

# *Pastoral Plan*

*Johnson County Region*

*Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas*

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*Prepared by*

 **MEITLER  
Consultants, Inc.**  
www.meitler.com

*with the Johnson County Pastoral Planning Task Force*

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Ongoing demographic changes in Johnson County, population growth over the past decade, future population growth and emerging needs, both spiritual and temporal, require a response guided by a strategic pastoral plan. For the 18 parishes of Johnson County along with the 16 parish elementary schools and the 3 Catholic high schools, being faithful to the calling of Jesus Christ and the will of God will require adaptation to change, anticipation of what may be coming, and preparation to grow and expand as needs and opportunities emerge. There is more for the Church to accomplish and its effectiveness depends on working together toward a common mission.

The Catholic Church in Johnson County has a rich history. The people are blessed with vital and vibrant Catholic communities. Pastoral planning in Johnson County will build upon the strengths of parishes to enhance their vitality. It will also address long-range strategic questions at the regional level. The benefits to parishes, schools and the Archdiocese are:

- A county level plan for parishes/schools providing a framework for local parish planning
- Fresh discussion, new awareness, and common understanding of parish vitality
- Objective data used to understand the challenges facing the Church and examine options for the future
- Examination of the current state of parish and school ministry both individually and collaboratively
- Involvement of laity, clergy and key decision-makers in the planning process
- Good stewardship of resources
- An agreed-upon plan to realistically serve a growing population with both parishes and schools
- Parishes working together toward common goals

The Pastoral Plan emerged from a process that began with extensive data collection and analysis and listening to parish and school leaders through interviews, followed by a presentation and discussion of data. The plan was critiqued and refined through three rounds of consultation with a wide range of parish leaders. The entire planning effort was overseen by the work of a Pastoral Planning Task Force for Johnson County.

A special thank you to the members of the Pastoral Planning Task Force for Johnson County. Through prayerful reflection, careful study and listening, they gave significant direction to the planning process. With open minds they sought the best plan for a vital church in the future. Each member gave generously of their time and talent.

John Bartolac	Corky Hyatt
Paul Black	Carroll Macke
Fr. Frank Burger	Fr. Mark Mertes
David Dillner	Dr. Kathy O'Hara
Peggy Dunn	Don Palmer
Tim Hannon	Michael Shirley
Fr. Mike Hawken	Allen Strain
Stephanie Hill	Msgr. Thomas Tank
Fr. Francis Hund	

## II. SIGNS OF PARISH VITALITY

The purpose of the signs of parish vitality is to achieve a common understanding of basic elements that should be present in every parish. Every parish should find areas for growth and improvement as they study the signs of vitality. Parishes that exhibit these signs are more capable of carrying out the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Archdiocese for the next decade and beyond.

### MISSION OF ARCHDIOCESE OF KANSAS CITY

**We are the people of God of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas made one in Christ through Baptism.**

**We are a Eucharistic family of faith called to live a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to witness to His Gospel message.**

**Our mission is to pray and worship, to teach and share Christ's message, to nurture communities of faith, and to serve others in Christ's name as we journey with each other to the fullness of eternal life.**

The use of these signs of vitality is twofold:

- The signs will guide each parish in a self-evaluation that identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- The results of the evaluation will be a basis from which each parish can develop a local pastoral plan that leads to vibrant parish life and more effective ministry.

Vitality should not be measured by one sign alone, but through a cumulative picture of all the areas of parish vitality.

### 1. MISSION

- 1.1 The parish mission statement is Christ-centered and in solidarity with the mission of the Church of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas.
- 1.2 The priest, in collaboration with the Archbishop as chief pastor and parish leadership, provides capable, visionary and pastoral leadership that enhances the mission and values of the local parish and the larger Church of the Archdiocese.
- 1.3 The parish has a pastoral plan that is communicated to the parishioners and is actively implemented.
- 1.4 The parish fosters and promotes a theology of stewardship that invites and regularly encourages parishioners to share their time, talent and treasure in leadership and service.

### 2. COMMUNITY

- 2.1 The parish is of adequate size to provide sufficient resources to sustain a complete and vibrant parish ministry in response to parishioner needs and to involve maximum number of parishioners in parish life and ministry.
- 2.2 Parish membership is stable or even growing as measured by parish households and Mass attendance.

- 2.3 Parishioners have a strong sense of belonging and new members feel welcomed and find assimilation into the life of the parish an easy process. The parish actively welcomes new parishioners through personal contacts such as interviews, home visits, telephone calls, welcome packets, and letters.
- 2.4 Parishioners are trained and empowered as leaders in parish ministries.
- 2.5 At least 30% of adult parishioners are actively engaged once a year in a parish activity or ministry in addition to Sunday Mass.
- 2.6 The Pastoral and Finance Councils, as well as other committees and task forces needed to promote parish ministry, are active and effective.

### **3. LITURGY AND PRAYER**

- 3.1 The Eucharist is the “source and summit” of faith and worship in the parish. Parishioners are growing in their understanding of the Eucharistic liturgy as a celebration of common faith and commitment.
- 3.2 The parish strives for high quality liturgies, especially homilies and music. They promote spiritual growth and understanding. These are regularly evaluated.
- 3.3 The Eucharist is the center of parish life and involves all participants through full, active and conscious participation.
- 3.4 Liturgical ministers are well-trained and serve faithfully.
- 3.5 At least 50% of parishioners are attending Mass each week.
- 3.6 The Mass and Sacraments, especially Reconciliation, are readily available to parishioners with sufficient instruction to assist in faith-filled participation.
- 3.7 Ample opportunities are available for devotions, faith sharing and personal spiritual growth, e.g., Eucharistic adoration, Marian devotions, missions, retreats, Stations of the Cross, prayer groups.
- 3.8 At each weekend Liturgy the church building is at least 50% full.

