Maintenance to Mission:
Transforming Our Catholic Schools

Catholic Diocese of Lansing
Father Steven M. Mattson, Superintendent
December 8, 2010
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Dear Brother Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Coordinators, School Principals, and Teachers:

On this great Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of our diocese and our cathedral, I am pleased to share with you the attached report concerning the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lansing. The report outlines a vision for where our schools need to go, in order fully to accomplish our mission of Catholic education. A great deal of planning and hard work lie ahead, though I am pleased to say that these efforts are already under way.

You get a lot of mail, and your desk includes a pile of reports that you generally intend to read someday. Please set aside some time soon to read this one. One of the core principles is that Catholic schools are a “common good” — in other words, they benefit the whole Catholic community, and not just the children of parents who choose to enroll. It is only a short step to the realization that all our parishes will have a role in funding and a say in direction. Your own participation will be essential to the success of this endeavor.

It is no secret that a portion of the clergy, religious, and laity lost confidence in Catholic schools in the closing decades of the Twentieth Century. These doubts were both the cause and the result of some of the stumbles that occurred as mission blurred, enrollment dropped, and schools closed. A decade into the Twenty-First Century, I have no lingering doubts, and neither should you. We face a culture that is often hostile to the values that bring our young people happiness in this life and the next. Our schools must be outstanding centers of education and formation, so that the young may come to know the hope, joy, and peace that Jesus offers to each of them.

Please read the report. Please share your thoughts and reactions with Father Steve Mattson, our Superintendent of Schools. Please pray for the success of this undertaking, seeking as I do the intercession of our Mother Mary, whose Feast Day we celebrate today.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing
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# Table of Contents

1. Current Realities: Maintenance in a Period of Decline
2. Reclaiming the Common Good of Catholic Schools
3. Parents’ Baptismal Promises
3. What About Public Schools?
4. Cultural Power of Catholic Education
4. What about Religious Education?
4. Catholic Funding of Catholic Schools
5. Renewed Commitment
6. Schools as Cultures of Formation and Transformation
6. Transformational Change: Moving from Maintenance to Mission
6. The Church’s Missionary Mandate
8. Next Steps: Planning and Prayer for Transformation
10. Conclusion
10. Reference List
11. Appendix A: Code of Canon Law Excerpts
13. Appendix B: Enrollment Comparisons
“Illuminated by faith,” our Catholic schools are places for “an unfolding of our baptismal grace and our baptismal promise.” They “help parents help their children get to Heaven.” In the present age, our Catholic schools seek “to graduate students who will bring a new order to our culture so that the salvation won for us in Jesus Christ can be shared by our society and the world.” These powerful words of challenge and inspiration were provided by Most Reverend Earl Boyea, fifth bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lansing, in May 2009, in a special issue of FAITH Magazine devoted to Catholic schools.

Across 10 counties and many cities and rural areas, the schools within the Diocese of Lansing serve the whole Catholic community. Catholic schools should not be viewed as a service benefiting only those families whose children happen to attend our schools. Rather, Catholic schools are helping to prepare the next generation of Catholic leaders. The new diocese-wide system of scholarship assistance for our schools underlines the shared interest that all Catholics have in a sound, dynamic system of Catholic schools.

This document describes a preliminary approach to addressing present challenges for our schools, promoting a renewed commitment to the common good of Catholic schools, and renewing and revitalizing every Catholic school in the Diocese of Lansing. It highlights the need for strategic efforts to ensure that our schools are truly doing the Lord’s will. Our efforts and this document are premised on the conviction that a fuller embrace of the Mission of the Church will allow our schools to become more what they are intended by God to be: communities of love, learning, and witness in our world.

Current Realities: Maintenance in a Period of Decline

Each autumn, faithful families and dedicated staff come together to continue the great work of educating the young and transmitting the beautiful truth of our Catholic faith. But we know that at least one Catholic school has closed in this diocese for seven consecutive years, and this past year, three schools closed.

