



Sustaining Urban Catholic Elementary Schools

An Examination of Governance
Models and Funding Strategies

Erik P. Goldschmidt, Ph.D., M.Div.
Mary E. Walsh, Ph.D.

*Funding for this project was graciously provided
by the Mathile Family Foundation.*



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December 2011

Dear Reader:

You are likely well aware of the many challenges that are eroding the viability of Catholic schools across the country. The facts are daunting: since 1963, the Catholic Church in the United States has lost nearly half (48%) of its schools and has suffered a 63% decline in enrollment. The declines are sharpest in the urban environments where the financial demands, diminished resources, and demographic changes have placed insurmountable strain on vulnerable parish schools serving low-income populations. The evidence points to a clear conclusion: in most cases, the single-parish elementary school in the urban environment is not sustainable, despite the heroic effort of Catholic education stakeholders to save these schools.

What is less known is that in response to the growing challenges, many school leaders, diocesan officials, and other stakeholders in Catholic education have developed innovative and promising approaches to improving the sustainability of these schools. School governance and finance have been a central focus of these efforts.

Concerned for the future of Catholic schools and encouraged by the creative ingenuity of Catholic school leaders who are thinking “out of the box,” we engaged in a national study of the governance models and funding strategies currently utilized by urban Catholic elementary schools.

This report, *Sustaining Urban Catholic Elementary Schools: An Examination of Governance Models and Funding Strategies*, presents the findings and cites examples of schools and dioceses that have implemented these approaches. We point out the innovative trends that cut across the governance models and funding strategies and offer concrete recommendations to improve the sustainability of these schools.

Our hope is that this report can serve as a resource to assist Catholic educational leaders and stakeholders in planning for the future for Catholic schools. We welcome your ideas, experiences, and feedback, and look forward to an open conversation, at all levels of the church, on the merits of these approaches and the usefulness of our recommendations. Without a coordinated effort to develop sustainable Catholic schools, we risk losing this vital ministry in urban centers across the country.

Sincerely,

Erik P. Goldschmidt, Ph.D., M.Div

Mary E. Walsh, Ph.D.

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank the Mathile Family Foundation for their support of this research. In addition, we thank their staff who shared their accumulated learning, thereby laying a strong foundation for this project.

Our sincere gratitude also goes to the participants in this study who generously made time for phone conversations, email correspondence and sharing documentation of their work. Their willingness to engage in these discussions helped us to gain rich insights into the critical work of their schools, dioceses, universities, foundations, and other organizations seeking to strengthen Catholic schools.

Finally, we thank our research assistants, Karen Schreiner and Michael Gardner, for their excellent contributions toward the completion of this report.



Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
1. Introduction	5
2. Models of Governance.....	14
2.1 Parish Schools.....	14
2.2 Private Schools	15
2.3 Inter-Parish Schools.....	17
2.4 Diocesan Schools	18
2.5 Consortium Schools.....	20
2.6 Private Network Schools.....	21
2.7 K-12 School Systems	23
2.8 University Partnership Schools	24
2.9 Faith-Inspired Charter Schools.....	25
3. Funding Strategies	27
3.1 Tuition and Fees	28
3.2 Parish Subsidies.....	29
3.3 Diocesan Subsidies	30
3.4 Large-Scale Scholarship Funds.....	30
3.5 Development Programs.....	31
3.6 Leveraging Economies of Scale	32
3.7 Catholic College and University Programs	34
3.8 School-Community Partnerships.....	36
3.9 Niche Programming	38
3.10 Endowments.....	39
3.11 Patron Programs.....	40
3.12 Private Grantmaking	41
3.13 Federal Funding.....	42
3.14 State and Local Government Funding.....	45
4. Innovative Trends in Governance and Finance	47
5. Recommendations for Future Work	52
6. Appendix: Sources of Data Reviewed	62
7. Endnotes.....	67
8. References	71
9. About the Authors.....	77

Executive Summary

Nearly half of Catholic elementary schools have closed in the United States since their peak in the 1960s. This alarming rate appears to be the result of increased cost of running a school. These challenges are compounded in the urban centers where families are unable to pay increasing tuition costs and parishes lack adequate resources to support a school. The Catholic school decline is most often linked to a financial crisis. In addition, Catholics appear to be increasingly less likely to view schools as a vital ministry of the church.

In the last two decades, the National Catholic Educational Association has played an important role in documenting the crisis in Catholic education. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has challenged the entire Catholic community to respond to the crisis. Catholic colleges and universities, the philanthropic community, independent think tanks, and consulting firms have demonstrated leadership in convening public symposia, developing academic programs, publishing analytical reports, and founding innovative programs and initiatives. Improving the governance models and the financial management of schools has been the common agenda of these efforts to stabilize, strengthen, and sustain urban Catholic elementary education.

With the generous help of the Mathile Family Foundation, the authors examined the governance models and funding strategies currently in use by urban Catholic elementary schools. Over 60 focused interviews were conducted with key informants across the country (e.g., superintendents, foundation executives) and hundreds of documents were reviewed (e.g., annual reports, websites).

While not aiming to review every single diocese, this report offers a representative description of the governance models and funding strategies utilized by urban Catholic elementary schools across the United States. Specific examples are examined. The report is intended to be a resource for dioceses, schools, researchers, philanthropists, and other stakeholders in Catholic education to assist in strategic planning for urban elementary schools.

At least eight major governance models for urban Catholic elementary schools have been identified in contrast to a nearly ubiquitous model of years past in which a single school was governed and financed by one parish. These differing approaches to school governance have emerged as a result of concerns about sustainability. The alternative models

At least eight major governance models for urban Catholic elementary schools have been identified in contrast to a nearly ubiquitous model of years past in which a single school was governed and financed by one parish.

include simple collaborations such as inter-parochial schools (sponsored by multiple parishes) and diocesan schools (a principal reports to the superintendent rather than to the pastor). Efforts to utilize economies of scale have resulted in linking several schools into a consortium that employs an umbrella of shared administration, operations and resources. Other examples of innovation include networks of schools, a cluster of schools aligning into a K-12 system, and a school co-owned by a parish, a diocese and a university. In addition, the controversial faith-inspired charter school model involves converting Catholic schools into publicly funded non-profit organizations; Catholic educators are exploring how faith-based values and mission can be infused implicitly into a public day school and explicitly into a voluntary afterschool program.

In response to the crisis, a variety of funding strategies have been developed to keep urban Catholic elementary schools open. Clearly, most Catholic schools cannot be supported by tuition alone. Parish schools, particularly in urban areas, are a financial burden for their associated parish and increasingly for the diocese. Scholarship drives, development programs, patron programs, and other donor support have effectively engaged the philanthropic community. Leveraging economies of scale has resulted in reduced spending through eliminating redundancies in operations, increasing purchasing power, and sharing resources across schools. Endowment programs have allowed schools to fiscally invest in their future. Collaborative partnerships with colleges and universities, community organizations, and other schools have increased access to resources and expertise. Federal funding is a largely underutilized resource to which high-poverty Catholic schools are entitled. Catholic schools in many states benefit from voucher programs, tax credits, early childhood funding, transportation assistance and funding for textbooks.

The wide variety of governance models and funding strategies examined in this report demonstrate some of the innovation in urban Catholic elementary schools across the country. While this study did not evaluate the effectiveness of each example cited, the available evidence does suggest potential for improved stability and increased income for urban Catholic elementary schools.

Common themes can be extracted to guide exploration, development, and implementation of practices that will improve the management of urban Catholic schools. Centralized operations, collective procurement and greater collaboration with neighboring schools, community organizations, institutions of higher education and the philanthropic community appear to lower costs and increase access to resources. Increased use of strategic

The future of urban Catholic elementary schools requires that we identify, implement, measure, and market models that demonstrate effective governance, financial sustainability, and academic quality.

planning, data-informed practices, professional business practices, and diversified funding sources suggest the importance of more sustainable financial and management practices. Finally, accessing federal and state funding, as well as continued advocacy for public funding and tax credits, point to potentially substantial sources of public support for these institutions.

The report concludes with concrete recommendations. Church leadership need to make the case for Catholic schools, particularly urban Catholic schools. The parish elementary school in urban settings appears to be no longer viable. Clarification is therefore needed about the ways that governance and finance may vary in different settings. We recommend that Catholic education stakeholders consider evaluating existing governance and finance practices while continuing to innovate at the local level. We recommend renewing a focus on excellence, providing empirical evidence for academic quality and capitalizing on the unique strengths of Catholic schools. A more intentional effort to assess the performance of all educational leaders at all levels is vital to ensure quality. Collaborative partnerships among church ministries and community organizations will enhance Catholic schools' mission to educate the "whole child." Urban Catholic schools must be more intentional in their outreach to and integration of new immigrant groups (e.g., Latinos). Lastly, relentless advocacy for public funding and resources is critical for sustaining these schools.

The future of urban Catholic elementary schools requires that we identify, implement, measure, and market models that demonstrate effective governance, financial sustainability, and academic quality. Efforts to sustain Catholic schools will not succeed without a renewed commitment to recognize these Catholic schools as a vital and authentic expression of the church's overall mission. A courageous, coordinated effort to support urban Catholic elementary education utilizing tested, innovative strategies will not save all Catholic schools but could ensure that this vital ministry will be preserved in some form in every urban center across the country.



Introduction

In 1884, the American Catholic Bishops met for the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore and boldly articulated the “absolute necessity” of Catholic schools, the “obligation of pastors to establish them” and the imperative that parents “must send their children to such schools.”¹ Following these mandates, pastors founded parochial schools at an incredible rate. Catholic education reached its peak in 1965 when 5.6 million students attended nearly 13,500 Catholic schools hosted by more than half of the Catholic parishes across the country.² The numbers look quite different in 2010-2011, with 2 million students attending 6,980 Catholic schools.³ This represents a 63% decline in enrollment and a 48% school closure rate since 1965.

A close examination of declines in school and enrollment shows that the steepest loss has occurred in Catholic elementary schools (see Figures 1 & 2). The sharp rate of closures for Catholic elementary schools and the decrease in enrollment suggests that the future of Catholic elementary education is at serious risk, particularly in low-income communities. While some regions reported an increase in the number of Catholic high schools over the last decade, no region avoided a decline in elementary schools.⁴

Figure 1.
Number of Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1960 to 2010

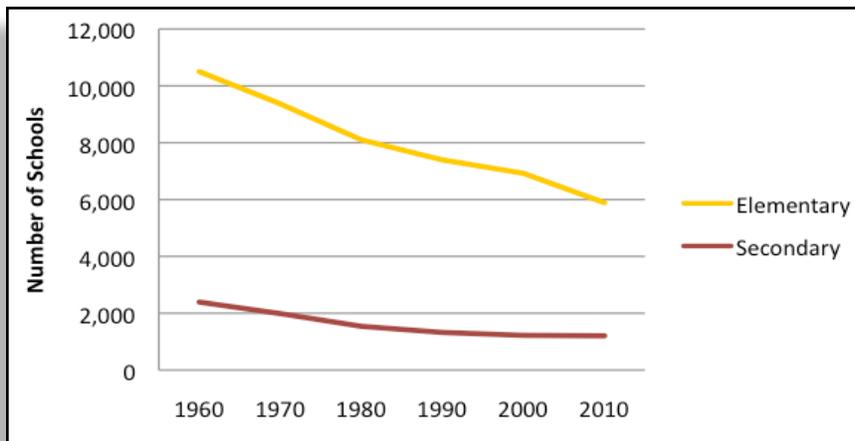
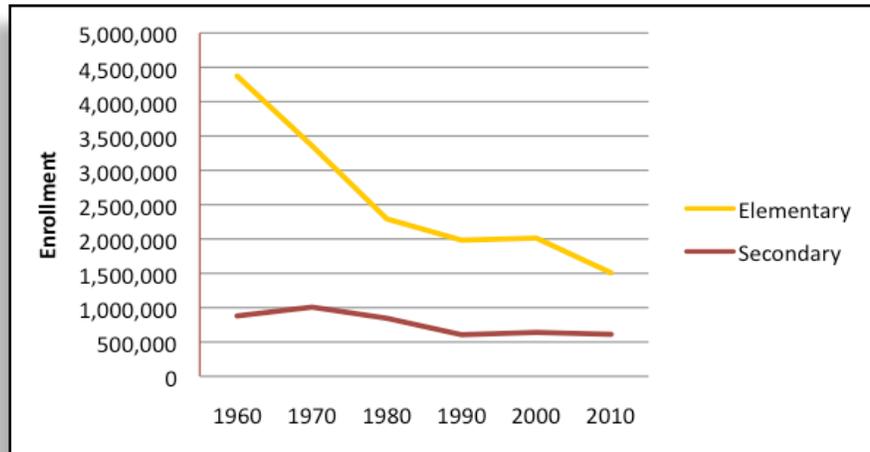


Figure 2.
Enrollment in Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1960 to 2010



Researchers have documented a host of reasons for the closure of Catholic schools, aptly described as a “crisis.” The most commonly agreed-upon reason is the increased cost of running a school. Over the last several decades, the cost of all education – both public and private – has increased dramatically.

Responding to these challenges is particularly difficult for urban schools because fewer resources are available in the inner-city communities. The declining number of parishioners who can contribute weekly has resulted in many financially depleted urban parishes. Urban Catholic parishes serving lower-income populations find it nearly impossible to support the growing cost of a school. Additionally, demographic shifts in the last century have seen Catholic populations moving from specific ethnic communities (e.g., Polish, Italian, Irish) into more diffuse suburban areas. These shifts left a largely non-Catholic urban population behind with fewer means to afford a Catholic education.⁷ Consequently, fewer families in the urban centers are able to pay increasing tuition costs and parishes lack adequate resources to support a quality school in a competitive educational environment.

In addition to increased costs amidst fewer resources in the urban environment, Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), points to a departure from the “neighborhood-based Catholic culture that depended upon the parochial school as its foundation.” Dolan further elaborates that the decline of Catholic education can also be attributed to the deterioration of a sense of ownership of the schools

Fewer families in the urban centers are able to pay increasing tuition costs and parishes lack adequate resources to support a quality school in a competitive educational environment

by the church: "... the thinking of American Catholics [is]... that the responsibility for Catholic schools belongs only to the parents of the students and not to the entire church."⁸

Responding to the Crisis

The crisis of urban Catholic education has been receiving growing attention. The last decade has shown a steep rise in publications, conferences, organizations, and foundations addressing the crisis in Catholic education. The National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) has regularly provided data that has documented the crisis. The annual NCEA convention and other regional events have provided venues for the dissemination of a variety of local innovative approaches to governance, finance and other critical domains of schooling. The NCEA has also provided hands-on support to schools and dioceses as they implement these approaches, e.g., for the development and management of school boards.

