

# Pathways to Excellence II

THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SCHOOLS



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS *in the* ARCHDIOCESE *of* NEW YORK  
Faith-Based. Future-Focused.





APRIL 2018

OFFICE OF THE CARDINAL  
1011 FIRST AVENUE  
NEW YORK, NY 10022

Dear Friends in the Lord,

Since the first Catholic school in New York opened its doors at the turn of the 19th century, our school system has been inextricably linked to the evangelizing mission of Christ's Church. By the grace of God, we have remained steadfast in our collective commitment to educate generations of students—intellectually, spiritually, morally and physically in an environment infused with the Gospel message—and never to waver from our duty to provide an excellent Catholic education to every child who seeks it.

There is no question we have faced significant challenges in pursuit of this critical goal, which has required us to think creatively and envision innovative strategies to preserve the life changing gift of a Catholic education. As such, in 2010 the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of New York unveiled its Pathways to Excellence (Pathways I) strategic plan, a comprehensive roadmap to foster and sustain our schools for many years to come. After nearly a decade since the implementation of Pathways I, earlier this year, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools kicked-off a new three-year strategic planning process, entitled Pathways to Excellence II (Pathways II), to evaluate the progress we have made these last eight years and consider new strategies for continued success.

In the report to follow, I am pleased to share with you the fruits of these labors and the combined wisdom, expertise, and prayerful reflection of countless Catholic school stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, families, pastors and religious, principals, alumni and staff. For indeed, a bold strategic plan like Pathways II finds inspiration in our Catholic faith, and in a 2015 address to Church leaders, our Holy Father Pope Francis quoted from John Cardinal Dearden's 1979 prayer:

*PROPHETS OF A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN*

It helps, now and then to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

As our entire Catholic school family works together to implement the objectives and strategies contained in Pathways II, please know that I will be praying for you, for we must all keep in mind the countless young people who depend on our success. In the Archdiocese of New York, the vast majority of our students receiving financial aid live below the poverty line.

Nonetheless, the vast majority of our Catholic high school seniors graduate and go on to college. From this, we can see the profound, life-changing impact our schools are having in the lives of our students, particularly those who would not have such opportunities were it not for their Catholic education.

As we begin our journey, let us remember that the strength and foundation of Jesus Christ guides our every step. When challenges and difficult questions arise, let us remain faithful and look to God for inspiration and purpose. With His intercession, I am confident that the implementation of Pathways II will set us on the path for continued success and achievement. Thank you again for your continued service to our Catholic schools.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Faithfully in Christ,

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan  
Archbishop of New York

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# Executive Summary

## A STRONG FOUNDATION

In October 2010, the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of New York introduced *Pathways to Excellence*, a visionary strategic plan. It identified serious, contemporary challenges to our historically outstanding elementary schools and described a bold, multi-faceted approach to ensure the long-term success of a school system that spans ten counties.

*Pathways to Excellence* underscored the archdiocese's historic commitment to Catholic education. In the years since it was implemented, administrators and staff have worked diligently to strengthen every aspect of the schools. Each decision has been consistent with the stated mission to ensure schools are Christ-centered, academically excellent and welcoming communities that teach students to be life-long learners and leaders energized by fidelity to Christ, His Church and one another.

The extraordinary approach entailed a rethinking of many aspects of education. Nine education regions were established to provide support and oversight to schools that were formerly the responsibility of individual parishes. Enrollment stabilization was embraced by dedicated stakeholders of the schools: pastors, principals, educators, regional boards, alumni, parents, family members and donors. Improvements were also reflected in academic proficiency and strengthened Catholic identity.

Other educators lauded the plan and asked how it might be replicated elsewhere. The National Catholic Education Association presented its 2016 NCEA Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Award to the Catholic schools of the archdiocese in recognition of innovation in Catholic education. The NCEA specifically cited the successful completion of the *Pathways to Excellence* strategic planning process for ensuring the schools are places where Catholic culture and values will continue to thrive now and in the future.

