



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ST. IGNATIUS LOYOLA SCHOOL

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: How are decisions made regarding the closure of a school?

A decision regarding the closure of a school is taken very seriously and is not a reaction to isolated or most recent factors. It is lengthy, inclusive of numerous factors and individuals, and prayerful.

In this case, the final decision was made by Father Eustace Sequeira, S.J., the pastor in consultation with his Finance Council. Throughout this discernment process, the pastor and representative advisors also consulted senior management of the Archdiocese. A number of Archdiocesan offices provide key information for review and consideration by Father Sequeira and his advisors.

Q2: What factors have led to the closing of this school?

Loyola has been impacted by several factors, not unlike hundreds of schools across the country that have had to close. The primary factors affecting the school's lack of viability are changing demographics, the K-6 grade configuration, lack of sufficient enrollment, significant budget shortfall for several years, and capital improvement needs.

It is important to understand that Loyola School has been facing these same issues for more than 20 years, and the situation has not improved but is, in fact, more serious today considering the variety of education options available and the state of the economy.

Q3: What resources has the school received during these challenging times?

The school has received a substantial investment of time, talent, and treasure for many years. The Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and the Jesuits have contributed quality services, a strong presence, and leadership since 1924. Seeds of Hope, The Catholic Foundation, the Archdiocese of Denver, private foundations and individual benefactors have invested more than \$3 million in the last decade.

Volunteers serve the school on a regular basis. The Office of Catholic Schools has provided opportunities for marketing and branding assistance, resourcing by four symposiums, review and assistance by the Education Review and Resource Commission, and the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. The school community has worked hard to engage in these various opportunities and initiatives.



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Q4: Did poor academic performance contribute to the closing?

No. Students at Loyola scored well above students in neighboring public schools on standardized tests in math, reading, and writing. In some years 100 percent of the class scored at the Passing level (Proficient plus Advanced). They often scored above the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools' average.

Q5: How can we describe the quality of the education provided?

Students at Loyola received a high-quality education. An atmosphere of respect and safety throughout the school allowed students to learn to read and do math as well as practice self-control and grow in maturity. Highly qualified teachers worked with students in regular classes, and for those who needed additional support, volunteers, part-time and retired teachers worked with individuals and small groups on remedial and special skills.

Laptop computers with Internet access have been available for student instruction for several years. Benefactors sponsored experiences beyond the walls of the school – such as the Denver Zoo's "Bunk with the Beasts" experience.

Q6: Are there plans to reopen the school at some point?

No, but the legacy of Loyola School will be alive in the students, parents, and teachers who have been the life-blood of the school for nearly nine decades. Despite this wonderful legacy, it is clear that this school is not sustainable for the future.

Q7: What steps are being taken to facilitate the transition of students and teachers into other Catholic schools?

An outreach plan has been developed by the Office of Catholic Schools to help address the needs and facilitate the transition of the various Loyola stakeholder groups—teachers, children, parents, parishioners, benefactors, and the Archdiocese of Denver Catholic Schools community.

Q8: How many students are currently enrolled?

Loyola Catholic School is serving 105 students in Kindergarten through seventh grade during the 2010-11 academic year.

Q9: How many teachers are currently employed?

Loyola currently employs eight full-time teachers and six part-time teachers, the principal, one full-time secretary and two additional non-teaching positions. Accordingly, the faculty and staff count totals 18 employees. Three of the faculty members have been employed at Loyola for more than 20 years. The average years of teaching experience at Loyola is eight.

Q10: What are the demographics of the current student body?

Of the 105 students attending Loyola during the 2010-11 school year, 95 percent are of minority background – 86 percent are African-American, 9 percent are Hispanic.



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Thirty-five percent of the student body is Catholic and the other sixty-five percent is of other faith backgrounds. Forty-two percent of the student population is female; 58 percent is male. In addition, 62 percent of the students qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch based upon the Federal Income Guidelines.

Q11: What has been the enrollment trend for the last 10 years?

Since the 2000-01 academic year, Loyola has averaged a student enrollment of 100 students per year with a high of 117 students in 2000-01 and a low of 73 students in 2009-10. The enrollment increase to 105 for the 2010-11 school year reflects the addition of seventh grade.

Q12: What was the maximum enrollment and when?

Loyola Catholic School opened in 1924 with classrooms in the basement of the church. By 1938, they had a student enrollment of 71 students. By the 1951-52 school year, the student enrollment was up to 298 students in the first through the eighth grades. Loyola experienced their highest student enrollment during the 1958-59 school year with 366 students enrolled in the first through the eighth grades.

Loyola experienced fluctuating enrollment during the 1960s, beginning the decade with 358 students and ending the decade with 194 students. The 1970s brought a change to the school configuration as the seventh and eighth grades were no longer offered as part of the education program. During the 1980s, Loyola served an average student enrollment of 122 students. The next decade brought a slight increase in the average student enrollment to 129 students in Kindergarten through sixth grade and by the end of the decade and through today, Loyola was serving an average of 100 students.

Q13: With the closing of Loyola School, will the Church and Catholic schools continue to serve the poor?

Yes. The Archdiocese of Denver is committed to serving economically-disadvantaged families throughout our school system. 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 as they have the largest concentration of families living at or below the poverty level. Fifty-five percent of the students attending these 13 schools qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch Program as part of the Federal Income Guidelines. With the closing of Loyola, 12 of the SUN and FOCUS schools will continue to serve these families with five of the schools remaining in the inner-city of Denver.

Children need to be reassured through presence and actions that people care about them and will help them find their place in a new school. Students from Loyola who enroll and attend another



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic school for the 2011-12 school year will continue to receive the same quality education they were provided at Loyola. In addition, parents of Loyola students will have the same tuition payment amount and plan in effect from the 2010-11 school year for the upcoming 2011-12 school year.

The Archdiocese of Denver and its related organizations have and will continue to invest great effort and funds on behalf of Catholic schools. Since 1998, Catholic schools have received over \$69 million in support. The majority of the available grant funds are distributed to the schools with the greatest need, which include the SUN and FOCUS schools.