### **4. EVANGELIZATION & CATECHESIS**

- 4.1 The parish reaches out to the non-churched and is proactive in engaging inactive and marginally active Catholics.
- 4.2 A full complement of activities and ministries is in place to meet the various spiritual needs of all ages, ethnic groups and persons with special needs. These may be available at the local parish or offered in collaboration with neighboring parishes. Included in a comprehensive ministry program are religious education for adults and youth, youth and young adult ministry, ministry to the sick, programs for senior adults, scripture study, family ministry, RCIA, and sacramental preparation.
- 4.3 The parish supports a Catholic school by having its own school or by promoting Catholic school education in collaboration with area parishes that have Catholic schools. Catholic schools should provide a superior opportunity for formation in the Catholic faith and a quality education. Students are formed spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically.
- 4.4 The parish has a strong parish school of religion. Programs of religious instruction focus strongly on the conversion of young people to Christ and their spiritual development.

- 4.5 The parish provides vital, well-attended programs for adults, enabling initial and ongoing conversion and continuing catechesis/faith formation. This includes RCIA, retreats, scripture/theology study, faith sharing, and missions.
- 4.6 At least 80% of school-aged children/youth registered in the parish participate in religious instruction/formation.
- 4.7 Parishioners are invited to actively support vocations to the priesthood.
- 4.8 Programs of sacramental preparation and religious education include active parental involvement.

## **5. SERVICE**

- 5.1 The parish is actively engaged with staff/volunteers and finances in serving the less fortunate both within the parish and the broader community.
- 5.2 The parish reaches out to immigrants and minorities within its area.
- 5.3 Parishioners are actively encouraged and assisted to become educated and active in promoting the sanctity of human life.
- 5.4 The parish has an active social concerns ministry involving a substantial number of parishioners.
- 5.5 The parish reaches out in ministry to the homebound and the elderly as well as with pastoral services to those in hospitals and nursing facilities.
- 5.6 The parish actively supports programs of the Archdiocese, the USCCB and the universal Church.
- 5.7 The parish exercises good stewardship in the use of resources including being ecologically responsible.

## **6. FINANCES AND FACILITIES**

- 6.1 The parish maintains a balanced budget with sufficient funding for a full ministry program and needed staff. Offertory income keeps pace with increases in operating costs.
- 6.2 Cash reserves are sufficient for two months of operation beyond regular monthly income and parish reserves/savings are not being used to pay for current operation.
- 6.3 The parish is staffed with lay professionals sufficient to provide a full range of liturgical, educational and service ministries with fair compensation and a positive work environment.
- 6.4 The parish devotes a portion of its income (5% or more) to outreach and ministry beyond the parish.
- 6.5 The parish sponsors a yearly stewardship program of education and invitation focusing on the spirituality of stewardship.
- 6.7 An endowment or other long-term invested fund for future financial needs is actively promoted and is growing.
- 6.8 Parish debt, if any, is being reduced on schedule.
- 6.9 Parish facilities are adequate and well-maintained.

6.10 Maintenance and capital improvements needed for buildings and grounds have been identified and there is a five-year plan to address them. A funding plan is established for capital projects.

6.11 An annual financial report of income and expenditures is provided to parishioners.

## **7. COLLABORATION**

7.1 The parish is active in communication and collaboration with neighboring parishes, the pastoral region and the Archdiocese.

7.2 The parish demonstrates a spirit of ecumenism with other faith communities.

7.3 The parish supports local community activities and endeavors as appropriate.

### III. KEY FINDINGS

From all the data that was collected, the following findings were gleaned. The findings were identified that have some direct relevance to the goals of the Pastoral Plan for the Johnson County Region.

#### A. Demographics

##### Johnson County Demographic Profile

Category	1990	2000	2006 <sup>1</sup>	2020	2030
Population	355,021	451,086	516,731	654,774	744,059
White (non-Hispanic)	336,190	419,258	466,454		
Hispanic	7,112	17,957	29,263		
Persons who speak Spanish at home <sup>3</sup>		12,421	21,999		
Asian (non-Hispanic)	5,870	13,008	19,622		
African-American (non-Hispanic)	6,883	12,073	20,822		
		<b>1990-2000</b>		<b>2000-2020</b>	
Change in population <sup>2</sup>		96,032		203,688	
Change in employment <sup>2</sup>		123,430		226,010	
Median household income 2007			\$70,144		
Percent Catholic			16% registered in parishes		
			22% nationally		

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau estimate

<sup>2</sup> Mid-America Regional Council

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey

1. Population in Johnson County will keep growing at a rapid pace, increasing 200,000 persons between 2000 and 2020 and almost 300,000 by 2030.
2. Over the next twenty-year period, there could be 32,000 more Catholics or 12,600 more Catholic households. This is based on historical growth trends and population projections.
3. New energy for evangelization in parishes can change the basic assumptions about the number of Catholics that may be active in the future and will need to be served. Among the current population, there could be as many as 11,000 persons with some Catholic identity who are not active or counted on parish records.
4. 36% of the growth will be in southern Johnson County, south of 143<sup>rd</sup> Street. 8% will be in area around Gardner. 17% will be in west Olathe, west of I-35 and south of K-10. 29% will be in west Lenexa and Shawnee.
5. Many areas in northeast Johnson County (inside I-435) will experience stable or a slight decline in population.
6. The population is aging in more established areas of Johnson County which will affect some schools and parishes. As the population ages, there will be growing needs and increasing opportunities to involve and serve persons in retirement, seniors and elderly.
7. An aging of the population affects young age cohorts which will be declining in some parishes while growing in others. In general, parishes will need to adapt to these changes as they will affect Catholic schools and the myriad of ministries directed toward children and youth.