The schools of the Archdiocese of New York are not resting on their laurels as they continue their pursuit of excellence. A well-focused strategic plan to continue the momentum through the next three years is tangible evidence of this deep commitment.

This is *Pathways to Excellence II*. It does not reimagine the future of Catholic education as its predecessor did in 2010. Using *Pathways to Excellence* as a framework, this renewed effort takes note of considerable progress and identifies areas for improvement. *Pathways to Excellence II* is a fresh iteration of an ongoing effort to ensure the Catholic school system is poised and prepared for growth and longevity.

## CREATING PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE II

This new strategic plan reflects the work of educators, pastors and supporters of the Catholic school community throughout the Archdiocese of New York. A Steering Committee began in June 2017 to develop a process to evaluate the progress of the schools and look toward the next three years. Seventy-five dedicated individuals served on various committees, each representing an important facet of the school system: Catholic Identity, Leadership, Teaching & Learning, Enrollment Management, Communication, Student Services and Governance. Parents, community members and others committed to the future of the schools were invited to provide input to the strategic plan using an electronic survey.

Each of the committees analyzed how the school system performed relative to the goals and objectives of *Pathways to Excellence*, considered the evolving landscape of education in New York and recommended updated priorities and realistic strategies for *Pathways to Excellence II*.

## TANGIBLE PROGRESS IS THE FOUNDATION FOR A STRONG FUTURE

Measurable progress toward and beyond the goals in *Pathways to Excellence* was identified in each domain. Subsequently, many of the initial strategies were further developed to meet changing needs or take advantage of new opportunities.

Unquestionably, **Catholic Identity** is the most important guiding principle of the schools. It sets them apart from all other educational options available to families and ensures Catholic schools are places where communities encounter the Risen Christ and prepare students to become virtuous, productive, compassionate citizens.

With the engagement of an Archdiocesan Pastors' Advisory Council, schools incorporated new approaches to strengthen their Catholic Identity. Additionally, pastors participated in regional board Catholic Identity Committees and assisted principals with a new school-wide tool to assess and guide Catholic Identity for their schools. The Archdiocese of New York hired a director to reinforce, oversee and promote Catholic Identity throughout the school system. In addition, teachers and school leaders used improved and expanded professional and faith-based development opportunities to help communicate the meaning and importance of various traditions and practices of the Catholic faith.

The success of the Catholic schools depends on exceptional **Leadership**. In the past, the schools were blessed by legions of religious men and women. However in 2018, almost all the schools are led by lay women and lay men whose collaboration with pastors, teachers and parents is essential to fulfilling the educational mission. Aspiring school leader candidates complete a new yearlong discernment and formation program known as the Principals' Academy, after which they are eligible for the popular Catholic School Leadership Academy. As part of its commitment to identify, train and support future leaders, the archdiocese initiated an intensive on-boarding for new administrators. It includes a three-day retreat followed by monthly check-in meetings and an end-of-year two-day reflective retreat.

Principals began to use a new formative assessment that supports their professional development, enhances communication, improves morale through regular feedback and assists the Superintendent of Schools to achieve overall educational goals and objectives.

By developing a centralized database of teacher applicants, the archdiocese increased candidates available to each principal and helped school leaders recruit for specific openings. Once hired, teachers benefit from a robust program of professional development and ongoing evaluation.

The Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of New York have a storied history of educating children intellectually, spiritually, morally and physically. They are both steeped in solid Catholic educational tradition and simultaneously forward-thinking in curriculum and instruction. In the area of **Teaching & Learning**, there is an ongoing commitment to maintain high quality education and develop rich programming for the schools. Since *Pathways to Excellence* was introduced, teachers began to use new tools to evaluate and act on test data, including interim measures of academic progress (MAP) to support data-driven instruction. They have also become adept at updated instructional methodologies, including blended learning, a model that enhances individualized and differentiated instruction. Each school has improved resources, particularly in the areas of math and English language arts. The Eureka Math program is one of the updated, research-based curricular materials now being used. The archdiocese helped schools update their technological resources, while the teachers strategically employed technology to help students develop skills to communicate, create, access and share information.

