Initial Assessment Report

Lighting the Way: A Vision for Catholic School Education for Catholic Schools

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

September 13, 2011

CONFIDENTIAL
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND .................................................................................................................. 4
About ACE Consulting ........................................................................................................ 4
Request for ACE Engagement ............................................................................................ 4
ACE Consulting Project Team ............................................................................................. 4
Methodology ...................................................................................................................... 5

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................... 7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .................................................................................................. 8

RELIGIOUS FORMATION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY ................................................. 10

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE ............................................................................................... 22

FINANCE, FINANCIAL VIABILITY, AND DEVELOPMENT ............................................... 27

GOVERNANCE ................................................................................................................ 31

ENROLLMENT AND MARKETING .................................................................................. 34

LEADERSHIP .................................................................................................................. 48

VISIONING SESSION AND SURVEY REPORT .............................................................. 52

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS ............................................................................................ 76

EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE .......................................................................................... 92

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI DATA COLLECTION REPORT (The data collection report has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.) .................................................. 111

CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................. 112

APPENDICES .................................................................................................................. 113

Appendix A: High School Data Charts
Appendix B: CISE Data Charts
Appendix C: Dayton Data Charts
Appendix D: Eastern Data Charts
Appendix E: Eastern Suburban Data Charts
Appendix F: Hamilton Data Charts
Appendix G: Northern Data Charts
Appendix H: Northwest Data Charts
Appendix I: Western Data Charts
Appendix J: United States Demographics
Appendix K: Ohio Demographics
Appendix L: Cincinnati Demographics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Cincinnati Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Dayton Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Dayton Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Kettering Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Amelia Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Butler County Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Sidney Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Piqua Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Zip Code 45238 Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Hamilton County School District Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Montgomery County School District Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>East Dayton/Kettering Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Finneytown Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Harrison Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Loveland Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>Mason Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Monfort Heights Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Oakley/Madisonville Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>Price Hill Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>City of Reading Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>St. Bernard Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Tri-County Aggregate Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJ</td>
<td>Union Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AK</td>
<td>Urban Dayton Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Western Clermont County – Aggregate Demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>West Dayton Demographics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BACKGROUND

About ACE Consulting

ACE Consulting was established in response to the University of Notre Dame’s National Task Force on Catholic Education’s call to develop a high-quality, affordable consulting organization to serve Catholic schools. The organization’s portfolio of services attends to the following areas critical to school success: Catholic identity, academic improvement, strategic planning, financial management, advancement, marketing, board development, and access to federal grant programs. ACE Consulting’s work is rooted in data-driven decision-making, and the organization’s aim is to assist Catholic schools with achieving excellence in all areas of school life based on national benchmarks to ensure their future vitality.

Request for ACE Consulting Engagement

ACE Consulting was contacted in November 2010 by Dr. Jim Rigg, the Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, to discuss how ACE Consulting could serve the Archdiocese by facilitating a process to develop a unifying vision and strategic plan for Catholic school education and assess the capacity and practices of the Catholic School Office (CSO). On December 13, 2010, members of the Archdiocese’s Vision Steering Committee interviewed ACE Consulting representatives to discuss a potential assessment and strategic planning engagement. Subsequently, ACE Consulting received a Request for Proposal on December 28, 2010. ACE Consulting submitted an initial proposal on January 12, 2011. In dialogue with the Vision Steering Committee, the scope and objectives of the project were refined and revisions made to the initial proposal. A final proposal was submitted on February 1, 2011 to conduct an assessment of the following domains: 1) religious formation and Catholic identity, 2) academic excellence, 3) finances, financial viability, and development, 4) governance, 5) enrollment and marketing, and 6) leadership. The proposal also outlined a process to facilitate a visioning and planning process that will yield a unifying vision for Catholic schools and a strategic plan to be implemented by the CSO. In addition, ACE Consulting will support the writing of the Foundational Statements of Unified Vision, Mission, and Values.

The Vision Steering Committee recommended the proposal to Archbishop Schnurr for his review and approval. Final approval was received in mid-February and the initial meeting of the Vision Steering Committee and the ACE Consulting Team was held on February 24, 2011.

The work for this engagement is divided into two phases. ACE Consulting presents this Initial Assessment Report as the work product for Phase One. The Catholic School Office Capacity and Practice Report, also part of Phase One, will be submitted as a separate report to the Archbishop and to the Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Initial Assessment Report will serve as the basis for the work of Phase Two: the development of the strategic plan for Catholic school education.

ACE Consulting Project Team

Kathleen Carr, CSJ, Ph.D. Senior Associate Director for ACE Consulting
Tony DeSapio, M.Ed. Associate Director for ACE Consulting
Brandy J. Ellison, Ph.D. Associate Director of Research for ACE Consulting
John J. Waller, M.B.A. Senior Financial Consultant for ACE Consulting
Methodology

There are five assessment process components for which ACE Consulting provided leadership: 1) meetings with key Archdiocesan leaders and with the Vision Steering Committee, 2) developing a Communications and Involvement Plan, 3) collecting and analyzing data, 4) developing and implementing a series of visioning sessions and surveys, and 5) creating a foundational statement writing process. The following section describes the methodology for each component.

ACE Consulting conducted four on-site visits to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati between February 2011 and June 2011. Consultants met with Archdiocesan leaders to provide an overview of the planning process and to seek information regarding the perceived challenges and expected outcomes of a successful engagement. The leaders involved in these meetings included: the Archbishop, Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Archdiocesan Department Directors, Department of Education Directors, Chief Financial Director, Archdiocesan Controller, and CSO Professional Staff. The Vision Steering Committee provided ongoing direction and guidance for various components of the planning process over the course of three meetings.

A Communications and Involvement Plan was developed by ACE Consulting in collaboration with the Archdiocesan Director of Communications to build broad understanding and support for the planning initiative. The plan utilized several modes of communication, including print, media, and web-based methods, to keep constituent groups updated and informed about the overall process and specific events.

ACE Consulting requested data for each of the domains relevant to the assessment from the CSO to inform the assessment reports and to provide an indication of the status of data collection at the Archdiocesan level. Data were collected from the Archdiocese in the areas of enrollment, school location, public school districts, demographic and religious breakdown of the student body, tuition, test scores, finances, and other domains to provide a comprehensive picture of Archdiocesan schools and to inform the assessment of all domains. A report on the data collection efforts and recommendations for changes has been included as a section in this report. The report addresses all relevant aspects of data collection with the exception of finances, which is addressed in the assessment section on finances and financial viability. *(The data collection report has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)* The data provided to ACE Consulting were utilized to inform the assessment reports where applicable.

Specifically related to finances, ACE Consulting reviewed the financial management and performance of the Archdiocese and CSO and the status of financial reporting from schools to the CSO. ACE Consulting also identified and reviewed available financial information. Subsequent to scanning and reviewing the hard copies of provided reports, alternatives for inputting the information to make it electronically available for financial analysis were reviewed. A vendor has been selected and provided with a template to create financial databases for the years 2007 to 2011. Upon receipt of the 2011 data, the conversion process will commence and the financial data will be made available for analysis.

Demographic analysis for the report included a comparison of the data provided by the CSO, data for the United States and Ohio, as well as information related to many of the cities in which Archdiocesan schools are located. Data were drawn from US Census 2011 estimates, via Nielsen Claritas reporting, and supplemented by private school enrollment data from the American Community Survey, a service of the US Census Bureau.

The analysis of the educational landscape provides broad context for comparison of Archdiocesan schools with one another by cluster, as well as with the public school districts directly competing for students, both at the elementary and high school levels. Public school data were gathered from the Ohio Department of Education and individual school websites.

ACE Consulting also worked with CSO personnel to organize and conduct seven visioning sessions in Cincinnati and Dayton in order to gather the opinions, perspectives, and concerns of a broad group of Catholic school stakeholders. Two sessions were specifically for pastors and principals, two were for leaders in parishes and schools, and three sessions were open to the public. More than 800 stakeholders participated in the visioning sessions. At each of the sessions, participants
were placed in small groups and asked to respond to a pre-determined set of questions. Each small group table had a recorder present to write down the group’s responses and submit them to CSO personnel.

In addition to the visioning sessions, ACE Consulting prepared an online survey for participants in the pastor, principal, and school and parish leader visioning sessions. Eighty-seven respondents completed that survey. A separate survey was prepared for participants in the public visioning sessions and for stakeholders who were unable to attend any of the visioning sessions. Slightly more than 1000 individuals completed that survey.

ACE Consulting created a process and timeline to support the writing of the Foundational Statements. This Initial Assessment Report will be used as the platform to launch the writing of these statements. A sub committee of the Vision Steering Committee and the Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools will draft the Foundational Statements. The anticipated completion date is November 2011.

To provide additional stakeholder feedback for development of the Foundational Statements, ACE Consulting developed a worksheet for principals to utilize to solicit feedback from teachers prior to the start of the 2011-2012 academic year. The worksheet requested belief statements from faculty at each school that can provide local input to inform the writing of the Foundational Statements.

The information gathered during on-site visits, presented in the educational landscape and demographic reports, and data collected from the CSO, visioning sessions, and online surveys form the basis for the content of this assessment report for the areas of religious formation and Catholic identity; academic excellence; finances, financial viability, and development; governance; enrollment and marketing; and leadership.
INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati have a strong tradition of educating and forming young people in the Catholic faith and preparing students to be contributing members to our Church and world. Students and their families have been enriched by these schools for almost two centuries! The Archdiocese of Cincinnati, under the leadership of Archbishop Schnurr, is committed to ensuring the continuing excellence and availability of Catholic schools because their “mission is vital to the future of our young people, our nation and, most especially, our church” (Renewing our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, 2005, USCCB, Inc).

Similar to other dioceses across the country, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati face a variety of challenges due to cultural and economic factors, declines in birth and baptismal rates, and the growing number of charter schools and other educational options available to families. Such factors have resulted in declining enrollment levels and the closures and consolidations of schools in recent years. Historically, the Archdiocese dealt with school related issues on a case-by-case basis without the benefit of a comprehensive approach to long-term planning for Catholic school education.

Overall, the system of schools in the Archdiocese is relatively stable. This assessment process is conducted from a position of strength, affording leadership the appropriate time to gather data, engage constituent groups, anticipate the implications of any proposed changes, and thoughtfully reflect and decide upon the best action steps to unify stakeholders and sustain an ongoing commitment to Catholic school education.

This report contributes to the planning process by providing an assessment of the condition of Catholic school education in the Archdiocese. It sets forth the challenges and strengths for specific domains that are vital for effectively carrying out the academic and religious missions of Catholic schools. The results will serve as the foundation upon which a strategic plan will be developed. The domain areas under study are: religious formation and Catholic identity; academic excellence; finances, financial viability, and development; governance; enrollment and marketing; and leadership. The assessments are informed by data provided by the Archdiocese, feedback from visioning sessions and surveys, the demographic and educational landscape reports, observational data, and input from Archdiocesan personnel.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents the initial product of ACE Consulting’s engagement with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, which commenced in February 2011. The report is designed to serve as a resource to inform the development of a three-year strategic plan for Catholic school education. The report features assessments of religious formation and Catholic identity; academic excellence; finances, financial viability, and development; governance; enrollment and marketing; and leadership. The key findings of these assessments are summarized below. Data to support the assessments came from many sources including the visioning session and survey report, demographic report, and educational landscape that are included in this Initial Assessment Report.

Religious Formation and Catholic Identity

Religious formation of students and the overall Catholic identity of schools are viewed as being of primary importance. There is some disagreement among members of the Archdiocesan community regarding the perceived strength of this domain in schools. Strategic planning should address the following:

- Prioritize this domain throughout the strategic planning process.
- Develop a centralized method to collect and store data in order to systematically evaluate and monitor instruction and outcomes to ensure the ongoing strength of this domain.
- Assist schools struggling to maintain or define Catholic identity, especially those schools with growing non-Catholic populations.
- Solicit and include stakeholder feedback in reviews of religious curricula.
- Acknowledge and address concerns regarding the nature and quality of religious formation and Catholic identity in schools.
- Broaden the role of the CSO to include the screening and approval of high school religion teachers.

Academic Excellence

The CSO should ensure the effective use of learning standards and assessment processes to guide and inform the academic programs in schools. Strategic planning should address the following:

- Continue to provide leadership for a standards-based curriculum for all subject areas and provide oversight to ensure consistent implementation
- Analyze standardized test results and other measures of student achievement to assess the strengths and weaknesses of academic programs and use the results to develop specific improvement goals in partnership with schools.
- Develop and strengthen postsecondary partnerships to enhance professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators.
- Provide programs to meet the needs of students with a wide range of academic abilities.

Finances, Financial Viability, and Development

Currently the CSO has no defined role in the oversight of school finances and financial viability status. This should change so that the CSO has an appropriate role in relation to this domain. Strategic planning should address the following:

- Centralize financial reporting and management to involve the CSO in viability assessments.
- Use Archdiocesan funding to incentivize compliance with financial initiatives and policies.
- Enhance revenue generation through:
o An independent foundation for Catholic schools.
o Actively pursuing and utilizing all resources available through federal, state, and private funding sources.
o Renting or leasing unused or underutilized parish properties.
o Centralized purchasing of major goods and services.

Governance

Currently, the CSO has limited involvement in school management or oversight. This should change so that the CSO has an appropriate role as it relates to school governance. Strategic planning should address the following:

- Clarify the role of the Archdiocesan Education Commission as it relates to strategic planning and other CSO activities and initiatives.
- Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of active school advisory boards at the elementary school level and establish clearer lines of communication and authority between parish leadership and the CSO.
- Review the handbook for Education Commissions to determine if it accurately reflects the commissions’ current roles in school governance and modify as needed to establish functional and efficient roles for local education commissions.
- Support continued investigation of a robust and proactive CSO role in determining school viability.

Enrollment and Marketing

Stakeholder feedback consistently identified this domain as needing Archdiocesan-level intervention and assistance. Attention should be directed toward establishing a strong commitment on the part of the CSO to assist schools in addressing enrollment management and marketing. Strategic planning should address the following:

- Identify a group of schools most in need of assistance to partner with the CSO in a “pilot” program to focus on enrollment management and marketing.
- Initiate the development of templates to support marketing and enrollment management at the local school level.
- Coordinate and centralize the collection and analysis of enrollment, demographic, and other data relevant to the domain.
- Analyze the Educational Choice Scholarship Program to determine how it should align with tuition rates and how best to maximize access to this program’s resources.
- Assist schools in developing enrollment plans that address affordability and financial assistance needs.

Leadership

The CSO has no well-defined or consistent involvement in the selection, development, or evaluation of school leaders. The CSO should, however, consistently be involved in each of these three leadership areas. While certain processes related to these areas are in place and functioning, others are lacking, not followed, or nonexistent. Strategic planning should address the following:

- Develop a centralized and rolling application process for school leaders.
- Enhance existing postsecondary school relationships to provide additional opportunities for the formation of leaders and ongoing professional development.
- Improve training for new principals.
- Monitor the newly established performance evaluation process, revise as needed, and ensure that the CSO is consistently involved and responsible for implementing the process.
RELIGIOUS FORMATION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Introduction

Catholic School education has been a powerful anchor for Catholic families in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati since the first school opened in 1824. The schools have provided faith-filled communities that are rooted in gospel values and traditions along with strong academic programs designed to meet the academic and developmental needs of their students.

Within the context of the mission of Catholic schools, Catholic identity is in all respects the soul of the schools’ programs and activities. Coupled with the vision statement for the Catholic School Office (CSO), the individual mission and primary purpose for each Catholic school is to fulfill the educational mission of the church in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

In Southeast Ohio the identity and makeup of the Catholic population is changing and location, income, and demographics continue to play a significant role in the evolving face of Catholic education within the Archdiocese. Today, the fulfillment of the mission of Catholic education in an increasingly secular world calls for a new level of determination and constancy of purpose that must be grounded in a shared vision with the entire Catholic community of faith.

This assessment report for religious formation and Catholic identity is based on the data received during the study period, which includes visioning session and survey feedback, guidebooks and policies, and quantitative data on individual schools. It presents findings and considerations for strategic planning based on those findings.

Findings

Trends in Catholic school education and catechesis/religious education

Table 1 provides information on the percentages of students attending Catholic schools, attending religious education classes, or not known to be receiving any formal religious education from 2005 to 2010.
Table 1. School-age Catholics attending Catholic school, religious education classes, or neither

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Available Catholic Students</th>
<th>Attending Catholic Schools</th>
<th>% attending Catholic schools</th>
<th>Attending parish religious education</th>
<th>% attending parish religious education</th>
<th>Not attending religious education</th>
<th>% not attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>46,884</td>
<td>17,012</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>15,469</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>14,403</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>25,222</td>
<td>9,134</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>9,779</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>6,309</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>33,530</td>
<td>11,615</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5,507</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16,408</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105,635</td>
<td>37,761</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>30,755</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37,120</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>48,085</td>
<td>17,536</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>16,044</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>14,505</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>25,193</td>
<td>9,478</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>7,909</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7,806</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>34,119</td>
<td>11,979</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5,356</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16,784</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107,397</td>
<td>38,993</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29,309</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39,095</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>49,182</td>
<td>18,286</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>16,408</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>14,488</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>25,156</td>
<td>11,324</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>7,936</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5,896</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>34,807</td>
<td>12,324</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5,103</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17,380</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109,145</td>
<td>41,934</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29,447</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>37,764</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>49,998</td>
<td>18,921</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19,609</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>11,468</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>24,977</td>
<td>10,237</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>8,869</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5,871</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>35,414</td>
<td>12,574</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>6,139</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16,701</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110,389</td>
<td>41,732</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34,617</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34,040</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>50,354</td>
<td>19,829</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16,543</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>13,983</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>25,190</td>
<td>10,566</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>8,394</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>6,230</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>35,657</td>
<td>12,830</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>6,035</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16,792</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111,201</td>
<td>43,225</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>30,972</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>37,005</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 1, the number of school-age Catholic students has decreased steadily over the past five years. This is likely related to the declining Catholic populations in the counties located in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, as outlined in the demographic report that is included as part of this assessment. The decline in population has led to a reduction in the absolute number of students in Catholic schools as well as those engaged in parish-based religious education. The percentages of Catholic students in Catholic schools have also declined, but are somewhat more stable than the absolute numbers. The percentages in religious education classes are less stable and were ultimately somewhat higher in 2009-2010 than in 2005-2006.

Table 1 also indicates that the numbers of students not enrolled in Catholic schools or religious education are variable but appear to be growing overall. Recently, the numbers have been similar to the numbers of students in Catholic schools. The students in this group, however, are more concentrated in the high school years than are the students in the other groups.
Table 2 presents information on the representation of Catholic and non-Catholic students in schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Total school population</th>
<th>Catholic students</th>
<th>% Catholic students</th>
<th>Non-Catholic students</th>
<th>% non-Catholic students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>20,639</td>
<td>17,012</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>3,627</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>10,607</td>
<td>9,134</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>1,473</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>13,676</td>
<td>11,615</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2,061</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44,922</td>
<td>37,761</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>7,161</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>21,060</td>
<td>17,536</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>3,524</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>10,928</td>
<td>9,478</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>1,450</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>14,122</td>
<td>11,979</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46,110</td>
<td>38,993</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7,117</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>21,562</td>
<td>18,286</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>3,276</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>12,776</td>
<td>11,324</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>14,461</td>
<td>12,324</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2,137</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48,799</td>
<td>41,934</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>6,865</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>21,336</td>
<td>18,921</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>2,415</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>11,692</td>
<td>10,237</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>1,455</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>14,664</td>
<td>12,574</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47,692</td>
<td>41,732</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>5,960</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>22,541</td>
<td>19,829</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2,712</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>11,904</td>
<td>10,566</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>1,338</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>14,850</td>
<td>12,830</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>2,020</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49,295</td>
<td>43,225</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>6,070</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 illustrates a steady, but small, increase in the percentage of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools. How to address this change and maintain strong Catholic identity in schools is one of the major questions facing the Archdiocese. When coupled with the sizable number of Catholic school-age children who are not known to participate in any form of religious education, the growing number of non-Catholic students in schools is indicative of important changes within schools and within the larger Catholic community in the Archdiocese. Significant planning is necessary to ensure that Catholic schools are viable for future generations despite changes in and challenges facing the larger community.
Early childhood and elementary catechetical program graded course of study

CSO personnel provided a copy of the graded course of study for the catechetical program for this assessment. The religious education catechetical program includes an age appropriate systematic teaching of Catholic doctrine. The main focus is to lead children, youth, and adults to a deeper relationship with Jesus and a greater understanding of His teachings, thus building within them a desire to commit themselves to following him throughout life.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati graded course of study for early childhood and elementary catechetical programs contains the official content for this systematic catechesis for students from age three through eighth grade. As stated on the manual’s introductory page, “this course of study is to be followed by all those responsible for catechesis in Catholic schools, in parish religious education programs and by parents who provide formal religious education for their children at home.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the National Directory for Catechesis provide the content and conceptual framework for each of the learning objectives. Instructors are encouraged to adjust the language/terminology they use to the different age groups, ability levels, and learning styles of students.

The content is written in relation to the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1. Profession of faith: revelation – salvation – Jesus – Church
2. Celebration of the Christian mystery (Sacraments)
3. Life in Christ (Catholic-Christian morality)
4. Christian prayer

A comprehensive outline for the instructional processes to be utilized is also provided. Instructors are guided, through the use of students’ own experiences, to the message or doctrine to be introduced, to the application of the message/ doctrine in discovery, and finally to the response of the student in applying the information to their personal lives.

The document presents grade-level and age appropriate content. At the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels, no concepts are concretely introduced. At this age level, concentration is placed on the readiness of the child for religious experiences. Beginning with first grade and following through to eighth grade, all grade-level content is divided into specific objectives for the grade level’s key concepts.

Secondary religious instruction

An outline similar to the graded course of study for early childhood and elementary catechetical programs was not provided for the secondary level. However, a review of the websites for a number of the secondary schools indicates that secondary schools typically utilize the following course of studies:

Grade 9 Introduction to Catholicism – Hebrew scriptures
Grade 10 Church history – Christian scriptures
Grade 11 Morality – social justice – service
Grade 12 World religions – service – Christian lifestyles

The CSO does not have a role in the screening, approval or hiring of high school religion teachers. The content, number of religion credits, and time allocated to the teaching of religion varies from school to school. The Director of Educational Services/ Superintendent of Catholic Schools has begun meeting with high school leaders to ensure that the core curriculum areas identified in the Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age are included appropriately in the religion course of studies.
Archdiocese of Cincinnati catechesis/religious education policy

Archdiocesan policy requires the administration of the NCEA ACRE assessment in every parish and school annually. The instrument generates standardized information upon which the existing catechesis/religious education program can be assessed, thereby providing a foundation for identifying areas of strength and concern. The ACRE is composed of two main parts: faith and knowledge which has eight domains and affective statements which has seven domains. Students’ results in each of these domains provide school and parish catechesis/religious education coordinators with a wealth of knowledge upon which to build instructional and formative programs for students.

Copies of the latest ACRE test results were provided by the CSO, however, the format did not allow for manipulation so that areas/regions could be appropriately examined. A review of the summary profile for the test shows that results are divided into four subgroups: all students, Catholic students, non-Catholic students, and returning students. The last subgroup is particularly useful for tracking student progress over time.

A review of the ACRE testing profile for the past academic year indicates that, in all areas, the schools and parishes are performing above the national average.

No information was provided as to the uses or applications of the test results, either within schools or parishes. It is evident, however, from the testing results that schools are adhering to the guidelines for instruction that have been put forward at the Archdiocesan level.

Relevant listening session and survey feedback

Any true assessment of religious formation and Catholic identity must move from the objective use of test results to the subjective experiences of those who make up the constituent groups being served. For that reason, a synopsis of information gathered through the four listening sessions attended by pastors, principals, and school and parish leaders is presented below in outline format to provide insight into perspectives on these domains within the Archdiocesan community. A narrative summary of feedback provided in the three public visioning sessions and through the public survey is presented below that. Additional information on the data gathered through these forums can be found in the visioning session and survey report that is included as a section of this assessment. The perceptual data from these forums provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the strengths and challenges facing the Archdiocese in relation to religious formation and Catholic identity.

Areas of strength: faith, mission, parish, pastor, and religious order/charism

Faith and Catholic identity: Overwhelmingly, the perception of a strong Catholic faith and Catholic identity were evidenced in each of the listening sessions. Frequent comments referenced the following factors as particular strengths:

- God/faith-based education
- Faith/religion permeates every subject and the whole environment
- The importance of evangelization
- Strong sacramental life
Mission: Respondents who spoke to mission cited the following:

- Accepting the “missionary” role as part of the call of the Catholic faith
- The call to carry out the mission of Jesus
- School is mission-oriented

Parish connections: Of particular importance in this category was the relationship between the parish and the school. Participants in all four of the listening sessions commented on how supportive the parish was of the school as well as how strongly the school identified with the parish.

- Parish is proud/supportive of the school
- Parishioners are very supportive financially
- High level of involvement in parish activities
- Parish(es) and school working together

Pastor: The role of the pastor was highlighted multiple times in the responses from each of the sites. The pastor is seen as one of the most important influences on whether or not a school thrives within the parish setting. Multiple responses in this category included:

- Strong parish leadership
- Pastor is a strong advocate for Catholic education
- Pastor is involved with the school community
- Positive relationships exist between pastor and school leadership

Religious order/charism: Only two sites provided responses in this category. In both instances positive remarks were made relative to the historical charism of the religious order that originally staffed the school. Mention was made of the value of the following traditions:

- Franciscan
- Marianist
- Dominican

Areas of challenge: Catholic identity, non-Catholics, parish connections, pastor, and religious orders

Catholic identity: As the population within schools is changing, a great deal of concern was expressed about the difficulty of maintaining a true Catholic identity and whether or not it is possible.

- Need support from the Archdiocese on how to maintain Catholic identity when asked to be open to serving all (e.g., Catholic, non-Catholic, non-believers)
- Perception of a lack of “authentic” Catholic faith
- Are the schools Catholic or just private?

