

Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools



Austin, Texas

June 2009

Diocese of Austin
The Catholic Church of Central Texas

Prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee and

MEITLER
Consultants
www.meitler.com

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. STATEMENT OF VISION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS	3
III. CATHOLIC IDENTITY	6
A. OBSERVATIONS	6
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	7
IV. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE	10
A. OBSERVATIONS	10
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	11
V. LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOLS	15
A. OBSERVATIONS	15
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	15
VI. ENROLLMENT AND MARKETING	17
A. OBSERVATIONS	17
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	18
VII. GROWTH OF SCHOOLS AND NEW SCHOOLS.....	21
A. OBSERVATIONS	21
B. GOALS	21
VIII. FINANCIAL PLAN FOR SCHOOLS	24
A. ASSUMPTIONS.....	24
B. DIOCESAN SUPPORT	24
C. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER COMPENSATION.....	27
D. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TUITION	28
E. TUITION ASSISTANCE.....	30
F. PARISH SUPPORT	32
G. DEVELOPMENT/SCHOOL ADVANCEMENT	36
H. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR HIGH SCHOOLS.....	39
I. ACCOUNTABILITY AND MANAGEMENT.....	40

IX. FACILITIES	41
A. OBSERVATIONS.....	41
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	41
X. GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS	43
A. OBSERVATIONS.....	43
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	45
XI. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE	47
A. OBSERVATIONS.....	47
B. GOALS AND STRATEGIES	48
XII. REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS	50
A. AUSTIN CITY DEANERIES AND GEORGETOWN/ROUND ROCK DEANERY	50
B. BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION DEANERY	55
C. GEORGETOWN/ROUND ROCK DEANERY	57
D. BRENHAM/LA GRANGE DEANERY	61
E. WACO DEANERY	63
F. SAN MARCOS DEANERY.....	67
G. KILLEEN/TEMPLE DEANERY	68
H. LAMPASAS/MARBLE FALLS DEANERY	71

I. INTRODUCTION

Catholic school education in the Diocese of Austin is on the threshold of new growth and potential for the future. Catholic schools have educated youth for many years, forming them in their faith and providing them with the knowledge and life skills to assume an active and positive role in the Church and in the communities in which they live.

In 2007, as a result of the diocesan pastoral planning process, Bishop Aymond and diocesan leaders identified the need to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to strengthen Catholic school education and ensure its future. To accomplish this, the Diocese and Catholic Schools Office utilized the services of Meitler Consultants to direct the planning process. The diocesan-wide planning effort began in February 2007.

The planning process set out to accomplish the following objectives:

- Ensure the schools in the Diocese will be vital, vibrant, and accomplish their mission as Catholic schools
- Articulate a vision for Catholic schools that provides direction for the next ten years and beyond
- Evaluate current and projected changes in demographic trends affecting Catholic schools
- Analyze historical Catholic school enrollment trends to evaluate future enrollment potential
- Evaluate where new schools may be needed in the future
- Evaluate the funding model supporting schools at the present time and develop goals and strategies to strengthen the financial foundation for the long-term
- Involve key stakeholders to build broad support for and ownership of the strategic plan and improve the potential for successful implementation

A Strategic Planning Committee was established to work with Meitler Consultants in developing the plan. The Committee was comprised of representatives from among pastors, school administrators, Diocesan School Board members, diocesan leaders, local school board members, and Catholic Schools Office leadership. The members of the Strategic Planning Committee devoted many hours of work to bring valuable ideas, insights and experience to the process and plan. A Steering Committee, including Bishop Aymond and other diocesan leaders, provided direction and input which also helped shape the plan. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee and Steering Committee include:

Bishop Gregory Aymond	Sandra Esqueda	Msgr. Michael Mulvey
Todd Blahnik	Christian Gonzalez	Charlene O'Connell
Msgr. Bill Brooks	Dr. Ardelle Hamilton	Fr. Michael O'Connor
Karen Conine	Pam Jupe	Dr. Mike Thomas
Kathy Coonan	Fr. Ed Karasek	Dr. Ned Vanders
Chris Dolce	Mary Beth Koenig	Bob van Til
Dina Dwyer-Owens	Msgr. John McCaffrey	Scott Whitaker
Linda Edwards-Gockel	Dr. Esther Miranda	Fr. Richard Wosman

The process of developing the strategic plan involved extensive data research and analysis resulting in a comprehensive data report. Visits were made to each elementary and high school to meet with pastors, school administrators and at times, school leaders. Listening sessions were held with numerous individuals and groups throughout the Diocese, along with regular meetings with the Strategic Planning Committee and Steering Committee.

This plan has been developed with careful thought, prayer and hard work. It is presented to the Diocese of Austin with the confidence and hope that it will strengthen Catholic schools and help them thrive as they continue to make significant contributions to the future of the Church and central Texas.

II. STATEMENT OF VISION FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

“Young people are a valued treasure and the future leaders of our Church.” Thus begins the call to action from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their document, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*. To ensure the future of our young people and our Church, we look to our Catholic schools to provide a strong foundation of faith and knowledge in action.

In order to discern the direction for Catholic school education in the Diocese of Austin, this Statement of Vision for Catholic Schools provides the foundation for the Strategic Plan in each of the identified areas.

The Catholic Diocese of Austin believes in the power of Catholic education to transform the world into an image of God’s kingdom. Relying on the gifts of parents as first educators, the professional talents of well-trained and dedicated teachers, and the prayerful support of the people of the Diocese, the Catholic Schools Office presents this vision of Catholic schools at the beginning of the third millennium that reinforces the commitment of the Diocese, the Catholic identity and mission of the schools, and issues of quality, governance, leadership, marketing/enrollment, and finances.

DIOCESAN PRIORITY

“...we believe the time has come to revisit and reaffirm our commitment to Catholic elementary and secondary schools as invaluable instruments in proclaiming the Good News from one generation to the next...now is the appropriate time to renew our challenge to the entire Catholic community to join in this critical endeavor.”ⁱ

1. The Diocese of Austin recognizes Catholic school education as a valued ministry as evidenced by:
 - Providing financial, human and capital resources to Catholic school education
 - Encouraging diocesan leaders, clergy, and laity to develop an understanding of the purpose and goals of Catholic school education
 - Planning for Catholic schools at the diocesan and school levels through short-term and long-term strategic initiatives
2. The Diocese will study new/expanded school opportunities and act to meet the needs of Catholics in all parts of the Diocese.

MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

“...Catholic schools offer the fullest and best opportunity to realize the four-fold purpose of Christian education, namely to provide an atmosphere where the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and thanksgiving and worship of God is cultivated.”¹

- Schools articulate and manifest a Catholic and Christ-centered mission.
- Schools and the community embrace each child as a unique creation of God.
- All schools work collaboratively with parents/guardians as the first educators of their children to ensure quality education that integrates a solid academic education with age-appropriate faith formation and active participation in the life of the Church through Eucharistic liturgy, prayer and service.
- Catholic schools effectively evangelize the communities in which they serve.
- Catholic schools embrace a range of ethnic, socio-economic, and academic ability groups and reflect the diversity of the parish and local communities in which they serve.

QUALITY

“...we must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education and faith formation designed to strengthen their union with Christ and His Church.”¹

- Catholic school PreK to grade 12 educational programs must excel academically and exceed the acceptable standards of quality as defined by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) and/or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).
- Teachers serve as role models and witnesses in living Catholic/Christian values and lifestyles. They are certified and current in their areas of expertise.
- School facilities are conducive to quality educational programs and faith formation. Facilities are safe, educationally appropriate, and well-maintained.
- The Catholic school environment engenders a sense of welcoming, nurturing, and spirituality, resulting in a disciplined academic environment.
- School personnel, by means of sound curricular and co-curricular programs, focus on the development and education of the whole child – spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically.
- Technology and educational resources are readily available to support learning.
- Catholic schools effectively serve the students they accept, from those with special needs to those who are gifted.

LEADERSHIP

“The preparation and ongoing formation of administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions.”¹

- Diocesan and parish leaders (the Bishop and diocesan personnel, the Religious Education and Formation Office, pastors, the Diocesan School Board, Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils for parish schools, and local School Advisory Boards) participate in partnership with Catholic schools to ensure strong Catholic identity and a high level of quality in every school.
- The Catholic Schools Office provides Catholic schools with direction, support, and access to essential resources. The Catholic Schools Office is staffed and funded to fulfill its role.
- Catholic school administrators are visionary leaders, grounded and active in their Catholic faith, and professionally competent and certified.
- Religion teachers are appropriately certified in religious education by the Diocese or a Catholic college/university.
- Teachers are certified, professionally competent, and dedicated to Catholic school education as a ministry. The recruitment and retention of quality teachers is a priority.
- Effective leadership and professional development programs are implemented and funded.

GOVERNANCE

“The future of Catholic school education depends on the entire Catholic community embracing wholeheartedly the concept of stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, and translating stewardship into concrete action.”¹

- The Diocesan School Board provides expertise and support for the Bishop and the Catholic Schools Office. The Board serves as a model for local School Advisory Boards.
- Laity are substantially involved in the governance of Catholic schools.

- Effective local School Advisory Boards exist in every school. Their members are capable people with the expertise necessary to provide leadership on behalf of the school.

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT

“While we have made progress in opening offices for development, endowments, marketing, and institutional advancement, we must expand those efforts on both the diocesan and local levels.”¹

- Catholic schools build a strong image of quality education in the context of their Catholic mission. Schools are widely known for their excellence in education and faith formation throughout the Diocese.
- Catholic parents highly value and prefer the Catholic school educational choice.
- Effective and well-funded marketing and recruitment programs support each school.
- Catholic schools operate at 90% or better of the capacity for which they are staffed.
- Catholic schools effectively retain students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.

FINANCES

“We call on the entire Catholic community – clergy, religious and laity – to assist in addressing the critical financial questions that continue to face our Catholic schools. They will require the Catholic community to make both personal and financial sacrifices to overcome these financial challenges...[and] to continue to strive towards the goal of making our Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children...”¹

- Families who wish to enroll their children in Catholic schools find the financial means necessary to do so with parish and diocesan sources.
- Catholic faithful evidence their support of Catholic education in each parish through prayer, encouraging enrollment, and financial resources.
- Schools operate within balanced budgets that provide quality programming and competitive salaries and benefits. The funding model for schools is sustainable and sufficient to achieve financial goals.
- Financial resources are available to attract and retain qualified school administrators, teachers and staff, and provide just compensation and benefits in keeping with their service and commitment.
- Parishes provide financial support for students attending a Catholic school. Parishes that do not have students attending Catholic schools are encouraged to support Catholic schools financially and spiritually.
- Each school has an effective advancement/development program and plan. Each school has an endowment fund with a long-term plan to grow the fund.
- Tuition assistance is funded at a level that meets the needs of low and middle income families who wish to enroll their children.
- Capital needs in schools are identified as part of a strategic long-range plan. The plan provides a means for funding these needs.

ⁱ Quotes introducing each section are from Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005.

III. CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The mission and intent of a Catholic school is to provide a distinctly Catholic education and environment with the highest standards of academic excellence for all. It is this identity that is essential to the mission of Catholic school education.

Historically, religious communities and pastors have helped maintain a strong Catholic identity in schools. In today's world, this mission and Catholic identity is shared and carried forward by lay administrators, teachers and staff committed to Catholic school education in collaboration with pastors, local school boards, religious communities and diocesan leadership, alumni, parents, students and the wider community. Strengthening this partnership is essential to keep Catholic school education vital and alive.

A. Observations

1. Catholic mission and identity rest on the belief that faith formation and solid education work together to bring about the transformation of hearts and minds of young people and their families.
2. Parishes and schools that work together with parents and families on Catholic identity form a strong community. When parents and families are involved with faith development and formation, the child's religious formation is typically stronger and long-lasting.
3. The Catholic identity of the schools can be assured by means of age-appropriate catechetics, prayer and worship, faith formation, service to others, and a solid religion curriculum.
4. In almost all cases, there is a strong identity and connection of the school with its parish. For many, the school is a key parish mission or ministry, although not all parishioners may see the value of their Catholic school.
5. The Catholic character of the schools in the Diocese was evident when the schools were visited, with appropriate symbols of faith, sacramentals and Catholic art, and through the general spirit and environment present in the schools.
6. All teachers of religion in the Diocese are required to have obtained or are in the process of obtaining appropriate religious education certification.
7. Pastors interviewed during the school visits were very supportive of Catholic schools and Catholic school education. Maintaining and enhancing the Catholic identity of the schools is a key issue and goal they expressed.
8. Some principals do not/did not come into the Diocese with Catholic school experience or a formal formation background. There is a need for a formal program or experience for these principals to undertake to fully understand and effectively lead and support the Catholic mission and identity of their schools.
9. Every effort is made to hire teachers who are Catholic. If not available, teachers are sought who have a strong commitment to their Christian faith and actively model Christian and Gospel values.
10. The private/independent Catholic schools in the Diocese have very limited connection or relationship with the parishes in their area.
11. Pastors and principals expressed the challenge that exists at times to bring parents to a true understanding of the Catholic mission and identity of the school. A good number of parents are still looking at Catholic schools as private or alternative education.

12. The Religion curriculum established by the Diocese is based on the guidelines of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and is required of all schools.
13. The schools are staffed by committed and professional educators and leaders who are dedicated to the mission of Catholic school education.
14. Each school has a Religion Coordinator. These coordinators meet every other month during the school year to share best practices, new ideas, curriculum development, etc.

B. Goals and Strategies

- 1. Benchmarks or guiding principles of Catholic identity will be identified, embraced and implemented so school communities can evaluate themselves to ensure their mission and identity are truly Catholic.**

Strategies

- 1.1 The Bishops' letter and Strategic Pastoral Plan on Catholic school education will provide the vision and direction for the future of the schools.
- 1.2 The Catholic Schools Office, the Office of Religious Education and Formation, pastors and principals will identify and establish diocesan benchmarks of Catholic identity for schools. The Catholic Schools Office, pastors and principals will collaborate to ensure each school is accountable for implementing established benchmarks and requirements through established assessment processes (e.g., accreditation and its follow up assessments).
- 1.3 Each school will ensure that school life and learning are focused on the foundation of Catholic education: teaching, worship, community and service.
 - Teaching – living Gospel values, preserving and passing on the traditions, beliefs and culture of the Catholic faith which are the heart of each school's curriculum and activities.
 - Worship – regularly celebrated liturgy, prayer and prayer services in the Catholic tradition.
 - Community – the total life of the school reflects the commitment to the faith development of each person, and a genuine respect for every individual.
 - Service – opportunities for faith-in-action are provided that are consistent with Catholic social teaching and serve as a witness of faith to the communities served by the schools.
- 1.4 Each school will evaluate its Catholic identity annually using established diocesan standards and guidelines. This written evaluation will indicate the ways in which Catholic identity has been integrated into all areas of school life – prayer and worship experiences, curriculum, communications, co-curricular activities, service opportunities, etc.
- 1.5 Schools will assess their policies and procedures (e.g., staff selection and hiring, admissions, discipline, financial assistance assignment, etc.) annually to ensure they consistently reflect the mission and values of the Catholic Church.

2. The Catholic mission of schools in the Diocese will be demonstrated by strong Catholic character and witness of the students who become active and contributing members of their community – Church, local, national and global.

Strategies

- 2.1 The mission statement and philosophy of each school will be evident, expressed regularly, and understood by the school community. The school community will review how its mission statement influences policies, decisions and activities within the school.
- 2.2 The Catholic environment of each school is evident with images and visual representations of the Catholic faith.
- 2.3 Service learning is integrated into school life and learning so students are aware and understand why they are helping others.

3. The Catholic identity and mission of each school will be carried out by committed pastors, administrators, teachers and staff.

Strategies

- 3.1 Diocesan leadership will make every attempt to assign pastors to parishes associated with a school (parish or regional) who wish to have and support a Catholic school.
- 3.2 An information session and continuing assistance for pastors with a Catholic school will be developed to help them understand Catholic school education and their role as pastor with a school.
- 3.3 Newly hired teachers (who are not Catholic or are new to Catholic school education) will participate in an orientation program focusing on the ministry/mission of Catholic school education and their role in ensuring the Catholic identity of the school.
- 3.4 The Catholic Schools Office, in cooperation with the Office of Religious Education, will develop, sponsor and require participation of all administrators and teachers in a program of continuing faith formation to help them:
 - Deepen their own faith
 - Better understand Catholic doctrine
 - Strengthen a school's Catholic identity
 - Integrate Catholic teaching and values
 - Understand the role of the schools' curriculum and programs in the context of Catholic education
 - Understand how Catholic faith impacts every area of the curriculum
- 3.5 Teachers of Religion will obtain the necessary credentials to be catechists within the Diocese or obtain an MA in Theology from a reputable Catholic college or university. By 2016, those not certified will not be able to be hired to teach Religion in Catholic schools. School administrators, by means of appropriate instruction, will be prepared to be coordinators of religious education in their schools.
- 3.6 School personnel share the beliefs and values of their faith with students and families on a daily basis through their instruction, example, lifestyle and witness as active Catholic/Christian women and men through their approach to their subject areas, teaching and class management style, etc.

4. Catholic schools will effectively catechize students and their families to help them understand and live the teachings, virtues and values of the Catholic Church and to know and love Jesus Christ.

