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Education has always been a core mission for the Archdiocese of Newark since 1853. Our schools were born at a time when many Catholics were newly arrived immigrants. They belonged to urban parishes that reflected the language and culture of their congregants. The development of Catholic grammar schools was a natural outgrowth of this process. In a world where Catholicism was at times violently opposed, our schools offered a safe environment where students received a rigorous education in both academics and their Faith.

When the children and grandchildren of these immigrants migrated to the suburbs, they took their Catholic institutions with them. From the perspective of enrollment, the 1960’s represent a high point for Catholic education in our Archdiocese.

Today our schools continue to offer a superior education, infused with Faith. The results of the recent TerraNova achievement tests found our students consistently achieving above national performance levels. Still, social and economic changes have put Catholic education at risk. Enrollment has decreased, as costs have steadily increased.

Fewer families are willing and able to pay Catholic school tuition. Children who in the past might have gone to parochial schools now attend taxpayer-supported Charter Schools. Aging buildings need ongoing maintenance. Effective education requires expensive, new technology. Attracting outstanding lay administrators and teaching staff requires paying competitive salaries. Pastors, with fewer assistant parochial vicars — if any — to help them, find issues relating to parish schools taking ever more of their time.

In a world where Catholicism was at times violently opposed, our schools offered a safe environment where students received a rigorous education in both academics and their Faith.
These are serious challenges not just here in New Jersey, but throughout the country. The situation is so severe that some have predicted the end of Catholic education.

We, the members of the Catholic Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Newark, could not disagree more. We believe the time is right for a renaissance in Catholic education.

In June 2011, Newark Archbishop John J. Myers appointed a 33-member Catholic Education Commission (CEC). The Archbishop acted in response to requests from pastors and principals for a plan to promote a sustainable model for economic and academic excellence that would characterize our Catholic elementary schools. Those selected for membership on the CEC have extensive experience in higher education, business and school governance. Several pastors, as well as consultants from research firms and foundations, participated. A number of parents were also included. Additional members were drawn from the Archdiocesan Schools Office, elementary school communities and local universities.

Our goal was to create a multi-year strategic plan that provides elementary schools with a “roadmap for success.” We were tasked to determine not just what needs to be done, but how it could be accomplished. Our work was data-driven, and our conclusions are based on extensive empirical analysis.

The Commission met as a group more than a dozen times. We also participated in subcommittees that explored 8 areas central to the future of Catholic schools: Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Governance, Leadership, Enrollment Management, Marketing, Finance and Facilities. Parental Choice and Development were added as special initiatives.

Cumulatively, these subcommittees met more than 50 times over a nine-month period, utilizing both internal and external resources. These included Seton Hall University, as well as Meitler Consultants, a national leader in strategic planning for dioceses, schools and parishes. We carefully studied the experiences of other dioceses, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Wichita and Bridgeport. In addition, focus groups were conducted to assure input from all stakeholders.

We found that Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Newark can do more than simply survive, but can thrive in the coming years. Doing so will require fundamental changes in governance and leadership. It also means embracing new enrollment and financial management strategies, along with consistent marketing, fundraising and development methods. The introduction of state legislation offering the promise of parental choice could potentially have a major positive impact on some urban schools. Yet whatever happens, our schools must never lose their distinctive Catholic Identity.
The title of our report to the Archbishop, *Lighting the Way: Building a New Era in Catholic Education* reflects our optimism and our hope.

We found that Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Newark can do more than simply survive, but can thrive in the coming years.
Catholic Identity is what makes our schools unique.
Since the earliest days of Catholic education, the primary purpose of Catholic schools has been clear. Our schools were founded to share the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. This commitment should affect and influence every aspect of our schools.

The Catholic Identity of our schools contributes to forming a Christ-centered faith community that helps form the minds, bodies, and spirits of students and leads them to a life of service to others. It sets our schools apart from public and private schools, as well as other religious-based institutions.

Catholic Identity is what makes our schools unique.

Catholic Identity also provides our schools with a competitive advantage. Our schools today attract a religiously-diverse population that values character development, moral formation and a commitment to serving others.

After surveying programs across the Archdiocese, this Commission affirms the need for religious instruction to be held to the same high academic standards as all other academic subjects. As we move forward we believe it is essential that our Catholic faith and values are integrated into and permeate all course work.

It is essential to cultivate and sustain a safe environment in which Gospel teachings can infuse every subject, co-curricular program, and personal interaction. Promoting parental involvement is equally important. Parents are the first and primary educators of their children in our faith. Catholic schools provide parents with an opportunity to grow in their own faith, as we work together to nurture their children’s faith.

