



Current Direction

Snapshot of current status

Universal Church

- Continued new evangelization
 - New encyclical letter: "Fratelli Tutti" - Unity & Christian brotherhood/sisterhood ('20)
 - New edition- Directory for Catechesis ('20)
 - V Encuentro (national pastoral planning for Hispanic ministry, 2017-20)
 - Vatican Congregation of Catholic Education document: "Male & Female, He Created Them" (toward a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory & education, 2019)
 - USCCB pastoral letter against racism: "Open Wide Our Hearts" (2018)
 - Apostolic exhortation "Amoris Laetitia" (2016) Encyclical letter: "Laudato si" - Care for our Common Home (2015)
 - Apostolic exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium"(13)
 - Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue (March 2022)
- Sex abuse scandal
- National Eucharistic Revival (2022-24)
- Defense of religious freedom
- Global pandemic (2019-2022)
- Synod on Synodality (2021-24)

Diocese of Grand Rapids

- Bold leadership and support for Catholic Schools from Bishop Walkowiak
- All parishes financially support schools
- Bishop's Catholic Schools Initiative & Bridging Faith & Future school plan being implemented
- Pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry being implemented
- Our Shepherds Our Future surpassed goal
- Declining parish membership
- Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage and gender ideology conflict with Church teaching
- Many pastors called on to lead clustered parishes and other diocesan responsibilities (Our Faith, Our Future Pastoral Plan)

Diocesan Schools

- 26 elementary/5 high schools with 6,445 PK-12 students enrolled (2023/24)
- Catholic school enrollment grew 7.1% over the last 3 years; rebound from 5% decline with pandemic
- New elementary schools (2018, 2024)
- 11 parishes in north deaneries have no access to Catholic school; large number of Catholic

students in SE/SW parishes with no schools

- 36.2K school-age Catholic children in diocese; 16.99% attend Catholic schools
- Our students outperform local, state, national peers on standardized assessments MAP/SAT
- Our high school college attendance rate for two- and four-year colleges is 95%
- 9.3% of Catholic school students have identified learning needs that are being served
- In the past five years, racial/cultural diversity in our schools decreased to 19%; enrollment of Hispanic/Latino students has remained steady
- Families pay average of 47% of cost for elementary students and 68% of cost for high school students; remainder covered by parish and development efforts
- Diocesan administrative shared services model to support schools implemented
- Unprecedented amount of short-term federal/state funds available to private schools via pandemic stimulus funding with restrictions.

Environment

Trends

Economic, social, political, religious, etc. trends that may impact us

Demographic

- Percentage of children in poverty continues to increase
- Strong state/federal support for early childhood education
- Nationally, enrollment of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools is growing
- Increasing number of H.S. graduates enrolling in college/post-secondary
- Hispanic population continues to increase
- Students who reside and go to school within city of GR qualify for Promise Zone scholarships to attend GRCC for free
- Grand Rapids metropolitan area is one of fastest-growing areas in U.S. (2019)
- Public and private school enrollments declined (temporarily) statewide due to pandemic; homeschooling has significantly increased

Family Dynamics

- Family tensions around pandemic- related issues & mental/physical health concerns
- Pandemic driving increase in virtual/homeschooling
- Multi-family/multi-generational homes

- Increasing parent attitude focuses on ROI for children's education
- Marriage/parenthood happen later in life
- Many two-income families face logistical challenges
- Families caring for aging parents face additional financial/resource constraints
- Non-traditional families are more common
- Fewer sacramental marriages in Church
- Same-sex marriage legal nationwide
- Less perceived disposable income; growing number of funding priorities
- College costs continue to rise; growing sensitivity to student loan burden
- Parents have higher expectations/less loyal to parishes/schools

Faith

- The academic science over faith claims
- Post-Vatican II Catholic parents (1970s-2000) lack strong catechesis
- Declining vocations to priesthood/religious life in U.S.
- Catechesis steadily improving since mid-late 1990s with the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Mostly lay people serve Catholic schools
- People report being less religious but more spiritual
- Rise of the "Nones" - no religious affiliation
- Concern about disaffiliation from the Church as early as age 13
- Society moving from truth to relativism
- Pope Francis' call to go to the outskirts