In the 2005 statement, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Education in the Third Millennium*, the USCCB challenged the entire Catholic community to respond to the crisis.⁹ Their exhortation helped to intensify a response not only from within the K-12 Catholic education community (e.g., NCEA, diocesan school leaders) but also from Catholic higher education, the philanthropic community, and to some degree, the federal government.

Catholic universities and colleges, whose mission is an extension of the K-12 Catholic education system, have sponsored a wide range of efforts to increase the vitality of Catholic schools. These efforts are grounded in a central role of the university to engage the intersection between research and practice, i.e., to develop and disseminate evidence-based "best practices" that, in the case of K-12 schooling, improve educational outcomes for children.

Toward this end, Catholic universities and colleges have trained large cadres of Catholic school leaders and teachers. In addition, these institutions have developed best practices for Catholic education and disseminated these practices through conferences, authoritative white papers, new research centers on Catholic education, volunteer teaching corps for Catholic schools, and professional development in schools and dioceses to enhance leadership and improve curriculum and instruction. Boston College and the University of Notre Dame provide just two examples of institutional leadership on the part of Catholic colleges and universities across the country.

The Lynch School of Education at Boston College has provided graduate training to Catholic school administrators and teachers since the 1970s through the Catholic School Leadership Program. Emerging from this program in 1994 was an annual national conference co-sponsored by the NCEA that focused on innovative models in Catholic education. In 2007, the university significantly deepened its commitment to Catholic schools by including Catholic education as a central focus of its 10-year strategic plan and launching the Boston College Center for Catholic Education.

In 1993, the University of Notre Dame founded the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) as a national program to train and infuse energetic, young teachers in Catholic schools in rural and urban communities across the country. In 2005, the University of Notre Dame convened a Task Force on Catholic Education, which identified specific recommendations to address the crisis that has resulted in several national conferences convening Catholic higher education leadership.¹⁰ ACE has steadily grown to now offer over a dozen programs and initiatives to strengthen Catholic schools.

A number of private foundations have invested millions of dollars to support struggling urban Catholic schools (e.g., Cassin Educational Initiatives Foundation in Boston, Connelly Foundation in Philadelphia, GHR Foundation in Minneapolis, Mathile Family Foundation in Dayton). Many foundations were developed with an exclusive focus on supporting Catholic schools within a particular diocese (e.g., Big Shoulders Fund in Chicago, Catholic Education Foundation of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Catholic Schools Foundation in Boston, Extra Mile Education Foundation in Pittsburgh, and Fulcrum Foundation in Seattle).

Many philanthropists have taken a proactive role in developing solutions to the Catholic school crisis. Some donors have become intricately involved at the decision-making level for schools and dioceses, including engaging in thorough financial analyses of school budgets.¹¹ A number of Catholic philanthropists convened by Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities, Inc. (FADICA) have participated in a series of conferences, most recently in 2011, to discuss specific models that exemplify sound leadership, sustainable partnerships, finance, quality, and innovation in Catholic schools.¹²

Independent research organizations (i.e., think tanks) have produced white papers and sponsored conferences in response to the crisis. In 2008, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute summarized a number of innovative Catholic schools, dioceses and programs in *Who Will Save America's Urban Catholic Schools*.¹³ Seton Education Partners have examined case studies of urban

Catholic schools receiving public funding by converting to charter schools.¹⁴ Other organizations have promoted urban Catholic schools as part of their advocacy for school choice. These groups include but are not limited to the American Federation for Children, Alliance for School Choice, Center for Education Reform and Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice.

A number of for-profit consulting groups have responded to the crisis by helping Catholic schools to develop more effective management strategies. These firms have offered training seminars and direct consultation to individual schools on strategic planning, marketing, enrollment management, development, capital campaigns, financial planning and institutional management. Some groups provide large-scale strategic planning for dioceses, planning for school reconfigurations, feasibility studies for new schools, and studies of demographic trends across a diocese. Examples of private consulting firms include Catholic Education Services (California), Catholic School Management (Connecticut), Institute of School and Parish Development (Louisiana), Meitler Consultants, Inc. (Wisconsin), Partners in Mission (Massachusetts), SDG Advisors (Ohio) and TeamWorks International, Inc. (Minnesota).

The federal government has recognized the crisis in Catholic schools. In April 2008, the White House sponsored the Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools. At this summit, the White House convened educational leaders and community stakeholders to address “a deeply troubling but vastly under-reported phenomenon limiting the education options available to low-income urban families: the rapid disappearance of faith-based schools in America’s cities.”¹⁵

In addition to exploring the causes of the crisis, these public symposia, publications, academic programs, philanthropic initiatives, and consultants have focused attention on the critical importance of developing new governance models and finance strategies in order to sustain urban Catholic schools. These efforts have pointed out that approaches to governance and finance that worked in the not-so-distant past are no longer viable.

Purpose of the Study

Effective governance and finance are essential to the existence of any organization. Any effort to stabilize a vulnerable school or a system of schools must include an examination of these two fundamental and essential domains.¹⁶ This report identifies and describes a variety of governance models and funding strategies currently utilized by urban Catholic elementary schools and dioceses.

Any effort to stabilize a vulnerable school or a system of schools must include an examination of ... governance models and funding strategies.

While most urban Catholic schools continue to be governed by traditional structures under local parish management, a variety of alternative approaches have emerged. The traditional approach to funding schools (tuition and parish subsidy) has given way to numerous alternative funding strategies. Faced with imminent closures, many schools and dioceses have developed an array of short-term funding approaches. These changes in governance and finance vary in terms of the level at which they occur (i.e., school, parish, diocese). Efforts to address local needs and opportunities frequently occur without reference to what is happening in other locales. School and diocesan leaders are often particularly challenged by this absence of a systematic understanding of the variety of governance and funding strategies currently utilized across the country. This overview of governance and funding strategies can serve as a reference for schools and dioceses as they plan to address local needs and opportunities.

Methodology

This study follows previous research conducted by the authors at the Lynch School of Education at Boston College. In 2004, the authors conducted a preliminary study on the various reconfigurations and governance models of urban Catholic elementary schools.¹⁷ In 2009, Mary Walsh engaged in a follow-up study to track trends in enrollment and school closings in dioceses with the largest concentration in urban areas. Parallel to these efforts, Mary Lynn Naughton, Program Director at the Mathile Family Foundation, gathered substantial information on governance models and funding strategies. The Mathile Family Foundation has been a key collaborator and funder in several efforts to support Catholic schools.

Building upon these efforts, the authors set out to identify, understand and describe the models of governance and finance currently utilized by urban Catholic elementary schools. Well-known models were initially identified by 1) compiling a list of governance models and funding strategies as described in relevant literature and 2) contacting key informants experienced with innovative approaches to governance and finance. These informants were also asked to identify specific schools, dioceses and foundations that have implemented innovative approaches as well as other persons with knowledge in these domains.

Following these “big picture” explorations, the researchers engaged in a year-long study to deepen their understanding of contemporary approaches to governance and finance. Specifically, the authors utilized structured interviews with key informants, who had knowledge of

particular governance models and/or funding strategies, and document analysis of a wide range of written materials relevant to each approach.

The authors conducted more than 60 focused phone interviews with diocesan officials, school administrators, pastors, foundation executives, researchers, consultants to Catholic schools, and representatives from related professional organizations (e.g., the NCEA). The interview protocols varied somewhat according to which sector the participant represented (e.g., foundation, school, diocese). Interview questions addressed the unique aspects of the governance model and/or funding strategy, the historical premise and context, the process of development and implementation, and any outcomes that suggest improved sustainability (e.g., increased enrollment, reduced costs). After asking the questions common to all approaches, follow-up questions were tailored to fit the context and development of each model being examined. Table 1 lists examples of interview questions.

Table 1. Examples of Interview Questions

- *Can you describe the process by which your school/diocese developed and implemented this governance model/funding strategy?*
- *Who was involved in the design and implementation of this approach (e.g., the bishop, superintendent, the pastor, local foundations)?*
- *Were other dioceses or schools who have utilized this model/strategy consulted? What did you learn from doing that?*
- *How far along is the implementation of the model/strategy?*
- *What were some of the key challenges to implementation and how did you address them?*
- *Have you observed any changes in enrollment, access to resources, or financial outcomes since implementing this governance model/funding strategy?*
- *What recommendations would you have for others who might consider this approach?*

In addition to interviews, the researchers examined hundreds of related documents including diocesan strategic plans, academic studies, national reports, organizational annual reviews, newspaper articles, and school

websites. These documents contained detailed information about a particular governance model and/or strategy to fund an urban Catholic school or group of schools.

While this study was not intended to be exhaustive on the subjects of governance and finance in urban Catholic schools, it does cover most approaches utilized today. The data sources reflected a wide sampling of urban areas across the country including Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Seattle, and Washington, DC. Figure 3 shows a geographic representation of the sampling of major data sources across the country. The greatest concentration of sources is seen in the mid-Atlantic, Northeast, upper Midwest and parts of California which correspond to urban centers with large concentrations of Catholic elementary schools. The appendix lists all data sources by state and by type of data examined.

Figure 3. Distribution of Data Sources



It is important to point out that what is represented in this report is a distilled interpretation of data gathered from a variety of sources (e.g., websites, interviews, secondary sources, etc.). Every effort was made to present as accurately as possible the essence of what was gleaned from these sources of information. Given the nature of interpretation, however, there are likely to be a few unintended inaccuracies or misrepresentations.

The Report

This report summarizes the unique components of various governance models and funding strategies currently in use in urban Catholic elementary schools. The two main sections – governance models and funding strategies – outline traditional approaches (e.g., the parish school) and present the details of more recent approaches of the last several decades. In each section, a number of examples demonstrate efforts to better govern schools, improve institutional effectiveness, increase income, reduce costs, and access low-cost resources, all toward enhancing the sustainability of urban Catholic elementary schools. Some examples cover large regions or entire dioceses including urban schools. We highlight examples that focus exclusively on urban schools where available. The selected examples represent approaches that have been implemented rather than those that have been simply proposed. The report concludes by identifying common trends and recommendations.

While the purpose of this study was to describe and catalog the various approaches to governance and finance, we also report basic outcomes that were made available. This study did not independently evaluate the effectiveness of the various approaches. Follow-up studies may examine the cost-benefit impact of each approach on such outcomes as per-pupil costs, overall revenue, and other indicators of fiscal efficiencies. Future studies could also explore the specific contextual factors (e.g., fiscal, demographic, regional) that contribute to the effectiveness of the different approaches.

This report is intended to be a resource for dioceses, schools, researchers, philanthropists, and other stakeholders in Catholic education to assist in strategic planning for Catholic urban elementary schools. The scope of this report is limited to Catholic schools in urban settings, which represents about 40% of all Catholic elementary schools. While the findings in this report are expected to have some utility for all Catholic schools, suburban and rural schools also deserve a focused study of their unique challenges and opportunities.



Models of Governance

School governance is a key area that many dioceses are examining closely. Catholic schools as institutions of the Catholic Church are governed in accordance to both civil law and Canon Law.¹⁸ The term governance refers to the articulation of mission, policy development and enforcement, establishment of core priorities, and employment and evaluation of key leadership (e.g., the principal).¹⁹ The governance model establishes the framework within which administrators manage the operations of the schools. Catholic dioceses and schools utilize a variety of models to arrange these aspects of governance. Some models have been utilized for decades, whereas others are more recent. Furthermore, many schools have established boards which are charged with a defined set of governance responsibilities. Different types of boards can be implemented in each of the models we outline in this section. For more information on the use of boards in Catholic schools, readers may refer to the work of the Department of Boards and Councils of Catholic Education of the NCEA.²⁰

Models of Governance

- 2.1 Parish Schools
- 2.2 Private Schools
- 2.3 Inter-Parish Schools
- 2.4 Diocesan Schools
- 2.5 Consortium Schools
- 2.6 Private Network Schools
- 2.7 K-12 School Systems
- 2.8 University Partnership Schools
- 2.9 Faith-Inspired Charter Schools

2.1 Parish Schools

The most common type of Catholic elementary school utilized across the United States is the parish school. A parish school is sponsored by a single parish. The school is legally (under both civil and canonical laws) a part of the parish and is therefore owned and operated by that parish. The parochial model was instituted by the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, obligating all pastors to establish a school at their respective parishes. Parish elementary schools peaked in the 1960s at almost 10,000. At that time, the parish model was utilized by 95% of all Catholic elementary schools in the United States.²¹ While the parish school model

is still the most utilized among dioceses, it is not nearly as ubiquitous as it was 50 years ago. In 2010-2011, three quarters (73%) of Catholic elementary schools were parish schools.²² Currently, there are about 1,700 parish elementary schools in the urban centers.

Within the parish, the pastor ultimately holds authority over the property and operations. The pastor has the authority to hire the principal, teachers, and staff necessary to operate the school. The principal serves at the behest of the pastor as the administrator over the educational functions of the school. The range of authority given to the principal by the pastor varies (e.g., some principals manage the budget but others have no budget authority). The superintendent technically serves only an advisory role to the pastor, for instance by helping the pastor to find a qualified principal. A majority of parish schools utilize school boards that are primarily advisory or consultative in nature. Boards are typically charged with a range of governance tasks, with the exception of those responsibilities delegated specifically to the pastor by Canon Law.²³ Boards are typically charged with reviewing the operating budget, formulating policy, and making related recommendations to the pastor. The pastor provides final approval of all policies that the principal is responsible for implementing. Some pastors assign policy-making authority and governance responsibilities to the school board (commonly called a board of limited jurisdiction).

The relationship between the parish school and the parish community can be significant, thereby potentially strengthening or inhibiting the school. Schools can benefit from a parish that is committed to Catholic education, views the school and Catholic education as being central to its mission, and has sufficient funding to support operating deficits. When these three elements are not in place, parish schools are vulnerable. Parish schools that are not central to the parish's mission can feel like tenants, cohabitating but not benefiting from a pastoral and financial relationship. Lack of mission support for Catholic education eventually results in diminished funding from the parish. Parishes in low-income areas, regardless of pastoral mission, often do not have sufficient funding to support a school without ongoing external subsidies.

2.2 Private Schools

Private Catholic elementary schools are among some of the oldest schools in the United States. A private Catholic elementary school is an independent school that is sponsored by a religious congregation or a lay organization that is sanctioned by the bishop. Many of these schools benefit from the expertise of religious congregations that focus their

mission on providing high-quality education. Private Catholic schools do not typically have an affiliation with a parish.