Non-Catholic students: Several sites mentioned the influx of “voucher” students as having an impact on the Catholic identity of their individual schools because many of the students are not Catholic. Comments included:

- Parents of “voucher” students are not vested in the school
- Are we becoming a values-based school rather than a Catholic school?
**Parish connections:** While all of the sites put forward responses in this category, there were differences in the understanding of “parish connection.” The multiplicity of responses in this category will give further insight:

- Schools are too tied to the parish; can we move them to where the population is?
- There is a disconnect between parishes and schools
- Not a shared endeavor between parish and school; school is doing the most work
- Struggle to keep our identity as a parish in support of a “consolidated” school
- Belief that if the school closes it will negatively impact the parish
- Difficulty in engaging parents in parish activities; they only participate in school activities

**Pastor:** With fewer priests available to be pastors and with more consolidations of schools and parishes, the demands for “presence” from the pastor have to be examined and potentially redefined.

- Pastors have too much going on and do not have the time or the energy for a school
- There appears to be a strained relationship between the pastor and the principal
- Leadership within the parish is lacking
- If people don’t like the pastor, it is bad for the school
- Pressure on the pastors who want to be involved with schools, but do not have the time or support at the parish level that will allow this to happen

**Religious orders:** Participants at two sites mentioned that it is unfortunate that religious orders are no longer involved with their schools.

**Areas of beneficial change: Catholic identity, declining church population, and pastors**

**Catholic identity:** Based on the responses made at each of the listening sessions, it is readily apparent that the following changes would have significant positive impact on the Catholic identity of schools and parishes:

- Stronger commitment to Catholic identity
- Increased Catholic identity within schools
- Make schools more Catholic
- Improve faith development within schools

**Declining church population:** Throughout all the sites there is a clear understanding that parental involvement in the school must be transitioned into parental involvement in the parish/church.

- Use the school to evangelize parents
- Re-energize the Catholic family and commitment to Catholic education
- Need to engage people in their faith
- Need to examine why people are not participating in their faith
- We need a renaissance of faith within the schools, parishes, and Archdiocese

**Pastor:** Comments in this category are not surprising given the feedback shared above related to pastors.

- Lack of involvement of the pastor with the school
- Lack of support of the pastor for the school
- Stronger pastoral support in all areas

**Hope for school and parish: Catholic, Catholic identity, Catholic schools, and pastors**
Catholic: There were many calls that came under this broad concept of church. All of them focused at least in part on preserving and building up the Catholic faith.

- Continue to build up our children in their faith, values, and academic excellence
- That we actively pursue more young men and woman for religious life and the priesthood
- That the church attracts and retains more young men and women
- Attract more young families
- Increase awareness about our faith with young people
- Adult faith formation initiatives would encourage parish families to choose Catholic schools

Catholic identity:

- Continue to keep faith-based focus, we tend to lose this when we struggle financially
- Keep key things that are distinctive for Catholic schools, like communion services
- Strong mission and identity
- Kids in high school are involved with their faith formation
- School should keep Catholic education as the cornerstone in the classroom
- Schools are tools for evangelization

Parish schools: In relation to parish schools, the responses centered on the importance of the school within the parish setting.

- Keep parochial schools open in the neighborhood
- Bring in students from neighboring parishes where there is no school
- Pastors of neighboring parishes should support each other

Pastors:

- More support between pastors
- Having more priests and religious women involved in Catholic schools again
- Greater commitment to faith formation

Necessary elements for a unifying vision: Christ-like, evangelizing, faith, holistic, religious order/parish connection, service, values

Christ-like

- To teach as Christ taught
- Act like and be like Christ to all
- Forming Christian leaders
- Think like a Catholic
- Walk in Christ’s footsteps
Evangelizing

- See the schools as an evangelizing presence
- Recognize that Catholic education is a lifelong commitment
- Faith formation through evangelization of families
- Without formation of adults, the vision for our schools is lost
- Sharing faith traditions

Faith: Of all the categories under this question, faith as a necessary element for support of a unifying vision received the most responses. The responses varied from calls for mandated behaviors to a more traditional understanding of what it means to be Catholic.

- Goal is to produce dedicated and committed Catholics
- Stronger approach to vocation awareness
- Profoundly Catholic environment
- Gospel values
- Consensus on religious study materials and textbooks
- Keep Catholic identity within all subjects; bring a Catholic vision to all subjects
- Focus on central activity of Catholic community – Eucharist
- Ensure that high school level of faith education is complete and accurate
- Ensure teachers are teaching complete/accurate Catholic faith and not alternative versions
- Need to be more Eucharist centered; Sunday Mass is not optional
- We need more faith formation at all levels

Holistic

- Nurturing the whole child academically, spiritually, socially, and artistically
- Recognizing every child is a light from God with potential
- Develop the whole person within the child
- Transform our children

Religious order/parish connection

- Retain the spirit of the charism of the order that opened the school
- A real need to see the school as a life preserver for a parish and not an anchor
- Pastors and directors of religious education need to be more present in the school and openly support the school

Service

- Giving service to the community would unite people on a larger scale
- Connect all schools through service programs
- We need to help the people in our own communities
- We need to have a spirit of social justice in our own communities
Values: Throughout the responses listed for a number of categories, the term “values” has become synonymous for some with the components that should underlie Catholic identity.

- Values oriented
- Values that lead to better decisions
- Values for a lifetime
- Pillars of character
- Values for life, church, school, family – we need all of these
- Helping children develop a strong work ethic

Concerns about the unifying vision: parish connections, pastor, and secularism

Parish connections: For most Catholics, the individual parish at which they worship or the school which they attend is in many respects their concept of what the Catholic church is and who they are in relation to the church. That being stated, it is not surprising that there is a great deal of anxiety about the unifying vision as it relates to parishes.

- Loss of parish identity
- Schools will no longer be parochial
- With closures of parishes/schools, neighborhoods will suffer
- Will people still have a voice and be able to take ownership of their parish?
- If funding is put into one pool, we will lose dedicated parishioners
- One vision cannot work for every parish
- Consolidation and regionalization requires extra work from the pastor to bring things together

Pastors

- What will happen to parishes with schools who have pastors who do not want them?
- Since pastors have autonomy at the parish level, what types of problems are going to surface?
- What is enforcement going to look like?
- How are we going to get pastors to follow it?
- Pastors have to buy in or it is dead in the water
- Some pastors will think this is a bad thing because they will lose control over their schools
- What do the pastors without schools think about this vision planning?

Secularism: Concerns about secularism of the unifying vision came from one listening session and are noted as follows.

- The unified vision will be articulated in a way that will have a secularizing effect and the undertow of secularism
- Vision will not be expressed in explicitly Catholic terms but more with the use of terms that will allow us all to agree
- Lose our Catholic identity; pretending that we are not fully Catholic
- Vision must have Catholicity as its core
- Need to be proud to be Catholic
- Younger Catholics leaving to go to a more “free spirit” church
Public visioning sessions and surveys

In many ways, the feedback provided in the three public visioning sessions and the public survey mirrored that in the visioning sessions for pastors, principals, and school and parish leaders. The participants had a strong and, in some cases, exclusive focus on Catholic identity in the visioning sessions. Survey respondents were somewhat less concerned with Catholic identity in general, although most appeared to appreciate it and some did cite it as their priority.

While some participants advocated for a strong Catholic identity to set Catholic schools apart from other educational options, most were more focused on Catholic identity because they believe it benefits students and families. Several visioning session participants were particularly concerned about the nature of the Catholic faith that is taught in schools and indicated that they do not feel it is an authentic Catholic faith. Several members of this group also expressed concern about the growing non-Catholic population in the schools, the lack of Catholic content in all areas of the curriculum, and their perception that faculty and staff are not qualified to teach the faith.

Other feedback, primarily from survey respondents, indicates a higher degree of satisfaction with Catholic identity as it currently exists in schools in the Archdiocese. This suggests a possible tension between two groups in the Archdiocese regarding how to define and enact Catholic identity within a school.

Considerations for strategic planning related to religious formation and Catholic identity

The overall purpose of this assessment is to provide information that will ensure that the schools in the Archdiocese are offering meaningful instruction in the Catholic faith and providing an environment that reflects genuine Catholic school traditions. The section below presents areas of consideration for the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Religious Formation and Catholic Identity as the strategic planning process proceeds.

Evidence from the test scores on the ACRE test indicates that the religion curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels is being implemented effectively and is generating positive results. With some exceptions, stakeholder feedback was positive relative to Catholic identity and the vast majority of respondents described it as an integral aspect of Catholic schools, indicating strong community support for religious formation and Catholic identity.

Because this domain is such a vital component of the mission of Catholic schools, it remains important to monitor and continuously evaluate and adjust elements to ensure it remains strong. Therefore, it is recommended that a central database of information related to Catholic identity be established and data used to pinpoint specific areas for growth, improvement, and adjustment to the curriculum. Specific schools needing to further develop their religious dimension can be identified and provided assistance while schools with exemplary results can be recognized for their distinction and encouraged to share best practices.

In addition, the findings outlined above suggest the following areas be taken into consideration throughout the strategic planning process:

- Based on feedback from Archdiocesan community members, it is clear that religious formation and Catholic identity must be prioritized throughout the development of the unifying vision and strategic plan and information regarding this domain must be regularly and clearly communicated to stakeholders.
- The declining Catholic population in the Archdiocese and its impacts on the overall enrollment at schools and the proportional representation of non-Catholic students warrants further investigation. Schools may need assistance and training from the Archdiocese regarding maintenance of Catholic identity in a changing environment.
- It may be beneficial to develop a system that relies on stakeholder feedback from a variety of groups in the Archdiocese, in addition to ACRE test results, to regularly review and potentially revise the religion curricula in elementary and secondary schools.
• To ensure the quality of religious instruction at the high school level, consider creating and implementing a screening/approval process for potential high school religion teacher candidates that involves high school leaders and religion department chairs.
• Participants in the public visioning sessions expressed strongly-felt concerns about the nature and quality of religious formation in Archdiocesan schools. Those concerns need to be acknowledged and addressed even if the requested reforms are not implemented.
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Introduction

Presently there are 113 Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Schools are located within cities, suburban neighborhoods, and small towns and rural locations. The schools vary in size and populations served. Most elementary schools are traditional parish schools, while the high schools represent a mix of Archdiocesan, religious order-owned, and independent schools.

Under the leadership of Archbishop Schnurr and Dr. Rigg, Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Archdiocese is involved in a two-phase project to develop a new vision and strategic plan for all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. Throughout the creation and implementation of the unifying vision and strategic plan, the main focus will be to develop not only foundational statements, such as vision, mission, and beliefs, but also to design actionable plans that will ensure a balance of attitudes, realities, and resources that will strengthen the educational services provided by the CSO and by individual schools. As part of that process, this report presents an analysis of areas that relate to academic excellence.

Throughout the development of the report, data were collected from many sources, including the Archdiocese, the CSO, school and parish leaders, and Archdiocesan community members. The data were gathered through interviews, quantitative sources, visioning sessions, and surveys. Where sufficient academic data were provided in a format that allowed for manipulation of contents, analysis was undertaken and recommendations for development or further exploration have been stated. The information gleaned from these sources provides a broad understanding of the challenges and best practices that are currently in place and, at the same time, provides some insight into the perceptions community members shared as they relate to academic excellence.

Findings

Curriculum policies and guidelines

The curriculum policies and guidelines for elementary schools provided for this assessment were published in 2005 and distributed to school leaders in CD format for ease of use and accessibility. Also provided in CD format were the graded course of study for Language Arts (2005) and graded courses of study for Arts, Music and Physical Education (2006). Entitled “Teaching for the 21st Century” they provide a scope and sequence with specific and measurable objectives and learning outcomes in each academic discipline. These courses of study provide consistent expectations for each grade level and allow for short and long-range planning, periodic evaluation, and accountability. A systematic review and update of curricula, if not already in place, is needed to ensure a standardized curriculum wherein each subject area aligns with Ohio state standards and reflects the particular mission of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The electronic format should continue to be the preferred means of distribution.

The CSO website provides a direct link to a set of curriculum frameworks via INFOhio. How this site relates to “Teaching for the 21st Century” or how schools should utilize this resource is unclear. Information should be provided to make clear the CSO’s expectations regarding this resource as it relates to curriculum in the schools.

Standardized test results

An excerpt taken from the CSO website section entitled “Why Catholic Schools?” states, “the U.S. Department of Education has recognized our Ohio Catholic schools for consistently ranking in the top 10% of schools nationwide for 8th grade reading and math test scores.” This statement indicates a strong foundation for academic success in Archdiocesan schools.
(A discussion of data made available for the assessment has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)

2010 High School Placement Test

(A discussion of individual schools’ High School Placement Test scores has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)

The chart below presents the averages for each cluster in comparison to each other. The group average is 510.
2010 ACT test for 12th grade

(A discussion of individual high schools’ ACT scores has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)

2006 and 2010 Ohio Graduation Test in math and reading

(A discussion of individual high schools’ Ohio Graduation Test scores has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)

Schools achieving Blue Ribbon status

The national Blue Ribbon Schools Program confers the Blue Ribbon School title on public and private elementary and high schools that are high-performing or that have shown remarkable improvements in academic outcomes. Not all schools that may qualify for the distinction receive it because the schools generally must self-initiate the nomination process. The title can help to bolster schools’ academic reputations and benefit marketing efforts.

Since 1986, five high schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati have achieved Blue Ribbon status. The most recent Blue Ribbon high schools received the title for the 2001-2002 school year. Further study is needed to understand the factors that contributed to the 10-year hiatus since a high school has been recognized as a Blue Ribbon School. Among elementary schools, 16 have received this distinction overall. The most recent Blue Ribbon elementary schools received this designation in 2010-2011. In five clusters, no schools or only one school has received the distinction in the past decade. (A discussion that would provide information on individual schools has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.) Eastern, Eastern Suburban, and Western schools have been most successful in terms of Blue Ribbon designees in the past ten years. This indicator of academic success corresponds with the cluster average scores on the HSPT in that the clusters with the highest averages also have the most schools with Blue Ribbon status. (A discussion that would provide information on individual schools has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)

Personnel licensure and standards for the teaching profession

Closely related to schools’ academic outcomes is the necessity of implementing quality control measures for Catholic school teachers. As noted on the CSO website, all teachers in the Archdiocese are required to possess licensure that aligns with the state of Ohio. No data were provided on the current status of licensure for teachers at individual schools, so a detailed analysis could not be performed. There is a full-time CSO position dedicated to ensuring that all teachers meet state licensure requirements and are fully informed and monitored on an ongoing basis for compliance. This includes keeping abreast of all state mandates that relate to professional development and licensure standards. The CSO, through this position, provides guidance and consistent communication regarding licensure status to ensure that teachers remain in good standing with state education agencies.

The CSO website notes that all schools are expected to follow the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession. These standards, seven in all, include instructional and behavioral norms that are expected of teachers within the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese. Provided with these standards is a comprehensive explanation of each standard as well as an evaluation tool that could be utilized to monitor instructional success within each standard. Although these standards are referred to as a component utilized by all teachers in the Archdiocese, there was no information provided that demonstrated their use or the use of the evaluation tool to ascertain the level of proficiency for each standard. It is assumed that individual schools are responsible for evaluating their teachers. It is not known if these reports are submitted to the CSO nor if schools utilize a standardized tool or method for conducting evaluations of teachers.
Relevant listening sessions and survey feedback

In order to complete the academic assessment, qualitative data from visioning sessions and surveys are used to round out the findings. Data from these forums provide a sense of stakeholders’ opinions of academic quality and the strengths and challenges facing the Archdiocese in relation to academic excellence. Additional information on the data gathered through these forums can be found in the visioning session and survey report that is included as a section of this report.

Based on the comments shared through the visioning sessions and surveys, Catholic identity is viewed as the soul of a school, providing the cornerstone upon which the school’s mission is based. Academics, however, are understood to be the heart. Academics were listed by participants in all forums as a great source of strength for schools and their stakeholders. Within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati it is understood that academic programs offered by Catholic schools are one of the most important areas needing specialized attention, resources, and a commitment to ongoing development.

General analysis of the feedback suggests the understanding that the academic program provides the scope and structure that nurtures the spiritual, intellectual, and developmental needs of students. The strength and vitality of academic programs, inclusive of all curricular offerings, extracurricular offerings, and educational and developmental support services, form the basis upon which schools are compared and evaluated by potential parents and supporters of Catholic schools in general. The importance of this domain highlights the necessity of active leadership at the Archdiocesan level and points to the benefits of unified curricula across schools.

While academic programs were overwhelmingly cited as significant strengths, they were also listed as one of the primary challenges for schools. Feedback suggests the following as areas to be addressed: curriculum development, curriculum mapping, and expansion of the academic program. Related to specific aspects of the academic program, feedback suggests that participants are particularly concerned about the lack of academic programming and resources for students with special needs as well as for gifted students in Catholic schools. Participants also noted the lack of basic resources in many Catholic elementary schools in comparison to public and other types of schools, particularly in terms of technology.

When assessing academic programs, one element of critical importance is the link between the academic program that is offered and the efficacy of that program in meeting student needs and generating a compelling incentive to attract and retain future students. The linkage between the curriculum and the success of the school’s academic program rests primarily on the professionalism and abilities of the classroom teachers and the ongoing professional development of personnel. Feedback from visioning sessions and surveys regarding teachers varied widely. Some participants expressed praise and recognized the dedication of teachers. Others reported that teachers were subpar, attributing this to a low rate of compensation, and others viewed teachers as not being motivated. The substandard salary was viewed as a justice issue and was also viewed as an obstacle to faculty hiring and retention. Additional feedback criticized the status of and resources for teachers in Catholic schools. Feedback also called for better professional development opportunities, greater teacher accountability, and networking and collaboration opportunities for teachers and administrators.

Considerations for strategic planning related to academic excellence

Each paragraph below presents considerations for strategic planning based on the findings above that can be utilized by the members of the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Academic Excellence to guide its work.

Vesting more authority for educational leadership in the CSO in the area of curriculum development and standardization should be considered as a means to strengthen the academic mission of schools and ensure consistent, high-quality programs. The recent transition from a part-time curriculum position to a full time CSO position is a positive step and should enhance the CSO’s leadership in this area. Based on the number of times the disparity in curricula provided in schools was mentioned in visioning sessions, it appears that a system that provides oversight and can address these reported discrepancies is needed.
There is also a clear need for the development of rigorous programs to address the academic needs of students with special needs and those who are gifted learners. Survey and visioning session data suggest that Catholic schools, particularly elementary schools, are viewed as being best-suited for students who fall in the middle of the academic spectrum with limited opportunities available for students on either end of the learning spectrum. If this is accurate, Catholic schools are limited in their ability to serve all interested families.

The CSO is currently implementing systems to collect and manage data from standardized tests in a manner that will facilitate analysis and comparison of test scores. This is a positive step and will allow CSO personnel to provide better support for all schools on an ongoing basis. Standardized test scores and other measures of student achievement should be analyzed annually to determine the strength and limitations of academic programs. These results should be used to identify specific improvement goals and target CSO assistance.

In addition, the CSO should continue to encourage schools to qualify and apply for Blue Ribbon School status to incentivize academic improvements and provide strong evidence of academic success.

A strong and vibrant academic program is dependent upon the efficacy of the instruction that takes place within the classroom. As those who deliver the instructional program, teaching staffs should be a focal point for development and nurturing at both the school and Archdiocesan levels. Ways to enhance professional development opportunities for teachers should be explored to ensure teachers are current in educational research and best practice. Universities and colleges may be potential partners for the CSO in providing sustained programs available to all teachers. There are effective teachers in schools who should be recognized as such and utilized as resources to enhance professional development throughout the system. Teachers could also benefit from formal opportunities for collaboration and networking across schools and clusters to strengthen the craft of teaching and promote professional relationships among colleagues.

Teacher compensation should be studied to learn how salary and benefit packages of competing school systems compare to those offered in Catholic schools and the ways in which this may affect teacher recruitment and retention. It would also be beneficial for CSO staff to work with school stakeholders to develop standardized evaluation instruments for teachers and to ensure that teachers are assessed on a regular basis.
FINANCES, FINANCIAL VIABILITY, AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

ACE Consulting is recommending a strategic review of policies and programs that are geared toward enhancing finances and financial viability of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati by, among other strategies, strategically improving the value proposition of the schools via value-based budgets and increasing tuition assistance. We believe by combining the benefits of accurate and consistent reporting of financial information, including tuition, discounts, financial aid and expenses, alternative funding sources, and effective cost management, the financial performance of schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati can dramatically improve.

Findings

Fiscal management and oversight

The Catholic School Office’s (CSO) ability to evaluate the financial performance of schools is currently close to nonexistent. As a result of the historic and current decentralized structure, the CSO has no ability to monitor or predict the financial performance of the schools in the Archdiocese. Without timely, transparent, electronic reporting by the schools and associated parishes, there is little opportunity for the CSO to identify trends; evaluate strengths, weaknesses, and threats; and perform strategic planning. Consequently, the CSO is unable to evaluate the overriding financial challenges facing the schools and is hindered in its ability to enhance the sustainability of Catholic schools in light of new economic realities in their communities and the Catholic Church. These new economic realities impact all the financial areas of a school, including tuition, tuition assistance, and academic expenses, and permeate all aspects of the school system and the CSO.

Any ability to make recommendations for addressing this challenge are tied to the financial reporting, analysis, and management recommendations being provided in this assessment. ACE Consulting will input the financial data for fiscal years 2008 to 2011 to perform an assessment of the current financial situation of the schools as well as an assessment of historical trends. A template of the data to be captured has been prepared.

Given the central fact that the CSO currently provides little to no financial oversight of schools and limited data are available for review and analysis, the remainder of this assessment is composed of considerations for strategic planning and proposed action steps for implementation.

Considerations for strategic planning related to finances, financial viability, and development

To achieve financial benefits and viability, we have focused on providing considerations and implementation strategies in the following major categories: financial reporting and management, expectations and incentives for participation, revenue enhancing opportunities, and reducing costs.

Financial reporting and management

The CSO should have a defined role in ensuring and forecasting the overall financial health and wellbeing of Catholic schools across the Archdiocese, with appropriate capacity and clear responsibilities and policies at the Archdiocesan and school levels. Based on discussions with Archdiocesan leaders, the most serious impediment to fulfillment of this role is the lack of high-quality, timely, and transparent reporting of financial information. In order to allow the CSO to adequately and strategically monitor and support Catholic school financial health, additional support will need to be offered at the CSO level, clear policies and protocols should be established, and appropriate steps for implementation and training should be followed. If the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Finances, Financial Viability, and
Development chooses to adopt this recommendation, the following steps are recommended for implementation, in the order presented, as strategic planning proceeds:

- Move to a full time CSO Finance Officer who will analyze and monitor school finances and facilitate financial planning in collaboration with school and parish leaders.
- Implement a school budgeting process that results in tuition that matches the ability to pay and a school’s ability to fund existing and desired programs with costs and fundraising adjusted to the economic realities and projections of each school.
- Establish benchmarks for key performance ratios and accounting policies for revenue recognition and cost allocations. The benchmarks will target and monitor financial performance and cost allocation methodologies for consistent reporting and planning.
- Establish a clear process for providing consistent reports to individual school boards and finance committees and the CSO.
- Create requirements and templates for the electronic reporting of timely, consistent, and transparent financial information. Supplement with a resource booklet that includes a clear and concise explanation of reporting processes and procedures and all templates (with links to online versions of templates for easy electronic access) for distribution to all relevant stakeholders.
- Establish and provide guidance for finance committees on all school boards. The CSO should facilitate and ensure that each school board establishes a finance committee with leadership and oversight responsibility for school finances, and provide guidelines for its role.

**Expectations and incentives for participation**

To ensure that each Catholic school follows fiduciary guidelines and practices that maintain and enhance the integrity of the entire system of Catholic schools, the Archdiocese, in conjunction with the existing CISE program and fundraising efforts, should tie Archdiocesan funding opportunities to incentives to encourage compliance, increase performance in key areas, and shift from operating subsidies to tuition assistance. To achieve this, funding for schools should be explicitly and systematically tied to compliance with Archdiocesan policies and expectations that ensure quality and effective financial management at the school and Archdiocesan level. Funding should also be used as an incentive to adhere to CSO policies and processes meant to bolster the academic, governance, and effective management of Catholic schools. Similarly, the Archdiocese should move to tie all funding to tuition assistance. By focusing on tuition assistance, funding is used to drive up enrollment, which effectively leverages the investment by bringing additional sustainable revenue in the form of partial tuition into the schools and helping schools achieve their mission of providing accessible Catholic education to more children and families. Finally, funding should be used as competitive awards or competitive grants to incentivize performance in key areas. By offering a limited but significant amount of competitive funding, the Archdiocese can create a major effect in key performance areas by rewarding significant gains and improvements, such as increased enrollment and improved academic performance. If the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Finances, Financial Viability, and Development chooses to adopt these recommendations, the following steps are recommended for implementation, in the order presented, as strategic planning proceeds:

- Review and approve a proposed incentive funding policies with key stakeholders to finalize criteria, determine funding levels, and clarify accountability measures for non-compliance.
- Communicate with schools to prepare stakeholders for coming changes, set expectations for participation, clearly explain accountability measures, and share information about multiple training opportunities.
- Ensure an accurate tracking of compliance and participation in all mandatory processes, policies, and training.
- Continue to push all schools toward a full shift to a tuition assistance model and away from an operating subsidy approach. Consider allowing two to three years for a full transition, after which failure to function with tuition assistance model should entail negative funding implications for non-compliant schools.
• After compliance incentive funding policies are in place and functioning properly, introduce performance-based competitive grants to drive improvements with incentive funding for enrollment gains and academic improvement.

**Revenue enhancing opportunities and development**

**CSO development officer**

The Task Force should consider establishing a development officer position at the CSO level. An Archdiocesan-level development officer would have the responsibility of supporting all development efforts of the Archdiocesan educational entities, including schools, scholarship funds, and the CSO office. In assisting the schools, the development officer could identify and help implement best practices, coordinate activities, and support fundraising programs. The officer would also lead all CSO-related development efforts, including coordination with CISE and any newly created internal endowments or third-party scholarship programs.