Some of our Catholic schools are outstanding. Some have waiting lists. Others, while essentially sound, face challenges of enrollment and finances. Among our schools, there is some variance in the richness of the Christian culture as well as the strength of the academic and extra-curricular programs. As the 21st century enters its second decade, Catholic education cannot be content with maintaining its current level of operation. Some of the numbers are sobering, as schools close and total enrollment continues to slide.

Though our situation is not yet dire, it is precarious. Like many other dioceses and archdioceses around the country, we cannot afford to wait to address the steady decline in student enrollment, the challenges of funding our schools, and the predictable closing of a few schools each year. Archbishop Timothy Dolan, reflecting on the situation in the Archdiocese of New York, stated the case boldly: “It is time to recover our nerve and promote our schools for the 21st century. The current hospice mentality—watching our schools slowly die—must give way to a renewed confidence.” (Dolan 2010)

Here in the Diocese of Lansing, we have a few schools that are at capacity, but most of our schools lie in an unsatisfactory middle state—in no immediate peril of closing, but far from full. Even in our “thriving” schools, some classrooms lack the outstanding Catholic and academic instruction we
seek to provide. Too few of our schools are actively involved in the New Evangelization. And many of our schools are facing financial stress and other challenges.

Year after year, parishes within our own diocese, like many others around the country, are forced to ask whether they can afford to keep their Catholic schools open. Schools, and the parishes that support them, struggle to balance budgets, wondering how to attract more students, to grow rather than diminish in size. Fewer and fewer families are able (or willing) to make the sacrifices necessary to send their children to Catholic schools. The challenge is greater still for high schools, because they have no parish to subsidize their budget shortfalls.

Not long ago, pastors would invite new parishioners to tour their school and say, meaning every word, “This is where your children will go to school.” It was a foregone conclusion that every family would send their children to Catholic schools. In those days, religious brothers and sisters served in large numbers, and their witness and their ministry allowed Catholic schools to be both affordable and transformative for entire generations of Catholics. Pastors today rarely challenge parents to make every effort to give their children a Catholic education, even though the Church continues to emphasize the value of a truly Catholic education. Pope John Paul II stated the case clearly: “[T]he special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils.” (Pope John Paul II, 1979)

Today it is common for parents, even those who take seriously their charge to prepare their children for life here and in heaven, to view Catholic schools as a luxury rather than the best educational choice for their families. Education is often viewed as a private good for the students and families they serve, rather than as a common good for the benefit of families, our Church and the broader society. When Catholic schools are what God wills them to be, they are not merely a good choice or a great investment; they provide a tremendous value to the Church and society.

Reclaiming the Common Good of Catholic Schools

Many Catholics view Catholic schools as a good option for those who are able to afford them, rather than the best choice that we must strive to make available to every Catholic family. In many ways, we have lost the missionary spirit of earlier days, when families sacrificed to build Catholic schools and churches, and made Catholic schools available to all Catholics, regardless of financial means. We are duty bound to help the “least of these,” the poor and disenfranchised Catholics among us, receive the benefits of a Catholic education.

In addition, the great Catholic social justice tradition of service to the poor and minorities in our urban centers must be upheld, where possible, so that those who are poor are not deprived of the priceless treasure of a Catholic education. As we seek to fulfill the Lord’s will for our schools, we must be mindful of helping those who are most vulnerable. Generosity to those who are in need is central to what it means to be parts of one Body of Christ. Scripture makes clear our duty to help those who are in need.

(Mt 25:31–46; Lk 10:25–37; 2 Cor 8:10–15)
leaders in their communities and Church. To put the matter plainly, our world needs Catholic school graduates because the world needs Jesus. Catholic schools help Catholics bring the light of Christ to the darkness of a world that is increasingly fragmented, confused, distracted and distraught.

Parents’ Baptismal Promises

At the time of baptism, parents and godparents are reminded of the solemn and sacred duty they undertake by having their child baptized:

Dear parents and godparents: You have come here to present this child for baptism. By water and the Holy Spirit he (she) is to receive the gift of new life from God, who is love. On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him (her) up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives him (her) is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his (her) heart.

