

2019

Scott County Catholic Schools Strategy Executive Summary

Barton

Summarized from the Meitler study
3/22/2019





Scott County Catholic Schools Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Assumptions for the Strategic Plan

As The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium reminds us, “We must respond to challenging times with faith, vision and the will to succeed because the Catholic school’s mission is vital to the future of our young people, our nation and, most especially, our Church.” (United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, “Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium,” 2005).

In forming this strategic plan as the Scott County Catholic schools, we envision the strength and vitality of our schools for the future and respond to that vision with faith and determination. Our vision and planning efforts will be interwoven with the Vision 20/20: From Pentecost to Pentecost initiative that motivates all in our diocese “to move forward and fill every heart and life with the joy of the Gospel through a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ and His Church.” (Vision 20/20: From Pentecost to Pentecost Concept Paper).

Integral to the development of a plan for Scott County Catholic schools plan is the Strategic Plan for Catholic School Education for the entire Diocese of Davenport. The diocesan vision states:

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Davenport will remain relevant, valuable, competitive and effective for the Church, our families and society. Our diocesan schools have a long track record of success, but there is room to reach an even higher level of excellence in all of our schools.

To that end, the following statements articulate the foundational assumptions from which the plan is derived. These statements articulate the strategic direction we believe will guide the Scott County Catholic schools as a single community to grow stronger and more vibrant now and in the future:

- ❖ **Our Catholic schools will be distinctively Catholic, working together with parishes to be “Spirit-filled evangelizers” to form intentional disciples who belong to communities of faith.**
- ❖ **Our Catholic schools are smartly organized so they function systemically with collaborative leadership that can deliver quality Catholic education efficiently and effectively. Planning will connect Catholic education from early childhood through 12th grade.**
- ❖ **Our Catholic schools will pursue a culture of excellence, educating students holistically to fully develop their God-given potential and prepare them for leadership and service.**
- ❖ **Our Catholic schools develop and ensure vitality to create a tomorrow in which they are accessible and affordable to all families that desire a Catholic education.**



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Rationale for the Plan

Catholic schools in Scott County have a long and successful history of providing children with a quality education that is genuinely Catholic and has deep roots within the various parish communities. There are many strengths that have been instrumental in successfully building up and sustaining the schools. Strategically, these will continue to form the foundation for moving change forward and reaching the next level of excellence. A number of challenges also emerged from many discussions, interviews, school and parish visits. These challenges need to be addressed in order for the schools to improve, grow together and enhance the mission of Catholic education in Scott County. These too provide the focus for a future where Catholic school education in the county is available, accessible and affordable.

A sample of strengths and challenges revealed from these discussions are as follows:

Strengths

- The mission and Catholic identity of the schools are evident in terms of visible signs of the faith, strong religion curriculum, faith formation activities, service to the community, and intentional connections with parishes as much as possible.
- The one-parish/one-school model of Catholic school education has served Scott County well for many years. In some cases, the partnership between parish and school is integrally linked and connected.
- The dedication and commitment of administrators, teachers and school staff to the ministry of education in the Scott County Catholic schools is evident and a key element in the success of these communities.
- The schools provide a solid academic curriculum that prepares students for advancement grade to grade and for success in high school.
- Students with learning differences and special needs are addressed in varying ways at the schools depending on the resources available.
- Enrollment in Catholic schools is relatively stable. Retention is relatively good. Families travel across a wide area to reach their school of choice. No school is a neighborhood school, and all the schools serve a regional market. Schools on the west side of Scott County, for example, have students that live on the east side and vice versa.
- School facilities are presentable, clean and are marketable. School leaders make full use of their facilities, maximizing at times the very limited spaces they may have for various programs and classes.
- Parish support is very generous.



