
Key Findings



A Vision for Excellence in
Catholic
Education

Inspired by a Caring, Committed, Faithful Community

Diocese of Des Moines

June 2018



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INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture.

Pope Francis-The Gospel of Joy

The Diocese of Des Moines and Bishop Richard Pates engaged the consulting firm Meitler to guide the development of a strategic plan for Catholic school education in the diocese. Developing the plan comes at a time of transition in the diocese as Bishop Pates wants his successor to have the best information possible upon which a vision and plan for the future will be built and implemented.

Planning for the future of Catholic schools requires those who will form and use the plan to have an accurate understanding of the current reality based on data and analysis. Through analysis and formation of conclusions, the data from this extensive study will provide insight into the challenges and possibilities for the future and will serve as the foundation for developing a strategic plan.

The Meitler consulting team brings to the planning process an emphasis on data and accountability, believing that the best plans are based on empirical evidence. In addition to empirical data, the consulting team interviewed many stakeholders (including teachers, pastors, school leaders, board members and diocesan representatives) involved in the ministry of Catholic education. The team toured each school site and met with school and parish leaders.

Planning is important so Catholic schools do not grow complacent in their accomplishments, but proactively strive to be ever more authentic in their Catholic identity and ever more excellent in their academics. As “a most valuable resource for the evangelization,” Catholic schools must exist to form young people to be disciples of Christ and instill Catholic values for future generations.

THEMES

Understanding the challenges and appreciating the strengths of Catholic schools is a first step toward building a strategic vision and plan for the future. The following themes flow from a thorough analysis of data, interviews, and school visits. The themes provide strengths to celebrate, problems to solve, and opportunities to grow. As the current status of Catholic schools in the diocese is better understood, a productive conversation about where schools are headed for the future should lay the foundation for building a strategic plan.

MAKING DISCIPLES

1. The Diocese of Des Moines is dedicated and supportive of Catholic education. Parish and school leaders support the schools throughout the diocese. Catholic identity is evident not only through the physical appearance of the schools, but it is evident in the heart of the schools.
2. Catholic identity is visibly present in schools. It is evident that people working in and leading Catholic schools care about the mission of Catholic education and living the faith.
3. Students attend Mass and receive the sacraments regularly.
4. Many pastors give significant time and effort to making Catholic schools successful.
5. Pastors need further education and guidance to administer parishes with parochial schools. The complexities of school operations and the strategic planning skills required necessitate pastors be given more tools and training so they fulfill their spiritual and governing role with the expertise necessary.
6. All schools offer students of all ages numerous opportunities to live their faith through service to others.
7. Faith Journey, the ongoing faith formation program for educators, seeks to build a Catholic culture in all schools by forming the intellectual and spiritual lives of the participants, building a personal relationship with God, and forming community.
8. In some parishes with schools, the parish and school function in isolation from each other rather than the school being an integral ministry of the parish.
9. Cultural values are pushing against Catholic values, and the teachings of Christ and the Church are increasingly challenged. Families and students struggle to choose what is important, and there is competition for where they will find their identity and how they will live their faith.
10. Schools are an opportunity for the church to reach not only the child, but the entire family. There are many opportunities still not utilized to help the family know God and bring faith into the home.

ACADEMICS

1. Standardized test scores (Iowa Test) for Catholic school students are better in percent of proficiency as compared to public school students. However, there is sometimes reason to question how strong academic programs really are and if they are substantially better than the public school system in all subject areas for all Catholic schools.
2. The process of vertical curriculum alignment is not in place from the elementary schools to the high school in the Des Moines metro.
3. There is no diocesan-wide process for intentional academic decision-making based on both formative and summative data.

4. Educators put forth great effort in meeting the needs of children with special needs, but lack of resources and training make it difficult to offer sustainable programs. Schools have limited services for these students.
5. Many public schools are providing strong academic programs. There is a need for Catholic schools to further distinguish themselves with strong academic results in all the core subjects and to provide niche programming that shows added value for parent's tuition.

GOVERNANCE

1. The Bishop, Office of Catholic Schools, parish pastors, school administrators, and school board members have a high level of dedication to the schools entrusted to their care.
2. The current governance model for parish schools relies heavily on a strong working relationship between pastor and principal. When roles are confused or personalities conflict, the school ministry often suffers.
3. The roles and responsibilities of many decision makers and influencers are often not clearly articulated or properly practiced. This applies at many levels: Bishop's office, Office of Catholic Schools, pastors administering parishes with schools, school administrators, and school boards.
4. Many of the school boards do not have a significant role in governing the school. Members lack consistent understanding of their role. Members are often not being selected for a bigger role because the mandate is not clear or substantial board development is lacking. Lay leaders have many talents and resources they will generously give to the mission of Catholic education when properly guided and empowered.
5. Administrators and boards in many schools do not lead with a strategic plan or make decisions based on a comprehensive strategic plan for their school.
6. The Office of Catholic Schools currently functions mostly as a resource for schools in the diocese. The Office of Catholic Schools has been delegated limited authority with respect to accountability for outcomes, key leadership hires, school finance, development, and marketing.
7. There are limited resources and programs to identify and cultivate future principals and teachers. A pipeline of talented faith-filled leaders and teachers will ensure the Catholicity and excellence of schools.

FINANCES

1. The funding model of high subsidy and low tuition is fundamentally broken. It will not sustain the vision of excellent Catholic schools that parents want and the diocese hopes for.
2. The ability to attract and retain excellent teachers is being compromised by low salaries. Turnover of new teachers is high. Seasoned experienced teachers will retire in greater numbers in future years. The pool of qualified Catholic teacher candidates is small because competition for teachers from the public sector is strong.
3. The Catholic School Tuition Organization program has greatly increased the funding available for students from lower income backgrounds to attend Catholic schools, but financial aid from other sources does not extend much beyond this.
4. Parishes make a large investment that is sustaining the mission of Catholic schools. However, the level of subsidy schools receive from the supporting parishes is not sustainable in many cases because it represents more than 40% and up to 70% of parish offertory income. For many parishes, offertory income is not growing enough to sustain a full spectrum of parish ministries and sustain school subsidies. In a number of situations, this level of subsidy is not sustainable.

