



A Vision for Excellence in
**Catholic
Education**

Inspired by a Caring, Committed, Faithful Community

April 24, 2019

Dear Parents,

By now you may have heard or read that the Diocese of Des Moines School's Office completed a strategic planning process to guide the way forward for Catholic schools in the Diocese. The process was led by Superintendent Dr. Bonday, me as Blue Ribbon Task Force chair, and the Meitler firm. The process was robust and comprehensive. A large amount of data was collected from interviews and conversations with pastors, administrators, boards, diocesan committees and many individuals from every school in the Diocese. A list of key findings was produced from the work that helped inform and create the final plan. The Blue Ribbon Task Force, made up of members representing pastors, administrators, boards, parents and several other constituent groups, worked throughout the process to interpret the data and key findings to make recommendations.

A final plan was created and shared publicly with pastors, board members, administrators, parents, teachers and other constituents on March 7th at the Pastoral Center. You can read the full plan at www.dmdiocese.org/catholic-schools/strategic-plan. In addition to the plan, you will find the list of key findings, a Q&A document to answer some questions you may have, and a letter of support for the plan from Bishop Pates.

Also from this planning process and shared at the meeting on March 7th was a recommendation for a new approach of looking at how the schools in the metro area may benefit from working together versus individually given the challenges that key findings and the plan laid out. A copy of the recommendation for the metro area entitled **A New Approach for a Stronger Future** can be found at the site listed above. There is an article entitled *Catholic Schools Reimagined* by Betsy Shirley at the site listed above that discusses this kind of approach that you may find interesting.

As the next step in the process, Bishop Pates asked me to lead the implementation phase related to the recommendation of the new approach for the metro area schools. This implementation phase will take 10-12 months and will produce a five-year plan. I am looking forward to working with pastors, administrators, faculty, boards, parents and constituents through this phase of the plan. A steering committee will be created to help lead the process. A number of sub committees with representatives from across all schools will be created to work as focus groups in the areas of faith formation, academics, finance and human resources, governance, enrollment management and advancement.

Moving forward on the work ahead, I have contacted all of the school boards in the metro area to get on their agenda in the next two months so I can share information on this plan, gather feedback and begin to recruit assistance for the work of the committees going forward. I will continue to meet with Pastors and other groups in the diocese. In the process we will provide opportunities for parents to share information and get their feedback as well.

I believe you want for your child an excellent, faith-filled education that is couched in a loving, trusting, safe environment delivered by faculty and staff committed to the mission and continuous improvement. That is what my wife and I expected when our children attended Catholic schools. I truly believe that by working together on this plan, we can set about a process that delivers on that desire. I will keep you informed along the way and look forward to working with you to help our schools continue on their quest toward excellence.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jerry Deegan
Implementation Coordinator