Peaking at 362 in 1967 (about 3.5% of all Catholic schools), private Catholic schools have typically been few in comparison to parish-sponsored schools.²⁴ Today, they number at 331, or 5.6% of Catholic elementary schools.²⁵ At first glance there does not appear to be a substantial net loss in the number of private schools over 40 years. However, many parish schools have been closed and re-opened as private Catholic schools, thus confounding the overall total figures.

Private schools are often governed by a board that is empowered with full decision-making authority (in contrast to the consultative board in the parish school). The principal is typically hired by the board to run the daily operations of the school. The superintendent's relationship to the private Catholic school is often limited to the areas of Catholic identity and religious curriculum. Pastors from neighboring parishes typically are not involved in private school governance.

Sponsoring religious congregations usually stay connected to the school by having a presence on the board, by supplying religious personnel as teachers or administrators, and/or by providing financial support. The Sisters of Mercy is a commonly recognized religious congregation supporting Catholic education. The Sisters of Mercy have sponsored private Catholic schools in the United States continuously since 1844. Currently, they sponsor over 20 elementary schools and early childhood centers.²⁶

Some private schools are owned by an independent lay organization, as recognized in Canon Law as an "Association of Christian Faithful."²⁷ Lay-run private schools have been founded when a parish ends its relationship to its school or when a sponsoring religious congregation withdraws ownership. An example of a lay-run private urban elementary school is Francis Xavier Warde School in Chicago, which opened in 1989 at two locations (Holy Name Cathedral Campus and Old St. Patrick's Campus). The school is a lay-sponsored charitable organization that is owned and managed by an Association of Christian Faithful. The founders of Francis Xavier Warde School aimed to provide students with an "excellent education along with a foundation to guide them to become hardworking individuals armed with a strong moral compass."²⁸ This private school rents building space from two neighborhood parishes. The pastors of these parishes serve on the board of directors of the school, a rare example of a private school collaborating with local pastors.

2.3 Inter-Parish Schools

The inter-parish elementary school, also called a regional school, is sponsored by multiple parishes that are geographically contiguous. The inter-parish model currently represents 12% of Catholic elementary schools, a substantial increase from 1967 when this model represented only 1% of Catholic elementary schools.²⁹ The increase in inter-parish schools reflects an overall trend towards consolidating parish schools.

The inter-parish school typically leases the building of a former parish school. An inter-parish school can be established as an independent “juridic person” or as part of the juridic person of the lead parish. A juridic person is a canonically designated body for a “purpose which is in keeping with the mission of the Church.”³⁰ As a juridic person sponsored by multiple parishes, the inter-parish school would fall under the canonical jurisdiction of sponsoring pastors. The school can be governed by a board of limited jurisdiction that sets policy, establishes the budget, develops the strategic plans, and hires and evaluates the school administrator.³¹ Sponsoring pastors may sit as voting or ex officio members on the board with typically one pastor having general oversight (sometimes on a rotating basis). The board may consist of lay representatives from each parish.

Inter-parish schools are established to maximize enrollment and financial support by drawing from multiple parishes across a large geographic area. Historically, the inter-parish school model was the first approach to consolidating parish schools when individual parishes recognized that they could no longer support a school. John James, from the St. Louis University, notes that this “represents a redrawing of school boundaries without redrawing parish boundaries.”³² This collaborative approach allows pastors to pool their parish resources and to share costs while still fulfilling their obligation to provide their congregations access to a Catholic education.

One example, East Boston Central Catholic School (EBCCS), was established in 1974 as a multi-parish, collaborative elementary school serving four parishes in Boston: Our Lady of the Assumption, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Most Holy Redeemer, and Sacred Heart.³³ Thirty years later, EBCCS remains the only school sponsored by multiple parishes in the Archdiocese of Boston. EBCCS is currently sponsored by two of the original parishes; one was suppressed while another withdrew support. The two remaining sponsoring parishes (Most Holy Redeemer and Sacred Heart) continue to subsidize a combined \$40,000 annually, a mere 3% of the school’s operating budget. Additionally, the school is governed by a board of limited jurisdiction composed of community representatives, parents, and teachers in an effort to ensure that all stakeholders are represented.³⁴

The increase in inter-parish schools reflects an overall trend toward consolidating parish schools.

Participating in a larger diocesan system potentially facilitates access to improved practices in curriculum, instruction, professional development, strategic planning, and pooled resources.

2.4 Diocesan Schools

A diocesan school is owned by the bishop and managed by the superintendent of schools. While the school may be housed at a parish, it is part of the juridic person of the diocese under the authority of the bishop (rather than of the parish which is governed by the pastor). The diocese is financially responsible for the school. In most cases, diocesan schools are formed when pastors return the authority over the school to the bishop, when a previously closed parish school is re-opened by the diocese, or when the pastor agrees to “outsource” the governance of the school to the diocese.

The diocesan school model has been utilized for many decades. In 1967, there were 35 diocesan schools, representing less than 1% of Catholic elementary schools.³⁵ Four decades later, these schools grew to nearly 600 or roughly 10% of Catholic elementary schools. The steep rise in diocesan schools negatively correlates to parish school closings, suggesting that the diocesan model has been utilized as an alternative to the closing of a parish school.

In diocesan schools, the principal reports to the superintendent, the designated canonical administrator representing the authority of the bishop. Many diocesan schools utilize boards, either in an advisory capacity or with policy-making authority. The pastor from the host parish, as well as pastors from surrounding parishes, can serve as spiritual/pastoral leaders but without canonical authority over the schools.

The diocesan superintendent oversees these schools. Participating in a larger diocesan system potentially facilitates access to improved practices in curriculum, instruction, professional development, strategic planning, and pooled resources such as Title funding. Pastors also report feeling “freed up” of school administrative duties to focus more on pastoral ministries.³⁶

One example is the Jubilee School in the Diocese of Memphis. In 1998, the Superintendent of Schools in Memphis, Mary McDonald, was charged with the task of reopening Catholic schools that had been closed in downtown Memphis. McDonald accepted the challenge. Over a decade later the eight reopened Jubilee Schools serve over 1,300 students.³⁷ The “Miracle in Memphis” is a rare example of a diocese that has opened schools and experienced increased enrollment.³⁸ The Jubilee Schools are governed by the Diocese of Memphis and supported by innovative marketing and capital campaigns to secure financial support from local philanthropists and foundations. Memphis Jubilee schools revitalized Catholic education in Memphis and served to “illustrate what works [and] what is possible” for Catholic education in urban areas.³⁹

A second example is the Diocese of Bridgeport. In 2003, a study by Meitler Consultants pointed to an issue of “blurred authority” within the Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools. They noted a void in leadership where no one “owned the mission of the schools and their operations.”⁴⁰ In response, Bishop William E. Lori announced that a new model of diocesan school governance would be pursued under the Bridgeport Roman Catholic Schools Corporation.⁴¹ Superintendent Margaret Dames explains that the schools were charged with developing their own “empowered” boards while the Corporation would be responsible for supporting, sustaining, and governing the schools.⁴² In 2011, the Diocese of Bridgeport managed 33 elementary schools and 5 high schools, which together serve over 11,000 students.

A third example is the Archdiocesan Collaborative Schools (ACS) in the Archdiocese of Baltimore. The Archdiocese’s strategic plan states that all parish schools will eventually transform into the ACS model in which schools will be owned and operated by the Archdiocese.⁴³ The implementation of the ACS model will be incremental. Schools will become ACS schools in one of three ways: (1) the school had previously been operated by the Archdiocese; (2) the pastor voluntarily cedes canonical authority over a parish school to the bishop; or (3) as a condition for the appointment of a new pastor. Twelve schools (about a quarter of the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese) converted to the new model in July 2011, with a second cohort to change over in 2012.⁴⁴ Each ACS is tasked with forming a school board with decision-making authority in the areas of strategic planning, finances, facilities, development, and marketing.

Another unique aspect of the ACS model is that the pastors, as canonical representatives, are charged with maintaining the relationship among the school, the host parish, and the surrounding parishes.⁴⁵ Monsignor Robert Hartnett, Executive Director of the Office for School Planning and Implementation of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, explained, “Some who have read about the ACS model mistakenly believe that it minimizes or does away with altogether the school and parish relationship. In fact, we believe the ACS model will strengthen – *and expand* – that relationship, not diminish it” (emphasis in original text).⁴⁶ Canonical representatives will work with the school’s president and/or principal to develop opportunities for mutual engagement between the school and each parish.

Coordinating several schools as a consortium seems to provide a more efficient use of resources than an individual school model. Consortium schools have increased economies of scale.

2.5 Consortium Schools

A consortium is a cluster of Catholic elementary schools within a diocese that are linked through shared administration, policies, finances, resources and practices. Consortium schools are incorporated as one school with multiple campuses. A consortium is typically owned and managed by the diocese. However, some are sponsored by multiple parishes and would be considered inter-parochial in governance.⁴⁷

No definitive figures are available on the number of consortium Catholic schools across the country, though this study was able to identify a dozen such models in urban areas. The consortium model seems to be most utilized in low-income urban areas where individual parishes are not able to support a school.

Consortium schools are typically governed by an executive director to whom each school principal reports. In a diocesan consortium, the executive director reports to the superintendent and/or a board of limited jurisdiction. In an inter-parish consortium, the executive director reports to the policy-making board that represents the sponsoring parishes. The presence of an executive director frees consortium principals from many administrative tasks, allowing them to focus more on being educational leaders. Pastors serve as spiritual and pastoral leaders in the diocesan consortium, but reserve some canonical authority in an inter-parish consortium. In some consortia, pastors participate on the board of directors.⁴⁸

Coordinating several schools as a consortium seems to provide a more efficient use of resources than is possible under an individual school model. Consortium schools have increased economies of scale. A collective administration allows for a centralized management of finances: budget development, payroll (i.e., salary and benefits), tuition collection, and bill payment. Consortium schools share resources such as professional development, materials (e.g., desks, textbooks), and specialized teachers (e.g., art, gym, special education). These coordinated clusters of schools leverage increased purchasing power and a shared capacity for marketing, strategic planning, and fundraising. Collective coordination of academic programs allows for the implementation of higher-quality curricula and assessment tools. The collaborative relationship among consortium schools increases opportunities for peer-to-peer consultation (between principals or teachers across grade levels), as opposed to individual schools in competition with one another.

One example of a consortium was developed in response to growing concern about the viability of parish schools in the Archdiocese of

Indianapolis. Archbishop Buechlein formed a consortium of six inner-city schools called the Mother Theodore Catholic Academies (MTCA).⁴⁹ Through consolidating and coordinating areas such as finance, maintenance, marketing, and Catholic identity, the consortium provided a more viable model of Catholic education in urban Indianapolis. With an executive director and a board of directors to handle non-academic administrative tasks, principals can focus on the academic programs at their schools. Executive Director Connie Zittnan explains that “the change in governance has brought about great efficiencies, good stewardship of resources, and the empowerment of educators to do what they do best.”⁵⁰ In 2010, MTCA converted two of the six campuses to public charter schools.

Another example is Pope John Paul II (PJPII) Catholic Academy in the Archdiocese of Boston. Recognizing the trends of declining enrollment and financial hardship, the Archdiocese sought to redesign Catholic education in Boston’s inner city. In September 2008, PJPII Catholic Academy opened its doors to over 1,500 students on five campuses in the Dorchester and Mattapan communities.⁵¹ Under this consortium, a central office and regional director are responsible for the financial management and structural improvements of the campuses, thereby enabling principals to focus on serving as educational leaders in the school. PJPII Catholic Academy offers professional development courses to its faculty at the central office on an ongoing basis.⁵² In 2010, PLPII closed one of its campuses for financial reasons.

2.6 Private Network Schools

A private network of Catholic elementary schools is a national association of private, independent schools that are aligned by a common set of practices and standards of mission effectiveness. Networks essentially cross diocesan lines. The network is managed at the national level by an executive director, a small central staff, and a national board of directors. Similar to individual private schools, network schools are largely independent of diocesan governance, with the exception of basic assurances of Catholic identity. Individual schools within the network are governed by a policy-making board of directors that hires a president and/or a principal.

A network model of schools brings the added benefit of access to a specific set of practices, a faith-based identity, accountability metrics, and a nationally recognized brand name that assists in development fundraising. Network accountability implies some assurance of quality and transparency related to practices. Regular communication, annual

network meetings, and sharing of outcome data facilitate continual improvement processes and evaluation for these schools.

This study identified one national network with an explicit focus on urban Catholic education. The NativityMiguel Network was officially formed in 2006, uniting the best educational practices from the former separate networks of the Nativity Schools and the San Miguel Schools.⁵³ These two networks had been delivering quality middle school education in low-income urban areas for several decades. The combined network serves 5000 students in 64 schools across 27 states. The Cassin Educational Initiative Foundation has provided substantial funding to help replicate and support many of these schools. NativityMiguel schools implement a specific model of schooling rooted in Mission Effectiveness Standards (see Table 2).⁵⁴

Table 2. Mission Effectiveness Standards of the NativityMiguel Network

- *Faith-Based*
- *Serves the Economically Poor and Marginalized*
- *A Holistic Education*
- *Partners with the Family*
- *Extended Day and Year*
- *Commitment Beyond Graduation*
- *Effective Administrative Structure*
- *On-going Assessment and Inquiry*
- *Active Network Engagement*

Catholic school systems can coordinate curricula, assessments, and professional development not only across grades and schools but also across levels.

An example of a regional network, ACCESS Academies (Academies Creating Challenging Education for St. Louis Students), was founded in 2005. ACCESS Academies are certified members of the NativityMiguel Network and therefore utilize their practice standards. ACCESS Academies serve over 300 students in four middle schools that are “embedded” within existing Catholic parish schools.⁵⁵ ACCESS Academies manages the middle school grades of their hosting parish elementary schools. A small central staff oversees quality control, mission effectiveness and funding for this small network of schools.⁵⁶

ACCESS institutes an intensive curriculum and extensive afterschool programming to ensure that students will thrive in competitive college preparatory high schools in St. Louis.⁵⁷ As students complete high school, ACCESS Academies provide a personal Graduate Support Coordinator

to support students through the college application process. This “school within a school” approach has created a unique collaboration among a network of schools, local parish schools, and the Archdiocese of St. Louis Catholic School Office. The Academies and host schools mutually benefit from joint marketing and other opportunities to stabilize enrollment and improve fundraising capacity.⁵⁸

2.7 K-12 School Systems

A K-12 Catholic school system is a unified cluster of schools (several elementary schools and one high school) covering a specified geographic area. A Catholic school system aligns these schools into one corporate system with the goal of providing a seamless K-12 education for a defined region. Kenith Britt, President of Catholic Central Schools in Springfield Ohio, identified approximately 80 such systems across the country.⁵⁹ Although this model was first utilized in rural areas, it has been increasingly implemented in urban centers.