Since 2010, the Catholic schools expanded the range of high-quality early childhood learning options, including traditional and non-traditional learning environments, half- and full-day schedules and tuition-based as well as government-funded programs. Pre-K For All and other



early learning programs have become the entry point for children who may remain in the Catholic school communities throughout their elementary and high school years.

The most palpable result of the increased attention to leadership, teaching and learning is the steady improvement of Catholic school students on New York State tests. Scores have improved and, in almost all cases, exceeded public and charter school performances.

To re-establish and maintain a dynamic system of fully-enrolled schools, the Archdiocese of New York introduced marketing and outreach programs, engagement efforts, financial assistance and scholarship awards and technology solutions. This commitment to **Enrollment Management** aims to attract new families, enhance the experience of current families and convey the unique and lasting value of a Catholic education to the wider community. All of the schools were drawn together with system-wide “branding” that identifies each school as an important part of the overall Catholic education program. The archdiocese reached prospective and returning parents with an online admission, registration and scholarship application process. In response to interest in Catholic education among Spanish-speaking families, a Latino Outreach Initiative was established with a multilingual call center to help parents identify a school or get help with applications.

Effective **Communication** is integral to articulating the impressive stories of Catholic schools to both internal and external constituencies. Consequently, the archdiocese works hard to communicate critical information to schools, pastors, regional boards, principals, teachers, families and pastors, while supporting an accurate, upbeat narrative about Catholic schools to the public, media, donors, alumni and prospective families. Since the last strategic plan, websites for the Superintendent of Schools and each school were established or revamped, and there has been an effort to expand media outreach throughout the New York metropolitan area. There is more frequent communication with teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

Because the schools educate the whole child—mind, body and spirit—**Student Services** attend to areas outside of instruction. These include health and wellness, enrichment programs, administrative data and technology, and government compliance and reporting. *Pathway to Excellence* improved the Child Nutrition Program that provides breakfast, lunch and snacks to many of the schools and expanded the reach of the Archdiocese of New York Drug Abuse Prevention Program (ADAPP) to align with the ever-changing landscape of contemporary society. More counselors were assigned to schools, and there is a renewed effort to prevent and address bullying.

*Pathways to Excellence* dramatically altered the **Governance** structure of the Catholic schools. It established nine education regions for 91 elementary schools. Each region has a local board of trustees, a regional superintendent and support staff. With this unique structure, Catholic education in the Archdiocese of New York belongs to all parishes and parishioners, even those who do not share their campus with a school. Regional boards are responsible to promote their schools, enhance their Catholic identity, create region-specific strategic plans and fund-raising goals and make recommendations about school vitality. Much of the financial administration for the schools rests in the Global Regional School System, where critical infrastructure is maintained, and centralized accounting reduces costs through efficiencies of scale. The regional system has improved budget projections and financial oversight for each school, while increasing scholarship opportunities for families.

## MOVING FORWARD

Significant strides have been realized since *Pathways to Excellence* was introduced. The schools aggressively addressed issues that previously challenged Catholic education and developed strategies to ensure they will remain sustainable centers of academic, intellectual and faith education. In short, the schools are not only well positioned to continue to serve students and their families throughout the Archdiocese of New York, they look to the future from a position of strength.

*Pathways to Excellence II* supports this confidence and optimism. It is a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to the near future, undertaken with consultation among stakeholders and key leaders. By restricting the plan to what can be accomplished within a 36-month timeframe, it provides credibility and momentum. It also anticipates the strategic planning process will be replicated in three years.

The objectives and strategies that follow build on the vision and success of *Pathways to Excellence*. They are strongly weighted toward maintaining and enhancing the quality of academic and faith formation programs in the schools. Nonetheless, their implementation will be impacted by ongoing financial pressures on the schools. The archdiocese is committed to the financial strategies contained in the original *Pathways to Excellence*, and the maturation of the ground-breaking regionalization it envisioned. However, the success of *Pathways to Excellence II* will require both ongoing prayer and an unrelenting fight to win needed and deserved public support for the outstanding Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of New York.



OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

## PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE II

Pathways to Excellence II uses seven domains to examine the opportunities and challenges the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of New York will encounter in the next three years. It identifies objectives for each domain and presents strategies to attain them.



# Catholic Identity

Catholic schools incorporate faith, values and traditions into every aspect of education. Beyond the religious imagery and iconography in every classroom, Catholic schools are characterized by daily catechetical instruction and prayer, frequent celebration of Mass and an encompassing culture of respect for the human dignity of each individual.

While families play the most central role in communicating the faith to their children, Catholic schools provide a consistent interpretation of shared faith, reinforce traditional values and provide opportunities to practice Christian outreach.

Pathways to Excellence II seeks to strengthen the existing partnership among educators, families, clergy and religious to achieve the preeminent goal of developing students as well-educated young adults who are formed in their faith and prepared to take on leadership roles in the Church and the world.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

### 1. Engage local clergy and religious in the Catholic schools' faith formation programs.

- A. Invite priests, deacons and religious to offer opportunities for the students to experience the grace of the sacraments and other liturgical and spiritual experiences.
- B. Welcome the input of the pastor in the hiring and recruiting of teachers.
- C. Where necessary, implement the recently approved chaplaincy program to ensure all schools have regular access to a priest.

### 2. Maximize the role of the regional board and its Catholic Identity Committee as the overseers of the region's fidelity to mission.

- A. Invite clergy to become members of the regional Catholic Identity Committee.
- B. Encourage regional Catholic Identity Committee members to visit schools and participate in school-based spiritual opportunities.
- C. Encourage regional Catholic Identity Committees to meet annually with school principals to discuss opportunities for growth.

### 3. Ensure school leaders and staff are energized by encountering Christ, being faithful to Him, the Church and one another through spiritual formation and pedagogical growth in religious studies.

- A. Recognize and affirm that all school leaders and staff live and practice their Catholic faith, and provide opportunities for spiritual growth through a variety of prayer and retreats.
- B. Investigate ways to partner with local colleges and universities to utilize religious studies courses and professors.
- C. Instruct new teachers in religious education methodologies.
- D. Streamline the record-keeping of Catechist Formation Certification requirements.
- E. Use the Catholic Identity Self-Reflection Tool as a guide for ongoing conversations with school principals and regional boards.

### 4. Evangelize students and their families by providing opportunities for prayer, adult faith formation and action in service of social justice outside of the classroom.

- A. In collaboration with pastors, develop sacramental preparation programs that are less academically oriented and more faith-experience oriented.
- B. Use sacramental preparation programs to evangelize school families.
- C. Effectively use the family components provided in the religion textbooks adopted by the schools.
- D. Increase social justice teachings across all grade levels.

## OTHER FAITHS





# Leadership

Catholic schools are blessed with exceptional leaders whose talent and dedication determine the success of the entire educational system. Qualified and experienced leaders develop and articulate a clear vision for their schools that mirrors the overall mission. They guide all stakeholders to achieve the vision by setting clear goals, encouraging collaboration and monitoring progress.

This strategic plan represents a sustained and increased investment in the people who lead the Catholic schools of the archdiocese. It envisions a renewed effort to attract and retain outstanding leaders and give them rigorous professional development. Recognizing that principals are key to the quality and vitality of their school, this plan commits mission effectiveness support for teacher coaching, culture building, evangelization, personnel management, and enrollment management.

In addition, Pathways to Excellence II anticipates expanding recruitment of competent, certified teachers committed to Catholic education, and encourages principals to identify teachers in their schools with leadership potential.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 1. Provide leadership formation opportunities to help school leaders grow in their practice.

- A. Annually utilize the leader appraisal process to identify professional development and growth opportunities for all school leaders.
- B. Provide professional development opportunities to meet the unique needs of parish-based school leaders.
- C. Develop a path and timeline for school leaders to seek certification as part of their professional growth plan.
- D. Create coaching and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) for archdiocesan school administrators.