Social

- Ubiquitous access to unfiltered information
- Growing entitlement mentality
- Distrust/dislike of institutional authority
- Lack of civil discourse
- Racial tensions/protests; BLM, CRT
- Violence/threats of violence on the rise
- Increase in accountability measures for students, teachers, schools
- High expectations for educational facilities, especially technology/athletics
- Philanthropists nationwide increasingly value and support Catholic schools as means to address poverty/achievement gaps and prepare future leaders
- LGBT ideologies popularly promoted
- Increased mental health awareness
- National push for gender identity/sexual orientation to be added as protected legal classes

Vision Metrics

(Five years)

Our quantitative measures of success

Catholic Culture and Mission

- Increased proportion of baptized Catholic children attending Catholic school from 17% to 19%
- Increased student/family Sunday Mass attendance & reported participation in confession (via ACRE)
- Growth in community, prayer and service (via ACRE)
- All parents, teachers and students have the opportunity to gain understanding of God's design for the human person through Theology of the Body
- Increased # of students utilizing the vocation scholarship
- Reported incidents of racism in our schools are declining; racial diversity is embraced (via ACRE)

Programmatic Excellence

- Every school updates their strategic plan on a regular cycle (typically year after site visit) and measures/reports progress through annual accreditation report
- Excellent teachers are retained and recruited
 - Teacher compensation improves annually to foster excellence
- Processes implemented to develop and update diocesan curriculum standards
- Practices in place that address the social, emotional and spiritual health of students, teachers, leaders
- Plans in place to optimize facilities and technology per standard #12 on accreditation
- Value/ROI of our schools is well publicized & marketed

Accessibility and Investment

- Schools are ready to welcome/support a broad range of students with special needs
- Flexible/variable tuition rates implemented across diocesan schools
 - Schools are implementing strategic financial plans
- Feasibility of launching new schools is determined; plans developed as appropriate
- Catholic Foundation of West Michigan is represented on the Diocesan Catholic School Board

Stewardship and Sustainability

- Catholic Foundation of West Michigan growing to plan
 - School development/advancement plans are established and implemented (NSBECS 13.3)
 - School revenue & expenses shared via annual financial report
- Federal, state and local funding is maximized
- Shared services consistently used by schools, increasing efficiency and effectiveness
- Schools have optimized efficiency with average class sizes between 18-24

Roles of Diocesan Schools

What we do?

- Model Catholic faith and encourage its practice in daily living
- Educate and prepare children for life and eternity
- Nurture the dignity of each person
- Value and promote the universal diversity of the Church, the Body of Christ
- Support, respect and foster the unique gifts of each individual
- Provide a safe environment for optimal growth and development
- Meet each individual's learning needs
- Partner with parents to assist them in their primary role as educators
- Foster service and stewardship with students, parents and community
- Make Catholic education accessible to all who desire it

Mission

Why we exist

We are Catholic schools that prepare students to seek and fulfill God's plan for learning and life.

Strategies

Our shared agenda for success

1. Catholic Culture and Mission

- Enroll an increased number of families/students who desire a Catholic education
- Nurture in each student growth in virtue and holiness through a deeper relationship with God and participation in the sacramental life of the Church
- Promote active engagement of students and families in parish life
- Integrate Theology of the Body and the value of the human person (mind, body, spirit) throughout the school culture
- Welcome families of diverse cultural heritage and raise cultural awareness to support an increasingly universal population
- Support programs to increase vocations to the priesthood and religious life

3. Accessibility and Investment

- Include and support students with a broad range of learning needs
- Increase accessibility for all families
- Explore the feasibility of launching new/additional schools, expanded programming, transportation
- Leverage the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan to grow development efforts for schools and parishes

2. Programmatic Excellence

- Embrace a growth mindset through continuous strategic planning and consistent implementation
- Retain and recruit excellent talent; grow leadership capacity/diversity at all levels; deliver competitive compensation
- Implement collaborative processes for Catholic school curriculum development and updates
- Nurture relationships that promote a positive Catholic school culture (community building, responsibility, repair, forgiveness, and reconciliation)
- Promote/maintain a standard of excellence in school facilities
- Vigorously promote the value of Catholic schools with expanded audiences

4. Stewardship and Sustainability

- Encourage schools to optimize funding sources (tuition, parish support, development)
- Advocate for and utilize federal, state and local funding
- Leverage shared services across the Alliance to ensure efficiency and impact
- Fully utilize classroom capacity

Vision

What we aspire to achieve

Be an alliance of Catholic schools expanding outstanding educational ministry.