K-12 Catholic school systems typically utilize either an inter-parish or diocesan governance model. However, one private K-12 system was identified for this study. K-12 Catholic school systems are generally overseen by an executive director who reports to the superintendent or to a policy-making board. The executive director typically supervises the principals and manages centralized operations and finances.

Similar to a consortium model, K-12 Catholic school systems benefit from economies of scale (i.e., centralized operations and shared resources and personnel). In addition, Catholic school systems can coordinate curricula, assessments, and professional development not only across grades and schools but also across levels. Close coordination among participating elementary, middle and high schools provides increased access to resources and expertise that would not be available to institutions under a single-school model. The regional approach reduces competition and pools resources for the benefit of all schools.

One example is the Messmer Catholic Schools in Milwaukee. In 1998, Messmer High School, a private Catholic high school, assumed responsibility for Blessed Trinity Elementary School, which was facing financial difficulties. A year later Messmer Catholic Schools was formed to include Messmer High School and Messmer Preparatory Catholic School (formerly Blessed Trinity), both governed by a president/CEO and a board of directors. At the request of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Messmer Catholic Schools assumed management responsibility of St. Rose and St. Leo Catholic Urban Academies,

thus expanding the system of Messmer schools to serve nearly 1,700 students across three campuses.⁶⁰ The unified K-12 system benefits from curriculum alignment, shared costs, unified purchasing, centralized finances, and an integrated technological system.⁶¹

The Diocese of Scranton has adopted the K-12 model as its primary approach to governance. As a result of a strategic planning process in collaboration with Meitler Consultants in 2005, the Diocese of Scranton committed to a consolidation of its elementary and high schools.⁶² Under the new model, four regional systems were formed in 2007 to align early childhood centers, elementary schools and one high school within each region.⁶³ The K-12 regional system provides a built-in enrollment mechanism; early childhood centers provide students to the elementary schools, which in turn provide students to the regional high school. Each K-12 system is led by a system director who reports to the superintendent of schools.

Similarly, the Diocese of Paterson has developed three K-12 Catholic school systems, each serving one of the three counties in the diocese.⁶⁴ For instance, in 2007, the Catholic Academy of Sussex County, Inc. was formed to join three elementary schools, one early childhood center and the regional high school under one “virtual academy” administration.⁶⁵ A Board of Trustees oversees operations and reports to the Superintendent of Schools. The Board includes three pastors from local parishes who are appointed for three-year terms. An executive director is charged with managing the daily operations of the participating schools and is accountable to the board and the superintendent.⁶⁶ The academy arrangement has facilitated the development of a more rigorous curriculum that aligns the elementary schools with the regional high school, thus facilitating transitions across the K-12 grades.⁶⁷

2.8 University Partnership Schools

A university partnership school is co-owned by a parish, a diocese, and a local Catholic university. The partnership school is an independent juridic person to account for the unique canonical arrangement among the owners. The university partnership model leverages the resources inherent to multiple sectors of the church. The parish brings the pastoral benefits of a sacramental community. The diocese brings the expertise of the diocesan Catholic Schools Office, particularly in the area of religious education. Lastly, the university lends knowledge of academic best practices, management expertise, and development opportunities. This unique collaboration formalizes the commitment of each partner to contribute to the improvement and long-term sustainability of the school.⁶⁸

In 2006, St. Columbkille Parish, the Archdiocese of Boston, and Boston College combined their resources to create the first university partnership school in the country.⁶⁹ St. Columbkille Partnership School was founded by a Board of Members consisting of the then Pastor of St. Columbkille Richard J. Shmaruk, Archbishop Sean O'Malley, O.F.M., Cap., and President of Boston College William P. Leahy, S.J. The Board of Members appointed a Board of Trustees that includes equal representation for each founding member as well as the surrounding community.⁷⁰ The Board of Trustees hires the Head of School to direct and manage the daily operations of the school.

This collaborative model establishes a “laboratory school.” Best practices in educational leadership, student development, curriculum and instruction, finance and enrollment management, facilities management, and religious formation can be developed, tested, and disseminated.⁷¹ Some examples of institutional collaboration include placements for student teachers, undergraduate volunteer tutors, free tuition for teachers to earn graduate degrees at Boston College, a summer program for students held on the Boston College campus, and a thorough curriculum and facilities review by the university. In addition, the university has provided substantial financial resources to the partnership school. To date, St. Columbkille Partnership School represents the only school co-owned by a parish, diocese and university.

2.9 Faith-Inspired Charter Schools

Note: While faith-inspired charter schools represent a departure from traditional Catholic schools, we believe this model is worth examining for the following reasons: (1) Catholic schools in many countries are publicly funded; (2) there is a growing trend to develop charter schools that utilize some characteristics of faith-based schools; and (3) many dioceses have been recently explored the option to convert parish schools into charter schools.

Charter schools are independent, public schools run by a non-profit organization that has received a charter to implement an alternative approach to schooling. Faith-inspired charter schools are founded to implicitly replicate some characteristics of faith-based education such as a highly structured environment, high expectations for behavior, a values-based character education curriculum, and/or the use of uniforms. While these schools may be hosted at a parish or represent a cultural group (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Greek Orthodox, Catholic), they are not permitted to have explicit expression or endorsement of a specific religion during the school day.⁷² These schools may, however, offer optional religious education classes outside of school hours.

With stable public funding, mission-oriented charter schools provide a values-based education for low-income communities who have few other alternatives

The obvious advantage to this model is increased access to public funding. With stable public funding, mission-oriented charter schools provide a values-based education for low-income communities who have few other alternatives. The lack of explicit religious education, however, represents a fundamental departure from Catholic education.

A few examples were identified in which dioceses or Catholic educational leaders took an active role in developing a charter school based upon Catholic values. These faith-inspired charter schools are typically run by an executive director, who reports to a governing board of directors. These schools have no direct governance relationship to a parish, a Catholic school, or the diocese school office.

One example is the Cornerstone Charter Schools in Detroit. In 1991, prominent lay Catholics in Detroit founded the Cornerstone School, a private non-sectarian school with a “Christ-centered” mission to serve the poor.⁷³ This effort, though independent of the Archdiocese of Detroit, was inspired by the words of Archbishop Adam Maida to “make all things new again.”⁷⁴ In addition to a rigorous academic curriculum, Cornerstone offered biblical-based instruction, non-denominational prayer services, and character education based upon attributes of Christ. Due to the apparent success of the Cornerstone School, the City of Detroit requested that Cornerstone expand its model of educational excellence to the public sector. In 2009, Cornerstone opened two public charter schools (Lincoln-King and Washington-Parks Academies). Cornerstone Charter Schools offer rigorous curriculum standards and an integrated character education program, thus offering the “essential elements of the Cornerstone culture” but without explicit religious references.⁷⁵

In 2004, Arne Duncan, then CEO of Chicago Public Schools, invited Bro. Ed Siderewicz, FSC to replicate the San Miguel model as a charter school. This represented essentially an exploration of the potential of a collaborative partnership between Chicago Public Schools and the private San Miguel network. After substantial internal debate about mission and identity (among San Miguel Network administrators, the Lasallian Christian Brothers community and other contributors), the Lasallian Board of Directors approved the proposal.⁷⁶ In 2009, Bro. Ed Siderewicz, FSC co-founded the Catalyst Schools, two public charter K-8 schools serving a rigorous academic program to children from low-income areas of Chicago.⁷⁷ A values-based education is integrated throughout the school day, and religious education is taught after school from 2:30-4:30 in the San Miguel extended day program. The initial concerns about identity have faded. Br. Siderewicz states, “These are Lasallian schools. Our charism is the heart beat of these schools. Transparency, honesty, integrity – are core values, are Gospel values.”⁷⁸

A third example was found in Indianapolis. In February 2009, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis was invited by the city mayor's office to apply to open charter schools. Officials from the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and Mother Theodore Catholic Academy (MTCA) began an extensive process to explore the invitation, which included consultations with pastors, parents and principals.⁷⁹ The Archdiocese submitted an official proposal to the mayor's office to open two charter schools under a new non-profit organization called ADI Charter Schools, Inc. Approval was received in April 2010, paving the way for two former MTCA schools to open as charter schools in time for the 2010-2011 school year.⁸⁰ The city pays ADI approximately \$7,500 per student. ADI in turn contracts with MTCA to manage the daily operations of the charter schools. In compliance with state charter law, archdiocese employees cannot hold a majority of the ADI board. A formal lease allows ADI exclusive use of the school buildings from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., after which the buildings return to parish oversight.⁸¹ This arrangement represents the first time a Catholic diocese in the United States has committed to managing public charter schools. More important, it ensures that the Archdiocese of Indianapolis will continue educating children from low-income families in the urban center.

Funding Strategies

Catholic elementary schools, particularly in urban areas, require substantial financial support beyond tuition and fees. This section summarizes the various funding strategies identified by this study and offers specific examples of schools, dioceses or foundations that are implementing these strategies. Some strategies and/or examples noted here have a wider scope and extend beyond urban areas.

Funding Strategies

- 3.1 Tuition and Fees
- 3.2 Parish Subsidies
- 3.3 Diocesan Subsidies
- 3.4 Large-Scale Scholarship Funds
- 3.5 Development Programs
- 3.6 Leveraging Economies of Scale
- 3.7 Catholic University Outreach
- 3.8 School-Community Partnerships
- 3.9 Niche Programming
- 3.10 Endowments
- 3.11 Patrons Programs

3.12 Private Philanthropy

3.13 Federal Funding

3.14 State and Local Government Funding

3.1 Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees represent the most widely utilized source of income for Catholic elementary schools. The NCEA reported that on average tuition and fees represent about two thirds (64%) of the operating income for Catholic elementary schools.⁸² This, of course, can vary greatly, depending on the demographic situation of a school.

The tuition rate is typically set at a portion of per pupil cost that the market will bear. The average per pupil tuition rate for parish elementary schools in 2010-2011 was reportedly \$3,383, 62% of the reported per-pupil cost of \$5,436.⁸³ Schools offer below-cost tuition to be affordable to lower and middle-income families.

An increasing number of schools are setting tuition at the actual cost-per-pupil. Families are presented with the cost-based tuition rate and invited to apply for tuition assistance. The advantage of cost-based tuition rates is that some families can pay the full cost while other families receive needed financial aid. However, some principals express concern that the higher rate discourages middle to lower income families from even considering the school.

Tuition rates are commonly adjusted based on a family's ability to pay. Requests for tuition assistance, also known as financial aid or a scholarship, are typically submitted to the principal, pastor, or school board. This process can range from a simple conversation to a formal application. Schools are increasingly using third-party tuition management services or federal poverty guidelines to determine need on a more objective basis.

In addition to need-based assistance, schools commonly offer a variety of other discounts. The most common discount is offered to active Catholics who have an affiliation with a sponsoring or neighboring parish. The in-parish discount of \$500 at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School (Baton Rouge, LA) requires families to be registered, actively attending mass, and regularly contributing to the collection.⁸⁴ Additionally, this school offers further discounts for multiple siblings who attend the school. Early payment discounts are offered as well. St. Rita's School (Diocese of Brooklyn) provides a \$165 discount if the year's worth of tuition is paid in full by mid-August.⁸⁵

Table 3 shows the tuition schedule for in-parish Catholics, out-of-parish Catholics, and non-Catholics for St. Monica School in San Francisco.

Table 3. Example Tuition Schedule for 2011-2012⁸⁶

Number of Children	In-Parish Catholic Rate	Out-of-Parish Catholic Rate	Non-Catholic Rate
1	\$6,030	\$6,310	\$6,790
2	\$8,910	\$9,390	\$10,580
3	\$9,220	\$9,950	\$11,990

3.2 Parish Subsidies

When schools run an operating deficit, they commonly draw upon sponsoring parish(es) to subsidize the budget. For parish and inter-parish schools, sponsoring parish subsidies might directly pay for operating costs, capital improvements, utilities, physical plant maintenance, or scholarships. While some dioceses (e.g., Archdiocese of Los Angeles,⁸⁷ Diocese of Monterrey⁸⁸) do not engage in parish subsidies, a survey of 1,243 parishes in 2009 found that 82% of Catholic elementary schools received some parish subsidies. Almost one third of the schools received subsidies from multiple parishes.⁸⁹

Parish subsidies might come from the Sunday church collection, parish fundraiser, or specific funds designated for the school (e.g., restricted gifts, endowment). Some parishes offer the school a fixed yearly amount or a specified percentage of parish income. Other parishes adjust their contribution according to the financial needs of the school, which can fluctuate from year to year.

Parish contributions to their school are commonly recommended to be no more than 25-35% of the overall parish budget.⁹⁰ However, the financial needs of the school can often rise well above this range, thereby draining vital parish resources away from other ministries. In drastic cases, more than half of a parish's Sunday collection income can go to the school, which is unsustainable for both parish and school.

Stewardship programs have placed some parishes in a position to provide a tuition-free education to parishioners. The cost of educating the children of parishioners is covered by generous giving through Sunday collections. The most widely known example is the Diocese of Wichita. As a result of stewardship, the Diocese of Wichita is the only diocese in the United States where the children of active parishioners who participate in the stewardship program can attend Catholic school for free.⁹¹ For over 50 years, pastors and diocesan leaders invited parishioners to donate 8% of

their household income to their parish. Parishioners are so committed to supporting Catholic education that parish stewardship income dropped only 1% in 2009 during the economic crisis.⁹²

3.3 Diocesan Subsidies

To offset the burden of a parish school in a low income area, many dioceses utilize a central fund to support struggling schools. Diocesan funds are distributed directly to very poor schools or to schools that have unforeseen financial difficulties. These subsidies typically cover operating deficits, assist with capital improvements, or address emergency expenses.

Dioceses are increasingly requiring support for Catholic schools in the form of a tax on all parishes regardless of whether a parish has a school. The Archdiocese of Atlanta, for example, requires a 13.25% tax on parish income above \$300,000.⁹³ The Diocese of Bridgeport assesses all parishes at 8% of their offertory income. Margaret Dames, superintendent of Bridgeport, reported that this tax resulted in an additional \$100,000 for each Catholic elementary school in the diocese, not including the inner-city schools which are supported by the Annual Bishops Appeal.⁹⁴ The Archdiocese of Washington assesses parish income at 3% for parishes with a school, 5% for parishes that co-sponsor a regional school, and 9% for parishes that do not directly support a school.⁹⁵

3.4 Large-Scale Scholarship Funds

Many dioceses have centralized funds raised exclusively for scholarships or tuition assistance. These funds are managed by a non-profit charitable organization that can be part of a diocese or separately incorporated. These funds are typically raised through direct appeal fundraising and/or endowment income.