8. The population of Hispanic Catholics will continue to grow. An organized pastoral response is needed from the collective parishes of the Johnson County Region.

## **B. Parishes**

9. Parishes in Johnson County are very alive with vibrant ministry, quality liturgy, excellent education programs, service and outreach, and a wide range of other activities.
10. Strong leadership is being provided by pastors, parish staff, school staff, and lay volunteers. Through them excellent parish ministries are thriving throughout the Johnson County Region.
11. The Archdiocese of Kansas City has been proactive in planning and opening new parishes, building new churches, opening new schools, relocating parishes and in general responding to the population needs over the past twenty years.
12. Several new parishes will be needed over the next twenty to twenty-five years to serve the growing population.
13. Parishes have been highly parochial and autonomous in many ways. Efforts to work together do occur, but on a relatively small scale.
14. Coordination of Mass times and fewer Masses at times with low attendance would result in better utilization of staff resources and priest personnel. Masses with attendance below 30% of the seating capacity of the church should be examined and consideration given to serving these worshippers in another manner.
15. Three Masses are offered in Spanish at three different parishes. Mass times are all Sunday afternoon and none are Sunday morning. 900 to 1,000 persons attend these Masses on a typical weekend.
16. Only in two parishes is there an organized plan for providing Hispanic ministry. The Hispanic population is growing in Johnson County. By tradition this community is highly Catholic.
17. About 80,000 Catholics are registered in parishes in the Johnson County Region. A full-time equivalent of 27.25 priests and a full-time equivalent of 86 lay professionals presently minister to the population; a ratio 1 priest to every 3,000 Catholics and 1 lay professional to every 951 Catholics. These ratios are high which suggests parishes are generally understaffed given the scale of spiritual need in a growing community.
18. Mass attendance appears to be close to 60% in the Johnson County Region. This is high compared to the national average which is closer to 42%.
19. Over \$151 million has been spent on major building projects and new construction over the last twelve years. During this time, three new parish elementary schools were opened, a new high school was built, one new parish was established, and four new churches were built.
20. More than \$75 million has been raised through capital campaigns at the parish level from 1996 to 2008. Fundraising for high schools and the Archdiocese is in addition to this amount.
21. The potential for funding large capital projects remains. This potential could be lost if new vision is not forthcoming or new purposes are not identified for which capital funding is needed. Five parishes have not engaged in capital campaigns in the last decade.
22. Several parishes will soon start a new chapter in their life as parish. The vision and drive of these parishes has been raising capital dollars to build new facilities. Within five or ten years, a group of parishes will retire their debts and facilities will be basically completed. A compelling new vision with new goals is needed for the next ten and twenty years.

23. Many parishes have large numbers of parishioners living outside their parish boundaries; in some cases up to 1/3 or more of the number of parishioners. Factors affecting where people go to church appear to be travel and accessibility, schools and historical ties. Parish boundaries have been useful in the past to define the geographical area a parish is responsible for and to launch new parishes.

## **C. Catholic Elementary Schools**

24. With 7,000 students enrolled in religious education programs and 7,110 students enrolled in Catholic schools (kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade), a high percentage of Catholic children are in a formal program of religious education.
25. Staffing for parish religious education varies from no paid staff to part-time or stipend staff to full-time professionals with support staff. The program quality varies depending on the resources and professional expertise invested in these programs.
26. Total Catholic elementary school enrollment has grown 4% from 2002 to 2008. While growth has been a strong trend in five schools, eight others have had enrollment losses.
27. Enrollment decline appears to be an immediate or long-term trend for Holy Cross, Holy Spirit, St. Agnes, and St. Paul. In some cases the decline is a concern. Decline in enrollment may require adjustments to number of classes and staffing to control escalating costs while maintaining high quality.
28. Marketing for Catholic schools has been present only at a basic level. A lack of marketing can result in weak enrollment demand, lack of perceived value for tuition paid, weakened support from parishes to fund the schools and mediocre donor support.
29. Schools must offer quality programs and have a reputation for excellence to remain a viable, competitive option for parents who have many educational choices available to them. Strong competition exists among public and private schools.
30. Pre-kindergarten programs have been growing and are recognized more and more as a basic component of schooling for children. 13 of 16 Catholic schools have PreK programs. Several parishes may need to grow their early childhood education programs but lack classroom space.
31. The Catholic Schools Office is an important support and resource for elementary schools and high schools. The office has limited authority to direct schools or hold them accountable to affect change.
32. Maintaining and even increasing Hispanic enrollment in Catholic schools calls for an intentional strategy.
33. The divergent models of funding schools, tuition and stewardship, have not run into direct conflict with each other. Both models are sustainable as long as parishes are healthy and demographics provide adequate numbers of students to fill the classes at all schools. The gap in tuition between elementary schools and high schools is widening as both institutions follow different models of funding.
34. Several schools have a larger and growing proportion of middle and low income families: John Paul II, St. Agnes and St. Paul. In the future, some parishes of lower economic means may find funding their Catholic schools too much to sustain on their own given the present funding model.

## **D. Catholic High Schools**

35. High school enrollment will continue to build as St. James Academy opens upper classes.
36. Existing high schools can serve the existing elementary schools in Johnson County as there is room for several hundred more students. A new high school should only be considered for the very long term if two or three new elementary schools were established and existing schools could maintain full enrollment.
37. Catholic high schools do not have a shared vision for serving Johnson County or a strategic plan that guides the activities of all three high schools in a coordinated approach.