Catholic Identity is a way of life to be cherished and shared, just as Jesus shared faith with his disciples and friends. It is in that spirit that we recommend the following goals and strategies to deepen and strengthen the Catholic Identity of our schools.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend every Catholic school have a clearly communicated Mission Statement. It should include a commitment to Gospel values, faith formation, academic excellence, and Christian service.
   - The foundation for all activities, the Mission Statement will be highly visible throughout the school, and referenced in all school documents. Everyone should know and understand it.
   - The Mission Statement will regularly be reviewed and renewed by the school community.

2. We recommend Catholic schools in the Archdiocese provide a religious studies program that is academically sound, and set within a total curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.
   - Religious education curriculum and instruction will meet the requirements of the Archdiocese of Newark, as will all faculty members who teach religion.
   - Religion classes will be an integrated part of the total academic program.
   - Scriptures and Catholic tradition will be used to help students think critically and morally about the world around them.
   - Catholic culture and faith symbols will be expressed throughout the school.
   - The teaching and practice of the Church's social teachings and the dignity of life will be vital elements of the curriculum.
   - Schools will provide and participate in vocation awareness programs.
   - Curriculum and programs will be annually assessed.

3. We recommend all schools should engage in outside activities and service that contribute to student faith formation, as well as age appropriate service projects.
   - Every student will learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the
After surveying programs across the Archdiocese, this Commission affirms the need for religious instruction to be held to the same high academic standards as all other academic subjects.

Catholic Identity also provides our schools with a competitive advantage. Our schools today attract a religiously-diverse population that values commitment to serving others.

- Students will participate in age appropriate programs to deepen their faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.

4. We recommend adult faith formation, including participation in Christian service, be undertaken in all schools.

- The administrative team, faculty, and staff will participate in retreats and other spiritual experiences, and will visibly support the faith life of the school.
- Schools will assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in their faith development, to deepen their knowledge and their practice of our faith.
- All adults in the school community will be invited to participate in Christian service programs.

5. We recommend the Archdiocesan Schools Office be responsible for providing a dynamic spiritual formation program to the administrative team of the schools.

- The Archdiocesan Schools Office will provide a Catholic leadership formation program to assist new hires, ongoing spiritual support to school boards, as well as leadership support and training to pastors, priests, deacons and seminarians who have an association with Catholic schools.

6. We recommend the administrative team at each school partner with the parish religious education offices and the Archdiocesan Catechetical Office.

7. We recommend the Archdiocesan Evangelization Office be part of building Catholic identity, to reinforce the value of Catholic schools in faith formation.
Seven Archdiocesan elementary schools were recognized by the United States Department of Education as 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools.
Academic Excellence

The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Newark have a long and proud history of providing students with an excellent academic program in a faith-centered environment.

Commitment to academic excellence, and faithfulness to Catholic doctrine and values, have and will continue to be defining elements.

The curriculum of the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Newark adheres to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. It is also well-positioned to meet the rigor of emerging national Common Core State Standards.

TerraNova, a national achievement test based on nationwide curriculum standards, is given annually to assess the academic achievement and skills of our students. Our schools are Middle States accredited and the results of these tests affirm the educational excellence of our schools. In the latest test, students in Archdiocesan schools scored above the national average in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies – every subject area tested by TerraNova.

Out of 14 New Jersey schools recognized by the United States Department of Education as 2011 National Blue Ribbon Schools, seven were Archdiocesan elementary schools.

Unfortunately, declining student enrollment has resulted in shrinking revenues placing all aspects of our schools at risk. The lack of a common curriculum, along with differing teacher standards and expectations, along with a need to institutionalize accountability, are challenges we are determined to address directly.

This Commission believes that the academic success of our students is the responsibility of everyone within the school community. We must all work together to create an environment of excellence in which children from diverse backgrounds with a range of learning styles and abilities can flourish creatively and intellectually.

Students in Archdiocesan schools scored above the national average in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend that evidence-based best practices be incorporated as part of an overall revision and update of the curriculum in all elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. All schools are expected to provide students with a thorough educational experience that adheres to high, clearly articulated academic standards accredited by a nationally recognized agency.

- The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Instruction and Assessment will guide the ongoing review, revision, and implementation of subject specific curriculum maps based on rigorous academic standards and assessment of student achievement data.
- Research-based practices will be implemented that promote critical thinking, problem solving and other essential cognitive and social skills.
- Schools that successfully implement research-based best practices will be identified to serve as professional learning labs for teachers from other schools.
- Educational practices that utilize current and emerging technology will be researched and implemented.
- Staffing and assignment of responsibilities within the Archdiocesan Schools Office will be assessed to ensure adequate personnel to implement curriculum and technology initiatives.
- Sources of funding will be identified and pursued for seminars and in-school support for the implementation of best practices, as well as for a spotlight school to model digital learning.