**Independent fundraising and scholarship organization**

To enhance revenues for schools, ACE Consulting recommends considering the establishment of a single, coordinated, and highly-supported independent fundraising and scholarship organization. Best practices in the field of fundraising and private scholarship provisions for Catholic education suggest that an autonomous, non-profit organization, distinct from the Archdiocese with a significant engagement of business and community leaders, is the best method for generating and providing scholarship-based funding support to Catholic schools in a large metropolitan area. While the current structure and infrastructure of CISE should be used to inform the development of this organization, additional autonomy from the CSO is important, as evidenced by the success of other independent scholarship organizations. Examples include the Big Shoulders Fund in Chicago, the Catholic Schools Foundation in Boston, and the Patrons’ Program in New York City. As an autonomous, non-profit organization, the institution can focus its mission on fundraising and effective scholarship provision. Donors value this mission focus, independent management, and transparency. An autonomous organization can also more easily facilitate the engagement of non-Catholic donors that may be interested in providing quality school options for low-income students. By funding scholarships and tuition assistance the organization will help to drive enrollment in Catholic schools, which is the single most important factor for financial and school vitality. It is critical that the organization work in close collaboration with the CSO and in support of CSO policies and objectives for Catholic education, so as to advance the common mission of quality, accessible, and vital Catholic education in the Archdiocese. If the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Finances, Financial Viability, and Development chooses to adopt this recommendation, the following steps are recommended for implementation, in the order presented, as strategic planning proceeds:

• Establish a planning committee to set up initial seed investors and generate interest among key community leaders and philanthropists.
• Select and invite board members and procure initial seed funding and initial commitments.
• Launch and begin fundraising for first major goal.

**Unused and underutilized parish and Archdiocesan properties**

The second recommendation for revenue enhancement is to use centralized marketing and negotiation efforts to maximize revenue generated from unused and underutilized parish and Archdiocesan properties, including unused school buildings. New York, Washington, DC, Chicago and other dioceses and archdioceses have initiated coordinated, strategic plans to use available space to generate funds to support Catholic education. Additionally, these efforts continue the mission of the parishioners’ who funded and built the schools. The goal should be to maximize the revenue generated from the available facilities, and funnel as much revenue as possible and reasonable into the Fund to fuel enrollment growth. The following steps are recommended for implementation, in the order presented, as strategic planning proceeds:
• Review existing Archdiocesan and parish policies and practices regarding unused or underutilized space. Amend or generate policy where necessary to facilitate revenue generation.
• Identify unused or underutilized spaces.
• Identify Archdiocesan management responsibility.
• Clarify and communicate to pastors that the mission of the effort is that proceeds generated from available school space should be used for the original mission of the parish school, to support Catholic education.
• Propose and execute memorandum of understanding that clarifies:
  o Revenue split (example based on informal survey of targets for various (arch)dioceses):
    ▪ 45% to parish
    ▪ 45% to the Fund
    ▪ 10% to escrow to fund required maintenance of rented properties
  o Marketing and negotiation efforts
  o Property management
• Create a database that contains information on and monitors each unused or underutilized property.
• Identify and implement process for marketing available space.

Reducing costs

The CSO should pursue bulk purchasing for major goods and services for Archdiocesan schools to reduce system-wide costs annually by building capacity at the Archdiocese to manage procurement or by subcontracting with a firm to manage and negotiate contracts on behalf of the Archdiocese. System-wide procurement would enable schools in the Archdiocese to purchase many goods and services in bulk at a lower cost than if those goods and services were purchased by schools individually. Goods and services that may be obtained through procurement typically include utilities (heat, electricity, phone service), office equipment (computers, copiers), and office supplies (paper, cleaning supplies). If the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Finances, Financial Viability, and Development chooses to adopt this recommendation, the following steps are recommended for implementation, in the order presented, as strategic planning proceeds:

• Contact procurement service providers, determine preliminary scope of services, and estimate costs.
• Conduct cost/benefit analysis of pursuing procurement through an outside provider or pursuing procurement through current Archdiocesan/CSO staff.
• Communicate broadly with school stakeholders to notify them of any changes and provide contact information for questions.
GOVERNANCE

Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to inform leaders within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Catholic School Office (CSO), the Vision Steering Committee, and relevant task forces as they prepare a unifying vision and strategic plan for Catholic school education. This section of the assessment focuses on the governance of Catholic elementary and high schools. It will review the following areas critical to Catholic school governance:

- Archdiocesan Governance Structure
- School Models and Governance Structures
- School Viability Assessments

The governance assessment is based on written Archdiocesan policy, guidebooks, CSO staff interviews, and visioning session and survey feedback. It presents findings and considerations for strategic planning based on those findings.

Findings

Archdiocesan governance structure

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati utilizes an Education Commission model to support the governance of Catholic schools. An Archdiocesan Education Commission serves at the head of three regional education commissions (Cincinnati, Dayton, and North). The regional education commissions govern local parish education commissions. The Archdiocesan Synod of 1971 called for the establishment of education commissions in each parish. In the case of secondary schools and a limited number of elementary schools, boards of trustees or boards of limited jurisdiction serve in a governance capacity.

Education commissions

While education commission guidelines and Archdiocesan policy outline responsibilities and points of intersection between education commissions and school boards, the roles of each in governance can be confusing or at times conflicting. For example, as per Archdiocesan policy, the Archdiocesan Education Commission is responsible for strategic planning. While the Archdiocesan Education Commission has been consulted by the Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the current strategic planning process has been approved, direct involvement in the strategic planning process has been delegated to a Vision Steering Committee of widely representative stakeholders. It is important to note that this Vision Steering Committee has been diligent and effective in the execution of the strategic planning process. That said, the place of the Archdiocesan Education Commission is unclear and this group has had limited impact on the strategic planning process.

Boards of trustees and boards of limited jurisdiction

Archdiocesan policy and CSO guidelines reflect the direct involvement of boards in the governance models of Catholic schools. Fifteen Archdiocesan secondary schools are governed by a board of trustees or a board of limited jurisdiction. Only a small percentage of elementary schools presently have boards. It is unclear through available data how many local parish education commissions operate as de facto boards for elementary schools. It is also unclear how the mandated presence of a parish education commission impacts the potential for highly effective school boards to operate at parish elementary schools. Given the limited number of leaders available for governance positions in a parish and school community, staffing both an education commission and a school board can be challenging.
Policy clearly outlines the roles of school boards in strategic planning, policy, and performance evaluation and hiring of leadership. Policy also indicates that for a school to initiate a board of trustees or a board of limited jurisdiction, an appeal must be made to the regional area education commission. The regional area education commission sanctions the formation of a board and the bylaws. In this situation, the regional area education commission serves as a board approval review mechanism, which removes the initiation of a board from CSO authority and involvement. Since a school board works most directly with school leaders and CSO staff, this approval process for the formation of a school board may benefit from deeper CSO collaboration.

**Education commission handbook**

A handbook has been created to outline the governance role and operation of education commissions. This handbook was last revised in 1995 and thus the presentation and information contained within it reflect an outdated organization. A former Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools authored and signed the opening letter in the handbook.

The lack of attention provided to regularly updating this handbook may reflect a deficit of interest in this component of governance, which can lead to a question of its relevance. On the other hand, the education commission governance structure may have a direct and positive impact on schools and their role in governance may be so ingrained that there is no need for significant revision to the handbook.

**Parish education commissions**

The roles of the parish education commission as outlined in the handbook may present confusion and needless bureaucracy for school leadership and a school board. The education commission handbook calls for parish commission involvement in school related activities such as formulation and recommendation of policy, review of budget, and a process for hiring the administration. This assessment has been limited to a review of policy and the select availability of stakeholder input. This assessment did not include a formal study of the functionality and interrelation of school leaders, school boards, education commissions, parish councils, and CSO leadership. The Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Governance may seek additional data and input on this governance model to inform strategic planning in this domain.

**School models and governance structures**

The predominant governance model for Catholic elementary schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is the single parish school model. A shared governance model supports a limited number of regional or consolidated schools across several parishes in an area. The single parish governance model was highlighted in visioning session and survey data as providing the most support to a school. Data reflected that the parish was viewed as the most invested and directly supportive community relative to Catholic education in the Archdiocese when compared to the local neighborhood, the business community, the philanthropic community, and the Archdiocese. Local governance is essential when a parish serves as the primary financial support to a school.

**School viability assessments**

The CSO has taken initiative to provide better guidance and direct support in the process of determining school viability. Previous determinations to close schools have in some cases included the consultation of the CSO while, in other cases, closure was at the sole determination of the parish and school leadership. The CSO has asked pastors for a one-year moratorium on school closures, which has been obliged. Over this time, the CSO has been consulting with pastors, school leaders, and stakeholders regarding best practice in school viability study. Guidelines are being considered that bring the CSO into direct communication with any school questioning its viability. As the CSO considers the most impactful means to provide support to Catholic schools, a deep involvement must be considered in determination of school viability and interventions that may enhance viability.
Considerations for strategic planning related to governance

The list below summarizes and reiterates important areas of consideration for the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Governance as strategic planning moves forward:

- Clarify the role of the Archdiocesan Education Commission as it relates to strategic planning and other CSO activities and initiatives.
- Determine if the parish education commission model is relevant and/or providing value to the governance of Catholic schools.
- If the education commission governance model is to be maintained, review the handbook for education commissions to determine how well it reflects the activities of the commissions, if it needs to be updated, and if it needs to be modified to establish a more functional and efficient role for local education commissions. The Task Force on Governance may benefit from gathering additional feedback and information on this topic directly from school stakeholders, including principals, pastors, and education commission members.
- Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of active school advisory boards at the elementary school level and establish clearer lines of communication and authority between parish leadership and the CSO.
- Investigate the possibility of increasing CSO involvement and authority relative to the creation of school advisory boards.
- Provide for school advisory board training through the CSO.
- Support continued investigation of a robust and proactive CSO role in determinations of school viability.
ENROLLMENT AND MARKETING

Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to inform leaders within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Catholic School Office (CSO), the Vision Steering Committee, and relevant task forces as they prepare a unifying vision and strategic plan for Catholic school education. This section of the assessment focuses on enrollment and marketing for Archdiocesan Catholic schools. It will review the following areas related to marketing and enrollment management of Catholic schools:

- General Marketing and Branding
- Web-based Marketing and Communications
- Relevant Visioning Session and Survey Feedback
- Relevant Educational Landscape and Demographic Report Information
- Cluster Enrollment Trends, Tuition, and Demographics

The enrollment and marketing assessment is based on Archdiocesan data sets, demographics and other publicly available data, CSO staff interviews, and visioning session and survey feedback. The assessment presents findings and considerations for strategic planning based on those findings.

Findings

General marketing and branding

Superintendent’s Annual Report

The Superintendent sends out a letter and data packet containing enrollment figures each fall. Sharing the data with school leaders is to be commended. The title of the report may not be fully reflective of the information presented due to the fact that little to no analysis of the data is included. The report can be used as an opportunity to provide not only analysis but also vision and direction to school leaders.

Marketing assessment

The CSO has established an annual financial assessment that all schools must pay to support Archdiocesan-wide marketing initiatives. This is a helpful initiative provided the schools perceive and actually experience benefit from this assessment. The effectiveness of previous efforts funded by this assessment is unclear based on feedback from CSO staff. In addition, participants in the visioning sessions for pastors, principals, and other parish and school leaders frequently requested an Archdiocesan-level marketing campaign, indicating that they do not believe past efforts have been effective. Steps were taken in the 2010-2011 school year to transition responsibility for this marketing fund from the Catholic Education Collaborative staff to the CSO staff. The marketing fund was partially used for web-based enhancements with a majority of the funds reserved for 2011-2012. The responsibility for this fund and the associated marketing activities now resides with the Director of Strategic Planning. It will be important to develop a clear and impactful plan for the implementation of these funds.
CSO professional staff

The restructuring of the CSO, including the hiring of two new positions with a focus on marketing and enrollment, presents a new opportunity for the CSO to impact enrollment trends in the Archdiocese. The Director of Strategic Planning will have full responsibility for developing and implementing a marketing plan. This plan will include the support of a part-time Coordinator for Latino Outreach. This coordinator will have responsibility for engaging and enrolling a larger percentage of the Latino population in Catholic schools. This new emphasis on expanding CSO capacity to impact enrollment is in alignment with feedback from school leaders and stakeholders voicing the need for support and leadership in this area. As the CSO staff members responsible for the marketing plan seek to implement it, the meaningful inclusion of CSO Regional Directors will be important for monitoring implementation at the school level.

Communications

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and the CSO benefit from a community that consistently demonstrates interests in the Catholic Church and her schools. This has become evident in media coverage and through engagement with visioning sessions and surveys throughout this process. The Archdiocese and the CSO also have the benefit of experienced staff providing strong support for both proactive and reactive media outreach and general communications. The communications plan surrounding the strategic visioning and planning process has been executed in a timely and thoughtful manner by the Archdiocesan and CSO staff involved with implementation. The general appetite for information about Catholic schools in the Archdiocese is strong and must be consistently fed with accurate and forward-looking news presenting a vision of the path ahead. Consistently addressing this need will pave the way for implementation of a vision and plan which involves and earns the support of informed stakeholders.

Web-based marketing and branding

Archdiocesan and Catholic School Office websites

The website for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (www.CatholicCincinnati.org) represents a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to online communications and branding. This website presents information in a clear and uncluttered fashion, incorporating industry standard communication tools into a design model that is fresh, relevant, user-friendly, and easy to read. Catholic education and specifically Catholic schools are well positioned on the homepage with several pathway links incorporated in various places throughout the page. In particular, Catholic schools feature prominently with the “find a school” link located at the top of the homepage, between the Archdiocesan logo and the “search” function. Additionally, the centerpiece of the homepage highlights a series of three feature stories. The “Lighting the Way” website dedicated to the visioning and strategic planning process has been highlighted as a feature story at the opening of the 2011-2012 school year. This is a high profile position on the website and reflects Archdiocesan investment in and attention to this visioning and planning process. Overall, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati homepage reflects a high degree of intentionality around driving attention to Catholic schools.

The “Lighting the Way” website (www.CatholicCincinnati.org/education/lighting_the_way), dedicated to the visioning and planning process, presents an accessible, clear, and current description of activities and goals. The FAQ section of this website offers a range of information presented in a manner designed to anticipate stakeholder concerns with the process. The FAQs have been adjusted to reflect the most current phases of the process and demonstrates significant attention to detail. This website is updated with other means of communications such as monthly newsletters and seasonal video updates. Overall, the Lighting the Way website incorporates key elements for ensuring that stakeholders are continuously engaged and informed.

The CSO website (http://valuesforalifetime.com) provides relevant information about schools with a specific focus on marketing the schools to parents and students considering educational options. The intentional design and marketing-
based focus of the website is to be commended. The prominent banner headlining the homepage directly engages parent decision makers regarding the value of a Catholic education. Additional prominent features of the website that facilitate a marketing and enrollment focus include: a map-based, searchable school locator; customizable search history; fast facts; FAQs; and testimonials.

**School locator website**

The school locator portion of the CSO website presents a comprehensive approach to marketing Catholic schools to parents and students seeking an educational option. All 22 high schools and 92 elementary schools are included in a customizable search that includes individual school profiles, website links, and admissions and contact information. It is important to note that all but one of the 114 schools has a website. Though this assessment did not review the quality of each school’s website, the fact that this high a percentage of schools is positioned to market and communicate via the web supports the ability to impact enrollment.

**Social media**

The CSO has incorporated a blog authored by the Director of Education Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools and a Facebook page that presents fans with regular updates. Both initiatives reflect a CSO that is working to stay current with the most relevant means of communication among parents, students, and stakeholders.

**Web-based communications**

The significant amount of quality web-based marketing and branding is to be commended. Continued efforts to ensure consistent updating, promotions, and analysis of web traffic will be critical to ensure that positive developments in this area are maintained.

**Relevant visioning session and survey feedback**

The section below presents information related to enrollment and marketing from the seven visioning sessions and two surveys conducted as part of the assessment process. Enrollment and marketing topics and concerns were frequent items of discussion in the visioning sessions and surveys conducted for this report. The feedback summarized below presents the most relevant aspects of those conversations. Additional feedback from these forums can be found in the full report on the visioning sessions and surveys.

**Enrollment**

Participants in surveys and visioning sessions frequently cited declining enrollments as one of the greatest challenges facing Catholic schools. Declines in enrollment are particularly devastating because they can negatively impact many other aspects of school operations—including finances, academics, and sense of community—and they are often self-perpetuating, making reversal of the pattern difficult.

Because of the difficulty of maintaining or increasing enrollment after school populations have begun to decline, a notable minority of participants in the public survey advocated for mergers or consolidations of shrinking schools to increase overall enrollment, eliminate the perception that the schools are faltering, and offer a fresh start. This recommendation was also present in the feedback from the pastor, principal, and other leader visioning sessions, but it was rare. This is likely because the participants are more attached to individual schools and also because they are more aware of the difficulties inherent in restructuring.
To truly address enrollment declines, it is important to understand why they are occurring. The feedback from the visioning sessions and surveys provides insight into why the participants believe more families do not choose Catholic schools or even why the participants themselves have not chosen Catholic schools. The reasons offered include:

- **Declining Catholic population**
  - This concern was discussed most frequently by participants in the pastor, principal, and school and parish leader visioning sessions. Disaffection with the Catholic Church was cited as causing many current problems, including enrollment declines and a general lack of interest in and support for Catholic schools.

- **Lack of affordability**
  - Participants in the public survey overwhelming cited affordability as a barrier to choosing Catholic schools. They focused particularly on growing high school tuitions, but also described elementary school tuitions as problematic for many families. They also indicated that financial aid options are not promoted well or are not sufficient.

- **Weak Catholic identity and low-quality faith formation**
  - This challenge was discussed most frequently in the public visioning sessions and, to a lesser degree, in the public survey. Those who cited it as a concern were often passionate about the need to reform the religion curriculum in Catholic schools and to provide religious instruction in all core academic areas. Several also called for requiring teachers to pledge to model a specific type of Catholicity both in and out of school and, to a lesser extent, to limit enrollment in Catholic schools to only Catholic students or to students whose parents have agreed to meet certain standards.
  - The weak Catholic identity in many schools was cited as a reason for declining enrollments because parents would not be willing to pay tuition for a Catholic school that is only nominally Catholic. Instead, they would choose a public school and provide religious instruction at home and through their parish or they would join the growing home school movement.

- **Competition from public and, to a lesser degree, Christian schools**
  - Participants cited numerous areas in which public schools may be superior to Catholic schools, including:
    - Academic quality
    - Availability of educational resources, particularly technology
    - Programs for students with special needs
    - Programs for gifted students
    - Expansive extracurricular opportunities, especially for athletics
    - Teacher quality
    - Updated facilities
  - The characteristics listed above are areas in which Catholic schools can struggle to offer the same opportunities or quality as nearby public schools, generally because of funding limitations. Although they may not represent the priorities of all families, many families do value these characteristics and will choose a public school over a Catholic school if it meets or exceeds their expectations in these domains. This competition can lead to enrollment declines in Catholic schools.
• Lack of academic quality and educational resources
  
  o Although addressed in the section on public schools above, the importance of academic quality and 
    resources is emphasized here because it was highlighted by participants in the public survey and, to a 
    lesser degree, by participants in the pastor, principal, and other school and parish leader visioning 
    sessions. The general category is wide and encompasses many of the characteristics of public schools 
    listed above. It is important to note that a weakness in only one of those areas in a Catholic school may 
    lead families to choose a non-Catholic school. Therefore, even if public schools do not offer superior 
    quality in each area, parents may still choose those schools, especially because they do not have to pay 
    tuition.

  One of the correctives for the enrollment crisis discussed during the visioning sessions is increased use of the EdChoice 
  Scholarship Program. Participants noted that the vouchers would effectively address concerns about affordability for 
  certain families within the Archdiocese. Other participants, however, expressed concerns about the program because many 
  of the program participants are not Catholic and they felt that Catholic identity would be further weakened by their 
  attendance. They also expressed concerns about the academic abilities of students who use vouchers and about their 
  behavior and the commitment of their parents to their educations. In fact, a few participants suggested that Catholic 
  schools could be improved and enrollment would increase by refusing to accept students who utilize the vouchers. These 
  discussions suggest a debate within the Archdiocesan community regarding efforts to increase enrollment and, more 
  importantly, the nature and mission of Catholic schools.

  The discussion of vouchers and the reasons cited for declining enrollment above hint at an apparent division among 
  members of the Archdiocesan community, particularly parents. The disagreement centers on whether to prioritize Catholic 
  identity or academic quality in Catholic schools. Theoretically, the two domains are not in conflict and both can be strong 
  within a school. The debate, however, indicates that the two positions may be in opposition on specific elements. For 
  instance, the group calling for strong and pervasive Catholic identity suggested requiring that all teachers be active 
  Catholics. This necessarily narrows the pool of potential teachers for schools and may eliminate many high-quality 
  teachers who could improve academic outcomes. Another example is that parents who prioritize academic quality may be 
  concerned that utilizing textbooks with an explicitly Catholic frame of reference would reduce quality and negatively 
  impact Catholic school students’ ability to compete academically with students from other schools, particularly for college 
  placements. Ultimately, most parents in the Archdiocese are likely in the middle of the spectrum on this debate but those 
  who feel strongly one way or the other are more passionate, vocal, and involved.

Marketing

Effective marketing was commonly cited as one tool to stop and reverse enrollment declines in Catholic schools. 
Participants in the visioning sessions for pastors, principals, and other school leaders and in the public visioning sessions 
frequently requested an Archdiocesan-led marketing campaign for Catholic schools. They indicated that a coordinated 
effort to promote the schools would be the most efficient method for educating families about the value of Catholic 
schools and potentially increasing enrollments. Although participants were reluctant to advocate for Archdiocesan 
involvement in most aspects of school operations, there was a clear call for assistance and intervention in this domain.

Closely related to the desire for coordinated marketing campaigns was the hope expressed by many participants that the 
level of competition between schools in the Archdiocese would be reduced. While this wish was commonly expressed in 
relation to high schools, several participants also bemoaned the increased competition between elementary schools that 
resulted from declining enrollments and policies that eliminated parochial boundaries for elementary school enrollment. 
They noted that schools spend too much of their tuition income on marketing campaigns that may create or intensify 
feelings of antagonism among schools and parishes. By centralizing marketing efforts, the Archdiocese may better be able 
to foster a sense of camaraderie and team spirit among schools and reduce rivalries.
As is suggested above, many of the requests for a coordinated marketing campaign appear to be driven by financial concerns at the individual school level. Archdiocesan marketing efforts could reduce the amount of money schools spend to attract students and potentially increase enrollments and bring more tuition dollars into schools.

In addition to requesting Archdiocesan marketing efforts, a notable minority of participants in the visioning sessions expressed hopes that Catholic schools will be discussed and advocated for more frequently during Masses and other parish activities. This desire relates to concerns that some pastors in the Archdiocese would prefer not to have parish schools and/or do not actively encourage families to choose Catholic schools. Those who expressed concern about this felt that regular advocacy for schools by pastors and other parish employees and leaders would be a cost-effective form of marketing that would reach a crucial target audience for Catholic school recruitment. It should be noted that many participants indicated that pastors at their schools are deeply involved in and committed to the schools, indicating that disengagement on the part of the pastor and the parish is not widespread.

The feedback from the visioning sessions and surveys also provides information on what aspects of Catholic schools should be actively marketed. The aspects of the schools for which participants had the most praise include:

- **Strong Catholic identity and faith formation**
  - This was also a characteristic of the schools for which participants, especially those in the public visioning sessions, had the most criticism. The apparently conflicting opinions illustrate a division within the Archdiocese regarding the perceived quality of Catholic identity and faith formation in Catholic schools.

- **Academic excellence**
  - As was noted in the section above on enrollment, participants also criticized this aspect of schools by noting that academic quality could be improved, Catholic schools are unable to provide appropriate education for students with special needs and for gifted students, academic quality is varied across schools in the Archdiocese, and many schools lack educational resources to help them compete with public schools.

- **Sense of community/welcoming atmosphere**
  - While a strong sense of community is attractive to many parents, it can be a double-edged sword because it is often most pronounced in small schools and schools with large legacy populations. Each of these characteristics may make parents reluctant to choose schools, either because they worry about a lack of resources in the schools or because they are concerned they will not be accepted by the families that have been involved with the schools for generations. A few comments provided in the public survey highlight the latter concern because parents reported having to transfer their students out of schools that were too “cliquish.”

- **Holistic education/values-based education**
  - Discussion of the benefits of holistic education or “education of the whole child” and of values-based education was most common in the visioning sessions for pastors, principals, and other leaders. Values-based education was, however, rated as a primary benefit of Catholic schools by a majority of participants in the public survey. Despite the appreciation of this characteristic among a large group of respondents, a few noted in the open-ended comments that they were uncomfortable with the term because it denotes a generally Christian or secular type of education rather than an explicitly Catholic education.
• **Caring and dedicated faculty and staff**

  o Teachers received almost universal praise for their dedication, which many believe is exemplified by their willingness to work for low salaries. They did not, however, escape criticism in other areas. Concerns were expressed regarding both their academic quality and their commitment to respondents’ preferred Catholic ideals. In addition, although they were applauded for working for low salaries, respondents also noted that the low pay made it difficult to attract and/or retain high-quality teachers.

• **Diversity**

  o While several respondents cited diversity as a strength of Catholic schools, evidence indicates many schools in the Archdiocese are not truly diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or religion (although many appear to reflect the demographics of the communities in which they are located). For this reason, marketing diversity in schools, especially at an Archdiocesan level, may be of limited utility at this time. As parents increasingly seek schools that reflect the wider society, though, efforts to improve diversity in schools may be beneficial.

• **Service and service learning**

  o A few participants noted specifically that service learning is becoming more common in public schools. Catholic schools can advertise their strong tradition of service and commitment to social justice as a tool to address that focus and illustrate strong credentials in this domain.