This is a serious and sober commitment. Parents are the first educators of their children in the faith, and they need the counsel and help of the communion of saints and the Family of God on earth. Therefore, the Church is bound to provide the most effective ways to help parents and godparents in the great work of ensuring that the “divine life which God gives [their children] is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in [their] hearts.” When Catholic schools are truly what God wills for them to be, they offer parents the best means of helping their children grow in the practice of the faith.

Many parents have options for where to send their children to school. Some are blessed to have a Catholic school at their own parish, and most Catholic families in our diocese are close enough to a Catholic school to consider that option. It is imperative for the Church of Lansing to make Catholic schools available to the Catholic faithful. At the same time, we must address the financial concerns that make Catholic schools seem out of reach for so many Catholic families. In short, because providing a Catholic education is essential to being a Catholic parent, we must work tirelessly to make it possible for all Catholic parents to choose a Catholic school for their children. As we proceed, we will seek to find creative ways to improve the availability of Catholic schooling to all our families, even to those who live in places where there is currently no Catholic school.

What About Public Schools?

Since quality public schools are essential for our culture, all Catholics must be committed to making public schools as good as possible. This is especially important in these troubling times because most parents in our diocese send their children to public schools. Many Catholic parents who send their children to public schools have never seriously considered Catholic schools for their children. Others make the choice of public schools because of the cost of Catholic schools, transportation, family tradition, etc. Some public schools provide quality programs, and we are grateful for the good work that many Catholics and other men and women of faith do to serve children in public schools.

As good as public schools can be, they are neither able nor allowed to help parents form their children in the practice of the faith. The reason is as unsurprising as it is profound: God and faith are not allowed in the conversation. This does not mean there are not believers among the teachers and the students in public schools—there are. But in public schools, teachers cannot talk about faith and morals from a Catholic perspective, and serious talk about belief in God is prohibited by law. This is a profound, indeed fundamental, handicap to the full formation of our youth. In contrast, our Catholic schools not only allow, but encourage our teachers, students, principals and parents to talk about Jesus, God’s love and the truth that sets us free.
Cultural Power of Catholic Education

In his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II spoke of the reality that informs Catholic teaching and learning: “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth: and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.” (Pope John Paul II, 1998)

And Pope Benedict XVI, on the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas in 2007, stated that “When . . . man reduces himself to thinking only of material objects or those that can be proven, he closes himself to the great questions about life, himself and God and is impoverished.” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007) We are, indeed, richer when we can understand God, ourselves, and our world by the light of reason informed by faith.

When Catholic schools are truly living in keeping with their mission, they do inform reason with faith. Thus, they provide students a more complete (read: truer) understanding of the world than their public school counterparts are able to transmit. Public schools can offer “reason,” but our Catholic faith places reason in its proper, complete context. This “wedding” of faith and reason is one of the great gifts Catholic schools can give to the students they serve, and it is worth our sacrifice to make them available for all our children.

What About Religious Education?

Religious education programs at our parishes do help parents who send children to public schools fulfill their duty to form their children in the faith. And as a diocese we are strongly committed to having religious education programs be as faithful and effective as possible. Even so, the preference, when and where possible, should be for a Catholic school.

Our Catholic schools are called to integrate faith with every subject matter area, every aspect of school life. Religion is not merely one subject among many, but is rather the context and hinge for everything we do. From the beginning, the Christian life has been counter-cultural. And for children to learn to live in counter-cultural ways, it is vital for them to live and learn in a Catholic culture. Our schools are called to provide such a Catholic culture, rich soil in which the seeds of faith can grow.

It is much more challenging to establish a Catholic culture in a religious education context than to establish that culture in Catholic schools. Consider the simple matter of time: Students spend approximately 30 hours per week in Catholic schools. Compare that with the 30 hours per year that the average child spends in religious education in our parishes. The point of this contrast is not to disparage religious education, but to highlight the tremendous advantage our Catholic schools provide parents in helping their children grow in the faith.

Catholic Funding of Catholic Schools

In recent years, there has been a growing consensus that Catholics need to find new ways to fund Catholic schools. The parish-based model of school funding is failing in many places, but the need for Catholic schools is greater than ever. Therefore, we need to find a better, more Catholic, way to fund our schools.