## **E. Pastoral Concerns**

38. Areas of pastoral concern that were consistently identified in parish interviews were developing ministry to youth, adult education and formation, evangelization, Hispanic ministry, and Catholic schools. These are not the only or most important concerns of parishes, but seemed to be given particular interest at this time.
39. There is a need for greater parish collaboration instead of competition. Strong parochialism is deeply embedded in the parish culture of Johnson County.
40. A concern for the future is attracting and preparing the next generation of non-ordained professionals who will work alongside priests, deacons and vowed religious.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT PARISHES

Assimilating all the information gathered so far, the following conclusions are made and will be the basis for recommendations:

1. Based exclusively on population growth and the assumption that the preferred size for a large parish is around 2,500 Catholic households, four or five new parishes will be needed to serve the growing population of Johnson County in the next twenty years.
2. Two and possibly three new parishes will be needed in the southern area of Johnson County. South is understood to mean between 151<sup>st</sup> Street and 215<sup>th</sup> Street.
3. In addition to the relocation of St. Paul Parish, two new parishes will be needed in the western area of Johnson County. West is understood to mean Olathe, west Lenexa and perhaps some of Shawnee south of Shawnee Mission Parkway and west of I-435.
4. Beyond twenty years, new parishes could be needed further west in unincorporated areas of Johnson County. Population migration patterns are not clear enough at this time to know the best placement for additional parishes.
5. Three existing parishes have capacity for significant growth and are also located contiguous to or within the major growth areas of Johnson County.

### **Sacred Heart Parish, Shawnee**

Households: 1,585

Church: new building seats 840; expandable to 1,200 if parking is also added

School: PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> grade; capacity for 510 students

Meeting space: 4 dedicated meeting rooms

### **Sacred Heart Parish, Gardner**

Households: 707

Church: new building seats 950; expandable to 1,200

School: none

Meeting space: 1 room on new church site

### **St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Leawood**

Households: 1,854

Church: new building will seat 1,250

School: PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> grade; capacity for 870

Meeting space: 7 dedicated meeting rooms

6. While growth will occur within the parish boundaries of Queen of the Holy Rosary-Wea, almost all of this growth is in Johnson County. The towns of Bucyrus and Wea will remain rural towns. The parish will depend on the majority of its population and most all of its growth from communities more than five miles away.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARISHES

The following recommendations are made with a twenty to twenty-five year time frame in mind.

### A. Recommendations for Existing Parishes

#### ST. PAUL PARISH, OLATHE

- 1. The proposal put forth by St. Paul Parish to move to a new site should be accepted in principle and planning for a move should move forward. St. Paul Parish and School should relocate to a site that will serve its current members in addition to the growing population identified in north Olathe. The existing site is not adequate for future parish and school needs, and the constraints of staying on this site do not warrant significant capital investment.**

#### *Rationale*

- Olathe is the second largest city in Johnson County with an estimated 114,662 persons in 2007. The City grew by 21,700 from 2000 to 2006, more than any other city. From 1990 to 2000 Olathe grew by more than 51,000 persons.
- The facilities are land-locked and do not allow for growth or expansion.
- The parish is located inside a neighborhood rather than on a major thoroughfare.
- The planned K-7 highway expansion to a freeway will have adverse effects on the site and make access more difficult.
- Olathe is served by two Catholic parishes: Prince of Peace Parish and St. Paul Parish. Prince of Peace continues to grow and has 3,400 households. St. Paul has 1,900 households. St. Paul Parish is handicapped to grow at its current site.
- St. Paul Church, in its present location with its existing facilities, is not going to serve much of the new emerging populations in Olathe.
- Two-thirds of the parish households live north of 135<sup>th</sup> Street. The current parish site is not well-located to serve the growth areas of Olathe.
- The current church sanctuary was intended to be temporary. The seating capacity of the church is limited to 500 persons.
- In November 2006 a study was completed to determine the cost of renovating the church, school and early education center. Total estimates at that time were \$5,982,000. Renovations included many items, the major ones of which were:
  - Expand church (850 capacity)
  - Purchase twelve houses
  - Demolition of houses
  - Additional parking (125 spaces)
  - Repair/resurface parking lot
  - New pews
  - New roof (church and school)
  - Update kitchen
  - Elevator

- Replace heating and cooling
  - Asbestos removal
  - New central air in school
  - Construct early education center
- j. Enrollment at St. Paul School declined from 198 (K to 8) in 2002-03 to 97 in 2008-09, a loss of 51%. The school has a strong future with a new plan, but is at risk with no plan.
  - k. St. Paul School facilities are in need of renovation and upgrading to be competitive. While the school facilities are improved after recent renovations, they are still in need of additional upgrades. For example, the wing for upper grades lacks the proper design and facility to support optimal programming for middle school students.
  - l. The early education center is limited and cannot be expanded in its present location.
  - m. Handicap accessibility for all parish facilities is limited.
  - n. The school has 9 classrooms. Educational space is limited or not available for science labs, computer labs, music, art, library, and special education.
  - o. The parish has only 2 meeting rooms in addition to the school facilities.
  - p. St. Paul Parish is the oldest parish in Johnson County. The parish has been located on three different sites over its history and has traditionally been supportive of change.

