



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

4/13/22

Dear Diocese of Saginaw Community,

Catholic schools, in partnership with our parishes, play an important role in the formation of our students and families. The Diocese of Saginaw and the Office of Catholic Schools are committed to supporting our schools and parishes in this shared mission. Today, we begin a new chapter in the history of Catholic education in the Diocese of Saginaw.

In late December, 2021, Bishop Robert Gruss identified two priorities: Eucharistic renewal and Catholic schools (more information can be found [here](#)). With his full support, I am pleased to announce a transformative initiative entitled, *Our Catholic Schools: Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence*. A video message from Bishop Gruss introducing this important work can be found [here](#).

Beginning in late spring 2021, a small group of dedicated principals, volunteers and diocesan staff members began to regularly meet with me to discuss the state of our Catholic schools and the role of the Bishop to promote Catholic schools. In August, the group met with Bishop Gruss to share our preliminary findings. With Bishop Gruss' support, the group was expanded in an effort to have appropriate geographic representation. We also began working with a consultant. The consultant conducted interviews with pastors associated with schools, principals, and colleagues dedicated to Catholic education. We strove to identify current, as well as future, challenges and opportunities.

We identified four areas of focus: 1) Catholic identity and academic excellence, 2) marketing and enrollment, 3) financial vitality, and 4) people and governance. Bishop Gruss continues to support this focus by providing the funding for increasing the staffing within the Office of Catholic Schools. Two additional staff members will soon join the Catholic Schools Office. One staff person will focus on Catholic identity and academic excellence; the second professional staff person will be devoted to marketing and enrollment. Both will work closely with individual schools across the Diocese to supplement local efforts. (Full job descriptions can be found on the diocesan website [here](#) and [here](#).)

Catholic Identity and Academic Excellence Supporting our teachers includes identifying how our faith can be intentionally and effectively intertwined throughout all subject areas. We will update our religious education (theology) standards and gather best instructional practices in core educational content areas.

Marketing and Enrollment Few of our schools have sufficient staffing to fully carry out strategic and intentional enrollment and marketing campaigns. The new marketing position will be tasked with facilitating marketing and enrollment. We hope that this resource will allow our principals to concentrate on learning and instructional goals.

Financial Vitality We are conducting a review of current funding models with the goal of helping all schools become increasingly self-sustainable, while keeping tuition at an appropriate level. We

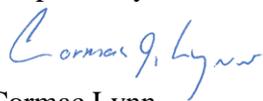
will assess teacher, administrative, and support staff salaries, wages, incentives, and benefits and make recommendations to support the stability of Catholic schools and just compensation according to Catholic ethical teachings. Reviewing the physical operations, existing funding sources, creating new sources of revenue, and investing funds in an intentional and strategic manner are all within the scope of our plan. We have conducted an initial review of our schools' aspirations and consolidated our findings in a financial overview we call *Investment in Excellence*. This document will evolve as we gather information and will aid us in identifying priorities across the diocese and within individual schools.

People and Governance This monumental effort has, to the best of our collective knowledge, not been set forth in the Diocese of Saginaw. A draft strategic plan has been created. In the near future, we will seek feedback to help us select a course both compelling and measured. Structurally, a formal council will support the Office of Catholic schools in carrying out the objectives of this initiative to work in collaboration with the existing school boards and committees. Bylaws are currently being developed to guide this council moving forward. A significant part of this component of people and governance is retaining and recruiting effective teachers, administrators, and school staff. This aspect of the plan includes, in part, providing resources to our schools to support and enhance the ongoing professional development of school staff.

Most importantly, I look to our Catholic School families. I thank them for their cooperation and generous support through the challenging past two years. I recognize and appreciate their desire to collaborate in their child(ren)'s education. Our schools look forward to continuing to partner with them in this essential ministry.

We are entering an exciting and vital time for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Saginaw. I look forward to sharing more information with you about *Our Catholic Schools: Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence* initiative in the future. Current information and future updates on this initiative can be found [here](#). If you are interested in supporting this effort to strengthen our Catholic schools, please visit the [Give to Catholic Education page](#). The upcoming edition of *Faith Saginaw* magazine will feature articles related to this initiative and our schools. A specific prayer created for this initiative has been included in this communication. (A digital copy of the prayer can be found [here](#).) Please feel welcome to use and share it. Thank you for supporting our Catholic schools and the Diocese of Saginaw in this important work.

Respectfully,



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Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

A prayer for:

Our Catholic Schools: Centered in Christ, Committed to Excellence

Dear Jesus, Lord and Savior,
our rabbi and greatest teacher.
We ask you to help to accompany us on our journey
in Catholic education.
Breathe the Spirit into your plan,
give us courage to be steadfast,
be the source of wisdom in our actions and decisions,
provide the necessary resources for our schools to be
successful in spreading your message of eternal life,
Be with all of our students and families who sacrifice
to provide a Catholic education,
Be with our staff and faculty,
bless them for their dedication and commitment
to this essential ministry.
Remind us at all times that education in the
faith is essential to forming disciples
who can transform our society and evangelize
throughout our Diocese and beyond.
We ask this all through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

