

Comprehensive School Study Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet October 2008

1. What is the goal of the Comprehensive School Study for the Diocese of Madison?

To bring people and process together to strengthen the system of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Madison, that we may: ensure the vitality of Catholic schools for years to come, answer the call of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) that Catholic schools be “available, affordable, and accessible” and, meet Pope Benedict XVI’s vision for Catholic schools as set forth in his *Address to Catholic Educators* delivered in Washington D.C., April 17, 2008.

2. Who is and who should be involved with this study?

This study is being coordinated by the Office of Catholic Schools (Mike Lancaster – Superintendent) in partnership with The Institute for School and Parish Development (ISPD). All parishes, both those with and those without schools, are to play a key role in this study, involving pastors, parents, parishioners, principals, teachers, education commissions, school boards, business leaders and *Trusting in the Spirit* Implementation teams.

3. What are the guiding principles of this study?

There are five guiding principles to be referred to as guides to this work:

- a. Focus on ways to strengthen our Catholic schools and our Catholic school system;
- b. Assess the current situation in our schools, including but not limited to, Catholic leadership, curriculum, demographics, enrollment data, financial data, community input and existing strategic plans;
- c. Be a collaborative process that serves to unify schools, parishes and communities across clusters throughout the Diocese;
- d. Consider new, imaginative, innovative structures and processes that will increase school enrollment, ensure school viability and provide an unparalleled education in the faith and academic disciplines;
- e. Honor, complement and coordinate with the work already done by cluster planning commissions through the *Guided by the Spirit* process.

4. What are the Four Planning areas?

Catholic Leadership (including: Identifying, training, and retaining quality Catholic school teachers and principals for the future; Catholic school identity and mission; Catholic school connection to faith life of families; Catholic school support of parish life; Catholic school spiritual and faith life connecting to the curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular aspects of student experience);

Fiscal Stewardship (including: Balanced school budgets; Human resources related to just wage and benefits for all staff; Establishment of formal development plan for each school; Annual fund; Capital campaigns; Endowments; Affordability of tuition; Perceived and/or real value of tuition; Financial assistance; Volunteerism; Fundraising);

Academic Curriculum (including: Measuring student success – intellectually, morally, spiritually, and physically; Integration of faith into all curricular areas; Addressing special needs intervention for both the gifted and academically challenged students; Teacher credentialing and continuing education; Breadth, depth, rigor, and relevance of curriculum, especially outside of the traditional academic disciplines; Student to teacher ratio; Integration of technology into curriculum; Pre-school and early childhood emphasis);

Enrollment Management (including: Statistical enrollment trend data in the diocese; Satisfaction and Self-promotion; Strategic use of financial assistance; Use of technology in marketing and recruitment; Human resources needed to support enrollment; Faculty, Staff, Parent and

Comprehensive School Study

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet

October 2008

Volunteer support in managing enrollment; Customer relationship building; Retention;
Benchmarking and forecasting enrollment; Marketing tactics; Changing target market)

5. What is general process that the study will follow?

The study will follow a process with several components operating over the next 18-24 months:

- a. Steering Committee – Main body coordinating all work leading to Final Plan
- b. Regional Meetings – Four meetings around Diocese in October, November 2008
- c. Core Teams – Meet beginning in January, 2009 to coordinate Task Forces
- d. Task Forces – Meet once monthly for three months in preparation for Congress
- e. Diocesan-wide Congress – Will be held October 9-10, 2009 (Tentative)
- f. Implementation - Begins immediately after Bishop approves Final Plan, and in concert with *Trusting in the Spirit*, likely early 2010

6. What is the role of the Steering Committee?

This group of 14-18 people, having representatives from across the diocese and including Diocesan offices, principals, pastors, financial and business leaders from communities, have two main duties with a commitment spanning the entire study: to oversee the entire school planning process, (including inviting others to become involved, leading the Congress, and working on planning document creation and refinement), and to chair one of the Core Teams.