5. There is no process in place for monitoring the financial health of schools year to year. The diocese is put in a reactive position rather than helping schools plan when facing financial difficulty. Accountability for schools to have solid financial plans is weak, especially because the parish picks up whatever deficit the school cannot cover.
6. While a central accounting system is in place, the ability to see the full financial picture of a school is not there. The way income and expenses are entered varies across schools. Reporting lacks clarity for the purposes of decision making and strategic planning.
7. The financial resources, and therefore programming and staff pay, are not equitable from school to school.
8. Tuition income is relatively low, covering only 48% of the cost of education. Every family is getting significant financial assistance in the form of low tuition without consideration for varying degrees of need.
9. There are few formal advancement programs in the schools and a minimal effort at the diocesan level. These programs are not funded or staffed to function effectively.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

1. There has been little change in the overall number of children enrolled in Catholic schools over the last ten years. Over the past five years, six schools have a trend of enrollment loss, one is gaining and nine were relatively stable. One school opened – St. Luke the Evangelist is completing its third school year.
2. Throughout the diocese, there are areas of growth and areas of decline. In the areas of decline, there is little planning on how schools continue to serve the children in these areas. Catholic schools are not present in all areas of strategic growth.
3. Currently, there is no diocesan-wide enrollment management or marketing plan in place nor a process to facilitate this effort.
4. The Catholic schools with support from the diocese have reached out to the Hispanic community to encourage families to attend Catholic schools. This has yielded good success.
5. All schools have some kind of marketing activities, and many have a marketing committee. Few have adequate marketing budgets or staff to support the effort with marketing skills.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

1. Very few schools function with comprehensive strategic plans that guide intentional and informed decision making when planning for the future. Where they exist, elements of funding or facilities or other components may be missing.
2. Formal processes for planning in relation to the parish and school as well as the school and diocese are lacking. Many situations and issues would benefit from more structure and clearer processes.
3. Larger schools have advantages of staff to support marketing, development, public relations, strategic planning, board development, and many other areas critical to a thriving Catholic school. Too often, the principal is the only staff with limited help to balance so many responsibilities.

I. MAKING DISCIPLES

Observations

- a. Parish and school leaders support the schools throughout the diocese.
- b. During the school visits, it was noted that the visual appearance of Catholic identity throughout the schools was prevalent and permeated the school campus.
- c. Catholic identity is evident and is the heart of the schools. Students receive the sacraments regularly, service projects are prevalent and the way the students treat each other and are treated by the faculty align with servant-leadership.
- d. Many of those interviewed expressed disappointment and even frustration that a noticeable number of school families are not regularly attending Mass and are not involved in parish life.
- e. There is little evidence of a systemic plan to evangelize school families using the school as an initial touch point. Schools generally focus on the faith of the student more than the parent. Traditionally, it was the parish that focused on adult education and family ministry. Parishes are generally not resourced or programed to reach the new generation of parents.
- f. In some parishes with schools, there is isolation between the parish and the school rather than the school being an integral ministry of the parish.
- g. Many of those interviewed expressed pastor involvement in the school correlates to school family involvement in the parish.
- h. Faith Journey, the formation program for educators, provides opportunities for teachers on their personal faith journey. It is an ongoing program supporting educators in constant growth and nourishment of their spiritual lives.
- i. The increased time commitment of teachers for Faith Journey is competing with and limits academic professional development.
- j. Catholic identity standards and benchmarks have been updated by teachers throughout the diocese to include the integration of Catholic identity into all subject areas.
- k. Information for Growth Assessment for Children/Youth Religious Education Assessment (IFG:ACRE) is the assessment published by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). This assessment of Catholic Identity found the students to be proficient in all areas with the exception of fifth grade Faith Knowledge: Mission Spirit. The diocese requests that all schools administer the IFG:ACRE to the students. Several schools did not administer the assessment so the findings are not reflective of all schools.
- l. Cultural values are pushing against Catholic values, and the teachings of Christ and the Church are increasingly challenged. Families and students struggle to choose what is important, and there is competition for where they will find their identity, who will guide their choices, and how they will live their faith.

II. ACADEMICS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Observations

- a. All schools are accredited by the state. This accreditation ensures accountability based on the state guidelines in regard to teacher credentials, academic rigor, as well as other parameters which are deemed necessary by the Iowa State Department of Education. Currently the diocese is working towards a diocesan-wide accreditation with AdvancED. AdvanceED Accreditation is recognized internationally and is the largest professional education organization. The major tenet of the accreditation process is to foster a climate of continuous improvement.
- b. Standards are clearly outlined and stated in the classrooms. Iowa Core Standards are used both by public and Catholic schools in language arts and math. Schools are currently using diocesan standards in science, social studies and religion. These standards are used in all schools.
- c. Diocesan-wide scores on the Iowa Assessment are consistently stronger in proficiency compared to state and national percentages. However, there is variation from school to school. Iowa Assessment scores are sent to the Office of Catholic Schools in terms of percent of student proficiency, but the office does not collect actual test data. To be in compliance with the Iowa Department of Education, an additional test is given at the fourth grade (CRS Reading), sixth grade (CRS Math), and eighth grade level (SCASS Science). The data give additional information in proficiency, but the data are not consistent with the Iowa State Tests.
- d. The diocese lacks a process to ensure vertical alignment in curriculum is achieved between elementary and high school for schools feeding to Dowling Catholic High School. While students are generally prepared for high school, improved planning would raise the level and consistency of preparation for all students.
- e. No diocesan-wide process is in place to utilize and direct data-driven decision making in regard to curriculum and instruction.
- f. ACT scores of high school students are higher than the state and national average, however, there has been a steady decline in scores.
- g. At the high school level, the number of National Merit Scholars were:
 - Class of 2018 4 Commended Students/2 Finalists
 - Class of 2017 4 Commended Students/4 Finalists
 - Class of 2016 3 Commended Students/2 Finalists
- h. Most schools do not have long-term educational or technology plans. Having such plans allow schools to make intentional decisions when planning for the future.
- i. Few schools have fostered a uniquely niched educational experience with special value for students such as STEM programs or a Spanish immersion program. These schools have specialized staff and facilities. More specialization is needed in school offerings to be more than a good basic education.
- j. Schools with limited resources are unable to provide the variety of enrichment classes offered at other schools in the diocese. Due to budgetary constraints, some schools struggle to secure updated curriculum resources.

