

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

2008-2013



A Report on Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Washington
five years after Cardinal Wuerl's pastoral letter:
Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence

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INTRODUCTION

by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

FIVE YEARS AGO, my pastoral letter, *Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence*, called us to reflect upon why we are involved in Catholic education, what we can do to enrich parish religious education, and what we can do to ensure the viability of our Catholic schools for the future. The letter detailed a strategy to conduct an overall assessment of our educational ministry that identifies both strengths and those areas needing improvement in order to develop a long-range plan that would focus on four areas: Catholic identity, academic excellence, accessibility and affordability of Catholic schools. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on our accomplishments, the challenges we face today, and the next steps to take in all areas of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Washington: Catholic schools, parish religious education and adult catechetical programs.

The mission of the Church is to help people encounter Jesus Christ. The context of the effort today is the New Evangelization, of which education and catechesis are a constitutive dimension. Catholic education in all its forms has as its primary task the communication of the person and message of Christ to adults, youth and children. This unfolds through a wide range of efforts, but the goal is always the same. In our Catholic secondary and elementary schools, parish religious education programs, adult faith formation, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, sacramental formation programs, and the many forms of youth ministry, campus ministry and evangelizing outreach, the threads of the encounter with Christ and his life giving message are woven into the fabric of our human experience.

Our local Catholic educational institutions and programs fulfill that role – the light of Christ shines not only in Catholic school religion classes, but in each and every class, across all subjects. Likewise the entire life and activity of the parish help form people of all ages in the faith. Our schools and programs nurture an environment where our faith is the inspiration for a wholesome culture that encourages academic achievement as well as self-discipline, personal integrity and moral values. Catholic education



and particularly our Catholic schools are a living institutional witness to Christ and his message, so vitally important in a culture marked by secularism, materialism, and individualism.

Catholic education – and our support of it – is not merely an option. It is an essential element of the New Evangelization. This ministry is exercised in this archdiocese in the 96 Catholic Schools and 139 parishes that offer innumerable programs which teach the faith to adults, youth and children. In a particular way, significant strides have been made in recent years financially to support Catholic schools; but there is still much work to be done on the part of all of us.

Blessed John Paul II wrote in *Ecclesia in America* that “parents have a fundamental and primary right to make decisions about the education of their children; consequently, Catholic parents must be able to choose an education in harmony with their religious convictions.” But there is little real choice in education if there is no money to support it. Innovative government and business partnerships help real choices emerge that will make Catholic education affordable and accessible for more families. These initiatives would include government vouchers, educational tax credits and both privately- and publicly-funded scholarship programs.

A robust system of Catholic education programs is something from which we all benefit. The first and most obvious beneficiaries of Catholic education are its recipients, but the whole Church benefits from having, as a part of its lived experience, vital programs and institutions of learning. The wider community also benefits from the presence of Catholic educational institutions because the richness of Catholic teaching engages the secular culture in such a way that the light of the wisdom of God is brought to bear on the issues of the day. Catholic education is a blessing – a blessing so sorely needed by our society today.

PART ONE

DEVELOPMENTS BEFORE AND AFTER THE 2008 PASTORAL LETTER "CATHOLIC EDUCATION: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE"

IN HIS PASTORAL LETTER, *Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence* (2008), Cardinal Donald Wuerl identified specific goals to help ensure the future vitality of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Washington. This section provides an overview of these goals with details about how they have been accomplished through the hard work of pastors, principals, parish leaders, catechists, teachers, and the lay faithful. Much has been accomplished, but essential work remains to be done.



Catholic Education: Statistical Snapshot 2013

- 25,116 students, K-12, in parish religious education and youth ministry programs
- 2,699 parish catechists
- 1,226 adults became Catholic at Easter 2013
- \$9,774,000 spent on parish religious education programs in 139 parishes
- 27,720 students, Pre-K – 12, attend 96 Catholic Schools
- 65 archdiocesan schools and 31 independent Catholic schools
- 16% enrollment decline over the past ten years; 6% over the past five years; this decline is slowing.
- 0.7% Catholic school enrollment decline from 2011-12 to 2012-13 academic years
- \$117 million in total expenses for all parish elementary schools
- 83% of the aggregate revenue for archdiocesan elementary schools (excluding the Consortium of Catholic Academies) comes from tuition
- \$5.5 million in archdiocesan tuition assistance awarded to families for 2013-14
- 8% of students in Catholic schools are Hispanic; 27% are Black; and 51% are White; the remaining 14% are of various ethnicities
- 72% of students in Catholic schools are Catholic
- \$367 million in taxpayer dollars saved because of Catholic schools

Prelude to the 2008 Pastoral Letter

A number of goals for Catholic education that were outlined in the 2008 pastoral letter found their origin in two significant events in 2006 and 2007. In October 2006, Cardinal Wuerl gathered over 2,300 catechists and teachers to present and discuss the critical role of catechesis in the Church. At the October 2007 Convocation on Catholic Education, 500 parish and school leaders, including pastors, principals, catechetical leaders and others reviewed the facts and figures of Catholic education and identified a number of specific themes central to moving forward, for example, the need for a shared vision of Catholic education that is firmly rooted in a strong Catholic identity. This vision was clearly communicated in Cardinal Wuerl's *Catholic Education* pastoral letter published the year after the Convocation. It was also made clear from these two events that strategic planning was critical in the areas of Catholic identity, academics and, in a particular way, affordability and accessibility – namely, the financing of Catholic schools and how best to ensure that as many families as possible who want a Catholic education for their child can afford it. Finally, there was a clear emphasis on and commitment to continued communication with all those who have a stake in Catholic education in the Church of Washington.



Key Goals of Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence

Communication of the Good News of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Catholic education. This term - “Catholic education” - encompasses (a) parish-based religious education for those who attend public or other non-Catholic schools, (b) Catholic schools, which serve almost 28,000 students annually and have as part of their curriculum religious education, (c) homeschooling families who teach their children in the family home and (d) the formation and catechesis of adults. The primary goal described in the pastoral letter was “to renew and strengthen our efforts to pass on the faith,” but this required first of all an assessment of parish religious education efforts and Catholic schools. Another key goal, given some of the financial challenges facing our schools, was to renew in the hearts of all the members of the Church a sense of ownership for Catholic education, and our schools in particular.