7. What will be discussed at the Regional Meetings?

Each Regional Meeting will follow the same format and will be conducted by a member of ISPD. Each meeting is intended to be a working session, both to give information and to get feedback from the attendees. After prayer, the meeting will begin with the history and background of the school planning effort. Each of the study components (Steering Committee, Core Teams, Task Forces, and Diocesan-wide Congress) will be discussed. The attendees will be broken into groups to discuss, at a diocesan level, the strengths and weaknesses related to the four planning areas of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Madison. There will be ample time for questions and answers. Finally, each attendee will be invited to become meaningfully engaged in the entire process.

8. What do the Core Teams do?

There are four Core Teams, one for each of the four Planning Areas, with 15-18 people on each team meeting for 4-6 hours per month up until the Diocesan-wide Congress. Each team is led by members of the Steering Committee and is composed of representatives from across the diocese having strong expertise and/or interest in the specific planning area. The members within each planning area will determine what data is needed, conduct a SWOT, create a purpose statement, identify challenges, invite other people to be members of the Task Force, and will bring the Planning Area to completion.

9. What will the Task Forces do?

There are four Task Forces, one for each of the four Planning areas, with 100 people on each task force meeting for a two hour workshop each month for three months in preparation for the Diocesan-wide Congress. Each Task Force is chaired by 2 Core Team members, with the work overseen by Steering Committee members, and is composed of representatives from across the diocese having knowledge and expertise in the specific planning area. Each Task Force will review the work of the Core Team, that is, the SWOT, purpose statement, challenges. The Task Force will suggest strategic solutions to the challenges as well as invite people to the Diocesan-wide Congress.

Comprehensive School Study

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Sheet

October 2008

10. What will happen at the Diocesan-wide Congress?

The Congress is a diocesan-wide gathering, facilitated by the Steering Committee, where parishioners across the diocese are invited to hear the results of the Core Team, Task Force, and Steering Committee work as well as offer input and solutions. This two-day event begins with a liturgy on Friday followed by presentations from each planning area. On Saturday, there is a final opportunity for people to provide input and solutions to the work of each Core Team, final presentations, a multi-vote of all challenges, and a closing liturgy.

11. How will a Final Plan be put together?

The Steering Committee will take the results of the Congress and formulate them into a Long-Range Plan for recommendation to the Bishop with the goal of presenting something by January 2010. After the Bishop has time to go over the plan and make whatever changes he sees fit to make, the Diocese will begin implementation of the plan.

12. How does the School Study fit with the existing parish implementation work?

This school study is a natural extension, and in some ways, a continuation of the work begun in *Guided by the Spirit* and now being carried out in *Trusting in the Spirit*. However, there is a big difference in that with the parish planning, it is understood that the problems we are facing are related to the decreasing number of priests and that there are some specific solution paths to addressing these problems. In the school study, the root causes of many of the problems and their possible solutions are not as clear thus requiring additional work in order to devise a strategic plan that can address them. Additionally, the school plan and the parish plans must mesh as much as possible in order to make the best use of parish resources and to avoid having two never-meeting parallel processes. Both processes should connect and elevate one another as the double helix of DNA, twisting ever upward as it carries the hope for new life and future generations.

13. What should cluster implementation teams and commissions be doing right now?

- a. Promote and participate in the regional meetings that will further explain the planning process.
- b. Think of people from your cluster who have an interest in Catholic schools and have knowledge or experience in one of the four planning areas to serve on the Core Teams and Task Forces.
- c. Begin to think of any data that you might have that would support the planning process. (i.e. demographic data, historical data, current school data, etc.)

14. Who should I contact if I'm interested in participating?

Contact either Mike Lancaster (michael.lancaster@straphael.org, 608-821-3179) or Monica Bischoff (monica.bischoff@straphael.org, 608-821-3178) in the Office of Catholic Schools for more information or to see how you can get involved.