Our Catholic schools are a treasure because they benefit not only the children we serve, but also the Catholic Church and the broader society as well. When boys and girls grow up to be good citizens of heaven, they are better able to be good citizens.
of earth. The world needs Catholics who know and live their faith, and Catholic schools help make that possible. We must therefore strive to help all Catholics see the vital importance of our Catholic schools to our faith, so much so that every Catholic family and parish will see supporting our Catholic schools as a way to serve our Lord.

Renewed Commitment

Around the country, bishops and archbishops are calling for a renewed commitment, financially and spiritually, to support Catholic schools. New York’s Archbishop Dolan states the case bluntly:

*The truth is that the entire parish, the whole diocese and the universal church benefit from Catholic schools in ways that keep communities strong. So all Catholics have a duty to support them. Reawakening a sense of common ownership of Catholic schools may be the biggest challenge the church faces in any revitalization effort ahead.* (Dolan 2010)

And again:

*To re-grow the Catholic school system, today’s efforts need to be rooted in the long-term financial security that comes from institutional commitment through endowments, foundations and stable funding sources and also from every parish supporting a Catholic school, even if it is not “their own.” Catholic education is a communal, ecclesial duty, not just for parents of schoolchildren or for parishes blessed to have their own school. Surely American Catholics have sufficient wealth and imagination to accomplish this.* (Dolan 2010)

Though we rarely speak about it in such bald terms, supporting Catholic schools is indeed an “ecclesial duty” for all Catholics. In other words, all Catholics are bound to support Catholic schools because all of us are bound to support the work of the Church. With eyes and ears attentive to the Divine Mandate given her from Jesus to “go and make disciples,” Holy Mother Church gives us a clear command to support Catholic education:

- “Pastors of souls have the duty of arranging everything so that all the faithful have a Catholic education.” *Can. 794 §2.*
- “Among the means to foster education, the Christian faithful are to hold schools in esteem; schools are the principal assistance to parents in fulfilling the function of education.” *Can. 796 §1.*
- “The Christian faithful are to foster Catholic schools, assisting in their establishment and maintenance according to their means.” *Can. 800 §2.*

Some might object that Catholic schools have not always been excellent in every way, and they have a point. In an earlier time, some Catholic schools (like many Catholics) were not very effective in handing on the faith. During the tumultuous time after the Second Vatican Council, the famous TV preacher Archbishop Fulton Sheen reportedly told those closest to him that they should send their children to public schools to “fight for their faith” rather than to Catholic schools, where they might “lose their faith.” However, those were days before the New Springtime of Evangelization, before the spiritual renewal ushered in with the Third Millennium.

If Catholic schools are not as effective as they might be in evangelizing and forming disciples of Christ, the response of the faithful cannot be to abandon them. Faith demands that we *transform* them in ways that please our Lord. The Church cannot afford to have any of our children graduate from
schools without a firm grounding in the truth that sets them free. After all, the baptismal call for all Christians is to help transform the culture, to be salt and light in our world. Catholic schools, in partnership with Catholic families, must make sure that future leaders of the Church and the world are well formed and prepared for future challenges.

**Schools as Cultures of Formation and Transformation**

To justify the support of the Catholic faithful, our schools must be excellent in every way. Our principals, teachers and staff must be called upon and equipped to help children become fully mature in Christ. Our schools must be Catholic to the core, which means that they must focus on the truth, strive to form the whole person, seek excellence at every level, and transform minds and hearts into the image of Jesus Christ. We need our schools to be marked by a Catholic culture—by excellence, service, virtue and grace. They must be infused by the Gospel message and filled with faith, hope and love.