Strategies

- 4.1 Pastors, through their presence and leadership in the schools, play a lead role in the spiritual, religious education and sacramental life of the schools.
- 4.2 Pastors with schools, school administrators and Religion Coordinators will meet on a regular basis to discuss and continue developing the spiritual life and faith formation programs of the schools.
- 4.3 In cooperation with parish leaders, the schools will strive to bring Catholic students and their families into participation in the sacramental life of the Church and parish. The schools will plan and schedule opportunities that involve students and families in parish worship, sacramental preparation, service projects, parish ministries, etc.
- 4.4 The schools will empower and support parents and guardians in their primary role of fostering life-long faith development and learning with their children. Effective communications with parents, special parent and parenting programs, and building strong school-parent relationships will provide opportunities to encourage parent involvement.
- 4.5 The Catholic Schools Office, in collaboration with the Office of Religious Education and pastors, will ensure that all teachers of religion know and follow the approved guidelines and approved religion curriculum at all grade levels.
- 4.6 Schools and parishes will encourage awareness of vocations among students and their families to consider a call to a life of service to the Church. Schools will utilize the services and resources of the diocesan Office of Vocations.
- 4.7 The Catholic high schools will develop a connection between their graduates and college campus Catholic ministry programs (e.g., Newman Centers), where available, as the students transition from high school to college
- 4.8 As part of seminarian training and experience, the Diocese will initiate a Catholic school experience for them when working in parishes.

5. Catholic schools are welcoming and respectful of students and families of other faith traditions who will benefit from the evangelizing mission of the school.

Strategies

- 5.1 Each school will expect and communicate that parents be actively involved in the faith formation of their children and an active member of their parish or faith community.
- 5.2 Students and families of other faith traditions desiring a Catholic school education will continue to be welcomed into Catholic schools.
- 5.3 An information session for parents and families who are not Catholic will be developed by the Diocese to share and clarify Catholic traditions, beliefs and practices to provide a level of understanding of Catholic identity. Resources for use by the schools will be developed through the Diocese.

IV. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Effective Catholic schools exhibit a clear mission, a strong Catholic identity, a safe and orderly learning environment, and academic excellence. The hallmark of a Catholic school education has been challenging programs offered in an atmosphere that models Gospel values and supports and enhances the development of the whole child.

A. Observations

1. Increasing demands are being placed on the schools as a result of social and demographic changes:
 - More students with learning differences
 - Working parents who are less involved with the school
 - Increasing competition from public schools and other private or faith-based schools
 - Growing parental expectations for more specialized programs
 - Increasing technology requirements and expectations, etc.
2. Parents want to know that tuition dollars spent on their children's Catholic education will be worth the investment, not only in terms of Catholic identity, but also in terms of academic excellence.
3. It is a challenge at times to attract quality teachers when the salary scale is below that of local public schools.
4. An effective, strong principal (with a supportive pastor in parish schools) is one of the most important factors in the success and academic excellence of Catholic schools. The identification, preparation, selection, retention and on-going professional development of effective principals are keys to the future of Catholic school education.
5. The Diocese requires teachers to hold or be pursuing a professional teaching credential. All teachers of religion must gain religion teacher certification through diocesan programs.
6. The schools face the challenge of educating students with a wide range of academic abilities. Programs that support various learning styles and ability levels are needed to serve families and students interested in Catholic school education in the Diocese.
7. Professional development programs to support classroom teachers will be essential in helping them to continually improve and expand their teaching methodologies. Professional development is implemented primarily at the local level. The Diocese offers professional development opportunities as well, but there is a need for increased services for teachers and administrators.
8. The schools in the Diocese currently use the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in a number of subjects.
9. Schools report that space and limited financial resources are often barriers to providing quality academic programs.
10. In most areas, the public schools are considered the competition for the Catholic schools. Parents seem to be generally happy with public schools and see them as a quality option. Catholic parents, especially, do not know or are not aware of the added value Catholic schools are or can be for their children. Home schooling and other faith-based schools also provide a level of competition.

11. There is a parental expectation that the academic programs in the Catholic schools should be at a high quality level comparable to quality public schools. There is a need to continue to focus on strong academic programs with Catholic standards.
12. There is a wide variation throughout the Diocese in the scope of curriculum, curriculum development, and the availability and/or sharing of instructional resources and materials.
13. Accountability for student performance and academic progress needs to include quantitative and qualitative assessment in all schools and at all levels.
14. Catholic school standardized test results are higher than national norms.
15. Middle school programs in many of the Catholic schools need to focus on enhancing and developing as true middle schools with a focused curriculum.
16. Schools tend to budget according to what they can afford rather than according to what they need or according to a strategic plan for academic program development and improvement.
17. Every school needs to take advantage of and provide appropriate services available through government funding.
18. Many Catholic school teachers in the Diocese have a long tenure in the schools and they see Catholic schools as part of their personal ministry and mission.

B. Goals and Strategies

- 1. The integration of Catholic identity and academic excellence will be the primary focus and hallmark of every Catholic school in the Diocese enabling them to educate the whole child.**

Strategies

- 1.1 Individual elementary schools and high schools, under the leadership of the Catholic Schools Office, will strive to function more like a K to 12 system and exhibit consistency in curriculum, programs and marketing of all Catholic schools.
 - 1.2 The unique combination of Catholic identity and academic excellence will be clearly articulated to the wider diocesan community so that each Catholic school is distinguishable and uniquely different from its local competitors (e.g., public and private schools).
 - 1.3 Schools will be distinguished by offering holistic education focusing on the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and social development of every student. The Catholic Schools Office will assist each elementary and high school in identifying and achieving specific benchmarks related to Catholic identity and academic excellence.
- 2. Schools will build a culture of continuous improvement to ensure they meet or exceed the rigorous standards established by the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) and/or the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).**

Strategies

- 2.1 The Catholic Schools Office will ensure that each school participates in the rigorous accreditation process to ensure that each school meets and exceeds quality standards expected by the community.

- 2.2 All schools in the Diocese may want to consider undergoing the accreditation process of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
- 2.3 Schools will develop professional partnerships with local educational leaders, local community organizations, colleges, etc. to assist them in their school improvement process.
- 2.4 Learning outcomes for each subject and for each grade will be reviewed and discussed with faculty at each school at the beginning of every school year.

3. Catholic schools will develop and adopt a systematic, research-based curriculum that is comprehensive and rigorous.

Strategies

- 3.1 The Diocese of Austin, through the Catholic Schools Office, will develop a curriculum to fit its mission and needs for the future. The Catholic Schools Office will lead the development of a systematic curriculum for each instructional area beginning with:
 - Language Arts curriculum in 20__
 - Math curriculum in 20__
 - Science curriculum in 20__
 - Social Studies curriculum in 20__
 - Fine Arts curriculum in 20__
 - Health curriculum in 20__
 - Religion curriculum in 20__
 - Physical education curriculum in 20__
 - Foreign Language curriculum in 20__
- 3.2 The newly developed curriculum will identify appropriate learning outcomes for each subject and grade level.
- 3.3 Assessment instruments and procedures to evaluate curriculum resources, textbooks and instructional materials will be developed so they are aligned with the new curriculum. The assessment program will align with the national standards and exceed those of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.
- 3.4 Schools will use multiple methods to assess student achievement on learning outcomes, including standardized tests and other measures.
- 3.5 In addition to standard core subject areas, each elementary school will offer art, music, drama, foreign language and physical education. Staffing and resources can be shared among schools if feasible.
- 3.6 Teachers will plan and implement effective teaching and learning strategies that respect learning styles, utilize a variety of methodologies and materials, demand higher order thinking skills and in-depth understanding.
- 3.7 Training for teachers in areas of differentiated instruction and related strategies will be provided at a diocesan level to assist students with a wide range of academic ability and learning styles. This can be done regionally or diocesan-wide through the Catholic Schools Office.
- 3.8 Each school, with the Catholic Schools Office, will regularly review and implement effective curriculum processes, and incorporate research-based, effective teaching and learning strategies to enhance the diocesan-approved curriculum.
- 3.9 Principals and teachers will review, interpret and report all student test scores to identify trends and potential needs.

- 3.10 Student progress toward learning outcomes will be a factor in the ongoing supervision and evaluation of school administrators and teachers.
- 3.11 The Catholic Schools Office in collaboration with school leaders and faculty members will identify and publish “best practice” instructional models that incorporate research-based, effective teaching and learning strategies.
- 3.12 Each school will continue to implement its curriculum improvement plan with measurable goals as part of its strategic plan. The curriculum plan should include:
 - Catholic faith values and concepts integrated across the curriculum
 - Specific criteria that indicate the school is academically proficient
 - Programs or strategies to support struggling and special needs students
 - Programs to enrich academically advanced students
 - Research-based learning/teaching strategies
 - Writing and reading across the curriculum

4. The Catholic schools in accordance with the schools mission and resources will provide diverse program opportunities and strategies to help students reach their potential.

Strategies

- 4.1 The Catholic Schools Office in collaboration with local school and parish leadership will study ways to effectively minister to students who are “at risk” socially, spiritually, academically and economically. In an effort to meet the spiritual needs of students, schools will continue to actively communicate with and involve local pastors as well as parish religious education personnel.
- 4.2 Schools will provide services of qualified specialists such as guidance counselors, reading teachers and resource teachers, resource programs, special tutoring or other support programs for remediation and acceleration. This could be implemented through sharing resources and staff, government funded services, grants, etc.
- 4.3 Diocesan-wide and regional sharing seminars will be organized to highlight and share the successes of individual schools that meet the diverse needs of students and provide models for replication in other schools for all areas of learning.
- 4.4 Creative alternatives will be investigated for providing Catholic school education to meet the growing diverse needs in the Diocese:
 - Study the market for a Montessori school
 - Investigate school models such as the Nativity middle school model, Miguel school model, etc.

5. Catholic schools will hire committed and qualified staff who will engage in ongoing professional development to learn and implement instructional best practices.

Strategies

- 5.1 The Catholic Schools Office will serve as a center and connector for in-service programs for administrators and teachers.
- 5.2 Year-long staff development themes related to school improvement and teacher effectiveness will be identified by the Diocese and each school annually. Teachers will plan classroom activities that align with this annual theme. Conduct a needs

assessment annually with faculty to determine issues to address improving teaching and learning for the following year.

- 5.3 Staff development programs will provide teachers with information on curriculum content and implementation, technology integration, and State and diocesan certification requirements.
- 5.4 Partnerships will be developed with colleges and universities to provide staff development opportunities and access to advanced degrees. Funding sources for teacher and administrator professional development will be researched and actively pursued.
- 5.5 The Diocesan School Board, Catholic Schools Office, school administrators, pastors and finance professionals will work to study ways in which compensation for school personnel can be improved in order to attract and retain quality leadership and teaching personnel. (Refer to Finance Plan for specific strategies)
- 5.6 Each school will have an ongoing professional development program that addresses five key components:
 - Mentoring program for new teachers
 - Pedagogy and research-based methodologies (including the use of technology)
 - Classroom management
 - Mastery of the content as represented in the learning outcomes
 - Strategies for assessment based on multiple measures of student progress
- 5.7 The diocesan policy handbook will identify the minimum and ideal qualifications for all Catholic school teachers and administrators including degrees obtained and certification required.
- 5.8 Professional development programs for teachers will be linked to student learning outcomes and success in achieving those learning outcomes.

6. Catholic schools will optimize the use of technology for enhancing student learning and effective school operations.

Strategies

- 6.1 Teachers will know how to use technology as an effective instructional tool in their subject areas and will utilize this throughout their classroom instruction. A checklist and standards for teachers will be established so that the progress of each teacher can be monitored.
- 6.2 Each school will collaborate with diocesan technology leadership, develop and implement a school-wide technology plan. Diocesan and school technology leaders will develop expectations and what to include in the plan.
- 6.3 Technology will be updated on a regular basis and will be sufficiently funded.

7. Catholic schools will have a clear direction and standardized program regarding the teaching of chaste living.

Strategies

- 7.1 The Religious Education Guidelines developed and approved by the Diocese will be adopted and used in each school.
- 7.2 Training, in-service and resources will be provided as needed for teachers who will teach chaste living.

V. LEADERSHIP FOR SCHOOLS

A. Observations

Strong, supportive pastors, with effective school administrators (president, principal), are the most important factors in the success of Catholic schools. Therefore, the identification, selection, preparation and retention of high quality administrators are essential to the future of Catholic schools in the Diocese. Investing in effective school leadership is a primary step to ensure that other investments in Catholic schools have the potential for success.

1. There has been limited preparation and in-service for new (or experienced) principals who have not worked in Catholic schools prior to their tenure with the Diocese. There is a need to provide a formal leadership development program to encourage and support individuals who may be interested in becoming a school principal in the Diocese of Austin.
2. The principal of a parish school is accountable to the pastor regarding the hiring, salary, appointment, and termination of employment of school personnel. However, the Catholic Schools Office provides overall policies, guidelines, in-services, and consultative assistance to principals regularly. At times the role and accountability of the principal is sometimes unclear.
3. The Diocese employs approximately 530 teachers. Qualified, committed teachers are a key element in providing a high quality instructional program.

B. Goals and Strategies

- 1. Developing and strengthening the role of Catholic school leaders is a priority in the Diocese.**

Strategies

- 1.1 Develop and implement an in-service program for all priests in support of Catholic schools and Catholic education across the Diocese.
- 1.2 Implement the following criteria for all school administrative candidates:
 - All presidents and principals will be practicing Catholics.
 - Principals and president candidates will meet all the qualifications outlined in diocesan policies. These policies will be adhered to by all schools when hiring.
 - Candidates for president or principal will have earned a Masters degree or are in the process of obtaining such a degree in school leadership/administration.
- 1.3 Require participation in a Catholic leadership orientation/program established by the Diocese for presidents or principals who do not come from a Catholic school background.
- 1.4 Appropriate monies for the formation of new Catholic school principals and presidents from grants and other sources.
- 1.5 Screen and approve all applicants for principal and president positions in diocesan and parish schools prior to being offered a position. The screening and approval are conducted through the Catholic Schools Office.
- 1.6 The Catholic Schools Office will participate in partnership with all local search committees when a principal or president is to be hired.

- 1.7 Require participation of all presidents and principals in regular annual professional in-services provided through the Catholic Schools Office.
- 1.8 Develop a diocesan-wide job description for principals and presidents to articulate clear definitions of their roles and responsibilities, to whom they are accountable, and by what means.
- 1.9 Develop and conduct an exit interview process for school administrators. The interviews are conducted through the Catholic Schools Office for parish schools in collaboration with the pastors.
- 1.10 Establish and implement a process for exit interviews for teachers and staff. The president or principal conducts the interviews and provides a written memo to the Catholic Schools Office (and pastor in parish schools).

2. Regularly and systematically review school principals and presidents to evaluate job performance, facilitate professional development planning, and encourage competent/capable leaders.

Strategies

- 2.1 Specific evaluative criteria, guidelines and assessment resources will be developed based on the diocesan-wide job descriptions for principals and presidents and will serve as the foundation for the review process.
- 2.2 Local review processes will be coordinated through the Catholic Schools Office. The focus of the review/evaluation process is the strengthening of school leadership in every school.
- 2.3 Supervision of principals and presidents will involve a comprehensive dialogue among the administrator, pastor (in parish schools), and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

3. The Catholic Schools Office will implement a program for the identification of principal candidates, training for prospective principals, and placement of new principals to assure that all diocesan schools continue to have effective leadership in future years.

Strategies

- 3.1 A leadership development program will be established to attract, identify, and train potential president and principal candidates to build a pool of qualified administrators who can assume leadership as openings arise.
 - Each year the Catholic Schools Office will request the names of teachers and other individuals who are interested in school administration and who show leadership potential.
 - Candidates in the program will be teamed with an experienced Catholic school principal who will serve as their mentor during the training period.
- 3.2 The Superintendent of Catholic Schools will determine the necessary qualifications for school administrative positions within the Diocese and the process to be followed in hiring principals and presidents.
- 3.3 The Catholic Schools Office will work with local colleges and universities to arrange leadership training courses that are cost effective for the candidates.

VI. ENROLLMENT AND MARKETING

Catholic schools must actively live their mission and provide high quality Catholic education programs. They must also effectively communicate their value and excellence in order to build a strong image in their communities and attract new students and supportive friends. The challenge of effective communication requires a comprehensive marketing plan and effort.

A. Observations

1. In 2006-07, Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese had a total of 3,568 students in grades K to 8, a 7% increase (226 students) in enrollment since 2001-02. The Catholic high schools had a total enrollment of 1,022 students, an enrollment increase of 28% (224 students). Overall, K to grade 12 enrollment in all the Catholic schools grew by 11% (450 students).
2. In most of the schools, marketing efforts focus primarily on student recruitment. A limited number of schools have a written comprehensive plan for marketing and public relations. Most marketing/recruitment efforts include an open house, ads in local publications and papers, Catholic Schools Week activities, print materials (brochures), presence in the Diocesan paper, and development of the school website. There is some use of billboards, presence within the local community, and community/parish outreach.
3. Over the past five years, 23 new elementary school classes were added, although not all were filled to capacity. Elementary schools gained more students (530) than they lost (304) from 2001-02 to 2006-07. Of the 16 elementary schools, 7 had an enrollment increase, while 8 experienced a decline in their enrollment. In the high schools, 4 of the high schools gained enrollment during the same time period, and only 1 declined.
4. New PreK programs moved enrollment in these grades past the 500 student mark. Overall, PreK enrollment in the Diocese grew by 39% (150 students) from 2001-02 to 2006-07.
5. The attractiveness of public school programs and the anticipation of attending a public high school lure students away from grades 6 to 8 in a number of Catholic schools in these grades.
6. Capacity is a key element in looking at the potential for growth or expansion of a school. In general, as school enrollment approaches or exceeds 90% of its capacity, it can be considered at or near capacity. While there were 974 empty elementary school seats for grades K to 8 in 2006-07, and 293 seats open in the high schools, enrollment capacity overall in the Diocese for elementary schools was 79%. The schools in the Austin City Deaneries had an overall capacity of 87%, Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery schools had 65% capacity, Waco Deanery schools had 71% capacity and Killeen/Temple Deanery schools had 57% capacity. The Bryan/College Station Deanery school had 76% capacity and the Brenham/La Grange Deanery school had 99% enrollment capacity.
7. Student retention year-to-year is a concern at 63% of the elementary schools. Some have significant attrition each year while others have experienced this in isolated years (e.g. 1st to 2nd grade or 7th to 8th grade).
8. Twelve of sixteen elementary schools are predominately Catholic, with 89% or more of their enrollment being Catholic. More than 20% of enrollment in four of the schools is not Catholic. For many schools, non-Catholic enrollment has been steady, and it appears there is a tradition of serving students with other faith traditions. There may be more enrollment potential among non-Catholic families to fill empty seats if marketing to the wider community were a stated goal and a conscious effort were made.