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### 2. Sustain a pipeline of leadership candidates for school, regional and Superintendent's office staff positions.

- A. Improve the compensation packages to recruit the best school leaders.
- B. Develop a task force to assist marketing efforts to attract local and national talent.
- C. Initiate an internal process to help current teachers view their ministry in the Archdiocese of New York as God's work.
- D. Expand the Archdiocesan Principal Academy (Curran Fellowship) opportunities awarded each year to 12–15.
- E. Continue to seek ways to encourage teachers early in their career to view leadership as a career path.
- F. Seek additional ways to identify and counsel school leaders to consider a career path to regional and central office leadership opportunities.

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### 3. Ensure that talented school leaders are retained within the system, particularly at schools that need the most experienced and talented leadership.

- A. Explore differentiated compensation for school leaders based on geographical region.
- B. Provide opportunities to assign school leaders within the region based on the unique needs of each school.

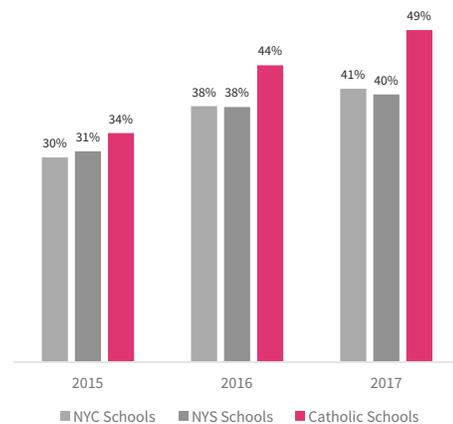
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### 4. Recruit and retain competent, certified teachers committed to the mission of Catholic education.

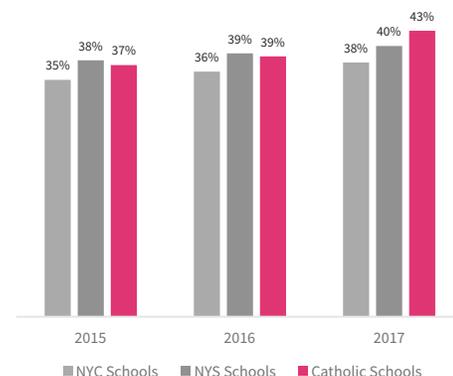
- A. Replicate the leadership recruitment process for teachers and increase technology-driven recruitment efforts to secure a robust pipeline of classroom teachers.
- B. Provide school leaders with the support necessary to interview and screen potential teacher candidates.
- C. Create incentive packages to recruit and retain teachers certified to teach math, science and special education.
- D. Create opportunities for undergraduate education majors to student teach in the schools of the archdiocese.
- E. Partner with local Catholic universities to benefit from their teacher education programs.
- F. Work with Teach for America and college campus ministries such as FOCUS to identify and recruit teacher candidates.
- G. Identify strategies to engage clergy in the hiring and on-boarding process for teachers.

Our students' NY State test scores and academic proficiency continue to rise year after year. Our task over the next three years is to determine how we can continue to sustain and improve on this promising growth.

### STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING ELA PROFICIENCY STANDARDS



### STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING MATH PROFICIENCY STANDARDS



# Teaching & Learning

The Catholic schools of the archdiocese lean on the solid foundation of their storied past, and prepare students to live in a complex and evolving world. They are steeped in the traditions of the Church, yet are simultaneously forward-thinking and cutting-edge in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

To support excellence in education, all schools have access to contemporary, highly-rated, research-based curricular materials. Student-focused academic and curriculum initiatives guide and drive instruction, including strong professional development opportunities for teachers and leaders.

Pathways to Excellence II expands the thoughtful use of technology and blended learning in the classroom, and recognizes the school system's growing commitment to early childhood education. It underscores academic achievement throughout the system, promotes Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education, and embraces inclusion by providing tailored opportunities for students with special learning needs.

The strategic plan recognizes the role of co-curricular activities as a valuable component of educating the whole person – body, mind and soul.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 1. Use high-quality instruction to facilitate educational growth for all students as evidenced by improvements on the New York state exams.

