

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
Catholic Schools Policies/Regulations

ADMINISTRATION

School President/Chief Administrative Officer

President/Chief Administrative Officer Search and Interview Process

It is the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop that the following procedures will be adhered to when selecting a School President or Chief Administrative Officer.

1. Establish an interview committee that must include the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools and Bishop or his designee.
2. The Catholic Schools Office will post the position on Teach Iowa and in other locations as deemed necessary.
3. The Diocesan Superintendent will perform necessary reference checks and licensure checks as applicable. (If President/Chief Administrative Officer will be evaluating administrators, they must have a valid Iowa Evaluator Approval endorsement.)
4. If the Bishop cannot participate in interviews, he may choose to meet with the recommended candidate prior to giving approval.

All hiring will follow Diocese of Des Moines hiring guidelines, including the Diocesan Nepotism policy.

Policy Adopted:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	September 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal)

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that each elementary and secondary school complies with the State of Iowa law and accreditation standards regarding the employment of a certified, licensed principal. (281-IAC 12.4 (7))

Decisions affecting the employment of the school administrator must be determined via a collaborative decision-making process between the Superintendent and Pastor/Canonical Administrator, with the final decision from the Bishop should consensus not be reached.

The principal shall be available to devote the entire school day to the duties of the principal. If the principal is unable to fulfill the contract and expectations, the pastor and principal will meet with the Superintendent. Permission must be granted from the diocesan Superintendent and pastor/canonical administrator to move forward with an altered contract or agreement for work.

Policy Adopted: April 20, 1970
Policy Revised: May 21, 2018
July 30, 2021
September 2026

Administrator (Principal): Principal/Assistant Principal Recruitment, Interview, and Selection
Regulation 303.1

The following procedures for recruiting, interviewing, and selecting an administrator (principal or assistant principal) are to be followed in all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines.

1. Each pastor or principal will notify the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools as soon as it is known that a new principal or assistant principal will be needed for the following school year.
2. The Diocesan Superintendent or designee will work with the pastor throughout the process of selecting a principal or assistant principal.
3. The Catholic Schools Office will post the position and the Superintendent will review applicants with the pastor.
4. The Superintendent will set up interviews.
5. The Pastor will provide input for the make-up of the interview team.
6. The Superintendent and/or designee will serve on the interview team.

7. After conversation with the Pastor/Canonical Administrator, the Superintendent or designee will share recommendations for the new administrator with the Bishop for his approval. The Bishop may choose to meet with the candidate prior to approval.

All hiring will follow Diocese of Des Moines hiring guidelines, including the Diocesan Nepotism policy.

Regulation Adopted:	April 12, 1976
Regulation Revised:	March 25, 2013
Regulation Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Regulation Revised:	July 30, 2021
	September 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

School Administrator Job Description

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that each school administrator (President, Chief Administrative Officer, Principal, Assistant Principal) have a written job description. The job description shall outline the main duties and responsibilities. Job descriptions will be made available as a part of the hiring process.

Job descriptions will be found in the Administrator Handbook.

Policy Adopted:	October 27, 1969
Policy Revised:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	August 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Lead Teacher

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that the administrator (principal) of each elementary and secondary school shall secure the appointment a lead teacher who is to temporarily assume the role of the administrator (principal) in the absence of the administrator (principal). The chain of and change in command must be identified and published so that all will know who is to assume the role of the administrator (principal) in his/her absence for emergency purposes.

A lead teacher cannot assume the duties of a licensed administrator as found in Iowa Code (281 IAC – 12.4(7)). These include: serving as the instructional leader, coordinating the process and substance of educational and instructional programs, coordinating the school budget, providing formative and summative evaluation of all practitioners in the school, recommending, assigning, promoting, or transferring personnel, implementing the policies specific to the administrator, or developing or administering school programming. The Lead Teacher is responsible for managing the building in the event of an emergency should the administrator be absent.

A job description for the Lead Teacher is found in the Administrator Handbook.

Policy Adopted:	October 27, 1969
Policy Revised:	May 21, 2018
Policy Approved:	May 30, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	August 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Employment of Former Priests/Religious

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that former priests and/or religious may be employed provided that they have been properly and officially laicized and/or dispensed from their vows.

In the case of laicized priests, the Bishop of Des Moines shall be consulted in order to determine that the canonical procedures of the Church are fulfilled.