• **Variety of academic and other programs**

  o Participants in the pastor, principal, and other school and parish leaders visioning sessions were the most likely to explicitly mention this characteristic of schools within the Archdiocese. While participants in all forums recognized that each school is unique, those groups were most likely to frame the concept as providing a variety of specialized options that can attract families. They were also most likely to recommend the development of additional specialized programs and schools to attract specific groups of students and parents.

• **New unifying vision for Catholic schools**

  o The unifying vision for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati offers a clear marketing opportunity if it is meaningful, enforceable, and clearly communicated. It can represent a new beginning for schools and attest to their sustainability under the new plan.

When discussing which characteristics of Catholic schools to market, several participants indicated that they are convinced Catholic schools are better than other schools on many measures but the evidence has not been provided for parents to make a data-based decision. This highlights the importance of ensuring that data are available to support marketing efforts and that parents have access to the information needed to inform their educational choices. Evaluation and transparency are vital, especially given the strong focus on accountability in public schools.

**Relevant educational landscape and demographic report information**

This section of the enrollment and marketing assessment presents information from the Educational Landscape and Demographic Reports that is relevant for enrollment and marketing. Additional information on the educational market and
demographics of school communities can be found in the full reports, which are included as a portion of the Initial Assessment Report.

The Educational Landscape report presents a great deal of information on Catholic school enrollment and demographics that is reiterated in the section below on cluster enrollment trends, tuition, and demographics. For that reason, this synopsis of the report will focus on the comparisons of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese to public schools, which represent Catholic schools’ primary competitors in the educational marketplace. The report presents the following findings regarding public school districts in the Archdiocese that are relevant for enrollment and marketing:

- All examined school districts have populations in which at least 30% of the students are classified as “economically disadvantaged.”
  - Only CISE schools serve a higher proportion of students from low-income families than are in the public school district in which they are located.

- With the exception of CISE, most clusters are less racially and ethnically diverse than their public school counterparts.

- The public schools serve only a small number of students who are classified as Limited English Proficient, indicating only small communities of immigrants in the Archdiocesan community.

- Seventy-five percent or more of the students in the public school districts passed the English portion of state-mandated standardized tests, with the exception of the school districts associated with CISE and Dayton.

- Public school students were less successful in math, with only three of the examined public school districts having 75% or more students pass the state test.

- Public high schools in the Archdiocese generally have strong graduation rates and outcomes on the Ohio Graduation Test in both reading and math.
  - The districts that struggle most on these measures are Cincinnati, Dayton, and Springfield.
  - The district with the strongest outcomes on all measures is Sycamore, which corresponds with areas in the Eastern Suburban cluster.

- Most Catholic high schools have higher average ACT scores than the districts in which they are located, although several Catholic high school averages are similar to the public averages.

The information outlined below is from the Demographic Report. It is separated by cluster.

- CISE schools are located in Cincinnati. The schools have more black and low-income students than are represented in the general population, likely reflecting their focus on enrolling students from the inner-city. Only 3% of the city’s population is classified as Latino. The population of the city declined in recent years, as did the Catholic population of the county in which it is located.

- The city of Dayton is similar to Cincinnati in terms of race, overall population declines, and declines in the Catholic population in the county in which it is located. The median income is slightly higher, but the percentage of residents in poverty is higher and educational attainment is lower. Kettering, which also has schools from the Dayton cluster, is somewhat more affluent and educated, but the population is older and there are likely declining numbers of students available in that city.

- The Eastern cluster is partially represented by Cincinnati demographics. One school is located in Amelia, a small town with a growing, predominantly white population. Residents are also relatively young, which is positive in terms of the pool of students from which the school can recruit.

- The Eastern Suburban cluster is represented partly by Cincinnati and also by Butler County in the demographics. This county is a growing area that is predominantly white and affluent. The county has comparatively low rates of private school attendance, though, possibly indicating a strong public school system in the area.

- The city of Hamilton represents the Hamilton cluster. Demographically, it lands in the middle of the clusters on many characteristics. It is somewhat diverse and, at 6%, its Latino population is larger than any of the other cities examined. Related to income, residents are better off than those in Cincinnati, but not in most other areas. The
city has low levels of private school attendance and poor students are underrepresented in Catholic schools based on their presence in the general population.

- The two largest schools in the Northern cluster are located in the cities of Piqua and Sidney. Piqua has a shrinking population and high median age, two factors that reduce the pool of potential students. In addition, private school attendance is low in the city. Sidney is similar to Piqua in many ways. Although its population increased in recent years, it is predicted to decline in the next few years. Median incomes in both areas are not strong, although better than a few other areas examined for the report.
- Northwestern schools are all located in the city of Cincinnati and they are in different zip codes. Therefore, it is best to utilize the Cincinnati demographics to understand the cluster’s position, with the understanding that the city is diverse and has concentrated areas of demographic representation.
- Four schools in the Western cluster are in zip code 45238 and the demographics for that area are used to examine the cluster community. The demographics provide a good example of the concentration of specific groups of residents in neighborhoods in Cincinnati. The area is predominantly white and educational attainment and median income is relatively high. Few residents live in poverty, especially when compared to Cincinnati as a whole. Rates of private school attendance are unusually high, indicating a strong culture of private school attendance.

Cluster enrollment trends, tuition, and demographics

The section below presents a description of a set of charts for each cluster of schools within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and an overview of the information presented in the charts. The charts are included as appendices to this report, separated by cluster. When years are not specified in the charts, the data are for the 2010-2011 academic year.

Because high school information is not readily comparable to the elementary school clusters, the narrative information presented below is solely for the eight elementary school clusters unless otherwise noted. In general, high schools follow many of the same patterns as the elementary schools in terms of enrollment, tuition, and demographics.

General and enrollment charts

Chart One shows how many schools are currently in each cluster and how many separate schools have received a Blue Ribbon School designation in the past ten years.

The charts provide basic information on schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and hints at the diversity across clusters by highlighting the varying sizes of the clusters—ranging from 17 to 6 schools—and their records of academic distinctions.

Chart Two presents ten-year total enrollment trends for the clusters and the percentage change in enrollments over that time. The chart also shows cluster enrollment capacity. The calculations do not include enrollments for schools that closed prior to the 2010-2011 academic year. They do include schools that opened after 2001-2002.

Because of the varying numbers of schools in clusters and the diversity of facilities for those schools, capacity varies greatly with the largest being approximately 10,000 students in the Western cluster and the lowest being near 1,700 students in the CISE and Northern clusters. None of the clusters are at capacity, with some falling almost 50% short of maximizing their facility use.

The only cluster that has not experienced enrollment decline over the past ten years is CISE. The positive trend in that cluster is likely due to usage of the Educational Choice Scholarship Program and active fundraising to subsidize tuition for additional students. Enrollment in other clusters ranges from near stability; with declines of 1% in Northwest, 2% in Eastern, and 3% in Hamilton; to alarming declines, represented by a 39% reduction in enrollment in the Northern cluster. It is important to remember that no schools which closed prior to 2010-2011 are included in the enrollment trends and all declines indicate shrinking populations at schools which are currently operating.
Chart Three presents one-year enrollment totals for each cluster by grade level and the percentage difference in kindergarten or 1st grade enrollment compared to 6th or 8th grade enrollment. The chart also shows grade level enrollment capacity. Comparison groups for enrollment vary based on grade level capacity. Preschool enrollment is omitted from the charts because many schools do not have preschools.

These charts suggest a degree of stability in many of the clusters because enrollment in early grades is at or near replacement levels for graduating classes. Only one cluster—Northwest—has a deficit greater than 7% when late grades are compared to earlier grades that are comparable in capacity. Eastern, Eastern Suburban, and Hamilton have kindergarten or first grade enrollments that exceed enrollments in 8th grade. These illustrations are heartening in terms of future enrollment trends because they suggest the potential for a degree of stability in enrollment numbers that has been absent for most clusters in recent years.

Tuition charts

(A discussion of individual schools’ tuitions has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report and the accompanying charts have been removed from the appendices.)

Chart Five illustrates ten-year average tuition trends in the cluster and reports the percentage increase in average tuition over time. Because it illustrates trends, outliers are not omitted from the calculations of the average tuition. Schools are not included in the average, though, if no data are available for a specific year because the school was not yet open or because the data are missing.

CISE clearly had one of the steepest rates of increase at 162%. Again, this growth is likely related to the ability to utilize government and donor funds to subsidize tuitions. Two other clusters, though, experienced more significant increases in tuition. Tuition in the Eastern cluster increased by 177%, primarily due to the opening of a school in 2002-2003 with a higher than average tuition. Tuitions in that area have been comparatively more stable since that year, with a 55% increase over the past nine years. The Eastern Suburban cluster also experienced a higher average tuition increase than CISE. Again, the steep rise of tuition is primarily related to the presence of two schools with higher than average tuitions and significant increases. Without those schools, tuition increases are 60% over ten years. The lowest percentage increase is 38% in the Northern cluster, indicating that no clusters have experienced tuition stability in the past decade. Schools in the Northern cluster may have been compelled to minimize tuition increases to prevent further loss of enrollment in the cluster, again highlighting the importance of market forces on tuition rates. This is further reinforced by the fact that several of the clusters with larger tuition increases are those with the relatively most stable enrollments over ten years, indicating their ability to raise tuition in general or sustain a small number of schools with higher than average tuitions.

High school tuition trends also illustrate a steep rise in education costs to families, with a 56% increase over ten years. (A mention of an individual school’s tuition has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.) The tuition changes provide supporting evidence for the deeply-felt concern among community members regarding the accessibility of Catholic high school education. If tuition continues to increase at the same rates over the next years, starting from the average tuition of $8,824 (without St. Rita), a 56% increase would lead to an average high school tuition of $13,765 in 2020-2021.

Overall, mapping tuition trends against enrollment trends by cluster would illustrate inverse relationships or, at best, a lack of direct relationship between the two variables in every cluster except CISE.

Demographic charts

Chart Six presents the racial and ethnic distribution of the student populations at cluster schools.

1 The tuition data provided did not indicate whether the rates represent in-parish tuition or other tuition rates.
CISE is the outlier in this set of charts. For race and ethnicity, CISE schools are majority black while all other clusters (including high school) are at least 77% white. The three most diverse clusters on this variable are CISE, Dayton, and Northwest because they enroll students from several racial and ethnic groups in proportions higher than in other clusters. None of the clusters, though, are truly diverse in terms of representation because all have one group that accounts for more than 70% of the student population. As is noted in the demographic section of this report, however, many of the clusters have student populations that are representative of the areas in which they are located.

**Chart Seven** contains information on students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, utilized Title I services in the previous year, and use the EdChoice Scholarship Program in comparison to the total school population.

For the information related to family income, again, CISE is noticeably different than the other clusters. A majority of students in CISE schools qualify for free and reduced lunch, almost one-third utilized Title I services in the previous year, and almost one-half have EdChoice Scholarships. The remaining clusters enroll varying numbers of students from families with low incomes, with Dayton appearing to be the next most successful at serving students from economically disadvantaged families. Two clusters—Hamilton and Northern—enroll no students with EdChoice Scholarships, suggesting none of their schools have chosen to participate in the program. The demographic report suggests that some of the clusters are located in affluent areas that likely have small numbers of students that would qualify for any of the programs represented in the charts. In other clusters, the small numbers of economically disadvantaged students may be indicative of a lack of access to financial aid or reluctance among school stakeholders to serve students from families with low incomes, as was indicated by a few participants in the visioning sessions and surveys.

**Chart Eight** presents the total number of students in each cluster who are Catholic and non-Catholic and the number of EdChoice Scholarship Program students who are Catholic and non-Catholic.

The charts show that, in all clusters except CISE, the overwhelming majority of students are Catholic. For clusters that enroll students with EdChoice Scholarships, the percentage of Catholic students among the voucher recipients varies widely. Only in the Western cluster, though, are the majority of those students Catholic. The predominance of Catholic students in the schools is related to racial and ethnic diversity because most Catholics are white or Latino and the Latino population in Ohio is small. Therefore, the vast majority of Catholic students in the Archdiocese are likely white. Opinions differ on whether or not Catholic schools should actively recruit non-Catholic students, but it is likely that, strictly from an enrollment perspective, it could be beneficial because the Catholic population in many counties in the Archdiocese is shrinking, as shown in the demographic report.

**Considerations for strategic planning related to enrollment and marketing**

The section below presents areas of consideration for the Visioning Steering Committee Task Force for Enrollment and Marketing as the strategic planning process proceeds. Given stakeholder calls for Archdiocesan-level intervention and assistance within this domain, strategic planning activities should be directed toward establishing a strong commitment on the part of the CSO to assisting schools in these vital areas.

**CSO leadership**

Upon review of staff position descriptions and individual interviews, the CSO professional staff did not reflect a specific focus on marketing and enrollment management. CSO staff did not present a cohesive focus on a responsibility to positively impact enrollment. With the CSO restructuring, this is beginning to be addressed as the Director of Strategic Planning and the Coordinator for Latino Outreach commence activities. These staff positions will be critical to impacting enrollment. A thorough and coordinated planning process should be utilized to guide their efforts in collaboration with school leaders and stakeholders. The CSO may consider identifying a subset or cluster of schools that can serve as a pilot group. This pilot group of schools could benefit from working with the CSO staff on planning, implementing, and
evaluating marketing and enrollment management plans. Criteria for identifying pilot schools to partner with the CSO may include enrollment trends, demographic trends (e.g., sizable Latino populations), willing participation of school leaders, and the availability of school stakeholders to form enrollment management teams. The Vision Steering Committee Task Force for Enrollment and Marketing may consider identifying potential pilot schools as part of the strategic planning process.

Archdiocesan and CSO marketing and communication efforts

The assessment indicates that web-based communication and marketing efforts on behalf of Catholic schools are strong and should be maintained, regularly evaluated, and enhanced where needed. Other CSO-level efforts related to marketing and communication have been less powerful or need to be enhanced to fully reflect the spirit of the visioning and strategic planning process, as is indicated in the analysis above. The addition of CSO staff members with a specific focus on marketing will help to address this concern and ensure that all communications to school leaders and community members are impactful, relevant, and reflective of the financial contribution made by schools to the Archdiocese in support of marketing.

Utilizing marketing and enrollment management plans

The Vision Steering Committee Task Force for Enrollment and Marketing may consider establishing a marketing and enrollment management plan template or recommending the development of a template. This planning template could be developed in consultation with CSO staff and school leaders to represent the best thinking around an annual plan to support marketing and enrollment management at the school level. Two variations of this planning template could be developed: one for elementary schools and one for secondary schools. The design team could include CSO staff and school leaders with records of positively impacting student enrollment. Schools utilizing the planning template may benefit from a cohort model that includes common time for planning, sharing, and monitoring their collective experience. The Catholic Schools Office in the Archdiocese of Chicago utilizes a similar model that incorporates CSO leaders with a specific enrollment management plan and a cohort approach to identifying and working with a pilot group of schools seeking to increase student enrollment. The plan should include the following elements:

- **Value Proposition and Messaging** – This element would focus a school on clearly articulating their value proposition, identifying their position in a competitive marketplace, and developing a commonly understood message to be shared by all stakeholders and consistently expressed in marketing materials and activities.
- **Communications Strategy** – This element would outline the communication methods, goals, timelines, responsible parties, and anticipated outcomes.
- **Recruitment Strategies** – This element would include specific activities to engage parents and students that would ultimately result in the enrollment of new students.
- **Retention Strategies** – This element would include specific activities designed to ensure for the maximum retention of all enrolled students.

Collecting and disseminating data

To best inform marketing and enrollment management planning at the CSO and school levels, it will be essential to have better systems for data collection and dissemination. The CSO may consider ways to dedicate more attention to the collection and analysis of enrollment data. Additionally, specific recommendations regarding data collection are provided for other domains that were assessed for this report. All data collection efforts could be coordinated and centralized to maximize the use of resources.
Impact of Education Choice Voucher Program

The Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati have been active in the Ohio Educational Choice Scholarship Pilot Program. In the 2010-2011 school year, 3,468 students were enrolled in Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati through the support of this program. This represents 26% of the total program participants (13,213) throughout Ohio. It is important to note the impact on enrollment specifically in 2007-2008, the year the voucher program began operation. Several clusters experienced an enrollment bump in that particular year. Trends since that time indicate that, in most of the clusters with this enrollment bump, enrollments have trended back to pre-voucher levels. It is also important to note that the voucher program had a cap of 14,000 participants prior to the 2011-2012 academic year. The cap was raised to 30,000 students in 2011-2012 and will increase to 60,000 in 2012-2013. This should be taken into consideration when developing enrollment plans. The impact of the voucher program on tuition presents another area in need of closer analysis. The voucher program can incentivize school leaders to increase tuition closer to full cost in an effort to capitalize on the fullest extent of the voucher funds available. This tuition adjustment may have an unintended negative impact on enrollment of students from families unable to participate in the voucher program. The Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Enrollment and Marketing may consider a deeper analysis of data related to the Educational Choice Scholarship Program to provide a comprehensive awareness of the program’s impact.

Declining enrollment clusters

As part of the strategic planning process, the Vision Steering Committee Task Force on Enrollment and Marketing may choose to carry out pilot enrollment and marketing efforts in partnership with clusters facing the greatest enrollment challenges. Based on trends for the past ten years, this group would likely include the high school, Eastern, Northern, and Western clusters. All clusters other than CISE have encountered enrollment challenges, though, and current enrollments hint at the possibility of continued declines. Although comparisons of enrollments in early and later grades suggest stability in many clusters, only one cluster, Hamilton, has early grade enrollments that exceed late grade enrollment by more than 5%. If schools can expect standard attrition rates of 5%, all clusters may experience continued enrollment declines. The Northwest cluster is in a particularly precarious position on this measure. Although overall enrollment declined only 1% from 2001-2002 to 2010-2011, enrollment varied greatly between those years and current enrollments by grade level reflect an 18% deficit in early grades.

Because of the relationship between tuition and enrollment trends, enrollment plans must address affordability and financial assistance. All clusters have experienced noteworthy tuition increases and school stakeholders and community members frequently expressed concerns about tuition as a barrier to enrollment.

Tri-county school group

CSO personnel have identified a group of schools, called the Tri-County Schools, that consists of portions of the Hamilton, Eastern Suburban, and Dayton clusters and which is felt to represent a promising area for enrollment growth. The data available for this assessment are not sufficient to thoroughly examine and make recommendations regarding the possibility for enrollment growth or the sustainability of new Catholic schools in the area. It is recommended that the Task Force for Enrollment and Marketing collect additional quantitative and qualitative data related to the schools, parishes, and communities in the area to make informed recommendations and decisions regarding the possibilities in the area as they relate to Catholic schools. ACE Consulting personnel can provide guidance in this area throughout the strategic planning process.
LEADERSHIP

Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to inform leaders within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Catholic School Office (CSO), the Vision Steering Committee, and relevant task forces as they prepare a unifying vision and strategic plan for Catholic school education. This section of the assessment focuses on the leadership of Catholic schools at the administrative level. To define the scope, Catholic school leadership at the administrative level will center on the chief administrator positions of principal and president of secondary and elementary schools. It will review the following areas critical to effective leadership in Catholic schools:

- Recruiting and Retaining Catholic School Leaders
- Professional Development and Ongoing Formation
- Performance Evaluation

The leadership assessment is based on written Archdiocesan policy, guidebooks, CSO staff interviews, and visioning session and survey feedback. It presents findings and considerations for strategic planning based on those findings.

Findings

Recruiting and retaining Catholic school leaders

Upon review of visioning session and survey feedback, ensuring that strong leaders staff Catholic schools is a significant priority for stakeholders. Recruiting and retaining quality leaders involves collaboration between the CSO and decision makers at the school level. Effective collaboration in the recruitment and retention of school leaders requires a close attention to process, protocol, and an awareness of local decision-making authority.

Secondary school leaders

It is important to draw a distinction between the recruitment and retention process for secondary and elementary school leaders. In all cases, boards of trustees or boards of limited jurisdiction govern the secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The hiring process at the secondary school level directly involves these established boards and Archdiocesan policies stipulate the involvement of the CSO. The process outlined for hiring secondary school leaders is sufficiently outlined and appropriately collaborative.

Elementary school leaders

Interviews and analysis of data revealed that a collaborative hiring procedure for elementary school leaders that involves the CSO is not consistently followed. The hiring of an elementary school principal is ultimately the responsibility of the local pastor (unless consolidated schools operate under a shared governance model). Elementary schools in the Archdiocese do not typically have a Board of Limited Jurisdiction that would be involved in the process. In some instances, it was reported that the CSO would be informed after a new principal was hired. This lack of coordination between the school and the CSO can present challenges to ensuring quality leadership.

In the hiring of an elementary school principal, a pastor could reach out to the CSO and he would be provided with a basic hiring packet. In January 2011, the staff at the CSO revised the hiring packet to provide comprehensive support and a step-by-step guide through the hiring process. This revision by the CSO is a positive step in the direction of collaboration and ensuring quality leadership. The revised hiring procedures outline a thorough process that accounts for communications protocol, search guidelines, interview tips, hiring procedures, and transition plans. The hiring packet also
includes a detailed listing of qualifications of an elementary school principal, interview questions, and a rubric for assessing applicants. This guidebook of hiring procedures is thorough and user-friendly, written for direct implementation by a pastor.

The revised guidebook of hiring procedures features the appropriate level of CSO involvement and collaboration with the local elementary school. These hiring procedures clearly present the CSO as a willing and active collaborator throughout the process. Important points at which the CSO is incorporated into the elementary school principal hiring process include:

- Providing assistance with communications and messaging
- Ensuring all applicants meet credential and background checks
- Serving as part of the selection committee (if requested)
- Reviewing and approving of finalists
- Supplying contracts and salary/benefit scales

While the pastor has the sole authority to make the hire, with this revised process the CSO is better positioned to support the pastor in this role. Even with the revised hiring procedures, the CSO is not able to mandate adherence. This will remain a challenge relative to ensuring quality process and leadership selection. A consistent emphasis on this process by the CSO can build greater collaboration and enhance leadership quality control.

**Professional development and ongoing formation**

At both the elementary and secondary levels, providing an engaging program of professional development is critical to ensuring effective school leadership. With all professional development, the most effective programs are designed and delivered to specific groups of school leaders sharing similar needs and circumstances. It is important to note that while some professional development topics are shared between the elementary and secondary levels, in many situations the formation needs at those two levels would vary in terms of design and delivery. As the CSO considers its capacity to support the professional development needs of school leaders, it is critical to give close attention to both the shared and varied needs of elementary and secondary school leaders and account for these needs in the design and delivery of professional development. This is particularly important to keep in mind as the responsibilities of the CSO Regional Directors transition to include both elementary and secondary schools.

**New principal preparation**

Providing professional development for first time principals and/or principals new to the Archdiocese is essential to ensuring effective leadership in Catholic schools. It was reported in CSO interviews and in stakeholder feedback that new principal orientation and professional development needs to be revisited. Moving into the 2011-2012 school year, new principal orientation has been transferred to the Deputy Superintendent. It will be important to establish a comprehensive approach to this new principal professional development that incorporates orientation and ongoing formation and support.

**University relationships**

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati CSO maintains critical collaborations with Xavier University and the University of Dayton.

Through the Center for Catholic Education (CCE) at Xavier University, Catholic school leaders and teachers are provided ongoing professional development opportunities designed to engage school principals and teams of faculty aspiring to improve student learning. The team approach emphasized through the Xavier CCE and Cincinnati CSO supports not only established school leaders, but also exposes faculty aspiring to be leaders to formation that will benefit them if they transition to a principal role. Xavier University has established a Master of Education program designed specifically for
Catholic school leaders and teachers. The program is offered in collaborations with the CSO, with a part-time CSO staff person serving as liaison for the program, and courses are offered at a discount for Catholic school leaders and teachers. The ongoing formation of Catholic school leaders is greatly enhanced by the established partnership with Xavier University.

The Center for Catholic Education at the University of Dayton has initiated significant professional development experiences for Catholic school leaders and faculty in the Dayton area. Professional development opportunities have been directed through the Catholic Education Collaborative (CEC). The Excellence Initiative focused on curriculum mapping and the St. Remy Initiative offered schools team-based formation around the spiritual, academic, and managerial aspects of Catholic school leadership. Given the productive collaborations between the University of Dayton and the CEC, the new year brings a significant opportunity to ensure that meaningful professional development opportunities are continued in light of the fact that CEC initiatives have been absorbed into the CSO.

Performance evaluation

With secondary school leaders, the primary responsibility for performance evaluation resides with the board of trustees or the board of limited jurisdiction. It is important that the CSO Regional Directors monitor the frequency and quality of all review processes to ensure the boards deliver on their responsibilities and that high school leaders receive accurate and meaningful feedback.

In the area of elementary school principal evaluation, performance reviews have been sporadic and the format has not been productive. When performance evaluation occurred, they consisted of surveys distributed every two years by an Assistant Superintendent. Faculty, board members (where applicable), and members of a school’s education commission provided feedback and the Assistant Superintendent compiled a one- to three-page narrative report. This process was reported to be both labor intensive and ineffective in that it did not yield meaningful formative feedback.

With input from pastors, principals, and CSO personnel, the Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Catholic Schools advanced a revision of the evaluation process and tools. A new performance evaluation process has been presented to parish and school leaders for full implementation in the 2011-2012 academic year. The evaluation tool is aligned with the five domains pertaining to leadership in the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association process. This new performance evaluation process calls for the CSO Regional Director to be responsible for managing the process and ensuring for appropriate timing and submissions.

The new process is greatly improved. Expectations and timelines are clearly outlined for both CSO personnel and principals. The evaluation tool utilizes both quantitative and qualitative data collection, which will yield more effective formative feedback for school leaders. The heightened role of CSO staff will allow for a deepened understanding of school leaders’ strengths and areas in need of improvement. The evaluation process will be best supported by Regional Directors gaining significant, on-the-ground, school-based experience. The direct involvement of the Regional Directors will allow for intimate knowledge of the principal’s performance.