From these major goals, and reflecting the work of both the 2006 and 2007 convocations, came a number of specific initiatives that provided an outline for a five-year period (2008-2013):

- Develop an updated standards-based religion curriculum for use in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs
- Improve formation programs for parish catechists and religion teachers
- Initiate discussion with homeschooling families, provide guidelines for religious education and make available appropriate religious education resources
- Develop policy and strategy for Catholic schools, particularly in the areas of Catholic identity, academic excellence, governance, and affordability and accessibility.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARDS GOALS:

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Assessment of Parish Religious Education Programs

BEGINNING IN 2007, the archdiocesan Office for Catechesis visited many parishes to assess religious education programs for adults, youth and children and learn how best to support pastors and parish catechetical leaders. Over time, these assessment visits were replaced with the parish planning process known today as the “Indicators of Vitality” which helps parishes review and enhance all aspects of parish life, not just religious education. From the original religious education visits and the 2006 Catechetical Convocation, came the specific tasks of creating a new archdiocesan religion curriculum with a corresponding assessment, along with improved catechist formation programs. These goals have been accomplished.

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization Curriculum Guide

In collaboration with catechetical leaders, the Office for Catechesis created a new standards-based religion curriculum guide in 2010 that has since provided parish catechists and religion teachers with direction as to what students need to know, understand and do with regard to the Catholic faith. The archdiocesan curriculum guide provides general standards for all age groups and specific indicators for students in grades K-8 in both parish religious education programs and Catholic schools. At the high school level, teachers and catechists use curricula based upon the national *Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age* published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 2008.

The use of such religion curriculum standards not only provides uniformity of instruction throughout the archdiocese, but it helps catechists and teachers to more comprehensively present the material to students, and ensure that nothing essential is omitted.

Archdiocesan Faith Knowledge Assessment

One challenge in teaching any subject is the wide range of differences in the knowledge level of students. Teaching the Catholic faith is no different. In order to account for these differences and tailor lessons based on what the students already know and what they do not know, a new faith knowledge assessment was launched in schools and parish religious education programs during the 2012-13 academic year. Over 19,000 students in grades 3 through 8 took the assessment and the results help teachers and catechists enhance their lessons. The results will also help parish, school and archdiocesan leaders determine any specific areas of needed professional development for catechists and teachers. Faith in and of itself cannot truly be measured by testing, but it is clear that knowledge of the faith is important for living the faith and then being able to share it with others.

Revised and Updated Policies for Parish Catechesis and Homeschooling Families

In light of the 2010 update to the archdiocese's *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, it became apparent that the 1999 *Policies for Religious Education* needed to be updated and refreshed. In addition, the growing number of families who are choosing to educate their children in the home showed the need for a policy statement helpful to homeschooling families. As with other archdiocesan policy documents, the *Policies for Parish Catechesis* and the companion document *Catholic Religious Education in the Home: A Policy Statement of the Archdiocese of Washington* are the fruit of extensive consultation with leaders and families. In a particular way, the statement for homeschooling families clarifies roles in religious education which helps ensure clear communication so that parishes can fully support religious education in the home and at the same time collaborate to ensure the faith is most effectively taught to all young people. These new policies are available on the archdiocesan website, adw.org.

 The Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guide can be viewed at:
www.adw.org/ReligiousEducationCurriculumGuide.pdf

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARDS GOALS: CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

THE ARCHDIOCESE HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS in meeting the goals that have been set with respect to Catholic identity, academic excellence, accessibility, and affordability. Catholic schools have a well-deserved reputation of providing an excellent learning experience – as places where daily growth, academic education, and faith development proceed hand-in-hand. Catholic identity is intrinsic to all educational efforts and is the reason for their success. Each year, approximately 28,000 students are able to receive an education in Catholic schools in the District of Columbia and the five surrounding Maryland counties. Tuition assistance is provided to many of these students and their families.

➤ The work of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington saves the State of Maryland (and ultimately its taxpayers) nearly **\$300 MILLION** per year and the District of Columbia more than **\$80 MILLION** in annual per-pupil costs.

ESTIMATED SAVINGS PROVIDED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY REGION

All Elementary and High Schools in the Archdiocese (excluding preschool students)

Region	No. of children in ADW elementary and high schools	Cost per child in public schools	Total dollars ADW saves the region
Washington, DC*	4,815	\$18,475	\$88,957,125
Montgomery County	10,254	\$15,421	\$158,126,934
Prince George's County	6,776	\$13,775	\$93,339,400
Calvert County	134	\$13,326	\$1,785,684
Charles County	497	\$12,700	\$6,311,900
St. Mary's County	1,570	\$12,320	\$19,342,400
Total	24,046		\$367,863,443

*Does not include Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute, which serves a special population requiring a different cost structure and is not comparable.

Source: Based on US Census Bureau Survey of Local Government Finances – School Systems of Public Elementary-Secondary Schools, SY 2011



Promulgation of Policies for Catholic Schools in 2009

A clear accomplishment in the years following the 2007 Convocation on Catholic Education and the 2008 *Catholic Education* pastoral letter was the development of new policies for Catholic schools. During the extensive consultations about 12,000 people – parents, parishioners and leaders, including pastors, – were asked to give input on key areas of Catholic school life; close to 3,000 people provided direct input that was used to develop the policies. Promulgated by Cardinal Wuerl in 2009 the policies have greatly assisted Catholic schools by providing clear direction on school planning and operations, as well as establishing key processes to help schools maintain their Catholic identity, governance, academic excellence and affordability.

➤ For more information on the practical impact of the policies, see “Realizing the Vision: New School Policies Shape a Bright Future” at: www.adw.org/realizing-the-vision



Comprehensive Accreditation of Archdiocesan Schools

Over the past few years, the Catholic Schools Office of the archdiocesan Central Pastoral Administration has worked closely with archdiocesan schools to move from individual school accreditation to a comprehensive accreditation model. Comprehensive accreditation is contingent upon each archdiocesan school together with the Catholic Schools Office creating and implementing an annual improvement plan based upon an assessment of specific indicators of excellence from three sources: *Archdiocesan Policies for Catholic Schools*, *AdvancED's Standards for Schools* and the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. Subsequently, schools have taken a deeper look at how they are doing in their mission to educate and pass on the faith, and identified specific areas for improvement. In November 2013 a national team of education leaders will come to the Archdiocese of Washington for a formal accreditation visit and will visit half of all the archdiocesan Catholic schools.

➤ Who is AdvancED?

AdvancED is an international leader in accreditation serving more than 30,000 schools and districts in over 70 countries. As the parent company for three regional accrediting agencies, the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement, AdvancED has over 100 years of experience. Their accreditation process combines the best of historic experience with contemporary research to define the standards of educational practice that can help guide schools to become most effective in meeting their educational mission.