Policy Adopted:	March 27, 2000
Policy Revised:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
Policy Reviewed:	August 2026

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

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ADMINISTRATION

Nondiscriminatory Practices

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that all schools be committed to Equal Employment Opportunity and do not unlawfully discriminate in employment.

The employment relationship between diocesan schools and its employees is governed by canon law as well as civil law.

As religious institutions, nothing in the Iowa Code and this policy shall be construed as prohibiting diocesan schools from imposing qualifications based on religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose.

In addition, schools shall comply with the anti-bullying/anti-harassment laws of the state of Iowa, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act as such may apply to diocesan schools.

All schools must include this non-discrimination policy in the faculty/staff handbooks.

Policy Adopted:	April 12, 1976
Policy Revised:	January 20, 2012
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
Policy Reviewed:	August 2026

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
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ADMINISTRATION

Administrator Contract Renewal/Non-Renewal

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that if a pastor/canonical administrator contemplates the non-renewal of a contract for the administrator (president, chief administrative officer, principal, or assistant principal), the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Des Moines Human Resources, and diocesan legal counsel must be consulted in advance of such action.

Administrators (presidents, chief administrative officers, principals, assistant principals) shall be notified as stated in the Diocesan Administrator Handbook by the pastor/canonical administrator with the intent to renew or not renew the administrator's (president, chief administrative officer, principal, assistant principal) contract for the next academic year. Non-renewal shall be done in collaboration with the Bishop, Superintendent of Schools, and Pastor/Canonical Administrator.

Notification that the administrator's (president, chief administrative officer, principal, or assistant principal) contract will not be renewed shall be delivered to the administrator by certified mail and in person by the canonical administrator or pastor. The notification shall be signed by the canonical administrator or pastor.

Policy Adopted:	March 15, 1971
Policy Revised:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	May 30, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	September 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Administrator Contract Termination-Temporary Suspension

It shall be the policy of the Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that a canonical administrator/pastor may terminate or temporarily suspend an administrator (president, chief administrative officer, principal, assistant principal) for good and sufficient cause during the year of employment with the consultation of the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, Bishop, and legal counsel.

Termination or temporary suspension must be based on the language found in the legally authorized Diocese of Des Moines Administrator Contract. Or, if the recommendation for termination or temporary suspension is made based on serious, inadequate performance, there must be documentation which includes the stated deficiencies and the record of employer/employee conference(s).

Policy Adopted:	May 16, 2005
Policy Revised:	May 21, 2018
Policy Approved:	May 30, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	September 2026

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
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ADMINISTRATION

Steps Involved for a Possible Major Change in a School Operation or Academic Programs

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that any major change in the operation or academic programs of a school must be approved by the pastor/canonical administrator Superintendent, and in consultation with the Bishop for final approval prior to the enactment of the change.

A “major change” is defined as any operational or academic modification that significantly alters the school’s delivery of instruction, community identity, or student schedule. This includes but is not limited to: programmatic shifts such as the introduction, elimination or structural overhaul of any specialized academic track; significant instructional time allocation such as increasing or decreasing instructional minutes; or staffing and resource reallocation such as changes that require a realignment of staff or school-wide resources (e.g. changes to school start and end times).

The approval of the Bishop will be considered only after completion of the processes and steps contained in Regulation 326.1.

Policy Adopted:	May 17, 1975
Policy Revised:	May 21, 2012
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	September 2026

Steps Involved for a Possible Major Change in a School Operation or Academic Program
Regulation 326.1

The steps to be followed if a school proposes a major change in its operation or academic programs are:

1. The administrator must obtain permission of the pastor/canonical administrator and Superintendent to explore the major change.
2. The administrator must present to the local school board/leadership council the steps the school will follow in order to investigate the possible change, which include educating the staff, parents and students and, if necessary, the parishioners.
3. Approval must be obtained from the pastor/canonical administrator and Superintendent to proceed.
4. The Superintendent of Schools will keep the Bishop updated on movement toward the change.