Considerations for strategic planning related to leadership

Recruiting and retaining Catholic school leaders

The CSO may consider using a rolling application process for school leaders to build up a bank of potential candidates. Alternately, the CSO can develop a process to invite aspiring candidates to submit applications to a central clearinghouse at the CSO. At this point, potential candidates can be vetted and the names of those who qualify can be shared with pastors and boards when they contact the CSO for hiring support. Building a bank of qualified potential leaders can serve as a means to draw more pastors and boards into closer collaboration with the CSO in this hiring process.
The CSO may also consider enhancing existing relationships with local Catholic universities like the University of Dayton and Xavier University to ensure a credentialing pipeline to support aspiring Catholic school leaders with degrees and certification. Several collaborations already exist with local Catholic universities including discounts for continued education. A focus on developing new leaders through a special degree program can be a hallmark effort that will be attractive both to the universities and potential leaders, as evidenced by the program at Xavier University.

In addition, the CSO may consider a deeper review of the contract issued to school leaders. A committee of pastors and school leaders can collaborate with the CSO to review contract language and the manner in which both the local parish and the CSO is represented in the authorization.

**Professional development and ongoing formation**

Given the importance of professional development and ongoing formation for quality school leadership, the CSO should explore methods for enhancing training for principals who are new to their positions or to the Archdiocese. Recent reforms suggest positive developments in this domain, and the CSO should continue to regularly evaluate and improve the orientations and training opportunities to best meet the needs of the leaders and their schools.

It is recommended that the CSO continue and potentially enhance its existing collaborations with Xavier University, the University of Dayton, and other colleges and universities in the Archdiocese. The August 2011 summit for university and college leaders is an excellent starting point for enhanced collaborations. Existing relationships with universities have had positive outcomes and it is anticipated that continued efforts and expanded initiatives will offer additional benefits related to the development and formation of school leaders.

**Performance evaluation**

The new performance evaluation process will need to be closely monitored and potentially revised during the initial months and years of implementation to ensure it provides accurate and meaningful feedback on school leaders. As the process evolves, the CSO may consider how the performance evaluation is linked to compensation and the annual contract process. Upon deliberation, the CSO may consider an element of performance-based compensation for school leaders as an outcome of more closely linking reviews with the contracting process.
VISIONING SESSION AND SURVEY REPORT

Introduction

The information contained in this report was gathered through a series of visioning sessions and surveys conducted by the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in partnership with ACE Consulting. The questions utilized in the sessions and surveys were designed primarily to elicit information that can inform the writing of foundational statements to guide the development of a unifying vision for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Participants’ responses are presented below in a format that is meant to facilitate the consideration and use of the information to develop statements that reflect the input of Archdiocesan stakeholder groups. Details regarding each of the methods for data collection and the presentation of the data are provided in the appropriate sections below.

While the visioning sessions and surveys reached large audiences within the Archdiocese and all interested stakeholders were provided with opportunities to contribute to the data collection efforts, it is important to bear in mind that those who chose to participate are likely the most committed to and passionate about Catholic education. In addition, they may be those who believe that the most reforms are needed to improve or sustain schools. It is also possible that, despite numerous outreach efforts, individuals may not have been aware of their opportunities to contribute and participate. For these reasons, the information outlined below may not be representative of the opinions of many members of the Archdiocesan community and may reflect a bias in terms of the community members who were notified of the opportunities or inspired to participate.

Principal, pastor, and school and parish leader visioning sessions

The information presented below represents feedback gathered from visioning sessions attended by principals, school pastors, and other school and parish leaders. Four visioning sessions for these stakeholders were conducted in May 2011 and were attended by 446 individuals. All principals and school pastors were invited by the Superintendent to attend visioning sessions through letters, emails, and announcements. Other school and parish leaders were identified and invited to attend by pastors and principals. At the sessions, the participants formed groups in which they discussed predetermined questions. Their responses were documented by volunteer recorders, submitted to the CSO, and forwarded to ACE Consulting personnel. Additional details of the sessions are presented in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal, Pastor, and School and Parish Leader Visioning Session Data</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic representation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Participant types</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Percentage of total participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Number of groups at session</strong></td>
<td><strong>Location of session</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>Pastors and principals</td>
<td>Total=151 Principals=83 Pastors=60</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Seton High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>School and parish leaders</td>
<td>Total=181 Secondary=21 Elementary=160</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Elder High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Pastors and principals</td>
<td>Total=48 Principals=31 Pastors=17</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bishop Leibold School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>School and parish leaders</td>
<td>Total=66 Secondary=6 Elementary=60</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Immaculate Conception School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Notes were not received for four of the groups that participated in the visioning session at Elder High School.
Each question from the visioning sessions that is relevant to the development of foundational statements is presented below. The feedback for each question was grouped into categories of similar responses. The ten categories discussed most frequently are outlined below each question, in order from most mentioned to least frequently mentioned. Because of the nature of qualitative data, the categorizations are necessarily subjective and exact numbers are not used to describe the frequency of responses. The lists do, however, provide a sense of the topics that are of most interest to participants. Within the categories, there may be disagreements among participants over the topic or there may be differing areas of focus for participants. Those nuances are noted in the lists below where necessary.

The notes for the categories below also indicate if a category or groups of categories was discussed considerably more often than other categories under the question. It is not indicated whether a category was discussed more frequently at certain visioning sessions than at others because of wide variations in the sizes of the groups at the sessions. However, because the Cincinnati visioning sessions were considerably larger than the Dayton sessions, efforts were made to ensure that the selected categories generally represented feedback from all of the groups rather than disproportionately valuing feedback from the larger sessions. In general, the most frequently mentioned categories were common in all or most of the sessions. This is likely because they represent general topics rather than special interest categories.

**What are the greatest areas of strength in your local parish and/or school context?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned strengths of participants’ local parishes and schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

- **Faculty and staff**
  - Specific comments often focused on teacher quality, dedication, and longevity.

- **Catholic identity and faith formation**
  - Although it was not the majority of comments, several participants specifically mentioned active evangelization of non-Catholics at their schools and parishes as a strength.

- **Parish connections**
  - Comments focused on the generosity of parishioners, the strength of connections between the parish and school, and the size or youth of the parish population.

- **Parental involvement and commitment**

- **Sense of community/atmosphere**
  - Comments coded into this category are often quite general, encompassing statements such as “family oriented,” “welcoming feeling,” and “sense of community.”

- **Academic excellence/high academic expectations**

- **Legacy/tradition**
  - Several of the comments in this category focused on multigenerational family attendance at schools and alumni support for the schools.

- **Support of parish pastor**
  - There is a sizable gap between the number of mentions for this strength and the previous strength.

- **Community and neighborhood support**
  - A minority of comments in this category focused on the role of the school in supporting the neighborhood rather than vice versa.

- **Diversity**
  - Although several of the comments mentioned diversity broadly, most specifically cited student diversity in terms of race or ethnicity (particularly Latino students), income, religion, or zip codes in which they live.
What are the two most significant challenges in your local parish and/or school context?

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned challenges facing participants’ local parishes and schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Several of the challenges listed in this section were also described as strengths for a large group of participants above, indicating a diversity of experiences related to these domains throughout the Archdiocese.

- **Declining Catholic/Church-going population**
  - Comments in this section touched on many aspects of the Catholic population, including disaffection based on the sexual abuse crisis, increasing numbers of non-practicing Catholics, aging parishioners, low baptismal rates, and inactive Catholic parents not taking children to Mass.

- **Financial challenges/lack of money**
- **Affordability/increasing tuition**
  - Affording Catholic education was noted to be a particular challenge for middle class families and families with several children.

- **Declining enrollment**
- **Parish connections**
  - Most comments noted that the school and parish are not strongly connected or that school families are not involved in the parish. A few comments addressed the challenges of developing relationships with multiple parishes after mergers or consolidations.

- **Demographic changes**
  - Many of the comments under this category were general references to changing demographics. The more specific comments occasionally appeared to contradict each other. For instance, it was noted that families with young children had moved to the suburbs while another participant stated that there are few Catholic families in the suburbs.

- **Competition from public and Christian schools**
  - Public schools were cited as competition most frequently. Participants noted that Catholic schools find it difficult to compete with the schools in terms of academics, facilities, fine art classes, and teacher salaries.

- **Family structure and involvement**
  - Participants expressed that parents are less involved in schools than in previous generations; parents lack parenting skills; and changes in family structure such as divorces, blended families, and single-parent families have made educating students more difficult.

- **Lack of resources**
  - Comments in this category often noted that schools do not have sufficient resources to meet the needs of gifted students or students with special needs and that they cannot provide services such as counseling.

- **Pastor support**
  - Comments centered around a lack of visibility of pastors at schools, pastors’ lack of time to commit to schools, and weak or negative working relationships between pastors and principals.

What single change would most positively impact your local school environment?

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned changes participants believe would benefit their schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Most of the changes listed in this section directly address challenges listed above, with the majority related to financial struggles faced by schools and parishes. No participants reported that no changes were needed at their schools.
• **Financial assistance**
  o Comments in this category generally did not specify who the respondents thought could or should provide the financial assistance.

• **Evangelization and invigoration of Catholic population**
  o Several comments in this category specified that, if more families actively participated in Mass, donations would go up and help to alleviate the financial problems described above.

• **Parish contributions**
  o This category and the following categories were mentioned considerably less often than the first two changes listed above.
  o The two perspectives represented in this category were that parishes need to receive more money in donations and that all parishes, even those without schools, should contribute to Catholic schools.

• **Parental involvement/commitment**
  o In addition to desiring increased parental involvement, several participants suggested that limiting enrollment to children from families committed to the Catholic Church would be beneficial.

• **Parish relationships**
  o While some participants desired stronger relationships between schools and parishes, other advocated for reduced parochialism and collaboration among all parishes to support Catholic education.

• **Marketing/recruitment**
  o Although the comments did not specifically state that the participants would like the Catholic Schools Office to undertake a marketing campaign, several of their suggestions hinted at a centralized marketing effort for all schools.

• **Increased support and presence of parish pastor**
• **Centralization/shared resources**
  o The majority of comments in this domain addressed the possibility of cost savings through centralized purchasing.

• **Increased or stabilized enrollment**
• **Affordability/decreased tuition**
• **Increased access to school vouchers**

**What are your hopes for the future of Catholic schools in your local context?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned hopes for the future of Catholic schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

As would be expected, several of the hopes expressed for Catholic schools reflect the changes recommended under the previous question, although they are not as directly focused on financial concerns. Many hopes address factors that would lead to increased enrollment, though, which would help to alleviate financial burdens on schools and parishes.

• **Increased cooperation/collaboration**
  o These comments highlight a desire for the tempering of parochialism and for reduced competition between high schools and increased collaboration among all schools.

• **Evangelization and recommitment of the Catholic population**
• **Affordability/decreased tuition**
  o Comments in this category also indicated a focus on providing meaningful financial aid options.

• **Academic excellence**
  o Several statements in this category indicated that the participants felt their schools do not provide the same academic quality as public schools.

• **Viable/thriving schools**
• **Marketing/recruitment**
  o Several respondents focused on the need to provide clear, measurable evidence of Catholic school success, particularly in comparison to public schools.

• **Strong Catholic identity and faith formation**

• **Increased enrollment**

• **Parish relationships**
  o Many comments in this category focused on the need for schools to attract families to parishes in order to strengthen and sustain the parishes.

• **No more school closures**

• **Parish support**
  o In addition to desiring stronger connections between parishes and schools, several respondents expressed a desire for parishes to better support consolidated or regionalized schools.

**What elements of your school or parish vision and mission would translate to a unifying Archdiocesan vision and mission for Catholic schools?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned local vision and mission elements that could be utilized to develop a unifying Archdiocesan vision. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Although all visioning session questions provide relevant feedback for the development of foundational statements, the categories for this question address that process most directly.

• **Faith-based education/Catholic identity**
  o This element was mentioned almost twice as often as the next most frequently mentioned element.

• **Academic excellence**

• **Evangelization and faith formation**

• **Holistic education/education of the whole child**

• **Service and service learning**
  o Comments related to this category focused both on connecting schools to their communities and to each other through service work.

• **Appreciation of diversity**
  o The comments in this category generally addressed diversity as a broad concept. They focused on the need for schools in the Archdiocese to welcome and value diversity.

• **Affordability/accessibility for all who want a Catholic education**

• **Sense of community/welcoming of all**

• **Unity of mission and vision**

• **Values oriented**

**What concerns might you have about a unified vision for the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned concerns regarding a unified vision for Catholic schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

The responses in this category almost universally revolve around the fear that schools will be forced to submit to centralized control that will eliminate their individual authority and identities.

• **One size does not fit all**
  o This concern was mentioned more than three times more frequently than the next listed concern.
Concerns within this category centered on how the vision could account for diversity in location, demographics, charisms, and traditions at individual schools. Participants expressed concerns about schools losing their identities. Several noted that the vision should be generic and broad to avoid making all schools conform to a standard that eliminates their unique characteristics.

- **Loss of local control and autonomy**
  - This category is strongly related to the first category, “one size does not fit all,” in that it represents fear of standardization and reductions in local authority.

- **Weakened parish relationships**
  - Concerns mentioned within this category addressed loss of parish and school connections and loss of parish identity at schools.

- **Closures and restructuring**
  - Many of the comments in this category focused on fears that the Archdiocese would make unilateral decisions regarding school closures. A minority of participants, though, expressed a desire for consolidations of schools.

- **CSO/Archdiocesan leadership**
  - Comments within this category were diverse but many centered on a lack of trust or faith in Archdiocesan leadership and its ability to unify schools.

- **Support of pastor**
  - Participants were unsure how a unifying vision could be implemented in parish schools because they are controlled by their pastors, who may not be willing to follow Archdiocesan directives.

- **Lack of buy in**
  - Concerns expressed in this category indicated doubt that all stakeholders would accept the unifying vision and that Archdiocesan leadership would be able to hold them accountable.

- **Lack of funding**
  - Comments in this category represented a variety of concerns about funding, with a focus on worries that the vision will require schools and parishes to spend additional money.

- **Increased centralization**
  - The majority of comments in this category echoed concerns presented in the “one size does not fit all” and “loss of local control and autonomy” categories regarding loss of school identity and authority.

- **Poor communication of vision**
  - Comments in this category centered on the need for the Archdiocese and school leaders to clearly communicate the vision to all stakeholders.

**In what ways would a unifying vision be most beneficial to Catholic schools or your school and/or parish in particular?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned benefits that may result from a unifying vision for Catholic schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

A minority of categories under this question, such as “consistency” and “curricular improvements and standardization,” contradict the strongly expressed desire under the previous question for schools to remain independent of Archdiocesan authority and to maintain their individuality. Most of the categories, though, relate to aspects of centralization that would be voluntary or would benefit schools (primarily financially) but not result in a loss of meaningful local authority.

- **Working together/sense of connection**
  - Comments in this category focused on the potential for a unifying vision to bring schools together throughout the Archdiocese and create a broader sense of community.

- **Preserve Catholic identity and increase faith formation**

- **Sharing resources and best practices**
Benefits mentioned in this category included sharing teachers and networking to share information and practices related to academics and extracurricular activities.

- **Coordinated marketing campaigns**
- **Centralization of purchasing/economies of scale**
- **Increased collaboration**
  - Comments in this category were generally similar to the benefits outlined in the sections on “working together/sense of connection” and “sharing resources and best practices,” highlighting the perceived value of teamwork and networking for the schools in the Archdiocese.
- **Consistency**
  - Benefits discussed in this category referenced consistency and standardization across schools in general and occasionally addressed specific topics such as catechesis and the school calendar.
- **Reduced competition for enrollment**
- **Increased support and leadership from the Archdiocese**
- **Curricular improvements and standardization across schools**

**Pastor, principal, and school and parish leader visioning session conclusion**

The feedback outlined above indicates a clear commitment to Catholic schools on the part of pastors, principals, and other school and parish leaders. The participants shared their passion for schools and expressed their hopes that they will be widely available for future generations. They also shared a range of opinions regarding what changes need to be made and what efforts need to be continued in order to preserve the schools. The information presented above illuminates the areas in which there was the most agreement among participants regarding the needs of the schools and their stakeholders. While there are points of disagreement, particularly regarding details, the participants appear able to agree broadly on many of the topics presented in the visioning sessions.

The participants shared a commitment to maintaining and improving Catholic identity, faith formation, and academic quality. They appear to be open to changes and assistance in additional areas, but with important limits. They primarily desire increased financial support and improved collaboration and collegiality among schools. They were resistant to other changes at the Archdiocesan level that might result in a loss of local control or disrupt their unique traditions and identities. Essentially, they appear more willing to accept centralized assistance than to accept centralized control of school operations.

The responses also reveal a focus on external factors that have negatively impacted Catholic schools. Many of these factors, though not all, are outside of the control of the schools and the Archdiocese. In order to generate true change for Catholic schools, it is likely that the energies of school personnel and leaders will need to be redirected internally to generate reforms and initiatives that respond to the external factors.

**Principal, pastor, and school and parish leader survey**

The information presented below comes from an online survey available to participants in the four visioning sessions for principals, pastors, and other school and parish leaders. The survey was announced to pastors and principals prior to their visioning sessions and also at their visioning sessions. Other school and parish leaders were informed of the survey at their visioning sessions. Eighty-seven participants completed the survey with the largest group of respondents identifying as principals. Additional information about the respondents is provided in the table below.
The primary purpose of the survey was to provide participants with an opportunity to share information on an individual basis that reaffirms or adds to the feedback they provided during the visioning sessions. Therefore, many of the questions in the survey mirrored the questions presented in the visioning sessions. Each of the open-ended questions from the survey is presented below and is organized in a manner similar to the visioning questions above. Because of the preponderance of principals in the sample and the ability of participants to select more than one category of affiliation with their schools, it is not noted whether or not particular types of respondents mentioned categories more often than other respondents.

Please briefly state two primary strengths of the school.

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned strengths of the respondents’ schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

The strengths reported in the survey generally mirror those reported by participants in the visioning sessions.

- **Strong academic programs**
- **Strong Catholic identity and faith formation**
- **High quality, dedicated faculty and staff**
- **Parental involvement and support**
  - This category and those that follow were mentioned considerably less often than the previous strengths.
- **Sense of community/family atmosphere**
- **Parish/pastor support**
- **Diverse school populations**
- **Neighborhood and community support**
- **Small schools and classes**
- **Specialized academic programs**

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal, Pastor, and School and Parish Leader Survey Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools represented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position in relation to the school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Participants selected all applicable positions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parishioner at the affiliated parish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent of a current student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee at the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School board member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee at the affiliated parish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please state the two most significant challenges the school faces.

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned challenges’ for participants’ schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

The categories outlined below are similar to those from the visioning sessions in many ways; however, there are notable exceptions. The declining Church population, which was the most frequently mentioned challenge in the visioning sessions is not among the top ten concerns from the survey. Conversely, faculty and staff and facilities were not among the top concerns in the visioning sessions but were reported frequently in the survey. Although the differences cannot be accounted for definitively, it is possible that the large number of principals and relatively small number of priests and parish employees who completed the survey explain the differing concerns.

- **Lack of money and financial stability**
- **Declining enrollment**
- **Increasing tuitions and limited financial aid**
  - This characteristic and those that follow were mentioned considerably less often than the previous challenges.
- **Faculty and staff**
  - Comments in this category addressed both the desire to hire better staff and the need to pay better wages in order to retain teachers.
- **Facility needs**
  - Comments regarding facility challenges focused on aging buildings and the need to have more space.
- **School families**
  - Comments in this category expressed a variety of concerns about school families, including a lack of involvement and increased parental needs.
- **Demographics**
  - Comments in this category addressed declines in the Catholic population and the changing populations in schools’ neighborhoods.
- **Lack of awareness of the school**
- **Competition with Catholic and public schools**
- **Lack of parish/pastor support**

Please list two essential elements that must be taken into consideration in developing a unifying vision for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The categories listed below represent the elements that respondents believe must be taken into consideration while developing the unifying vision. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

This question corresponds most closely to the visioning session question regarding concerns about a unifying vision and is strongly related to the development of foundational statements for a unifying vision. Responses are similar to those for the visioning session question in that they indicate a strong preference for maintaining the individual identities of schools, but support actions at the Archdiocesan level designed to ensure pervasive Catholic identity, strong academic programs, and financial stability throughout the Archdiocese.
• **One size does not fit all**
  o This characteristic was mentioned almost three times as often as the next most frequently mentioned essential element.

• **Strong Catholic identity and faith formation**

• **Retain local control/autonomy**
  o Many of the comments indicated a preference for majority or total local control and a limited role for the Archdiocese.

• **Reduce competition/increase collaboration between schools**

• **Finances**
  o While many of the comments in this category addressed finances generally, several specified a preference for equalized or shared funding across the Archdiocese.

• **Support from all parishes in Archdiocese**
  o Although most respondents did not specify, it appears that they particularly desire financial support from all parishes for schools.

• **Academics**
  o The comments in this category focused on maintaining and improving academic quality and on the development of a standardized curriculum.

• **Account for demographic differences/diversity across schools**

• **Maintain parish connections/relationships**

• **Strong CSO/Archdiocesan leadership and proactivity**

In addition to the questions discussed above, survey respondents were asked to rate the strength of support for their schools among various communities. The question was asked because perceptions of relationships between Catholic schools and these communities may impact stakeholders’ willingness to participate in initiatives related to the unifying vision for Catholic schools. The results of the question are presented in the table below.

Only parishes were rated as providing very strong support for schools by the majority of respondents. The other communities were reported to provide strong support by the largest groups. This is a positive result in that no community was rated as providing weak or very weak support by a large group of participants. Almost one-third of respondents, however, indicated that business and philanthropic communities provide weak or very weak support and one-fifth rated neighborhood and Archdiocesan support as weak or very weak. This indicates that a sizable minority of respondents perceive that their schools are not benefiting from relationships with those communities. In addition, 13% of respondents reported that they are unsure how much support their schools receive from the Archdiocesan community. This suggests a disconnect between certain schools and the larger Catholic community in which they are located.
Perceived Strength of Support for Respondents’ Schools among Various Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No support</th>
<th>Very weak</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Very strong</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parish (if applicable)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood in which the school is located</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local business or philanthropic community</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archdiocese of Cincinnati</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After completing the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional feedback in an open-ended format. Their responses reflect the diversity of opinion and priorities found in the survey responses and visioning session feedback. Several reported specific recommendation and hopes for schools. Others commented on the visioning process. Many praised the process but some responses were accompanied by concerns that this effort would not be implemented as many previous attempts have failed. Overall, though, there was a sense of optimism regarding the process and future prospects for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese, particularly given the presence of new leadership in key positions. Most importantly, the responses indicated a passion for Catholic schools that bodes well for commitment to and involvement in the visioning process.

**Pastor, principal, and school and parish leader survey conclusion**

Overall, the survey results are similar to those for the visioning sessions. Small disparities between the two likely highlight the differing priorities of stakeholder groups because the majority of survey respondents identified as principals, while the visioning sessions represented a wider group of stakeholders. These differences, although relatively small, hint at the difficulty of developing meaningful statements and plans that will be acceptable to all members of the Archdiocesan community.

**Public visioning sessions**

The information presented below was gathered from visioning sessions attended by interested members of the public. Three visioning sessions for these stakeholders were conducted in June 2011 and were attended by 194 individuals. The sessions were advertised in letters to schools and parishes, church bulletins, the visioning process website, the Archdiocesan newsletter, other local newspapers, and Facebook. The sessions were conducted in the same way as the four previous visioning sessions. Participants met in groups to discuss the same questions utilized in earlier sessions, although certain questions were omitted from the public sessions due to a lack of relevance for the population. Responses were recorded by volunteers and submitted to the CSO to be forwarded to ACE Consulting personnel. Additional details of the sessions are presented in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic representation for session</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Percentage of total participants</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Number of parents</th>
<th>Other participants</th>
<th>Number of groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati and western area of Archdiocese</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati and eastern area of Archdiocese</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton and northern area of Archdiocese</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each question from the public visioning sessions is presented below and the feedback gathered at the sessions is presented in the same way as the feedback from the earlier visioning sessions.

### What are the greatest areas of strength in your local parish and/or school context?

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned strengths of participants’ local parishes and schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

The categories are similar to those presented for the four earlier visioning sessions. Participants were more likely to mention the value of having members of religious orders and clergy members present in schools, though. They also referred more frequently to the size of schools than the earlier participants, although there was disagreement about whether smaller or larger schools were preferable.

- **Catholic identity and faith formation**
  - This strength was mentioned considerably more often than the remaining categories for this question.
- **Academic excellence**
- **Dedicated and high-quality faculty and staff**
- **Parental commitment and involvement**
- **Sense of community/welcoming atmosphere**
- **Supportive and involved parishes**
- **Presence of religious orders and clergy members**
- **Strong leadership from pastor and principal**
- **Size of school**
  - Comments in this category praised small schools for their sense of community while other comments noted that larger schools are more sustainable and have more resources for students.
- **Pastor support and involvement**

### What are the two most significant challenges in your local parish and/or school context?

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned challenges faced by participants’ local parishes and schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Again, the categories are similar to those for the earlier visioning sessions with a few notable exceptions. Most significantly, the first category in this section indicates concerns about faith formation and Catholic identity in schools, a category that did not appear in the top concerns for the earlier sessions. Instead, the earlier participants were concerned with societal changes that have reduced the Catholic population rather than with Catholic identity within their schools.
Another difference between the responses, which is related to Catholic identity, is that participants indicated that teacher quality needs to be improved at many schools, particularly in terms of their ability to teach the Catholic faith.

It is also important to note that Catholic identity and faith formation were the most frequently cited strengths of schools in the previous section. This may indicate a division among the participants in terms of their perceptions of these characteristics. It may also suggest that the participants are pleased that the schools have these characteristics, but they believe they need to be improved.

- **Lack of high-quality faith formation/loss of Catholic identity**
  - Several comments in this category noted that the increasing numbers of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools has led to the degradation of religious education and Catholic identity.