Three of the high schools have 82% to 98% of their enrollment being Catholic. The other two high schools have 70% and 78% of students who are Catholic.

9. The primary challenges facing the schools and maintaining or building enrollment/market share include:
 - Affordability
 - Accessibility/transportation
 - Varied perceptions on the quality of Catholic schools
 - Lack of overall aggressive marketing programs that reach all on local levels
 - Intentional reduction of class sizes
 - Perceived quality of public or private school programs that compete with Catholic schools
 - Demographic shifts
10. Marketing and recruitment activities are currently the responsibility of each local school. These recruitment efforts vary widely, and in general do not always receive the investment of human and financial resources needed to build or maintain sufficient enrollment.
11. Marketing and recruitment efforts require a comprehensive approach at the diocesan, regional and local school levels. These efforts must focus on developing and projecting a strong image, attracting increased student enrollment, and attracting and cultivating new donors for every school.

B. Goals and Strategies

1. **The Diocese of Austin will aggressively and effectively market Catholic school education to enhance the image of the Catholic schools in the Diocese, to publicize the value of Catholic school education, to build enrollment, and attract essential and necessary funding.**

Strategies

- 1.1 The potential to develop diocesan-wide and region-wide marketing plans to market the schools will be researched and planned.

The diocesan-wide marketing plan will include:

- Collaboration among schools and the Diocese for marketing efforts and funding
 - A budget line item to support diocesan-wide marketing initiative
 - Strategies to connect early with Catholic families whose children are not yet of school age
 - Effective use of the Catholic Schools Office website and other media; regular review and update of the website by diocesan technology leadership
 - Use of the Diocesan Office of Communication for marketing efforts at the diocesan, regional and local school levels
- 1.2 Schools could use resources developed and promoted by the National Catholic Educational Association to build and enhance the individual school marketing programs.
 - 1.3 More effective promotion of Catholic education will be addressed and implemented with all parishes having access to a school to share the value of Catholic school education and promote enrollment.

- 1.4 Marketing workshops will be conducted for school staff and board members on a regular basis to identify and implement marketing strategies in their respective school communities. Leadership and resources can be provided through the Catholic Schools Office and resources within the schools.
- 1.5 Appropriate staffing in the Catholic Schools Office will support effective marketing of all diocesan schools. (Refer to Catholic Schools Office plan)
- 1.6 The leadership role of the Catholic Schools Office will focus on the coordination of diocesan-wide marketing efforts, providing advice, coordination and training for school administrators, school boards and local marketing committees.

2. Each school will develop and implement an aggressive marketing and recruitment program. Special attention will be paid to increase to an enrollment capacity of 90% or more.

Strategies

- 2.1 Each elementary and high school will have a written and well-defined enrollment management and student retention plan as part of their overall strategic planning process.
 - Individual school plans will have a local marketing committee and a written plan of goals and actions.
 - The Catholic Schools Office will develop an exit interview process and instrument for all schools to implement to track their attrition rate and reasons why students and families leave a school by 2009-10.
 - A satisfaction survey instrument and process will be developed by the Catholic Schools Office and implemented by the schools to regularly measure parent (or other school constituencies) attitudes, perceptions and expectations as a means of internally evaluating school performance, areas of strength, and challenges or areas for potential change.
 - A summary report of survey results will be prepared.
 - Strategies will be developed to enhance the retention of students from PreK to 8th grade.
- 2.2 Schools will utilize the comprehensive data study of the strategic plan to project future enrollment trends and markets. Each school will develop enrollment or market share goals based on the available data.
- 2.3 Each local school board and/or a marketing committee of the board will have the mandate to develop, implement and evaluate a marketing program at its school.
- 2.4 Research and implement, if feasible, the expansion of the before and after-school programs as a service to parish families whose children are not enrolled in a Catholic school to enhance the school's marketability and positive image in the parish community.
- 2.5 Each school will submit its annual marketing plan to the Catholic Schools Office for review and feedback.
- 2.6 Schools can measure and market the success of their academic programs by sharing graduation rates, student success in high school or college, appropriate aspects of school test scores, etc.

3. All parishes will promote Catholic school education and provide a supportive environment for the schools.

Strategies

- 3.1 Pastors will support the marketing and recruitment efforts of the schools and will actively encourage families to consider enrolling their children.
- 3.2 All parishes will facilitate the distribution of information about Catholic schools to parishioners. The role of pastors in marketing the schools will be developed and their participation in schools' marketing efforts will be solicited.

VII. GROWTH OF SCHOOLS AND NEW SCHOOLS

A. Observations

1. Significant growth in the general population, school-age population, and Catholic population has been the trend and is projected to continue in a number of areas in the Diocese. Counties with greatest projected growth in both general population and school-age populations include: Bastrop County, Brazos County, Hays County, McLennan County, Travis County, and Williamson County.
2. Demographic changes over the past ten to fifteen years have resulted in a larger Catholic population in some areas of the Diocese. Some of these areas have Catholic school availability and adequate capacity, while others do not.
3. Overall, the number of parish households increased by 19% in the Diocese (over 16,000 households). The following deaneries had the greatest increase in households: Austin North Deanery, San Marcos Deanery, Austin South Deanery, and the Killeen/Temple Deanery.
4. Holy Family Catholic School (Austin), St. Helen Catholic School (Georgetown), and Santa Cruz Catholic School (Buda) are the most recent additions in the Diocese and both serve recent growth areas. A new high school in the north Austin area is currently in the planning stages. However, there are additional growth areas where additional schools should be considered.
5. Alternative Catholic school models are being initiated in many areas of the country. The Diocese of Austin established such a model with San Juan Diego High School, initially as a Cristo Rey School. The high school is continuing its corporate work study program.
6. A new parish, St. Patrick, has been opened in Hutto, anticipating the projected growth in that area.

B. Goals

1. **The Diocese will continue to study the potential for expanding existing schools and starting new schools in geographic areas where there is sufficient population growth or a shortage of Catholic elementary schools or high schools.**

Strategies and Rationale

AUSTIN NORTH DEANERY

- 1.0 Study the potential for a new elementary school to serve the Leander/Burnet area.
 - Leander and the surrounding area (Cedar Park north to Liberty Hill) are projected to increase as a major growth area through 2030.
 - The proximity to Burnet and Burnet County may make Catholic school education available to Catholics in the wider area. A regional school in this area would be able to serve and be supported by several parish communities.
 - Holy Family School, the only school in the north Austin area at this time, will be at its enrollment capacity and will not be able to serve this growth area adequately.
 - Public school enrollments have been increasing throughout this area; e.g., Leander ISD grew by 6,319 students (grades K to 8) in the past five years.

- St. Margaret Mary Parish grew 174% (1,276 families) over the past 5 years. The number of infant baptisms also increased. Religious education enrollment was approximately 700 students.
- The potential for moving an existing parish and/or planning a new parish is being considered.

SAN MARCOS DEANERY

- 1.0 Study the potential for a second new elementary school to serve the southern Hays County area.
 - Hays County population is projected to increase by 86,000 or 87,000 people by 2025.
 - San Marcos population is projected to grow from 34,733 in 2000 to 69,906 people by 2020, an increase of 101%.
 - Santa Cruz Catholic School in Buda will operate as a single-section school and future growth in the county may demand more elementary school capacity in the future.
 - St. John the Evangelist Parish grew by 1,000 families in the past five years (3,300 total families). It had over 500 students in the parish religious education program.
 - St. Anthony de Claret Parish in Kyle also increased in its number of families (to a total of 1,762 families) with approximately 375 students in the parish religious education program.
- 2.0 Santa Cruz School will collaborate with local parishes to increase enrollment and effectively serve the wider area.

BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION DEANERY

- 1.0 Study the potential for a new Pre-K to Grade 5 elementary school in the College Station area as part of a potential Catholic school system in the future.
 - Recent change in leadership at St. Joseph School is having a positive impact, especially in terms of grade-to-grade student retention. This effort, combined with focused marketing and additional financial assistance, should increase enrollment.
 - Brazos County population is projected to increase to somewhere between 37,000 and 51,000 people by 2025.
 - College Station population is projected to increase more than Bryan (27,000 people in College Station, and 18,000 people in Bryan by 2020).
 - Public school enrollment grew by 21% (1,072 students, grades K to 8) over the past five years in College Station, and 8% (800 students) in Bryan.
 - The potential for a new parish in this area is being considered for the future.

GEORGETOWN/ROUND ROCK DEANERY

- 1.0 Study the potential for a new elementary school in the Round Rock/Pflugerville area.
 - Population projections show continuing growth in both Round Rock and Pflugerville, to the point that in the next 25 to 30 years, Round Rock will become its own urban center according to planners. Projected population is estimated at over 161,290 by 2020.
 - While several elementary schools currently attract students from these cities, the number of students enrolling in Catholic schools from here is not significant compared to the overall population.
 - Growth in the number of parish families in this area the Diocese has been strong at 57% (6,096 families) along with a 57% increase in infant baptisms over the past five years.
 - Religious education enrollment at St. Elizabeth Parish was approximately 660 students last year.

AUSTIN DEANERIES

- 1.0 Plan for the expansion of San Juan Diego High School into new facilities to continue attracting students in the City of Austin.
 - A high school of this nature is essential to continue providing Catholic high school education for students in a unique and affordable fashion.
 - The increase in enrollment shows the interest in Catholic high school education if it is available, accessible and affordable.
- 2.0 Study the potential for a new elementary and/or middle school program such as a Miguel school model to serve the east side of Austin in collaboration with San Juan Diego High School.
 - Several Catholic elementary schools have been closed in this area of the city because of economic and affordability issues which had an impact on enrollment. It is an area that is presently underserved by Catholic schools.
 - The east Austin area is projected to continue growing with a population that is diverse, where accessibility and affordability will be a challenge.
- 3.0 Study the potential for expanding classroom space at St. Ignatius, Martyr Catholic School.
 - Student enrollment has increased 31% over the past five years and had a wait list for Kindergarten.
 - The school needs additional space to expand its music and art programs.
- 4.0 Study the potential for a new regional elementary school in western Travis County and Lakeway area.
 - Emmaus Parish has grown from 797 parish families in 2000 to 1,540 families in 2005, an increase of 60%. There was an annual average of 81 infant baptisms from 2001 to 2005.
 - St. Catherine of Siena Parish increased from 2,525 families to 3,095 families (2000 to 2005). The parish averaged 150 infant baptisms per year for the 5-year period of 2001 to 2005.
 - The two parishes had a combined religious education enrollment of 1,190 students in 2005.
 - A population increase in the southwest area of Austin and Travis County is projected at an additional 137,300 people by 2030. The City of Lakeway population is projected to increase by 81% (6,517) from 2000 to 2020.
 - The Lake Travis ISD, grades K to 8, increased by 25% (771 students) between 2001-02 and 2006-07.
 - The potential impact on St. Ignatius and St. Gabriel's Catholic Schools will have to be a significant part of a market research study for a new school in this area.

LAMPASAS/MARBLE FALLS DEANERY

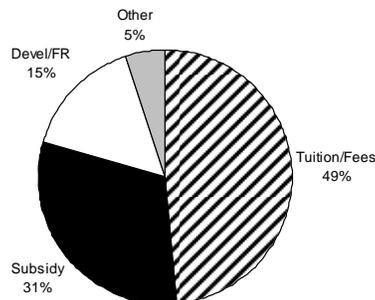
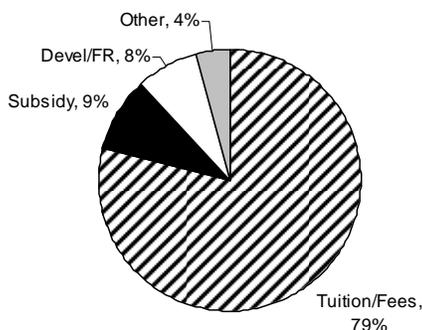
- 1.0 Study the potential for offering Catholic school education through a more non-traditional model or means in the Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery.
 - Pastor and parent leadership to support the research of options and the development of a model will be essential for the success of any program.
 - As a potential option, research a home schooling model which could meet centrally at an "education center" two or three days per week for instruction in core curriculum (science) or specialty classes (languages, fine arts, etc.).
 - Staff the model with a Director to oversee the home schooling program and curriculum, and a Religion teacher.
 - Complement this model with distance learning and effective use of technology.

VIII. FINANCIAL PLAN FOR SCHOOLS

Fulfilling the mission of Catholic education depends upon having the financial resources necessary to make Catholic schools affordable to all Catholic parents and their children.

The current funding model for elementary schools is of two general types:

- A. Tuition is the primary source of funding with minimal subsidy. Revenue generated through development/fundraising reduces tuition and provides for program enhancement.
- B. Tuition reduced far below cost per pupil. Large parish subsidies fill in a large part of the gap between what parents pay and cost.



A. Assumptions

Seeking innovative means of funding in the future is easy rhetoric, but difficult in practice. While this accepts many existing funding practices, it requires a change in mindset and sophistication in many areas.

The financial model for Catholic elementary schools is built on these assumptions:

1. Parish subsidy will not increase as an overall percentage of revenues. However, parish subsidy should remain a source of support.
2. Development/fundraising will be an increasing share of school revenue.
3. Tuition will continue to be the primary source of revenue, as parents will continue to be responsible for a large portion of the costs to educate their children.
4. More tuition assistance will be necessary to keep schools affordable. Growth in tuition assistance will need to come from both local sources and diocesan sources (Catholic Foundation – Catholic Schools Endowment).

B. Diocesan Support

Diocesan support should be invested where it will strengthen and sustain Catholic education for the long term. At the diocesan level, funds must be spent in the most strategic manner to realize the greatest return and accomplish long-range goals.

Diocesan support presently involves the following elements:

- a. Leadership and expertise in the Catholic Schools Office
- b. Strategic planning for Catholic schools at the diocesan level

- c. Annual subsidy for Reicher Catholic High School and San Juan Diego Catholic High School, until such time as school tuition and development efforts alleviate the need for subsidy.
- d. Feasibility studies and planning for new schools
- e. Seed money to open and build new schools
- f. Expertise to support school development programs through the Office of Stewardship and Development
- g. Financial assistance, loan guarantees
- h. Endowment fund management

GOALS

1. Funds raised through the *Our Faith ~ Our Legacy* capital campaign will be used as follows:

Area/Description	Amount	Expected Benefits
<p>Strengthen Catholic Identity Funding for diocesan programs that provide ongoing education and strengthen the spiritual formation of teachers and administrators.</p>	\$100,000	Current and future administrators are prepared to be spiritual leaders as well as educational leaders of their local schools. Teachers and school staff are strengthened in their personal faith and given tools and training about how to model and share their lived faith with students and others.
<p>Academic Excellence Funds used to implement initiatives to enhance academic excellence as described in the strategic plan for Catholic schools. Particular priority areas are professional development for teachers, seed money for new programs in local schools, curriculum development, grants for technology to schools in need, and funding for new programs initiated by the Catholic Schools Office. Provide funding to train future Catholic school leaders.</p>	\$700,000	Strong academic programs will certainly serve the needs of students and also draw more families to enroll in Catholic schools.
<p>Development/Advancement Provide training to school administrators and board members to plan and upgrade development/advancement programs at local school. Funds could be used for consultants to assist schools with building their development program and/or expertise could be hired within the Diocesan Development Office.</p>	\$500,000 to be used over 3 years	Development is a long-term investment whose payback can be realized many times. It is a key element in achieving long-term financial security and achieving goals like raising teacher salaries and funding tuition assistance. Generally, newer development programs need 3 to 5 years to produce significant results.
<p>Strengthening Catholic Schools Special projects to improve and expand programs that enhance Catholic identity, academic excellence, and the ability of schools to serve more students.</p>	Refers to funds already spent that do not fit other categories.	

Area/Description	Amount	Expected Benefits
<p>Marketing and Recruitment Establish marketing programs at the regional level and provide training and resources to develop local marketing initiatives. Train local school leaders, boards, teachers and volunteers. Support local initiatives with a regional and diocesan marketing program.</p>	<p>Local/regional marketing efforts \$400,000</p> <p>Diocesan marketing \$300,000</p>	<p>Building awareness and understanding of the value of Catholic schools will raise long-term support for schools. Filling empty seats will provide additional revenue making it possible to raise teachers' salaries and raise academic excellence. Full enrollments help schools operate more efficiently, produce funding to enrich programs, and give more opportunities to students.</p>
<p>Catholic School Endowment The Catholic Foundation will have a Catholic school endowment fund of \$2 million from an existing fund. Add an additional \$1 million to this fund for a total of \$3 million. Use proceeds from the endowment for two purposes. 1. To enhance enrollment by providing tuition assistance for qualified schools lacking in tuition assistance funds. 2. To sustain initiatives aimed at strengthening existing schools.</p>	<p>\$1 million new funds</p>	<p>Some schools will find raising tuition prevents some children from getting a Catholic education. Tuition assistance funding will help these schools make Catholic education accessible and available. It will also help increase enrollment which will strengthen the financial condition of these schools. Long run, the endowment can help fund specific needs called for in the strategic plan for schools.</p>
<p>New School Fund To assist with the opening and start up of new Catholic schools in the Diocese. Specific uses would be: land acquisition held as an investment until such time as a new school is ready to open, costs associated with land acquisition and site planning, enrollment studies and feasibility studies, and grants to individual schools for new construction and costs related to facilities. Grants would generally be limited to \$250,000.</p>	<p>\$3.5 million</p>	<p>New or expanded elementary schools and high schools will be needed over the next 10 or more years. This “seed money” would provide an opportunity for communities to meet the demand for Catholic school education in the short and long-term future.</p>

2. A diocesan level development program specifically for Catholic schools is needed to support and complement local school development/ advancement programs. The purpose will be to enhance tuition assistance funding, grow the endowment for Catholic schools, and support diocesan initiatives to improve schools.

