



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In the wake of the current economic events and consequences affecting grant funding and philanthropic support from donors and benefactors, representatives from various offices at the Archdiocese of Denver have prepared a stabilization plan to address these issues on an on-going basis for those parishes in Northern Colorado with schools. Components of the stabilization plan incorporate flexibility in order to respond to the uncertain, and ever-changing economic times forecasted for the next few years. The value and commitment to Catholic schools remains strong and vibrant and the Archdiocese of Denver is committed to our schools and helping them through the difficult economic times affecting our nation. The benefits and accomplishments of Catholic schools are worthy of our best efforts as every community works through these challenges.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is a system of schools with a strategic focus for long-term sustainability that responds to challenging times with faith, vision and the will to succeed. The Catholic school mission is vital to the future of our young people, our nation, and most especially our Church. Many dioceses across the country have taken a clinical approach to determining the viability of a Catholic school. For example, “*Does the school have an enrollment of 200 students? If not, close it.*” We have elected to approach long-term sustainability differently than those around us and honor the generosity, tradition, and commitment to Catholic schools by the faithful of Northern Colorado. The information below provides the framework for our stabilization plan.

Q1: What is the long-range strategic plan for Archdiocese of Denver Catholic schools?

Over the past five years, the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools has been involved in a branding initiative as part of their sustainability plan. Based upon the brand platform of *investment*, the strategic direction and focus for the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic schools has four (4) pillars that form the foundation of the Catholic schools’ long-term sustainability and constitute a paradigm shift in Catholic schools throughout the United States.

Q2: What are the four pillars that constitute the Archdiocese of Denver strategic plan that forms the foundation for Catholic schools’ long-term sustainability?

The four (4) pillars are:

- *Promote self-sufficiency*: Provide the vision, tools and resources necessary to help schools grow in financial self-sufficiency.
- *Protect the philanthropic base*: Continue to develop, nurture and be good stewards of the philanthropic base necessary to ensure that our schools are accessible to people of all social and economic strata.
- *Expand stakeholder base*: Create and implement a broad-based funding formula to meet and actualize the guidelines of the Holy Father and the Archbishop of Denver; to provide the



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opportunity for the entire Catholic community to contribute according to their means to the financial needs of our Catholic schools.

- *Implement strategic pruning*: Utilize and communicate data-driven sustainability measurements to determine and recommend strategic pruning for schools that are not able to meet the sustainability factors¹.

Q3: What is branding?

Branding is defined as the set of characteristics, impressions, tone, feelings and attitudes that comes immediately to mind – and heart – when a person hears or sees a Catholic school or the name of a Catholic school. Branding brings the core values to life and are tied to mission, vision and goals. Branding initiatives help our Catholic schools penetrate the “environmental noise” of numerous educational options available to families today.

Q4: What is the “branding platform” for Catholic schools?

The branding platform of “investing in the future of our children and our Catholic faith” was developed through extensive research and provided to all Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools for implementation beginning in October 2005. The branding strategy, tools, and information have been and continue to be shared with members of the school communities through various communication vehicles including:

- Principal meetings; Pastor meetings; Teacher in-service meetings, School Advisory Council training;
- Annual Symposia; Parent Information Nights; Educators’ Conference;
- Presbyteral Council meetings; Deanery meetings; Archdiocesan Pastoral Council meetings; Archdiocesan Finance Council meetings; Philanthropic organizations meetings.

Q5: What are the branding initiatives and tools available to Catholic schools to help them in their efforts to become self-sufficient?

Several initiatives, tools and resources have been provided to the Catholic schools in an effort to promote self-sufficiency including:

- Brand platform and associated language based on research completed during the 2004-2005 school year;
- Marketing toolkit outlining a twelve-step plan for assessing current and future needs of the school and parish community;
- Development² Symposium where topics of conversation and tools focused on developing a core team, expanding circle of involvement in school and parish activities, identifying resources, etc.;
- Enrollment Management Symposium where topics of conversation and tools focused on developing an enrollment management team, targeting Catholic families enrolled in parish Religious Education programs but not the school, tracking inquiries, etc.;

¹ Sustainability factors include, but are not limited to differentiation, specialization, consolidation and compassionate closing.