**2. St. Paul Parish should move into north Olathe versus west Olathe. The site at 115<sup>th</sup> and Lone Elm is an acceptable site with the acquisition of additional property.**

***Rationale***

- a. Growth will be greater in north Olathe versus west Olathe in the near term. Presently over 5,500 housing units, both multi-family and single-family, are approved for new construction north of 135<sup>th</sup> Street.
- b. St. Paul parishioners are much more concentrated north of the current parish site versus west.
- c. The City of Olathe can grow to about 325,000 over the decades to come before it reaches the stage where it is built out. In future years, the City will be served by 4 parishes: new St. Paul Parish, Prince of Peace Parish, new parish to the west, and new parish at 167<sup>th</sup> and Ridgeview.
- d. The site owned by the Archdiocese at 115<sup>th</sup> and Lone Elm is presently 16.1 acres. Contiguous acres are possibly available. A site of 20 to 25 acres is needed to support the long-term needs of the parish.

**3. Moving St. Paul Parish should emerge from a vision that St. Paul Parish will transform into a larger parish. Given a new site in close proximity to new growth, the parish is expected to have the long-term potential to reach 2,500 households and fill a school with double classes per grade. The school may have potential for three classes per grade.**

#### **4. The following steps should be taken by St. Paul Parish:**

- 4.1 Further develop a comprehensive plan for the parish. Bring together in a written document a vision for expanding ministry and serving a new population while strengthening ministry to the current parish community. It should have a vision for the school that will rebuild enrollment, project staff needs, provide a financial projection, and timeline for implementation.
- 4.2 Conduct the planning process with good communications and involvement of all key stakeholders. Build ownership and excitement in the wider parish community for a new vision. Invite participation from new leaders who can work with and support current leaders.
- 4.3 As the plan is developed and implemented, evaluate models of ministry and staffing for their effectiveness and adopt new models that help transform the parish.
- 4.4 Conduct a survey of parishioners about the site and other matters related to the plan. Holy Trinity should also survey its families living in the area. Questions and survey design should be guided by the Communications and Planning Office to ensure reliable and objective data is obtained.
- 4.5 Study possibilities for moving the school to a new site, and then phasing construction to provide for a church and related parish needs.
- 4.6 Commission a professional school marketing and enrollment study to do the following:
  - Assess short-term and long-term enrollment potential at the present site and at a potential new site.
  - Determine who will be served at the present site and at a potential new site.
  - Evaluate the impact on existing Catholic schools of moving to a new site, specifically the impact on Holy Trinity School.
  - Identify parent expectations for programs and services given the tuition.
  - Test assumptions about a funding model and what parents are willing/able to pay.
  - Consult with Sacred Heart Parish in Gardner through the study process.
- 4.7 Prepare a case statement for a capital campaign and present it with the comprehensive plan.
- 4.8 Select professional campaign counsel and conduct a capital campaign feasibility study.
- 4.9 With the results of the feasibility study revise the comprehensive plan as needed. Communicate the outcome to the parish and prepare for a capital campaign.

#### **5. As a plan for the future comes together, St. Paul School needs to draw upon its strengths and change perceptions of the school in terms of image, population served, and strength of academic programs.**

#### **GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH, SHAWNEE**

- 6. Good Shepherd Parish should not sell any part of its unused property. It will retain this property for long-term options that cannot be fully perceived at this time.**

#### **QUEEN OF THE HOLY ROSARY PARISH, WEA**

- 7. Strong programs, good leadership and an excellent Catholic school will be key factors to attract parishioners from Johnson County. Growth in southern Johnson County could be as much as 77,000 more people between 2010 and 2030. Even with a new parish opening on Ridgeview, Holy Rosary Parish will likely see new membership from development along highway 69 and in the southern most area of Overland Park.**
- 8. Study the feasibility of repairing, further renovating or replacing the current church. The seating capacity needed in a church located at this site is going to be less than new churches in other parts of Johnson County. A careful projection of parish membership is needed and should take into consideration the timing and impact of new parishes.**
- 9. Investigate new opportunities for collaboration with Immaculate Conception Parish in Louisburg.**

#### **SACRED HEART PARISH, GARDNER**

- 10. Continue to seek a gift or opportunity to purchase additional acreage to enlarge the parish site.**
- 11. Revisit the master plan for the new site and affirm or modify the plan. Submit an updated plan to the Archdiocese for approval.**
- 12. Commission a professional market/enrollment study for a new Catholic school. Conduct the study after a master plan review is complete and after the parish community has been engaged in dialogue about the need for a Catholic school. Consult with St. Paul Parish and School in the planning process.**
- 13. Plan for the next capital campaign to consolidate the parish to one site and provide needed facilities.**
- 14. Dispose of the original site and use the proceeds from sale of property to fund the master plan at the new site.**
- 15. Investigate new opportunities for collaboration with Assumption Parish in Edgerton. Sacred Heart Parish and Assumption Parish should plan together in the future, in particular with regard to Catholic schools and pastoral care.**

#### **ST. AGNES PARISH, ROELAND PARK**

- 16. A master facility plan should be developed to update and upgrade the entire infrastructure of both parish buildings. The plan needs to be driven by a long-term vision for vibrant parish life and an outstanding Catholic school.**
- 17. St. Agnes School needs a comprehensive plan to address matters of enrollment, funding, facilities, and related issues.**



18. St. Agnes School and Holy Name School should actively collaborate in programming and marketing. Both schools serve parts of Wyandotte County and both draw enrollment from Missouri.

#### **ST. PIUS X PARISH, MISSION**

19. The parish should take action to determine the future use of the school building. A plan for the building should take into account parish needs. The parish may find a compatible tenant for portions of the building the parish will not use and the parish could secure a long-term lease. If some part of the building appears to lack a plan for long-term use, a reduction in building size should be considered.

### **B. Recommendations for New Parishes**

20. New parishes have potential to be large and ultimately need extensive facilities for parish and school programming. The assumption is new parishes in Johnson County could grow to 2,500 households, new churches could seat 1,200 to 1,500, schools could be built for 450 to 800 students, and parishes will need an array of meeting rooms and administrative areas.