- k. While recent progress has been made when teaching children with learning differences, often budgetary constraints have hindered the hiring of certified personnel in working with the unique behaviors associated with the exceptional, thus preventing Catholic schools from accepting students with more severe learning needs.
- l. While the diocese is commended for setting aside three days for professional development, schools do not have adequate professional development time for site-based needs. Professional development is not adequately funded. There is more opportunity for coordination and sharing among schools.
- m. Salaries and compensation that are not competitive are impacting the ability to attract and recruit the best quality teachers. Administrators are often unable to find and hire a preferred candidate, and the pool of experienced candidates willing to work for Catholic school salaries is often few. This also affects the ability to attract the best quality administrators.
- n. Retention of employees is negatively impacted by salaries and compensation. When the employee's financial situation changes, they will sometimes leave Catholic education for higher financial compensation.
- o. The teacher evaluation instrument, which is used by all schools in the diocese, is based on the Iowa Teaching Standards with a faith-based component written by teachers throughout the diocese. While the summative component of the evaluation instrument is consistent, the formative assessment is not consistent from school to school.

III. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics tell a story of who schools serve now, and who could be served in the future. Data was collected from many sources including Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, City of Des Moines Community Development, Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency, US Census, State of Iowa Data Center, Iowa Department of Education, Environics Analytics by Claritas, West Des Moines Community and Economic Development, and other sources. Interviews were conducted with some of these agencies. The following highlights basic facts. A presentation will extend these facts with visuals and conclusions.

A. DES MOINES METROPOLITAN AREA

Figure 1
Population History

County	1990	2000	2010	Change 1990 to 2010	
				Number	Percent
Polk	327,140	374,601	430,640	103,500	32%
Dallas	29,775	40,750	66,135	36,360	122%
Warren	36,033	40,671	46,225	10,192	28%
Total	392,948	456,022	543,000	150,052	38%

Source: US Census

Figure 2
Population Projection

County	Estimate		Projection 2040 ³	Change 2018 to 2040	
	2010 ¹	2018 ²		Number	Percent
Polk	430,640	484,967	571,353	86,386	18%
Dallas	66,135	89,316	120,506	31,190	35%
Warren	46,225	50,788	61,409	10,621	21%
Total	543,000	625,071	753,268	128,197	21%

¹ Source: US Census 2010

² Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

³ Source: Des Moines Area MPO 2016

Figure 3
School-Age Projection ages 5-14

County	Estimate		Projection 2030 ³	Projection 2040 ³	Change 2018 to 2040	
	2010 ¹	2018 ²			Number	Percent
Polk	60,308	67,736	69,103	68,260	524	1%
Dallas	10,925	14,030	12,437	12,706	-1,324	-9%
Warren	6,962	6,982	6,289	7,277	295	4%
Total	78,195	88,748	87,828	88,242	-506	-1%

¹ Source: US Census 2010

² Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

³ Source: Des Moines Area MPO 2016

Figure 4
Dallas County and Polk County Hispanic/Latino Population

	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Hispanic/Latino population	36,706	47,201	53,563
Years of change		8 years	5 years
Number change		10,495	6,362
Percent change		28.6%	13.5%
Percent of total population that is Hispanic/Latino	7.4%	8.2%	8.8%

Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Observations

- According to the 2050 Growth Scenario used by the Des Moines MPO, the best source of overall population data, the Des Moines metropolitan area could grow by over 100,000 persons over the next twenty years.
 - Within the City of Des Moines, high growth areas are Grays Station where 1,500 units are master planned, Lake Easter and the northeast part of the City. The Southeast Polk School District infringes on the NE corner of Des Moines which impacts the real estate market positively there. St. Joseph School is in closest proximity to growth in new single-family homes in the northeast part of Des Moines.
 - St. Anthony and Holy Family are the closest downtown schools. St. Anthony in particular may be positioned to serve downtown population growth and Grays Station development.
 - High growth areas outside the City of Des Moines favor western communities like West Des Moines, Waukee, Urbandale, Clive, and Grimes, and northern regions like Ankeny.
 - While students travel from the western communities to Catholic schools, the population and growth potential may warrant exploring locating a Catholic school in the northwestern part of the Metro area.
 - According to the Des Moines MPO, the population over the age of 65 will increase from approximately 53,000 to 155,000. This population will go from roughly 10% of the total population to roughly 20%.
- Source: *Mobilizing Tomorrow, Des Moines MPO.*

B. COUNCIL BLUFFS

Figure 5
Pottawattamie County History

1980	1990	2000	2010	Change 1980 to 2010	
				Number	Percent
86,561	82,628	87,704	93,158	6,597	8%

Source: US Census

Figure 6**Pottawattamie County Projection**

Census 2010	Projection			Change 2010 to 2040	
	2020	2030	2040	Number	Percent
93,158	93,678	97,705	99,981	6,823	7%

Source: US Census and MAPA (Metropolitan Area Planning Agency) - LRTP 2040

Figure 7**Pottawattamie County Population Trends**

	Census 2000	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Total population	87,704	93,158	93,772	95,104
Years of change		10 years	8 years	5 years
Number change		5,454	614	1,332
Percent change		6.2%	0.7%	1.4%
Population 5-14	12,914	12,345	12,238	12,040
Years of change		10 years	8 years	5 years
Number change		-569	-107	-198
Percent change		-4.4%	-0.9%	-1.6%

Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Figure 8**Pottawattamie County Hispanic/Latino Population**

	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Hispanic/Latino population	6,151	7,474	8,417
Years of change		8 years	5 years
Number change		1,323	943
Percent change		21.5%	12.6%
Percent of total population that is Hispanic/Latino	6.6%	8.0%	8.9%

Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Observations

- Pottawattamie County's population declined during the 1970s and 1980s, but rebounded for modest, but consistent growth from the 1990s onward.
- Even with some population growth, the school-age population is projected to continue to decline. The school has the opportunity to draw from the wider Omaha metro area, so its potential pool of students is larger, but at the same time with competition from other well-established Catholic schools.

