



School and Parish Planning: Key Recommendations



Disciples on the Way PARISH MISSION PLANNING



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Following are key recommendations from the Strategic & Mission Plan for Catholic Schools.

A. Mission and Vision Alignment: Parish and Schools of Discipleship

1. Catholic schools in partnership with parishes will embrace the mission and vision of the diocese to form missionary disciples of Jesus.

- 1.1. Mission and vision statements adopted by Parishes and Schools will be evaluated and aligned to the new Diocesan Mission and Vision with an emphasis on impacting the communities in which they dwell.
- 1.2. Schools and Parishes that are linked will evaluate and align to a collaborative mission and vision inclusive to each other and towards impacting the communities in which they dwell.

2. School and parish families will be actively supported through many types of parish ministries. Collaboration will be enhanced between schools and the parishes, specifically with pastors, parish staff, parish religious education staff, and parish ministry leaders.

- 2.1. Parish, school and system leadership will meet routinely with pastors and heads of religious education to actively partner with their local parish(es) and build communities of faith rooted in discipleship.
- 2.2. In collaboration with parish staff, schools will plan and schedule activities that involve students and staff in parish worship, service projects, liturgies, and other parish events.
- 2.3. Parishes will convey a welcoming spirit and promote communications about Catholic school education. Parishes will share databases to help facilitate the communication.

3. Parish, schools, and school systems will define substantive roles that promotes cross functional collaboration between parish and school leadership and staff.

- 3.1. Schools and school systems will be creative in identifying substantive leadership roles for pastors that strengthen the school of discipleship.
- 3.2. Schools will actively invite pastors to participate in events more than celebrating Mass. There will be active invitations to pastors to engage in the life of the school at all levels.
- 3.3. Parishes will ensure that parish councils and committees include members from school councils and committees.
- 3.4. Schools will ensure that school boards and committees include members from parish councils and committees.
- 3.5. School and parish staff will intentionally create collaborative opportunities in person, through processes and in programs. Examples include:
 - Parish religious education and youth ministry staff interacting in school religious education classes and vice versa.
 - Parish and school office administration staff seeking to share or create collaborative functions (e.g. scheduling, communications, document management, etc.).

B. Collaborative Leadership

1. School and parish boards and councils* will be actively engaged with forming strategic plans and overseeing implementation of the plan, including monitoring and updating the plan.

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Decision making by boards and councils will be strategic and justified in the context of the plan.¹ * Councils include parish & school councils, finance committees, and other strategic ad-hoc committees.

- 1.1. All Catholic schools and parishes will have a comprehensive multi-year strategic plan that is aligned with the diocesan strategic plan, their common school-parish linkages, and local/regional community impact considerations.
- 1.2. Schools and parishes will have the option to complete their strategic plan on their own, request assistance from the Office of Catholic Schools, Diocesan Parish Planning, or engage consultants to assist them; however, all school and parish planning must be incorporated under the one common Parish Mission Planning Process.
- 2. School and parish boards and councils should understand their role, in particular their role in furthering the advancement goals of the school in harmony with the larger stewardship goals of the parish(es).**
 - 2.1. School board and council members, parish council members and parish trustees will be in-serviced on their role and provided with a job description.²
 - 2.2. Each school board/council member and parish council member and trustee should be educated and fully understand the functions of Catholic identity, planning, policy making, administrator/principal/director selection and evaluation, finances/budgeting, and communications/marketing.
 - 2.3. Selection of school board members will take into account advancement objectives for the school/system.
 - 2.4. Selection of parish council members and trustees will take into account the Parish Mission Planning alignment, actions, and outcomes in all ministry areas and community impact.
 - 2.5. School boards and councils will have a standing group/committee dedicated to school advancement which includes direct and associated parish representation.
- 3. Parishes and schools will collaboratively seek out viable relationships with local civic organizations and outreach services to advance our Catholic value in partnerships aimed at impacting the communities in which they dwell.**
 - 3.1. Parish, school, and system leadership will identify and coordinate established relationships with community civic leadership functions (e.g. city/town/county councils).
 - 3.2. Parish, school, and system leadership will identify and coordinate partnerships with existing community services and outreach (e.g. city/town/county social services, food & clothing outlets, counseling services, etc.).

C. Culture of New Evangelization

- 1. Educators, catechists, and parish faith formation leaders will both understand and model the meaning of a missionary disciple, so they can lead students and parents to become faith-filled followers of Christ.**

¹ The Diocesan Offices of Catholic Schools and Parish Planning are responsible for ensuring school system leadership, boards, and governance planning are collaborative and in alignment with Parish Mission Planning.

² Reference existing parish Pastoral Council, Finance Committee, and Trustee Guidelines.

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- 1.1. Schools and parishes will have a collaborative plan to develop the spiritual life of each school leader, parish leader, teacher, and catechist involved in Catholic education/ catechesis to enhance their professional lives with carryover to their personal lives.
- 1.2. Parish, school, and system leadership with assistance from pastors as well as the Office of Catholic Schools, Religious Education/Youth Ministry, and New Evangelization will provide expanded opportunities for spiritual formation, retreats, liturgies, and prayer services for faculty and staff.
- 2. Schools will be on the front line of evangelization and outreach to parents and families, drawing them into a closer relationship with Christ and His Church. Catholic identity will migrate beyond school to the home.**
 - 2.1. Parish, school, and system leadership will articulate to all parents the evangelizing mission and role of Catholic schools and parishes in the faith lives of their children and the supporting role of the family.
 - 2.2. Schools and parishes working in collaboration will support, empower, and resource parents and guardians in their primary role of making disciples and fostering life-long faith.

D. Culture of Missionary Discipleship

- 1. Each school and parish will effectively provide ongoing discipleship formation for students and families that articulate the vision for Catholic schools and parishes.**
 - 1.1. The practice and witness of the Catholic faith, including values and lifestyle, will be rooted in all school and parish curricular and extracurricular activities.
 - 1.2. Schools will offer students and their families' regular engaging opportunities for prayer, retreats, and liturgy. These opportunities should be unique from those that exist within religious education programs.
- 2. Catholic schools and parish religious education programs will come together regularly for sacraments.**
 - 2.1. Sacramental preparation will fully integrate both school and parish students and parents as one program.
 - 2.2. Parish sacramental preparation programs will provide both child and adult level evangelization, catechesis, and discipleship formation.

E. Culture of Community Impact

- 1. Catholic school and parish families will come together regularly for community service and social awareness endeavors.**
 - 1.1. There will be a culture of community service in every grade level in every school and parish that is discipleship oriented and deepens students' understanding of Jesus and the mission of the Catholic Church.
 - 1.2. Parish and school leadership will collaborate and coordinate community service and social awareness endeavors.