To ensure that our schools are living up to this high calling from our Lord, it is imperative that they possess cultures of formation and transformation, that they be places where the Christian life is modeled, taught and “caught.” It is precisely because the Christian life is more readily caught than taught that our schools must be filled with teachers, staff members and families who embrace the faith and live Christ-like lives, worshiping God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. Some schools are more clearly marked by Christ-like cultures than others. Our Lord, however, desires that every school, every parish, indeed, every home be a place of rich soil in which the seeds of faith can grow. Therefore, one primary responsibility for the diocese and for every parish is to ensure that we establish rich cultures of formation and transformation in each and every school, so that the seeds of faith can bear abundant fruit in those we serve.

**Transformational Change: Moving from Maintenance to Mission**

Awakening the faithful to the common good of Catholic education and forming cultures of formation and transformation entails nothing short of “transformational change.” This clarion call demands more than minor changes at the margin. It demands a renewed mind-set and an operational shift from maintenance (focused primarily on survival) to focusing squarely on our mission.

As daunting as transformational change might sound, it is plain that such efforts have been undertaken successfully in other dioceses, where sleeping school systems have been brought more fully to life. We believe that all things are possible in Christ, and we know well that, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (Ps 127:1) We entrust ourselves, our schools, and our children to the Lord, that he will build our “house” in ways that please our heavenly Father.

In every age, there is a need to be reminded of who we are, whose we are, and what we must be about, which is always only the Father’s will. Our Lord is always calling us to himself, to follow him and to live lives of evangelization, discipleship and service. When the Good Shepherd calls, his sheep heed his voice. As we recommit ourselves to following the Good Shepherd, we trust that the Lord equips all those he calls. Given our conviction that God’s work done in God’s ways will not lack God’s support, we begin by asking again, what is God’s work?

**The Church’s Missionary Mandate**

Ever since the command of Christ was first given, Christians have been challenged to spread the Gospel to all nations:
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. (Mt 28:19–20)

Pope Paul VI offered the world a clear outline of the mission of the Church, the mission that must also guide the Catholic schools that serve the Church:

We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection. (Pope Paul VI, 1975)

Pope John Paul II added his strong voice, calling us back to the foundation of our faith, which is the person of Jesus, risen from the dead.

Conscious of the Risen Lord’s presence among us, we ask ourselves today the same question put to Peter in Jerusalem immediately after his Pentecost speech: “What must we do?” (Acts 2:37)

We put the question with trusting optimism, but without underestimating the problems we face. We are certainly not seduced by the naive expectation that, faced with the great challenges of our time, we shall find some magic formula. No, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: I am with you!

It is not therefore a matter of inventing a “new program.” The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium. (Pope John Paul II, 2001)

In his first encyclical, our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI reminded us of the power of encountering Jesus, the face of the God who is love:

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction . . . . Since God has first loved us (cf. I Jn 4:10), love is now
no longer a mere “command”; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us. (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005)

The call of all Christians is to help others come to know the God who is love. The mission of the Church is to spread this good news, to preach and make disciples. Cognizant of this high calling, the Church of Lansing declares anew her commitment to the great work of spreading the Good News. We therefore commit ourselves to ensuring that every Catholic school effectively and faithfully forms and transforms lives to ensure they grow to the “full stature of Christ.” (Eph 4:13)

Ours is a lofty and worthwhile purpose, one informed by the command of Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, and aimed at pleasing our heavenly Father. Our bold vision for schools demands strategic planning that will help us effect change that goes to the core of who we are and what we are about. It entails a recommitment to the Lord’s will for our schools as well as knowledge of the many systems that interact to shape the culture and life in our schools. Our purpose, given by Jesus himself, is evangelization and discipleship.

Next Steps: Planning and Prayer for Transformation

In the near future, we will be sharing with you the process that will help us move strategically from maintenance to mission. Already, much groundwork has been done to begin to move from a bold call for change to action steps in schools and classrooms. There is a tremendous amount of work involved in transformational change, and we are eager to begin. Part of the process is seeking the ideas and suggestions of parents, parishes, school leaders, clergy, consecrated men and women, and all the laity, as well as gathering relevant data that will form the basis for recommendations for change. Not everything can be changed at once, and our efforts will take time to bear fruit. But we are committed to making every effort to transform our schools into mission-focused ministries for the Glory of God.