² Development is the meaningful involvement of people in your mission and vision for the future. – *Institute of School and Parish Development*



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- Parent Information Nights provide an opportunity for the Superintendent of Catholic Schools to share both a global-level and local-level look at Catholic schools, along with a Q&A session with the parents;
- Global-level and local-level proof points describing the value of the specific Catholic school;
- The Call to Action – *Catholic School Take Another Look* encourages people to become reacquainted with the key quality indicators of Catholic schools and for Catholic schools to always focus on internal assessment and improvement.

Q6: What are the criteria for determining the long-term viability and sustainability of a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Denver?

For the past 5 years, multiple criteria have been used for all of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools as part of the viability and sustainability analysis. Some of the key metrics include, but are not limited to:

- Enrollment levels and trends for the last 10 years;
- Enrollment based on percentage of capacity for the last 10 years;
- Demographic trends (number of school age children in the area, housing, population, etc.);
- Engagement and implementation of self-sufficiency tools, materials and information provided to schools by the Office of Catholic Schools;
- Capital maintenance needs of the facility now and for the next 3-5 years;
- Proximity to other Catholic schools;
- Amount of parish funds that are required to help operate the school.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS FUNDING SOURCES

Q7: How are Catholic Schools funded in the Archdiocese of Denver?

Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is funded through tuition, fundraising, parish support, grant support and philanthropic support.

Q8: Do funds collected through the Archbishop's Catholic Appeal (ACA) support the Catholic schools ministry?

A portion of the monies collected through the ACA fund both personnel costs and other services provided by Office of Catholic Schools to the Catholic schools ministry. In the spirit of servant leadership, the Office of Catholic Schools provides vision, direction and supervision to archdiocesan Catholic school communities in order to assist them in the achievement of their mission. Services provided to the Catholic schools ministry include policy promulgation, safety guidelines, financial reviews, legal advice, teacher licensure, and school accreditation.

In addition to the Office of Catholic Schools, ACA monies fund other archdiocesan offices – such as Parish Finance, Human Resources, Risk Management, Denver Catholic Register, and Finance and Administration – all who support and provide services to the Catholic schools ministry.



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Q9: What are the Archdiocese of Denver and its related organizations doing to support Catholic schools, especially during these challenging times?

The Archdiocese of Denver and its related organizations have and will continue to invest great effort and funds on behalf of Catholic schools.

- \$400,000 emergency grant funding provided by the Archdiocese of Denver to help fund tuition assistance needs for second semester 2008-2009 school year.
- In the last 10 years, Catholic schools serving families in need of financial assistance and other services have received \$60.5 million in support.
- For the 2009-2010 school year, Catholic schools with families in need will receive \$3.8 million in grant support including up to \$1.0 million in bridge funding from the Archdiocese of Denver.

Q10: Do the more affluent Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools provide assistance to the Catholic schools in need?

Catholic schools in the suburban areas provide substantial assistance to those schools in need through generous donations of time, talent and treasure.

Q11: What is the Catholic Schools Assistance Fund (CSAF)?

The Catholic Schools Assistance Fund is an assessment (1.5% of parish assessable income) collected from all parishes in the Archdiocese of Denver to support archdiocesan Catholic schools.

Q12: How many Catholic schools receive grant funding?

Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools receive grant funding from the Archdiocese of Denver and its related organizations.

- Since the 2003-2004 school year, nineteen (19) Catholic schools have received over \$5.2 million in Salary Assistance Fund grants from The Catholic Foundation.
- Since the 2003-2004 school year, twenty-one (21) Catholic schools have received over \$6.9 million in Catholic Schools Assistance Fund (CSAF) grants from the Archdiocese of Denver.

Q13: How many Catholic schools will experience an operating budget deficit³ as a result of the economic downturn?

Without grant assistance, twenty-two (22) of the 37 parish elementary Catholic schools are anticipating an operating budget deficit for the 2009-2010 school year.

Q14: How many Catholic schools will receive decreased grant funding in the future as a result of the economic downturn?

Twenty-two (22) schools will receive decreased grant assistance from the Catholic Schools Assistance Fund (CSAF) and Salary Assistance Fund beginning with the 2009-2010 school year. Families attending these 22 schools who qualify for assistance will continue to receive some level of Seeds of Hope tuition

³ Budget deficit is defined as expenses exceeding income.



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assistance. The specific details regarding grant assistance for these 22 schools has been shared with the pastors as they plan for the 2009-2010 school year and beyond.