C. SHELBY COUNTY

Figure 9
Population Trends

	Census 2000	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Total population	13,173	12,167	11,694	11,572
Years of change		10 years	8 years	5 years
Number change		-1,006	-473	-122
Percent change		-7.6%	-3.9%	-1.0%
Population 5-14	1,998	1,636	1,401	1,279
Years of change		10 years	8 years	5 years
Number change		-362	-235	-122
Percent change		-18.1%	-14.4%	-8.7%

Source: US Census and Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Figure 10
Hispanic/Latino Population

	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Hispanic/Latino population	219	433	571
Years of change		8 years	5 years
Number change		214	138
Percent change		97.7%	31.9%
Percent of total population that is Hispanic/Latino	1.8%	3.7%	4.9%

Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Observations

- Shelby County is one of the few areas with Catholic schools where the pool of students appears to be shrinking.

D. CRESTON

Figure 11
Population Trends 20-mile radius

	Census 2000	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Total population	24,074	23,493	22,580	22,346
Years of change		10 years	8 years	5 years
Number change		-581	-913	-234
Percent change		-2.4%	-3.9%	-1.0%
Population 5-14		3,040	2,826	2,646
Years of change			8 years	5 years
Number change			-214	-180
Percent change			-7.0%	-6.4%

Note: 20-mile radius used from St. Malachy School.

Source: *Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018*

Figure 12
Hispanic/Latino Population 20-mile radius

	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Hispanic/Latino population	649	1,069	1,348
Years of change		8 years	5 years
Number change		420	279
Percent change		64.7%	26.1%
Percent of total population that is Hispanic/Latino	2.8%	4.7%	6.0%

Note: 20-mile radius used from St. Malachy School.

Source: *Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018*

Observations

- St. Malachy School draws students from three counties: Union County, Adams County and Adair County. The population in these counties is declining.
- St. Malachy School has a 5.5% market share. The school serves families of all faiths and reflects the community at large as seen by 38% of the current enrollment not being Catholic.

E. PERRY

Figure 13

Population Trends 5-mile radius

	Census 2000	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Total population	8,922	8,976	9,929	10,536
Years of change		10 years	8 years	5 years
Number change		54	953	607
Percent change		0.6%	10.6%	6.1%
Population 5-14		1,440	1,545	1,643
Years of change			8 years	5 years
Number change			105	98
Percent change			7.3%	6.3%

Note: 5-mile radius used from St. Patrick School

Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Figure 14

Hispanic/Latino Population 5-mile radius

	Census 2010	Estimate 2018	Projection 2023
Hispanic/Latino population	2,732	3,456	3,840
Years of change		8 years	5 years
Number change		724	384
Percent change		26.5%	11.1%
Percent of total population that is Hispanic/Latino	30.4%	34.8%	36.4%

Note: 5-mile radius used from St. Patrick School

Source: Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018

Observations

- Perry being on the edge of Dallas County has modest growth for the projection period. This region has a high Hispanic population which accounts for much of the population change.
- St. Patrick School in Perry has about an 8.2% market share of school-age children. The school reflects the diversity of the community with 50% of the current enrollment being Hispanic, compared to 35% of the population being Hispanic.

IV. ENROLLMENT

Figure 15
PreK to 12 Enrollment Trends

School	Town	Gr	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	Change 12/13-17/18		Change 16/17-17/18	
									Number	Percent	Number	Percent
POLK COUNTY ¹												
Christ the King	Des Moines	PK-8	231	229	285	304	273	252	21	9%	-21	-8%
Holy Family	Des Moines	PK-8	241	243	240	237	226	238	-3	-1%	12	5%
Holy Trinity	Des Moines	PK-8	484	472	460	452	431	435	-49	-10%	4	1%
Sacred Heart	W. Des Moines	PK-8	567	564	556	577	553	569	2	0%	16	3%
St. Anthony	Des Moines	PK-8	361	335	331	373	358	360	-1	0%	2	1%
St. Augustin	Des Moines	PK-8	294	288	298	284	281	280	-14	-5%	-1	0%
St. Francis of Assisi	W. Des Moines	PK-8 ²	743	737	731	730	741	708	-35	-5%	-33	-4%
St. Joseph	Des Moines	PK-8	264	251	261	238	241	249	-15	-6%	8	3%
St. Luke (<i>open 9/15</i>)	Ankeny	K-5	0	0	0	44	93	119	119		26	28%
St. Pius X	Urbandale	PK-8	376	361	346	355	359	353	-23	-6%	-6	-2%
St. Theresa	Des Moines	PK-8	271	291	293	295	304	283	12	4%	-21	-7%
Subtotal Polk County Elementary			3,832	3,771	3,801	3,889	3,860	3,846	14	0%	-14	0%
Dowling Catholic High	W. Des Moines	9-12	1,398	1,431	1,417	1,436	1,405	1,379	-19	-1%	-26	-2%
Total Polk County Catholic Schools			5,230	5,202	5,218	5,325	5,265	5,225	-5	0%	-40	-1%
OUTSIDE POLK COUNTY												
St. Albert Catholic Schools	Council Bluffs											
St. Albert Elementary		PK-5	365	343	319	336	359	364	-1	0%	5	1%
St. Albert Middle		6-8	164	161	144	149	147	134	-30	-18%	-13	-9%
Subtotal Elementary and Middle			529	504	463	485	506	498	-31	-6%	-8	-2%
St. Albert High		9-12	216	204	199	189	188	183	-33	-15%	-5	-3%
Total St. Albert Catholic Schools			745	708	662	674	694	681	-64	-9%	-13	-2%
St. Malachy	Creston	PK-8	169	152	150	157	152	150	-19	-11%	-2	-1%
St. Patrick	Perry	PK-8	141	141	132	134	152	144	3	2%	-8	-5%
Shelby County	Harlan	PK-6	141	137	135	115	106	101	-40	-28%	-5	-5%
Assumption (<i>closed 6/16</i>)	Granger		91	95	86	62	0	0	-91			
Subtotal Outside Polk County Elementary/Middle			1,071	1,029	966	953	916	893	-178	-17%	-23	-3%
Total Outside Polk County Catholic Schools			1,287	1,233	1,165	1,142	1,104	1,076	-211	-16%	-28	-3%
Total Diocese PK-8			4,903	4,800	4,767	4,842	4,776	4,739	-164	-3%	-37	-1%
Total Diocese 9-12			1,614	1,635	1,616	1,625	1,593	1,562	-52	-3%	-31	-2%
Grand Total Diocese PK-12			6,517	6,435	6,383	6,467	6,369	6,301	-216	-3%	-68	-1%