Just after the New Year, we will be providing details about the initial “visioning” stage and other conversations that we have had with principals, teachers, parents, priests and others who are instrumental in our Catholic schools. Much work remains to be done, and we are excited to get all the men and women of the diocese involved in this effort. In the second part of this report, we will describe the strategic planning process, the timeline, and the “charge statements” that will be given to five Planning Advisory Teams. Each of these five teams will be asked to review current practices, explore best practices in our diocese and in other dioceses across the country, and develop recommendations for changes to be made to the myriad of systems that influence life in our parishes and schools. Following are the five Planning Advisory Teams:

- **Leadership and Mission**

  The focus of this team is on making recommendations for the best ways to cultivate, recruit, select and form leaders at the diocesan, parish and school levels to ensure that our schools are effectively living out our mission. Without strong leadership at all levels, our call for transformational change will be compromised.

- **Academic Excellence and Faith Integration**

  The focus of this team is developing systems to ensure academic and program excellence, and to create systems whereby teachers are given the skills and resources to integrate faith with every subject matter and program. Without purposeful faith integration, academic excellence is half-hearted.
- **Catholic Identity and Culture**

The focus of this team will be to recommend systems that will help foster a strong and unambiguous Catholic Culture in all our schools, in ways that help form all the members of the school community in their identity as Catholic Christians, marked by evangelization, discipleship and service.

- **Evangelization and Enrollment**

The focus of this team is formulating recommendations about how to address the challenge of enrollment management in light of the principles and priority of evangelization. This team will assess current and best practices, and recommend ways for us to more effectively evangelize in and through our schools. It will also address how we can best share the good news of Catholic schooling with those inside and outside our schools and parishes.

- **Stewardship, Governance and Finance**

The focus of this team will be assessing different forms of governance and finance, with an eye to the Christian principle of stewardship. For these purposes, stewardship is as much about getting the right people in the right positions in the right structures as it is about financial support of our schools.

Each of these Planning Advisory Teams has a distinctly Christian focus, because everything we do must be informed and oriented to the practice and the promotion of our faith. The Lord will give us wisdom as we seek it prayerfully. Our efforts are ultimately dependent upon the Spirit’s guidance and grace. It is work worth doing, and we commit ourselves to it wholeheartedly.

We undertake this planning process for transformational change because of the tremendous value of Catholic schools to our families, to the Church, and to society as a whole. It is clear that the Lord is calling us to this himself, for he always calls us to deeper and higher levels of excellence, holiness and love. Transformational change is a call for conversion, to a deeper immersion in the mystery of our life in Christ. This call for transformation is not written solely for those who happen to be involved in Catholic schools. It is written for all the faithful, from the newest baptized member to the man or woman who is preparing to meet the Lord.

As we proceed, please commit to pray (and perhaps fast as well) for wisdom. We invite you also to share this document and the attached materials with others. We want there to be widespread engagement in this process of transformation from maintenance to mission. In the near future, you will have opportunities to share your thoughts and observations about our schools—about what is going well and what you see as areas for growth. The call for transformational change in schools affects everyone in the Church, and we look forward to widespread interest and investment in this process of change.

We will soon be creating a website where you will be able to get more information about the process of change, where you can see the “charge statements” for the Planning Advisory Teams, and where regular updates will be posted. We look forward to having that website available in January 2011. We welcome nominations for these Planning Advisory Teams as well as any observations or comments about this report or the process of transformational change. Please send correspondence to Claudia Kalo (ckalo@dioceseoflansing.org) in the Department of Education & Catechesis in the Diocese of Lansing.
Conclusion

Although Catholic schools are vital to the mission of the Church of Lansing, at least one has closed in the diocese annually for the past seven years. This past year three were closed. We have choices about how to respond. Our goal could be to hold on as long as possible, to seek to merely slow the inevitable rate of decline. Or our goal could be to prayerfully seek a new Pentecost amongst the young and their families, as well as with the teachers and staff who lead our Catholic schools in 10 counties. It is our conviction that we have no choice but to pursue the latter alternative, for it is the way of faith.