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Challenges

- Administrators indicate the need for a “similar” curriculum among the schools. Enhancing the vertical and horizontal (collaboratively) alignment of the curriculum from kindergarten through grade 12 would benefit students as they progress toward and through high school.
- Updating technology on a regular basis is a challenge and a significant cost.
- The number of students with academic special needs and learning differences is growing, with more parents desiring a Catholic school experience for their children who have such needs. Greater resources and specialized staff are needed.
- Additional distinctive academic opportunities such as STEAM, global languages, multi-disciplined, integrated courses, would add to the solid academic foundation the schools currently provide and would serve to attract enrollment from increasingly experienced-focused parents.
- Elementary enrollment in kindergarten and grades 1 through 5 has been declining in recent years.
- Schools have additional capacity in many grades.
- Few of the schools have a written and implemented marketing and enrollment management plan, nor is there one in place for action in the county.
- The facilities of each school are aging, have deferred maintenance that needs to be addressed, and in some cases are inadequate to meet their current needs or provide the full range of quality programs a 21st century educational institution requires.
- Compensation (salaries and benefits) is not standard among the Catholic elementary schools.
- Tuition does not reflect the value or cost of a Catholic education. It is subsidized for all families, for example, through the parish subsidy lowering the cost charged to families whether financial need exists or not.
- Relatively little financial assistance is provided from sources beyond the Family Tuition Plan. This limits the ability to raise tuition and makes recruitment and retention of middle income families more difficult.
- Parish support will be limited by parish offertory income and competes with other parish priorities. The cost of parish support has been difficult to keep in balance with what parishes can afford in supporting the schools. The one-parish/one-school model is becoming increasingly challenging to preserve as the active participation and giving of the faithful to the parishes is diminishing over time.



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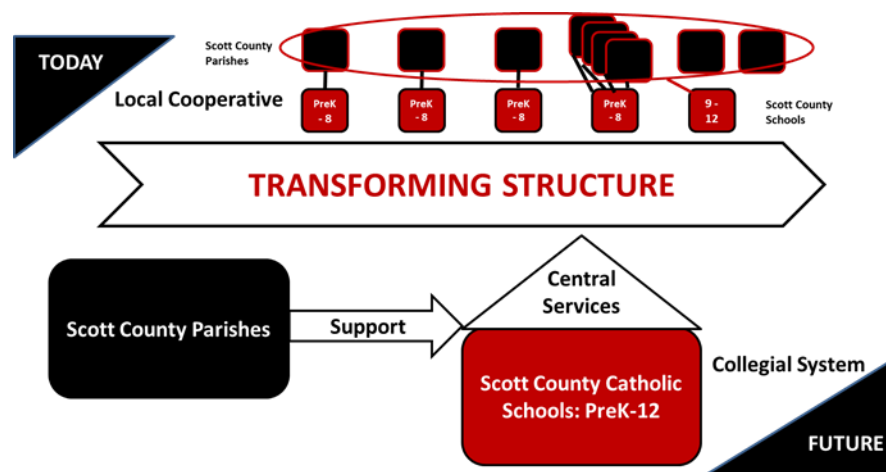
Regional System for Catholic Schools in Scott County

In Scott County, each school is an individual entity supported by one or more parishes and governed within those parishes, the traditional parish model. Assumption High School loosely connects the schools to one another and provides some services on behalf of all Catholic school students. All schools are pursuing a similar mission to the same population. The current traditional parish model for Catholic schools is being called into question, as the model does not always deliver sustainable governance or the adequate resources necessary to ensure schools will be competitive and have the resources to make them the best possible institutions carrying out the mission of Catholic education for the church. Some changes can be accomplished within existing models, but they will not be as transforming as a new model. Current efforts at cooperation have limited potential, and greater levels of collaboration require governance structures and funding models that make their execution and sustainability possible.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

Over the next two to three years, move toward a regionalized Catholic school system PreK-12 with these features:

- An inspired plan to ensure Catholic identity and faith formation are strong in the mission of making disciples who will encounter Jesus, grow in their knowledge, and serve God and neighbor.
- An enrollment management program that will market and brand schools with the staff and resources needed to execute well.
- An academic program that capitalizes on the strengths of a PreK-12 program. Identify the enrichment opportunities that can be offered through a system.