¹ Includes St. Francis of Assisi which is located in Dallas County.

² St. Francis Preschool is sponsored by St. Francis of Assisi Parish and is separate from St. Francis of Assisi School.

Source: Diocese of Des Moines

Figure 16**Public School Enrollment Trends**

District(s)	K to 8		Change 12-13 to 17-18		9 to 12		Change 12-13 to 17-18	
	2012-13	2017-18	Number	Percent	2012-13	2017-18	Number	Percent
Des Moines Metro ¹	58,289	63,434	5,145	9%	23,492	26,683	3,191	14%
Creston	948	945	-3	0%	494	471	-23	-5%
Harlan	1,022	981	-41	-4%	517	518	1	0%
Perry	1,204	1,087	-117	-10%	587	589	2	0%
Council Bluffs Area ²	10,403	10,303	-100	-1%	4,621	4,638	17	0%

¹ Includes all 9 public school districts in Polk County, along with Carlisle, Norwalk and Waukee districts.

² Includes Council Bluffs, Glenwood, Lewis Central, Tri-Center and Underwood districts.

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Figure 17**First Communion participants enrolled in 2nd grade in Catholic schools**

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
First Communions ¹	1,653	1,773	1,844	1,622	1,712	8,604
2nd Grade Catholic Schools ²	459	451	466	399	427	2,202
% of First Communion participants enrolled in Catholic school 2nd grade	27.8%	25.4%	25.3%	24.6%	24.9%	25.6%

¹ Includes only parishes in Polk, Dallas, Pottawattamie, Shelby and Union counties.

² Includes only Catholic students.

Source: Diocese of Des Moines

Figure 18**Market Share – Polk County**

	2012	2018
5-14 population Polk County	62,842	67,736
K-7 total enrollment Polk County schools and St. Francis ¹	3,386	3,248
Market share	5.4%	4.8%

¹ Includes 3/4 of Sacred Heart K-7 and 1/2 of St. Francis K-7 enrollments.

Source: US Census, Environics Analytics by Claritas 2018 and Diocese of Des Moines

Observations

- The Diocese of Des Moines has 16 Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Over the past five years, six schools have a trend of enrollment loss, one is gaining and nine were relatively stable. Over this time, one school closed and one school opened. St. Luke the Evangelist School is completing its third school year, adding new grades every year.
- In the areas of decline, there is little long-range planning on how schools will remain sustainable and continue to serve the children in these areas. The model and structure of schools has not changed, so schools try harder with more constrained resources producing the same results.

- c. From 2012-13 to 2017-18, PreK-12 enrollment for Polk County and St. Francis of Assisi was unchanged from 5,230 to 5,225; while PreK-12 enrollment for outside Polk County decreased from 1,287 to 1,076, a loss of 16% or 211 students.
- d. The Des Moines area continues to grow in population, however, there are few formal marketing/ advancement programs at the school or diocesan level.
- e. Currently, elementary schools are at 77% capacity with approximately 1,238 empty seats available. Nine schools out of 16 elementary/middle school sites are below 75% capacity. Polk County and St. Francis of Assisi schools average 79% capacity with an average class size of 21 students. Outside Polk County schools average 67% capacity with an average class size of 17 students.
- f. From the 2015-16 school year to the 2017-18 school year, approximately 83% of the eighth-grade students from the 12 feeder schools have attended Dowling Catholic High School.
- g. From the 2015-16 school year to the 2017-18 school year, approximately 91% of the eighth-grade students attending St. Albert have gone from the middle school to the high school.
- h. The number of Hispanic students in Catholic schools has increased from 623 to 794 in the five years from 2012-13 to 2017-18. Polk County and St. Francis of Assisi increased from 535 to 657 Hispanic students, while outside Polk County increased from 88 to 137 Hispanic students. The Office of Catholic Schools has a staff member dedicated to recruitment of the Hispanic population.
- i. From 2007 to 2016, the number of children making First Communion in Polk County and St. Francis of Assisi held relatively stable from 1,419 to 1,359. Outside Polk County First Communion numbers declined 6%, from 665 to 624. Overall, 25.6% of students making First Communion are enrolled in second grade in a Catholic elementary school.
- j. Currently, all schools are operating on the traditional school model where students are divided by grade and departmentalizing in middle and high school.
- k. Overall, 18% of students qualify for reduced/free lunch in 2017-18.