2. We recommend that all professional staff of the Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Newark be state-certified educators who possess the knowledge, skills and disposition to create and maintain a productive and vibrant learning environment.

- New instruments for teacher evaluation and accountability will be designed and implemented throughout the Archdiocese.
- Improved teacher development, training and coaching are essential. Educators will be engaged in ongoing professional development that improves the learning of all students and adheres to New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and Professional Development Standards for New Jersey Educators.
- Grade level curriculum maps will be created by teachers to provide relevant examples for the infusion of Catholic content into each subject area.
- Online forums will be established to facilitate professional dialogue and collaborative learning among educators.
- The current mentoring program for new teachers will be evaluated, and necessary changes made, to emphasize a Catholic identity throughout. A program to train new mentoring teachers will be incorporated.
- Partnerships will be established with high

We must all work together to create an environment of excellence in which children from diverse backgrounds with a range of learning styles and abilities can flourish creatively and intellectually.
schools, colleges, and universities, to develop programs and strategies to deepen teacher content knowledge in curricular areas, especially mathematics and science.

3. We recommend that the administrators and principals of the Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Newark have deepened accountability for the academic progress of each student.

• Each school will be required to formulate a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) goal for improved student achievement that will be used to assess school performance.

4. We recommend that all Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese of Newark extend learning beyond the classroom, providing students with co-curricular programs and opportunities that broaden their cultural experiences, and support the development of each student’s interests and abilities.

• Programs will be developed and implemented at the local level — service learning, clubs, music and fine arts activities, athletics programs, peer tutoring — that provide students with rich and varied opportunities to enhance the goals and objectives of the curriculum.
• Technology-based resources — such as virtual field trips, webinars, and online forums — will be utilized to expose students to the global community, and deepen their appreciation of world cultures and the differences of others.
• Innovative teaching and learning methods, incorporating digital media and technology, will be used to supplement traditional teaching techniques.
• A grants writer will be utilized to establish a network of sponsors to help fund innovative activities.

The curriculum of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Newark is well-positioned to meet the rigors of emerging National Common Core State Standards.
This Commission recommends a change from the parish model, which has been the norm for generations, to a new regional model.
Governance

For generations, Catholic schools nationwide have been centered on local parishes. Pastors and priests headed the schools; the religious of the parish taught the classes; the children of the parish filled the seats. The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Newark were no different, and for generations this model led to thriving and successful schools.

Today, however, a rising number of laity in leadership positions and the dissolution of the parish model in many neighborhoods call for a reevaluation of existing governance models. An innovative approach must be taken to ensure the continued success and sustainability of Catholic education.

This Commission believes successful governance should encourage and guarantee the quality of the education provided, while nurturing the leadership of the school. The responsibility for the growth, development, marketing, and financial resources of the school community rests in the hands of its governing board.

This Commission recommends a change from the parish model, which has been the norm for generations, to a new archdiocesan school advisory model.

The archdiocesan model is a bold new direction in governance and leadership. It relies more heavily on local lay leaders to ensure the fiscal successes of every school. At the same time it maintains a commitment to the highest academic standards, and a strict adherence to sound Catholic identity. Governance changes have already been implemented in many different Archdioceses, including Los Angeles, Boston, and New York.

The new archdiocesan model for Catholic schools involves all parishes in the support of Catholic education. Whether or not a parish is associated with a specific school, all parishioners will have access to a quality Catholic education. It also supports fair distribution of resources, everything from teachers’ salaries to technology. This will provide more consistency across the Archdiocese.

The new model for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Newark is a “call to the laity”. It is a collaborative model that engages and empowers parents and lay constituents to have a voice in the future of their schools. The new model is always mindful of the authority and teachings of the Church, and at the same time it provides an opportunity for the laity’s greater involvement in the school strategic planning, finance, facilities, and marketing and development activities.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend the creation of an archdiocesan school model, with a consistent governance structure.

- Membership on the School Advisory Board will be recommended by the pastor and principal and approved by the Archbishop.
- In-service education about the governance model will be provided.
- The Regional Bishops and Pastors will collaborate to foster greater understanding of the governance model.