21. A new parish should be established on the twenty-acre site at 167<sup>th</sup> and Ridgeview. This should occur in 2009 or 2010. The site is accessible and visible. It is located in the heart of one of the highest growth areas of Johnson County. New developments and new schools are emerging all around this site. A new parish at this location would serve some of the population in Prince of Peace Parish as well as new emerging populations in southern Johnson County.

22. A second new parish will be needed in southern Johnson County. Continue to monitor the need for this parish to be at 151<sup>st</sup> and Switzer verses another location. The timing of the parish should take into consideration the impact on Queen of the Holy Rosary, Wea.

23. Long-term, a third new parish site in southern Johnson County is a possibility, but is likely to be beyond twenty years.

24. A new parish site is needed in west Lenexa. It should probably be within the shadow of St. James Academy High School and have easy access to K-7. It also needs to be located along the border of Shawnee and Lenexa so the growing population of these areas can be served by this parish. The site at 83<sup>rd</sup> and Mize should be considered to meet this need.

25. An additional new parish will be needed long-term in west Olathe following the move of St. Paul Parish to north Olathe.

26. A twenty-acre site can be used for a new parish. However, when the option for a larger site is available preference should be given to properties of twenty-five acres or more.

## EVENTS TO WATCH

Opening new parishes and schools should be guided by a plan, and the plan should adjust to events that shape assumptions about the future. The following possible events are wildcards in the plan. They should be monitored and their relevance to the plan evaluated.

- A. The Sunflower Ammunition Plant is a 14-square-mile area in private development. New residential development could emerge in this area, however some of the unknowns are timing, potential population, and density.
- B. 199<sup>th</sup> Street is slated to be a major east-west transportation route crossing most of southern Johnson County. The road is currently planned for a two-lane road with grade separation at main intersections.
- C. A major highway could be built and routed across southern Johnson County, around Gardner and north through De Soto, crossing the Kansas River and then connecting to I-70. If the road is built, employment and housing could follow.
- D. Travel patterns could be altered depending on the cost of transportation, new technology and energy policies. People could choose to live closer to where they work, shop, attend school and carry on their lives.
- E. As the cost of Catholic education rises as a percentage of family income, enrollment could be adversely affected without new funding. The diversity of students could narrow without well-funded tuition assistance programs.
- F. Immigrant populations could grow and become a larger minority in the region. Of particular interest is the relatively new Hispanic population.

## C. Start-up and Funding for New Parishes

The wealth dynamics of Johnson County pose challenges for funding new parishes. New parishes are needed in areas where wealth is concentrated and in areas where wealth is modest.

Parishes and schools have generally been self-funded. In the past, new parishes received some initial start-up funds, and were then expected to raise the rest of the funds to build the parish and operate a school. Parishes that relocated were generally expected to raise their own funding. Debt was used as a means to extend parish funding, only when the parish had 50% cash in hand and could exhibit pledges or other income to repay loans in ten years.

The following recommendations are made for start-up and funding of new parishes:

- 27. A new parish will ideally start with around 600 Catholic households. Existing parishes with households in the boundaries of the new parish should encourage and expect families to join the new parish.**
- 28. New parishes should be established when demographic trends show that growth potential for 2,000 or more parish households could be realized in ten to fifteen years.**
- 29. Established parishes should be consulted when new parishes are being proposed. Established parishes should be willing supporters of new parishes because the work of God is extended to a larger area and more people.**

- 30. New Catholic schools should be a priority for new parishes. Normally a parish school will be opened. New schools should be opened only after a market study does the following: demonstrates a school is needed, demonstrates enrollment can be sustained long term, and evaluates impact on neighboring schools.**
- 31. New churches in growth areas should be built for seating capacity of 1,200. There may be situations where seating capacity of 1,500 is justified. The design of these churches should consider options to expand seating.**
- 32. New parishes should be located on major thoroughfares to provide easy access and visibility in the community.**
- 33. The Archdiocese should assist in the acquisition of property for parishes and schools. A portion of the property should be gifted to the parish, and a portion may become a long-term loan to the parish depending on the size and cost of the site. Terms for repayment need to be defined.**
- 34. Given the number of new parishes needed and the rise in expenses, the amount granted to new parishes should be adjusted up with annual increases to follow.**

***Rationale***

- a. Traditionally, grants were \$500,000; however a grant of \$500,000 in 1999 has a present value of \$650,000 in 2008. Because of inflation, a gift in 2008 needs to be 30% larger than a gift in 1999 to retain the same value.
- b. The real cost of expenses like health insurance and construction have risen faster than the average inflation rate.
- c. The cost of land has risen and new parishes need sites larger than in the past.
- d. New parishes are needed in communities with moderate incomes. The resources necessary to start a new parish are present in Johnson County, although they may not reside in abundance in the immediate area of a new parish.
- e. Start-up costs are higher because parishes will be increasingly dependent on qualified lay professionals to guide vital ministries. New parishes need an effective team to build a base of ministry that becomes self-sustaining.

## D. Preliminary Timeline for New Parishes

Year	New Parish in Southern Johnson County/Olathe	St. Paul Parish	New Parishes
2009	Announce new parish at 167 <sup>th</sup> and Ridgeview Pastor assigned Preliminary planning	Planning and preparation Determine if the parish and school will move together or in phases	
2010	New parish worshipping in temporary space Parish staff in place and programs developing Conduct feasibility study for new parish elementary school Develop master facility plan	Capital campaign	
2011	First capital campaign	Construction	
2012	Construction of new facilities	School opens at new site	
2017		<i>Note: Finances will dictate if the parish can move all at one time or in stages. Planning needs to determine priorities for church and school.</i>	New parish opens in Lenexa or second new parish opens in southern Johnson County. Establishment of a new parish will be determined by the pace of housing development and rate of growth in existing parishes.
Future			Open new parish about every 4 to 6 years depending on need

## VI. GOALS TO STRENGTHEN PARISH VITALITY

Three goals stand out as high priorities for strengthening parish vitality. They are:

Goal 1: local pastoral plans

Goal 5: parish collaboration

Goal 6: plan for Hispanic ministry

These goals were selected as high priorities by the Pastoral Planning Task Force with input from parish leaders and pastors.