- **Affordability**
  - This challenge and the previous challenge were mentioned considerably more often than the other characteristics discussed for this question.
  - Although most comments in this category addressed the high cost of tuition in general, several specifically noted that high school tuition is prohibitively expensive and that middle class and large families face the greatest challenges in terms of paying tuition.

- **Financial and fundraising difficulties**
- **Parents’ lack of faith and Mass attendance**
- **Declining enrollment**
- **Competition from public schools**
  - Comments in this category noted that public schools may be better than Catholic schools academically and they can provide more resources. In addition, students can attend public schools for free.
- **Competition among Catholic schools**
  - Respondents focused particularly on competition between Catholic high schools, but several noted that open enrollment for elementary schools has increased competition in those grade levels.
- **Faculty and staff**
  - The majority of comments in this category expressed concern about teachers’ ability to teach the Catholic faith.
- **Parish contributions**
  - Comments focused on the serious financial burden placed on parishes with schools and the need for parishes without schools to support Catholic schools financially.
- **School leadership**
  - Comments addressed lack of quality principals and pastors, pastors’ lack of commitment to schools, and the inability of school boards to impact schools.

**What single change would most positively impact your local school environment?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned changes that would benefit participants’ local schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Similar to the last section, participants focused on the need to improve Catholic identity within schools in order to strengthen the Church while participants in the earlier sessions cited a need to address larger issues within society that they believe have reduced commitment to Catholicism. They sense that these changes would lead to increased enrollment in and commitment to Catholic schools. The dichotomy may illustrate a general difference in thinking on the issue between the groups represented at the sessions. School and parish personnel and leaders perceive the challenge to lie outside of the schools and to be negatively impacting schools. Conversely, parents, parishioners, and other members of the community believe schools have not provided sufficient faith formation to reinvigorate the larger population. Although they view the issue from different angles, it is possible that both groups could be satisfied with similar reforms because they both ultimately seek to strengthen the Catholic population. The two groups may have different ideas regarding what
constitutes strong Catholic identity in schools, though. This is suggested by the feedback because the public session participants view the current situation as problematic while the other participants appear more satisfied with the current state of Catholic identity in schools.

Another recurring difference in categories is that public session participants cited faculty and staff at schools as problematic, primarily because teachers may not be practicing Catholics or may not teach or practice the desired type of Catholicism, while this was not a common concern in the earlier sessions.

- **Strong Catholic identity**
  - This change was mentioned more than twice as often as the other characteristics under this question.
  - Respondents expressed a desire for a more rigorous and authentic teaching of the Catholic faith that pervades the curriculum. In particular, several respondents recommended implementing Theology of the Body.
- **Faculty and staff**
  - The most common suggestion in this category was requiring teachers to adhere to the Catholic faith. Other recommendations included improving the quality of teachers and paying teachers a better salary.
- **Tuition decreases/financial aid increases**
- **Parental support**
  - Comments related to this characteristic included requests for parental faith formation and greater parental involvement in schools.
- **High-quality leadership from pastors and principals**
- **Financial stability/additional funding**
- **Archdiocese/CSO**
  - Recommendations in this section included additional support and resources from the Archdiocese. A minority of comments suggested an increase in Archdiocesan authority over schools.
- **Financial contributions from non-school parishes**
- **Updated and improved facilities**
  - Several comments in this category mentioned the need for air conditioning at schools.
- **Improved marketing and recruitment efforts**

**What are your hopes for the future of Catholic schools in your local context?**

The categories listed below represent the participants’ most frequently mentioned hopes for their local schools. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

The categories for this question are similar to the same question from the earlier sessions with little tension or disagreement apparent between the two groups’ responses. Both described hopes for strong Catholic identity and for increased commitment to Catholicism among the larger population, although they did so with differing frequencies. Unlike participants in the earlier sessions, public session participants expressed a desire for better leadership at the Archdiocesan level, which may be an outgrowth of their comments above regarding the belief that a lack of quality school leaders represents a challenge for schools.

- **Strong Catholic identity and faith formation**
  - This hope was mentioned more than twice as often as the other categories for this question.
  - Comments in this category focused on the need to teach authentic Catholic faith throughout the curriculum, re-evangelize lapsed Catholics, and maintain Catholic identity at schools despite growing populations of non-Catholic students.
- **Stable and sustainable schools**
- **Affordable tuition**
- **Reduced competition/increased collaboration**
Although several comments in this category specifically cited the need for high schools to work together, a minority did address elementary school collaboration and the need for elementary schools to work more closely with high schools.

- **Increased enrollment**
- **Faith formation for and evangelization of families**
- **Better leadership and support from the Archdiocese**
- **Financial viability and stability**
- **Increased parish contributions**
  - Responses in this category split between requests to assess all parishes, even those without schools, and the need to increase Mass attendance and donations to parishes.

- **Academic excellence and consistency**

**What concerns might you have about a unified vision for the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned concerns about a unifying vision for schools in the Archdiocese. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Similar to the earlier visioning sessions, participants in the public sessions cited a “one size fits all” mandate from the Archdiocese as their primary concern regarding a unifying vision for schools. This fear was likely the most pervasive and agreed upon theme in all of the listening sessions. More participants mentioned it than almost any other category for any question, particularly in the pastor, principal, and school leader sessions. In the public visioning sessions, concerns regarding Catholic identity were the most common responses for several questions. Therefore it is noteworthy that “one size fits all” was a more common theme for this question, although it is likely tied to Catholic identity in many ways as the Catholic nature of schools was often considered to arise from their unique charisms.

Although several of the other categories under this question were similar for both sets of listening sessions, the public session responses indicate greater concern with the Archdiocese’s willingness and ability to enforce the vision and any requirements that stem from it. The responses for the earlier sessions suggest more concern about reduced control of schools than about the process of implementation.

- **One size does not fit all**
  - This concern was mentioned considerably more often than the other concerns under this question.
  - Comments in this category focused on the need to ensure the vision is broad enough to allow schools to maintain their unique identities.

- **Lack of accountability and authority**
  - Comments indicated concern that the vision would not be enforceable and would not be properly implemented.

- **Lack of authentic and pervasive Catholic identity**
  - A fraction of the comments in this category suggested that views of “authentic” Catholic faith vary among the Catholic community and these disagreements will lead to controversies over the representation of Catholicism in the unifying vision.

- **Archdiocesan centralized control/lack of school independence**

- **Vision will not be meaningful or implemented**
  - Comments in this category are related to those under “accountability and authority” in that they expressed concerns that no tangible actions or changes would result from the unifying vision.

- **School leadership**
  - Although several elements of school leadership were discussed in this section, most focused on the need to improve pastoral leadership of schools or ensure that the Archdiocese has sufficient authority to enforce needed changes.

- **Archdiocesan/CSO roles**
Comments in this category centered on concerns about the effectiveness of Archdiocesan leadership of the initiative, particularly due to a lack of trust in the Archdiocese among Church members.

- **Too few decision makers**
  - Participants shared concerns that the vision is being created by a small group of stakeholders without sufficient input from community members.

- **Reduced financial viability and stability**
- **Parish identity and relationships**
  - Comments in this section focused on concerns regarding disruptions in the relationships between schools and parishes and the possibility of the loss of individual parish identities.

**In what ways would a unifying vision be most beneficial to Catholic schools or your school and/or parish in particular?**

The categories listed below represent the most frequently mentioned benefits of a unifying vision for schools in the Archdiocese. Where needed, additional clarification is provided.

Public visioning session responses for this question closely reflected those in the earlier visioning sessions. One of the primary deviations was a repeated call for stronger school leadership. For this question, that category had a particular focus on the need to ensure pastors have the support required to effectively run schools or to relieve them of a portion of their administrative duties.

- **Sharing of best practices and resources**
  - This category of benefits was mentioned almost twice as often as the other categories under this question. Because the responses to this question covered a wide range of benefits, though, none were mentioned with overwhelming frequency as was often the case for previous questions.
  - Several comments in this category focused on utilizing economies of scale to improve schools’ buying power in addition to exchanging ideas and sharing resources.

- **Clearly defined Catholic identity**
- **Reduce competition/increase collaboration**
- **Unified and efficient marketing and recruitment efforts**
- **Academic excellence and consistency**
- **Increased cohesiveness and sense of community**
  - Comments in this category relate to those for “reduce competition/increase collaboration” in that they express a desire to have schools and parishes in the Archdiocese work more closely together for a common goal.

- **Catholic school families**
  - Comments in this category illustrated a desire to see better faith formation among families as well as a need to better appreciate families who have chosen Catholic schools and the sacrifices and commitments they have made.

- **Improved funding**
  - Respondents indicated a desire for revised systems for distributing funds to schools and for greater assistance from the Archdiocese in generating funds.

- **Improved school leadership**
  - Most of the comments in this category addressed the need for strong support from pastors or for reduced administrative duties for pastors.

- **Unified parishes**
Public visioning session conclusion

The overwhelming focus of participants in the public visioning sessions was Catholic identity and faith formation in schools. Participants cited this as the primary strength of schools but also indicated that serious improvements need to be made in that area. The pervasive nature of this concern indicates that it may be the factor that motivated many participants to attend the sessions.

Compared to the earlier visioning sessions for principals, pastors, and other school leaders, participants in the public visioning sessions were more internally than externally focused because they were more likely to indicate that problems within schools contribute to schools’ challenges. Among the most commonly mentioned internal challenges were weak or nonexistent Catholic identity and faith formation; low-quality academic programs, particularly in comparison to public schools; low-quality faculty and staff, especially as relates to Catholic identity; and weak school leadership. Although many of these concerns arose in the earlier visioning sessions, they were not as pervasive as in the public sessions.

Another difference between the two sets of visioning sessions is that public session participants appear more open to Archdiocesan intervention than earlier participants. This greater willingness to accept centralized authority may be related to concerns regarding the quality of leadership of individual schools. Despite calls for a more significant Archdiocesan role in school leadership, most participants remained adverse to too much centralized control and expressed a preference for maintaining many elements of local school ownership.

Public survey

The information presented below was gathered through an online survey that was open to the public. The survey was advertised through handouts at the public visioning sessions, the visioning process website, and Facebook. Slightly more than one thousand individuals completed the survey, representing at least 132 schools and parishes. The survey was divided into two tracks: one for those who participated in a visioning session and one for those who did not attend a visioning session. The 52 respondents who indicated they had attended a visioning session were directed to an open-ended question that provided an opportunity to reaffirm their statements from visioning sessions, share feedback that they were unable to provide at the sessions, or contribute thoughts that had occurred to them after the sessions. The 956 respondents who did not attend a visioning session were directed to a more extensive survey. Additional information about the respondents is provided in the table below.
The primary purpose of the survey was to give members of the public an opportunity to provide feedback on the development of a unifying vision, particularly if they were unable to attend a visioning session. Many of the questions in the survey mirrored the questions presented in the public visioning sessions, although the majority of the questions were presented as close-ended questions with defined response choices because of the large number of respondents.

The list below outlines the responses to the open-ended question for the 52 participants who had attended a visioning session. The categories are listed in order of how often they were mentioned. Only the categories that were mentioned by more than one respondent are included in the list. There is a clear focus on Catholic identity in these responses, which mirrors the feedback provided in the public visioning sessions.

- Catholic identity and faith formation must be most important
- The Archdiocese needs to provide true and meaningful leadership
- Schools must be equitably funded and affordable for middle-class parents
- Maintain local decision-making authority/do not centralize all control of schools
- Improve academic quality

The 956 participants who did not attend a visioning session were directed to the questions presented below. The table below presents their responses to a question asking them to select the two primary benefits of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. Respondents were also given the option of entering an open-ended response. Fourteen chose this option and their answers varied but generally centered around the Catholic nature of the schools.

---

3 This number represents the minimum number of schools and parishes represented because some respondents did not provide their affiliation.
The table indicates that the respondents to the survey were most likely to select academic quality as a benefit, followed by education in the Catholic faith and values-based education. The three other options were selected by relatively small groups of respondents, indicating a strong focus on the three top choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported Primary Benefits of Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They provide education in the Catholic faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They provide a quality academic education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They foster a sense of community for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They offer an alternative to public education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They provide values-based education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They provide a safe environment for students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below presents responses to a question asking participants to select the two primary weaknesses of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. One hundred forty-one respondents chose to provide an open-ended response to this question. Many of these responses addressed specific aspects of the academic program, with a strong focus on providing a quality education for students with special needs and, to a lesser degree, gifted students. Other comments related to academic programs raised concerns about a lack of up-to-date technology and “special” classes such as fine arts, physical education, and languages. Other respondents mentioned facilities problems, which were occasionally linked to deficiencies in academic programs because of lack of space or equipment. Also related to academics, a small number of respondents shared concerns about the quality of teachers in the schools. Others felt that high rates of teacher turnover negatively impact schools and could be reduced with better salaries.

The table shows clear agreement among respondents that affordability is the primary weakness of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. Interestingly, only a small group of respondents selected academic quality as one of the two main weaknesses of the schools, despite the focus on academics in the open-ended responses. It is possible that the respondents who chose academic quality are also those who chose to provide open-ended responses. It may also be that they primarily have concerns about narrowly-focused aspects of academics programs rather than about the overall quality of academics in the schools.
Reported Primary Weaknesses or Areas in Need of Improvement for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education in the Catholic faith</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic quality</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community building</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect students only to school’s home parishes</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What single change do you believe would most positively impact Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati?

Respondents were asked to describe the single change they believe would be most beneficial for schools in the Archdiocese. For this question, they were not provided with response choices. Their open-ended responses were categorized and are presented below in the same manner as the visioning session responses presented in earlier sections of this report.

Similar to the previous question, the responses below show clear agreement that the lack of affordability of Catholic schools is problematic and should be addressed. The level of consensus is particularly striking given the large size of the respondent group and the open-ended nature of the question. This call for change in tuition costs is distantly followed by hopes for an improved focus on what participants view as authentic Catholic faith. The remaining hopes are clearly important to respondents but were mentioned much less often than the first two categories.

The responses to this question suggest important differences between the priorities of the survey respondents and the public visioning session participants. The visioning session participants focused on strong Catholic identity as the most important change with affordability as a considerably less common concern. This further suggests that the visioning session participants were inspired to attend sessions by a commitment to reforms to Catholic identity and faith formation in schools in the Archdiocese. Those who completed the survey are clearly more concerned with the accessibility of schools and somewhat less focused on changes to the religious nature of schools.

- **Affordability/tuition decreases**
  - This change was mentioned twice as often as the next most mentioned category.

- **Consistent focus on the authentic Catholic faith**
This change was mentioned considerably more often than the next most mentioned change.

- **Maintain or improve academic quality**
  - Several comments under this category noted that Catholic schools must exceed the academic quality of public schools and Catholic schools need to offer strong math and science programs.

- **Finances**
  - Comments in this category addressed a number of issues including improved financial management and accountability, more equitable distribution of funds, and increased Archdiocesan assistance with a focus on the creation of an endowment.

- **Improved marketing and recruitment efforts**
  - Several comments in this category indicated a preference for a centralized marketing campaign led by the Archdiocese.

- **High-quality faculty and staff**
  - Comments in this category focused both on improving the academic quality of teachers and ensuring that personnel teach and live an appropriate Catholic faith.

- **Strong leadership**
  - Many comments in this category did not specify the level at which better leadership is needed. Several, however, indicated that school-level leadership needs to improve while others expressed a desire for stronger Archdiocesan leadership.

- **Consolidate or close small and struggling schools**
  - Most respondents in this category indicated a preference for consolidations, but a small group also recommended closures.

- **Increased teacher salaries**

- **Reduce competition/increase collaboration**

The table below presents responses to a question asking participants to select the two elements that must be taken into consideration while developing a unifying vision for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese. Only 27 respondents entered open-ended responses and there were no consistent themes among their responses.

The table illustrates a focus on maintaining and promoting academic quality, which is consonant with respondents’ reports that academic quality is a primary strength of Catholic schools. These patterns suggest that many of the respondents believe that academic quality is strong in the schools, does not need serious improvements, and must be maintained for the benefit of the schools. Affordability was selected by the second largest group of participants, echoing the concerns reported above regarding tuition costs.

Education in the Catholic faith is the third most selected topic, which is not in keeping with the strong focus on Catholic identity as it relates to the unifying vision among the participants in the seven visioning sessions. These differences may be indicative of a split in priorities among members of the Catholic community in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Although participants in all visioning sessions and surveys expressed commitments to both Catholic identity and academic quality, they may differ in which they believe should take precedence relative to any changes or reform efforts in the Archdiocese.
Similar to the survey for pastors, principals, and other schools leaders, respondents were asked to rate the strength of support for their schools among various communities. The results for the question are presented in the table below.

The results are similar to those from the earlier survey in that the largest groups of respondents for each type of community fall in the same columns. They differ in that there is somewhat less agreement among respondents from the public survey and they were more likely to report weaker support from communities than stronger support. Overall, respondents to this survey appear to believe that schools receive less support in general from the community. For each type of community, they were also more likely than earlier respondents to be unsure of the strength of support for schools. This makes sense because they are likely not as directly involved with schools as administrators and other leaders and are therefore less familiar with the support provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordability of schools</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education in the Catholic faith</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of schools in all areas of the Archdiocese</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic quality</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish connections</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community connections</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values-based education</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Perceived Strength of Support for Respondents’ Schools among Various Communities |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                 | No support | Very weak | Weak | Strong | Very strong | I don’t know |
| Parish                          | 1%         | 3%            | 10%  | 40%    | 41%          | 5%             |
| Neighborhoods in which the schools are located | 2%         | 5%            | 28%  | 44%    | 10%          | 10%            |
| Local businesses or philanthropic community     | 2%         | 5%            | 30%  | 39%    | 10%          | 13%            |
| Archdiocese of Cincinnati          | 2%         | 6%            | 23%  | 40%    | 13%          | 18%            |
At the end of the survey, participants were invited to share open-ended comments. The feedback illustrates a variety of experiences with Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, ranging from extreme disappointment to high levels of satisfaction. The comments primarily echoed feedback provided in the survey with an emphasis on topics that were of particular interest to participants. They did help to clarify that, while affordability is a concern at all levels of Catholic education, respondents are most worried about paying for high school education. The comments also reaffirmed the focus on academic quality evidenced in the survey responses.

A notable minority of comments indicated a preference for Catholic schools to be welcoming and inclusive of students from all faiths and backgrounds, including different types of Catholic spirituality. This opinion was not strongly represented in the public visioning sessions, where calls for a more orthodox view of the Catholic faith and for faith commitments from teachers, students, and parents were common. This focus was present in the open-ended comments, but it was not present to the exclusion of the viewpoint advocating for inclusivity, indicating a division among the population in the Archdiocese regarding the nature of schools’ Catholic identities.

**Public survey conclusion**

Public survey respondents expressed somewhat more interest in and concern about academic programs in Catholic schools than Catholic identity and faith formation, although Catholic identity was also a primary focus. Overwhelmingly, though, the survey respondents expressed deep concerns regarding the affordability of Catholic schools. While school finances were a topic of interest to participants in the first four visioning sessions, they addressed the issue primarily as it relates to the viability of schools, with less focus on how it impacts families’ abilities to choose Catholic schools. The survey respondents, though, are facing an inability to access any Catholic schools for their children because of tuition costs, heightening their level of concern. While they likely want many Catholic schools to remain open and strong, the availability of the schools is not meaningful to them if they are unable to access the schools because tuition presents a barrier to enrollment. For this reason, the survey respondents appear somewhat more open than pastors, principals, and other school and parish leaders to considering reforms such as consolidations, closures, and centralization of control of schools if those changes will facilitate financial reforms that make schools more affordable and accessible.

**Visioning session and survey report conclusion**

Overall, the visioning sessions and survey results provide feedback from a large number of participants representing a diverse range of experiences and opinions, although they share a common commitment to Catholic schools. Their recommendations and hopes often differ based on their positions within the Catholic school system and their individual priorities and experiences. This diversity both highlights the importance of taking the feedback into consideration in order to understand stakeholders’ positions and underscores the impossibility of developing a meaningful vision that will satisfy all members of the Archdiocesan community. Despite this, the information in this report will be helpful going forward, even if it is not included in the final products of the visioning process, because it will help leadership to identify and proactively address questions and criticisms.

Ultimately, the process will seek to develop a unifying vision that positions Catholic schools to best serve the students who attend them. This will likely require sacrifices on the part of many or all participants in the surveys and visioning sessions. They will be more likely to understand and accept these compromises if they are clearly presented and backed by strong leadership from members of the Vision Steering Committee, personnel at the CSO, and other Archdiocesan-level personnel. The collection and thoughtful consideration of feedback from stakeholder groups through the visioning sessions and surveys is an important indicator of this leadership and bodes well for the success of the visioning process as it moves forward.
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data presented in this section provide an overview of demographics for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The information is intended to assist Catholic School Office (CSO) personnel, in conjunction with additional data and their own knowledge of the community, in better understanding the factors that contribute to current enrollment at Archdiocesan schools, identifying target populations for recruitment, and developing effective marketing strategies. The report begins by examining demographics in the Archdiocese as a whole, followed by information for each of the clusters. The section concludes with a comparison of area demographics and Archdiocesan demographics, and implications for the Archdiocese.

Archdiocesan demographics

The two tables below summarize the demographic information provided by Archdiocesan personnel for the 2010-2011 school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School Demographics, 2010-2011 (Total Enrollment: 30,163 students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Alaskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Demographics, 2010-2011 (Total Enrollment: 13,329 students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Alaskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The racial demographics at the elementary and high school levels are similar by percentage. The percentages of free and reduced lunch students, however, a rough proxy for poverty, are 10% lower in the high schools than in the elementary schools. This is likely primarily due to two factors: the high cost of Catholic high school education and competition from good public high schools.

As will be discussed in-depth below, the percentages of each racial category are roughly in line with those at the state level and within each cluster. There is a slightly higher percentage of white students and a lower percentage of black students in the Archdiocesan schools. This will be discussed more in the educational landscape. For the rest of the analysis, only the four major racial groups: white, black, Asian, and Latino will be discussed, due to the small percentages of other groups present in Ohio and in Archdiocesan schools.

Demographics by cluster

The city-based demographic data referenced throughout this document are provided in the Nielsen Claritas reports attached as appendices. The reports are based on United States Census 2011 estimates. The cities chosen for analysis, in most cases, are those with the greatest numbers of Archdiocesan schools, based on the information submitted by the Archdiocese, divided by cluster.
Corresponding demographic information for the United States and Ohio can be found in the appendix as well, to provide a basis for comparison. They are referenced occasionally in the text as well. The following table contains information on the public school districts and counties in which the largest numbers of schools in each cluster are located. "CSD" stands for City School District and "LSD" for Local School District. For city school districts, the city was used as the unit of analysis for that cluster.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Public School District</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CISE</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Dayton CSD</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kettering CSD</td>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Clermont LSD</td>
<td>Clermont</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Suburban</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Princeton CSD</td>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Hamilton LSD</td>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Sidney CSD</td>
<td>Shelby</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piqua CSD</td>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>7 different</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>1 each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Northwest LSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oak Hills LSD</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CISE: Cincinnati**

The CISE cluster lies entirely within the Cincinnati City School District. Thus the demographics for the City of Cincinnati provide the best source for demographic information. Cincinnati has experienced recent population declines, from approximately 364,000 residents in 1990 to approximately 328,000 in 2011. The population is projected to continue to decline through 2016. The rate of decline, however, is projected to stabilize over the next five years.

Many of the other clusters are partially located within Cincinnati as well. Areas such as Price Hill (Western) and Oakley/Madisonville (Eastern Suburban) will be addressed in later sections of this report.

**Income and poverty**

The median income in Ohio is approximately $46,381, $3,400 below the US median. The median income for the city of Cincinnati is considerably lower still, at $33,457. The percentage of families with children living below the poverty line is nearly 18%, compared with only 8% statewide and in the United States as a whole. Poverty tends to be concentrated in urban settings, so the data on income and poverty are unsurprising. However, the average tuition at the CISE schools is the second highest of all clusters, at $4,563, representing 14% of the annual median income. The high tuition rates are likely related to the prevalence of the use of the EdChoice Scholarship Program, which subsidizes tuition expenses for many students in those schools.

The percentage of female-headed households with children under 18 represents another proxy for poverty, as female-headed households have a much higher probability of being poor than do families with two parents. In Cincinnati, 25% of

---

4 Public school district information was provided by the Archdiocese for each Catholic school.
5 In the Northern cluster, there are five schools located in five different city school districts. Sidney and Piqua have the two largest schools, with greater than 200 students apiece. In the Northwest cluster, there are seven schools in seven districts, but all are located in Hamilton County.
households are headed by a single mother. This is an extremely high percentage, especially when compared with the 12% of households in Ohio and 11% in the United States that are headed by a single mother.

As acknowledged by Archdiocesan leadership, these demographics suggest an area in need of economic assistance as well as school stability given the challenges faced by a large percentage of families.

**Housing**

The percentage of individuals renting rather than owning their homes is included as a measure of geographic mobility. High rates of renter-occupied homes indicate less stable communities, as families who rent are more likely than people who own their homes to move out of the area. The percentage of renter-occupied housing in Cincinnati is 60%, approximately twice the percentage of the rental rate in all of Ohio. Again, this is often the case in urban areas. It does, however, suggest a fairly transient and unstable population. Students in inner-city Cincinnati are likely to move from neighborhood to neighborhood and thus from school to school more often than their counterparts in other parts of the state.

For those that do own their homes, the median value of the property is $122,901. This value is approximately $8,000 below the median Ohio housing value, and $50,000 below the median housing value nationwide.

**Employment**

The percentage of residents over 16 in the labor force and the unemployment rate are used to indicate the strength of the local economy. At 8%, the official unemployment rate in Cincinnati is two percentage points above that of the state of Ohio and three percentage points above that of the United States. Of those who are employed, 61% participate in a white-collar occupation, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau; approximately the same percentage as are involved in white-collar work nationwide and slightly more than are involved in white-collar work statewide. As indicated in the graph below, unemployment in Ohio has more or less followed the national trend over the last ten years. At its peak, though, it exceeded the national rate by a few percentage points. As elsewhere in the country, unemployment has begun to decrease in the current year.