5. If approval to proceed is given by the Bishop, the following education and investigation processes are to take place:
 - a. Conduct research citing both the pros and cons including academic success or evidence to demonstrate that the proposed change is not harmful.
 - b. Hold informational meetings for pastor/canonical administrator, staff, school board/leadership council, parents, and parishioners, if needed, in order to educate people about the possible change.
 - c. Provide opportunities for community input.
 - d. Contact other school administrators and faculty, preferably from Catholic schools, which have experience with the proposed change.
 - e. Conduct a financial impact study in collaboration with the Superintendent, that contains all of the income and expenditures involved with the possible change and compare it with the income and expenditures for the same academic year without the proposed change included.
 - f. Share the results of the financial impact study with the pastor/canonical administrator, members of the school board/leadership council and parish finance committee. The input of the pastoral council and parish finance committee are to be sought in the process.
6. Upon completion of the above steps, the administrator must present the results to the pastor/canonical administrator and school board/leadership council.
7. If the pastor/canonical administrator grants permission, the administrator will present the proposed change and findings from the research study to the Superintendent, who will share the information with the Bishop. The Bishop will determine if the proposed change is to be put in place.

Regulation Adopted: April 1, 2010
Regulation Reviewed: May 21, 2018
Regulation Revised: July 30, 2021
September 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Closing of a School and/or the Discontinuation of a Grade or Grades

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that any consideration to close a Catholic school or discontinue a grade or grades must follow the directives contained in Regulation 327.1 and be approved by the Bishop.

Policy Adopted: March 25, 2013
Policy Reviewed: May 21, 2018
Policy Revised: July 30, 2021
Policy Reviewed: September 2026

Closing of a School and/or Discontinuation of a Grade or Grades
Regulation 327.1

If the closure of a school or the discontinuation of a grade or grades is under consideration, these directives must be followed and completed prior to submission of a request to the Superintendent and the Bishop.

1. The pastor/canonical administrator and Superintendent will meet to discuss the need to close a school or discontinue grades.
2. The Diocesan Superintendent shall meet with the pastor/canonical administrator and administrator to assess the status of enrollment, demographics, marketing, recruitment, support, budget issues. The Superintendent of Schools will share information with the Bishop to keep him informed of the process.
3. The Superintendent, in collaboration with the administrator and pastor/canonical administrator will hold meetings with the parish, school, and stakeholders to review the current status of the school, which could include a strategic planning process.
4. Following the meetings, an improvement plan with a timeline will be developed that explains next steps in the process. The improvement plan will include current and potential budget trends, current and potential enrollment patterns, current and potential staffing needs, and recommended solutions. The improvement plan will also include necessary costs that will be incurred to enact the plan.
5. At the conclusion of the timeline, a careful assessment of the current situation will be made and shared with the Bishop.
6. If sufficient improvement has not occurred a recommendation to close or discontinue a grade or grades must be presented by the pastor/canonical administrator to the Bishop and Superintendent.
7. The Bishop will make final decision about the plan for moving forward.

Regulation Adopted: March 25, 2013
Regulation Reviewed: May 21, 2018
Regulation Revised: July 30, 2021
September 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Religious Formation

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that the administrators and teachers of the Catholic schools be provided opportunities for and participate in faith formation programs annually. It is the responsibility of the employer to financially support the ongoing religious faith formation for the administration and faculty.

The pastors are primarily responsible for the faith formation of the school faculty and staff. The administrator shall collaborate with the pastor/canonical administrator in the planning and execution of local faith formation opportunities offered at the school, in addition to those offered through the Catholic Schools Office. Faith formation opportunities will be designed to allow faculty to grow in their relationship with God and each other through discussion, prayer, Scripture, and reflection.

Each school must engage its administration and faculty in at least one retreat each year, along with providing regular opportunities for faith formation for faculty and staff.

School-based faith formation activities are to be shared with the Catholic Schools Office through the School Improvement Plan and the Professional Development Plan.

Policy Adopted:	May 15, 1978
Policy Revised:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	September 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Annual Report

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that each school must create an annual report that is made available to the pastor/canonical administrator, local board, school patrons, and Catholic Schools Office. The Annual Report will be completed by December 30 and made available on the school's website and accessible to all constituents.

Policy Adopted:	August 20, 1973
Policy Revised:	March 25, 2013
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	August 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

School Reports

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that the Schools Office collect data from the schools and compile annual information and statistics. Administrators will be given a list of Required Reports in August that includes due dates and how the information will be used. The Catholic Schools Office will use the information to generate and disseminate reports requested by leadership at the diocesan level.

Policy Adopted:	April 20, 1970
Policy Revised:	March 25, 2013
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
Policy Reviewed:	August 2026

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ADMINISTRATION

Needs Assessment – School Questionnaires

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that in accordance with Iowa Code (281 IAC – 12.8(1)(a)(1-2) and 12.8(1)(b)(1-4)), schools will conduct a needs assessment every five years. This needs assessment will be used to gather information from the community on spiritual, physical plant, curricular, and other programming needs for the school. The data gathered from Needs Assessments should be used as a part of the strategic planning at the school. Assistance with the needs assessment can be obtained through the Catholic Schools Office.