In order to make the accreditation process for Catholic schools even more relevant, AdvancED partnered with the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness to identify Catholic identity standards that can be incorporated into the accreditation process for Catholic schools. These standards provide principals, teachers, parents, and other school stakeholders with the tools they need to measure their effectiveness in meeting the unique mission of Catholic schools.

Academic Excellence

Academic excellence has long been a hallmark of Catholic schools; more than 99 percent of Catholic school students graduate locally and nationally. The vast majority of them go on to further their studies in college.

In recent years, the quality of teaching in Catholic schools has improved even more through enhanced professional development of teachers and the extensive use of standards-based curricula and assessments. Now, in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington, students are taught by certified teachers using modern materials aligned to standards-based curricula. These educators have great responsibility for the success of our students and schools, which are often recognized on a national level. Since 2007, 13 archdiocesan elementary schools have received the prestigious Blue Ribbon award from the United States Department of Education. Only 50 private schools receive this award each year of the program.

The assessment of student academic performance and progress toward meeting academic standards at all grade levels is ongoing. This school year, our assessment system moved from a single standardized test given in the spring, to two standardized assessment instruments – a criterion referenced test, which is administered at the beginning of the year, mid-year, and at the end of the year; and a benchmark test, aligned to curriculum pacing guides, which is administered twice each school year, mid-first semester and mid-second semester. Both assessments are aligned to the Archdiocese of Washington Curriculum Standards to ensure that our students are meeting both archdiocesan and national academic targets. These assessments provide frequent and consistent measurements of student performance that inform daily classroom instruction, and assist teachers and school administrators in making well-informed decisions impacting academic programs. Ultimately the assessments ensure academic excellence for every student. The results of these assessments continue to reinforce our tradition of excellence and the good work and mission of our Catholic schools.



Catholic High Schools in the Archdiocese of Washington

The Archdiocese of Washington is fortunate to be home to 20 Catholic high schools serving just over 10,000 students. Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington, DC and Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School in Takoma Park, Maryland are archdiocesan schools, while the other 18 are independent Catholic high schools that relate to the archdiocese in the area of Catholic identity but are responsible for their own finances, operations and academics. The variety of high schools is extensive and the archdiocese is blessed to have so many excellent Catholic schools for young people – schools that form students in the faith through their particular charisms and traditions.

- Archbishop Carroll High School
- Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School
- Academy of the Holy Cross
- The Avalon School
- Bishop McNamara High School
- Brookewood School
- Connelly School of the Holy Child
- DeMatha Catholic High School
- Elizabeth Seton High School
- Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School
- Georgetown Preparatory School
- Gonzaga College High School
- The Heights School
- Our Lady of Good Counsel High School
- St. Ann's High School
- St. Anselm's Abbey School
- St. John's College High School
- St. Mary's Ryken High School
- St. Vincent Pallotti High School
- Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart

Regional Schools

The 2009 policies require that all parishes in the archdiocese support Catholic schools, whether through direct financial support of the parish school, being a partner in a regional school, or supporting archdiocesan tuition assistance that supports all schools. As a result of the policies, there are now 112 parishes out of 139 that use, with confidence, the phrase “our school.” While there are 56 parishes that sponsor an elementary school on their property, an additional 56 parishes support a regional school and provide financial assistance to families at that regional school. The remaining parishes generously contribute additional funds to archdiocesan tuition assistance through an annual education assessment; these funds help families across the archdiocese.

Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance and Private Scholarship Funding

Catholic families have long valued a Catholic education and, in past generations, almost any family who wanted to send their children to Catholic schools could. Unfortunately in today's economic climate, even though the per-pupil costs in our Catholic schools are far below that of neighboring public schools, not everyone who wants to send their children

to a Catholic school can afford to do so. Therefore, financial assistance has been, to the greatest extent possible, provided to those for whom a Catholic education would otherwise be out of reach. This assistance is the fruit of the generosity of the entire Catholic community and comes from parishes, the archdiocese, and other tuition assistance entities. Many families find the means to provide a Catholic education for their children through the generosity of grandparents, relatives and friends, in addition to tuition assistance.

In 2007 the archdiocese provided \$800,000 in tuition assistance to families with demonstrated need who wanted their children to attend Catholic school. As a result of the increase in parish offertory assessment for education, the generosity of donors, and the success of the Forward in Faith Campaign, \$5.5 million has been awarded to nearly 4,200 students and their families for the 2013-14 academic year. In the past four years, the Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance program has awarded over \$20 million to more than 15,000 recipients. The Catholic Education Foundation established in 2011 oversees these funds. While some of the funds are distributed directly by pastors to families with particular needs, the majority of awards are given to families who apply through the archdiocesan tuition assistance awarding process.

Parish Offertory Assessment for Education

The Catholic Education Foundation of the archdiocese distributes tuition assistance awards to families who want their children to attend Catholic schools. A major portion of the funding for these awards comes from parishioners through the Parish Offertory Assessment for Education. All parishes in the archdiocese contribute 3% of their offertory to this fund; in addition, 56 parishes support a regional school and contribute an additional 5% of their offertory to that regional school. Parishes without a school and not supporting a regional school contribute 9% of offertory to the tuition assistance fund.

This large and significant increase helps over 4,000 students each year attend Catholic schools, and yet the annual demonstrated need for the 2013-14 year was \$40 million – that is, there is far more need among families than can be met by archdiocesan assistance alone. Thanks to the generosity of parishes that provide their own assistance, of organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Business Networks, the Shepherd Foundation and other private benefactors, many families receive additional assistance. But still this is not enough for many families who desire to be able to send their children to a Catholic school. Thus, there is a need for educational tax credits, vouchers and publicly-funded scholarship programs, as further explained in Part Three.

School Year	Applicants	Recipients	Total Need	Total Awarded	% of Need Met
2013 - 2014	8621	TBD	\$40,724,866	\$5,500,000	14%
2012 - 2013	7585	4417	\$29,683,689	\$5,068,000	17%
2011 - 2012	8117	4379	\$30,509,140	\$5,013,000	16%
2010 - 2011	7650	4208	\$24,219,798	\$5,000,000	21%
2009 - 2010	6386	3433	\$20,324,940	\$4,269,123	21%
2008 - 2009	4379	2880	\$19,113,605	\$2,228,466	12%
2007 - 2008	3,833	1,536	\$18,074,238	\$800,000	5%

Schools Planning and Consultation

The 2007 Convocation on Catholic Education marked the beginning of sustained communications regarding Catholic education. Enrollment trends, school finances, parish support and archdiocesan assistance numbers provided pastors and other leaders the opportunity to see and understand that action was needed to ensure the viability of the greatest number of schools possible given the limited resources available. This data, accompanied by open and honest discussion, led to specific policies for school consultation and communication. Since then, 85 parish school consultations have taken place and thousands of parents and parishioners have seen, heard, and discussed the blessings and challenges of individual schools. In some cases the school's situation was truly insurmountable and, sadly, a number of parish schools have merged or closed. In other cases, communities