One example of a scholarship fund directed to children in urban Catholic schools is the Inner-City Scholarship Fund, a signature program of the Catholic Schools Foundation in Boston. Established in 1991, the Inner-City Scholarship Fund was modeled after the program in the Archdiocese of New York under the same name. Under the 20-year chairmanship of Peter Lynch, the Inner-City Scholarship Fund has raised upwards of \$100 million to provide over 60,000 scholarships for low-income children.⁹⁶ Over the last decade, the Fund has consistently raised between \$8 and \$10 million annually.⁹⁷

Another example of a diocesan scholarship fund is the Cardinal's Scholarship Program in the Archdiocese of New York. The Cardinal's

Scholarship Program collaborates with the Inner-City Scholarship Fund (New York), the Partnership for Inner-City Education and the Children’s Scholarship Fund. The Children’s Scholarship Fund subsequently matches \$1 for every \$2 raised by these organizations.⁹⁸ Since it was established in 2005, the Cardinal’s Scholarship Fund has awarded partial tuition scholarships to nearly 7,400 students including \$12.8 million in 2010.⁹⁹

An example of a non-sectarian scholarship fund is the BASIC (Bay Area Scholarships for Inner-City Children) Fund, which was founded in 1998. The BASIC Fund obtains four-year pledges from donors to ensure that children receive a scholarship through grade eight. On a yearly basis, the BASIC Fund raises and distributes over \$7 million in scholarships to an average of 5,000 children in approximately 300 schools.¹⁰⁰ Catholic schools are typically the preferred choice in the inner-city. The BASIC Fund also benefits from matching funds from the Children’s Scholarship Fund.¹⁰¹

Large-scale scholarship funds can also benefit from tax credit programs. States that have tax credit programs allow individuals and/or corporations to reduce their tax liability by contributing to scholarship organizations. Tax credits are discussed at greater length in the “State and Local Government Funding” section (3.14) of this report.

3.5 Development Programs

Historically, Catholic schools have raised supplemental income through fundraising activities. Traditional fundraising initiatives include selling chocolate bars, religious calendars, baked goods, raffle tickets, and so forth. Higher yield events such as silent auctions, golf outings, or “black-tie” banquets require more intensive planning. School administrators are learning that fundraising efforts are more effective when they are part of a strategic development plan.

While private Catholic high schools have been proactive in establishing professional quality development or advancement programs, elementary schools are gradually investing in this form of income. In addition to annual fundraising events, development programs involve strategic capital campaigns for special projects such as a new facility (e.g., gym, library, science lab), improved technology, or an endowment. Development programs also utilize scholarship drives to increase enrollment. Capital campaigns tend to be directed toward alumni, parishioners, and other affluent members of the community. Corporations, foundations, and significant donors are more likely to contribute to campaigns that have

Corporations, foundations and significant donors are more likely to contribute to campaigns that have targeted and measureable outcomes.

targeted and measureable outcomes. Some schools work with foundations and consulting firms to attain specialized training and/or guidance on how to maximize the effectiveness of capital campaigns.

Elementary schools have only recently begun to appeal to alumni in a strategic manner. Alumni outreach involves school newsletter updates (mailing and e-mail), reunions, invitations to special events, direct appeals for capital campaigns, and requests for planned giving (annual contribution or a specified amount upon the donor's death). Trained development officers can assist donors with maximizing the tax benefit of charitable giving.

A large outreach effort to Catholic elementary school alumni is the Catholic Alumni Partnership (CAP) run by Changing Our World, Inc. CAP was developed in collaboration with the Archdiocese of New York and first launched in November 2009. CAP offers a standardized diocesan-wide approach to help schools search archives to develop a list of graduates dating back to 1940.¹⁰² CAP obtains current addresses for these individuals, conducts wealth screenings, and facilitates a diocesan-wide marketing campaign. In two years, CAP was implemented in eight Northeastern dioceses, securing over 20,000 gifts for \$2.3 million on behalf of 300 elementary schools.¹⁰³ Large, multi-diocesan initiatives such as CAP may prove to have a substantial and lasting impact for schools.

An example of a private foundation assisting schools in this area is the Specialty Family Foundation in Los Angeles. In 2009, the Specialty Family Foundation launched a development and marketing program, called the Catholic Schools Consortium, to serve nine struggling inner-city Catholic elementary schools. The Specialty Family Foundation funds nine professional directors of marketing and development who are charged with substantially increasing enrollment fundraising for their respective schools.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the directors of marketing and development aim to improve financial management of participating schools.¹⁰⁵

3.6 Leveraging Economies of Scale

Increasing operational efficiencies through economies of scale is becoming more widely utilized to improve the financial well-being of urban elementary schools. Multi-school collaboration has given schools increased purchasing power, greater capacity to share resources and personnel, and the option of centralizing specialized operations. A collective approach to purchasing and business practices can yield significant cost-savings, increased efficiencies, increased resources, and more professional

operations.¹⁰⁶ Effective use of economies of scale is realized in governance models that structure collaboration across schools such as consortia, K-12 school systems, and network schools.

Russ Wilson, the Regional Director of Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy, a consortium in Boston, reports substantial savings on collective purchasing of textbooks and technology for its four campuses. Furthermore, centralizing operations of finances, tuition collection and payroll enables principals to be “more productive and efficient.”¹⁰⁷ By centralizing tuition collection, the consortium of four schools has been able to collect 98% of tuition, a substantially higher rate than what these schools collected as individual parish schools.¹⁰⁸

Some dioceses are centralizing business practices for schools. The Diocese of Bridgeport established diocesan-wide procedures and policies such as a standard salary scale for teachers and principals. Budgets follow standardized formats and are submitted for review to the diocesan Director of School Finance. Payroll, bill payment and other general funding processes are managed by a business manager.¹⁰⁹ A business manager is assigned to oversee finances for one of five school clusters across the diocese. The Diocese of Paterson also outsources business practices to diocesan business managers.¹¹⁰ The diocese negotiated contracts to outsource cleaning services and food services for all schools. Managing these business practices was “distracting for principals” says Superintendent John Erikson. He explains that this is “not a panacea but we are now losing a lot less money” (i.e., several hundred thousand dollars annually).¹¹¹

An example of a multi-diocesan collaborative is the Mid-Atlantic Catholic Schools Consortium (MACSC). MACSC includes the Archdioceses of Baltimore and Washington, and the Dioceses of Arlington, Richmond, Wheeling-Charleston, and Wilmington. It is managed by an executive director and governed by a board of directors, including six superintendents and people with business expertise. Collective purchasing power has allowed schools in these dioceses to negotiate lower costs. In fiscal year 2009, participating dioceses negotiated \$1.2 million in cost savings for utilities, as well as \$20,000 in rebates through collective purchasing from specified vendors.¹¹²

A collective approach to purchasing and business practices can yield significant cost-savings, increased efficiencies, increased resources, and more professional operations.

3.7 Catholic College and University Programs

Catholic colleges and universities have supported urban Catholic schools in many ways. True to their mission, Catholic colleges and universities have trained Catholic school teachers and administrators often offering tuition remission and/or significant discounts for Catholic school personnel. In the last 20 years, Catholic higher education's involvement in Catholic K-12 education has deepened and expanded beyond courses and traditional degree programs. These efforts have been fueled not only by the financial crisis in urban Catholic education, but also by education reform efforts in the nation's public schools. Colleges and universities have in response become more intentional in leveraging resources and expertise to have a measurable impact on schools.

One recent innovation in Catholic university outreach is the development of college graduate volunteer programs with a focus on teaching in Catholic schools. Participating teachers typically receive free tuition for a masters' degrees in education at the host Catholic college or university. These programs attract young, faith-filled, talented, and enthusiastic faculty members for Catholic schools. Furthermore, these teacher programs foster educational professionals who are committed to being leaders and advocates for Catholic education. With some assistance from the Alliance for Catholic Education, a network of these innovative teachers programs have formed the University Consortium for Catholic Education (see Table 4). Combined, these programs annually place over 400 teachers in Catholic schools across 53 dioceses.¹¹³

Table 4. University Consortium for Catholic Education

- Boston College: Urban Catholic Teacher Corps (UCTC)
- Christian Brothers University: Lasallian Association of New Catholic Educators (LANCE)
- Creighton University: Magis Catholic Teacher Corps
- Loyola Marymount University: Partners in Los Angeles Catholic Education (PLACE Corps)
- Loyola University Chicago Opportunities in Catholic Education (LU-CHOICE)
- Notre Dame of Maryland University: Operation TEACH (Teachers Enlisted to Advance Catholic Heritage)
- Providence College: Providence Alliance for Catholic Teachers (PACT)
- Saint Joseph's University: Alliance for Catholic Education (ACESJU)
- Saint Mary's University of Minnesota: Remick Fellowship
- Seton Hall University: Educational Partners in Catholic Schools (EPICS)
- University of Dayton: Lalanne Program
- University of Great Falls: LUMEN
- University of Notre Dame: Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE)
- University of Portland: Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE)
- University of St. Thomas: Gulf Region Academy for Catholic Educators (GRACE)
- Valparaiso University: Lutheran Education Alliance with Parochial Schools (LEAPS)

In light of the crisis in Catholic education, several Catholic universities have founded centers charged with the mission to address the needs of Catholic schools. At Boston College, the Roche Center for Catholic Education serves to develop and disseminate evidence-based best practices to revitalize Catholic education.¹¹⁴ The University of Notre Dame has expanded the Alliance for Catholic Education beyond the original teacher volunteer program to provide a wide range of Catholic school initiatives at the national level.¹¹⁵ The Loyola University Chicago Center for Catholic School Effectiveness provides tailored, on-site professional development coaching and consulting services to K-12 Catholic educators across the country, focusing on academic excellence

and instructional leadership.¹¹⁶ Loyola Marymount University founded a Center for Catholic Education to expand its Catholic education leadership development, teacher preparation, research, and outreach to support schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and other dioceses across the country.¹¹⁷ Such centers allow universities to integrate their efforts to support Catholic schools under one institutional umbrella. Table 5 lists examples of academic centers focused on supporting Catholic schools:

Table 5. Catholic University Centers Focused on Catholic Education

- Boston College: Roche Center for Catholic Education
- Catholic University of America: Center for the Advancement of Catholic Education
- Fordham University: Center for Catholic School Leadership and Faith-Based Education
- Loyola Marymount University: Center for Catholic Education
- Loyola University Chicago: Center for Catholic School Effectiveness
- Mount St. Mary's University: Center for Catholic School Excellence
- St. John's University: Institute for Catholic Schools
- University of San Francisco: Institute for Catholic Educational Leadership
- University of Dayton: Center for Catholic Education
- University of Notre Dame: Institute for Educational Initiatives
- University of St. Thomas: The Murray Institute for Catholic Education
- Xavier University: Center for Catholic Education

Catholic college and university programs appear to be providing Catholic schools with greater access to resources and expertise at substantially reduced costs.

3.8 School-Community Partnerships

Catholic schools are forming partnerships with community agencies and organizations to increase their access to a variety of services and resources for their students. Supplemental services are often available to schools at low or zero cost and can be delivered on-site at the school or nearby in the community. School-community partnerships can provide an array of services in urban centers. Services delivered by community providers

often come at no cost to the school because they are supported by grants, delivered by volunteers, or are reimbursed by students' health insurance.

One example of school-community partnerships is in the Archdiocese of Boston. Since 2008, Boston College has collaborated with the Catholic Schools Foundation to coordinate and expand access to student support services for elementary school children in 14 urban Catholic schools. The program, called City Connects in Catholic Schools, identifies the strengths and needs of every student in these schools and connects each to a set of tailored support services in the community.¹¹⁸ These school-based student support services include afterschool programs, enrichment opportunities, tutors, mentoring services, anti-bullying programs, safety awareness campaigns, as well as health, counseling and social services. In 2009-2010, School Site Coordinators formed partnerships with 164 community agencies, organizations and healthcare institutions that delivered over 4,000 prevention, early intervention, and intensive intervention services to 2,292 students in participating schools.¹¹⁹ With the support of the Mathile Family Foundation, the City Connects program is being implemented in Catholic elementary and secondary schools in Dayton, Ohio. In addition, the Better Way Foundation is supporting the development of an early childhood model of City Connects.

Some dioceses have established partnerships between Catholic Charities agencies and urban schools. For example, school-based counselors from Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis deliver individual and group counseling, as well as family and teacher consultations for six inner-city schools. The School-Based Counseling Program links children to community services that are often difficult for low-income populations to access. The counselors work with an average of 600 students and their families each year.¹²⁰ This program started over two decades ago with one school and grew to six schools in 2003.

Catholic hospitals are partnering with Catholic schools as well. Since 1998, the Diocese of Wichita Catholic Schools Office has partnered with Via Christi Health Systems, Newman University, and two other local colleges to address the health-related needs of poor parish schools. The School Nurse Program provides health screenings, specialized re-screenings, immunization audits, and professional consultation to school staff for two dozen Catholic schools.¹²¹ Student-nurses perform health and safety evaluations for the schools and design and deliver health education outreach to children and school staff.¹²²

A collaborative between schools and a Catholic behavioral health clinic was identified in New Orleans. Project Fleur-de-lis (PFDL) is a faith-centered,

School-community partnerships can provide an array of services in urban centers. Services delivered by community providers often come at no cost to the school.

comprehensive school-based mental health program that involves a partnership among Mercy Family Center, local health and human services agencies, and national experts. PFDL implements school intervention services to address symptoms of trauma and assess and delivering services to students who have mental health and psycho-educational needs beyond what can be typically addressed in the school setting.¹²³ With 60 participating schools (mostly Catholic elementary schools), PFDL directly or indirectly serves over 24,000 students annually.¹²⁴

3.9 Niche Programming

Some individual Catholic elementary schools have developed specialized programs to supplement the traditional academic program. Niche programs help schools to stand out among their peers by highlighting a unique strength. Investing in specialized programming has the potential to draw the attention of prospective students and parents who would not otherwise have chosen that school. In addition to enrollment benefits, specialized programming can provide an additional revenue source.

One niche area is dual-language programming. Escuela de Guadalupe, a NativityMiguel Network School in Denver, CO, has offered a K-5 dual language education since its founding in 1999. Instruction alternates between English and Spanish toward the goal of all students being proficient in speaking and writing in both languages by grade 5.¹²⁵ Despite more than half of the student population living at or below the poverty level, Escuela de Guadalupe is reporting academic outcomes that are comparable to the area's elite public schools.¹²⁶ In addition to instruction, the school engages parents through dual-language marketing materials, a website, and written communications sent home. Escuela de Guadalupe, the only dual-language Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Denver, has been a tremendous draw for the Spanish-speaking community in the Denver metropolitan area for over a decade.