2. We recommend each parish of the Archdiocese of Newark be affiliated with and financially support Catholic schools.

- Every parish will be affiliated with a Catholic school. Every parish will be responsible to contribute to Catholic schools.
- Pastors will receive orientation to the archdiocesan governance model, and their responsibilities to the schools.
- Print materials will be developed for parish and community education, to assist in understanding the governance model and the responsibilities of parishes within this new structure.
- The Archdiocesan Schools Finance Office, the Superintendent’s Office, the Regional Bishops, Pastors and Principals will be in dialogue concerning new assessment structures for Catholic school education.

3. We recommend a one-tiered board structure to govern the Catholic schools, which includes a Board of Members.

- A governance structure will be defined.
- By-laws and Letters of Incorporation will be developed.
- The structure of the Board of Members and the appointment process, along with the structure of the School Advisory Board and the appointment process, will be determined.
- Board manuals will be developed for the School Advisory Board.
- In-service education will be provided for the Pastors, Boards and Principals, for a common understanding of the governance model.
- A timeline for implementation of the new governance structure will be determined.

4. We recommend an organizational structure be established for each county that will include an Associate Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Finance team and a Marketing/Advancement team.

- Position descriptions will be written to guide the Finance team, and a Director of Marketing/Advancement.
- A schematic for the governance model will be created.
- Lines of authority will be established between and among the Office of Superintendent of Schools, administrators, and principals.
- Lines of communication will be established between and among the Office of Superintendent of Schools, the School Advisory Boards and the principals.
- In-service education for the common understanding of the governance model will be provided.
The regional model is a bold new direction in leadership. It relies more heavily on local lay leaders to ensure the fiscal successes of every school.

5. We recommend that each School Advisory Board create strategic plans be for their school.
   - In-service education on the development and writing of a strategic plan will be provided.
   - Strategic plans will be created, shared with the community and constituencies, and implemented.

6. We recommend the role of the Archdiocesan School Council be redefined in the face of the new governance model.
   - The current structure of the Archdiocesan School Council will be examined given the new governance model. A new Constitution and new by-laws will be written.
   - In-service education will be provided all constituents, with information and structures shared with the whole community.

The regionalization of Catholic schools involves all parishes in the support of Catholic education.
Ultimately, success depends on each elementary school in the Archdiocese employing high-quality leaders.
Leadership

The success of Catholic schools is critical to the Church’s commitment to passing on the knowledge, practice and traditions of Catholicism to future generations. Historically, Catholic schools readily met this challenge, providing an outstanding education that prepared our children to become productive, socially responsible members of our community.

The climate of education, both Catholic and secular, has changed significantly. Increasing challenges and demands have been placed upon Catholic school leadership. The education marketplace is competitive, and parents have increasingly taken on the role of consumer. The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Newark will continue to provide a competitive academic alternative that maintains the Catholic values and traditions.

School leaders – both the Archdiocesan Schools Office and principals – are central to success.

This Commission undertook a comprehensive review of the best practices being adopted in schools across the country to assess, develop, support, attract and maintain top talent as school leaders. This review identified four areas for the Archdiocese to focus on in improving the quality of its school leaders:

• Greater emphasis on assessment and accountability
• Greater focus on selection and measurement of professional development offerings
• A more robust compensation strategy
• Improvements in talent identification and hiring

Successful Catholic school leaders depend on collaboration with the pastor, boards and local school community as they strive to promote excellence and accountability, working under the guidance and support of the Archdiocesan Schools Office.

Ultimately, success depends on each elementary school in the Archdiocese employing high-quality leaders. They in turn must either establish or maintain strong Catholic identity and high academic achievement, along with enrollment and financial sustainability.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend the Archdiocesan Schools Office adopt and implement an assessment process for school leaders that will create accountability for school success.

   • Position descriptions will be adopted that clarify the respective roles of the School Advisory Boards and principals.
   • A working committee will be created to adopt an assessment tool that evaluates performance objectives identified in the job descriptions. This includes meeting specific goals for enrollment, academic outcomes, and other critical areas.
   • School leadership will be evaluated annually. Contract renewals and compensation for school leaders will be linked to performance outcomes.
   • An assessment process for teachers will be implemented which clarifies expectations, sets specific goals, and links contract renewal and compensation to performance.

2. We recommend that high quality professional development offerings targeted at improving the effectiveness of school leaders be researched, centralized, made available, and tracked by the Archdiocesan Schools Office.