Policy Adopted:	May 15, 1978
Policy Revised:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	August 2026

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Crisis Management Plan

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Des Moines Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that, for the safety and care of all school personnel, each school shall develop a high-quality Crisis Management Plan in alignment with regulation 345.1. This plan must be updated annually and made known to all staff members. When appropriate, the plan is to be practiced in order to be successful.

Policy Adopted:	May 17, 1999
Policy Revised:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
	August 2026

Crisis Management Plan **Regulation 345.1**

In alignment with Iowa Code 280.30, all high-quality emergency operations plans or crisis management plans must include, but are not limited to:

1. Responses to active shooter scenarios and natural disasters
2. Provisions for any alert regarding an emergency situation that is transmitted to school personnel or students by electronic means shall also be transmitted to the employer of any individual who is not a school employee but who is required to as a part of the individual's employment (e.g. if your school employs an outside cleaning service, all alerts should be sent to the cleaning service so they can alert their employees who are onsite at your school).
3. Published procedures for school personnel, parents, and guardians to report possible threats to the safety of students or school personnel on school grounds or at school activities.
4. Annual emergency operations drills (table-top, walk-through, partial, or full) are required at each building where students are educated.

Regulation Adopted:	May 17, 1999
Regulation Approved:	May 30, 2018
Regulation Reviewed:	July 30, 2021
Regulation Revised:	August 2026

Catholic Schools Crisis Management Plan

Regulation 345.2

Requirements

Safety Committee

- Purpose: Write, revise, review, and enact the EOP on an annual basis
- Required participants if the position exists in your building: Pastor/Canonical Administrator, Principal, Facilities Director, Nurse, Counselor, Parish/School Office Representative, Teacher Representative, Law enforcement representative

Facilities/Access

- Individual classroom doors must have the ability to be locked from the inside. The use of magnets is acceptable. This does not apply to shared spaces (gym, cafeteria, media center, etc).
- Outside of special events, Mass, and designated arrival/dismissal times for the academic school day, school entrances will be locked
- Any unlocked entrances during the designated student arrival/dismissal times for the academic school day* will be manned by a staff member. This does not apply to arrival for extra curricular activities or special events.
- Outside of special events and Mass, visitors during the academic school day must sign in/out and have a mode of identification (sticker, badge, lanyard, etc.)

Preparedness

- Emergency Quick Reference guide in each room (clipboard, flipbook, folder, binder, etc.) reviewed/updated annually
- Emergency kit in each room. Required items: band aids, gauze, flashlight, pens, a rosary, gloves, tourniquet
- Printed class list with contact information in each classroom. Schoolwide list with contact information printed and held in the school office, related arts rooms, and church.
- Annual building walk-through with fire and law enforcement with students in session by October 30

Trainings

- Annual review of EOP with all staff, including emergency response procedures for fire, tornado, and active shooter
- Annual Run/Hide/Fight training for all staff (ideally during preservice, at minimum within the first six weeks of school)
- All staff tabletop exercise 1x per year minimum
- Annual mental health training (AEA, counselor-led, anti-bullying, suicide prevention, etc.)
- Annual anaphylaxis review (signs of anaphylaxis and practice with a trainer device)
- Active shooter procedures reviewed with students annually in a developmentally appropriate manner

Drills

- 4 fire drills annually (one must be held from school Mass)
- 4 tornado annually
- 1 active shooter drill with students per year (Per Iowa Code 280.30, a “drill” may include but is not limited to a table top exercise, partial drill, or full drill).
- Evidence of drills will be filed with the CSO

**The “academic school day” is defined as the time in which instruction begins for all students until the time instruction ends for all students. This time frame does not include pick up/drop off, before/after school extracurricular activities, athletics, performances, or weekend activities.*

Regulation Adopted: July 12, 2024
Regulation Revised: February 18, 2025

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

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ADMINISTRATION

Federal and State Labor-Safety Laws

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Office, under the aegis of the Bishop, that each educational institution post in a location easily accessible for all employees to see and read, the federal and state labor-safety laws as required by law.

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Policy Revised:	May 19, 2008
Policy Reviewed:	May 21, 2018
Policy Revised:	July 30, 2021
Policy Reviewed:	August 2026