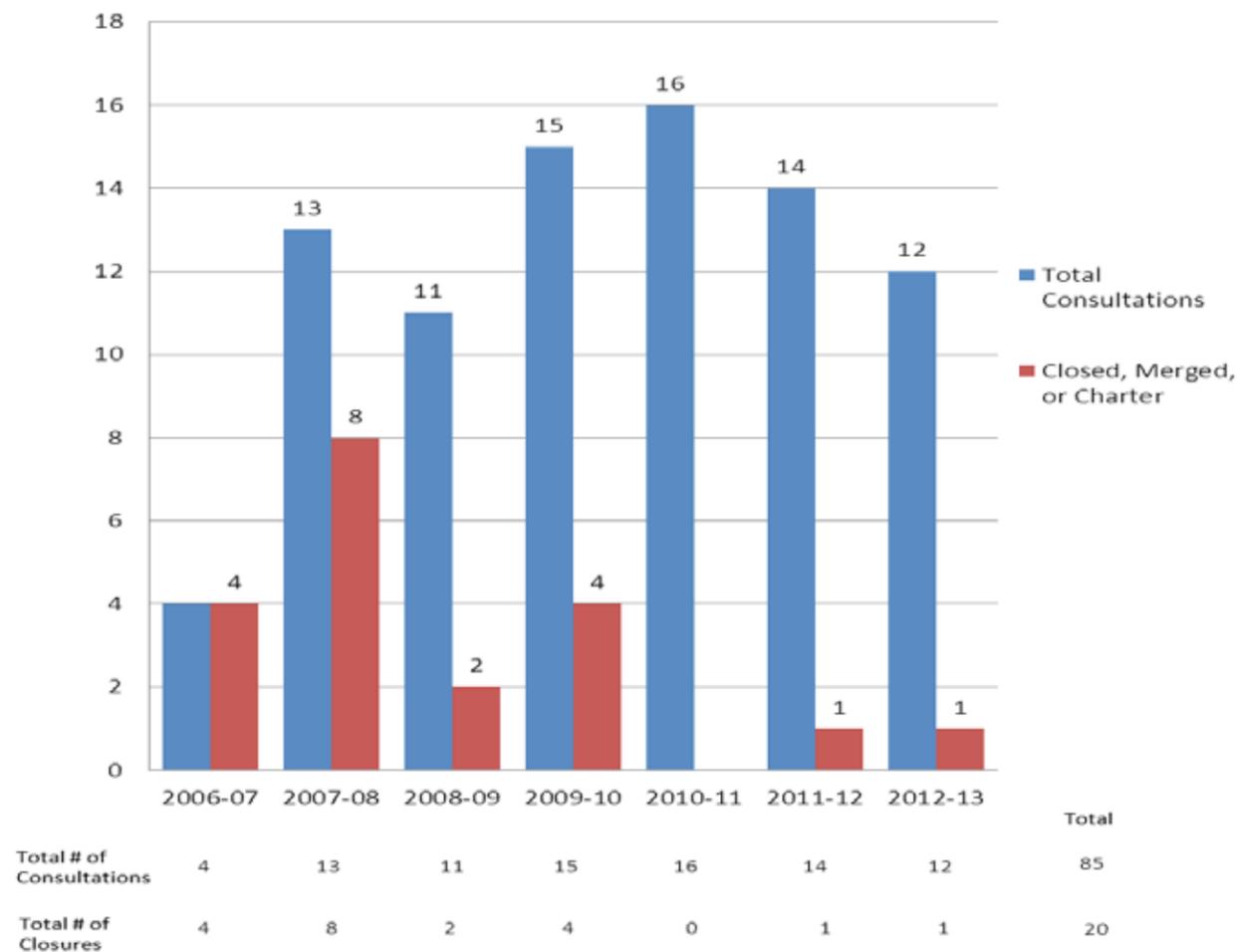
were able to bring about a change in enrollment or finances and thereby strengthen their schools for the future. Whatever the outcome, in almost every meeting those present appreciated the clear presentation of the facts and figures, the discussion of successes and the needs of the school, and were engaged to be part of the solution. In 2013, after five years of schools following archdiocesan consultation and communication policy, a parish school will communicate and engage parents through consultation years before the school might reach a crisis point. In this way the community has time to address the challenges to the best extent possible before the situation potentially becomes irreversible. This proactive engagement of the community bears significant fruit; while the consultations continue year to year, the number of schools that have had to merge or close has decreased significantly.

School Consultations and Closure/Mergers

Blue = number of formal consultations that took place each year,

Red = number of schools that merged or closed at the end of that particular year

Result of Consultation by Year



~ PART TWO ~

CATECHESIS FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

“CATHOLIC EDUCATION in all its forms has as its primary task the communication of the person and message of Christ to adults, youth and children.”

Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence, p. 5

Catechesis through Social Media, Websites, and other Communications

The New Evangelization calls us to actively reach out to others by our going out to them to meet them where they live, work, and play, in addition to inviting them to come to us to join us in the celebration of faith. New media in society presents a wonderful opportunity for the Church to reach people and proclaim the Gospel and teach in new ways. Specifically this happens through Cardinal Wuerl's blog, *Seek First the Kingdom*; e-letters from Cardinal Wuerl; the archdiocesan blog; Facebook; Twitter; YouTube; podcasts; the archdiocesan newspapers *Catholic Standard* and *El Pregonero*; the archdiocesan websites and media appearances by Cardinal Wuerl and various priests of the archdiocese. As of August 2013, the archdiocese's Facebook pages have more than 13,600 "friends" and the archdiocese's Twitter handles have more than 11,800 followers. Videos produced by the archdiocese have been viewed 237,000 times on YouTube.

THE CHURCH has the task of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. At the heart of this mission is the New Evangelization, in which all Catholics are called to know their faith, live it with confidence and share it with others. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, this mission can bear abundant fruit. A very positive sign of the real impact of the New Evangelization is that at the 2013 Easter Vigil over 1,200 people were received into the Church – the highest number on record for the Archdiocese of Washington.

In his 2010 pastoral letter, *Disciples of the Lord: Sharing the Vision*, Cardinal Wuerl invited each of us to “stir into flame the embers of the Gospel message and Christ's love in our own hearts in such a way that we not only grow in our own faith, but invite others to hear once again, maybe all over again for the first time, the exciting invitation of Jesus – ‘Come follow me.’”