Q15: How many Catholic schools is the Archdiocese of Denver planning to close?

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Denver are parish ministries under the direction of the pastor and principal. **No Catholic schools are planning to close for the 2009-2010 school year.**

Q16: Who decides to close a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Denver?

The decision to close a Catholic school is the decision of the respective parish Pastor based upon recommendations from his advisory bodies such as the parish's Finance Council, School Advisory Council, Pastoral Council, and the permission of the Archbishop. The Office of Catholic Schools provides oversight, vision, direction, supervision and recommendations to archdiocesan Catholic schools and assists the pastor with on-going analysis of sustainability factors and measurements as well as providing many tools and resources.

Q17: Is there a salary freeze in place for the faculty and staff of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools?

A careful review of the upcoming fiscal year 2010 parish and school budget projections shows a shortfall for the 2009-2010 school year of \$3.0 – 5.0 million. Because Catholic schools are a people ministry, salaries are the single largest portion of a parish and school budget, making them of primary significance during challenging economic conditions. To help offset some of the budget deficit, a salary freeze has been instituted for the archdiocesan Catholic schools. The freeze applies to all teachers, administrators, and staff in the parish preschools and early learning centers, parish elementary schools, archdiocesan high schools, and all personnel in the Office of Catholic schools.

As a result of no salary increases for the 2009-2010 school year, approximately \$1,000,000 in cost savings will be realized. This is a short-term solution to the current economic conditions and should not be viewed as a permanent fix to the budget deficits facing Catholic schools.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS TUITION ASSISTANCE

Q18: Who is Seeds of Hope and what is their role in providing tuition assistance to families in need attending Catholic schools?

The mission of the Seeds of Hope Charitable Trust is to make the tremendous benefits of a Catholic education available to economically disadvantaged children. Through tuition assistance grants, scholarships, vouchers, operating support, and grants for programs and technology, Seeds of Hope supports low-income students attending Catholic elementary and secondary schools concentrated in and bordering the inner city of Denver. To learn more about the Seeds of Hope Charitable Trust, visit their website at www.seedsofhopetrust.org.



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Q19: How many students will receive tuition assistance from Seeds of Hope for the 2009-2010 school year?

466 students will receive tuition assistance from Seeds of Hope in the form of either a \$3,000 Catholic School Voucher Program voucher, a \$2,000 Children's Scholarship Fund scholarship, or a \$2,500 Daniels Fund scholarship.

PARISH AND PARENT SUPPORT

Q20: How can parishes with schools in the Archdiocese of Denver help Catholic schools?

Each school parish is being asked to strengthen and increase its efforts to stabilize its school through expanding parent and parishioner involvement, implementing the branding initiatives and increasing financial support.

- Operating expenses for Catholic schools total \$45 million annually.
- Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools cost per student for the 2008-2009 school year ranges from \$3,491 to \$9,182 and averages \$5,148.
- It is recommended that parishes with schools contribute 10% of the school's operating budget, but not to exceed 35% of their parish offertory.
- In addition, beginning effective with the 2009-2010 school year, parishes with schools are asked to contribute up to an additional 20% of their unrestricted cash reserves to their respective school. This contribution totals approximately \$2.0 million.

Q21: How can parishes without schools in the Archdiocese of Denver help Catholic schools?

Parishes without schools who have families with children in Catholic schools are asked to honor and pay the Interparish School Assistance (ISA) amount set for each school year. Currently, the ISA amount for students attending Catholic schools in Kindergarten – 12th grade is \$1,000 per student totaling \$1.8 million annually.

Q22: How would stewardship help Catholic schools and the Catholic schools ministry?

If all parishioners would tithe (10% of income) or even increase their contribution to their parish by 2% of their income, the Catholic schools and other parish ministries would be more fully funded. For the Catholic schools ministry, parents would pay far less in tuition and parishes would pay less Interparish School Assistance.

Q23: What can parents do to help Catholic schools?

Parents are the number one stakeholders for the ongoing success of our Catholic schools. In addition to having confidence that their children will experience a more complete development and unsurpassed academic and personal success, parents must support Catholic schools by:

- Enrolling their child(ren) in a Catholic school following the school's enrollment timeline and schedules;
- Continuing to be positive school ambassadors to help build enrollment at their local school and throughout the system of Catholic schools;



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- Building community through personal relationships marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, and continuing dialogue between parents, school administration and staff;
- Actively participating in fundraising efforts and volunteering to participate in school and parish events;
- Attending Mass regularly and actively engaging in the life of the Parish – being a registered, active, present and supporting parishioner.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Q24: What is the extent of capital improvements and maintenance needs for Catholic schools in the next 3-5 years?