![Unemployment Rate, National (Gray) and Ohio (Blue)](image)


---

6 Recessions are represented by gray vertical shaded areas.
Race, ethnicity, and language

In terms of race, ethnicity, and country of origin, the state of Ohio is less diverse than many parts of the United States. White residents comprise 83% of the population (as compared with 72% in the United States overall) and African-American residents another 12%. The Asian population is small at 2%, and the Latino population, though larger at 3%, is underrepresented in comparison to 16% nationwide.

Demographically speaking, Cincinnati does not resemble the rest of the state. The white population makes up only 50%, with the African-American population nearly equal at 45%. As in Ohio at large, the Asian population nears 2% and the Latino population is approximately 3%. These demographics suggest inner-city concentration of black families.

The language variable included in the demographic snapshot report is “Speak only English at Home.” Ninety-three percent of Cincinnati residents speak only English, suggesting that only a small percentage of residents have recently emigrated from non English-speaking countries. This is in line with the percentage in Ohio, but for the entire United States, only 80% of the population speaks English exclusively. This means that most of the schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati should not have to provide resources for English Language Learners, but it also suggests that Cincinnati does not share one of the more significant drivers of growth in other regions, i.e. large amounts of immigration.

Educational attainment

Educational attainment was measured by the percentages of residents over 25 with a high school degree and with a college degree. Typically, educational attainment is correlated with income such that the higher the educational attainment, the higher the income in an area. This pattern does not hold in Cincinnati because the city’s residents are relatively well-educated despite low median incomes. In the city of Cincinnati, 82% of the population over 25 has at least a high school diploma or GED and 30% has a bachelors degree or higher. The percentages are comparable to the United States, where 85% have earned at least a high school diploma and 28% have earned a bachelors degree or higher.

Religious affiliation

Census data do not include religious affiliation. Information on religious practice can be accessed at the county level, however, through the Association of Religion Data Archives. The percentage of Catholic residents in Hamilton County fell slightly between 1990 and 2000, from 31% to approximately 27%. In numbers, there were about 20,000 fewer Catholics in 2000 than in 1990. It is not possible from the limited data available to determine what contributes to the declining percentage of Catholic adherents. It is likely, however, that the decline has contributed to the Archdiocesan-wide decline in Catholic school enrollment to be discussed in the educational landscape.

Dayton Cluster: Areas of Dayton and City of Kettering

To simplify the analysis of the remaining clusters, they will be compared primarily to the city of Cincinnati, and will not be broken into as many sections. They will, however, follow the basic format of the preceding analysis. As mentioned in the introduction, detailed demographic information for each of the cities discussed can be found in the appendices.

City of Dayton

The city of Dayton as a whole is similar in racial composition to the city of Cincinnati, but Dayton has a slightly higher percentage of white residents (53%). Like Cincinnati, Dayton is expected to lose population over the next five years, continuing the trend set from 1990 to the present. The decline is in fact expected to be greater for Dayton; the city is expected to lose slightly more than 4% of its population between 2011 and 2016. Like the rest of Ohio, 95% of the residents speak only English at home.
The median household income in Dayton is $5,000 higher than it is in Cincinnati, at $38,903, but the percentage of families living below the poverty line, with children, is higher, at 21%. The proportion of households headed by a single mother is nearly equal, at approximately 25%. The average tuition at Dayton cluster schools is $3,107, representing 8% of the median income.

The unemployment rate in Dayton is higher than in Cincinnati, at 11% compared to Cincinnati’s 8%, with a lower percentage of white-collar employees.

In terms of educational attainment, approximately the same percentage of the population over 25 has earned at least a high school degree (81%), but fewer have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher (16%). This suggests that, despite the higher median income, the population as a whole is less well-educated than that of Cincinnati. Without more information, it is difficult to account for this anomaly. The nature of the occupations in the two cities might be part of the explanation. With the higher percentage of white-collar jobs in Cincinnati, it is likely more necessary for employees to have attained a bachelor’s degree.

Fifty-two percent of Dayton residents own their own homes, 12% more than own their homes in Cincinnati, but the median value of houses is $60,000 less.

The number of Catholic adherents in Montgomery County declined from 1990 to 2000, but the concurrent decline in population resulted in the same percentage of Catholics, 16%.

**Individual Areas of Dayton**

Archdiocesan personnel identified three distinct areas within the city of Dayton, each with a different demographic composition and specified by a set of zip codes: Old North Dayton, West Dayton and East Dayton/Kettering. For any area containing more than one zip code, the data have been aggregated across the zip codes.

Broadly speaking, Old North Dayton and West Dayton have lower median incomes and higher degrees of poverty than any other area analyzed for this report, while East Dayton has a median income near the midpoint of the areas analyzed.

**Old North Dayton (Zip code 45404)**

Old North Dayton saw population decline of approximately 10% each decade from 1990 to 2011 and is projected to decline between 2011 and 2016, though at the lower rate of 4.5%. The population of this area is 81% white, 15% black, 3% Latino, and less than 1% Asian. Ninety-six percent of residents speak only English at home.

The median household income is $26,274, with the median income for white residents $29,239 and for black residents $14,999. As might be expected from the low median income, 25% of families with children live below the poverty line and an equal percentage of households are headed by a single mother. As is also generally correlated with low median income, the educational attainment in this part of Dayton is considerably lower than in other areas, with 71% of the population having earned a high school diploma and only 6% having earned a bachelor's degree or more.

The unemployment rate, at 9%, is higher than that of the United States and Ohio. Of those employed, a small proportion (approximately one-third) is employed in white-collar occupations, with 37% employed in blue-collar professions and 26% in service and farm professions.

Half of the population owns their own home and the median home value is about half that of Cincinnati, at $69,119.
West Dayton (Zip codes 45405 and 45417)

As in Old North Dayton, the zip codes comprising West Dayton have experienced population decline of 11 to 13% between 1990 and 2011, and are expected to decline a further 5% through 2016. While Old North Dayton has a majority white population, West Dayton has a population that is 27% white and 69% black, with 2% Latino and less than 1% Asian. Ninety-six percent of residents speak only English at home.

The educational attainment in West Dayton is higher than in the Old North area of Dayton; 78% of residents have earned a high school diploma or more, and 13% have earned a bachelor's degree or more. The median income is only slightly higher at $26,971. As in Old North Dayton, the percentages of single mothers (30%) and families with children living below the poverty line (24%) are worryingly high. Of equal concern is the 12% of residents who are officially unemployed.

The percentage of residents owning their homes is essentially equal to that in Old North Dayton at 52% compared with 50%; the median home value is slightly lower at $68,515.

East Dayton/Kettering (Zip codes 45420, 45431 and 45420)

The aggregated data for zip codes 45420, 45431, and 45420 reveal, as in other parts of the city, a declining population. The decline in this area, however, is much smaller than in other parts, with less than 5% decline each decade since 1990 and projected decline of 2% between 2011 and 2016. Compared with other parts of Dayton, East Dayton is less diverse, with 91% white residents, 4% black residents, and 3% each Asian and Latino residents. Ninety-five percent of residents speak only English at home.

The median age, at 39, is 6 years higher than that in Old North Dayton, representing a more mature population. The educational attainment is much higher: 89% of residents have earned at least a high school degree and 23% have earned a bachelors degree or more. Commensurate with the higher level of educational attainment, the median income is higher at $45,821 and the level of poverty lower. Seven percent of families with children live below the poverty line and 16% of households are headed by a single mother.

The unemployment rate is equal to that of the United States, at 5%, and 60% of workers are employed in white-collar professions.

Sixty percent of East Dayton residents are homeowners; the median home value is still comparatively low, at slightly below $100,000.

City of Kettering

The City of Kettering as a whole appears wealthier than any of the areas of Dayton specified for this report. Kettering, though, is also projected to suffer a decline in population through 2016, the largest by percentage of all the cities analyzed for this report. The projection is likely due to the higher median age in Kettering, 42 years old as opposed to 33 in Dayton and 35 in Cincinnati. Only 6,314 households have children under 18, compared to 17,693 without children.

The educational attainment in Kettering is much higher than in the other cities. Nearly the entire population over 25 has earned at least a high school degree (93%) and 31% have a bachelors degree or higher. Unsurprisingly, the median income is significantly higher as well, at slightly over $48,000; and the percentage of families living in poverty is only 4%. About half the percentage of households as in Cincinnati are headed by a single female. Unemployment is less than 5% and, of those who are employed, two-thirds are white collar workers.

The median home value in Kettering is $132,000, about $10,000 higher than Cincinnati, and 65% of residents own their homes.
Overall, Kettering is older and more affluent, with a higher rate of homeownership than either Cincinnati or Dayton. This reflects a more stable community than either of the larger cities. The opportunity for growth in enrollment, however, is likely limited by the smaller percentage of young families.

**Eastern Cluster: City of Cincinnati and Clermont County**

The largest numbers of Catholic schools in the Eastern cluster lie within the Cincinnati City School District and the West Clermont Local School District. Cincinnati demographics have already been described; of the three schools located in the West Clermont LSD, two are in the city of Union and one is located in a small town called Amelia. For the most part, the demographics of Amelia mirror those of Clermont County, in which it is located. The demographics for Union and Amelia are included in an appendix and summarized here to supplement the demographic picture of the Eastern cluster.

**Amelia**

Located to the east of Cincinnati, Amelia has experienced great population growth from 1990 through the present, and is expected to keep growing through 2016, albeit more slowly. The town has a white population of 95% and a high median income ($49,496), though not as high as the county overall ($55,778). Seven percent of families with children live in poverty and 13% of households are headed by a single mother. In terms of education, 89% of Amelia residents have earned at least a high school diploma, with 16% having earned a Bachelors degree or more.

Unemployment is unremarkable at 5% and 58% of employees work in white-collar occupations. The percentage of residents owning their own homes is 58% and the median house value is $139,018. As with income, these numbers are higher than in Cincinnati proper, but not as high as the county overall. In Clermont County, 76% of residents own their own homes and the median home value is $153,966.

**Union**

The City of Union has gone from a 3% population decline between 1990 and 2000 to a projected increase of 2% between 2011 and 2016. The population is currently 96% white, 1% black, 2% Latino and less than 1% Asian. Consonant with these demographics, 99% of residents speak only English at home.

While the percentage of the population having earned a high school diploma or more is high, at 90%, the percentage having earned a college degree or more is less than that nationwide, at 15%. Union consists of a high percentage of family households, 78%, with a median income of $55,742. Three percent of families with children live below the poverty line and 11% of households are headed by single mothers.

The unemployment rate matches that of Amelia, at 5%, as does the percentage of white-collar workers. An even greater percentage of the population owns their own homes, at 85%, but the median home value is $30,000 lower.

Amelia and Union both seem to be small, but growing areas, with younger families who might be considered a new or growing market for Catholic education. To the extent that this holds true for the other small cities in the Eastern cluster, it might be a good area of focus for increasing enrollment.

**Eastern Suburban Cluster: Oakley/Madisonville, City of Reading, and Butler County**

The largest numbers of schools in the Eastern Suburban cluster are located in the Cincinnati CSD and the Princeton CSD. Princeton City demographics are not available through Nielsen, so Butler County demographics will be described instead.

---

7 The population grew 36% from 2000 to 2011, and is projected to grow 8% between 2011 and 2016.
The Oakley/Madisonville area of Cincinnati and the City of Reading were specified by Archdiocesan personnel as areas of interest to Archdiocesan stakeholders and are included in the report as well.

**Butler County**

Butler County has experienced population growth from 1990 to the present and is projected to grow 4% between 2011 and 2016. The county has a white population of 87% and an African-American population of 7%. The Asian and Latino populations are similar in proportion to those in Cincinnati, at 2% and 3% respectively.

Eighty-seven percent of individuals over 25 have completed high school and 25% have earned at least a bachelors degree. The median income is comparable to that of Clermont County, at slightly greater than $53,000. Seven percent of families with children live below the poverty level and 11% of families are headed by a single mother. The unemployment rate is 6% and 61% of workers are employed in white-collar occupations.

As in Clermont County, more than 70% of residents own their own homes and the home value is $151,131.

**Oakley/Madisonville (Zip codes 45209 and 45227)**

The Oakley/Madisonville area of Cincinnati contains one school within the CISE cluster and two schools within the Eastern Suburban cluster. The neighborhood has experienced population decline in the past, decreasing 7% between 1990 and 2000 with a less than 1% projected decline between 2011 and 2016. The area has a population that is 67% white, 28% black, 1% Asian, and 3% Latino, with 95% speaking only English at home.

Residents are highly educated: 87% have earned at least a high school degree and nearly 40% have earned a bachelors degree or more. Compared with other areas, however, a lower percentage (50%) of households is classified as "family households."

The median income in Oakley/Madisonville is $45,821, lower than that in Amelia and Butler County. The unemployment rate, at 4%, is lower than that of the United States as a whole, and 67% of employed workers hold white-collar jobs.

Fifty-four percent of the residents in this area own their homes. The median home value is $135,438, higher than all but the Eastern cluster and Butler County.

**City of Reading**

The City of Reading has also experienced population decline, decreasing 6% from 1990 through 2000 and a projected 3% between 2011 and 2016.

The city is 88% white and 5% black, with 3% Asian and 2% Latino residents. A lower percentage than in other areas speaks only English at home at 92%.

The median age for the City of Reading is high, at 40 years of age. Educational attainment is average, with 84% having completed high school and 21% having earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The median income is $43,408, leaving the City of Reading near the middle when compared to the other locales analyzed in this report. The level of poverty is low; 4% of families with children live below the poverty line. Eleven percent of households are headed by a single mother.

Unemployment matches that nationwide, with 58% of employees in white-collar professions. Nearly 60% of the population owns their homes, with a median home value of $120,538.

The Eastern cluster and the Eastern Suburban cluster, from the high-level perspective presented in this report, both appear to offer areas of enrollment growth potential.
Hamilton Cluster: City of Hamilton

Hamilton

The City of Hamilton is expected to experience slight population growth between 2011 and 2016 (1.23%). The city is more diverse than the state as a whole, with 86% white residents and 8% black. Hamilton has the highest percentage of Latino residents of the cities analyzed in this report, at 6%. Despite the larger Latino population, Hamilton is similar to the rest of the state in that 95% of residents speak only English at home.

The educational attainment in Hamilton is lower than in other cities: 79% of residents have a high school diploma or more, while 13% have acquired a bachelors degree or more.

The median income in Hamilton is higher than that in Cincinnati, but lower than many of the other cities at $39,032. Unemployment is higher at 8% and a smaller percentage of the workforce is employed in white-collar occupations (50%). There is also a higher percentage of single mothers (16%) and 14% of families with children live below the poverty line.

Home ownership is similar to the other cities analyzed in this report at 60% with a median home value of $110,310.

Overall, the Hamilton cluster appears slightly less affluent and educated, with a less prosperous economy, than many of the other clusters. The percentage of median income represented by the average tuition falls somewhere near the middle of the clusters, indicating that Hamilton Catholic schools are a fair value compared to the Catholic schools in other clusters.

Northern Cluster: City of Sidney and City of Piqua

The Northern cluster consists of a number of different cities, each containing one Catholic school. The cities of Sidney and Piqua were chosen for this analysis because they contain the two largest schools, with greater than 200 students apiece.

Piqua

The two cities each have median income higher than $40,000, higher than that of Cincinnati, Dayton, or Hamilton. The City of Piqua declined in population from 1990 to 2011, and is projected to continue to decline through 2016. As seen previously, this is likely due in part to a high median age, at 39. Similar to Hamilton, 80% of city residents have earned high school degrees or more, while 13% have earned at least a bachelors degree.

Of households in Piqua, 12% are headed by single mothers and 12% of families with children live below the poverty line. Piqua is 93% white. While the unemployment rate (6%) is only one percentage point higher than that of the rest of the United States, only 46% of the employed population works in a white-collar occupation. The median value of homes is $96,889, higher only than the value of homes in Dayton; 65% of the population owns their own home.

Sidney

The city of Sidney, despite a slight increase in population from 1990 to 2000, is projected to decline in population from 2011 to 2016, similar to Piqua. Sidney has a lower percentage of white residents at 90%, with a higher percentage of Asian and Latino residents. Still, 95% of the population speaks only English at home.

---

8 Of the remaining workforce, 29% is involved in blue-collar work and 21% is involved in farming.
9 Of the remaining workforce, 39% is involved in blue-collar work and 15% is involved in farming.
The median age in Sidney is two years younger than that in Piqua, at 37. Eighty-three percent of the population has earned a high school degree or more; 15% has earned a bachelor's degree or more.

The median income is $2,000 higher than that in Piqua, but a larger percentage of the households are headed by a single female (14%), and the same percentage of families with children live below the poverty line. The statistics for unemployment, white-collar occupations, and rate of homeownership are nearly comparable, but the median housing value is about $13,000 higher in Sidney than it is in Piqua.

If these two cities can be taken as reflective of the demographics in the northern cluster, the cluster is characterized by a stronger blue-collar and agricultural presence and a slightly older mix of residents than those clusters closer to Cincinnati. Given that there is currently only one school per city in the northern cluster and the population is expected to decline in the two cities analyzed, this may not be a region in which to target or anticipate enrollment growth.

**Western and Northwestern clusters: Price Hill, St. Bernard, Finneytown**

Price Hill, which contains ten Catholic schools spread over two zip codes, 45205 and 45238, was identified by Archdiocesan personnel as an area of interest for stakeholders. St. Bernard and Finneytown each contain two Catholic schools, so were also chosen for analysis. Many other cities in this cluster contain only one school, so were not considered to be broadly representative for purposes of this report.

**Price Hill (Western)**

The population of Price Hill declined 6% from 1990 through 2000, but has become more stable since, declining less than 1% from 2000 through 2011. Going forward, the population is projected to be nearly constant, with a decline of only 0.66% through 2016. The population is diverse, with 82% white, 13% black, and 2% each Asian and Latino residents. Consistent with most of the areas in the Archdiocese, 95% of residents speak only English at home.

In terms of educational attainment, 85% of Price Hill residents have completed high school, with 21% having earned a college degree or more. The median income is $42,159, higher than that of Cincinnati as a whole. Fifteen percent of households are headed by a single mother and 9% of families with children live in poverty.

The unemployment rate is equal to that of the United States, at 5%. Of those employed, 59% work in white-collar occupations with the remainder about evenly split between blue-collar and "service and farm" occupations.

Sixty percent of residents own their own homes; the median home value is $120,225.

**St. Bernard (Western/Northwestern)**

St. Bernard is currently home to two Catholic schools, one in the Western cluster and one in the Northwestern cluster. The population in St. Bernard is declining, and is expected to decline an additional 4% between 2011 and 2016. Eighty-nine percent of residents are white, 9% are black, 1% are Asian, and 2% are Latino; 96% speak only English at home. In terms of educational attainment, the percentage of the population with a high school diploma approximates that of the United States as a whole, at 86%. The percentage of college graduates (15%), however, is 13 percentage points below that of the United States.

The median income in St. Bernard is $42,866. Twelve percent of households are headed by a single mother and 5% of families with children live in poverty. The unemployment rate in St. Bernard is low, 2%; just over half the working population is employed in white-collar jobs.

Sixty-five percent of the city's residents are homeowners, with median home value $110,366.
Finneytown (Western/Northwestern)

Finneytown is also currently home to two Catholic schools, one in the Western cluster and one in the Northwestern cluster. It is a diverse, well-educated, and relatively affluent community that has shown growth over the past 20 years, and is projected to grow 4% between 2011 and 2016. Two-thirds of the population is white and nearly one-third is black. Asian and Latino residents each represent approximately 1% of the population. Ninety-five percent of residents speak only English at home. A high percentage of the population has completed high school at 92% and 40% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.

Seventy-five percent of households are classified as family households; median household income is $59,471, with 5% of families with children living below the poverty line. Thirteen percent of families are headed by a single mother.

The unemployment rate is equal to the United States at 5% and 69% of workers are employed in white-collar occupations. The rate of homeownership is high at 84% with a median home value of $134,109.

Overall, the Western and Northwestern clusters appear to have some areas of growth and some of decline. Price Hill and Finneytown have potential as stable or growing populations with well-educated residents and moderate median incomes.

Areas of Growth

Three major areas of growth were suggested by Archdiocesan leadership for analysis: the Tri-County region/cluster, western Clermont County, and the western suburbs of Cincinnati.

Tri-County

In contrast to the mostly declining population in existing clusters, a number of cities were identified by Archdiocesan leadership as constituting an area of future growth, possibly to become a new Catholic school cluster. These include cities in the proximity of I-75 and I-71: Mason, Loveland, King's Island, King's Mills, West Chester, Lebanon, Monroe, Middletown, Franklin, and Springboro.

For purposes of this analysis, Mason and Loveland each contain two Catholic schools, and are analyzed separately. The others were aggregated into one area report, excluding King's Island, King's Mills, and West Chester, as data were not available via Nielsen Claritas for these localities.

Mason and Loveland

Both Mason and Loveland are growing cities with high-income, well-educated families and a large percentage of family households. Mason has shown the greatest percentage growth of all the cities cited in this report for all three time periods analyzed. The city grew 83% between 1990 and 2000, 35% between 2000 and 2011 and is projected to grow 11% through 2016. Racially speaking, the population of Mason is 88% white and 2% black. The city has the highest Asian population by percentage, at 7% and is 2% Latino. The city has the lowest percentage of individuals who speak only English at home: 91%.

Nearly 100% of residents have earned a high school diploma, and 48% have earned a bachelor's degree or more. Seventy-five percent of the households are considered family households. The median income is $70,370, and only 2% of families with children live in poverty. Of all households, 9% are headed by single mothers.

Loveland is growing as well, though at a slower rate; it is projected to grow 2% between 2011 and 2016. The population is 94% white, and 2% each black, Asian, and Latino. The percentage of residents speaking only English at home is more in line with other areas under consideration at 96%.
The educational attainment in Loveland is slightly lower than that in Mason, but still higher than in other cities. Ninety-two percent of the population has earned at least high school diploma and 42% have earned a bachelors degree or more. The median household income is just over $70,000. There are, however, 6% of families with children living in poverty. Ten percent of households are headed by single mothers.

As in Mason, a large percentage of Loveland residents, 79%, own their own homes. The median home value is $176,024.

**Aggregated Cities**

The cities of Lebanon, Monroe, Middletown, Franklin, and Springboro grew 13% from 1990 through 2000 and 14% between 2000 and 2011. They are projected to continue to grow, though more slowly, in the years to come, by 5% through 2016. The Tri-County aggregate cities are 88% white by population, 8% black, 1% Asian, and 2% Latino, and 96% of residents speak only English at home.

Educational attainment is competitive, with 86% of the population having earned a high school diploma and 23% having earned a bachelor's degree.

Perhaps important from a school planning standpoint, a high percentage of households have been identified as "family households", with 70% designated as such, compared to 50% in the Oakley/Madisonville area. The median income of $48,305 is one of the highest in the Archdiocese. Still, however, 9% of families with children live in poverty and 14% of households are headed by a single mother.

Similarly, the unemployment rate is above the national average at 7%, with 57% of employees in white-collar professions.

More than two-thirds of the residents in this area own their own homes. The median home value is $139,145.

Overall, the Tri-County cluster contains cities with the highest median income of all clusters analyzed, and has the most highly educated citizenry. Archdiocesan leadership is right to have targeted this area for possible growth in Catholic education because of the presence of a growing number of families that likely have the means to pay full tuition. The high level of home ownership also indicates stability and implies greater willingness and ability to invest in long-term relationships with schools.

**Western Clermont County**

The area in Western Clermont County identified by Archdiocesan personnel includes the cities of Summerside, Mt. Carmel, Milford, Amelia, Owensville, and Batavia. The cities are growing, though not as rapidly as those in the Tri-County region. The population increased 9% from 1990 to 2000 and is projected to grow 2% from 2011 through 2016. The percentage of white residents is high compared with other localities, at 95%. Black and Latino residents each comprise 2% of the population and Asian residents less than 1%.

The educational attainment is similar to the Tri-County area. Eighty-seven percent of the population has attained a high school degree and 21% has attained a bachelor's degree or more.

The median household income is $44,390, with 6% of families living in poverty and 13% of household headed by single mothers.

The unemployment rate is 6% and 61% of workers are employed in white-collar jobs.

Sixty percent of residents own their own homes; median house value is $140,815.
Western suburbs of Cincinnati

Monfort Heights and Harrison, in the western suburbs of Cincinnati, were singled out as areas of possible growth. Monfort Heights is projected to grow 3% between 2011 and 2016. The population is 89% white, 1% black, 1% Asian, and 2% Latino, with 96% speaking only English at home.

The population of Monfort Heights is well educated: 93% of residents have earned a high school degree or more, while 34% have earned at least a bachelor’s degree. Nearly 70% of households are classified as family households. The median income, $58,344, is not as high as some of the cities in the Tri-County area, but still exceeds the median income in all of the other analyzed areas. Five percent of families with children live below the poverty line and 8% of households are headed by a single mother. Unemployment in the city is low at 3% and 69% of those employed work in white-collar occupations.

Like Monfort Heights, the city of Harrison has been growing since 2000 and is projected to grow 4% through 2016. Harrison is not a diverse city: 98% of the population is white, with 1% Latino residents and less than 1% black and Asian residents. Only 2% of Harrison residents speak a language other than English at home.

Educational attainment is lower than in Monfort Heights. At 85%, the portion of the population with a high school diploma equals that of the United States as a whole, but only 14% have graduated college. This is 13% less than the percentage nationwide.

Unemployment in Harrison is also higher than in Monfort Heights, but lower than nationwide, at 4%. Fifty-five percent of those working are employed in white-collar occupations. Seventy-three percent of Harrison residents own their own homes; the median home value is $136,823.