A second niche area for Catholic schools is early childhood programming. Through a partnership with Boston College, St. Columbkille Partnership School in Brighton, MA revamped its early childhood program in 2007. Following the strategic initiative to improve the quality of the program for children as young as age three, the early childhood enrollment doubled within three years.¹²⁷ In addition to drawing more students at the early grades, more students are staying on into the primary grades. The school is turning around a trend in which many parents would transfer their

Niche programs help schools to stand out among their peers by highlighting a unique strength. Investing in specialized programming has the potential to draw the attention of prospective students and parents.

children to public schools by first grade - public schools do not offer early childhood programming – to take advantage of the free education.

St. Columbkille Partnership School also developed quality afterschool and summer programs, another potential niche area for Catholic schools. With 100 children enrolled in the afterschool program, St. Columbkille is able to reinforce its academic day program through an innovative activities-based curriculum. The summer program is held at Boston College and is open to children from the community. William Gartside, Head of School, reports that many new students have enrolled at the school based on their positive experience in the summer program. In addition to improved enrollment, the afterschool and summer programs yield over \$200,000 in additional annual revenue.¹²⁸

Dioceses and schools have also been able to obtain state funding for specialized programming (e.g., early childhood, special education). See Section 3.14, “State and Local Government Funding,” for more information.

3.10 Endowments

Some schools and dioceses have established endowment funds. The raised capital is invested while a percentage of the earned interest can be used toward pre-established goals. Endowment managers typically recommend spending no more than 5% of the amount of the principal investment in interest earnings. The income from endowments is used to address operating deficits, scholarships, emergency support, or a strategic capital improvement. This strategy ensures availability of a fixed income into the future.

Endowments have widely been utilized by private Catholic high schools but only recently by individual elementary schools. Endowment funds are becoming a more common component in schools’ strategic planning processes. In the NCEA’s study of Catholic elementary schools, half (49.6%) of the schools reported having an endowment fund. Of those with an endowment, 37.4% report a principal investment of under \$100,000; 35.6% between \$100,000 and \$400,000; and 27.1% over \$400,000.¹²⁹

Large-scale endowment initiatives that focus on a number of schools are growing in popularity. Some large endowments are often managed by a separate non-profit organization on behalf of the diocese. A professional management organization provides transparency through timely reporting and auditing of investment activities. This study identified several endowment initiatives across the country.

Large-scale endowment initiatives that focus on a number of schools are growing in popularity.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles continues to benefit from one of the largest and longest running endowment programs for Catholic schools in the country. Since 1987, the Catholic Education Foundation of Los Angeles has raised over \$100 million for an endowment to support scholarships.¹³⁰ The Catholic Education Foundation raises about \$3 million per year and distributes about \$8 million in scholarships for 7,000 students.¹³¹

In the Archdiocese of Seattle, the Fulcrum Foundation manages the combined endowments of 55 schools, which total \$32.5 million.¹³² Fulcrum has raised and invested an additional \$37.4 million for the fund. Collective endowment management allows individual schools to retain the services of a professional fund manager at a reduced cost.

The Diocese of Memphis created the Catholic Memphis Urban Schools Trust (CMUST) to raise and manage funding for Catholic elementary schools in the inner-city and other impoverished areas. As a separate non-profit organization, CMUST investors are assured of independent oversight and that their contributions remain separate from the diocese. CMUST has raised a \$30 million endowment to support the eight Jubilee schools.¹³³ The endowment income is used primarily for scholarships and other support for families such as supplies and uniforms.¹³⁴

The Diocese of Brooklyn recently founded the Futures in Education Endowment Fund (FIEEF) with the goal of raising a \$100 million endowment. After two years, FIEEF has raised over \$6 million for the fund.¹³⁵ When the endowment is more viable, the organization will distribute investment earnings in the following manner: scholarship/tuition assistance (80%); programmatic support (15%); and capital repairs/deferred maintenance (5%).¹³⁶ Through FIEEF, the Diocese of Brooklyn aims to sustain urban Catholic education in perpetuity in both Brooklyn and Queens.

3.11 Patron Programs

Several dioceses in large urban areas have implemented “adopt-a-school” programs that facilitate partnerships between schools and the business community. Corporate sponsorship programs ask for a multi-year (three to five years) commitment by a wealthy individual or corporate patron. A commitment involves a combination of an annual financial gift and some form of consultation service to the administration. This often takes the form of sitting as a member of the school’s board. These programs are managed by the diocese or an associated foundation with the goal to improve financial practices in the school, upgrade technology, assist in

strategic planning, improve marketing, increase fundraising capacity, and/or build relationships with the community. These programs offer opportunities for a donor, not only to make a financial contribution, but also to help improve the sustainability of the school.

In the Archdiocese of New York, the Patrons Program assists 30 urban Catholic elementary schools. Patrons contribute at least \$150,000 each year for three years to support program enhancement, scholarships, and capital improvements. In addition, patrons are asked to partner with the school administration to improve the financial sustainability of the school and the quality of its programming. The Patrons Program lists among its outcomes improved tuition collection, enhanced arts and music programs, upgraded libraries, well-designed playgrounds, extended day programs, and additional specialty teachers.¹³⁷ In 2009-2010, the program raised \$9.3 million for over 12,000 students.¹³⁸ In late 2010, the Patrons Program merged with the Endowment for Inner-City Education and was retitled the Partnership for Inner-City Education.

The Big Shoulders Fund also formed a patrons program to match donors to individual inner-city schools in the Archdiocese of Chicago. Since 2000, the Big Shoulders Patrons Program has asked donors to support a school for three years through a \$100,000 annual investment and strategic partnership to improve the viability and financial sustainability of the school. Over 10 years, patrons have committed more than \$18.5 million to 63 participating schools.¹³⁹ In addition, patrons have helped to recruit school board members, hire marketing directors, guide strategic planning, create alumni connections, enhance technology, improve professional development and establish tuition assistance programs.

3.12 Private Grantmaking

Catholic elementary schools have traditionally benefited from the generosity of wealthy donors and foundations. Individual Catholic schools and dioceses have received substantial gifts that range in size and purpose. Large donor gifts may be unrestricted or earmarked for a specific purpose such as a new facility, improved programming, tuition assistance, or technology improvements.

Many Catholic family foundations have directed a significant portion of their annual givings to urban Catholic schools. The John and Dorothy Shea Foundation has been a substantial benefactor to Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, contributing over \$8 million to Catholic schools in 2009 alone.¹⁴⁰ The Mathile Family Foundation gives

Several dioceses in large urban areas have implemented “adopt-a-school” programs that facilitate partnerships between schools and the business community.

approximately \$5 million annually to support Catholic education in the Dayton area.¹⁴¹ In 2008, the Yawkey Foundation gave a \$15 million grant to the Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy, the largest donation to date made directly to Boston Catholic schools.¹⁴² The Roche Family gave \$20 million to Boston College to support the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education. Though not a direct donation to schools, this grant will enable Boston College to continue outreach to Catholic schools in the region and to develop research-based best practices for Catholic schools on the national level.¹⁴³ The Joan and John Vatterott Family Foundation helped to found and continues to support the ACCESS Academies in St. Louis with almost \$1 million in annual contributions.¹⁴⁴

An example of a donor outside of the Catholic community is Robert Wilson, who gave \$22.5 million in 2007 to the Archdiocese of New York's Cardinal Scholarship program. In 2010, Robert Wilson envisioned the development of effective alumni networks. His \$8.3 million gift to the Archdiocese of New York established the Catholic Alumni Partnership, a system-wide development program for Catholic elementary schools.¹⁵⁵

3.13 Federal Funding

Catholic schools are eligible by law to access federal entitlement dollars to provide services to students, teachers and parents. Local public school districts receive federal funding based upon the child population in their district regardless of whether those children attend a public or private school. The districts are required to provide services and/or to fund services for eligible children. The eligibility criteria often include low-income status, English language learners or an identified disability.

According to estimates, hundreds of millions of federal entitlement dollars go unclaimed by Catholic schools annually.¹⁴⁶ Notre Dame's ACE Consulting group points out that "despite the clear intent of Congress for private school students and teachers to participate equitably ... equitable participation has not been experienced by most Catholic schools."¹⁴⁷ The Notre Dame Task Force suggests that this phenomenon results from a combination of "resistance by local public educational authorities," the endless challenges in navigating the bureaucratic systems, or simply a lack of awareness of entitlement to these funds.¹⁴⁸

The key federal legislation that ensures equitable funding is the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.¹⁴⁹ Eligibility requirement for funding from this legislation is particular to the specific Title in the law. For instance, Title IA funding is based upon the number of children that are below a defined

income level. Title funding is restricted to a variety of specified uses, several of which are listed in Table 6.

Table 6. Examples of Services Funded by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

- Supplemental academic services for economically disadvantaged children (Title IA)
- Improving reading programs for early elementary children (Title IB)
- Training and recruiting teachers and principals (Title IIA)
- Enhancing math and science programs through innovative partnerships (Title IIB)
- Enhanced learning through improved technology (Title IID)
- English language acquisition for immigrant children (Title IIIA)
- Drug abuse prevention programming (Title IV)

NCEA's Sr. Dale McDonald, PBVM reports that at least 3,573 schools received Title I funding for services in 2010-2011.¹⁵⁰ The actual figure may be an underestimate; some dioceses with large numbers of eligible children have not reported these data. The NCEA reported that 87.2% of the 1,243 elementary schools surveyed indicated receipt of Title II services for faculty professional development.¹⁵¹ The funding can be substantial, particularly for large urban areas. For example, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia reports receiving \$15.8 million in Title funding in 2009.¹⁵² Several dioceses used Title funding to partially pay for student support services. The Diocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis uses Title I funding to partially reimburse counselors from Catholic Charities who serve children in six inner-city schools.¹⁵³ Title IV funding is used to pay for Catholic Charities counseling services in five inner-city Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Camden¹⁵⁴ and in six schools in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis.¹⁵⁵

A second area of legislation administered by the United States Department of Education is the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, which assures services to children with a diagnosed learning disability who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in place.¹⁵⁶ According to the Council for American Private Education, the most recent version of this law (i.e., IDEA 2004) includes improved language to assist private school students to access these services, mainly underscoring the legal obligation of public districts to provide services to private school students either directly or through a third party agent.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, the updated

law requires that the U.S. Department of Education arrange for services to private school children if a state or district does not provide for the equitable participation of those children.¹⁵⁸

This study did not identify substantial utilization of IDEA funding by any diocese. One individual school that was identified is St. Catherine of Siena School in Norwood, MA. St. Catherine's has invested in a learning center that is staffed by three teachers certified in Special Education, as well as classroom aides. These special educators serve about 37 students who have a diagnosed learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia, autism, math disabilities, auditory processing) and Individual Education Plans. A district's allocation of IDEA funding can be used only to provide services for children who reside in that district. Only half of St. Catherine's students reside in Norwood; the remainder comes from a variety of other school districts. The school has advocated strongly each of the past ten years to access funding from this district. The school obtained \$19,216 for services delivered in the 2009-2010 academic year - the largest annual allocation to date.¹⁵⁹

The Department of Agriculture also ensures funding to non-public schools through the National School Lunch Program Federal Nutrition Program.¹⁶⁰ The National School Lunch Program is administered by each state's education department. Schools must supply hot lunches on site to benefit from this funding. Free lunch funding is available for children from families living at or below 130% of the poverty level (as defined by the federal government), whereas children living between 130% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for a reduced-price meal.¹⁶¹ Schools are required to have parents complete federal paper forms to document their eligibility for the National School Lunch Program. McDonald reports that at least 3,293 Catholic schools received this service in 2010-2011, though the actual figure is likely higher.¹⁶²

A program administered by the Federal Communications Commission known as E-Rate has provided discounted technology and telecommunications services since 1998. E-Rate eligibility for a school is determined by the percentage of students in the school qualifying for the National School Lunch Program. The E-Rate program provides discounts of 20% to 90% for specific telecommunications costs for schools in urban and rural areas.¹⁶³ These discounts can be used toward phone services, internet services, and within-school connections. McDonald confirmed that at least 2,661 Catholic schools received this entitlement in 2010-2011, though not every diocese reported these data.¹⁶⁴ The NCEA reported that in 2009 participating schools saved an average of 42.9% of their telecommunications costs through the E-Rate program.¹⁶⁵

3.14 State and Local Government Funding

Catholic schools benefit from a variety of state and local government programs. These programs and funding streams vary by state. The most significant source of state funding is the so-called “school choice” programs. Currently, twenty publicly-funded school choice programs operate in 12 states and the District of Columbia. This includes both school voucher programs and scholarship tax credit programs. Table 7 lists the states that have school choice funding programs.

Table 7. States with School Choice Funding Programs¹⁶⁶

Voucher Programs	Tax Credit Programs
Florida	Arizona
Georgia	Florida
Louisiana	Georgia
Ohio	Indiana
Oklahoma	Iowa
Utah	Pennsylvania
Washington, DC	Rhode Island
Wisconsin	

School choice voucher programs are the largest of state-funded programs assisting children with tuition in Catholic schools. In 2010-2011, these programs distributed an estimated \$425 million in scholarship vouchers.¹⁶⁷ Voucher programs are typically designated for children from low-income families, children who attend a failing public school, or children with special education needs. Currently, seven states and the District of Columbia provide over 67,000 eligible students with an average of \$6,315 in scholarship funding to attend private schools.¹⁶⁸ Over 20,000 of these students participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, the longest-running public voucher program in the nation.¹⁶⁹

To highlight an example of the political instability of these programs, the Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) in Washington, DC was first instated in 2004, subsequently cut by the Obama administration in 2008, and reauthorized and expanded in the federal budget for fiscal year 2012.¹⁷⁰ The OSP currently provides 1,000 low income children with \$8,000 to attend schools of their choice.

The other school choice option is tax credits or exemptions currently utilized in seven states (see Table 7). Tax credit programs allow individuals and corporations to make pre-tax donations to non-profit scholarship granting organizations. Tax credit programs generated over \$289 million in

scholarship donations for 123,544 children for the 2010-2011 school year.¹⁷¹ Most of these programs have an income eligibility requirement in order for a family to receive a scholarship.