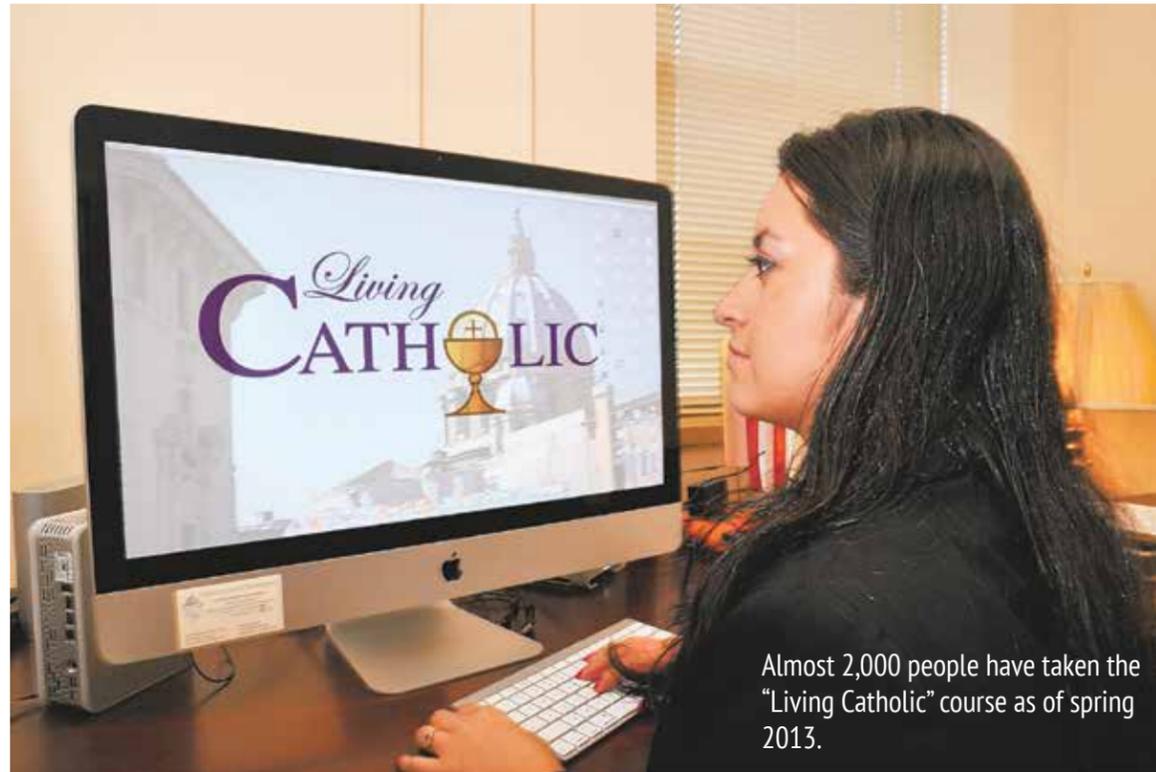


While 135,000 Catholics attend Mass on any given Sunday in the Archdiocese of Washington, it is worth noting that more than 262,000 people encounter the archdiocese through social media outlets.

The Archdiocese of Washington currently has the LARGEST diocesan social media presence in the country.

- www.adw.org
- www.facebook.com/adw.org
- www.youtube.com/washarchdiocese
- Twitter @WashArchdiocese
- Instagram @WashArchdiocese

CURRENT CHALLENGES TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION



Almost 2,000 people have taken the "Living Catholic" course as of spring 2013.

Faith Foundations

In light of the call of the New Evangelization, the Secretariat for Catholic Education initiated a shift in the way the archdiocese provides adult faith formation resources to parishes and all Catholics. Historically, through the *Hearts Aflame Program*, adult Catholics were invited to join faith formation classes in parishes that were primarily for parish catechists and school religion teachers seeking certification.

Now the new "Faith Foundations" program teaches the faith to adults using online lessons that can be accessed in the comfort of one's home and at one's own pace. These new courses are also taught live in parishes. They help all adult Catholics (not just catechists and teachers) know more about the faith so that they can share that faith with others.

Living Catholic

A shorter catechetical experience than "Faith Foundations" is found in the new "Living Catholic" course that went live across the archdiocese in October 2012. This program has been made available to individuals and parishes across the country. Between an in-person "live" opening and closing session at a parish, participants go online and learn about the Catholic faith over a period of four to six weeks, for an hour or so per week. "Living Catholic" also provides particular opportunities to engage in basic evangelization activities.

Through video, reading, assessment and surveys, along with resources for daily prayer and talking with others about faith, "Living Catholic" provides a basic overview of the Catholic faith in such a way that encourages all Catholics to identify how God has worked in their lives and then to begin to share that work with others. Almost 2,000 people have taken the "Living Catholic" course as of spring 2013.

➤ For more information and access to these courses, visit: www.mycatholicfaithdelivered.com/adw

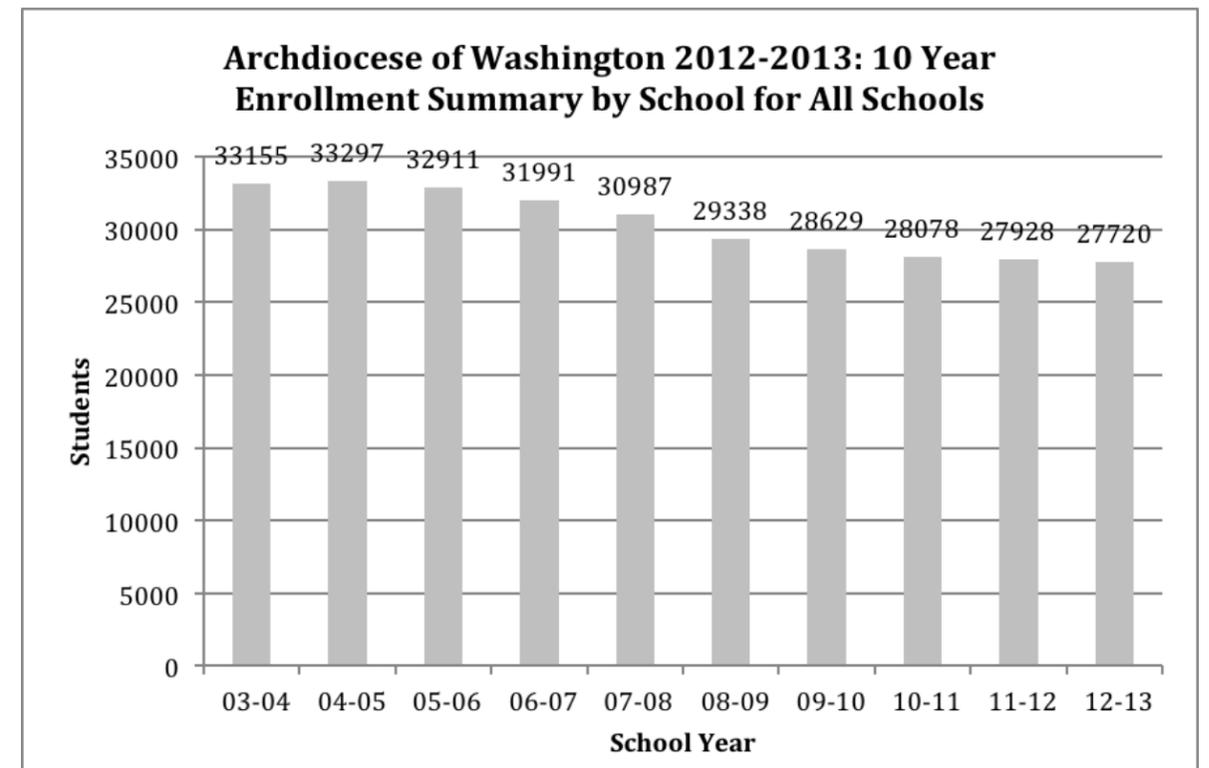
Challenges in Enrollment and Number of Schools