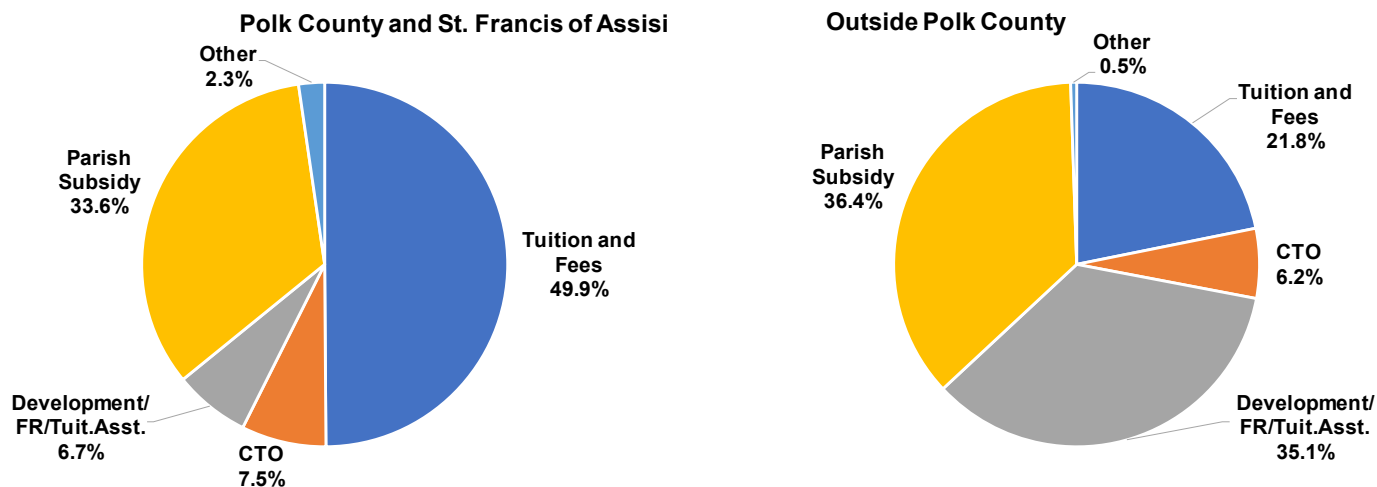
V. GOVERNANCE AND FACILITIES

Observations

- a. The Bishop, Office of Catholic Schools, parish pastors, school administrators and school board members support and have strong dedication to the schools entrusted to their care.
- b. The roles and responsibilities of the Bishop, Office of Catholic Schools, parish pastors, school administrators and school board members are not clearly understood, articulated, or consistently applied.
- c. Parish boards are advisory to the pastor and consultative to the principal. Currently, boards are functioning with varying degrees of delegated responsibility.
- d. Administrators and boards in many schools do not lead with a strategic plan or make decisions based on a comprehensive strategic plan for their school.
- e. The Office of Catholic Schools currently functions as a resource for schools in the diocese.
- f. The role of the diocesan board is not clearly articulated and it is not functioning as an effective body.
- g. The Office of Catholic Schools has limited authority with respect to accountability for outcomes, key leadership hires, school finance, development, and marketing.
- h. There are limited resources and programs to identify and cultivate future principals. The Leadership Grant Program has been providing up to \$5,000 grants for principals, but is limited in funding. Five currently participate.
- i. Throughout the diocese, there are approximately 291 classrooms, 107 special room for music, art, science, library, computer, band, etc., 20 gymnasiums and 2 auditoriums.
- j. The school buildings overall have been well kept and maintained. Both the interior and exterior of the schools and the surrounding grounds are overall aesthetically pleasing.
- k. Twelve buildings were built before 1960, ten buildings were built between 1960 and 1990, and twelve buildings were built after 1990. The average age of all buildings is 42 years.
- l. Few schools have a master plan for facilities and a plan to fund it. Because many buildings are owned by parishes, the parish may not see the needs or be ready to keep investing in facilities so that facilities are constantly being updated to deliver a 21st century education.
- m. There is no process between the Office of Catholic Schools and schools to plan for future construction and renovations of current buildings.

VI. SCHOOL FINANCES

Figure 19
2016-17 Elementary Schools Source of Revenue



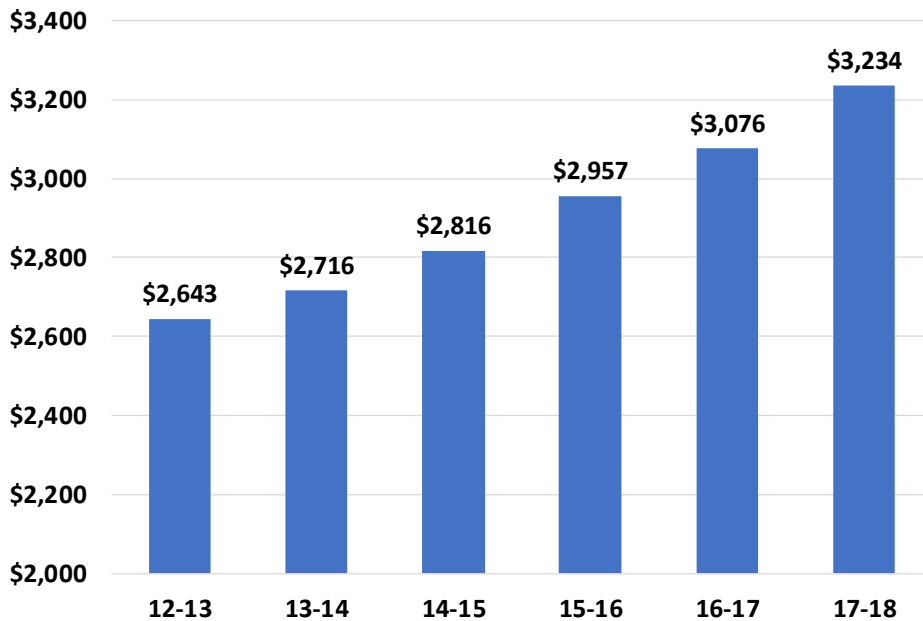
Observations

- Tuition and fees account for less than half of the revenue to sustain quality education (*49.9% in Polk County*). This leaves other sources to fund the majority of the cost. The second largest source of funding is parish subsidy – a source that may not have growth potential to make schools financially healthier. A relatively small source with high potential for many schools is development/fundraising (*6.7% in Polk County*).
- Parishes are investing \$10.5 million annually in Catholic elementary schools and high schools. The investment represents on average 37% of parish tithing and plate collections, and ranges from 21% to 78% depending on the parish. While overall contributions to parishes have been increasing 2% or more every year, parish giving has not demonstrated the potential to fill the funding gap for Catholic schools. Parishes subsidizing schools at high levels relative to their parish income are at risk of underfunding parish ministries and weakened parish vitality in the long run.
- Development and fundraising for all elementary schools took in \$1.95 million in 2016-17 (*not including Dowling and St. Albert*), only 8.8% of revenue. True development programs are only present in a few places, with most relying on fundraising. An unknown amount of fundraising is not recorded as school income but kept separate in balance sheet accounts. This lack of transparency results in understating the cost of education and hides the full financial picture.
- Catholic elementary schools cost \$23.2 million to operate in 2016-17 (*not including Dowling and St. Albert*). Per pupil cost was in the range of \$4,700 to \$10,700 across the diocese, the average being \$6,323. Per pupil cost is heavily influenced by class size and under enrollment.
- Most schools do not spend enough in many areas. The most striking area is low teacher compensation, small to no marketing budgets, basic professional development, aging facilities, and minimal investment in programs with equipment and infrastructure costs like the sciences and engineering. School budgets are very lean if not underfunded.