Rather than a “hospice approach,” which merely aims to make the patient more comfortable in the process of dying, we choose bold action. By enacting bold initiatives, borne of prayer, the possibilities for our schools (and the souls who inhabit them) are limitless. By shifting from maintenance to mission, we are simply embracing the Gospel, choosing to live lives of obedience to our Lord’s command. And obedience is pleasing to the Lord. As we go, we entrust our efforts to our Lord, imploring our Mother’s prayerful support. May the Lord prosper our work and safeguard our children.

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Appendix A:  
Code of Canon Law Excerpts

**Canons on Catholic Education**  
(1983 Code) **Title III: Catholic Education**

**Can. 793 §1.** Parents and those who take their place are bound by the obligation and possess the right of educating their offspring. Catholic parents also have the duty and right of choosing those means and institutions through which they can provide more suitably for the Catholic education of their children, according to local circumstances.

• **§2.** Parents also have the right to that assistance, to be furnished by civil society, which they need to secure the Catholic education of their children.

**Can. 794 §1.** The duty and right of educating belongs in a special way to the Church, to which has been divinely entrusted the mission of assisting persons so that they are able to reach the fullness of the Christian life.

• **§2.** Pastors of souls have the duty of arranging everything so that all the faithful have a Catholic education.

**Can. 795.** Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.

**Chapter I. Schools**

**Can. 796 §1.** Among the means to foster education, the Christian faithful are to hold schools in esteem; schools are the principal assistance to parents in fulfilling the function of education.

• **§2.** Parents must cooperate closely with the teachers of the schools to which they entrust their children to be educated; moreover, teachers in fulfilling their duty are to collaborate very closely with parents, who are to be heard willingly and for whom associations or meetings are to be established and highly esteemed.

**Can. 797.** Parents must possess a true freedom in choosing schools; therefore, the Christian faithful must be concerned that civil society recognizes this freedom for parents and even supports it with subsidies; distributive justice is to be observed.

**Can. 798.** Parents are to entrust their children to those schools which provide a Catholic education. If they are unable to do this, they are obliged to take care that suitable Catholic education is provided for their children outside the schools.

**Can. 799.** The Christian faithful are to strive so that in civil society the laws which regulate the formation of youth also provide for their religious and moral education in the schools themselves, according to the conscience of the parents.

**Can. 800 §1.** The Church has the right to establish and direct schools of any discipline, type, and level.

• **§2.** The Christian faithful are to foster Catholic schools, assisting in their establishment and maintenance according to their means.

**Can. 801.** Religious institutes whose proper mission is education, retaining their mission faithfully, are also to strive to devote themselves to Catholic education through their schools, established with the consent of the diocesan bishop.
Can. 802 §1. If schools which offer an education imbued with a Christian spirit are not available, it is for the diocesan bishop to take care that they are established.

- §2. Where it is expedient, the diocesan bishop is to make provision for the establishment of professional schools, technical schools, and other schools required by special needs.

Can. 803 §1. A Catholic school is understood as one which a competent ecclesiastical authority or a public ecclesiastical juridic person directs or which ecclesiastical authority recognizes as such through a written document.

- §2. The instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; teachers are to be outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life.

- §3. Even if it is in fact Catholic, no school is to bear the name Catholic school without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority.

Can. 804 §1. The Catholic religious instruction and education which are imparted in any schools whatsoever or are provided through the various instruments of social communication are subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the conference of bishops to issue general norms about this field of action and for the diocesan bishop to regulate and watch over it.

- §2. The local ordinary is to be concerned that those who are designated teachers of religious instruction in schools, even in non-Catholic ones, are outstanding in correct doctrine, the witness of a Christian life, and teaching skill.

Can. 805. For his own diocese, the local ordinary has the right to appoint or approve teachers of religion and even to remove them or demand that they be removed if a reason of religion or morals requires it.

Can. 806 §1. The diocesan bishop has the right to watch over and visit the Catholic schools in his territory, even those which members of religious institutes have founded or direct. He also issues prescripts which pertain to the general regulation of Catholic schools; these prescripts are valid also for schools which these religious direct, without prejudice, however, to their autonomy regarding the internal direction of their schools.