Values

What is important to us?

Defining Characteristics of a Catholic School (NSBECS)*

- Centered in the person of Jesus Christ
- Contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church
- Committed to educate the whole child
- Distinguished by excellence
- Steeped in a Catholic world view
- Sustained by Gospel witness
- Shaped by communion and community
- Accessible to all students
- Established by the expressed authority of the bishop

**National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*

- Catholic schools are the single most effective means for evangelization
- Increasing population of Hispanic/Latino families
- Pandemic creates new and ongoing challenges
- Parishes with schools invest/sacrifice to provide for their schools, sometimes at the expense of other ministries
- Aging facilities throughout the diocese

Competitive Landscape

Why parents make other school choices

- Public schools of choice
- Other Christian schools
- Homeschooling
- Charter schools, specialty schools, immersion schools, virtual schools
- "Free" school compared with tuition-based education
- Schools with more extensive support for students with learning disabilities
- Larger schools offering expanded opportunities
- School systems in closer proximity to local high schools
- Schools with better transportation
- Pandemic mitigation strategy

Critical Realities

Issues that affect our work

- Technology is ubiquitous and rapidly changing
- Significant disparity of COVID relief/other funding between public and private schools
- Individual parishes are primarily responsible for parish school financial support
- Middle income families are being priced out of Catholic schools
- Pandemic significantly impacted church attendance and weekly contributions

Catholic School Practices

As differentiated from other schools' practices

- Catholic identity and culture
- Education based upon dignity of the human person (spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral) and relationships vs. a standardized approach
- Curriculum standards are original, inspiring, founded upon Catholic faith, and collaboratively-created with teachers based on practice
- High academic expectations, high graduation rates, high college attendance rates
- Parents choose to invest in education (their time, talent, treasure)
- Alliance of Catholic schools (collaborative, consortium)
- Variety of innovative instructional models: W.I.N.G.S., classical/liberal arts focus
- Perception of zero sum game impacts ability for schools/parishes to grow and thrive
- Aging priests & religious, with projected near-term shortages
- Religious liberty/marriage/sexual identity being challenged/undermined through civil law
- Need for greater care of our common home (the environment)
- Growing inclusive education for students with special needs
- Equity and school identity fostered through school uniforms
- Peaceful, disciplined environments
- Catholic schools are top performing schools on The Nation's Report Card (NAEP)

Stakeholder Perceptions

How do we want to be known? By whom?

Catholic parent: "Seeing our child grow spiritually and academically is well worth the sacrifice and investment."

Catholic school graduate: "I will never forget the great education and friends; my spouse and I continue to support and utilize our Catholic schools."

Parent considering Catholic school: "Sending our children to a Catholic school will be the best decision we can make."

Diocesan leader: "Our Catholic school graduates are essential to the future of the Church."

Catholic philanthropist: "I know our financial support will have an impact far beyond our lifetime."

Catholic influencer: "We look to Catholic education as the foundation for those who follow us in living the Church's mission."

Priest: "The children of our Catholic schools experience an authentic daily encounter with Christ, and I see their lives being transformed."

School priest: "I see the school children and their families attending Mass and actively participating in our parish life."

Parishioner without school children: "Having a school enhances the life and vitality of our parish."