- f. When the real and desired cost of a Catholic education is considered, that is competitive teacher salaries and fully funded programs and quality facilities, the gap between what schools spend and what they should spend is significant. The current funding model and mindset will not be able to close that gap.

Figure 20

Average Diocese elementary/middle school tuition trend



Observations

- a. Elementary and middle school tuition rates have been increasing an annual average of 4% per year. The average tuition across the diocese for the first Catholic child is \$3,234 for 2017-18. The average tuition for Catholic elementary schools nationally is \$4,841 as reported by NCEA for 2017. *Source: NCEA Annual Statistical Report 2017-18.* Isolating only states that are part of the Plains Region (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, and the Dakotas) the average tuition is higher at \$6,189 for first grade. *Source: NCEA Annual Financial Report 2016-17.*
- b. While most schools increase tuition a little bit every year (\$100 to \$200 is common), the philosophy of tuition used by schools is widely varied. For example, one school in a high-income area held tuition flat for three years. Another raised tuition almost \$1,000 over three years. Seven of sixteen elementary/middle school sites have tuition rates for first child Catholic rate under \$3,000, and one of these is below \$2,000 in 2017-18.
- c. A major national study concluded 49% of all parents (*those interested and attending Catholic schools and those who are not*) are very or somewhat confident they can afford the cost of tuition in a Catholic school. 27% are not very confident. 24% are not at all confident. 77% would be more likely to consider if they know that most don't pay the full tuition. *Source: Perceptions toward Catholic Education in America, MayHill Strategies, NCEA, 2018.* Cost is not necessarily the most important factor when parents are making a decision about where to enroll their student for school. We know from research that the primary factors are identified as academic instruction, safety, the quality/qualifications of teachers, and developing character/religious instruction. All these rank above cost for many families.

- d. The Catholic Tuition Organization (CTO) came into existence in 2006 through state law that provided tax credits. Awards of \$3.0 million were given in 2017 benefiting 1,503 students, which was 27% of K to 12 Catholic school students enrolled. This has been a significant funding source which is credited for helping hold enrollment numbers.
- e. Among the elementary/middle schools (*not including Dowling or St. Albert*), only \$284,000 was able to be identified as financial assistance above CTO funds (year 2016-17).
- f. Among the high schools, financial assistance including CTO and internally funded sources was as follows for 2017-18: Dowling gave \$1,999,499 to nearly 40% of students representing 17.7% of gross tuition, and St. Albert gave \$640,000 representing 20% of gross tuition.
- g. For many schools, CTO is the primary, and many times, only real financial assistance program available to parents. It is common for a school to say to a family the parish can help you, but it can be an informal process lacking in protocols that make families comfortable and asking for assistance socially acceptable. Marketing of financial assistance is minimal and lacks the sophistication seen in institutions of higher education and larger systems. Financial assistance is not well understood, low on real funding dollars, lacking in strategy, and not reaching middle income families. The majority of schools are not motivated enough to develop and fund financial assistance locally beyond CTO.
- h. Tuition rates are being set to the lowest common threshold of what it is perceived parents can afford. They are not related to the value of an education or market forces. Published tuition rates are a statement of value to the marketplace.

Figure 21

Tuition as percent of median family income 2017

County/Town	Median Family Income w/child <18 2016 5-yr estimate	Tuition as percent of median family income	
		5%	10%
Dallas County	\$106,090	\$5,305	\$10,609
Warren County	80,026	4,001	8,003
Polk County	71,914	3,596	7,191
Clive	109,716	5,486	10,972
Waukee	108,810	5,441	10,881
Urbandale	102,444	5,122	10,244
West Des Moines	98,397	4,920	9,840
Pleasant Hill	96,125	4,806	9,613
Altoona	94,145	4,707	9,415
Ankeny	85,363	4,268	8,536
Des Moines	49,089	2,454	4,909
Shelby County	63,472	3,174	6,347
Pottawattamie County	62,271	3,114	6,227
Union County	49,872	2,494	4,987

