



Prayer - Planning - Possibilities

What is a HEALTHY SCHOOL?

KEY INDICATORS: an overview

Like parishes, Catholic schools are essential components of our diocese. That is why each school in the Diocese of Erie has been undergoing a rigorous assessment as part of the Pastoral Planning Process.



The Diocese of Erie has developed a document, *Key Indicators for a Healthy School in the Diocese of Erie*, as a standard against which schools can measure themselves. Although the

list is not exhaustive, it provides a good foundation for planning. All are encouraged to log onto www.ErieRCD.org/planning.asp to review the document in its entirety, but this bulletin insert provides excerpts of some of the key factors to be considered in evaluating the health of a school.

AN INTRODUCTION

Highlights of the Key Indicators for a Healthy School in the Diocese of Erie

In the Diocese of Erie, a healthy Catholic school or school system is expected to have the key indicators listed in this report. **A school may not exhibit all the indicators at a particular time; however the hope and expectation is that schools will have potential to realize these indicators and can demonstrate measurable progress toward them.**



The indicators are organized within the framework of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*.^{*} The key indicators provide a foundation for planning at the diocesan as well as at the local level. The ways in which schools achieve a healthy status may differ depending on enrollment being small or large, location being rural or urban, or organization being parish or system.

As with the document developed for parishes, please note that key indicators are designed to provide:

- a **vision** for healthy schools and a vision for the future.
- **direction** for the Pastoral Plan.
- a **means for evaluating** recommendations in the plan.
- a **foundation** for pastoral planning in local schools.
- a **focus** on the long-term and future potential for individual Catholic schools.

Just as importantly, key indicators are NOT designed to:

- be used as the sole criteria to determine if a school will remain open. Factors such as mission, potential for the future, demographics, finances and consideration for alternative approaches are all going to be considered.
- be the goals to achieve, but rather the expectations to meet or exceed.



All parishioners are invited to complete a **PASTORAL PLANNING SURVEY** as found in the **March** edition of **Faith** magazine or at www.ErieRCD.org/planning.asp.

^{*} **SOURCE** *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, Center for Catholic School Effectiveness, School of Education, Loyola University Chicago, in partnership with the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College. March 2012.

MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

- The school is guided by a clear statement of its Catholic mission, including a focus on Jesus and an acknowledgement of the importance of spreading the Gospel.
- The entire school community understands the mission and works to carry it out.
- Clergy and religious maintain a presence in the school whenever possible.
- The religion curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the Diocese of Erie.
- The Catholic faith and its implications are integrated into all subjects.
- Students are offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the importance of prayer, the Eucharist and liturgy, retreats, and Christian service.
- The school culture welcomes and accepts students from diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds.
- The school is an effective vehicle of evangelization and ongoing faith formation for students and their families. The school actively encourages Catholic school parents, students and staff to attend Mass and be involved in their parish.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.
- The school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.
- The curriculum is comprehensive in scope.
- Curriculum and instruction for 21st-century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers and socially responsible citizens.
- Current technology and educational resources are used effectively to enhance learning in an integrated manner throughout the curriculum.
- Faculty and staff engage in high-quality professional development, including religious formation.
- Guidance services, wellness programs and behavior management programs provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.
- Co-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to further identify and develop their gifts and talents.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- The school has an advisory board and ensures fidelity to mission, continuity and sustainability through leadership succession.
- The school values its relationship with the bishop, accepts his authority, cooperates with the diocesan Office of Education and adheres to diocesan policies.
- School administrators meet national, state and diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leaders of the school.
- A vibrant, collaborative spirit guides the relationship among the principal, teachers and staff.

OPERATIONAL VITALITY

- The school operates with a balanced budget, follows ethical principles in its business practices and adheres to diocesan policies regarding financial accounting. The budgets are filed on a timely basis and financial obligations are paid on a timely basis.
- A realistic three-to-five-year financial plan and projection is updated annually.
- Tuition, including all sources of tuition assistance and fees, account for a minimum of 50 percent of annual revenue. Uncollected tuition is limited to five percent of billed tuition.
- Schools have a preferred class enrollment of 20 to 25 students (maximum of 30 students). The school retains 90 percent or more of its students each year.
- Development and fundraising revenue equals 10 percent or more of annual revenue.
- The schools take advantage of funds available from state and federal sources as well as EITC funding, private foundations and corporate philanthropy. It has an endowment fund which is regularly promoted.
- The school provides just compensation for employees in accordance with diocesan policies.
- The school facility is safe, attractive and in good repair. The school has a facilities plan that supports the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.
- The school develops and implements an advancement plan and budget that addresses essential elements of annual fund, alumni support, major gifts program and planned giving.
- The school establishes and implements a multi-year enrollment management plan that effectively addresses marketing for enrollment, recruitment activities, admissions policies and student retention.

WHAT'S NEXT? The next insert will provide an overview of some of the trends that are being discussed at the parish listening sessions.