Sacred Scripture calls this human response to God, the author of revelation, “the obedience of faith”.”

- Catechism of the Catholic Church 143

FOUR INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

1. Schools will participate in the Eucharistic Revival.
2. Students will see sacraments as encounters with Jesus Christ.
3. Schools will assess faith formation and affinity for the faith through the ARK Assessment.
4. Teachers will be formed as authentic ministers of the faith.

“ With his whole being man gives his assent to God. ”

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY EXTRA 2

Revise Principal Evaluation Process

“Serving as a principal in a Catholic school, therefore, requires something different ... It is the formation of a community of believers in discipleship with Jesus Christ which, through the human development processes of teaching and learning, helps advance the school community toward their ultimate, common goal: salvation.”

Ronald J. Nuzzi and Thomas C. Hunt

Catholic school principals, motivated by a desire to serve, fundamentally give of their best to the students placed in their care, to the parents of these students, to their work colleagues, and to the system authorities to which they are responsible.

Thus, an evaluation of the principal shall be conducted annually. For this reason, it is important the evaluation instruments are helpful to our principals. For this reason, a committee comprised of principals and the CSO will review the current evaluation process, research best practices in evaluation, and revise the current process to affirm and discuss areas for growth.

SIX INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

1. Survey Principals and Pastors on their perceptions of the Principal evaluation process.
2. Gather evaluation instruments from other dioceses in the state and across the country.
3. Draft an initial copy of a new evaluation instrument.
4. A draft of the evaluation process is reviewed by Pastors and Principals and feedback is given to the CSO.
5. Revised evaluation process is submitted to Bishop Rhoades for approval.
6. Train Pastors on how to use the new evaluation instruments.

“affirm and discuss areas for growth”

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY EXTRA 3

Catholic Liberal Education & Resources

“We must be committed to excellence, to growth, working together to make our schools the best they can be, everything aimed at building up the body of Christ and growing to the full stature of Christ.”

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, 2019

The CSO will work on providing our schools with Catholic Liberal Education Resources that comply with Diocesan Policies. Among these are standards from the Cardinal Newman Society, Catholic resources to combat secular relativism and racism, curriculum samples and reading lists from liberal arts organizations, and many others.

SIX INITIATIVES FOLLOW:

1. Join Catholic Liberal Education organizations.
2. Utilize resources from various Liberal Arts organizations.
3. Visit schools in the Diocese of Marquette, Michigan who have successfully transitioned to a Catholic Liberal Education model.
4. Utilize resources from the Cardinal Newman Society such as Literature, Library, and Media Guide for Catholic Educators, Literature and the Arts in Catholic Education, Selected Reading List for Catholic K-12 Schools, and more.
5. Create a web page on Policies and Resources for Literature, Media, and Movies for administrators, library media specialists, teachers, and more.
6. Help schools who want to explore becoming Catholic Liberal Arts Education schools.

“providing our schools with Catholic/Liberal Education Resources”

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DIOCESE OF
FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We give thanks to God for His many blessings as our 18 member Accreditation Team (AT) worked hard to develop this Christ-centered Strategic Plan. The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades the Very Reverend Mark Gurtner and various stakeholders (pastors, administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and community) reviewed our plans and provided us with wise counsel. Our four domain committees conducted Pre-Focus Review meetings with stakeholder groups and we used their constructive advice to modify our strategic priorities and extras. We believe our strategic plan initiatives will help the Diocese with the sustainability of our Catholic schools. As we implement the plan we remain focused on helping our students to excel spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially. Our four-fold purpose for Catholic education is to help our students develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ within His mystical body the Church, form intentional disciples, help students fulfill their destinies to become saints, and the ultimate goal, to reach Heaven. Everything we do is for the greater glory of God.

Blessings,

Joseph A. Brettnacher, PhD
Superintendent of Catholic Schools