### A. Pastoral Planning

#### 1. Each parish will develop its own local pastoral plan that encompasses the comprehensive vision of parish vitality.

##### *Strategies*

1.1 The Communications and Planning Office will develop the pastoral planning guide that all parishes can follow and adapt to the local level.

1.2 Each parish will submit its pastoral plan to the Archbishop for implementation by July 1, 2010. Each parish pastoral council will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of their plan. The parish pastor, with assistance from the parish pastoral council and parish staff, will be accountable for the creation of the plan, oversight, and execution in subsequent years.

#### 2. The Pastoral Plan for Johnson County will be reviewed annually and a progress report made to the Archbishop. Every four or five years the plan will be updated through a planning process.

##### *Rationale*

*Accountability for implementation of the Pastoral Plan ultimately rests with the pastoral leadership of the region working together in a collegial fashion with the parish leadership, archdiocesan offices, archdiocesan consultants and various available resources. Updating the plan includes: (1) analyzing current demographic data, (2) assessing progress made, and (3) engaging pastors/parish staff/parish leaders in discussion about present and future. The result of these activities will be a revised plan accepted by the Archbishop.*

### B. Mission Beyond Parish Borders

#### 3. Each parish will determine how to support God's work outside the parish, including giving a percentage of parish income for this purpose.

##### *Rationale*

*Parish ministry cannot focus only on the needs of the parish itself and must be extended beyond its borders through stewardship of its time, talents, and treasure to the needs of God's people in the Archdiocese and beyond.*

### *Strategies*

- 3.1 Parishes will prayerfully and in the spirit of stewardship plan to extend their mission outside their boundaries by giving a percentage of their annual income to furthering the Catholic mission within the Archdiocese and around the world. Parishes able to give only a small percentage will challenge themselves to increase this percentage annually, trusting God to provide for their needs.
- 3.2 Parishes will include in their plan sending members to witness for the Gospel through service and ministry and developing long-term relationships with organizations, missions, schools, parishes and agencies who serve the Catholic mission.
- 3.3 Parishes with the financial and human resources to partner with parishes in need will include building twinning relationships in their parish plan. They will utilize the assistance of the Office of Stewardship and Development to choose and support their twin parish.

## **4. Parishes will generously support the critical, non-self-sustaining ministries carried on by individual parishes through both financial and service gifts.**

### *Rationale*

*The Archdiocese has parishes that carry on critical ministries which are not self-sustaining and require the generosity of the larger Church to continue their work.*

## **C. Collaborating Together**

### **5. Parishes in Johnson County will actively seek opportunities for collaborating and clustering.**

#### *Rationale*

*Collaboration [the working together of parishes to achieve common goals and to leverage resources and talent] can be formal or informal, long-term or short-term. For example, parish A which has no established adult education program will work with parish B which has a robust program either short-term or long-term, or the facilities of one parish are used for a program common to both parishes.*

*Clustering [a formal relationship planned by pastors and parish leaders] is generally long-term and provides a more permanent structure for collaboration to take place.*

#### *Strategies*

- 5.1 Each parish will, as part of their plan, identify their strengths and weaknesses, demographic trends, financial trends, and physical plant strengths and weaknesses.
- 5.2 Through this self-study parishes will identify opportunities for and draw up action plans to facilitate collaboration.
- 5.3 Parishes will identify, with the assistance of the Communications and Planning Office, those parishes with whom they can naturally collaborate and those parishes with whom a formal cluster will be formed.

## **D. Hispanic Ministry**

### **6. A county-wide plan will be developed and put into action to strengthen and grow Hispanic ministry.**

#### *Rationale*

*Recognizing the growth of the Hispanic Catholic population, the first initiative of the Archdiocesan plan for Hispanic Ministry states that we should “welcome and recognize the presence of Hispanics, especially the newly arrived and immigrant, to the life of the Church by equipping more parishes to support the Hispanic population living within their boundaries.”*

*The priests of the Johnson County region need tools and resources to promote collaboration for responding to the Hispanic presence. The number of Hispanic persons will double from the number in 2000, reaching around 37,000 or 7% of the population by 2012. Despite this dramatic increase, Johnson County has about the same number of parishes and Masses operating as five years ago. The rapid growth of this disproportionately younger population and their Catholic affinity calls for a proactive response and a pastoral plan, which is needed to direct the development of sacramental ministry, human services, education, Christian community and many other areas. A coordinated approach among all the parishes will be more effective than isolated efforts.*

#### *Strategies*

- 6.1 The Archdiocesan Animator for Hispanic Ministry will begin immediately to facilitate forming a county-wide plan to identify the resources, staff, and support required.
- 6.2 The plan will be specific about where and how Hispanic ministry will expand and will study the possibility of a “personal” parish.
- 6.3 Sunday morning Mass in Spanish will be offered in the region. The plan will include offering more Masses in Spanish when and where they are needed.