Tactics for Strategic Priorities

1. Catholic Culture and Mission	2. Programmatic Excellence	3. Accessibility and Investment	4. Stewardship and Sustainability
<p>A. Enroll an increased number of families and students who desire a Catholic education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create awareness/interest through continued mass and digital marketing, as well as outreach activities of diocesan admissions advocates• Incorporate Catholic school information into existing preparatory communications for the sacrament of baptism in all parishes• Leverage relationship management software for personal outreach to families of prospective students who receive the sacraments of initiation (baptism, Eucharist, confirmation) through our parishes (parishes with and without schools)• Continue to engage current parents/families through multiple communication channels to strengthen retention efforts; use student data as appropriate <p>B. Nurture in each student growth in virtue and holiness through a deeper relationship with God and participation in the sacramental life of the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hire faculty and staff for mission according to Diocesan Schools’ Policy #4130 and document the pathway to appropriate credentials according to the MNSAA Administrator/Teacher Certificate Plan• Offer regular opportunities for teachers to be continually formed in the Catholic Faith, with emphasis on harmony between faith and reason• Offer an annual retreat for all new teachers• Increase opportunities for reception of the sacraments of Eucharist and reconciliation• Strengthen and continue the practice of the end of day “all school” examination of conscience and Act of Contrition prayer• Strongly encourage full participation at the parish/school level in the Eucharistic Revival• Set aside grade-appropriate time for silent prayer, when possible, before the blessed sacrament or in Eucharistic Adoration; Diocese can share sample best practice resources• Encourage and present methods for personal prayer and scriptural reflection in school• Use devotional prayers/novenas as a regular way of practicing intercessory prayer• Provide intentional opportunities for classes to spend time with their pastors, deacons, and religious sisters• Articulate the necessity of parents to nurture their children’s relationship with God and neighbor through parent (at home) curriculum resources• Create and/or promote opportunities for all students and their families to grow in faith and service together• Make annual retreat opportunities available to elementary and high school students, and if possible, consider including students within parish faith formation classes <p>C. Promote active engagement of all students and families in parish life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage the parish as a vehicle to bring families from different “groups” together (e.g., Catholic school, religious education, youth ministry, parishioners at large, non-Catholic school families, neighbors) for common experiences – classes, programs, athletics, volunteering, faith-focused learning, celebrations (when including non-Catholic families in faith-based activities, do so with preparation and intentionality)• Strongly encourage, as an expectation for stewardship and service, that all students (and their families) become involved in giving financially to their parish and participating in some aspect of ministry, with special emphasis on Sunday• Strengthen the connection between school, parish religious education and youth ministry (e.g., train older school students to conduct short retreats for younger students within parishes)• Identify children/families within parishes who don’t attend the school/religious education/youth ministry programs for targeted and collaborative outreach• Institute a process for students to personally thank their pastor and broader parish for their commitment to financially supporting their Catholic education <p>D. Integrate the theology of the body (TOB) and the value of the human person (body, mind, spirit) throughout school culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue implementation of TOB throughout the curriculum• Continue to provide weekly formation for teachers in TOB following one year of focus on the Eucharist• Network and promote a series of TOB educational presentations for parents within our alliance• TOB can expose hurt requiring healing. Integrate opportunities for healing and restoration within TOB• Share best practices among schools and parents for addressing human sexuality and child development from the Catholic worldview <p>E. Support programs to increase vocations to the priesthood and religious life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a specific number of merit-based scholarships available each year for those expressing interest in a possible religious vocation• Invite consecrated religious men and women role models to participate in school activities where possible• Sustain our system of prayer and communication between current seminarians and schools• Proactively support the diocesan vocation director through innovative school programming• Consider instituting an annual vocations day/retreat for middle and high school students <p>F. Welcome families of diverse cultural heritage and raise awareness to create a culture of belonging in support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue admissions advocate efforts to include multi-lingual support and Catholic school presence at culturally diverse events (with emphasis on the large and growing Hispanic population)• Ensure that every diocesan & school promotion is translated)where possible & appropriate• Include the Google translate widget on the diocesan and every school website• Continue to work with schools to welcome international students• Identify parent/family “leaders” of diverse cultural heritage in local communities to mentor new families• Demonstrate increased cultural competency through curriculum, faculty and staff sensitivity, awareness, advocacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) training• Increase emphasis on recruiting/hiring faculty and staff of diverse