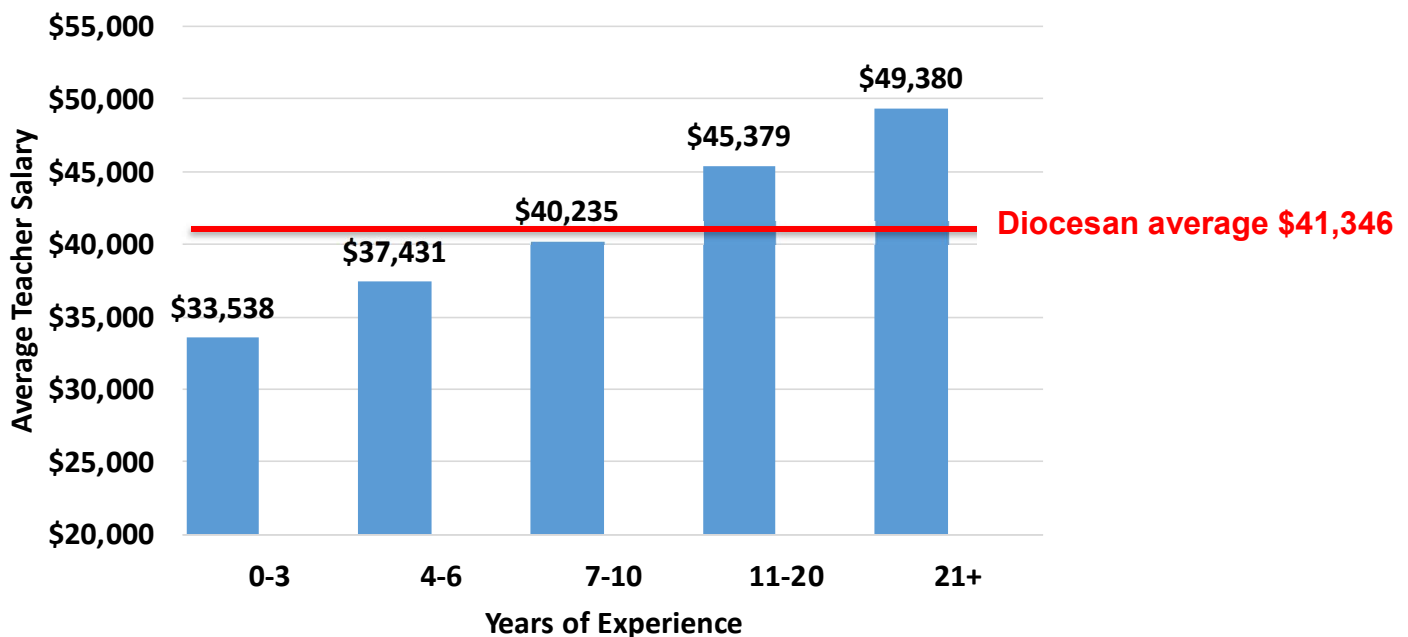
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012-2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates. "Median family income in the past 12 months in 2016 inflation-adjusted dollars by presence of own children under 18 years of age"

Observations

- a. Median family income is the midpoint, above which half of families will be able to afford more. In many counties and within their municipalities, the economics of families spread across a wide range. Many can afford more and have not been asked to pay more; and parents have been conditioned to think of the current tuition structure as expensive even though it may represent less than 10% of their income. Schools have not done enough to fully communicate the value of their product, a Catholic education. There is a lot of subsidy given to families who do not need it. The tuition model and financial assistance systems do not match with the economic diversities of the communities or the market forces that shape decisions made by parents.

Figure 22

2017-18 average salary of full-time elementary teachers



Note: Includes all grades K-8 and St. Albert 9-12. Does not include Dowling High School.

Figure 23

2016-17 public school average teacher salary

District(s)	2016-17 Average Teacher Salary
Des Moines Metro ¹	\$59,879
Perry	52,094
Creston	52,531
Harlan	67,656
Council Bluffs Area ²	59,480

¹ Includes all 9 public school districts in Polk County, along with Carlisle, Norwalk and Waukee districts.

² Includes Council Bluffs, Glenwood, Lewis Central, Tri-Center and Underwood districts.

Source: Iowa Department of Education

Observations

- a. There are 351 full-time teachers in all Catholic schools.
- b. At an average salary of \$41,346¹, Catholic school teachers are compensated about \$11,000 to \$19,000 less than public school teachers.
- c. Principals report increasing difficulty in finding and retaining a deep pool of qualified candidates with strong faith, especially for specialized areas.
- d. Turnover of new teachers is high. Young teachers regularly move out of Catholic schools after gaining a few years' experience. Many teachers have a second job or depend on a spouse for income. If a life transition occurs, income can become an issue and a reason teachers leave Catholic schools.
- e. There is a dearth of teachers in the four-to-ten-year category of experience. Catholic schools are heavily weighted toward young teachers and senior teachers.
- f. Seasoned experienced teachers will retire in greater numbers in future years. The State of Iowa, much like the rest of the country, is likely to have a teacher shortage in coming years adding to competition for talent from the public sector.

¹ Salaries calculated for all schools except Dowling.

THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Des Moines

The statements below describe the ideal vision of Catholic education as expressed by the many stakeholders of Catholic school community throughout the Diocese of Des Moines. While all schools in the diocese already exemplify many of these characteristics, the statements below challenge schools to embrace these attributes not as routine, but as challenges to be pursued with greater consistency, creativity, and collaboration. The strategic plan will eventually have goals, strategies and recommendations that flow from the vision.

Discipleship

1. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will function in close collaboration with all the parishes and as a ministry of the parishes for the evangelization of students and their families and for the building of faith communities who are disciples of Christ.
2. Through Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines, parents will be invited and challenged to grow in their faith, and to actively support the development of their children in faith and academics.

Academics

3. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will distinguish themselves with exemplary teachers and staff who are well qualified and faith filled, always striving to be the best through a culture of personal discipleship and continued improvement based on the best teaching practices.
4. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will develop and inspire learning for life by providing the best in academic excellence embedded in a Catholic environment where students encounter the living God and the Catholic Church, are formed to be lifelong disciples of Christ, and actively engage in the Eucharist and sacraments. The quality of education will be very high across all schools.

Enrollment

5. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will attract students from new and growing constituencies, in particular the Hispanic community and the many diverse populations of the diocese.
6. The Diocese will respond to new demands for Catholic education and recognize shifts in population by planning for new schools or expansion of schools as needed.
7. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will operate efficiently with full enrollment, meaning enrollment is 90% or more of capacity based on staffing and the type of educational program.
8. New models and structures will be explored for delivering the best Catholic education with effectiveness and efficiency so the talents and financial resources of the parishes and dioceses are used with wise stewardship.

Funding and Governance

9. Compensation for teachers and administrators will attract and retain the best personnel with talent and passion for the mission.
10. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will benefit from strong partnerships among all parishes, a high level of ownership among all stakeholders, and a clear understanding of roles among pastors, administrators, teachers, parents, students, school board members and the diocese.
11. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will operate with processes and procedures that are well defined and based in best practice. Accountability for good operating practices will be the norm.
12. Catholic school leaders in the Diocese of Des Moines will act strategically being guided by strategic planning.
13. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will function with a financial model that can fully fund the vision and be able to grow revenue. Schools will be accountable for good fiscal planning that ensures they will be financially strong and viable.