   • The Archdiocesan Schools Office will identify internal and external program options for school leaders, and create a database to centralize the availability of information on these programs.
   • Professional development participation will be tracked. Success criteria will be identified and evaluated to determine whether or not the program affected change in the school leader and the school itself.
   • A database will be regularly managed and

The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Newark need to provide a competitive academic alternative that maintains the Catholic values and traditions.
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3. **We recommend the Archdiocesan Schools Office adopt a compensation strategy for school leaders throughout the Archdiocese, which provides just and competitive salaries directly linked to performance outcomes.**

   - A compensation plan will be finalized and adopted. This plan will identify a salary target and range for school leaders, and clearly describe how performance outcomes will impact future compensation.
   - The salaries of existing leaders will be brought in line with the salary ranges outlined in the compensation plan.
   - Compensation targets will be adjusted annually.

4. **We recommend creation of a robust process for identifying, recruiting and hiring highly qualified individuals to fill school leadership positions, in order to ensure a pool of high quality candidates.**

   - A talent profile will be adopted and used as a guide in the hiring process for new school leaders.

The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Newark will continue to provide a competitive academic alternative that maintains the Catholic values and traditions.
The strategic plan endeavors to achieve the vision of the Archbishop that every student who desires a Catholic school education will have access to a school, and every parish in the Archdiocese will support Catholic school education.
For many years, there was little if any need to mount recruitment campaigns for Catholic schools. In fact, as fast as overcrowded facilities were expanded, classrooms soon were once again bursting at the seams, which led to even more expansion. The mid-1960’s marked the high point for Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Newark, with enrollment peaking at nearly 132,000 students.

The number of students attending Catholic elementary schools during the 2011–2012 school year was slightly more than 17,500 for grades K–8. This does not include an additional 3,000 students enrolled in Pre-K.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend all parishes promote and financially support Catholic school education, and provide a supportive environment for the schools and their families.

- A standing marketing committee will be formed in all parishes to actively encourage parents to choose a Catholic school education for their children. Pastors will be urged to allow elementary and high school representatives to be present within the parish, to speak with parishioners and religious education families regarding the desirability of enrolling at a Catholic school.
- Schools will work with parishes to promote their program and facilitate the dissemination of information to parishioners, particularly families with young children.
- The role of pastors and parish leaders in marketing Catholic schools will be clearly articulated and practical techniques and best practices will be shared with them to provide guidance and support. Their participation in school activities will be solicited.

2. We recommend every school develop, implement, and regularly update an enrollment management plan, using best practices in addressing student recruitment, admissions, and retention.

- The Archdiocesan Schools Office will develop and implement a sustainability assessment process and tool. It will be used when a school site is facing enrollment, financial or other challenges to its future. The assessment process should ordinarily be initiated at least 12 to 24 months in advance of any action.
- Consistently under-enrolled school sites will enter into an assessment process with Archdiocesan leadership.
- A school deemed ‘at risk’ and below will develop an action plan to remedy its situation over a two year time period.
- The Archdiocesan Schools Office will undertake extensive efforts to assist the school in improving enrollment and financial conditions.
- If the enrollment goals cannot be met in a reasonable time, the Archdiocese will facilitate dialogue concerning reorganization or restructuring within the archdiocese.
This Commission recommends proactive and innovative approaches to marketing that will communicate the inherent value of our Catholic school education.

A standing marketing committee will be formed in all parishes to actively encourage parents to choose a Catholic school education for their children. Pastors will be urged to allow elementary and high school representatives to be present within the parish, to speak with parishioners and religious education families regarding their desirability of enrolling at a Catholic school.
The power of marketing lies not in a single newspaper ad or email. Rather, it is based on multiple exposures in a variety of complementary media.
Marketing

Not so long ago, Catholic schools were not in need of a marketing strategy. The problem wasn’t too few students, it was too many. Overcrowded classrooms and maxed-out facilities were not uncommon.

It was assumed that Catholic parents would send their children to parochial schools, and they did. Our schools were viewed as a place where students received a superior education. Even as tuition began to climb, student enrollment initially remained strong.

Over time, however, that situation changed. Today many of our schools are struggling to attract students. Steadily increasing costs have driven up tuition to the point where a large number of families simply can’t afford to pay it. Worse still, the perception of our schools has changed. Some question the quality, even the value, of a Catholic education. However, high graduation rates and positive national assessment test scores speak to the quality and the value found in the growing need to instill moral codes.

Reversing this trend will require innovation and determination. Equally important, these actions must be successfully communicated to all families in the Archdiocese of Newark. Families with school-age children need to be convinced of the distinctiveness and value of Catholic education — the return on their investment.

Key messages must include the advantage a Catholic school offers parents committed to supporting faith-formation and religious identity of their children; how Catholic school students score significantly above national averages on standardized testing; how a greater emphasis on homework and study translates into more effective achievement; and the fact that more than 97% of Catholic high school students continue on to college.