- A. Set specific test score targets for each school.
- B. Implement ongoing student assessments to determine appropriate remediation and enrichment activities, and provide insight into instructional practices.
- C. Develop strong curricular Pre-K–8 standards that meet or exceed state standards.
- D. Use research-based, co-curricular activities that incorporate real-world application of knowledge into classrooms.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that enables students to leverage technology within the classroom.

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### 2. Design, implement and evaluate programs for students with specific learning needs that improve academic and behavioral outcomes in an inclusive setting.

- A. Implement pilot programs in schools to broaden inclusive education practices throughout the school system.
- B. Hire special education instructional specialists to help teaching staff identify and/or design appropriate educational resources and curriculum to implement the goals of students' Individualized Education Services Plans (IESPs).
- C. Devote greater attention and commitment to incorporate multisensory and systematic phonics, spelling, and handwriting programs into K–2 classrooms.

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### 3. Provide quality professional development opportunities that support excellence in education for teachers and principals.

- A. Provide rich, engaging professional development that meets the needs of teachers and principals. It should support content knowledge (i.e. what to teach) as well as pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. how to teach it), enhance instructional leadership skills, and be accessible in a variety of formats through the power of technology.
- B. Assess system-wide professional development efforts in conjunction with the regional superintendents' offerings to ensure all initiatives meet the needs of principals and teachers, and increase the use of high-leverage teaching practices in the classroom.

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### 4. Implement system-wide after school and summer programs that provide robust academic and extra-curricular activities.

- A. Evaluate the use of Title I for more diversified programming.
- B. Seek program and funding opportunities for after school and summer programs that incorporate academics, social-emotional learning, and recreation while building crucial support for families.



# Enrollment Management

In its ongoing commitment to maintain a dynamic system of fully-enrolled schools, the Archdiocese of New York utilizes various tools to enhance the experience of current families, attract new families, and communicate the unique and lasting value of a Catholic education to all members of the community. Welcoming open houses, and both broad-based and targeted advertising, introduce the schools to new families. Regional directors of enrollment work with principals to target the specific interests and needs of each school community.

The strategic plan expands on earlier successful multi-platform efforts, aims to identify and implement more effective marketing and outreach programs, increase engagement efforts, and enhance financial assistance and scholarships. It will use new technology to familiarize families with the schools, and help them through the recruitment, admission, enrollment and retention processes.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 1. Increase school enrollment, specifically in grades Pre-K through first grade, to sustain a robust enrollment.

- A. Develop quantifiable measures to track and assess the progress toward enrollment goals for each school and for the regional system overall.
- B. Encourage principals to develop strategic enrollment goals and use metrics to monitor enrollment patterns.
- C. Provide professional development for principals to support individualized school marketing that highlights the culture of the school and its distinct Catholic identity.
- D. Implement new models to support challenged schools with customized marketing and enrollment strategies.

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### 2. Expand Hispanic outreach to attract new Latino families into the schools of the archdiocese, and better engage those families currently attending the schools.

- A. Increase the number of Latino outreach coordinators to better address the needs of Hispanic communities in each region.
- B. Create new resources to meet the current and future needs of Latino families.
- C. Invite pastors to deepen relationships between the regional schools and their parishes, and advocate for Catholic schools among the Latino families in their parishes.

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### 3. Retain students currently attending the schools through targeted engagement and messaging.

- A. Identify strategies that create a welcoming and inviting school environment for all families.
- B. Collaborate with principals to provide tools to identify what families need to remain at the school.
- C. Develop proactive and effective methods to engage families before they consider leaving the Catholic school.



# Communication

Clear, concise, timely communication within the Catholic school system, and with its external constituents reflects the importance of keeping all stakeholders well-informed and is crucial to the continued success of the Catholic schools. Pertinent internal communication engages pastors, families, regional leaders, principals, teachers, board members, donors and alumni. External communication articulates a positive narrative about the benefits and accomplishments of the schools to the broader public, media and prospective families.