Strategies

- 2.1 Create an annual event for Catholic schools at the diocesan level. Funding realized from this event will be used to grow the Catholic School Endowment or provide direct tuition assistance to the schools.
- 2.2 Complement development work with an ongoing and sustained public relations and marketing campaign.
- 2.3 Create diocesan level boards to provide leadership for development and marketing for Catholic schools.

- 2.4 Develop a strategy to financially support new diocesan schools while empowering the efforts for school tuition and development funding to meet expenses.

C. Elementary School Teacher Compensation

OBSERVATIONS

1. Catholic schools employ 315 elementary school teachers earning an average salary of \$28,432.
2. Salaries in Catholic schools are based on multiple scales or systems. Ten schools use a salary scale. Most every school looks to public school district salaries as a point of comparison for parity.
3. For Catholic elementary schools where data was available, Catholic school starting salaries as a percent of the prior year's public school starting salaries are as follows for 2006-07:

<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Percent Parity with Public Schools</u>
3	60-69%
4	70-79%
3	80-89%
3	90% +

*Note: Percent parity depends on the public school benchmark used.
8 different benchmarks were identified by Catholic schools.*

4. Parishes with schools have had a long-standing practice of independently determining teacher compensation year-to-year.
5. All schools provide medical insurance through the diocesan plan. However, there is a disparity in the percent-share paid by the employee.
6. Fourteen schools indicate they offer life insurance, but again the percent-share between employer and employee varies. Eleven of sixteen schools offer retirement with variations in the employer contribution to the plan.
7. Thirteen of sixteen schools offer reduced tuition for faculty. The amount of reduction varies greatly by school and it may, or may not, include all faculty and staff.

GOALS

3. **A minimum teacher salary scale will be established for all teachers in Catholic schools in the Diocese.**

Strategies

- 3.1 The scale should target 80% to 90% of the starting salary of the prior year in the representative public school districts where Catholic schools are located. The scales should be based upon an average of selected school districts representing the districts where Catholic schools are located. The salary scale for Catholic schools should not be linked directly to public schools but use them as a guideline. Other factors could also be considered: cost of living increase, inflation, etc.
- 3.2 Research the historical trend in public school salary scale increases and identify a pattern or average that can help guide Catholic school salaries for the future.

- 3.3 Salary scales should be established for each of the next three years with scales for year 4 and year 5 to follow later. The goal should be to reach 80% to 90% of the prior year starting public school teacher pay by 2014. The new scale should be implemented for school year 2010-11.
 - 3.4 Schools unable to meet the minimum salary scale may appeal to the Catholic Schools Office. They must give appropriate rationale for their appeal and demonstrate a plan and timeframe to achieve the minimum scale.
 - 3.5 In a spirit of equity and social justice, the salary scale at a local Catholic school should not exceed 90% of the public school districts in the region where a school is located. A guideline that establishes an upper limit will reduce the potential for unhealthy competition among schools for teachers and it will restrain cost which can lead to higher tuition.
- 4. All schools will have a long-range financial plan to grow their revenue and cover the increased cost of salaries and benefits. Special attention will be given to development and raising tuition. Schools must begin this effort in the first year.**

Strategies

- 4.1 Develop a financial forecasting or projection model that can be used by all schools in the Diocese.
 - 4.2 The forecast should be reviewed at the time the budget is approved. The forecast should be submitted along with the budget to the Diocese.
- 5. All schools will make an employer contribution to the school employee retirement program. Diocesan policy will be established stipulating the requirement.**

Strategies

- 5.1 Develop guidelines to be used by all schools on contributions to employee retirement funding.
- 5.2 Employers should pay 50% of health insurance costs. By 2013, employers should be paying 75% of health insurance costs.

D. Elementary School Tuition

OBSERVATIONS

- 1. Average tuition is \$3,231 in 2006-07 for the first child. Fees averaged another \$322. Tuition revenue covers about 73% of the cost per pupil on average.
- 2. Tuition for the first Catholic child in 2006-07 ranged from \$1,700 to \$4,650. Five of seven schools in the Austin City Deaneries set tuition over \$4,000 for the first child.
- 3. Fees average \$323 per student. However, a few schools are exceptionally higher. Total cost to families must be considered when evaluating tuition.
- 4. Tuition increases often do not correspond with increases in the cost of education.
- 5. Parish subsidy is generally used to reduce tuition for everyone, rather than being directed towards families with specific needs.

6. Parishes exhibit an inconsistent philosophy of setting tuition. For most, tuition increases are a year-to-year decision rather than a long-range plan.
7. Tuition is set far below the cost per pupil in some schools. For most schools, all students receive subsidy through subsidized tuition, whether they need it or not.
8. The tuition rate for the second child can be anywhere from 29% to 100% of the first child rate. Wide variation exists regarding the philosophy and rationale for multiple child discounts.
9. Schools vary in their approach to charging tuition for non-Catholics and for non-parishioners. Fourteen schools have different rates for non-Catholics and Catholics.
10. In two schools, the rate for middle school grades is higher than the rate for elementary school grades. The middle school program is considered different from the elementary school program and operates with a higher cost structure.
11. Frequently, the tuition rate parents are willing to pay for Pre-K is higher than the rate charged for Kindergarten. Parents pay higher Pre-K rates with minimal tuition assistance because Pre-K is not widely available at taxpayer expense and parents seek daycare for their children.
12. The gap between elementary tuition and high school tuition ranges from \$1,100 at St. Joseph School in Bryan to over \$10,600 for St. Michael Academy in Austin.
13. Under the current system for setting tuition, parishes have the freedom to charge a higher rate for Catholics from other parishes or for non-Catholics. In the cases where only parishioners receive a tuition discount, there is a built-in incentive to be a parishioner at the school's host parish and a disincentive to belong to their own local parish.

GOALS

6. Tuition will be increased each year according to a long-range financial plan for the school.

Strategies

- 6.1 Annually educate parents on the cost of a quality Catholic education and the value they receive. The goal is to give parents a clear understanding of the total cost of education, the portion they are asked to pay, and what they receive for their tuition. Communicate the true cost of education versus what they are asked to pay. Full disclosure of costs and sources of funding should be communicated in understandable terms. The value of a Catholic education and improvements or additions to the school program should also be promoted, showing parents how their children and the teachers benefit from adequate funding. Without communications and marketing, tuition increases can result in loss of enrollment.
- 6.2 Require that all families be given an opportunity to submit a request for tuition assistance. Make it known how well tuition assistance is funded and advertise the generous amounts available. Families should be assured they will be assisted in a confidential manner.
- 6.3 Some schools will have to increase tuition by larger amounts to catch up with the rising cost of education and tuition rates in other schools. Large jumps in tuition must be accompanied by a comprehensive education of parents, added benefits for children and families, and increased tuition assistance.

- 6.4 Increasing tuition is important so schools do not fall behind and parents are conditioned to expect costs to rise. Predictable tuition increases over several years are much better than large swings year to year.
- 6.5 The Catholic Schools Office should annually publish the tuition schedules of all schools.
- 7. The practice of charging a lower rate for parish families and a higher rate for families not affiliated or active with a Catholic parish or not Catholic may be continued. The higher rate will be tied to the cost per pupil. However, the lower rate will be extended to all Catholic families from supporting parishes. Expectations for being an active parish member will be communicated through the tuition covenant (see Recommendation #9 regarding tuition covenant).**
- 8. The tuition rate for the 2nd and 3rd child will be 80% or more of the first child rate. No reduction for multiple children is also acceptable. Families with multiple children who need more help will be supported through tuition assistance.**

Strategy

- 8.1 Phase in the change in tuition schedule over several years, and use tuition assistance to keep multiple child families enrolled.
- 9. Every school and parish will institute a tuition covenant to solidify the commitment of the family enrolling at a Catholic school, the commitment of the school to the family and a commitment of the parish to support the school and family.**

Strategies

- 9.1 A tuition covenant document should be developed by the Catholic Schools Office along with suggestions for best practices.
- 9.2 Guidelines should be given to help parishes define an active supporting parish family (registration, contribution, parish participation) in a manner that is fair and consistent throughout the Diocese. Care must be taken to avoid any violation of IRS rules with regard to parish contributions. A total stewardship approach is best.
- 9.3 All schools and parishes sending children to schools should use the same covenant agreement, with some room for local adaptation. Utilization of the covenant should be part of the annual in-service for principals and pastors.
- 9.4 All parishes and their schools should require parents to attend an annual meeting to explain all elements of the covenant, cost of education, expectations, and so on. Pastors should be part of these meetings.

E. Tuition Assistance

OBSERVATIONS

- 1. A high level of tuition assistance (greater than \$50,000 total) is being provided to families at: Cathedral of St. Mary-Austin, St. Ignatius-Austin, St. Louis-Austin, St. Louis-Waco, Holy Family-Austin, St. Joseph-Bryan, St. Mary-Temple, Reicher Catholic High School, Holy Trinity High School and San Juan Diego High School. Another group of schools gives some

tuition assistance, but it would range from only 4% to 7% of total tuition income. Two schools provide virtually no tuition assistance; however, their tuition rates are relatively low.

2. There is no clear correlation between high tuition and high tuition assistance. The amount of tuition assistance is a reflection of the funding model as it has developed locally.
3. While a general perception pervades that tuition is a primary reason parents do not enroll their children in Catholic school, there is no indication that families who request tuition assistance are turned away.
4. Tuition assistance is frequently under-funded given that increases in tuition will continue in the future.
5. Tuition assistance is often provided in the form of a family discount or teacher/employee discounts.

GOALS

- 10. As tuition increases and family discounts are reduced, tuition assistance must be adequately funded and well administered to ensure Catholic schools remain true to their mission and affordable to middle and low income families.**

Strategies

- 10.1 New terminology and a refined process may be necessary to make tuition assistance accessible and acceptable to all. Terminology such as scholarship, tuition rate adjustment, and discount may be appropriate.
- 10.2 All schools should be required to use a tuition aid service in evaluating the needs of families.
- 10.3 The diocese should contract with a third party to evaluate financial need. All schools should use this provider.
- 10.4 In most cases, it will be appropriate for all families to submit information for tuition assistance. The fee associated with an application should be built in to the cost of tuition or the fees so everyone feels they can request assistance.
- 10.5 The process must be confidential, relatively simple, and timely.
- 10.6 To the extent funding is available, tuition aid formulas should be adjusted to help middle income families and families with multiple children.

- 11. The tuition assistance budget in a typical school will be minimally 6% to 9% of total tuition income. Some schools will find a higher percentage necessary.**

Strategies

- 11.1 Each school should determine its target percentage and use that target in financial planning.
- 11.2 Maintain a savings account to help parents with emergency situations keep their children enrolled in the school.

- 12. Tuition assistance will be funded first at the local level. Many schools are capable of generating adequate financial assistance through their development program, endowment fund and use of parish subsidy.**

- 13. A diocesan program will be established to provide supplemental funds for tuition assistance programs in local schools who qualify based on the populations they serve and the financial resources of the school. These funds will help schools maintain enrollment and serve families with financial needs.**

Strategies

- 13.1 Specific criteria should be developed for schools to qualify for help with funding their tuition assistance program. Funds will be given to qualifying schools to supplement their tuition assistance budget. The local school will administer the tuition assistance program.
- 13.2 The program would be funded through the Catholic Foundation – Catholic Schools Endowment Fund for tuition assistance.

F. Parish Support

OBSERVATIONS

1. The level of subsidy paid by parishes with schools ranges from 5% of school income to 51% of school income.
2. Parishes without schools are in minimal compliance with diocesan directives to provide financial support for their families. With a few exceptions, parishes without schools do not provide financial support.
3. Parish subsidy is generally not increasing at the same rate as the cost of education. For many schools, parish support is expected to decrease as a percent of total revenue.
4. The level of parish subsidy to schools as a percent of parish ordinary income ranges from 6% to 71%.
5. Parishes with a school currently pay 8% cathedraticum and parishes without a school pay 9%.
6. In some cases, parish subsidy is not coming from offertory but from fund raisers.

GOALS

- 14. In a spirit of ecclesial collaboration, local parishes ought to support Catholic schools. Support should follow general principles outlined in the finance plan for Catholic schools. Principles will be further delineated by the Diocesan School Board and Diocesan Bishop.**
- 15. Every parish with a school is strongly encouraged and expected to make a significant investment in Catholic education each year.**

Strategies

- 15.1 Parish subsidy should be set according to the following guidelines:
- a. Subsidy should be budgeted by the parish with a plan to increase it at an inflationary rate each year.
 - b. In situations where parish subsidy exceeds 40% of parish offertory income, adjustments should be made to transition subsidy down to 40%.
 - c. Subsidy to schools should not be less than 8% of offertory income. This is a minimum and not a goal.
 - d. Parish fundraising activities from bingo, carnivals and other fundraising events that have been traditionally designated for the school, should be accounted for separately

from parish investment. Generally, these items should be accounted for as revenue to the school not parish subsidy. Parish investment should reflect primarily parish financial support from offertory income and not support raised through fundraisers.

e. Parish subsidy should remain predictable from year to year. The parish should not become the “plug” factor to balance the school budget each year.

15.2 Parish subsidy should be used for intentional purposes, like tuition assistance or enhancing Catholic identity.

15.3 If a school finds it has surplus at the end of the year, the surplus should remain with the school. Schools should be allowed to build some savings so they do not have to depend on the parish to make up for shortages in future years. Surpluses could be designated for any of the following purposes:

- Fund additional tuition assistance in future years
- Add to a facility reserve fund for facility improvements or capital repairs
- Add to school savings

16. Specific funding formulas in use with Holy Family Catholic School in Austin and St. Joseph Catholic School in Bryan will be formally endorsed through a written agreement.

Strategies

16.1 The following parishes should enter into a formal agreement for the long-term support of Holy Family Catholic School:

- St. Albert the Great Parish, Austin
- St. Thomas More Parish, Austin
- St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Austin
- St. Margaret Mary Parish, Cedar Park
- St. Mary, Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Lago Vista
- St. John Vianney Parish, Round Rock
- St. William Parish, Round Rock

16.2 The following parishes should enter into a formal agreement for the long-term support of St. Joseph Catholic School in Bryan:

- St. Joseph Parish, Bryan
- Santa Teresa Parish, Bryan
- St. Anthony Parish and San Salvador Mission, Bryan
- St. Mary’s Parish, College Station
- St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, College Station

16.3 Formal agreements should be drawn up with these characteristics:

- a. Conditions under which the formula is reviewed and possibly adjusted
- b. Expectations of the parishes and the school involved
- c. Mechanism for enforcement of the agreement
- d. Standardized language adopted as much as possible across the Diocese

16.4 Funding formulas should transition over time away from number of students enrolling to other factors such as the financial resources of a parish. The formula needs to make provisions for subsidy to grow in proportion to growth in parish income.

17. In situations where a Catholic elementary or high school is serving multiple parishes, all parishes in that school's enrollment area will make a long term financial investment in Catholic education.

Strategies

17.1 All parishes will enter into formal agreements for the long-term support of the Catholic school in their area:

17.2 The funding should follow these principles:

- a. A formula should be established for all parishes that will pay subsidy. The design of this formula should be the same for all schools throughout the Diocese.
- b. Subsidy should be based mainly on the ability of the parish to pay. Part of the subsidy could be based on the number of parish children attending a school, but should not be the primary factor. Subsidy should increase in proportion to growth in parish income.
- c. The subsidy formula should be agreed upon in a written contract signed by the pastors, approved by the parish finance councils, and approved by the Bishop.
- d. Parish subsidy can be paid directly to the school or collected by the Diocese. Diocesan policy should be established to give the school recourse with parishes that become delinquent in their obligations.

18. Among parishes in the Austin City deaneries where several Catholic schools are available to parishioner families, a specific formula will be formally established and endorsed through a written agreement.

Strategies

18.1 The funding formula should follow these principles:

- a. The design of the formula should be the same for all schools throughout the Diocese.
- b. Subsidy should be based mainly on the ability of the parish to pay. Part of the subsidy could be based on the number of parish children attending a school, but should not be the primary factor. Subsidy should increase in proportion to growth in parish income.
- c. The subsidy formula should be agreed upon in a written contract signed by the pastors, approved by the parish finance councils, and approved by the Bishop.
- d. Parish subsidy could be collected directly by the Diocese. Allocation and distribution of funding to the schools would be done through specific criteria and a process developed and agreed upon by pastors, Catholic Schools Office and the Bishop. Diocesan policy should be established to provide recourse with parishes that become delinquent in their obligations.

- e. Subsidy may not be distributed evenly, rather based on criteria that determine need by school. Subsidy should not be distributed to families of students, but to schools. Subsidy should be used for intentional purposes, like tuition assistance or enhancing Catholic identity.

19. Parishes must actively pursue stewardship education to enhance the faith life of the parish and ultimately strengthen the funding base necessary for sustaining parish and school ministries.