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A new model must fit the culture and values of Scott County. It must build upon the strengths of existing schools and attain the big goals of this plan in ways not possible as individual entities. To further clarify –

The new model will NOT include:	The new model WILL include:
School closings	All existing school facilities (AHS, SPS, JFK, Our Lady of Lourdes, All Saints)
Structural transformation that is physical. The intent is not to combine, move or re-brand schools (One exception is whatever results from the feasibility study already underway for Our Lady of Lourdes)	Structural transformation that is organizational. This will provide improved efficiencies and resource sharing through centralizing certain services
Disconnecting schools from parishes	Maintaining close connection with associated parish or parishes
Creating a middle school	Creating an enhanced middle school experience within the existing schools
Elimination of school choice	Opportunity to choose which school within the system to attend
Elimination of local authority	Some decisions will be made at a regional level, while others will still be maintained at the local level

Some of the major benefits of moving to a new regional model include:

- Improved efficiencies and resource sharing
- Enhanced program offerings
- Increased professional development opportunities
- Pastors able to focus more on spiritual direction and pastoral leadership for their school
- School administrators able to focus more on their school’s educational needs and development of their staff
- Common tuition
- Common compensation and benefits
- Enhanced ability for managing enrollment through marketing, branding, recruitment and retention
- Larger funding opportunities
- Tuition that better matches the actual cost of education for a child with expanded tuition assistance to keep it affordable for all
- Reasonable and affordable parish subsidies due to increased revenue stream for the overall system from other sources

The overall benefit with the implementation of this plan will be to improve attendance in our Catholic schools and churches and to strengthen the pipeline for our vocations.



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Steps to Bringing a Successful System into Reality

1. Seek consensus to move in a new direction with a new model. This will be done through a communications plan to inform and seek input on the strategy from:
 - Diocesan, Parish and School leadership
 - Parish and School staffs
 - Parish and School boards and councils
 - Scott County Catholics (parishioners, parents, students, etc.)
2. Form working groups to design a regional Catholic school system PreK-12 that can succeed for Scott County. Groups will focus on:
 - Centralized Services
 - Governance Model
 - Funding Model
 - Facilities Plan
 - Middle School Experience
3. Implement the design. This will be done under the guidance of an Oversight Committee and a Program Manager. This will include a capital campaign planning study to determine major funding necessary to make the plan a reality. The Assumption Foundation for Scott County K12 Schools is renaming to the Scott County Catholic Schools Foundation and will continue to provide support for the schools and the strategy.

Regional System Design Considerations

Centralized Services

- Academics and curriculum planning
- Co-curricular and enrichment
- Enrollment management: marketing, branding, recruitment, retention
- Business functions
- Funding: development and setting tuition
- Salaries and benefits
- Human resources
- Ongoing strategic planning



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Governance Model

Develop a governance model in cooperation with the diocese by which parishes all have ownership of the schools but delegate operation of the schools.

- Role of diocesan leadership
- Role of parish leadership
- Role of regional school leadership
- Role of local school leadership

Funding Model

Establish a development staff dedicated to the long-term financial support for the schools and capable of establishing and implementing an effective development plan.

- Funding through major gifts, planned giving and campaigns
- Initiate capital campaign by 2020-2021
- Formula for parish involvement that includes all parishes in Scott County
- Tuition model with appropriate tuition rates and generously funded financial assistance

Facilities Plan

Each school in Scott County has varying levels of facility needs. A master plan is needed that foresees strategic investments at all school sites.

Middle School Experience

Sustain the middle school grades at their current school sites and enhance the educational program at the middle school level.

- Collaborative retreat program for grades 7-8
- Standards-based curriculum planning and development with the high school
- Develop a graduation profile to prepare for high school and beyond
- Focus on project-based experiential learning opportunities particularly in math and science
- Provide greater exposure to world languages
- Provide advanced academic opportunities for high-performing students in collaboration with Assumption High School
- Initiate a “middle school” service project at least once a year
- Research the potential for connections between the schools and St. Ambrose University