cultural backgrounds	<p>A. Embrace a growth mindset through continuous strategic planning and consistent implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct bi-annual school board summits to deliver support for continuous planning, best practice sharing and improvement ideas• Continue to offer a streamlined, common strategic planning process across schools which integrates elements of the Bridging Faith and Future Plan, accreditation and school improvement processes• Post completed strategic plans and/or executive summaries and relevant updates (e.g., progress) to school websites• Develop and communicate school annual reports to stakeholders <p>B. Retain and recruit excellent talent; grow leadership capacity/diversity at all levels; deliver competitive compensation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make the market analysis of teacher/leader salary/benefits widely available for planning within local parishes and schools• Implement teacher compensation adjustments informed by market analysis & performance appraisal• Research & offer a common diocesan teacher performance appraisal model• Encourage multi-year compensation adjustment plans as necessary• Identify and pursue potential revenue sources to support increased compensation• Utilize other non-salary incentives to reward teachers/leaders (i.e. tuition waiver, childcare, stipends for extra responsibilities, etc.)• Engage community in consistent teacher appreciation actions (not just Teacher Appreciation Week)• Pursue innovative recruitment efforts with particular emphasis on cultural diversity (i.e. alternate pathways for teacher preparation, retired teachers, teaching profession pipeline, etc.)• Enhance cohorts of teachers, principals, priests, business and board leaders to provide support, professional development, networking, best practices• Provide leadership training and recruitment opportunities for aspiring and current teachers, school leaders, business and board leaders to facilitate good succession and retention planning• Grow the pool of Catholic educators through innovative programs and experiences for high school students (e.g. high school interns, etc.) <p>C. Implement collaborative processes for Catholic school curriculum development and updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilize student assessment data to inform processes for development and updates• Use diocesan curriculum standards to pull out the essential standards for each grade level• Strengthen partnerships between Catholic high schools and middle schools to strengthen middle school program opportunities where applicable <p>D. Nurture relationships that promote a positive Catholic school culture (community building, responsibility, repair, forgiveness and reconciliation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build peaceful Catholic school environments that promote discipline and self-control• Use the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan (CFWM) grant to help educate school faculty & staff in community building, taking responsibility, repair, forgiveness, reconciliation, & restorative practices• Utilize restorative circles proactively to promote positive relationships and school culture• Utilize restorative practices to promote healing and restoration for students, teachers, and leaders• Train faculty and students (as appropriate) to recognize the signs of mental health concerns and take appropriate action <p>E. Promote/maintain a standard of excellence in school facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a DOGR review process for safety, technology infrastructure, instructional spaces and capital improvements• Invite schools to utilize the DOGR review process with their building and grounds committee to gain feedback for consideration at the local level and possible integration into local school/parish plans• Provide for facilities, equipment and technology needs in school budgets• Include depreciation and replacement costs in school budgets and in five-year capital budgets• Annual “walkabout” the school campus with parish and school experts to develop a 5-year capital maintenance and repair plan• Align school expenditures with the mission, strategic plans, curricular goals and environmental stewardship <p>F. Promote the value of Catholic schools with expanded audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educate the community on the value of a Catholic school education using powerful ROI data and testimonial stories• Equip staff, parents and students with easy to use/share informational tools about the value of our schools• Assist and encourage the formation of parent ambassador groups to optimize powerful “word of mouth” marketing techniques• Encourage, educate and lead pastors, boards, principals, teachers, parents and students (as appropriate) in the use of social media tools for promoting schools• Promote the unique qualities of Catholic school pastors, boards, principals and especially our teachers through recognition and publication• Grow awareness through continued mass marketing• Expand our communication channels (i.e. FAITH, CRM, social media, etc.) and increase communication frequency to reach the broader Catholic community• Leverage customer relationship management (CRM) software to send automated, targeted, personalized messages about the value of Catholic schools at strategic moments in the life of the student/family• Share diocesan inquiries with schools for school-specific outreach to families	<p>A. Support students with a broad range of learning needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Survey parents of students with special learning needs to discover areas for growth and further accommodation• Provide ongoing professional development to assist teachers with best practice, instruction and intervention strategies and support to address the needs of all learners• Continue and grow our partnerships with All Belong Center for Inclusive Education, Notre Dame’s Partnership for Inclusive Education (PIE), and other professional organizations to provide resources to empower all schools to deliver high-quality professional services for students with special needs and various