Strategies

- 19.1 Stewardship education must first occur at the local parish level with the leadership of the pastor. It should be supported by ongoing diocesan stewardship programs.
- 19.2 Increasing giving is necessary to carry on the ministry of the Church. Educating people to be lifetime givers is the best way to support the mission and ensure funding is provided for all needs. Supporting schools will not be a burden as long as there is growth in parish revenue.
- 19.3 Development programs in the school need to be compatible with the theology of stewardship in the parish. The two can co-exist but must operate in a manner that is mutually supportive.

20. Schools must report annually to the parishes supporting them and be accountable for their use of funds, and value of the ongoing, generous support of the parish communities.

Strategies

- 20.1 An annual report should be made to each supporting parish at the Parish Council and Finance Council level, as well as published to the parish as a whole.
- 20.2 The value of schools must continue to be explained to current and future generations of Catholics.

G. Development/School Advancement

OBSERVATIONS

1. Development is often associated with securing financial resources outside of tuition, fees and parish investment. Successful development is a total institutional effort that encompasses a quality product, good business management and effective marketing.
2. Schools and parishes have a mixed track record of capital fundraising and development. Currently, ten of the elementary schools have a Development Director or similar position (e.g., Development Coordinator, Marketing & Stewardship Director, Parish & School Development Associate). This is a relatively new position in several schools. All of the high schools have a Development Director and program.
3. While many schools have endowments, very few have plans to build those endowments as part of a total development program.
4. The role of the principal and pastor in leading development is not clearly understood. The role of lay boards to provide leadership and expertise for development is also not clearly understood. The principal is limited by time and knowledge to oversee this task.
5. The relationship between stewardship as part of Catholic life and school development has not been clarified among parishes and schools.
6. Schools do not fully access government funding, government programs or private grants.
7. Development in most of the elementary schools is a relatively new initiative. Most third source income is/has been generated essentially through fundraising and special events. While these sources will continue to fund schools, they are limited in their growth potential and can be unreliable.
8. Very few of the elementary schools have established an annual giving fund or campaign, one of the foundational elements of a development program.
9. There is approximately \$7 to \$8 million of endowment funding in the parish elementary schools and \$1.5 to \$2 million in endowments with the two high schools. The only growth plan in place for any of the endowments is to roll a part/all of the interest back into the fund each year. Any interest used by some schools goes for tuition assistance or for operations.

GOALS

- 21. All schools will conduct a development assessment if they have not done so in the last 2 years.**

Strategy

- 21.1 The Office of Stewardship and Development should work with the Catholic Schools Office and all schools to conduct a development assessment. The assessment should be used to update or establish a strategic plan with a focus on a sustainable fund development program.

22. Every school will operate with a development plan as part of the school's long-range strategic plan.

Strategies

- 22.1 Every school should have a development/advancement committee. It may be an extension of the local school board. This committee should have responsibility for developing and guiding the development plan.
- 22.2 School development programs should include these basic components: marketing and communications, special events, annual funds, programs for planned giving, recruitment, retention, endowments, capital campaigns and grants.
- 22.3 Successful development programs depend on a long-term sustained effort. Several key elements need to be in place:
 - a. The school operation must be carried out with good business practices.
 - b. A strategic plan should make a clear case of the need for funds and how they will benefit children.
 - c. The school must be accountable to donors. Annual reports are one way of being accountable.
 - d. An effective board structure with committed leadership needs to be operational.
 - e. The pastor and other parish leaders must support the mission of the school.
 - f. The principal must have time to support development initiatives.

23. School administrators, pastors and their boards will seek training in development.

Strategies

- 23.1 Every school should be required to send a representative to monthly development meetings at the regional or diocesan levels.
- 23.2 The school budget should include funding to support development activities. Funds should be designated for principals, volunteers and board members to attend workshops and conventions and get up-to-date training.
- 23.3 All pastors should participate in meetings/in-services to form a common understanding of development and its relationship with parish stewardship.

24. Adequate staff will be hired and trained appropriately to ensure development and all related activities are addressed.

Strategies

- 24.1 Principals need time to promote development activities. When necessary, a full or part-time assistant to the principal should be hired. When practical, schools should hire a part-time or full-time development coordinator or development director. The Office of Stewardship and Development should be contacted when such a hire is being considered to provide assistance with job descriptions and candidate search.
- 24.2 Even when staff dedicated to development are hired, the principal, pastor and board must be fully engaged in the development process. Each must be clear about their leadership role.

24.3 Schools in close proximity to one another and with common interests may wish to research the potential of sharing staff to support and sometimes lead development efforts.

25. Development will be a supportive and collaborative effort connected to the parish stewardship program. A working relationship with the parish is necessary to avoid conflicting messages to the Catholic community.

26. All schools will be required to achieve benchmarks according to a timeline.

Strategies

26.1 Benchmarks should be established by the Catholic Schools Office and Office of Stewardship and Development. Examples of benchmarks would be:

- Establish a long-range strategic plan
- Have a specific development plan
- Establish a committee for school advancement/development
- Participate in board in-service offered through the Diocese
- Have a plan to begin and/or grow an endowment
- Principal and board participate in development training
- Establish appropriate class sizes
- Work toward recommended salaries and benefits
- Establish and build an annual fund
- Have a plan for marketing and communications
- Include costs for development related activities in the school budget
- Establish a database with accurate records

26.2 Schools that do not show adequate progress toward the benchmarks should not be qualified to receive diocesan grant monies.

27. All schools will establish endowments and have a plan to grow them.

Strategies

27.1 All new endowments must be established through the Catholic Foundation.

27.2 All schools should have a plan to grow their endowment with 5-year goals.

27.3 The development plan should determine how the school endowment will be promoted and marketed.

27.4 All schools should review their endowments and update their investment plan and allocation plan.

27.5 Schools with existing endowment funds are encouraged to invest their endowment funds with the Catholic Foundation. The advantages for schools and donors are:

- Professional fund management with better returns
- Socially responsible investments
- Funds are protected from co-mingling with other school or parish funds
- The Catholic Foundation is independent of the Diocese and the schools. Donor gifts are protected from Diocesan liabilities. It operates with a high level of financial accountability.

- Provides services and distribution of funds, accounting and bookkeeping
- Supported by marketing, annual reporting
- Provides professional planned giving expertise

28. Capital campaigns will be an outgrowth of development programs. They will be planned in concert with the parish and supporting parishes and only after a strong annual fund and marketing strategies are in place.

Strategies

28.1 Campaigns should occur on 3 to 5 year cycle.

28.2 Campaigns should be built upon a long-range strategic plan.

H. Financial Support for High Schools

GOALS

29. High schools will have comprehensive strategic plans with long-range financial projections.

Strategies

29.1 A comprehensive plan should incorporate mission and Catholic identity, enrollment plan, educational plan, staffing plan, advancement/development, technology, facilities, finance, leadership and governance.

29.2 The Catholic Schools Office will receive a current copy of the plan.

29.3 Plans will be updated regularly.

30. High schools will be financially viable based on support from donors, parishes, and the local community they serve.

Strategies

30.1 Develop a plan to reduce and eventually eliminate direct subsidy from the Diocese to high schools.

30.2 Parish support should be used first for tuition assistance. This is in keeping with the principles of the Financial Plan for Schools.

I. Accountability and Management

GOALS

31. Schools will have a two month cash reserve to ensure smooth operations.

32. The school budgeting process will be based on the strategic plan for the school and goals for a quality program.

Strategies

32.1 Budgeting should use the following process:

- a. Determine the full cost of education based on a conservative projection of enrollment, staffing needs (following diocesan guidelines), salary and benefit guidelines, and the desired budget to deliver a quality educational program. Also include the cost of tuition assistance to the extent it is funded by the school budget.
- b. Determine how much the parish will budget for direct investment in the school.
- c. Determine the total amount of revenue needed from each of these sources to balance the budget: tuition, direct parish investment, development, fundraising, and other sources.
- d. Set a tuition schedule to generate the amount of tuition needed.
- e. Compare the tuition rate to last year and make sure tuition will increase. Make adjustments to the tuition schedule so tuition increases at least at the rate of inflation and not more than most families can manage.
- f. Compare the tuition schedule to the average tuition rates for Catholic schools in the area, and determine if further adjustments are necessary to avoid wide disparities with other schools.
- g. If the new tuition schedule requires too great an increase, determine how much tuition can be charged and reexamine budgeted expenses. Reduce costs or increase parish investment (within guidelines and parish means) to bring the budget into balance. Make conscientious decisions when making trade offs between reductions in cost and quality of program.

33. Schools will give quarterly financial reports to the Diocese.

34. Standard accounting software will be required for use by all schools for financial reporting.

35. Changes in school accounting will be coordinated and integrated with planning for parish accounting.

36. The chart of accounts for schools will be created and standardized. It will adopt a modified accrual system of accounting. With the new chart of accounts reporting should be more consistent and easier to use. Appropriate training will be required of all persons involved with finances.

37. Every school will have a long-range financial projection as part of a strategic plan. The financial projection will be submitted annually along with budgets for the following year.

38. Schools will have an audit conducted on a regular cycle as directed by the Office of Finance.

IX. FACILITIES

A. Observations

1. The schools are clean and presentable. A number of the schools have added on to their facilities or are in the process of planning or are actually expanding at this time.
2. Some of the existing school facilities are in aging and/or older facilities and in need of updating. The adequacy and condition of school facilities influences the public perception and marketability of the schools.
3. Costs associated with aging facilities and deferred maintenance cannot be addressed solely through tuition. Major capital investment is needed to bring a number of the school facilities up to date and make them more marketable.
4. Few parishes or schools provide adequate funds or set funds aside on an annual basis for deferred maintenance to ensure that school buildings are regularly maintained.
5. Existing school boards assist with fundraising, but few boards currently play a strong role in facility assessment.

B. Goals and Strategies

- 1. A facility assessment will be conducted with each school to obtain critical data and identify the most pressing needs of school facilities.**

Strategy

- 1.1 The Diocese will use the Office of Facilities to determine funding and professional services for this comprehensive facility assessment and a timeline for completion.
- 2. Each diocesan school will develop a long-range plan for addressing capital improvements and deferred maintenance as part of its local strategic planning process.**

Strategy

- 2.1 The plan will identify all facility improvements needed to offer a quality program and ensure the school remains competitive in its marketplace.
- 3. All parishes will have a long-range facility plan for the parish and school. This plan will include a funding plan for facility maintenance, upgrades, and expansion if feasible.**

Strategies

- 3.1 Parishes have a responsibility to maintain quality facilities for parish ministry, of which the school is a part. Joint planning with parish and school should be ongoing.
- 3.2 At a minimum, the parish should allow the school to have a long-range facility plan. The best plans are those developed jointly by parish and school to address all parish needs with appropriate priorities.

- 3.3 Capital funding for school facility renovation and upgrades should occur on a regular basis to ensure schools remain marketable, attractive, and educationally functional. Many times capital funding programs are conducted in conjunction with the parish, although it is not required. The parish should permit capital funding initiatives to go forward on a three to five year cycle.

4. Catholic schools will budget adequately for capital repairs and maintenance.

Strategies

- 4.1 Each school will have a five-year capital improvement plan for its facility. Each diocesan school should include a 3% minimum allocation in the annual operating budget for a capital reserve fund. This plan should be developed to reach 3% in less than five years. The plan will be submitted to the diocesan Office of Finance for review. Funds that are not used in any given year are placed in a balance sheet account as savings for future facility needs.
- 4.2 The 3% capital reserve fund allocation should be a goal for parish schools. A written facilities plan including the parish and school should address a capital reserve fund.

X. GOVERNANCE OF SCHOOLS

The historical success of Catholic elementary schools occurred, in part, because of their relative autonomy and their close connection to and support by a local parish. A parish-based model of governance was the appropriate fit for the conditions that existed. The parish school model is most successful when:

- Pastors have time, experience, knowledge, vision and personal interest to oversee Catholic schools.
- Schools are largely enrolling parishioner children.
- Parishes have a giving base that provides adequate finances to support/subsidize the parish school.
- The population of children in the parish is sufficient to fill classes.
- The cost of a quality education is within the means of a parish community alone to sustain it.
- Quality leadership is found in lay leaders who work well with the pastor and principal to guide and sustain the school.
- The Catholic community has a strong sense of mission for Catholic schools and values them highly; even above public schools and other options for education.
- Parish is healthy on many levels.

The conditions that supported successful parish schools in the past do not always exist for schools today. Changes affecting schools are geographic shifts in population, under enrollment, less intense parochial loyalty, a decline in the loyalty of parents toward Catholic education for their children, and a declining number of clergy.

While parish elementary schools have many advantages, there are instances where new organization and governance structures need to be explored to continue a strong tradition of viable and healthy Catholic schools.

A. Observations

1. The one-parish-one-school-model has served the Diocese well for many years and is still the most common model of school governance in the country. However, as circumstances change, new models of Catholic school governance are being implemented in dioceses throughout the country.
2. Some parish elementary schools are already regional in their enrollment because they enroll students from many different parishes.
3. The contributions of lay leaders are increasingly important for the success of Catholic schools. Lay people can and will share responsibility for the education ministry of the Church. They bring vision, expertise, financial resources and commitment to the mission of Catholic education.

4. The current governance models in place in the Diocese of Austin are:

MODEL	OWNER/ SPONSOR	BOARD STRUCTURE	ACCOUNTABILITY
Parish School	Local Parish	Advisory to pastor	Pastor holds final authority in all matters.
Diocesan School	Diocese Separately incorporated	Advisory to principal	Principal has limited jurisdiction and is accountable to Superintendent of Schools.
Private School	Separately incorporated	Jurisdictional in all matters	Principal/Headmaster accountable to board. Board/Principal accountable to Bishop in matters of Catholic teaching.

5. Diocesan and parish Catholic schools in the Diocese of Austin have advisory school boards. Boards function at various levels of responsibility, decision making and effectiveness
6. Lay people are more likely to provide leadership (organizational, marketing, financial, facilities, etc.) and financial resources for Catholic schools when they are empowered and where they play a significant role in the schools. Participation in the local school boards can provide an environment that builds ownership and solicits support when effectively implemented.
7. Governance changes are needed to ensure a healthy balance between lay involvement and church oversight. The role of school boards should expand beyond the historical role of advice, to clearly delegated responsibility inviting lay leaders to a more meaningful role in consequential work. Lay leaders should be empowered and utilized beyond limited participation afforded by advisory school boards, while respecting the canonical role of the Bishop and the role of the local pastor(s).
8. Several factors are making it increasingly difficult to ensure parish schools will be administered by priests: fewer priests are available to serve a growing population, priests have greater demands on their time, pastors do not all have the training or the background to administer schools, schools are increasingly complex to manage, and priests do not always share the same vision or passion for Catholic schools.
9. School boards that are well selected and have good formation have proven to be an effective means to relieve the pastor of many administrative tasks and tap into the vision, expertise and resources of the local community for the benefit of the school.
10. A newly established Diocesan School Board is in place. In the future they will be taking an active leadership role with the Catholic Schools Office in developing policy and implementing the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools.
11. Initial and ongoing training for the local advisory school boards has not been mandatory, so some boards are not fully formed or equipped to fulfill the role and responsibilities for which they were intended.

12. Membership on the school advisory boards does not always result in persons with the desired qualifications, expertise and experience to serve on the boards.
13. It is difficult for school boards to be consistently refreshed with the best candidates who are committed and qualified, fully understanding and embracing the mission of the Catholic schools, and willing to give the necessary effort and time to make the board effective and successful.
14. Parishes in the Diocese will become separate civil corporations by the end of 2007. Catholic schools connected to a parish will be incorporated as part of that parish. Several schools (Reicher Catholic High School, Holy Trinity Catholic High School, San Juan Diego Catholic High School, and Holy Family Catholic School) will remain as a separate incorporation. St. Michael's Catholic Academy and St. Gabriel's Catholic School will remain independent Catholic schools.

B. Goals and Strategies

1. Catholic schools in the Diocese will be governed by a model that best fits their local situation.

Strategies

- 1.1 Catholic schools will implement one of the following governance structures depending on who they serve, the future viability of local parishes, history and local circumstances, and funding model adopted.
 - Model 1: Parish-based school
 - Model 2: Inter-parochial, regional or area school which assumes sponsorship by more than one parish
- 1.2 Every school will have an active school board with qualified members.
- 1.3 Regular meetings during the school year will be scheduled for pastors with Catholic schools and school administrators to meet and collaborate with the Superintendent of Catholic Schools regarding school issues and the future of Catholic school education in the Diocese.

2. Governance models will be consistent in their structure and function.

Strategies

- 2.1 Participation in a diocesan wide in-service training will be strongly recommended.
- 2.2 A clearly articulated set of bylaws will be developed by the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office. After proper review and refinement, the bylaws will be adopted by all parishes and their school boards.
- 2.3 The role of the board will be articulated as it relates to the role of the parish pastoral council, parish finance council, principal, pastor and Catholic Schools Office.
- 2.4 Local school board members will be selected through a consistent process of nomination, discernment and appointment. Criteria for board membership will be established with an emphasis on commitment to Catholic school education and a specialized expertise (finances, education, law, etc.). New board members will be properly oriented as to requirements of the local board.

- 2.5 A majority of the board membership will be comprised of individuals who do not have children enrolled in the school.
- 2.6 In-service for all local school boards will be provided through the Catholic Schools Office and the Diocesan School Board and will be required of all school board members on a regular basis.

3. Parish school boards will be empowered with greater responsibility to provide leadership for Catholic schools.

Strategies

- 3.1 School boards will have delegated authority as articulated in a standard set of bylaws to be adopted across the Diocese.
- 3.2 Pastors and principals will participate in an orientation program for updates and evaluation in the governance model.
- 3.3 Pastors and boards will work collaboratively and will support each others decisions.
- 3.4 Parish school boards will have broader membership beyond current parents that reflects areas of expertise (e.g., finances, education, planning, etc.).