Families without school-age children, especially in parishes not directly linked to a school, must be regularly informed of the benefits to our society and that Catholic education deserves their continued financial support.

Coordinated marketing campaigns need to take place on the Archdiocesan and local levels. These campaigns must be aligned so that each reinforces the other. The power of marketing lies not in a single newspaper ad

Families with school-age children need to be convinced of the distinctiveness and value of Catholic education — the return on their investment.
or email. Rather, it is based on multiple exposures in a variety of complementary media. Schools should be discouraged from competing for students. Emphasis should be placed on expanding the universe of potential students.

The ultimate goal is to encourage person-to-person communication. Parents are not going to entrust their child to strangers. The case for Catholic education is compelling. The challenge is to convince parents to choose it.

This Commission undertook an extensive analysis of the enrollment and fiscal health of the schools within the Archdiocese of Newark.

The strategic plan endeavors to achieve the vision of the Archbishop that every student who desires a Catholic school education will have access to a school, and every parish in the Archdiocese will support Catholic school education. Through the implementation of this plan, the Archdiocese of Newark is committed to delivering high quality, affordable, Catholic school education to the students within the Archdiocese for generations to come.

This Commission recommends proactive and innovative approaches to marketing that will communicate the inherent value of our Catholic school education. We believe effective marketing should alleviate the pressures on enrollment. Fiscal sustainability needs to be a driving force for all schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. The sustainability of each school depends upon reaching a set of generally agreed targets. That includes an enrollment of 220 to 225 students in K–8 schools, with consideration given for unique circumstances such as classroom size, special student needs and similar factors.

**Goals and Strategies**

1. We recommend that a unified marketing strategy be designed for elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Newark.
   
   - A common brand identity and message will be developed for use in all advertising, public relations, direct mail, online and social media campaigns.
   - As part of this effort, a comprehensive SWOT analysis will be developed incorporating input from key constituencies.
   - A 24-month timeline, including benchmark goals and ongoing evaluation, will also be produced.

2. We recommend that the retention of current students be highlighted in this strategy, along with the recruitment of new students.
   
   - Keeping students already enrolled is an essential first step in stabilizing school populations.

3. We recommend all school marketing materials be sensitive to the cultural and linguistic preferences of their target audiences.

4. We recommend that the Marketing teams act
as a bridge between the overall Archdiocesan marketing effort and the efforts of individual schools.

- Mentoring will be an important part of this process, as the staff at local schools will be asked to utilize novel approaches and techniques.
- The Marketing teams will insure that local marketing efforts fully align with overall campaign strategy, and will also play a lead role in the evaluation process.

5. We recommend development of a Marketing Tool Kit, a “how-to” guide for locally implementing the overall marketing strategy.

- This kit will introduce proven best-practices to identify the parents of prospective students; engage these parents, as well as ascertain their needs and concerns; then work with them through the successful enrollment of their child.

6. We recommend that all high level public relations, media outreach and social media campaigns be unified at the Archdiocesan level.

- Individual schools will be positioned as local examples of an overall “brand.”
- Local marketing will initially be handled on the Archdiocesan level, then handed over to individual schools as their expertise increase.

7. We recommend local schools be encouraged to use informal social networking as a one-on-one recruiting tool.

- Parents of current students and alumni will be trained to act as ambassadors on behalf of local schools.

Coordinated marketing campaigns need to take place on the Archdiocesan, regional and local levels.
We recommend every Catholic school have a clearly communicated Mission Statement. It should include a commitment to Gospel values, faith formation, academic excellence, and Christian service.
Traditionally, Catholic elementary schools were funded by the parishes in which they were located. While budgets weren’t overly generous, they were considered adequate. Later parish subsidies were supplemented by tuition and fees. When that funding proved inadequate, especially in urban areas, diocesan subsidies were established. Declining student enrollment has translated into declining tuition income, requiring ever larger subsidies. All at a time when the costs associated with operating our schools have continually increased.

This Commission believes that if Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Newark are to continue offering a quality education, a new governance model needs to be adopted. Any shift in governance must be mirrored by a commensurate shift in financial administration and accountability.

Opportunities to maximize the sharing of resources, including staffing and the purchase of goods and services, will be explored.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend steps be taken to ensure that funding sources adequately support the new school model, and that all parishes contribute to the new structure.
   - All funding sources will be consolidated at the Archdiocesan level, ensuring accountability and uniformity in school fiscal management.
   - The Archdiocesan parish assessment methodology will be evaluated and updated. A sliding tax scale will be considered.
   - The applicability of a provisional assessment to ensure existing parish funding to schools remains available during implementation will be determined.
   - Existing funding models such as direct parish subsidy funding will be eliminated.
   - Explore the feasibility of an Archdiocesan-wide campaign to support Catholic Education, and consider a separate Sunday collection at parishes for the same purpose.