The strategic plan envisions streamlining and centralizing communication to internal constituencies by adopting a clear and consistent protocol. It also encourages individual schools to showcase their achievements locally and to leverage central office support for advice on messaging and outreach. Overall strategies will be evaluated for effectiveness, and standards will be developed to ensure the quality and consistency of websites and social media postings.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 1. Create proactive communications strategies for each internal constituency of the school community.

- A. Ensure all communication is coordinated, precise and timely; increase frequency of Superintendent's online newsletter for school families. Support schools that lack a family communication plan and ensure major system-wide announcements to parents are disseminated in Spanish.
- B. Establish a searchable online portal for quick communication among regional staff, department heads, principals, teachers and school staff.
- C. Increase presence by Department of Education staff and school principals at deanery meetings and identify greater opportunities to include persons with school-related news.
- D. Ensure that all schools have a weekly teacher communication plan and maintain accurate email contacts for all teachers.

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### 2. Enhance communication with prospective families

- A. Create a link on each school website to connect visitors to updated messages from the Superintendent of Schools about test score data, major achievements and accolades.
- B. Promote school-based events and public relations messages on Facebook, Twitter and other social media to extend and expand visibility throughout the region and beyond.
- C. Task internal staff member to translate all promotional content in Spanish, including social media postings.

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### 3. Enhance communication with the media and general public

- A. Generate regular contacts with multiple media organizations to seek opportunities to share news about the Catholic schools; build and maintain system-wide media database to identify local media outlets for every school and region.
- B. Develop compelling and concise talking points that encapsulate the value and unique benefit of a Catholic education.
- C. Expand press release visibility and identify additional opportunities to use social media to promote the schools, particularly via digital media and search engines to augment distribution reach.

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### 4. Enhance schools' use of digital media

- A. Designate a webmaster for each school to keep website timely and updated. Have webmasters maintain Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts (and any other deemed appropriate).
- B. Develop an annual media plan for Superintendent of Schools that will also have utility for local schools.



# Student Services

The Catholic schools ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of students with programs that complement the rigorous attention devoted to quality instruction and curriculum. At many schools, children from low-income families eat nutritious breakfast, lunch and snacks prepared by school food service staff. The strategic plan examines expanding the food program to other schools and families.

The social and emotional health of children is threatened by alcohol and drug abuse, as well as bullying. Catholic schools in the archdiocese continue to deploy new strategies to address these issues through a well-established prevention program and seek additional funding and partnerships to expand their efforts.

Technological systems, services and databases strengthen school communities and central support, but require constant vigilance. Pathways to Excellence II creates efficiencies and builds continuity among multiple systems to support operational capacity.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 1. Assess models and opportunities that bring social-emotional and physical health, safety, and nursing services to every school.

- A. Evaluate the funding mechanisms for providing additional Archdiocese of New York Drug Abuse Prevention Program (ADAPP) counselors and social workers in schools on either a school-based or a regionalized approach. Examine areas where ADAPP can expand services beyond those provide under the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services funding.
- B. Conduct system-wide trainings and professional development in the areas of school climate, social-emotional learning, mental health and crisis response.
- C. Adopt a health curriculum as a universal prevention strategy to promote social and emotional wellness.
- D. Engage local and state policy-makers and the non-public school constituencies to lobby to expand government-funded school nurses and security guards for all schools.
- E. Update the archdiocesan school safety plan and provide professional development to principals and teachers.
- F. Increase the number of schools currently enrolled in the archdiocesan Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) program.

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### 2. Expand and clarify the program that provides healthy, high-quality meals and snacks to the students.

- A. Offer opportunities for Child Nutrition Program school parents to provide feedback regarding the school food quality and menu options.
- B. Convert after school snacks to the Child and Adult Care Food Program and consider where dinner programs can be made available for families in the schools.
- C. Evaluate and draft a business plan for self-sustaining nutritious food programs within and outside of National School Lunch Program.
- D. Provide clear guidelines to ensure full compliance by those schools that contract with outside vendors to provide meal service, especially with respect to Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs.