4. A change in governance structure will be made when it is evident parish schools will not remain fully viable if left under their respective parish.

Strategy

- 4.1 See recommendations for changes in governance models for local areas under Regional Recommendations.

5. Involvement of pastors and the connection to parishes will be maintained and fostered by each deanery and school.

Strategies

- 5.1 Pastors and parishes will be informed regularly of the activities of the school(s) in their area and will receive an annual financial report.
- 5.2 Pastors will be encouraged and provided with resources to educate parishioners about the value and importance of the Catholic schools, and the shared responsibility for this ministry of the Church.
- 5.3 Area clergy will provide for the sacramental and spiritual care of the Catholic schools and will assist in monitoring the Catholic mission and identity of the schools in cooperation with the Catholic Schools Office.
- 5.4 Every school will be actively involved with their local parishes in the evangelization of their families. Efforts will be made to involve students and their families in parish life and ministries.
- 5.5 A special in-service for new pastors in a parish connected to a Catholic school (host or supporting parish) will be provided through the Catholic Schools Office.

XI. CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

A. Observations

1. The Office has direct management responsibility for three diocesan high schools, supervisory responsibility for 15 parish elementary schools, one parish high school, one diocesan elementary school, and serves as a resource to three private Catholic schools.
2. As the responsibilities of school principals become more numerous and complex, they increasingly need and seek assistance from the Catholic Schools Office which has not been able, in many cases, to provide that assistance in recent years due to limited staff. The need for greater availability of Catholic Schools Office staff and services at the local level was affirmed through interviews with principals and pastors during school visits.
3. While leadership in the present Catholic Schools Office is strong, the current staff is not large enough to provide for the increasing demand on their leadership and services: e.g., financial resource development, marketing, crisis management, local school board development and formation, leadership orientation and development, strategic plan implementation, among others.
4. The Office of Stewardship and Development works collaboratively with the Catholic schools by providing development in-service and leadership on a regular basis.
5. The Office of Religious Education and Formation works closely with the Catholic Schools Office in catechist formation for teachers of religion, catechist certification, etc.
6. The Catholic Schools Office should have the responsibility and appropriate authority and staffing to ensure quality in the following areas:
 - Catholic Identity PreK to 12
 - Ensure Catholic mission/identity
 - Formation of administrators and teachers
 - Oversight of the Religion curriculum
 - Development of school-parish connections
 - Certification program for religion teachers
 - Academic Excellence
 - Elementary/secondary curriculum development
 - Integration of technology
 - Early childhood programs
 - Student services, health, safety programs
 - State and federal government programs
 - Comprehensive educational assessment program
 - Accreditation/school improvement processes
 - Administrative Leadership and Personnel
 - Recruitment of administrators
 - Hiring, supervision and evaluation of administrators
 - Orientation/mentoring of administrators
 - Leadership for diocesan and local advancement/development efforts
 - Professional development
 - Communications and public relations

- School Board Leadership
 - Ensure on-going training of all school boards
 - Participation on the diocesan high school boards (Reicher Catholic High School, San Juan Diego High School and St. Dominic Savio High School)
 - Facilitate Diocesan Advisory School Board
 - Marketing and Enrollment
 - Effective student recruitment and retention programs
 - Marketing program/local level training – image, enrollment, funding
 - Planning
 - Implement/update diocesan strategic plan for Catholic schools
 - Ensure strategic planning in schools
 - School data management
 - Advancement
 - Work with Catholic School Foundation and diocesan Office of Development
 - Leadership/support for local development efforts
 - Promote diocesan development efforts
 - Finance
 - Communicate and provide oversight of diocesan policies
 - Review annual budgets
 - Collaborate with Diocesan Office of Finance
 - Assist with budget development
 - Policy development/implementation
 - Other
 - Crisis management
 - Health and safety issues
 - Facility support
7. New directions are being set for Catholic schools in the Diocese, and leadership in the Catholic Schools Office will play a key role in helping local school leaders implement the strategic plan.
8. The best investment the Diocese can make is providing its Catholic schools with the tools and support necessary to be viable institutions. A healthy system of schools will require more management and oversight from a strong Catholic Schools Office.

B. Goals and Strategies

1. The Catholic Schools Office will be appropriately staffed to provide the range of services and support needed by the schools and their leadership.

Strategies

- 1.1 Additional staff positions will be needed for the Catholic Schools Office to strengthen its role in leading schools and implementing the strategic plan:
- Add an Assistant Superintendent to the staff in 2008-09. The Assistant Superintendent will provide leadership and support for the elementary and high schools in local/regional curriculum formation and implementation, teacher formation and professional development, among other classroom-related programs.

- Add a new position to support implementation of the strategic plan, especially in the areas of marketing and development with the schools in 2009-10. Outsourcing this initiative could be considered to meet the short-term needs of the schools.
 - Add an additional support staff member.
 - When needed, research the need for a position to handle school finances and government programs.
- 1.2 Continue the leadership and support staff between the Office of Religious Education and Formation and the Catholic Schools Office that will focus on the Catholic identity and mission of the schools, continue formational programs for personnel and students, provide Religion curriculum support, and continue to direct the certification of all catechists/Religion teachers.
 - 1.3 Continue to develop a strong relationship between the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Finance to provide appropriate oversight of all school finances. This will include the review of schools' annual budgets, quarterly and annual reports.
 - 1.4 Continue the strong relationship between the schools, Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Stewardship and Development. All schools will participate in the training and ongoing development in-services provided by the Office of Stewardship and Development.
 - 1.5 The needs of the schools will be reviewed on a regular basis to determine how to best serve the schools in the future. As with all strategic plans, future needs may require different personnel in the Catholic Schools Office, or a decision to outsource specific roles or initiatives. Well-defined and written job descriptions will be prepared and implemented.

2. The Superintendent and Catholic Schools Office will ensure the schools in the Diocese fulfill their Catholic mission and are vital, viable institutions.

Strategies

- 2.1 The Catholic Schools Office provides oversight of all diocesan schools and, in partnership with pastors, of all parish schools.
- 2.2 The Diocesan School Board, in its leadership role in the Diocese, not only advises the Superintendent, but provides leadership and support with local school boards. As leaders for Catholic education, Diocesan School Board members will be visionaries who provide direction for the future, recommend policies, support local initiatives, and expect accountability.
- 2.3 The Diocesan School Board, in collaboration with the Catholic Schools Office, will provide support and oversight for the implementation of the strategic plan.

3. The Catholic Schools Office will review and update the strategic plan on a regular basis.

Strategies

- 3.1 The Catholic Schools Office will conduct an annual review of progress in plan implementation and make adjustments as necessary.
- 3.2 School data in the strategic plan will be updated annually. Parish and demographic data are updated every three years.

XII. REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Austin City Deaneries and Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

1. General population in Travis County is projected to increase by an average of 145,426 people per decade from 2005 to 2015, and 2015 to 2025.
2. Austin (39,210 people) and Pflugerville (9,802 people) had the largest estimated population increases in Travis County from 2000 to 2005.
3. Pflugerville has projected population increases of 51% (2000 to 2010) and 45% (2010 to 2020), had a public school enrollment increase for grades K to 8 of 27%, had an increase of approximately 1,800 parish families over five years, and yet does not have a significant number of children attending Catholic schools.
4. Since 2000, a significant number of people moved out of Travis County. Part of the reason for people moving is the lower costs of living in outlying County areas, or dislocated workers leaving for jobs in other parts of the state or country. Despite this experience, population in Austin grew due to natural increase and international migration. (Capital Area Planning Council)
5. The Hispanic population is projected to have the most significant increase in Travis County from 2005 to 2025. It is estimated that this population will be 72% of total population growth from 2005 to 2015 and 81% of the total population growth from 2015 to 2025. A key challenge for the future will be the ability of Catholic schools in the Hispanic growth areas to accommodate the needs and impact of this growing population.
6. The White population is estimated to increase through 2015, at which point some decline is projected.
7. While the school-age population is projected to increase through 2015, there is some anticipated decrease from 2015 to 2025 in the 5 to 14 year old groups.
8. Public school enrollment trends for 2001-02 to 2006-07 show an overall increase of 11% (8,647 students) in the seven public school districts. Districts with the greatest increase include Pflugerville ISD (27%, 2,852 students), Austin ISD (5%, 2,820 students), Manor ISD (84%, 1,606 students), and Del Valle ISD (20%, 1,002 students).
9. There was a 27% overall increase in parish families in the deaneries, with 57% growth in the Austin North Deanery and 16% in Austin South Deanery.
10. The south area of Williamson County is tied to the Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery and this is a significant growth area both at the present time and in the future. While overall County growth is projected at 35% and 32% during each of the next two decades, the cities of Cedar Park (106% from 2000 to 2010 and 40% from 2010 to 2020), Leander (51% and 40% for the same decades), Liberty Hill (73% and 50% for the same decades), and Round Rock will experience the greatest increases.
11. Round Rock is projecting population increases of 46% and 37% (approximately 27,900 people and 33,150 people from 2000 to 2010 and 2010 to 2020). Public school enrollments for grades K to 8 increased 20% (4,658 students) from 2001-02. The Capital Area Planning Council anticipates that Round Rock will be a self-sustaining urban area within the next 25 to 30 years.
12. Leander ISD K to 8 enrollment increased by 56% (6,319 students) from 2000, and the high school enrollment grew by 54% (2,215 students).

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. Catholic school enrollment increased 14% since 2001-02. The majority of this increase is essentially the result of growth at Holy Family Catholic School and St. Theresa Catholic School. St. Ignatius, Martyr Catholic School also experienced a small increase in enrollment during this time.
2. Enrollment in grades K to 3 has decreased slightly (4%) from a peak enrollment in 2002-03. Enrollment for grades 4 to 8 has increased (8%) during the same time period. Schools in the Austin City Deaneries are at 87% of total enrollment capacity. Enrollment capacity for grades K to 4 is 92%, with most of the schools' empty seats in grades 5 to 8 due to attrition.
3. Student enrollment that is Catholic has remained high with an average of 92% per year over the past five years.
4. The Catholic schools in these deaneries continue to be primarily White (56%) and Hispanic (29%) in terms of enrollment, reflective of the County population (57% White and 28% Hispanic).
5. St. Michael's Catholic Academy and San Juan Diego Catholic High School are the two Catholic high schools in the deaneries and serve very different populations. The proposed new high school in north Austin would fill a "middle ground" for Catholics in these deaneries and the southern area of the Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

St. Theresa's Catholic School

1. Waiting lists persist even without a push for marketing and recruitment. Some Catholic families are turned away.
2. If room was available, it may be possible to fill another class per grade.
3. The school lacks important educational facilities to be complete. Portable classrooms should be replaced.
4. Room for expansion at the site is limited and careful site planning is necessary to meet school and parish needs.

St. Gabriel's Catholic School

1. The school is faced with debt reduction and raising capital funds for the next phase of construction.
2. The school needs to continually build strong support among parishes within the geographic service area.
3. The school will maintain its enrollment at 2 classes per grade, with a capacity of 438.
4. With a high tuition and prestigious reputation, attracting a diverse student body is an ongoing challenge.

St. Michael's Catholic Academy

1. School leaders would like enrollment to grow to 600.
2. Capital funds have to be raised to accomplish the next phases of facility improvement and expansion.
3. The school needs to continually build strong support among parishes within the geographic service area.

Holy Family Catholic School

1. Paying off of the \$4.8 million debt is a challenge; currently all fundraising and budget overages go to debt service. There is a need for an investment and savings plan for the future.
2. The future relationship with the Diocese (ownership and governance) and the proposed Catholic high school will require clarification.
3. School leadership anticipates that a future need will exist for an expanded middle school program.
4. Additional space is needed for parking, athletic fields and administrative offices.

Cathedral of St. Mary Catholic School

1. This is a transient commuter school. Most students come from outside of the area whose parents work downtown. The school draws from 41 zip codes and 14 parishes.
2. 66% of the students receive tuition assistance and the need increases each year.
3. Teacher salaries are low; 77% of Austin ISD. Only a 1.5% salary raise was proposed for 2007-08.
4. The school has been running annual budget deficits, but increased tuition more than in the past to balance the budget for the 2007-08 school year.
5. The school is landlocked in the urban area and has limited space and facilities. While functional, the facilities can be a drawback to marketing the school.

St. Ignatius, Martyr Catholic School

1. There is a need for additional tuition assistance funding to better serve populations from the east Austin area.
2. The school almost closed in 2001-02 and is currently taking steps to increase and maintain enrollment. The school needs an effective marketing plan to continue attracting more students.
3. The school could use an additional six classrooms to meet its current enrollment needs.

St. Austin Catholic School

1. More Hispanic students from a lower socio-economic population continue to come into the City of Austin. This presents greater challenges to building enrollment. A key issue is how to attract and financially support families.
2. There is a need for a strong marketing and development program to enhance and sustain current and potential growth and support.
3. The school is essentially landlocked and is planning to build a new school on the current site.

St. Louis Catholic School

1. There has been a change in student demographics with more Asian (primarily Vietnamese) and Hispanic students enrolling.
2. There is a need for increased tuition assistance.
3. There is a need for additional facilities, primarily storage and another pre-kindergarten room.

San Juan Diego Catholic High School

1. A key challenge is the transition from a Cristo Rey network program to building and sustaining the same model independently and outside the Cristo Rey network (loss of network funding, curriculum and resources).
2. Retaining leadership at the administrative level is essential for continuity.
3. Without the benefit of the Cristo Rey network, it is a challenge to continue attracting and holding sponsors for the corporate work school program.
4. Population in the marketing and enrollment area being served is low income.
5. Success of the financial model they have devised is built around an enrollment of 400. All fundraising and development goes to the annual operating budget to cover expenses. There is a need to build a feeder system to support the high school enrollment for the future.
6. There is a need for quality high school facilities to attract students and sponsors for the corporate work school program. The question is whether to build new at the San Jose Parish site or relocate somewhere else in south Austin.

GOALS

1. **Study the potential for new elementary schools in the growth areas of the city deaneries as outlined in Section VII: “Growth of Schools and New Schools.”**
2. **Following Recommendation 16 in the “Financial Plan for Schools,” where a school is serving multiple parishes, all parishes in the school service area will make a financial investment in the school(s) according to funding strategies which are set down in the Financial Plan.**

Strategies

- 2.1 Develop and get approval of procedures to centralize the collection and distribution of financial support received from supporting or sending parishes. These funds would be designated for financial assistance for families, and grants for special projects for which the schools could apply.
- 2.2 Families and schools in the deaneries would apply for the financial assistance through the central distribution process.

- 3. Research, plan and implement an Austin City Deaneries Cooperative for five elementary schools (St. Mary Cathedral, St. Ignatius Martyr, St. Austin, St. Louis, and St. Theresa's). The focus of the Cooperative will be formal collaboration in planning, development, marketing, public relations, and recruitment. Sharing of special teachers could also be coordinated through the Cooperative.**

Strategies

- 3.1 The Deanery Cooperative would be established to formally facilitate collaboration and accountability for collaborative efforts in the areas previously identified and to provide coordination and assistance for the five schools.
 - 3.2 A description of the role, responsibilities, and authority of the Austin City Deaneries Cooperative will be developed and approved.
 - 3.3 Establish a central budget to provide the necessary funding to accomplish the goals of the Cooperative. Funding should be provided initially through a three-year diocesan grant until Deanery Cooperative development efforts and school budgets can meet the funding needs of the Cooperative. The funding would be used for activities in shared recruitment, marketing, educational enrichment, fund development and program staff sharing. Funds would also be used to provide a part-time assistant principal in the school from which the principal is selected to be the Cooperative leader.
 - 3.4 One of the principals would be identified as the lead principal for the Cooperative. A teacher in this school should be identified as a part-time assistant principal so that the lead principal has time to coordinate and lead the work of the Cooperative. The lead principal should meet regularly with the other four principals. Committees of lay people or teachers should be appointed as needed to help carry out Cooperative activities.
- 4. Create and implement a city-wide marketing, public relations and recruitment plan that builds awareness of and interest in Catholic school education in Austin.**

Strategies

- 4.1 Provide a respectable amount of funding for this effort so that it can be implemented in a professional and effective manner.
- 4.2 Determine who will be responsible for implementation of an effective marketing program: either the Catholic Schools Office or a committee of the newly formed Diocesan School Board.
- 4.3 Schools that serve families from outside the home parish should invite representation on their school boards from other parishes that they serve and that support the school. Representation would include pastors and/or members of the supporting parishes.
- 4.4 Make additional tuition assistance available to the city schools, St. Austin School, Cathedral of St. Mary School and St. Ignatius, Martyr School that could attract and enroll additional students, especially from the east Austin area.

B. Bryan/College Station Deanery

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Population growth for Brazos County is projected to increase from 152,415 to 205,099 by 2020.
2. From 2005 to 2025, the Hispanic population is projected to increase from 20% to 27% of total county population. The White population is projected to change from 64% of the total population to 56% of the total population by 2025.
3. Population increases for the city of Bryan are projected to increase from 65,660 people in 2000 to 84,038 by 2020, an increase of 18,378 people.
4. Population for the city of College Station is estimated to grow from 67,890 to 94,526 between 2000 and 2020, an average increase of approximately 13,000 people per decade. Much of this growth is anticipated in the southern area of the city.
5. Public school enrollment for K to 8 in the two city school districts from 2001-02 to 2006-07 grew by 13% (from 14,657 to 16,529 students) overall. In the Bryan ISD, enrollment increased by 800 students, and the College Station ISD grew by 1,072 students.
6. Public high school enrollment in the two districts increased by 622 students from 2001-02 to 2006-07.
7. The number of registered parish families in the deanery increased by 4% from 2000 to 2005. St. Joseph Parish and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish account for the majority (52%) of the total number of parish families in the deanery's ten parishes.
8. Religious education enrollment in the three Bryan parishes and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish totaled 1,175 children in 2005 for grades K to 8.