2. We recommend that the current policy regarding distribution of revenue from the rental/sale of schools be examined.

3. We recommend school fiscal management and oversight be enhanced.
   - There will be dedicated Finance personnel within the Archdiocese to monitor the ongoing fiscal health of our schools in cooperation with the School’s Office and the Finance Office.
   - Opportunities to maximize the sharing of resources, including staffing and the purchase of goods and services, will be explored.
   - Opportunities to maximize the sharing of resources, including staffing and purchasing opportunities, will be expanded.
   - A model expense budget will be developed, including standardized staffing levels and related salary scales.
   - New initiatives for local fundraising efforts will be developed.
The success of Catholic schools is critical to the Church’s commitment to passing on the knowledge, practice and traditions of Catholicism to future generations.

The results of the recent TerraNova achievement tests found our students consistently achieving above national performance levels.
We must all work together to create an environment of excellence in which children from diverse backgrounds with a range of learning styles and abilities can flourish creatively and intellectually.
As part of its scope of work, this commission evaluated the physical condition of all elementary school buildings in the Archdiocese of Newark. Special emphasis was placed on the projected or estimated maintenance required to keep each facility functional.

It is difficult to generalize regarding these facilities, as their ages vary widely. The inventory includes buildings that date back many decades. Others were products of rapid student enrollment growth during the 1950's and 1960’s. Some were built, or renovated, relatively recently.

Buildings were examined for short-term maintenance required in one to two years, medium term repairs expected to take place in three to five years, and long term maintenance needed six to ten years in the future. These projections were used to create a multi-year budget for each school based on the foreseen maintenance costs of each facility.
The test scores and graduation rates associated with Catholic schools, even for students in low socioeconomic areas, prove that Catholic schools work for all of our students.
Advocating for Parental Choice in Education

Parents are the first and primary educators of their children. It is the parents’ responsibility to ensure that their child receives a proper education that will prepare them to become productive, contributing members of society and to lead good and moral lives.

While maintaining our conviction that a Catholic school offers Catholic parents the most comprehensive resource for fulfilling their duty to provide a strong religious formation for their children, the Commission recognizes that parents have the right to decide what school they want their children to attend, whether that school be public, charter, private or parochial. The parents’ right should not depend on the economic status of the family or the geographic location of their home. Yet all too often such economic and practical realities prevent parents from exercising that right and responsibility, as they would wish, not permitting their selection of the school that would provide their child with the best education available.

Some parents have the means to choose their child’s education by paying tuition at a private school, or relocating to a specific public school district. But not all families are so fortunate. The mere fact that a family lacks the financial means to send their child to a private school should not take away their ability to choose the best educational option for their children.

This Commission supports comprehensive school choice programs across the state as a mechanism for returning to parents, regardless of their financial situation, the ability to choose the school their children will attend.

For many parents and their children, a Catholic education is demonstrably the best educational option. In many inner-city areas, Catholic schools are an integral way that the church serves the needs of the poor, regardless of their faith. Catholic schools offer students in low socioeconomic areas safe environment in which they can thrive academically and socially. The test scores and graduation rates associated with Catholic schools prove that Catholic schools work for all of our students.

While it has been demonstrated that Catholic schools often provide a better educational alternative for parents to select, the tuition burden on family finances can become prohibitive. To address this fact, Catholic
schools strive to maintain tuition rates as low as possible, to make this education affordable for as many as possible. But even these tuitions are unrealistic for many parents.

The Archdiocese of Newark supports increasing parental choice and advocates for passage of legislation in New Jersey that would provide scholarship tax credits to students. Because the funds from these programs are being given to the parents, and not to the schools, using these funds for Catholic schools avoids any questions of constitutional compliance, and has been upheld in various court cases across the nation.

Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island have established programs. Virginia recently passed a new program that is awaiting the signature of the governor.

Currently there is a bill in the New Jersey state legislature, the Opportunity Scholarship Act (OSA), which supports parental choice. OSA is a corporate tax credit scholarship program that would provide funds for low-income students from many of the state’s lowest performing or failing schools to attend a different public school or non-public school. Companies are encouraged to participate in such a program because they receive a complete tax refund against the amount they contribute to the scholarship fund. This would give students in the various pilot districts a chance to attend a school of their choosing – including Catholic schools.

OSA, or a similar program, offers the best opportunity for underprivileged students to receive a quality, Catholic education regardless of their family’s ability to pay for that education.