The National Catholic Educational Association reports that for the 2012-13 school year there were just over 2 million students enrolled in 6,685 Catholic schools nationwide. These numbers reflect a decline of over 29,000 students nationally from the prior year, and while 28 new schools were opened, 148 closed or merged. Here in the Archdiocese of Washington, Catholic schools experienced only a small decline in enrollment, from 27,928 students in 2011-12 to 27,720 in 2012-13. At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, one Catholic elementary school closed its doors although there are seats available for any interested students at nearby Catholic schools.

IN HIS PASTORAL LETTER, *Catholic Education*, Cardinal Wuerl identified four areas in need of attention in our Catholic schools: Catholic identity, academic excellence, accessibility, and affordability. Each of these respective areas faces their own particular challenges. All of the faithful have a role to play in responding to these challenges, not just the institutions of the archdiocese, parishes and schools. We all have a stake in Catholic education and we all must be engaged.

The Archdiocese of Washington is home to 96 Catholic schools that provide an excellent Catholic education to approximately 28,000 students in five counties of Maryland and the District of Columbia. The archdiocese operates 65 of these schools. While all of these schools provide an excellent education, day in and day out, many face significant challenges that must be addressed.

➤ Archdiocese of Washington School Enrollment Trend Chart for All Catholic Schools



Catholic Schools and the Preferential Option for the Poor

Answering the call of Christ to serve the poor and others who are disadvantaged, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Washington have for generations provided low-income students with an opportunity to succeed in life. The vast majority of students who attend Catholic elementary schools go on to competitive, high quality, Catholic, private, charter or public schools; more than 99 percent of students who attend Catholic high schools graduate and about 90 percent of them are then accepted to two- or four-year colleges, regardless of their socio-economic background. The results are clear: the more Catholic education that a child receives, the greater his or her chances to avoid poverty and unemployment.

While all Catholic schools have as part of their mission to provide a Catholic education to students from families with lower socioeconomic status, some schools in a particular way serve a significant number of families with very limited means and, therefore, depend heavily upon the generosity of donors and archdiocesan tuition assistance for operations.

In the case of the Consortium of Catholic Academies (CCA), (comprised of four urban schools - St. Thomas More, St. Francis Xavier, St. Anthony of Padua and Sacred Heart) 21 percent of revenue comes from the



Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP), 28 percent from archdiocesan/parish support, 31 percent from donors and fundraising, and 20 percent comes directly from parents paying tuition.

With regard to archdiocesan high schools, Don Bosco Cristo Rey and Archbishop Carroll High Schools depend upon the generosity of donors and also receive significant tuition assistance from the archdiocese in order to provide an excellent education to their students.

D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program

A significant percentage of students in archdiocesan schools in the District of Columbia benefit from the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program, which plays an important part of a comprehensive approach to strengthening education for all children across the District of Columbia. Approximately 40 percent of the student body in the Consortium of Catholic Academies receive an Opportunity Scholarship, and 39 percent at Archbishop Carroll High School.

Since its inception in 2004, over 13,000 low-income families have applied to participate in the program across the District. Overall, approximately half of all such families, most non-Catholic, have chosen Catholic schools for their children.

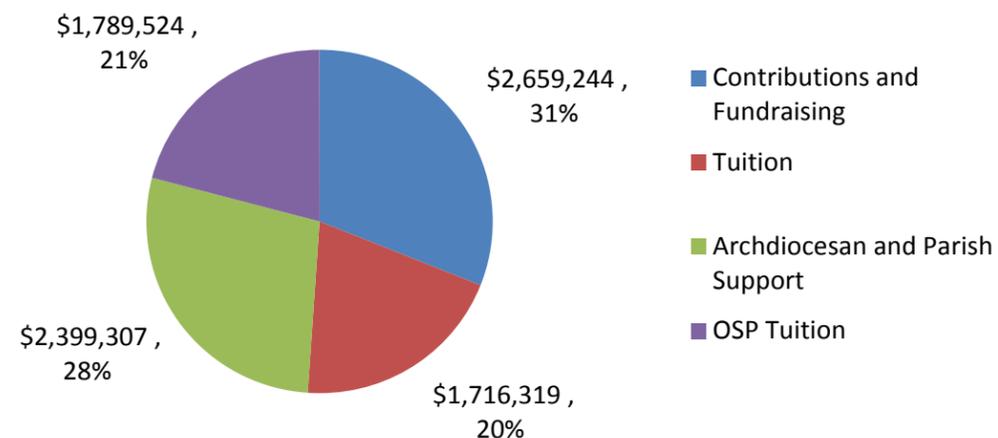
For the 2012-13 school year, there were 1,584 students receiving Opportunity Scholarship assistance overall, with 824 of these students enrolled in Catholic schools, 566 in elementary and middle school, and 258 in high school. Nearly half of the students enrolled in the program this last year live in Wards 7 and 8 of the District, the most economically challenged areas in the city, and almost all of them would otherwise be zoned for what has been classified as a “School in Need of Improvement.”