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. Elementary school enrollment at St. Joseph Catholic School declined by 13% since 2001-02. However, with a change in leadership, improved retention, and extensive planning, enrollment has increased 8% since 2004-05. The elementary school, grades K to 8, is at 76% of enrollment capacity. The percentage of students who are Catholic has been stable at 91%. St. Joseph Catholic School is reorganizing and reenergizing under current leadership, but the challenges have been formidable (quality teacher retention and building up academic programs).
2. St. Joseph High School has been steadily increasing enrollment since 2001-02, from 74 to 117 students in five years.
3. St. Joseph School has three programs, each with its own advisory school board. At the present time, all sending parishes to St. Joseph School have a voting representative on the advisory school boards.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

1. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in College Station expressed an interest in opening an elementary school. There is also the potential for a new parish in the College Station area in the future. If a second elementary school program is considered, any plan must include how to organize, structure and govern multiple school programs in this area to avoid competition.

2. Public school education in College Station is perceived to be of high quality and is a significant competitor with St. Joseph School. There is also competition with home schooling programs in the area.
3. St. Joseph Elementary School is in the process of expanding its facilities to accommodate additional enrollment. The addition of a new elementary school program in the immediate future could detract from this effort.
4. Alternative models to the current per-student financial assistance from sending parishes to St. Joseph School may provide a more positive incentive to have parishes strongly encourage families to enroll their children in the school.
5. Middle school and high school facility issues include the lack of athletic fields and a large chapel area that is virtually a single-use facility for Eucharistic liturgy. There is a need for a new high school gym.

GOALS

1. **Continue to enhance the quality of Catholic education of St. Joseph School to attract students and families in order to build enrollment and make it a school of first choice.**
2. **Conduct a market research study to survey parents in the Bryan and College Station parishes to determine why they enroll or do not enroll their children at St. Joseph School. The study will also address what it would take for more families to enroll their children at the school.**
3. **Continue an aggressive marketing and recruitment plan that promotes Catholic school education in Bryan and College Station to build interest and enrollment. Attention should be given to attracting students from the growth areas of College Station and the areas of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in proximity to Bryan and College Station.**
4. **Examine the funding/assessment model for the sending parishes to determine how to best secure ongoing support from parishes in the Bryan and College Station area beyond the per-student assessment currently in place. (Refer to Financial Plan) All parishes in the Bryan and College Station area will be included in supporting St. Joseph Catholic School.**
5. **Research the potential for another PreK-5 Catholic school program as St. Joseph Elementary School enrollment nears capacity and local population grows in the future, and when a new parish is opened in the College Station area. St. Joseph School and any new PreK-5 program will operate as a single system by establishing a regional school system sponsored by all parishes in the Bryan and College Station area.**

Features of the regional system would be:

- **Board of limited jurisdiction**
- **Defined roles for pastors, principal and school board**
- **Qualified board members who serve the school on behalf of the sponsoring parishes**
- **Parish subsidy agreement among sending parishes**
- **Facility use agreement with the host parish**

C. Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Georgetown population is projected to increase 44% (2000 to 2010) and 36% (2010 to 2020), Granger by 8% and 9% (less than 120 persons per decade), Hutto by 46% and 38%, and Taylor by 14% and 15%.
2. The White population is anticipated to make up 58% of total population growth in Williamson County from 2005 to 2015 and 53% from 2015 to 2025.
3. Projections and planning estimate that population growth will extend along US-79 from Round Rock through to Hutto. The new toll road east of Austin (130) will also impact growth in this area. The Capital Area Planning Council is predicting that the Hispanic population will increase significantly in the Hutto area. Growth in Hutto would benefit St. Mary Catholic School, Taylor.
4. Growth in all child-age groups is projected from 2005 to 2025 (approximately 18% per decade).
5. Parish families in this deanery have increased 14% in the deanery.
6. The northern area of Bastrop County, namely Elgin, can be connected with the Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery because of students attending St. Mary's Catholic School, Taylor. Elgin could also be connected with the Austin Central Deanery depending upon the feasibility of new schools in the future.
7. Elgin is projected to be a major growth area in conjunction with Manor.
8. While Georgetown ISD enrollment for K to 8 increased by 12% (696 students), Granger ISD and Taylor ISD declined slightly by 4% and 2%.
9. The Hutto ISD enrollment for grades K to 8 increased 167% (1,672 students).

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. The three deanery schools had an enrollment increase of 53% (114 students) since 2001-02. This increase is essentially the result of growth at St. Helen Catholic School which will continue to grow with the addition of 8th grade in 2007-08 and as each class continues to grow to the 25 student per class capacity.
2. The deanery schools are currently at 65% of their enrollment capacity (grades K to 4 are at 75% of capacity). St. Helen Catholic School is at 76% capacity, Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic School is at 63% capacity and St. Mary's Catholic School is at 59% capacity.
3. There is little or no overlap in the schools' enrollment service areas.
4. There is a need for collaboration among Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic School, St. Helen Catholic School in Georgetown and St. Mary's Catholic School in Taylor, since all are relatively close to one another (within 10 to 15 miles).
5. Long term financial health and viability is a significant challenge and concern. Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic School depends heavily on parish subsidy (22% of school budget, 46% of parish ordinary income) and fundraising (35% of school budget). Tuition is low with tuition and fees covering only 39.6% of expenses in the budget. Teacher salaries are low.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

St. Helen Catholic School, Georgetown

1. Getting parents and some parishioners to see St. Helen as a Catholic school not just as a private school (the role of and relationship of the school with the parish needs clarification and education) can be a challenge.
2. Originally planned as a school with 3 classes per grade, the school realistically may only need 2 sections.
3. There is a need for larger facilities to accommodate the school's education requirements and growing population. Currently the school operates 4th to 8th grades and departmental classes in a portable building, which it shares with the Church. The Church is also in need of space.
4. The school needs to strengthen its middle school concept to reduce attrition in the upper grades. The community has expressed a desire for a stronger athletic program, stronger foreign language and fine arts programs, and increased service opportunities for 6th to 8th grades. The school must address generating additional revenue to meet the desires of the community.
5. Overall retention is an issue as students progress from 2nd to 8th grade. The school must devise and implement a formal plan of action to address this concern.
6. The parish/school wish to establish an early childhood education center for a Pre-K program and possibly a day care.
7. Managing and sustaining growth is a challenge and needs an aggressive marketing and recruitment plan (board has established 22 as the class size, although demand could be greater as the area grows).
8. The school has to repay a loan for portable classrooms.

Sts. Cyril & Methodius Catholic School, Granger

1. Granger is an aging community. The parish is aging. This is generally a low income area which is illustrated, as pointed out by the administration, by the difficulty in collecting tuition in a timely manner.
2. Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic School enrollment increased from 58 to 67 students since 2002-03 for grades Kindergarten to 6. There is a teacher in each classroom even with enrollments of 7 to 9 students in five of the seven grades (K to 6). Two small classes have a teacher for morning sessions only with children attending "specials" in the afternoon.
3. This is a rural school with a 107 year history and feels somewhat isolated from other schools. Some of the isolation feeling is by geography and some of it is by ethnic and historical choice. There is a strong loyalty toward the school.
4. Facilities are aging and the cafeteria is in a renovated former convent along with some of the classrooms. There is no gym facility. Maintenance issues are addressed within the resources available.
5. Leadership expressed a need for a 7th and 8th grade program, or a better connection with another Catholic middle school program (St. Mary's Catholic School in Temple, St. Mary's Catholic School in Taylor, or St. Helen Catholic School in Georgetown).

St. Mary's Catholic School, Taylor

1. Slow or no growth is projected for the population, which makes it a challenge for maintaining or growing enrollment.
2. Low teacher salaries are an issue and the lack of a benchmark does not help as public schools continue to give large raises (currently \$10,000 less than Austin Catholic school salaries).
3. The school is rural which has its own unique challenges.
4. St. Mary's Catholic School, using a bus sponsored by St. William Parish, has a pickup/drop off route along the US-79 corridor from Round Rock and Hutto to Taylor. Enrollment at the school has been increasing from a low of 125 students in 2002-03 (6% in the last five years).
5. Facilities are aging, but maintenance issues are addressed within the resources available.

GOALS

- 1. Research and implement a regional "Cooperative" for the Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery schools (St. Helen, Sts. Cyril & Methodius and St. Mary's). The schools will formally collaborate with one another in the specific areas of planning, marketing and recruitment, public relations, educational enrichment, and development funding. Sharing of special teachers or staff could be coordinated through the Cooperative.**

Strategies

- 1.1 The Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery Cooperative would be established to formally facilitate collaboration and accountability for this joint effort, and provide coordination and assistance for the three schools.
 - 1.2 A description of the role, responsibilities, and authority of the Georgetown/Round Rock Deanery Cooperative will be developed to designate the role, responsibilities and authority of this group.
 - 1.3 Cooperative leadership would be selected from deanery clergy, school leadership, and lay persons with knowledge, appropriate expertise and commitment to Catholic school education in the Deanery. The process for member selection, terms of service, etc. would be outlined in the role description.
 - 1.4 Establish a central budget to provide the necessary funding to accomplish the goals of the Cooperative. Funding should be provided initially through a three-year diocesan grant until Deanery Cooperative development efforts and school budgets can meet the funding needs of the Cooperative. The funding would be used for activities in shared recruitment, marketing, educational enrichment, fund development and program staff sharing. Funds would also be used to provide a part-time assistant principal in the school from which the principal is selected to be the Cooperative leader. Similar models exist in Catholic schools in other dioceses. One of the principals would be identified as the lead principal for the Cooperative. A teacher in this school should be identified as a part-time assistant principal so that the lead principal has time to coordinate and lead the work of the cooperative. The lead principal should meet regularly with the other three principals. Committees of lay people or teachers should be appointed as needed to help carry out Cooperative activities.
- 2. Develop a joint collaborative marketing and recruitment campaign to highlight the value and benefits of Catholic school education in the deanery.**

- 3. Create a development plan or program that shares staffing among the schools and directs development and fundraising efforts as a deanery. These efforts are essential to broadening the financial base of support and relying less on subsidy from the parishes.**
- 4. Investigate the potential for some shared programs and/or staff among the schools language, fine arts, etc.**

St. Helen School – Georgetown

1. Research the feasibility of expanding the PreK-4 program to include a PreK-3 and day care programs to meet the needs of a growing parish community and serve as a potential feeder program for the school.
2. Maintain St. Helen School as a strong, double-section school with full enrollment. Plan on future facilities that would support a quality educational program of that size and meet the other ministry and educational needs of the parish.
3. As other parishes in St. Helen School's enrollment area provide financial support and encourage enrollment at the school, those sending parishes should be invited to have appropriate representation on the school board.

St. Mary's School - Taylor

1. Expand marketing and recruitment efforts in the Hutto, Elgin and Round Rock areas. Explore the growth potential for expanding bus transportation opportunities to make the school more accessible over a wider area.
2. As other parishes in St. Mary's School's enrollment area provide financial support and encourage enrollment at the school, those sending parishes should be invited to have appropriate representation on the school board.
3. Expand the school's fundraising and development efforts to provide for funding that will allow for a reduction in the level of parish subsidy over the next five years. Educate parents on the true cost of education and the role of tuition and development in providing a greater share of the annual budget.

Sts. Cyril and Methodius School – Granger

1. Review the current operating budget preparation, accountability and reporting processes to ensure that the annual budgets are realistically balanced and can be met.
2. Initiate a more formal relationship with St. Helen School and St. Mary's School to provide continuity from 6th grade to middle school for the students. This formal relationship could include welcoming and transition activities at the other schools for parents and students, shared programs, etc.
3. Review the current student-teacher ratios for each grade and investigate options to address the small class sizes; i.e., small Catholic school model, combination classes (with appropriate teacher training to lead this type of classroom structure), etc.

D. Brenham/La Grange Deanery

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Fayette County population was 21,804 in 2000 and is projected to increase by 7,004 people (32%) by 2020. The population in Washington County is projecting growth from 30,373 in 2000 to 35,253 people in 2020, an additional 4,880 people.
2. La Grange city population is estimating an increase of 2,151 people by 2020 for a total of 6,629.
3. The City of Brenham population was 13,507 in 2000 and future growth is estimated at an additional 1,799 people by 2020.
4. Public school enrollment in the La Grange ISD grew by 4% (from 1,197 to 1,241 children) in grades K to 8 from 2001-02 to 2006-07.
5. St. Mary Parish in Brenham has averaged approximately 1,400 registered families over the past five years. Sacred Heart Parish in La Grange averaged about 578 families per year for the past five years.

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. Sacred Heart Catholic School has been very stable from 2001-02 to 2006-07, averaging about 165 students per year, and ranging from 160 to 172 students.
2. Sacred Heart Catholic School is a rural school existing on its own within a special local network and good connections, especially with the public schools.
3. Sacred Heart Catholic School has been receiving some students from Bastrop city following the closure of Sacred Heart School in Austin. This is a 35-40 minute drive for parents.
4. The funding model is one-third of expenses are covered by tuition, one-third by endowment interest/fundraising/grants and one-third by parish subsidy. This puts pressure on a small, aging parish to continue its level of ongoing support. A total of 71% of parish ordinary income was used in 2005-06 for school subsidy.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

1. Low teacher and staff salaries and high parish subsidy are an economic challenge. This school would have to increase tuition significantly to pay higher salaries. Sacred Heart Catholic School has the lowest tuition and starting teacher salary in the Diocese.
2. There is a need to develop a relationship with adjacent parishes in the Diocese of Victoria.
3. Sacred Heart Catholic School is a double-section program, even with a lower enrollment. Administration tries to maintain class size at 15 to 16 per class due to parental expectations. However, the average class size is 13 students. Some of the variation is due to differences in physical classroom size at the present time. Meeting the parent demand of small class size, and balancing that with the economics of operating the school is a challenge. Viable double-section Catholic elementary schools generally have an enrollment above 240 to 250 students.
4. It is difficult to recruit and hire qualified teachers in this rural area.
5. The school needs to empower lay leadership and ownership beyond parents with children enrolled at Sacred Heart Catholic School.
6. Leadership in the Brenham area (Washington County) is looking to the possibility of a new Catholic school (grades 7 to 12) in that area of the Deanery.

GOALS

- 1. Continue Sacred Heart Catholic School as a parish-based school, but actively involve other sending parishes in supporting the school. Capitalize on the relationships in place between Sacred Heart Parish and the other local churches to share the value of the parish school.**
- 2. Review the current double-section structure of the school in light of the school's enrollment trend, low salaries, and high parish subsidy. Investigate the possibility of creating a strong single-section school.**
- 3. Network with other local Catholic parishes and Christian churches in the vicinity of La Grange and current/potential sending parishes in the Diocese of Victoria.**
- 4. Research the potential student market in Bastrop and Bastrop County, including the possibility of providing some type of transportation.**

E. Waco Deanery

BACKGROUND

1. Catholic education in Waco and West has long been the mission of St. Louis Parish and St. Mary Parish. Reicher Catholic High School, diocesan in governance, is practically a regional high school serving graduates mostly of St. Louis Catholic School.
2. Through the planning process, it became apparent the commitment to St. Louis Catholic School is very high among the leadership and parishioners of St. Louis Parish. The school as a ministry to the region has been strengthened and sustained by a high level of parish ownership. The pastoral leadership at St. Louis Catholic School has always given strong support to Catholic education.

With these realities in mind, the recommendations that follow affirm the strengths of the present structure, and encourage change to make that structure even more successful in providing Catholic education in the region.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Between 1990 and 2000, McLennan County grew by 12.9%, or 24,394 persons. The City of Waco accounted for 41% of this growth, or 10,136 persons.
2. Between 2005 and 2025, McLennan County is projected to grow by 9% in the first decade, and 8% in the second decade, a total increase of 38,798 persons. The City of Waco is projected to grow by 6.7% in the first decade, and 6.3% in the second decade, a total increase of 15,300 persons. Waco will have a declining share of the population as more than half of the growth will be in suburban cities and unincorporated areas.
3. The City of West had only 2,700 persons in 2000. The City is growing slowly. St. Mary's Catholic School draws much of its enrollment from rural areas.

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. K to 8th grade enrollment at St. Louis Catholic School declined from 422 in 2001 to 310 in 2006, a loss of 112 students or 26%. With some increase in 2007-08, the decrease was 93 students since 2001.
2. St. Louis Catholic School has 29 classrooms, enough to support 3 classes in every grade.
3. K to 8th grade enrollment at St. Mary's Catholic School in West declined from 158 in 2003 to 117 in 2006, a loss of 41 students or 26%. With one class per grade, average class size was 13.0 for 2006-07.
4. St. Mary's Catholic School had 105 empty seats for 2006-07. It appears a strong kindergarten enrollment of 24 to 26 per class has diminished to 16 to 17 per class.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School

1. To attract students, both St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School need to deliver quality programs that exceed the competition and maintain an excellent reputation.
2. Both St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School serve multiple parishes. While St. Louis is a parish school, it depends on a wider region for enrollment. Waco has 8 Catholic parishes in the immediate area.

3. Reicher Catholic High School depends on St. Louis Catholic School for 86% of the 9th grade class. Declines in enrollment at St. Louis Catholic School could lead to a decline in enrollment for Reicher Catholic High School.
4. An ongoing challenge is operating a seamless Pre-K to 12 grade program of Catholic education, especially when a decision is not to the advantage of both schools.
5. Reicher Catholic High School has plans to complete phase 5 of its facility plan. Much has been done in recent years to improve facilities.
6. Reicher Catholic High School has cultivated a strong donor base as the school has successfully raised over \$5.0 million in recent years. New leadership brings an opportunity to keep building the momentum of support.