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### 3. Improve the technology and data system operations to enhance efficiencies and reduce administrative burdens at the school level.

- A. Reduce the human resource/business administrative responsibilities of principals with improved technology solutions.
- B. Conduct technology audits at the school level to identify where principals can be more effective with their use of archdiocesan systems and programs.
- C. Improve the direct communication with teachers through more technology options.
- D. Develop programming interfaces to allow systems to share data, thus creating a unified platform to collect and house all school data.



# Governance

Catholic schools in the archdiocese comprise a system dedicated to providing every child access to an outstanding, sustainable Catholic education. There are several governance structures that have been created within this school system to continue this legacy of service.

Under the guidance of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, most schools are managed by local and regional leaders, collaborating as trustees and advisors to ensure excellence and long-term sustainability. Pastors continue to remain critical in fortifying the Catholic identity and Christian outreach of the schools.

Pathways to Excellence II examines and clarifies the evolving role of each governance entity, and strengthens the relationships and communication among them. The plan seeks ways to share and allocate resources among schools, and to draw on expert talent within and beyond the archdiocese to further the mission of the schools.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

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### 1. Reassert the invaluable role of the regional boards of trustees to ensure the regional schools are Catholic, competitive, resourced and sustainable.

- A. Encourage regional boards to be more actively involved with schools through personal engagement with principals, participation of school leaders at board meetings and by assigning board members to engage with specific schools.
- B. Identify further support for the role of the regional boards and their committees, especially in the areas of strategic planning, fundraising and Catholic identity.
- C. Provide greater resources for strategic planning and fundraising at the school level, and establish a committee of representatives from each regional board to meet quarterly with the superintendent to consult, offer insights and share best practices.

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### 2. Reaffirm the pivotal relationship between the Office of the Superintendent, pastors and schools.

- A. Determine what regional resources and/or systems could benefit parish schools, and understand and communicate the decision process for allocation of financial and other resources and establish best practices to share non-financial resources between parish schools and regional schools, i.e. professional development events and business opportunities.
- B. Build strong and consistent relationships with pastors of parish schools through annual regional meetings of the superintendent's office with the pastors of parish schools, and promote the importance of the priests' involvement with the regional schools that fall within their parish boundaries.
- C. Create outreach opportunities with families of parishes without schools in partnership with the pastors of those parishes.

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### 3. Leverage the talent in New York City and other parts of the country to advance the mission of Catholic education in New York.

- A. Establish a committee of educational experts to meet regularly with the superintendent to review key educational topics, including school choice issues, technology, fundraising and instructional/curricular initiatives.



# Conclusion

Pathways to Excellence II is intended to be a comprehensive, realistic three-year plan to ensure the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of New York maintain and enhance their long tradition of academic excellence and faith formation. It builds on the groundbreaking initiatives of the 2010 Pathways to Excellence strategic plan that re-imagined Catholic education for the 21st century and became a model for other Catholic school systems throughout the United States.

With this plan, the archdiocese renews its commitment to strong, vibrant centers of Catholic learning. A Superintendent of Schools Advisory Committee will be established to implement Pathways to Excellence II, and identify and secure funding for its forward-thinking initiatives. Additionally, a school profile assessment template is under development to enable the archdiocese to measure all aspects of school life over the next three years. This tool is unique to the Catholic schools of New York, and will help regional boards and principals enhance performance and maintain competitiveness in a complex educational landscape. It will capture multiple data points, including enrollment, academics, leadership, facilities and financial indicators such as tuition costs, operating expenses and scholarships.

This is a challenging, yet exciting time in the life of the schools. The implementation of Pathways to Excellence II has begun with a sharpened focus on the many interrelated features that work together to define the unique Catholic education experience offered in the Archdiocese of New York. During the next three years, the Office of the Superintendent of Schools will continue its ongoing assessment of the vitality, competitiveness, academic excellence and sustainability of the schools to make sure they best serve students and their families.

Pathways to Excellence II looks to the future of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York with optimism and eager anticipation.



# Pathways to Excellence II Committees

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