Other state programs provide funding for social services in Catholic schools. Catholic schools in several states utilize state funding earmarked for early childhood programs. For many years, the Diocese of Bridgeport has obtained approximately \$350,000 annually in preschool State Readiness Funds. A hundred preschoolers at two schools each receive \$3,500 toward tuition costs.¹⁷² In addition, the Archdiocese of St. Louis receives just over \$300,000 from the Department of Social Services-Family Support Division for two early childhood centers that integrate children with developmental disabilities into mainstream programs.¹⁷³ Many schools also benefit from free or subsidized transportation services for students paid for by local and/or state governments. In 2011, McDonald identified 2,329 schools that received transportation services for 299,978 students; the actual number is likely higher because not all dioceses provided these data.¹⁷⁴

Some states also provide funding for textbooks and other instructional materials. One such program is the Pennsylvania Department of Education ACT 90/195, which provides funding for instructional materials and equipment for Pennsylvania residents attending nonpublic and private schools.¹⁷⁵ In 2010, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia received \$9.3 million in textbook aid through this state program.

An example of an urban school receiving substantial state funding is Catholic Central School, a PreK-12 school system with three campuses across Springfield, OH. Over a third (37%) of Catholic Central's revenue for 2010-2011 was state funding.¹⁷⁶ This includes \$1 million in tuition vouchers from the Ohio Education Choice Program. The state also reimburses for specific administrative costs, for which Catholic Central received \$250,000. Lastly, Catholic Central School benefits from indirect auxiliary services (e.g., text books) worth \$500,000.

Innovative Trends in Governance and Finance

The variety of governance models and funding strategies examined in this report demonstrate innovation in urban Catholic education. While this study did not evaluate the effectiveness of each example, the available evidence does suggest significant potential for reducing costs, increasing revenue, and improving the overall sustainability for urban Catholic elementary schools. Overall, this set of governance models and funding strategies point to promising options for a better future for Catholic elementary schools. Without endorsing one particular model or strategy, common themes of innovation can be extracted to guide the exploration, development, and implementation of practices that will improve the sustainability of urban Catholic schools. The following section presents the trends illustrated by the models and strategies identified in this study.

Innovative Trends on Governance and Finance

- 4.1 Renewing the Commitment to Serve the Poor
- 4.2 Strengthening the Capacity of the Catholic Schools Office
- 4.3 Garnering Wide Ecclesial Support for Catholic Schools
- 4.4 Centralizing Operations
- 4.5 Collaborating and Networking across Schools
- 4.6 Coordinating Collective Procurement
- 4.7 Partnering with Catholic Higher Education
- 4.8 Deepening Relationships with the Philanthropic Community
- 4.9 Strategic Planning and Data-Informed Practices
- 4.10 Professionalizing Business Practices
- 4.11 Diversifying Funding Sources
- 4.12 Utilizing Community Services
- 4.13 Obtaining Government Funding

4.1 Renewing the Commitment to Serve the Poor

Catholic education in urban centers is a key component of the church's mission to serve the poor. The very existence of Catholic elementary schools is most threatened in urban centers across the country. The adage, "We educate not because *they* are Catholic but because *we* are Catholic," has been the driving force behind many initiatives to support urban Catholic schools. The growing concern of church leadership, lay foundations and other educational stakeholders suggests the need for

unanimity in renewing the church's commitment to preserve its service to the poor through educational opportunities. No financial strategy is going to work without "the will" to sustain urban Catholic schools.

4.2 Strengthening the Capacity of the Catholic Schools Office

Many bishops are clarifying the authority of the diocesan schools' offices. This study cited examples of dioceses in which the bishop has appointed the superintendent as canonical administrator over schools with the authority to hire, supervise, and train principals. A robust central office staff can assist all schools with an enhanced capacity for marketing, development, curriculum enhancement, coordinated professional development, implementation of quality business practices, and procurement of government funds. In addition, when principals report directly to the superintendent, pastors enjoy a clearer pastoral role as sacramental, liturgical, and religious education leaders for the schools.

4.3 Garnering Wider Ecclesial Support for Catholic Schools

The Bishops 2005 statement *Renewing Our Commitment* strongly noted that sustaining Catholic education in the future requires the support of the entire church community. More bishops are encouraging all parishes to provide financial support to Catholic schools, even those that do not sponsor a school.

4.4 Centralizing Operations

Dioceses are learning that individual school management of finances and related operations is inefficient. Centralizing payroll, tuition management, budgeting, purchasing, development, professional development planning and other administrative duties across a number of schools or an entire diocese seems to yield a number of benefits. School administrators report feeling freer to focus on educational leadership, including observing teachers in the classroom, aligning curricula, and so forth. More schools can benefit from improved management practices when a full-time person is hired for a number of schools rather than each school hiring a part-time person or utilizing volunteers.

4.5 Collaborating and Networking across Schools

Catholic schools can no longer work in isolation and/or in competition with one another. Individual Catholic schools, with the exception of elite schools, are typically under-resourced. Dozens of examples across

the country demonstrate how collaboration and shared practices can be mutually beneficial to elementary schools. In addition, collaboration with high schools and universities yields access to professional development opportunities, best practices, and other resources.

4.6 Coordinating Collective Procurement

One salient example of the cost-saving potential of collaboration is the leveraging of economies of scale. Schools and dioceses are benefiting from tremendous savings by collectively purchasing supplies and textbooks, negotiating lower utilities contracts, and securing reduced rates for services such as building repairs, janitorial cleaning services, and snow removal. A more systematic effort to coordinate procurement across parish, diocesan, and provincial lines could yield hundreds of millions of dollars in savings.¹⁷⁷

4.7 Partnering with Catholic Higher Education

Catholic colleges and universities have for decades committed resources and expertise to assist Catholic schools (e.g., tuition remission for graduate courses). In the last decade, a number of Catholic colleges and universities have taken more strategic initiative by developing degree-granting programs, research centers, and onsite professional development tailored specifically to the needs of Catholic schools. Relying on their expertise in research and best practices, institutions of Catholic higher education are well positioned to increase their collaboration with Catholic schools to assist in designing innovative strategies to help in sustaining Catholic education.

4.8 Deepening Relationships with the Philanthropic Community

Private Catholic family foundations and individual donors have supported individual Catholic schools and diocesan initiatives for many decades. In addition to financial support, foundations and donors bring particular expertise that can strengthen and thus help to sustain schools. Many in the philanthropic community are seeking to use their expertise to help shape the governance structures, business practices, and programming of individual schools and clusters of schools.

4.9 Strategic Planning and Data-Informed Practices

A common theme among the models in governance and finance is the use of strategic planning and data-informed practices. Individual schools, clusters of schools, dioceses, and foundations are increasingly using data to track their efforts. The field of education is beginning to adopt practices that the business community has utilized for decades. Funders require schools to provide evidence for constructive use of their investments. In response, schools are learning to demonstrate more strategic use of resources and to track their viability over time. Dioceses are utilizing more adaptive models of planning that allow them to recognize shifts in their operating environments and to adjust accordingly and timely. It is important to note that governance and finance are just two of the major domains of schooling (see Table 8).

Table 8. Domains of Schooling in Catholic Education

Governance	Leadership
Finance	Facilities
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Professional Development
Religious Faith Formation	Marketing and Enrollment Management
Student Support	

Various diocesan and school-level initiatives have addressed most of these domains, albeit not always systemically or strategically.

4.10 Professionalizing Business Practices

This study identified many examples of the implementation of more professional financial management for schools. Many dioceses are utilizing a standard budget reporting system. Some dioceses have taken on the management of school finances. Funders are expecting greater transparency in school finances. Overall, the trend is toward more professional business practices. Standardized practices and efficient oversight can more easily identify cost-saving measures, identify accounting errors, and improve the overall financial well-being of institutions.

4.11 Diversifying Funding Sources

Catholic urban elementary schools are not sustainable on tuition and parish subsidies alone. It appears that urban Catholic schools will need substantial external financial support on an ongoing basis. This report highlights dozens of schools and dioceses that are utilizing a wide

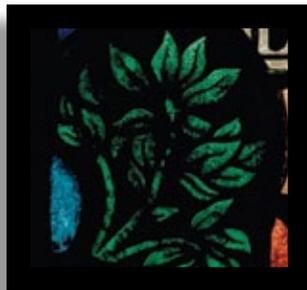
repertoire of funding sources beyond the traditional tuition, parish subsidies, and fundraising. Improved sustainability of schools requires a strategic approach to increase income at many levels. Elementary schools are implementing professional quality development programs, applying for competitive grants, engaging funders more effectively, and utilizing local, state and federal entitlement dollars.

4.12 Utilizing Community Services

Catholic schools have been traditionally viewed as insular by the non-Catholic community. Catholic elementary schools are more frequently reaching out to the wider community for a variety of services and resources. Such willingness to engage the community also seems to provide opportunities for marketing and more investment in the schools by businesses, non-profits, and civic services. This study identified a few examples of Catholic Charities agencies and Catholic hospitals that provide outreach to Catholic schools.

4.13 Obtaining Public Funding

Schools substantially under-utilize public funding. Federal funding and discounted services are available through the U.S. Department of Education, Department of Agriculture and the Federal Communications Commission. Schools and dioceses are increasingly accessing state or local government funding for textbooks, seed grants, social services, and other prevention services. Hundreds of millions of dollars of government funds are sent annually to local public school districts based upon the needs of the child population in a community, regardless of public or private school attendance. Some dioceses are becoming more adept at negotiating with local public school districts to access these monies. This large source of annual and long-term income remains largely untapped. Continued advocacy to increase the availability of vouchers, tax credits, and other sources of state and local government funding will surely increase the fiscal viability of urban Catholic schools.



Recommendations for Future Work

The rapid rate of school closures and enrollment declines suggest that many, if not most, Catholic schools are a risky investment. The heroic efforts and faithful intentions of committed teachers, administrators, pastors, donors and other stakeholders may be futile if we continue with the traditional approaches to governance and finance. That being said, we are witnessing many urban schools and dioceses across the country respond to this crisis by developing courageous and dynamic approaches to ameliorate their financial challenges.

This report highlights new models, cites examples, and suggests common themes of innovation that may be useful to dioceses and schools in their strategic planning. In short, traditional approaches are giving way to more strategic, data-tested practices that can increase efficiency, improve cost effectiveness, and enhance quality. Collective efforts to govern and finance urban Catholic elementary schools appear to lead to more sustainability than the traditional parish school model. Based upon this survey and our analysis of the trends of innovation across the country, we offer twelve recommendations that we feel are necessary to improve the sustainability of urban Catholic elementary schools.

5.1 *Make the case for Catholic education by articulating the value and worth of Catholic schools in general and urban Catholic schools in particular.*

It is critical that national ecclesial and Catholic education leadership be voices for the value and worth of Catholic schools. Catholic elementary schools will likely produce the vocations, lay leaders, and pastoral workers for the church of the future. More broadly, Catholic schools provide a values-based education that emphasizes service to the church and local community. From an economic perspective, Catholic schools offer billions of dollars of annual cost savings for local public districts across the country. In the urban areas, Catholic schools provide a quality and safe education to improve the life chances for children living in poverty. Our church and our civic society will be poorer if we let Catholic schools die out in the urban areas. A well-articulated and emphatic case for Catholic schools by bishops and Catholic educational leadership is essential for engaging the support of civic, business, and philanthropic leaders in the community.

5.2 *Recognize that the traditional parish elementary school model in urban settings is no longer viable for reasons of both governance and finance.*

The available evidence suggests that most urban Catholic schools will not survive utilizing the traditional parish school model. A systemic approach will be essential for effective governance and enhanced sustainable financial practices. It will allow schools to be guided by a unified educational vision and to commit to common standards of excellence. Reporting to system-wide educational leaders will lead to enhanced professional development and state-of-the-art curricula and instructional strategies. A systemic approach also will assist in obtaining the necessary subsidies from a variety of sources and will take advantage of economies of scale.

In some places, a systemic approach will result in a reduction of the number of Catholic schools. The courageous efforts of stakeholders in Catholic education will likely not be enough to completely stabilize and sustain all existing Catholic urban elementary schools. Dioceses have the responsibility to identify both the optimal number of schools and cost-effective models that can be supported in a fiscally sustainable fashion while also ensuring educational quality.

5.3 *Recognize that governance and finance may vary in adapting to the different settings in which Catholic elementary schools are located.*

Effective governance and sustainable finance will require adapting to the context in which the mission of Catholic schools is implemented. In 1884, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore mandated Catholic schools in every parish to address the needs of Catholics at a particular time in history. Public schools in the 19th century were perceived as having a Protestant bias and an anti-Catholic sentiment. The Catholic population was mostly poor and immigrant, and in need of safe schools in which to educate their children and by which to hand on the faith. The 21st century presents a different context. Catholic schools now

educate students along the full range of the socio-economic continuum. They serve students from middle to upper class families in suburban areas, working-class families in small cities and towns, and poor families in large cities and rural areas.

These differing settings present unique challenges and opportunities that impact the choice of governance model and funding strategies. Urban settings generally require more scholarship assistance and the support of many parishes across a region or an entire diocese. While the needs in urban areas are the most immediate and have led to the largest number of innovative governance and finance strategies, there are substantial but unique challenges in working-class, suburban, and rural areas. Catholic schools in working-class contexts are experiencing financial struggles and some are beginning to collaborate with each other on new governance and finance strategies. The Catholic education community needs to be intentional in adapting governance and financial solutions that are suited to these different settings.

5.4 *Evaluate the impact of existing practices in governance and finance on the sustainability of urban Catholic schools.*

This study described a range of governance models and funding strategies that are intended to lead to greater sustainability for urban Catholic elementary schools. These models were for the most part developed at the local level, i.e., parish, regional or diocesan. While development and implementation of these multiple models occurred out of critical necessity, a reactive stance is not sufficient in moving forward. A systemic study of the various governance approaches would not only help to distinguish among the issues of ownership, management, and administration, but also would provide critical data on the relative effectiveness of the various governance models. The measurable impact of these varied funding approaches could be critically examined using the sophisticated financial modeling employed by the business community. Continued replication of these models without a systematic examination of their effect is simply too risky. These impact studies will be costly and will require substantial expertise. Philanthropists and universities might combine their strengths to engage this needed task.

5.5 *Continue to explore innovative approaches to governance and finance at the local level.*

The Catholic educational community must continue to “think outside the box.” While the effort to evaluate these practices should occur at a national level, innovation should continue to develop at the local level. This report highlighted various innovative practices, including networking across schools, collaborating within and among dioceses, systematizing appropriate business practices, engaging the philanthropic community, and procuring public funding. Others will emerge. Even the controversial charter school, with Catholic education occurring in an afterschool program, deserves serious consideration. No options should automatically be ruled out. The conversation to ensure the future of urban Catholic schools cannot put aside any alternative approaches until appropriate, sustainable models have been identified and proven effective.