Private school enrollment

School enrollment information is included as an indication of the culture of private schooling in the areas served by the Archdiocese. The data were taken from the American Community Survey estimates for 2005 through 2009. The trend for private school enrollment at the U.S. level is to decline from elementary school to high school. This trend is observed in all of the areas analyzed except for the City of Hamilton. In addition, the percentages for private school enrollment in grades one through four are nearly equal to high school enrollments in Butler County and Sidney.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary 1-4</th>
<th>Elementary 5-8</th>
<th>High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>% Enrolled in Private Schools</td>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>15,209</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>7624</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>2460</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butler County</td>
<td>20,555</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>3636</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piqua</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Bernard</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finneytown</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>2,322</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The percentages of students enrolled in private schools at the elementary level are highest in Cincinnati, Kettering, Amelia, Reading, and St. Bernard. The percentage is lowest in Piqua, where fewer than 10% of students are estimated to be enrolled in private schools.

At the high school level, none of the localities exceed 20% in private school enrollment except for Reading and St. Bernard. Most of the cities lie between 10% and 20%, with the exception of Amelia, Piqua, and Harrison, where private high school enrollment estimates drop to between 0% and 5%.

These numbers suggest that there is a good market for and culture of private school attendance in several areas but, as in most regions of the country, it is weaker at the high school level.

Conclusion

To conclude the analysis of demographics, this section compares demographic information provided by the Archdiocese with the cluster information presented above.

The demographics of the Catholic schools in the majority of the clusters correspond closely with the demographics of the clusters in which they are located. There are a few exceptions, however. The percentage of black students in CISE is nearly 30% higher than that of Cincinnati as a whole. This undoubtedly reflects the geographic concentration of black families in the inner-city, which is the focus of CISE. White students are overrepresented in the Dayton cluster compared with the city of Dayton as a whole.
In the Eastern, Eastern Suburban, Hamilton, and Northern clusters, the demographics approximate the cities. In the Northwestern and Western clusters, it is difficult to make an accurate comparison without a concentrated number of schools in a zip code for analysis.

In terms of poverty, the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch is a relatively accurate account of the actual student poverty in the schools. Where it differs drastically from the demographic poverty measure, it is likely due to the particular geographical units chosen for this analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CISE</th>
<th>Dayton</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Eastern Suburban</th>
<th>Hamilton</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Northwest</th>
<th>Western</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Poverty</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% FRL</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discrepancies occur in CISE, Hamilton, and Western clusters. As mentioned above, the CISE schools are located in the inner city, where poverty is generally most concentrated; this would account for the much higher percentage of free and reduced lunch students in the CISE schools than there are impoverished families in Cincinnati. In addition, the schools focus on enrolling economically disadvantaged students. In the Western cluster, it is likely that zip codes other than the one chose for analysis have higher percentages of low-income families. It may also be that the school has been particularly successful recruiting students from families with low incomes.

In Hamilton, the trend is reversed: the percentage of low-income families in the city overall exceeds the percentage of low-income students in the Catholic schools. This may be because the schools are located in suburban areas or because low-income families cannot afford and/or are not willing to enroll in Catholic schools. This may be a cluster in which more tuition assistance is needed to encourage enrollment. The presence of proportional numbers of low-income students at schools in other clusters suggests that financial assistance policies are in place throughout the Archdiocese.

Overall, the demographic analysis indicates a diverse array of communities within and across clusters. One challenge for the Archdiocese is that, in addition to other factors causing a decline in Catholic school enrollments nationwide, the population of the larger cities—Cincinnati and Dayton—as well as some of the smaller cities, are expected to decline in the near future. The Archdiocese, then, is competing for a shrinking share of a shrinking population in many areas. The clusters in which the population is projected to increase—the Eastern and Eastern Suburban clusters—will need to ensure that Catholic schools are well-positioned to compete for students.

An issue that will need to be investigated and addressed going forward is the relationship between tuition and median income in the immediate vicinity of each cluster and school. While the relationship between the two measures is relatively out of balance around CISE schools, this is likely because of opportunities to utilize EdChoice Scholarships. Other areas may need to address imbalances between average tuition and median income to ensure families are able to afford tuition rates. Alternately, the schools can investigate methods for providing additional financial aid or increasing access to EdChoice Scholarships.

The following table presents information discussed above related to economic variables in relevant areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Examined Areas</th>
<th>Median Income</th>
<th>Median Home Value</th>
<th>Average Tuition (Cluster-wide)</th>
<th>Tuition as Percentage of Median Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CISE</td>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>$33,457</td>
<td>$122,901</td>
<td>$4,563</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>$38,903</td>
<td>$76,876</td>
<td>$3,107</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Old North Dayton</td>
<td>$26,274</td>
<td>$69,119</td>
<td>$3,107</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Dayton</td>
<td>$26,971</td>
<td>$68,515</td>
<td>$3,107</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Dayton</td>
<td>$45,821</td>
<td>$99,903</td>
<td>$3,107</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>$48,323</td>
<td>$132,070</td>
<td>$3,107</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Amelia</td>
<td>$49,496</td>
<td>$153,966</td>
<td>$4,002</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Union</td>
<td>$55,742</td>
<td>$120,687</td>
<td>$4,002</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Suburban</td>
<td>Butler County</td>
<td>$53,222</td>
<td>$151,132</td>
<td>$5,754</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oakley/Madisonville</td>
<td>$45,821</td>
<td>$135,438</td>
<td>$5,754</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>$43,408</td>
<td>$120,538</td>
<td>$5,754</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>$39,032</td>
<td>$110,310</td>
<td>$2,914</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>Sidney</td>
<td>$42,082</td>
<td>$109,817</td>
<td>$2,546</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piqua</td>
<td>$40,508</td>
<td>$96,889</td>
<td>$2,546</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwestern/Western</td>
<td>St. Bernard</td>
<td>$42,866</td>
<td>$110,366</td>
<td>$3,162</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finneytown</td>
<td>$59,471</td>
<td>$134,109</td>
<td>$3,162</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Price Hill</td>
<td>$42,159</td>
<td>$120,225</td>
<td>$2,680</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDUCATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Introduction

The following section of the assessment report presents an analysis of the educational landscape in which the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is situated. Information is provided on public school districts, Catholic elementary schools, and Catholic high schools, as well as internal data from the Archdiocese for comparison. Because the public school data utilized in this report are publicly available, this section represents information available to most parents when making their educational decisions. The Archdiocese also provided a large quantity of useful information on both elementary and high schools. These data form the backbone of the following report.

Overall, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati covers a diverse set of families and communities and this diversity is reflected in the schools. Poverty is an issue in many parts of the Archdiocese, as reflected somewhat in the Archdiocesan schools, but much more so in the public schools. The decline in enrollment across the Archdiocese is clear from the data, but the decline is not constant across all clusters, as will be discussed below.

The educational landscape provides insight into opportunities for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, challenges the schools may face, and potential recruiting methods and marketing efforts that may benefit the Archdiocese.

Elementary schools

Catholic elementary schools

Table 1 contains data about the Archdiocese as a whole, followed by data by cluster. Information includes: enrollment, race and ethnicity of the student population, EdChoice recipients, free and reduced lunch qualification, and tuition. The following pages provide narrative analysis of the data presented in the table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Total enrollment</th>
<th>Average enrollment</th>
<th>Race and ethnicity</th>
<th>% qualifying for free and reduced lunch</th>
<th>Average tuition</th>
<th>Number of EdChoice students</th>
<th>% Catholic</th>
<th>% attending Catholic high schools</th>
<th>Empty seats</th>
<th>% empty seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All School in Archdiocese</td>
<td>30312</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>White 87%, Black 9%, Latino 2%, Asian 2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>$3,257</td>
<td>3494</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>9,440</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CISE</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>White 76%, Black 14%, Latino 2%, Asian 2%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>$4,563</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>7008</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>White 93%, Black 1%, Latino 1%, Asian 2%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>$3,107</td>
<td>1366</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>3682</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>White 88%, Black 5%, Latino 2%, Asian 2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>$4,002</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Suburban</td>
<td>6470</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>White 89%, Black 1%, Latino 1%, Asian 2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>$5,754</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>1286</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>White 92%, Black 0%, Latino 1%, Asian 3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>$2,546</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 The percentage of students attending Catholic high school was calculated by adding the number of girls and boys planning to attend Catholic high schools, and dividing by eighth-grade enrollment for 2010-2011.

11 (total capacity - empty seats)/total capacity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>276</th>
<th>White 77% Black 13% Latino 3% Asian 2%</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>$3,162</th>
<th>265</th>
<th>78%</th>
<th>79%</th>
<th>976</th>
<th>34%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>7176</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>White 93% Black 3% Latino 1% Asian 1%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>$2,680</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>2451</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phone: 574-631-4646                              Fax: 574-631-2131                              Web: http://aceconsulting.nd.edu
Enrollment

The graph below shows cluster-wide enrollment in decreasing order by size. The Western cluster is the largest and the Northern cluster is the smallest in terms of enrollment. This largely mirrors the number of schools per cluster as well, with the exception of Dayton, which has the highest number of elementary schools. The average enrollment in Table 1 gives a sense of the size of each school within a cluster. Average enrollment ranges from the mid-100s in CISE and the Northern cluster to over 400 in the Western cluster.

![2010-2011 Enrollment by Cluster](image)

Race, ethnicity, and poverty

As evident in the graph below, racial/ethnic makeup differs significantly across clusters. The percentage of white students is highest in the Eastern, Northern, and Western clusters, where it exceeds 90%. The percentage of non-white students, by contrast, is highest in CISE—which is 74% black—followed by Dayton and the Northwest clusters. These latter two clusters, along with the Eastern Suburban, are the most diverse as, in addition to black and white students, each also has representation greater than 1% of Latino and Asian students.
The percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch differs cluster by cluster as well. The percentage is lowest in Hamilton, the Eastern, and the Eastern Suburban clusters. All others except CISE have percentages between 10 and 25%. CISE has the highest concentration of low-income students at 84%.

**Students receiving EdChoice scholarships**

Dayton has the highest number of students receiving EdChoice Scholarships at 1366. The next highest numbers of EdChoice students are found in the Western and CISE clusters at 788 and 622 respectively. CISE has the greatest percentage of students receiving the assistance in relation to its total enrollment. The Hamilton and Northern clusters each have zero, but this is likely not due exclusively to the small percentage of free and reduced lunch students at the schools, as the Eastern Suburban cluster has a lower percentage of low-income students than the Northern cluster, but has 390 Ed Choice students. It is more likely that those schools have chosen not to participate in the program or are unable to participate. They may want to investigate participating or easing access to the scholarships, especially since the voucher amount ($4250 for kindergarten through 8th grade) would more than cover tuition at the average school in both clusters. While it is true that the restrictions on the program are specific—the vouchers are only available to students from certain public schools, and even then only to students transferring from those schools or entering kindergarten—the vouchers could be particularly important in the Northern cluster where the number of empty seats is high. This may be a way of marketing to families currently considering only public schools.

**Tuition**

The Eastern Suburban cluster has the highest average tuition among the clusters, followed by CISE. Eastern Suburban’s high average is related primarily to the presence of two schools with unusually high tuitions in the cluster. Over all clusters, average tuition ranges from $2546-$5754, representing about a $3000 difference. The following graph shows the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch against average tuition.
Catholic students

In terms of the percentage of the student body comprised of Catholic students, CISE has by far the lowest, at 16%. This is likely due to demographics. All other clusters have percentages of Catholic students higher than 70%, with the greatest percentage of Catholic students in the Northern cluster, at 95%.

Despite the low percentage of Catholic students in CISE, the percentage continuing on to Catholic high school is encouragingly high. At 64%, the rate is approximately the same as in the Dayton and Northern clusters. The percentage of elementary students who attend Catholic high schools ranges in the other clusters from 78% in Eastern to 90% in the Western cluster. In most of the clusters, there is room for improvement in the percentage of students pipelined from Catholic elementary to Catholic high schools. The most striking exception is the Northern cluster because, despite the high percentage of Catholic students and the low percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, only 65% went on to Catholic high school in the 2010-2011 school year and (as will be discussed more below) many of the elementary schools have a large number of empty seats. Although this might be attributable to good public high schools, discussed below, the available public school data does not exclude other possible contributors.

Enrollment trends

The graphs below show the change in enrollment from 2001-2002 to 2010-2011 across the Archdiocese and by individual cluster. Each graph also shows a trendline to represent the overall pattern of change. In spite of the Archdiocesan decline, not all of the clusters have experienced decline, and of those that have, not all have experienced it on the same scale. Table 2 contains numerical and percentage change in enrollment for each cluster.

Enrollment in the Dayton and Hamilton clusters has changed considerably over the decade with massive losses in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. Enrollment peaked in 2006-2007 in Dayton and 2008-2009 in Hamilton. Enrollment in both areas has suffered from the recent recession, but enrollment in 2010-2011 came close to that of 2001-2002. Thus, overall, these

---

12 According to the US Religious Landscape Survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2007), only 2% of American Catholics are black. Similarly, only 2% of the nation’s Catholics are Asian. Whites constitute 65% and Latinos 29% of American Catholics.
clusters have trended toward stability, losing fewer than 5% of students from 2001 to 2011. Enrollment has also been fairly steady in the Eastern Suburban and Northwest clusters. Enrollment has grown only in the CISE cluster, to which 137 students have been added, representing growth of 12%. Enrollment has declined more than 10% in the Eastern, Northern, and Western clusters.

![Archdiocesan Enrollment vs. Tuition](image)

The scale for enrollment for each cluster has been standardized so that the numerical change in enrollment can be compared visually. The steeper trend line indicates greater overall change in number of students over the 10-year span.

| Table 2. Change in Enrollment by Cluster, 2001-2002 to 2010-2011 |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|                   | Change in Enrollment | % Change in Enrollment |
| CISE              | 137              | 11.7%          |
| Dayton            | -335             | -4.6%          |
| Eastern           | -422             | -10.3%         |
| Eastern Suburban  | -154             | -2.3%          |
| Hamilton          | -55              | -2.9%          |
| Northern          | -572             | -38.8%         |
| Northwest         | -14              | -0.7%          |
| Western           | -1461            | -16.9%         |
Empty seats

The percentage of empty seats ranges from 17% in the Dayton and Eastern Suburban clusters to 47% in the Northern cluster. The percentage in the rest of the clusters is between 20% and 35%. The demographic analysis suggested population growth in the Eastern and Eastern suburban clusters, so in these areas the Archdiocese should market aggressively to increase its market share and evaluate the price point as the student population grows.

The Northern cluster seems to present the toughest challenge because, in addition to 39% enrollment declines and the already-high percentage of empty seats, the area is projected to decline in population over the next five years.

Public elementary schools

The data for public elementary schools presented in Table 3 is divided by public school district. The public school district corresponding to each Catholic elementary school was provided by the Archdiocese. The public school districts containing the highest number of Catholic schools in each cluster were chosen for analysis.

As with the Catholic schools, the public elementary schools differ considerably in terms of demographics. The Ohio State School Report Card makes it possible to access data on a number of characteristics not available for the Catholic schools: percentage special education, percentage Limited English Proficient, and state test performance. In addition, Ohio classifies each district into a “type” based on population, income, and poverty. These are noted in the table as a support to the information presented in the demographic section.

Enrollment

The smallest school districts included for analysis are those located in the Northwest and Northern clusters, with 1,553 to 3,650 students. The largest, as would be expected, are the Cincinnati City School District (CSD) and Dayton CSD. Cincinnati has over 32,000 students and Dayton about 40% as many, at approximately 14,000.

Poverty

Ohio designates low-income students as “economically disadvantaged.” Despite the fact that a number of districts are classified “urban/suburban-high median income,” all districts except for Oak Hills LSD have at least 30% economically disadvantaged students. Dayton CSD has the highest concentration of economically disadvantaged students, 92%, followed by Cincinnati and Hamilton, with nearly 70% apiece.

Compared with the percentages of economically disadvantaged students in the public schools, the percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunch in the Catholic schools are low. Only in CISE does the percentage exceed that of the related public cluster. In Dayton, where 92% of the students are economically disadvantaged, only 23% of Catholic students receive free and reduced lunch. While this likely reflects that economically disadvantaged family are unable to afford tuition, the concentration of these families in public schools suggests that many families that can afford private school in Dayton opt out of public school, leaving a higher percentage of economically disadvantaged students in the public system. As will be discussed later, the test scores are extremely low in Dayton public schools, a fact which is likely both cause and consequence of more affluent families choosing private education.
Table 3. Selected Characteristics of Public Elementary School Districts\(^{13}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>School district</th>
<th>Typology</th>
<th>Average daily enrollment</th>
<th>Economically disadvantaged</th>
<th>Special education</th>
<th>Limited English Proficient</th>
<th>Race and ethnicity</th>
<th>Meet or exceed state standards: reading(^{14})</th>
<th>Meet or exceed state standards: math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ohio Public Schools</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,744,969</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>White 75.2% Black 16.1% Latino 2.8% Asian 1.6%</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CISE</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Major urban Very high poverty</td>
<td>32,525</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>White 24.2% Black 67.7% Latino 2.2% Asian 0.8%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Dayton CSD</td>
<td>Major urban Very high poverty</td>
<td>13,987</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>White 25.1% Black 67.8% Latino 2.8% Asian 0.4%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kettering CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>7,093</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>White 88.9% Black 3.7% Latino 1.8% Asian 1.2%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Clermont LSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>8,550</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>White 94.3% Black 1.0% Latino 1.3% Asian 1.2%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{14}\) Reading and math testing outcomes are for 8\(^{th}\) grade students in the 2009-2010 academic year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburban</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Poverty Rate</th>
<th>Education Rate</th>
<th>Population Share</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Population Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>5,091</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princeton CSD</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>9,310</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>3,650</td>
<td>53.5%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney CSD</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban Low median income, high poverty</td>
<td>3,457</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piqua CSD</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban Low median income, high poverty</td>
<td>3,343</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>1,553</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winton Woods CSD</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>9,405</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finneytown LSD</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>9,405</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Cincinnati CSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>9,405</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Hills LSD</td>
<td>Urban/suburban High median income</td>
<td>7,743</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>White 93.8%</td>
<td>Black 1.3%</td>
<td>Latino 0.5%</td>
<td>Asian 1.4%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Race/ethnicity**

As with poverty, the racial/ethnic makeup of the public school districts differs from that in the Archdiocese. The closest match is in CISE, which is 27% white, 74% black and 2% Latino and Asian combined. This is comparable to the Cincinnati public school district, which has 24% white, 68% black and 3% Latino and Asian students combined. The Dayton cluster seems to include a number of school districts that differ drastically from one to another. The range in proportions of white to minority students in these districts (74% to 18%) is likely a byproduct of having predominantly black schools in the Dayton inner-city and more predominantly white schools in the urban/suburban areas, represented in this analysis by Kettering.

Hamilton CSD data suggest an urban center with high poverty and a majority white population. The Hamilton cluster Catholic schools have vastly different demographics than their public counterparts, with a 14% higher white student population and 62% fewer economically disadvantaged students.

The Northwest public school districts were chosen at random, since there was no clear grouping of Catholic schools. The two chosen, Winton Woods and Finneytown, show greater diversity than many other districts. This diversity is represented in the Catholic schools in the Northwest cluster as well.

**Special student populations**

The percentages of special education students in the public school districts are similar, ranging from 14% in West Clermont (Eastern cluster) to 21% in Cincinnati (CISE cluster), with Dayton close to Cincinnati at 20%.

Consistent with the information presented in the demographic section of the report, the percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students is small across all clusters, exceeding 4% only in the Eastern Suburban, Hamilton, and Northwest clusters.

**Test scores**

The test score measure included in the analysis is the percentage of eighth grade students passing the state-mandated reading and math tests. The lowest percentage of students passing that is considered acceptable by the state is 75%. All cluster public school districts except CISE and Dayton met the state standard in reading. Mathematics proved more troublesome for most clusters, as well as for Ohio students overall. This could indicate that Ohio students are struggling, that math teachers or curricula are not up to par, or it could indicate that the test that year was too challenging. The only areas that performed satisfactorily on the mathematics test were Kettering, West Clermont, and Oak Hills. The lowest percentages passing were found in Dayton (36%), Winton Woods (49%) and Cincinnati (50%), with Hamilton (57%) and Finneytown (58%) also below 60% passing rate.

**Implications for the Archdiocese**

The public schools in the area served by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati serve a diverse population of students, a high percentage of which, in most clusters, are economically disadvantaged. In most of the public school districts, the percentage of special education students exceeds that of Ohio overall. Although test scores are a limited method for measuring quality, they do provide a rough measure. Looking exclusively at the reading scores—as the math scores are low across the board—the schools are educating the students in a satisfactory manner, with the highest scores unsurprisingly in urban/suburban districts with high median incomes.

The areas in which public schools are most markedly underserving their clientele are in the CISE and Dayton clusters. In these areas, Catholic schools should have a clear competitive advantage in terms of academics, in addition to the religious draw, to the extent that they can be made affordable to families.
In most clusters, any school that can demonstrate competence in math education should be able to penetrate the marketplace. This is recognizably outside of the core competency for traditional Catholic schools, but might be an avenue to consider if at all possible, and to market any schools that happen to have exemplary math instruction. It may become desirable, as emphasis on state tests increases, to have Catholic school students take some of the state tests for purposes of comparison if possible.

Although the format of the religious education data made it prohibitively time-consuming to analyze the numbers by cluster, there is a total of 23,662 religious education students in the Archdiocese, which is only 6,000 fewer students than are in all Catholic elementary schools. This represents a hearty market for recruitment into Catholic schools.

**High schools**

*(A discussion of individual high schools’ demographics and other characteristics, along with accompanying tables, has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)*

**Enrollment decline and empty seats**

None of the high schools were enrolled to capacity in 2010-2011, though some were close. *(A mention of individual schools’ enrollments has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)* Several schools, on the other hand, had more than 25% empty seats. *(A mention of individual schools’ enrollments has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)*

Overall, high school enrollment has declined 16.2% between 2001-2002 and 2010-2011, from 15,900 students to 13,329, as depicted in the following graph.

![Archdiocesan High School Enrollment](image)

Four schools have increased enrollment between 2001-2002 to 2010-2011. *(A mention of individual schools’ enrollments has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)* On the other hand, eight schools have lost more than 25% of their student population since 2001-2002. *(A reference to an accompanying table that has been removed has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)* There does not appear to be a strong correlation between enrollment growth and location: the schools with increasing enrollment are all located in different clusters. *(A reference that would provide information on individual schools has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.*)
Public school comparison and implications

While public school district information was provided for the high schools, information on neighborhood high schools for each Catholic school was not available. Therefore, district level information is most applicable. Table 5 presents high school test score and graduation rate data for the public school districts in which each Catholic high school is located. (This table has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report because it references individual Catholic high schools.) Although the high schools are not assigned to clusters by the Archdiocese, the public school district information, in addition to zip code comparisons in some cases, made it possible to assign each high school to a corresponding cluster by location.

Based on the limited information available, most of the public high schools appear to be adequately educating the students who attend them. More than 90% of students passed the Ohio Graduation Test in both reading and math in all school districts except Cincinnati, Springfield, Dayton, and Finneytown. In several of the districts, more than 95% passed both tests. The graduation rate is also high in most districts, exceeding 90% in all districts except Cincinnati, Springfield, Dayton, and St. Bernard/Elmwood.

The district average composite ACT scores range from 18 to 25. The Catholic high schools outperformed the district average in all cases except for one school. (A reference to a specific school has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.) This is most likely because the district average is so high. Other schools’ scores were close enough to the district average that parents may be unwilling to pay high tuitions for what appears to be a small academic benefit.

This information confirms strong competition from the public schools in most areas. (A reference to a specific public school district has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.) The weakest public school districts at the high school level, and thus those in which Catholic schools should more easily be able to demonstrate competitive advantage, are Cincinnati, Springfield, and Dayton in the Dayton cluster and possibly the Northwest cluster, though school quality likely varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. There also may be strong non-Catholic private schools serving as competitors.

An important observation is that the percentage of Catholic elementary students enrolling in Catholic high schools needs to be improved. At the high school level, there are 3,951 religious education students who attend public school. This represents 30% of the current high school enrollment and is a population that is likely to consider Catholic schools. In addition, many high school-age Catholic students do not attend religious education courses, indicating an even larger group of potential Catholic high school students within the Archdiocese.

Conclusion

At both the elementary and high school levels, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is facing enrollment challenges, yet within each there are examples of regions and/or schools that are succeeding even in a tough educational and financial climate. In the areas in which the public schools are not serving the students well, i.e. parts of Cincinnati and Dayton, the Catholic schools serve as an essential alternative for families. To the extent that initiatives like CISE can be replicated in other low-income areas, and funds drawn from outside sources, they will serve to benefit both the Archdiocese and the families that are able to enroll in Catholic schools.

An issue for consideration is the discrepancy in tuition from cluster to cluster. This may be due to differences in cost of living or cost of doing business in different regions. To the extent that it may be more standardized, or revenues generated in one region used to subsidize expenses in lower-income areas, it might be possible to make tuition more affordable in...
schools where it is currently not affordable.
ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI DATA COLLECTION REPORT

(The data collection report has been removed from the public version of the Initial Assessment Report.)
CONCLUSION

Catholic school education in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is relatively well-positioned to fulfill its mission of forming youth and young adults in the Catholic faith and educating them to become productive and contributing members of society.

The stellar history of the Catholic schools has encouraged members of the Archdiocesan community to form strong emotional bonds to the schools and they recognize the advantages and benefits they, or members of their families and communities, received from these schools. This passion in the community, in combination with Archbishop Schnurr’s commitment to Catholic school education and the energetic leadership of Dr. Rigg, provide a solid foundation from which to respond to the findings in this report and introduce a clear path to sustainable and high-quality education for the generations yet to come.

The Vision Steering Committee Task Forces should use the report findings to inform the development of a three-year plan that clearly articulates priorities, sets measurable goals, includes a timeline for completion, and organizes appropriate constituent groups in a coordinated effort to achieve the goals. There are numerous areas of strength identified in the report and these should be recognized and enhanced to support schools as they serve children’s educational and faith formation needs. Several challenges are also identified and they provide opportunities to develop new paradigms to guide the Catholic school mission.

The Director of Educational Services/Superintendent of Schools and CSO staff members are called to engage with the implications of the assessment report and the subsequent three-year plan and to provide inspiration and leadership throughout the change process.
APPENDICES