



Mission Ordered towards Reaching Eternal life



Diocese of Kalamazoo

Advancing Catholic Schools
Update, May 2012

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May 24, 2012





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Very Rev. John D. Fleckenstein, V.E.
Episcopal Vicar for Education

OVERVIEW

In the last several months, the Episcopal Vicar of Education, in cooperation with the Secretariat of New Evangelization and the Office of Schools with its Superintendent and staff, have made great strides towards moving forward the Diocesan priority of “Advancing Catholic Schools.” Several months ago, the Vicar of Education identified five major areas of focus which would lead towards enriching and growing the Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Kalamazoo. Those five areas are:

- **Vision and Evangelization**
- **Catholic Identity**
- **Leadership and Governance**
- **Academic Excellence**
- **Financial Accessibility**

The following provides an update on efforts currently being done. This report is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Instead, it is an update to information previously released by the Diocese.





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Common Vision Statement

The following Vision Statement has been developed and is proposed for use by the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Kalamazoo in the future:

The **MORE** Factor

A **M**ission **O**rdered towards **R**eaching **E**ternal life.

“In the spirit of Blessed John Paul II’s call for a New Evangelization, Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Kalamazoo desire to respond to this transformative invitation to holiness with a firm and renewed zeal. As a multi-culturally diverse institution, we joyfully embrace the universal vocation to holiness. We are a community centered in the Eucharist and an educational system of the highest standards, rooted in our Catholic faith. Our goal is to equip students with an excellent education and a solid faith formation so each student may know the faith confidently, live the faith in a community where families and teachers work together to advocate for each other’s salvation and Sainthood, and share the faith with relevance and loving courage throughout their lives.”

At present, the task is to communicate the Vision Statement and develop an instrument by which all 22 schools within the Diocese are evaluated based on its elements.





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Parent Faith Formation Program

The Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools have piloted the first step in a parent faith formation process entitled "Faith Infusion". This is a weekly "email blast" received by all parents and families of students within the system. The "Faith Infusion" which is sent weekly is directly sent to all BCACS families, those who subscribe to the email blast, as well as Facebook. (For a sample of the current "blast," simply go to Facebook and search "Faith Infusion.")

The goal is to begin a Diocesan-wide "Faith Infusion" blast from the Office of the Episcopal Vicar of Education beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

Instrument to Measure Catholic Identity

Currently, negotiations are underway with the Alliance of Catholic Education to pilot a "Catholic Identity Program" with three Catholic Schools within the Diocese once funding to finance this program is found.

Vocations Program in all Catholic Schools

A committee has been formed and will continue to meet during the Summer of 2012 for implementation of the program in the 2012-2013 school year.

Uniforms in Schools

At the recommendation of the Episcopal Vicar for Education and the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, the Bishop has approved the requirement that all Catholic Schools within the Diocese implement a policy regarding the wearing of uniforms beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.

Meeting with Pastors of Catholic Schools

For the first time ever, the Bishop convened a meeting of Pastors of all Catholic Schools within the Diocese to discuss the future of the schools and the importance of Catholic School Education. The Pastors will be convened again in the summer prior to the 2012-2013 school year.





New Instrument to Evaluate School Administrators

A new instrument to evaluate school principals (administrators) has been developed and is currently being implemented in the schools.

Changes to Diocesan Policy Manual

The Diocesan Policy Manual for Catholic Schools has been revised and promulgated to include the role of the Episcopal Vicar for Education.

LCAB Training

The Local Consultative/Advisory Board (either a school board, education commission or education committee) recommends policies to the pastor and school administrator. Additionally, the LCAB proposes an annual school budget and assesses the educational programs, the school administrator's effectiveness, and LCAB's effectiveness, and the effectiveness of LCAB policies. The LCAB is a consultative body, not a decision-making body.

All members of School Advisory Boards were required to attend training on the role of the Board, and those who did not attend a training session lost their voting privileges until the training is completed.

Implementation of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program

Beginning in the 2012-2013, all schools within the Diocese will implement the very successful Catechesis of the Good Shepherd curriculum. This summer, 35 catechists will undergo extensive training in this program.

Dignity of the Human Person program

A committee has been formed to develop an extensive K-12 "Dignity of the Human Person" incorporation into school curriculum, which we believe to be the first of its kind in the country. Implementation of some parts of the program is slated to begin in the 2012-2013 school year.

Examination of School Test Scores

Test scores are being evaluated and direction is being given to improve test scores in those schools who are falling anywhere below Diocesan standards.





Additionally, a “testing committee” was formed to evaluate the standardized testing program which is currently in use in the schools. It has been recommended by the school administrators that the currently-used IOWA testing be discontinued and the NWEA testing will be implemented because it gives the Diocese more comprehensive information, immediate feedback on students to schools, is taken on-line therefore making administering the test shorter and easier, and for the same amount of money students can take the test three times per year which gives better data to improve instruction. All teachers will be provided in-service to this new testing in the coming months.