However, funding for the OSP has been uncertain for many years, and the program is currently scheduled to expire in June 2016 (though funds must also be appropriated annually). While reauthorization beyond 2016 is hoped for, especially given the positive impact of the program and support on the part of families, it is important to note that the program faces significant political challenges. Were the OSP to end in 2016, even if students were grandfathered through the duration of their K-12 education, there would be a significant decrease in enrollment at these archdiocesan schools, along with a tuition revenue deficit that could not be overcome by already significant fundraising efforts. If political leaders permit the program to expire, or actively choose to end the program, they may effectively force schools to close, and the children in our society will suffer for it.

Specifically in the 2011-12 academic year, eight archdiocesan schools had at least 25 percent of their student body that benefitted from Opportunity Scholarships; of these, four schools have about 40 percent or more of their revenue coming from this one source. Given the benefits of the OSP to low-income families who would otherwise have limited options for an excellent education, the archdiocese, families, and school leaders are working with national and local leaders to ensure the program continues without interruption on a permanent basis.

Consortium of Catholic Academies

Revenue by Source
For the year ended June 30, 2012



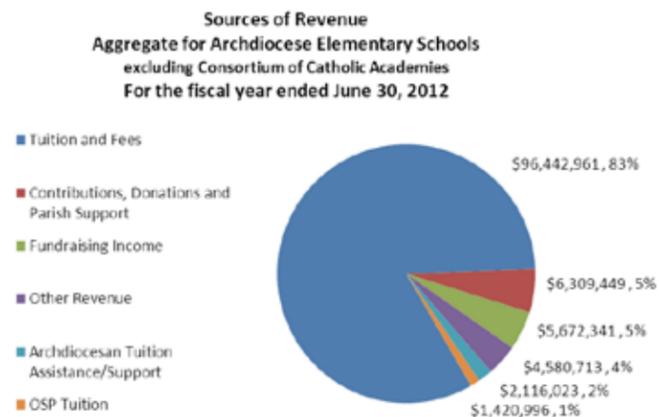
Two of our Catholic school students appeared before Congress when the program was being reviewed. One middle school student testified that “the Opportunity Scholarship Program has been a miracle for me and hundreds of other students just like me.” She noted that her school provides a bilingual education to children from around the world, who learn together in a challenging academic environment, and she said, “With my scholarship, I know I will go far.” A high school student who had grown up in poverty in a one-bedroom apartment provided this testimony: “This program has worked, is still working, and will continue to work... I am ready to take on the world and new opportunities.” Whereas before he struggled academically while attending D.C. public schools, at our school he excelled in academics and extracurricular activities, and applied to colleges, hoping to major in communications and physics. (Source: Catholic Standard, March 16, 2011.)



Parish School Finances

The pie chart below represents the aggregate revenue sources for archdiocesan elementary schools (not including the four schools supported by assistance from the Consortium of Catholic Academies). While some parish schools have only a small gap between total expenses and tuition revenue, many schools depend upon financial support from the parish, donors and the archdiocese. In the aggregate, tuition revenue from parents, the amount that is actually received by the school from parents, only covers about 83 percent of the actual total cost of operating parish elementary schools. The gap between what parents pay and the actual cost of educating children is made up by parish donations and support (including parishes that support a regional school), tuition assistance and other revenue (in some cases, investment income).

It is important to note, however, that while 34 parish elementary schools ended the 2011-12 academic year with net income, 20 schools ended the year with a net deficit which necessarily was covered by parish savings, or if savings were insufficient, by loans from the archdiocese. The aggregate net deficit of these 20 schools was almost \$3 million, demonstrating the great generosity of parishes that cover such deficits. For some of these parishes, covering the deficit is an intentional part of the parish budget and therefore a clearly identified means of supporting the parish school. But for most of the parish schools with a net deficit at the end of the year, the parish covers the deficit to ensure that the basic operation of the school continues, and they depend upon large fundraising goals and archdiocesan tuition assistance.



Increasing Costs and Tuition

Schools throughout the archdiocese are doing their best to keep costs down for all families at all income levels. However, as we have seen with healthcare, in recent decades, education costs have risen quickly due to factors in the economy that are largely beyond the control of our Catholic schools. Archdiocesan schools have an obligation to pay teachers a fair wage (which by and large is still less than what public schools pay – our teachers sacrifice themselves to help our Catholic school children), as well as to provide excellent academic programs. Costs also go up as older buildings need increased maintenance and repairs. Historically tuition has increased on average about five to six percent a year but it is important to note that tuition is usually set lower than the actual cost of educating a child in order to help keep Catholic education affordable.

Want to know more about the finances of your parish or school? Each year parishes provide parishioners with financial statements that include both parish and school operations; this is usually presented in the early fall.

Access to Catholic Schools for Catholic Middle-Income Families

Increasing tuitions provide a particular challenge to middle-income Catholic families. Two generations ago, Catholic school tuition required a small part of a middle-income family's total income, but for many such families today Catholic school tuition is simply not within reach. While parish generosity and archdiocesan assistance help, many just cannot make the finances work. Across the archdiocese the needs of lower-income families can be so great that there are fewer assistance resources left for middle-income families. This is a significant challenge facing many parish and school communities today, especially families who want a Catholic education for their children but just can't afford it.

To learn more about the Archdiocese of Washington's Tuition Assistance Fund visit: www.adw.org/TAFBrochure.pdf

Practicing the New Evangelization in a Secular Society

Recent surveys suggest that many Catholics do not believe that God is a personal God who wants to have a relationship with them – a relationship that is one of knowledge and friendship - and many cannot articulate how God has worked in their own life. Articulating God's work in one's life is not easy, especially in a secular society where God is not considered relevant by many and religion is painted as only a matter of personal opinion. The challenge then is not only a question of knowledge of the faith but also one of encounter and conversion – both elements are essential for an adult Catholic today seeking to learn more about their faith.

Most parishes have religious education programs for children and youth in place, and while these can always be improved, it is a challenge to provide for the needs of adults who may want to learn more about the faith but are too busy with jobs and raising their family.



THE NEXT STEPS

BUILDING ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS of the past and in light of the challenges today, we must continue to support Catholic education in all its forms, working to improve and strengthen adult formation, Catholic schools and parish religious education programs.



Assess Catholic School Affordability Across the Archdiocese

While much has been accomplished over the past five years, it is appropriate at this time to analyze at the archdiocesan level the key factors and data regarding Catholic school affordability. A special task force of Catholic education leaders, including laity and clergy, will meet in the fall of 2013 to look at specific challenges.