**Goals and Strategies**

1. We recommend the Archdiocese of Newark and the Archdiocesan Schools Office provide education to all the Faithful regarding corporate tax credit scholarship programs, to afford Catholic citizens the ability to express their interests in passage of the bill to their state representatives.

2. We recommend the Archdiocese collaborate with schools to educate and mobilize local school community involvement of faculty, staff, parents and supporters in advocating for corporate tax credit scholarship programs.
Corporate tax credit scholarship programs offer an opportunity for underprivileged students to receive a quality, Catholic education regardless of their family’s ability to pay for that education.

Catholic schools strive to maintain tuition rates as low as possible, to make this education affordable for as many as possible. But even these tuitions are unrealistic for many parents.
Providing adequate funding to ensure the successful launch of initiatives recommended in *Lighting the Way*, and sustaining them well into the future, is an essential aspect of the strategic plan envisioned by this Commission.
Development

Providing adequate funding to ensure the successful launch of initiatives recommended in Lighting the Way, and sustaining them well into the future, is an essential aspect of the strategic plan envisioned by this Commission. Identifying and securing the necessary resources to provide a quality Catholic education for elementary age children must be a priority.

In the past, funding for Catholic schools came primarily from individual parishes. Parishes subsidized the operation of their local school, a school attended by local children. While that economic model survived for decades, it is no longer practical today. In FY2012 the Archdiocese spent $6 million subsidizing the operation of elementary schools.

If our Catholic schools are to do more than simply survive, if they are to thrive, it will be necessary to reach beyond the current economic resources of the Archdiocese of Newark. This will require fundraising and development efforts tied directly to the promotion of Catholic education. The challenge is to develop a strategy that will generate the funds necessary to implement and maintain new initiatives, without negatively impacting existing campaigns.

One way of doing that is to expand the donor base beyond current contributors to include individuals, foundations and corporations with a special interest in education, both locally as well as nationally.

If our Catholic schools are to do more than simply survive, if they are to thrive, it will be necessary to reach beyond the current economic resources of the Archdiocese of Newark.
Goals and Strategies

1. We recommend that all fundraising and development efforts be aligned with and support the overall marketing plan for Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Newark.

   - Making a compelling case for philanthropic support requires the identification and recognition of potential donors’ goals and objectives.
   - Where appropriate, outside expertise will be retained to help pilot development efforts at test schools, to establish or enhance fundraising fundamentals such as annual funds, database management systems, and individual major gift prospecting and solicitation.

2. We recommend the Archdiocese of Newark initiate a special fundraising campaign to support short and long term needs of Catholic elementary schools.

   - The Archdiocese will engage outside expertise to lead a 4–5 month campaign planning process.
   - As part of the planning process, a formal study to test the feasibility of raising an additional $100–$150 million beyond current revenues will be conducted.
   - This planning study will be comprehensive and widely consultative, seeking input from all key constituencies.
   - The study will produce recommendations on the elements of a successful campaign, including: a working dollar goal, timing issues, recommended case funding priorities, campaign messaging and communication, real or perceived obstacles to success, roles and expectations of lay and clergy leaders.

3. We recommend the Archdiocese create a transparent and accountable structure to assure adherence to donor intentions, and facilitate long-term relationships with Catholic and non-Catholic donors.

   - A foundation board of trustees will be recruited (within the process of the campaign) and be comprised of select clergy and laity from within the Archdiocese who with the Chief Financial Officer will oversee the management of invested funds.
   - Foundation assets including those restricted to Catholic education will become a permanent source of supplemental funding for Archdiocesan needs, including education.
   - The foundation will be the philanthropic arm of the Archdiocese and will oversee all fundraising initiatives at the Archdiocese.

4. We recommend school-based development efforts be enhanced.

   - The commitment of building the Catholic Education Endowment Fund through rental and sale proceeds of school property should be reaffirmed.
   - Additional methods of building the Catholic Education Endowment Fund should also be

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evaluated.

- An Archdiocesan-wide annual Mass collection for Catholic education should be considered.
- An Archdiocesan-wide capital campaign for Catholic education should be considered.
- Archdiocesan support of the RCAN SEEDS initiative and CAP are designed to establish a culture of giving among Catholic elementary alumni and parents at the local school level, should continue.
- Grant opportunities should be investigated and pursued.
In Memoriam

Msgr. Kevin M. Hanbury, Ed.D.

“Lighting the Way” is dedicated to our dear colleague, friend and Vicar for Education/Superintendent of Schools Reverend Monsignor Kevin M. Hanbury, Ed.D., who initiated this process.