- §2. Directors of Catholic schools are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in the other schools of the area.
## Appendix B: Enrollment Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>K-12 2000-2001</th>
<th>K-12 2010-2011</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTHWEST REGION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansing Catholic HS</td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>9 - 12</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>-107</td>
<td>-18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IHM/St. Casimir</td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>K - 8</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>-122</td>
<td>-38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resurrection</td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>-53</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Gerard</td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>-28</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Therese <em>(closed 6-2010)</em></td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-125</td>
<td>-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>K - 5</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-41</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas Aquinas</td>
<td>East Lansing</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>-98</td>
<td>-21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Peter <em>(opened 03-04/closed6/10)</em></td>
<td>Eaton Rapids</td>
<td>PK - 6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Holy Trinity</td>
<td>Fowlerville</td>
<td>4 - 8</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-51</td>
<td>-41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Michael</td>
<td>Grand Ledge</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>-25</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Martha</td>
<td>Okemos</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>-27</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph <em>(closed 6/03)</em></td>
<td>Owoosso</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-136</td>
<td>-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>Owoosso</td>
<td>K - 8</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>-42</td>
<td>-22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>St. Johns</td>
<td>K - 6</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>273</td>
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<td>-8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Westphalia</td>
<td>I - 6</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>260</td>
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<td>14%</td>
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<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Williamson</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>-33</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Cross <em>(closed 6/07)</em></td>
<td>Lansing</td>
<td>K - 8</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>-80</td>
<td>-100%</td>
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<td><strong>Region Totals</strong></td>
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<td>3895</td>
<td>2883</td>
<td>-1012</td>
<td>-26%</td>
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<td><strong>NORTHEAST REGION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Luke Powers HS</td>
<td>Flint</td>
<td>9 - 12</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>-321</td>
<td>-37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. John the Evangelist</td>
<td>Fenton</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dukette <em>(closed 6/08)</em></td>
<td>Flint</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-161</td>
<td>-100%</td>
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<td>Holy Rosary</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>-56%</td>
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<td>221</td>
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<td>-34%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>194</td>
<td>189</td>
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<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Rota. Bellarminne</td>
<td>Flushing</td>
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<td>221</td>
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<td>-43%</td>
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<td>Holy Family</td>
<td>Grand Blanc</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>-217</td>
<td>-32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Mt. Morris</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-104</td>
<td>-59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Redeemer <em>(closed 6/09)</em></td>
<td>Burton</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>208</td>
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<td>-208</td>
<td>-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary Queen of Angels <em>(6/06)</em></td>
<td>Swartz Creek</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-156</td>
<td>-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Region Totals</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>2164</td>
<td>-1530</td>
<td>-41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr. Gabriel Richard HS</td>
<td>Ann Arbor</td>
<td>9 - 12</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Francis of Assisi</td>
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<td>509</td>
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<td>St. Thomas the Apostle</td>
<td>Ann Arbor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit <em>(opened 2002-03)</em></td>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>430%</td>
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<td>St. Patrick</td>
<td>Brighton</td>
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<td>266</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<td>St. Joseph</td>
<td>Howell</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>279</td>
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<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Mary</td>
<td>Pinckney</td>
<td>PK - 8</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>144</td>
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<td>-30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Region Totals</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1959</td>
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<td>119</td>
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<td>Lumen Christi HS</td>
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<td>9-12</td>
<td>605</td>
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<td>Sacred Heart</td>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td>PK - 7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>-7%</td>
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<td>Jackson Catholic Middle</td>
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<td>7 - 8</td>
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<td>Queen of Miraculous Medal</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>K - 6</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>314</td>
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<td>-29%</td>
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<td>-148</td>
<td>-100%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-133</td>
<td>-39%</td>
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<td>127</td>
<td>-44</td>
<td>-26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Lady of Fatima <em>(closed6/10)</em></td>
<td>MI Center</td>
<td>K - 6</td>
<td>148</td>
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<td>-148</td>
<td>-100%</td>
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