exceptionalities• Schools describe their special needs program and consider placing the logos and links of partnering professional organizations on their website to highlight the high-quality resources available for students with special needs or exceptionalities• Explore possibilities for the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan (CFWM) to collaborate with schools in the creation of specific, targeted opportunities designed to support and enhance special-needs programming <p>B. Increase accessibility for families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustain levels for need-based Bishop’s Scholarships• Continue implementation of ACH tuition payments to reduce and eliminate uncollected tuition• Explore opportunities through the CFWM to provide additional scholarships• Shift the model of publishing annual tuition rates to a variable or flexible tuition model based on financial ability (considered best practice in marketing tuition to middle income families)• Educate middle income families about financial planning to invest in Catholic school• Promote the communication of daily, weekly or monthly tuition to parents• Advocate for non-public school funding reforms at the state and national levels (e.g., tax credits, education savings plans, etc.) <p>C. Explore the feasibility of launching new/additional schools, expanded programming and transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the implementation of a new school to reach the underserved Catholic families in Newaygo and Oceana Counties• Study the feasibility of launching new/additional schools to serve large populations of underserved Catholic families in suburban GR, southeast and southwest, and other potential areas• Explore possible models to deliver Catholic high school opportunities to communities without Catholic high school access as satellites of existing Catholic high schools• Consider part-time Catholic school options to include more homeschooled students and families during portions of the school day• Collaborate with schools to utilize new third-party service providers to expand transportation offerings <p>D. Leverage the CFWM to grow development efforts for schools/parishes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Align the CFWM with our alliance of Catholic schools through a position on the Diocesan Catholic School Board• Explore and communicate the various opportunities the CFWM offers to schools and parishes• Encourage all schools/parishes, community philanthropists and local school foundations to utilize the full potential and opportunities available through the CFWM to foster generosity• Engage the CFWM in advancement programming for parish/school board development chairs and professionals at the bi-annual board summits• Educate school community on purpose and vision of CFWM to build confidence, as well as exemplify a model of best practice for local school foundations	<p>A. Encourage schools to optimize funding sources (tuition, parish support, development)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the use of the CFWM by schools and parishes• Grow school enrollment to broaden the base of tuition support• Utilize the diocesan development plan template to plan for and grow school development/advancement/fundraising capacity at all levels – annual appeals, events, major gifts, capital campaigns, bequests/planned gifts, grants, endowments and foundations (parish, school)• Promote Raiser’s Edge or other development software tools for all schools to encourage effective use of advancement databases• Encourage schools to effectively communicate high level financial realities (revenues, expenses, full cost per student) to their community (Schools Dashboard Report within the Annual Statistical Report is a good example)• Encourage parish stewardship as a means to optimize parish support<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School boards collaborate with finance councils to define ways to encourage Mass attendance and stewardship• Board, development and finance committees work with the pastor to define and communicate what it means to be an active parishioner <p>B. Advocate for and utilize federal, state and local funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote legislation to create funding for school choice initiatives or like legislation• Align organizations within the diocese to take full advantage of emerging opportunities• Market emerging opportunities within the community• Assist families in accessing emerging opportunities• Work with MCC and MANS advocacy efforts <p>C. Leverage shared services across the alliance to ensure efficiency and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to enhance the shared services and common software tools used for admissions, enrollment, tuition management, tuition assistance, student & learning management, finance, marketing, communications, development and technology• Leverage diocesan Office of Catholic Schools, HR, finance, communications, pastoral and technology departments’ expertise and services for significant cost savings and consistent best practice• Seek and communicate opportunities for greater collaboration between schools/parishes and all diocesan departments <p>D. Fully utilize classroom capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share the data on multi-age instruction as an opportunity for creating classrooms of optimal size (See NCEA resources on Catholic Microschools)• Dispel the myth that small class size (under 15) is equivalent to better instructional outcomes by sharing research and best practice about teaching, learning and student growth• Empower teachers and school leaders, in consideration of Diocesan Class Size Policy #5200, to determine classrooms of optimal size• Encourage an attitude of stewardship; striving to optimize classroom capacity by extending a generous and welcoming response to new students• Consider strategies to fill every seat (airplane model) to include as many Catholic students and families as possible in the transformative ministry of Catholic schools

**Repeated tactics are intentional to demonstrate the crossover and collaboration required for effective implementation*