Many of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools built in the early 1900s are still standing today and are beautiful, historic facilities. Some capital improvements have been made to the school buildings as needs grow and change, however, many of the schools are old and in need of \$5.0+ million in capital improvements to enhance the education environment for the students. This is a significant issue not currently addressed in our strategic planning and the parishes with schools must factor this into their budget planning going forward.

The Office of Catholic Schools has helped secure several grants on behalf of the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools in an effort to address immediate issues such as upgraded fire alarms, asbestos abatement, and other capital maintenance and safety-related needs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q25: Who is the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools?

The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is the largest private school system in the state of Colorado with over 10,000 students receiving a quality, Catholic education based on faith formation, rigorous academics, nurturing community, and reinforcement of family environment.

Q26: How many schools are in the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools?

The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools system is comprised of 37 parish elementary schools and 2 archdiocesan high schools.

Q27: Where are the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools located?

Archdiocesan Catholic schools are located in eighteen cities:

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|--------------|--------------------|---------------|
| – Arvada | – Greeley | – Longmont |
| – Aurora | – Glenwood Springs | – Louisville |
| – Boulder | – Edwards | – Loveland |
| – Broomfield | – Englewood | – Sterling |
| – Centennial | – Fort Collins | – Westminster |
| – Denver | – Lakewood | – Wheat Ridge |



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Q28: What are the student demographics for the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools?

Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools student demographics for the 2008-2009 school year are:

- Enrolled students – 10,208.
- Faith Background – 92% Catholic; 8% other Faiths.
- Gender – 49% Male; 51% Female.
- Ethnicity – 66% Caucasian; 20% Hispanic; 6% Multi-Racial; 4% African American; 4% Asian; and less than .5% for both Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.
- 1,473 students – 14% of the student population – qualify for free and reduced lunch benefits as determined by the federal government guidelines.

Q29: Are Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Denver accredited?

All Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools are accredited by the North Central Association and designated Catholic by the Archbishop of Denver.

Q30: Do Catholic schools have certified, licensed teachers on staff?

All teachers in the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools are required to have a state license. All teachers are required to have Catechetical Certification through the Catechetical School at the Archdiocese of Denver.

Q31: How many Catholic schools are located in the inner-city⁴ area of Denver or in areas dramatically affected by demographic changes in population?

Six (6) of the 37 parish elementary schools are located in the inner-city of Denver. An additional seven (7) parish elementary schools are located on the edge of the inner-city or in rural-populated areas affected by demographic changes. These thirteen (13) parish elementary schools are referred to as the SUN and FOCUS schools for the Archdiocese of Denver.

Q32: What are the student demographics for the SUN and FOCUS schools?

Student demographics for these thirteen (13) schools include:

- Enrolled students – 1,979.
- Faith Background – 88% Catholic; 12% other Faiths.
- Gender – 49% Male; 51% Female.
- Ethnicity – 27% Caucasian; 52% Hispanic; 8% Multi-Racial; 10% African American; 2% Asian; and 2% for both Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander grouped together.
- 1,159 students – 59% of the student population – qualify for free and reduced lunch benefits as determined by the federal government guidelines.

⁴ Inner-city is defined as an area located within a major city and characterized by a concentration (>40%) of low income inhabitants. – *National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)*



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Q33: What determines the official enrollment number for a Catholic school?

The official enrollment number for a Catholic school is determined by the number of students enrolled in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten enrollment is not used to report official enrollment for a school due to the numerous configurations of these types of programs (full-time, part-time, two-day, etc.) and preschool/pre-Kindergarten is not a required education program by the State of Colorado.

To learn more about the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools, please visit our website at <http://www.archden.org/index.cfm/id/44>.

If you would like to participate in a dialogue or leave a comment for Superintendent Thompson regarding Catholic schools, please visit him at <http://www.catholicschoolcommunity.com/>.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL
TAKE ANOTHER LOOK

The Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools is an investment in the future of our children and our Catholic faith.