5.6 *Renew the focus on excellence in the core areas of schooling: curriculum and instruction, educational leadership, and “whole child” student support.*

Unfortunately, in recent years in many schools, declining resources for professional development, teacher and administrator salaries, new technologies, and evidence-based curriculum programs and materials have diminished the capacity of the schools to maintain quality in all domains of schooling. Effective governance and finance models assume a quality product without which sustainability is not possible, or even desirable. A quality education is thus primary for the survival and growth of Catholic schools. Schools that have been able to focus on quality are in a better position to develop innovative and creative practices.

With a renewed focus on quality, Catholic schools in all settings can and should be able to reclaim their reputation as institutions of excellence. Developing excellent practices in the three core areas of schooling (i.e., curriculum and instruction, educational leadership and student support) has the potential to contribute

to educational reform efforts beyond the world of Catholic education. Unfettered by state testing requirements and teachers unions, Catholic schools are free to innovate in ways that public schools are not. Catholic schools can develop innovative academic strategies and niche programming in such areas as early childhood, character development, working with children who have special learning needs, and addressing the needs of the whole child.

5.7 *Provide empirical evidence for claims of academic excellence at the local level.*

Student academic achievement is the most critical indicator of a successful school. Most Catholic schools demonstrate the quality of their academics by national standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college attendance. While these outcomes are impressive indicators of success, they are not easily attained in the local educational setting, especially for schools serving low-income populations. The public is no longer swayed by claims of “excellence.” Parents, funders, and policy-makers want to see the evidence supporting quality. Catholic schools need to be transparent about their outcomes even if they are not favorable. Parents have a right to see not only their child’s individual test data but also the average scores for the school in comparison to Catholic schools within the diocese and across the country.

It is not often noted that test score comparisons are valid only when made between schools serving similar socio-economic populations. Catholic schools in urban areas would be expected to have lower scores than those in more advantaged suburban areas simply as a result of the enormous disadvantages associated with poverty. Lumping schools across all socio-economic levels for purposes of comparison often hides more than it shows because socio-economic status is the greatest single contributor to performance differentials across schools.

Similar transparency should guide comparisons between urban Catholic and public schools. In a national climate in which test scores are the measure of academic quality, these comparisons must be made very carefully. Catholic schools should present

their test scores in a way that acknowledges the selectivity of the population that Catholic schools serve. On occasion, statistical claims that “Catholic schools do better” ignore the impact of selection factors, i.e., the student populations in public and non-public schools are clearly different if for no other reason than that parents make a choice to send their children to Catholic schools. Simple comparisons of Catholic versus public school test outcomes, without an acknowledgement of population differences, are simply not valid.

5.8 *Capitalize on the unique strengths of Catholic schools – areas not addressed in public educational reform efforts.*

While academic achievement is the core expectation in any school, it is by no means the only educational outcome that must be considered. Catholic identity and faith formation are powerful assets that set Catholic schools apart from public schools. Catholic schools explicitly teach values and provide moral formation that appeals to parents, Catholic and non-Catholic alike. In general, Catholic education assumes that its graduates demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that reflect a Catholic Christian worldview. Catholic schools can and should measure and market these areas that speak to their strengths.

The development of the “whole child” is supported in numerous ways by Catholic schools. In addition to religious faith formation, urban Catholic schools often address the non-academic needs of students through health services, nutrition, and youth development programming. These schools provide environments that are perceived as being safe and nurturing. Effective learning environments and a positive school climate are linked to strong student engagement in learning and to positive relationships with classmates and teachers. Utilizing available measures of student thriving, character development and civic engagement, urban Catholic schools are in an excellent position to demonstrate the effect of the “whole child” approach to education, a key asset of a Catholic education.

5.9 *Assess the performance of educational leaders at all levels: principals, boards, regional supervisors and superintendents.*

Effective models of governance require continual performance evaluations of all educational leaders including principals, school boards (both local and diocesan), regional supervisors, and superintendents. Critical assessments can lead to quality improvements in school administration. Principals have not always been adequately evaluated. The typical parish school has not been well-positioned to engage in performance evaluation of a principal, precisely because pastors are not professionally trained educators. As a result, principals are often evaluated on enrollment and budget management, rather than on the quality of the school. An appropriate evaluation process for principals must occur in the context of a comprehensive evaluation at all educational levels in the diocese. Any successful strategy plan should include state-of-the-art performance evaluation as one of its core strategies for improving quality practice at all levels.

5.10 *Establish collaborative partnerships with church ministries and non-profit organizations in the community.*

Developing, implementing, and evaluating effective models of governance and finance for urban Catholic schools requires a commitment by the entire church community, i.e., bishops, pastors, and lay Catholics. Furthermore, sustaining urban Catholic schools will involve greater engagement with non-profit community-based organizations, i.e., health and social service agencies, hospitals, universities and colleges, community foundations, and even local public schools.

When Catholic schools partner with ecclesial institutions and community organizations, they are able to provide more robust “whole child” programming than a single school operating in isolation. According to the Catholic Health Association and Catholic Charities USA, inter-ministry collaboration enhances

services, strengthens community relationships, and improves outcomes for the individuals and families served by Catholic Charities and health care organizations.¹⁷⁸ School-community partnerships also show positive results when services are tailored to the needs and strengths of the “whole child.”¹⁷⁹ Schools that partner with community social services are more able to attend to multiple domains of a child’s life, to enhance strengths and address deficits, and to integrate the familial contexts of a child’s life into their programming.

Educating under-resourced populations requires support from an array of resources. Partnerships facilitate access to discounted or no-cost services. Collaborating with other church ministries and community organizations will enhance the mission of each of these institutions to address the needs of children and families from low-income urban populations. School-community partnerships seem most efficient and cost-effective when they are developed, implemented, and coordinated across multiple schools. The ethic of collaboration would be a paradigm shift for Catholic schools to reach across parish and service boundaries toward a more interconnected church community and a more intentional engagement with the community.

5.11 *Integrate new immigrant student groups, especially the growing Latino population, into the core mission of urban Catholic education.*

Sustainability in the urban environment requires not only educational excellence but also cultural responsiveness to new immigrant groups in these communities, e.g., Latinos, Haitians, Cape Verdeans. Urban Catholic schools can and should provide a safe educational environment that is tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs and strengths of immigrant students and their families. Urban Catholic schools in the 21st century must recruit and train teachers and administrators who have expertise in working with the particular cultural communities that their school serves. It is widely recognized that Latinos will comprise the majority of Catholics in America within the next generation. Our schools are not yet equipped to become places where the Latino-American culture is understood

and celebrated – key to an effective learning environment. Intentionally tailoring our educational product to these communities is completely consistent with the original purpose of Catholic schools. Furthermore, this approach aligns with a long tradition of the Catholic Church to care for and minister to immigrant populations.

5.12 *Advocate relentlessly for parental choice, public funding and entitlement support for Catholic schools.*

A sustainable system of Catholic schools would involve a deliberate utilization of available public resources whether in the form of vouchers, tax credits, text books, transportation, technology assistance, innovation grants, or “greening” support for school buildings. Accessing available public funding, as well as advocating for equity in educational resources, is absolutely critical for the sustainability of schools, particularly for those serving low-income populations in the urban settings. Efforts to obtain and advocate for public funding should necessarily come at the diocesan level, as well as in collaboration with other dioceses and non-sectarian school choice groups. Catholic education would be well-served by allying their advocacy with the efforts of other groups who support public funding for private education.

The implementation of these twelve recommendations, we believe, will substantially enhance the sustainability of urban Catholic schools. Effective governance and finance strategies will not only improve enrollment but also draw future investment. Wider communities, both Catholic and non-Catholic, recognize that Catholic schools are an important civic asset. However, donors will remain hesitant without proven governance models, sound funding strategies, and evidence of excellence in all areas. It is important to note that these recommendations are inter-connected. For instance, greater articulation to the public about the value and quality of Catholic schools will be critical in assisting efforts to recruit prospective students, engage potential funders, ensure wider ecclesial support and strengthen the case in advocating for vouchers and tax credits.

The future of urban Catholic elementary education requires that we identify, implement, measure and market models that demonstrate effective governance, financial sustainability and academic quality. Efforts to sustain urban Catholic schools will not succeed without a renewed commitment of the church to recognize these schools as a vital and authentic expression of the church's overall mission. A courageous, coordinated effort to support urban Catholic elementary education utilizing tested, innovative strategies will not save all schools but could ensure that this vital ministry will be preserved in some form in every urban center across the country.



Appendix

Sources of data and type of data reviewed.

Location and Organization	Interview (phone or in person)	E-Mail Request for Info	Strategic Plan or Proposal	Annual Report	Tax Forms	Website	Other Primary Sources	Secondary Articles
Arizona								
Diocese of Phoenix			√					
California								
Archdiocese of Los Angeles	√		√			√		
BASIC Fund		√			√	√		√
Catholic Education Foundation		√				√		
Catholic Education Services						√		
Diocese of Monterey, Catholic Schools Office	√					√		
John and Dorothy Shea Foundation					√			√
Loyola Marymount University, Center for Catholic Education						√	√	
Specialty Family Foundation				√		√		
St. Monica School, San Francisco						√		
University Consortium for Catholic Education						√		√
Colorado								
Escuela de Guadalupe, Denver	√					√		√
Connecticut								
Catholic Schools Management	√	√						
Diocese of Bridgeport	√	√					√	√
Delaware								
Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities					√			
Florida								
Archdiocese of Miami								√
Georgia								
Archdiocese of Atlanta			√				√	
Illinois								
Archdiocese of Chicago						√	√	√
Big Shoulders Fund	√	√				√		√
The Catalyst Schools	√	√	√			√	√	√
Frances Xavier Warde School, Chicago	√					√		
Loyola University Chicago Center for Catholic School Effectiveness	√					√	√	√
Indiana								
ADI, Inc.	√	√				√		√
Catholic Charities of Indianapolis	√	√					√	
Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice						√		
Mother Theodore Catholic Academies	√	√		√		√	√	
University of Notre Dame, Alliance for Catholic Education	√	√		√		√		√
University of Notre Dame, Institute for Educational Initiatives	√						√	

Location and Organization	Interview (phone or in person)	E-Mail Request for Info	Strategic Plan or Proposal	Annual Report	Tax Forms	Website	Other Primary Sources	Secondary Articles
Iowa								
Diocese of Sioux City								√
Kansas								
Diocese of Wichita	√	√						√
Via Christi Health Systems		√						
Kentucky								
Owensboro Catholic Schools	√					√		
Louisiana								
Archdiocese of New Orleans			√					
Institute of School & Parish Development						√		
Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School, Baton Rouge						√		
Project Fleur-de-Lis	√	√				√	√	√
Maryland								
Archdiocese of Baltimore	√	√	√			√	√	
Mid-Atlantic Catholic Schools Consortium	√			√		√	√	√
St. Francis International School, Silver Spring and Hyattsville						√		
Massachusetts								
Boston College, City Connects in Catholic Schools	√							
Boston College, Roche Center for Catholic Education	√					√		√
Cassin Educational Initiative Foundation					√	√		
Catholic Schools Foundation		√				√		
East Boston Central Catholic School	√	√				√		
Partners in Mission						√		
Pope John Paul II Catholic Academy, Dorchester	√					√		√
Sacred Heart Parish, Roslindale	√							
St. Catherine of Sienna, Norwood	√					√		
St. Columbkille Partnership School, Brighton	√					√		√
Michigan								
Cornerstone Schools	√			√		√		√
Minnesota								
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis	√	√						
Better Way Foundation					√			
Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis	√	√						
Friends of Catholic Urban Schools (FOCUS)	√					√		
GHR Foundation					√			
TeamWorks International, Inc.	√	√				√		
University of St. Thomas, Murray Institute	√							

Location and Organization	Interview (phone or in person)	E-Mail Request for Info	Strategic Plan or Proposal	Annual Report	Tax Forms	Website	Other Primary Sources	Secondary Articles
Missouri								
Archdiocese of St. Louis	√	√						
ACCESS Academies	√	√		√		√	√	√
The John and John Vatterott Family Foundation				√	√			
University of St. Louis	√							
Nebraska								
Creighton University	√							
New Jersey								
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden	√						√	
Diocese of Trenton	√							
Diocese of Paterson	√	√						
New York								
Archdiocese of New York, Department of Education			√			√		√
Cardinal Scholarship Fund						√		√
Catholic Alumni Partnership	√	√				√	√	√
Children's Scholarship Fund						√		√
Diocese of Albany	√							
Diocese of Brooklyn	√	√	√				√	√
Diocese of Buffalo			√			√		
Futures in Education Endowment Fund	√				√	√		√
Inner-City Scholarship Fund								√
Patrons Program						√		√
Robert Wilson Foundation								√
Seeberg and Associates	√							
St. Rita's School, Brooklyn						√		
Ohio								
Catholic Central School, Springfield		√						√
Mathile Family Foundation				√	√	√		
Our Lady of the Rosary School, Dayton							√	
SDG Advisors						√		
University of Dayton, Center for Catholic Education	√	√				√		
Pennsylvania								
Archdiocese of Philadelphia	√	√						
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia	√	√						
Connelly Foundation					√			
Diocese of Scranton			√			√		
Extra Mile Education Foundation						√		

Location and Organization	Interview (phone or in person)	E-Mail Request for Info	Strategic Plan or Proposal	Annual Report	Tax Forms	Website	Other Primary Sources	Secondary Articles
Tennessee								
Catholic Memphis Urban Schools Inc.					√			√
Diocese of Memphis	√	√	√			√		√
Jubilee Schools	√	√				√		√
Texas								
Diocese of Austin			√					
Virginia								
Diocese of Richmond			√					
National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)	√	√				√	√	
Washington, DC								
American Federation for Children						√		
Alliance for School Choice				√		√		
Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.	√						√	
Catholic University of America	√							
Center for Education Reform						√	√	
Consortium of Catholic Academies								√
Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities (FADICA)	√			√			√	
Georgetown University, Center for Applied Research Apostolate (CARA)	√							
National Leadership Roundtable for Church Management	√					√	√	√
NativityMiguel Network of Schools				√		√		√
Philanthropy Roundtable							√	
US Conference of Catholic Bishops	√					√		√
Washington								
Fulcrum Foundation	√			√		√		
Wisconsin								
Alverno College	√							
Diocese of Green Bay						√		
Greater Milwaukee Catholic Education Consortium								√
Marquette University	√							
Meitler Consultants, Inc.	√					√	√	
Messmer Catholic Schools	√					√		
Milwaukee Parental Choice Program								√

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