GOALS

- 1. St. Louis Catholic School and St. Mary's Catholic School will remain governed by their respective parishes, but function with a mission and ministry to provide quality Catholic education to all the parishes and to the wider community. Reicher Catholic High School will remain governed as a diocesan high school, but function to serve all the parishes of the Waco Deanery.**

Strategies

- 1.1 Develop an aggressive and collaborative marketing plan to promote Catholic school education in the Waco Deanery. Pursue a marketing strategy for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.
- 1.2 Reach out to all parishes in the region through a sustained intentional effort of communication, marketing and service. Develop ownership for Catholic education among all the parishes.
- 2. St. Louis Catholic School should market and recruit to ensure two sections per grade for Kindergarten to Grade 8.**
- 3. In alignment with goals of the Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools, all parishes in the school service area of St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School will support Catholic education. A new relationship between the parishes and the schools will be built upon a shared mission for Catholic education, a spirit of cooperation to promote the value of Catholic education, encouraging families to enroll and financial support.**

Strategies

- 3.1 The parishes in the school service area to support the schools should include: Sacred Heart Parish; St. Francis on the Brazos Parish; St. Jerome Parish; St. John the Baptist Parish; St. Joseph Parish; St. Mary, Church of the Assumption Parish.
- 3.2 Using the template set forth by the Diocese, establish a formula for financial support for Catholic education. Pastors, school leaders and the Catholic Schools Office together should develop the formula for the subsidy.
- 3.3 A joint committee of St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School should determine how the subsidy should be collected and allocated between the two schools.
- 3.4 The supporting parishes should provide access for the schools to parishioners for marketing, recruitment, public relations and development efforts.

- 3.5 A regularly scheduled meeting of all pastors of supporting parishes, school principals, and Office of Catholic Schools leadership should be convened to discuss the schools, their plans, and to maintain open lines of communication. These meetings could focus on vision for the schools, Catholic identity and finances.
- 3.6 Pastors of supporting parishes should be invited to participate in school life by sharing in the liturgical and sacramental life of the schools.
- 3.7 The schools should collaborate with the supporting parishes to identify service opportunities where students and school families could become active and support parish ministries in the community.
- 3.8 Subsidy from supporting parishes should be used primarily for tuition assistance to directly benefit students and families, or designated school programs.
- 3.9 The subsidy formula should be agreed upon in writing and signed by the pastors, approved by parish finance councils and approved by the Bishop.
- 3.10 The schools should be accountable to the parishes providing support by means of published annual reports.
- 3.11 Invite representation from supporting parishes on the St. Louis Catholic School Board.

4. The collaborative spirit of St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School will be formalized into a mutual working relationship in the following areas: marketing and recruitment, strategic planning, development/institutional advancement, transportation, curriculum planning, technology planning, sharing of staff and sharing of other resources. When possible and appropriate, St. Mary's Catholic School-West will be invited and included in collaborative efforts with Reicher Catholic High School and St. Louis Catholic School.

Strategies

- 4.1 Schedule joint meetings of the three school boards at least twice each year to shape the vision for PreK-12 Catholic education in the Waco Deanery.
 - Provide reports on collaboration among the schools and supporting parishes. Set goals for new collaborative efforts in the following year.
 - Conduct in-service to reinforce the role and responsibilities of the boards.
 - Participate in shared strategic planning to develop an overall vision for Catholic education in the Deanery.
- 4.2 Establish common committees to support the planning efforts of the schools in the following areas:
 - Marketing and recruitment
 - Strategic planning
 - Development/Institutional Advancement
 - Curriculum planning
 - Technology planning
- 4.3 Set up a joint Curriculum Committee comprised of representative faculty and administration from the three schools to meet at least twice each year for curriculum planning and development. Work to build continuity among the schools, raise the quality of the academic program and implement the goals of the strategic plan.

- 4.4 Collaborative professional development opportunities for faculty and staff members of the three schools should grow from the planning and implementation efforts of the Curriculum Committee.
 - 4.5 Enhance school programs through sharing of faculty, staff and other resources in areas schools may not be able to provide as well on their own. Areas to research are:
 - School nurse
 - Technology staff
 - Fine/Performing Arts staff
 - Personal counseling
 - 4.6 Research the potential for bus transportation to serve the schools and provide the means to reach into the current and projected growth areas to attract and bring more students to the schools.
- 5. St. Louis Catholic School administration and preschool director will develop a long-term relationship with leadership of St. Jerome Parish preschool and St. Francis On The Brazos Parish preschool that will connect preschool families with the Kindergarten and elementary school program at St. Louis Catholic School and the secondary school program at Reicher Catholic High School.**

Strategies

- 5.1 Market all preschool programs together as feeder programs to St. Louis School.
 - 5.2 Adopt a similar curriculum and agree on similar standards.
 - 5.3 Directors should meet at least once or twice each year to discuss program offerings, cost, potential opportunities to share resources and best practices, possible grants or funding available for early childhood education, etc.
- 6. St. Louis Catholic School will review and revise its tuition policy to reflect the reality that students come from multiple Catholic parishes.**

Strategy

- 6.1 The practice of charging a lower rate for parish families and a higher rate for non-parish families should change. Instead, the lower rate should be extended to all Catholic families who are registered in supporting parishes. The criteria for qualification should be agreed to by all parishes and applied consistently among parishes.
- 7. St. Louis Catholic School and Reicher Catholic High School will include St. Mary's Catholic School-West as part of the Waco Deanery collaboration for Catholic education.**

Strategy

- 7.1 Special care must be taken to ensure St. Mary's is fully represented and an equal player in new collaborative efforts and activities.
- 8. Reicher Catholic High School will begin the process to develop a new three to five year strategic plan.**

F. San Marcos Deanery

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Hays County is the 3rd greatest population growth of the 25 diocesan counties. Total population growth is projected at 35% from 2005 to 2015 and 28% from 2015 to 2025 (41,800 and 45,586 persons respectively).
2. The key growth cities are Buda (235%, 5,638 persons from 2000 to 2010; 74%, 5,929 persons from 2010 to 2020), Kyle (304%, 16,143 persons, and 45%, 9,669 persons), and San Marcos (41%, 14,081 persons, and 43%, 21,092 persons). Dripping Springs population is also projected to grow by 244% and 75% for the same two decades.
3. All child-age group populations are projected to increase in the county.
4. From 2001-02 to 2006-07, public school enrollment increased by 26% (3,457 students) in the county's school districts. The majority of students were in the Hays ISD (2,834 students) which grew by 52%.
5. Parish families have increased 43% (3,497 families) since 2000.

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. The new elementary school, Santa Cruz Catholic School, opened as a single-section school in fall of 2007 with 27 students in grades K to 2. There is little space at the current site to expand beyond a potential of 220 to 230 students in grades K to 8.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

1. Given the projected growth in south Austin and Hays County, the potential for a new Catholic high school in the future might be considered.
2. Continuing to build the Kindergarten to 8th grade enrollment toward a capacity of 200 to 225 students will be the key priority for Santa Cruz School.
3. While Santa Cruz Parish may be able to support an elementary school for the future, it will be important to involve other local parishes in supporting and sending students.

GOALS

1. **Utilize the recommendations in the “Financial Plan for Schools” in the Strategic Plan to broaden the support for Santa Cruz School among other parish communities in the area.**
2. **Develop and implement an aggressive marketing and recruitment program in the Buda and Kyle areas for Santa Cruz School to build strong enrollment and raise the viability of the school.**
3. **Research the potential for an additional new elementary school to meet the projected growth in the San Marcos area. Consider the possibility that any new school in this area should be established as a school serving multiple parishes in the region and supported by them. Features of the new model will be:**
 - **Board of limited jurisdiction**
 - **Defined roles for pastors, principal and school board**
 - **Qualified board members who serve the school on behalf of the sponsoring parishes**
 - **Parish subsidy agreement among sending parishes**
 - **Facility use agreement with the host parish**

G. Killeen/Temple Deanery

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. The population of Bell County is projected to grow 41,842 from 2005 to 2015, and again 39,010 from 2015 to 2025.
2. Most population growth in Bell County is among Black/African-American persons or Hispanic persons. The total White population is relatively unchanged over a 20-year period.
3. Between 2010 and 2015 the school-age population (5 to 14 year olds) in Bell County is projected to peak. This population will be increasingly diverse.
4. The City of Temple has been experiencing steady growth over the past several decades. Between 1970 and 2000 the City grew at an average annual rate of 1.64%, from 33,431 to 54,514. (*source: Temple Comprehensive Plan*)
5. The City of Temple has been declining as a share of the County's overall population, which reflects the increasing growth occurring outside the city limits. (*source: Temple Comprehensive Plan*)
6. The City of Temple is basing its comprehensive plan on round-number population assumptions of 61,000 persons in 2010; 66,000 in 2020; and 70,000 in 2030. (*source: Temple Comprehensive Plan*)
7. The City of Temple has an older population. Sixteen percent of the population is 65 years of age or older, which is almost double the average for Bell County (9%) and Texas (10%). (*source: Temple Comprehensive Plan*)

SCHOOL DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

1. St. Mary's Catholic School in Temple occupies a newly renovated public school facility. The parish religious education building is now being used for 5th grade.
2. Enrollment at St. Mary's Catholic School in 2006-07 is 251 for grades K to 8. Because the school maintains two classes for every grade, enrollment is at 59% of the seats available; that is 173 empty seats.
3. Enrollment at St. Joseph Catholic School had been holding in the range of 110 to 120 students for grades PreK to 5. In 2006-07, it dropped below 100 to 97. Class size is 8 to 18 per homeroom.
4. The highest grade at St. Joseph Catholic School is 5th grade. About 75% of 5th grade students will go on to St. Mary's Catholic School in Temple for 6th grade.
5. St. Joseph Catholic School is not located in the growing or affluent part of the Killeen area. Most families come from Killeen, and a handful come from surrounding communities like Harker Heights.
6. The presence of Fort Hood produces transience in the population affecting mostly St. Joseph Catholic School and less so St. Mary's Catholic School. For St. Joseph Catholic School, 30% to 40% of families may not live in the area 5 years from now.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Holy Trinity Catholic High School

1. Retaining students in Catholic education from St. Mary's Catholic School and St. Joseph Catholic School is a challenge and opportunity. Barriers to continuing with high school are tuition and transportation.
2. Holy Trinity High School is near capacity at its current site. The school is leasing a facility from the public schools.
3. Holy Trinity High School has identified a need to raise \$10 million to relocate to a new campus, enhance educational opportunities and fund an endowment.

St. Joseph Catholic School

1. St. Joseph Catholic School does not have 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Some students do not continue their Catholic education after the 5th grade.
2. Changing demographics and the possibility of a new parish could make St. Joseph an inner city parish. The school needs to draw enrollment from a wide area to fill every seat.
3. The financial situation for St. Joseph Parish is stabilizing. The parish and school have struggled with financial concerns in recent times. Limited fundraising was done in the past. Support from neighboring parishes has waned.
4. Public schools in Killeen have exceptionally high levels of public funding. St. Joseph Catholic School may be able to qualify for more of these funds.
5. St. Joseph Catholic School is housed in a building that was originally constructed as a school without walls. Classroom walls were added for 2007-08. The school made accommodations to work with the layout of the facility, including building walls where possible. The school building is not laid out according to current school design practices.

St. Mary's Catholic School

1. Located in an area of the city with lower income families and the moderate growth projected for the city of Temple, St. Mary's Catholic School will have to aggressively market itself to sustain enrollment and market share.
2. The school plans to hire a new part-time person to build the development program and improve public relations.

GOALS – KILLEEN

- 1. Even with a plan in process to construct an additional parish/school building, it is important to determine if the best long-range plan is for St. Joseph School, Killeen, to remain on the site of St. Joseph Parish, or relocate to a new site strategically chosen to serve growth areas and all the parishes in the area.**
- 2. Include in the master plan for facilities classrooms and ancillary space to support a 6 through 8th grade program. This is not a decision to open these grades, rather a plan to provide for this option in the future should it be feasible.**
- 3. An aggressive marketing and recruitment program will be funded and ongoing to raise visibility of the school, strengthen a public reputation, attract more students from a wider area, and fill classes. This is essential to sustaining**

long-term viability and maintaining full enrollment when student turnover can be as much as one-third of the enrollment in a particular year.

4. **Whether moving or staying, the facilities for St. Joseph School need a major capital investment. If the school remains on the parish site, build a new school building with modern classrooms and convert the existing building to other uses for the parish and school.**
5. **Transition St. Joseph School from a single parish Catholic elementary school to a Catholic school serving all the parishes in the region and to being supported by them.**
6. **When enrollment in K to 5th grade is consistently more than 20 per grade, study the feasibility of opening 6th, 7th and 8th grades.**
7. **Use recruitment, tuition aid and transportation services to retain students in Catholic education after 6th grade by attending St. Mary's School; and then to continue their Catholic education at Holy Trinity High School. Work to develop and strengthen a long-term relationship with St. Mary's School and Holy Trinity High School.**

GOALS – TEMPLE

1. **Consider the possibility that St. Mary's School will transition from a parish school to a Catholic school serving multiple parishes in the region and supported by them.**

Supporting parishes should be: Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Luke, St. Mary and St. Stephen-Salado. Features of the new model would be:

- Board of limited jurisdiction
 - Redefined roles for pastors, principal and new school board
 - Qualified board members who work for the good of the school on behalf of the sponsoring parishes
 - Parish subsidy agreement
 - Facility use agreement with St. Mary Parish
2. **Form a development plan that coordinates fundraising activities across the deanery.**
 3. **Develop a marketing and recruitment plan that promotes and celebrates Catholic school education in the greater Killeen-Temple area. The elementary schools and Holy Trinity Catholic High School will work together to form and execute a plan. Special attention will be given to retaining 5th grade students at St. Joseph School into 6th grade, and 8th grade students at St. Mary's School into Holy Trinity.**
 4. **Make additional tuition assistance available through St. Mary's School and Holy Trinity School to increase the percent of families who remain in Catholic school and to serve additional families. Investigate a scholarship plan that would help families from all parishes.**
 5. **St. Mary's School will study reasons why students are not enrolling in Catholic schools. Form an aggressive marketing and recruitment plan to see if enrollment potential is there to support 44 to 48 students per grade. Take**

steps to manage enrollment, as it may not be financially feasible to continue supporting 27 to 30 students per grade and maintain two classes in each grade.

6. **St. Mary's Parish and School will move ahead to form a master facility plan that includes: new gym/multi-purpose center, renovated junior high classrooms, parish hall, and other upgrades to support parish and school. Fundraising will be coordinated between parish and school, and possibly with the deanery.**
7. **St. Mary's School has adequate land and facilities to support a competitive middle school program. 7th and 8th grades will remain with St. Mary's School and every effort will be made to provide an excellent program with an outstanding reputation that is fully enrolled. Add advance placement courses in subjects like science and math to enhance the program.**
8. **Move forward with support for a capital campaign to build new school facilities at the new site owned by Holy Trinity High School.**
9. **Consider the possibility of inviting Holy Trinity High School to become a diocesan high school, separately incorporated with a board of limited jurisdiction. This will ensure stronger ties with the parishes and elementary schools, moving toward a vision for PreK through 12th grade Catholic education in the Killeen/Temple Deanery.**

H. Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery

OBSERVATIONS

1. Population projections for most of the counties in this deanery are low through 2025. Burnet County population is the only Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery county with a projection of significance: from 34,147 people in 2000 to approximately 52,000 people by 2020 (52% increase).
2. Burnet city population projection is low: from a 2000 population of 4,735 people to 6,668 people by 2020. The Bertram city population was 1,122 people in 2000 and is projected to grow by only 402 people (1,524 total) by 2020. Marble Falls shows a projection of an additional 1,402 people by 2020 for a total of 6,361.
3. Lampasas County population was 17,762 in 2000. Projections to 2020 estimate an increase of an additional 4,834 people by 2020.
4. Burnet ISD enrollment for grades K to 8 increased by only 14% (276 students) from 2001-02 to 2006-07, for a total of 2,252. Other school districts in the Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery experienced minimal growth or some decline.
5. The number of infant baptisms in the deanery has declined overall by 29% since 2000. St. John Parish, Marble Falls, averaged 59 baptisms per year for the past four years and St. Mary Parish, Lampasas, averaged 32 baptisms. Our Mother of Sorrows Parish, Burnet, averaged 5 baptisms during this time period, while Holy Cross Parish in Bertram averaged 25 baptisms per year.
6. The number of students enrolled in parish Religious Education programs is low throughout the Deanery, with only four parishes enrolling more than 100 children.
7. There are no Catholic schools in this deanery at the present time.

8. Parish subsidy for existing Catholic schools in the Diocese that have a similar rural experience (low population base and Catholic population) as the Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery impacts parish revenue. The percentage of parish ordinary income that is used for school subsidy in these situations ranges from 38% to 71%.
9. While some growth is projected for the eastern area of the Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery, the population base may not be large enough to provide sufficient enrollment for a new school.
10. Two areas in this deanery have expressed interest in a new Catholic school: Burnet/Bertram and Lampasas. Given the demographic projections and Catholic population trends, planning a new school(s) in this deanery would be difficult.

GOALS

1. **Demographic and Catholic population trends and projections show that a new Catholic elementary school in either the Lampasas or Burnet/Bertram areas may not be feasible in the next five to ten years. If, in the future, the size of the community and parish populations warrants a new Catholic school feasibility study, it will be a joint effort of several parishes in proximity to one another.**
2. **Study the potential for offering Catholic school education by means of a non-traditional model. (cf. “Growth of Schools and New Schools,” Lampasas/Marble Falls Deanery, 1.0, page 23)**