Centralized Purchasing

The first step in centralizing purchasing for all schools within the Diocese is being implemented by beginning with textbooks. The Math curriculum of the Diocese are the first textbooks to be implemented in this process beginning next school year. All schools will be purchasing their back-to-school supplies through School Speciality in order to reduce costs and receive consortium pricing.

Additionally, there is work being done to centralize purchasing of all maintenance supplies in the schools of the Diocese.

Preschool Report Cards

A common preschool report card is being implemented in the Diocese.

High Schools Theology Curriculum

A revised high school theology curriculum is in the final stages of development and should be approximately 90% implemented for the 2012-2013 school year.

Holy Hours

In September 2012, the Vicar of Education is proposing a touring “Diocesan Holy Hour for Catholic Schools” in 4 regions of the Diocesan schools. This effort is to emphasize the primacy of being a Eucharistic-centered educational system.

The chosen locations for the tour focuses on Catholic elementary schools with programs ranging from PK-8th grade, Catholic Secondary schools and/or schools which represent a large portion of the Deanery it is located within.





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The Holy Hour for Catholic Schools is an opportunity to:

- Share and spread the Catholic Schools campaign for the upcoming year.
- Introduce and reinforce newly revised mission statement for pastors, school administrators, teachers, and families within each Deanery of our Diocese.
- Promote unity within the Diocese and reinforce the school community in prayer within each Deanery.

Development of the Alliance of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Kalamazoo

Extensive work has been done to create the “Alliance of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Kalamazoo.” At the outset, the Catholic Schools of Greater Kalamazoo and the Battle Creek Area Catholic Schools will be the charter members.

Currently, the Canonical and Legal implications of such an Alliance are being evaluated. Additionally, there are several Dioceses within the country that have implemented such “Alliances” or “Consortiums” and these processes are being compared and evaluated for use in our schools.

Some of the factors of the “Alliance” include:

- To prepare and develop all payroll, payables, and financial reporting for all schools through the resources of KRESA
- New Chart of Accounts being developed for use by July 1, 2012. CSGK schools will convert to the Chart of Accounts on January 1, 2013.
- New financial reporting will be implemented by CSGK beginning January 1, 2013
- CSGK and BCACS budgets are being revised and developed for examination during the 2012-2013 school year. BCACS software currently being used will continue to be used until June 30, 2013.
- Testing of new payroll runs will take place in October, November, and December 2012.
- Payroll will be fully implemented using KRESA beginning January 1, 2013 and Payables beginning July 1, 2013.
- All new financial reporting will begin July 1, 2013.





Currently, examination of the benefits of standardization and centralization of the following is being examined for schools that are part of the “Alliance”:

- HR policies and Employee Manual
- Accounting Systems
- Budgeting
- Banking
- Enrollment Process
- Grading System and Student Information Systems
- Tuition Scales and Tuition discounts
- Tuition Assistance Programs
- Past-due tuition collection policies
- Salary Scales
- Examination of Parish Subsidies
- Food Service Operations
- Capital Project approval process
- Summer wage policies
- TRIP/SCRIP programs
- Clubs/fundraisers
- Pay Periods
- KRESA date entry
- Contracts

Technology

Currently, there is an examination of a common technology director for Alliance schools, with assistant directors in certain schools/regions.

Provincial Wide Support

The Episcopal Vicar of Education has met with the Bishops of Michigan and twice with the Superintendents of all Dioceses within the State of Michigan. Collectively, there is progress being made on examining the possibilities of:

- Standardizing Theological formation within the Province;
- Cyberschooling and sharing of online resources within the Province;





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- Financial subsidies and examining a “fourth source of funding” for schools;
- State-wide professional development of teachers;
- Professional development for pastors of Catholic Schools
- Establishment of an “Intermediate School District (ISD)” structure in the State as a resource tool for all Catholic Schools within the Diocese. An “ISD” structure refers to “Intermediate School District”. Such structures provide general educational services in professional development activities for administrators, teachers, and staff. Additionally, they serve as resource centers for instructional material and support. An “ISD” may also provide common resources for special education in schools.

Ongoing Projects

- Pursuing the hope of inviting Religious Sisters to teach in our Schools
- Developing standards for Sacramental preparation in all schools
- Evaluation of Liturgical practices in all schools
- Attaching all parishes within the Diocese to the Alliance or to given schools
- Examination of establishing a Diocesan Alumni Association
- Facility review of all schools, to assist in capital planning as well as expansion or consolidation

Through the generosity of a private donor, there are two staff members who have been hired on a temporary basis to assist with these and additional projects that are developed.