Increase Archdiocesan Tuition Assistance Long-Term

The archdiocesan tuition assistance awarded to families has grown from \$800,000 to \$5.5 million annually in a period of only six years, thanks to the generosity of our faith community. However, the

demonstrated need of families has also grown to its current level of \$40 million. The archdiocese will continue to work to increase the amount of funds available to help families and will work hard to ensure that the annual commitment not only remains secure for years to come but also grows over time.

Continue to Support School Choice Efforts and Government Partnerships

The future of our Catholic schools and the future of all parents and children having a truly free and equal opportunity in education depends on the ability of all of us working together to meet the increasing costs. The support of publicly-funded scholarship programs and educational tax credits is necessary. Without such programs many families will not have access to an excellent education, and schools will be severely impacted. We must be diligent about encouraging

governmental leaders to support and fund important initiatives such as the Opportunity Scholarship Program (www.dcscholarships.org) and a tuition tax credit program in Maryland (www.educationmaryland.org) that are critical today to helping those in need.

New Parish Catechist Retreat Day

As part of the new catechist certification procedures, in 2013 the Office for Catechesis will launch new short retreats for those who teach the faith. This day will not be “teaching” but rather an opportunity for prayer, mutual encouragement and discussion of the deep calling of catechists and teachers to participate in the teaching ministry of the Church. Additional resources also need to be created to help catechists enhance their teaching.

Utilize Data from Faith Knowledge Assessment Effectively for Learning

Now that over 19,000 students in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs have taken the archdiocesan “Faith Knowledge Assessment,” parish and school leaders together with archdiocesan staff have significant data to assess the effectiveness of programs that teach the faith to young people. This data provides statistical insight for professional development planning for teachers and catechists so that they can be even more effective. While not all data is in at the time of printing, initial results are very promising regarding the effectiveness of parish and school programs.

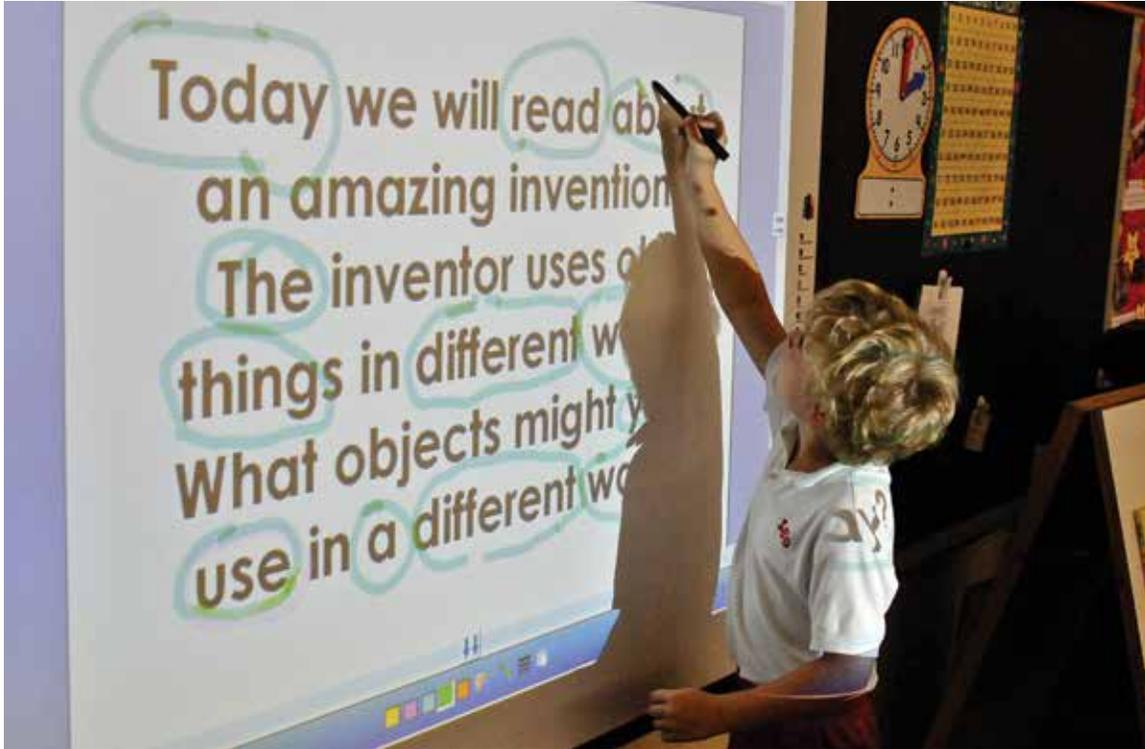


Next Steps for Adult Faith Formation

Encouraging all Catholics to live the Gospel in word and deed in homes, workplaces and society at large is a key message for preaching, catechesis and archdiocesan communication efforts. As lay Catholics do this in ever more explicit ways in response to the call of the New Evangelization, the opportunity to share broadly the experiences of evangelization that occur each day will encourage others also to evangelize.



≈ CONCLUSION ≈



THE PRINCIPLE OF SOLIDARITY taught by the Church recognizes that each person is interconnected with the well-being of all other members of society. Pope Francis reminds us that we cannot simply take refuge in a complacent quiet life, closed-in on ourselves. We are all members of God's family and each of us must have concern not only for ourselves, but for our spiritual brothers and sisters. This includes an obligation to be informed about and be engaged in Catholic education, helping to build it up and keep it strong.

Catholic education brings to today what it has brought to the world for 2,000 years. It brings the light of faith, an encounter with Jesus and his words of truth and life, which transforms lives and helps us to build a world of truth, justice, compassion, kindness, understanding, peace and love, as our Holy Father teaches in his encyclical *Lumen Fidei*. Everyone benefits from Catholic education and so we all must help to promote and sustain it – not only the education of ourselves, but the education of others.

This report has provided an accurate understanding of the accomplishments, facts, and figures in all areas of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Washington, as well as the next steps to be taken in light of the

challenges we face. It is vitally important that we be informed and have such an understanding because we *all* have a stake in Catholic education.

Over the past five years, great progress has been made to accomplish the goals presented in *Catholic Education: Looking to the Future with Confidence*. Catholic schools remain strong, and indeed are stronger than in the past even though they are fewer in number. Parish religious education programs continue to help parents in their task of passing on the faith and new efforts in catechesis for adults are taking hold in parishes across the archdiocese.

At the same time, we can do more. We *must* do more, even though there are some significant challenges that lie ahead – challenges involving school enrollment and finances, government partnerships, and engaging adult Catholics in the ongoing learning and sharing of the faith.

Beyond our own efforts, we prayerfully place ourselves in the hands of God's loving providence. As his faithful have done for more than 2,000 years, let us continue to work together with the grace of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel, pass on the faith and be the very best Church that we can be.

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