## **E. Personnel to Lead and Support the Mission**

### **7. Parishes will continue to support and promote vocations to the priesthood and vocations to consecrated life in the Church.**

#### *Strategy*

- 7.1 Local clergy, staff and lay leaders play an important role in identifying young men and women who would choose service to the Church as their vocation. Parishes will continue to collaborate with the Archdiocesan Vocation Office to promote vocations.

### **8. Parishes will examine their current level of lay professional staff and support staff and make new investment to further the mission of the parish and the region.**

#### *Rationale*

*Professional, trained personnel are now a normal part of parish structures. Leadership of parishes has become complicated and priests need the expertise of lay professionals who bring skills related to business as much as to ministry.*

### *Strategies*

- 8.1 Over the next five to eight years, reduce the ratio of lay professional staff to Catholics from 1:951 down to 1:500. Of particular need is expansion of professional staff to develop adult education programs, programs for young adults, religious education for children, and evangelization.
- 8.2 Parishes will operate with appropriate human resource functions such as job descriptions, evaluations, adequate compensation, and so on. Parishes will examine their hiring practices to ensure staff are hired with proper qualifications and are receiving adequate training.
- 8.3 Parishes with sufficient resources will expand their staffs further and consider encouraging their staff members to provide support to initiatives in the Johnson County Region.
- 8.4 Programs for training and mentoring parish managers will be developed, and credentials/ qualifications for the position will be determined and generally applied in all parishes. The Archdiocese and the region will work together to accomplish this strategy.
- 8.5 Pastors will be provided with assistance in working with larger professional staffs.
- 8.6 Grow parish stewardship as new professional staff are added and as parishes expand their ministries and involve more people. More time, talent and treasure will be needed to develop adult education, build programs for evangelization and strengthen religious education for children.

## **9. Strengthen organizations within the Johnson County Region that bring together parish managers, directors of religious education, youth ministers, school principals, and others to enhance the sharing of resources and ideas.**

## **F. Evangelization**

### **10. Evangelization has the potential to be most fruitful through planned and persistent efforts that are sustained over long periods of time and that through the power of the Holy Spirit make an eternal difference for many people. Parishes will proactively participate in the archdiocesan pastoral initiative on evangelization.**

#### *Strategies*

- 10.1 Parishes will develop adult education that facilitates spiritual growth among the Catholic community. They will examine current models and reassess the best programs. Parishes with strong programs will serve as resources for other parishes.
- 10.2 Every parish will be proactive in a new evangelization to share the Good News of salvation, going and making disciples of all nations. Each parish will include in its plan strategies for intentional evangelization, leading to a personal invitation for all Catholics to re-embrace the Church's missional roots and to become disciples of Jesus Christ.
- 10.3 The Archdiocese will either offer programs for training and education or facilitate the development of these programs within the region.



## **G. Catholic Education**

- 11. Parishes will examine the extent and quality of their youth ministry programs. Opportunities for collaboration will be identified. Consideration will be given to establishing a religious education program for grades 9 through 12 which will complement high school youth programs.**
- 12. The religious formation of young people will be a priority for every parish as the faith is shared with future generations. Quality programs will be provided for religious education/formation in parish schools and religious education (SOR/CCD) programs including preparation for reception and continued living of the sacraments.**

### *Strategies*

- 12.1 Sufficient resources of educational materials, funding and parish support will be invested.
- 12.2 Teachers will be qualified and prepared through initial and ongoing formation.
- 12.3 Parish priests and other parish ministers will be involved to fully share the faith.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS ABOUT SCHOOLS

“Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News....every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.... No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.” *taken from Pope Benedict’s address to Catholic educators in the United States, April 17, 2008.*

1. If existing circumstances continue without a major change, enrollment decline appears to be a trend and possible concern for Holy Cross, Holy Spirit, St. Agnes, and St. Paul Schools.
2. As the school-age population shrinks in the northeast area of Johnson County, parish schools will need to invest in more sophisticated and integrated marketing to maintain current enrollment levels. Even with renewed efforts at marketing, an increase in market share will be necessary just to maintain enrollment. Enrollment increases are certainly possible with a well-executed plan.
3. Enrollment for kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade among the eight schools inside I-435 (does not include Good Shepherd) is 4,065 in 2008-09, down from 4,361 in 2002-03; a net loss of 296 students. The enrollment capacity for these schools given current levels of staffing is 4,537; leaving 472 empty seats.
4. Increasing enrollment may not be possible for some parish schools if they depend only on Catholic families from within the parish boundaries.
5. Sacred Heart Parish in Gardner may someday need a school. Gardner is a growing young community. St. Paul School presently serves families from Sacred Heart Parish. The school will be less accessible when it moves to a new site.
6. All Catholic schools should work to recruit Catholic families of Hispanic background when the geography of the parish area includes Hispanic population. Marketing and tuition assistance need to be tailored and funded to reach this growing community in the Johnson County Region.

## VIII. GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOL VITALITY

Catholic identity and academic excellence are always a priority for Catholic schools. In addition, the following three goals stand out as high priorities for strengthening school vitality. They are:

Goal 4: Collaboration

Goal 5: Marketing

Goals 7 & 8: Funding

These goals were selected as high priorities by the Pastoral Planning Task Force with input from parish leaders, principals, and pastors.

### A. Catholic Identity and Academic Excellence

#### 1. Catholic schools will maintain a primary emphasis on their Catholic identity.

##### *Strategies*

- 1.1 Faculty formation will be ongoing.
- 1.2 Special attention will be given to providing opportunities for students to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to deepen their appreciation for the Eucharist and the sacramental life of the church.
- 1.3 School leaders will take advantage of the resources and programming available from the Superintendent's Office.

#### 2. Catholic schools will continue to provide excellent academic programs and will continue to improve teaching and learning.

##### *Strategies*

- 2.1 The accreditation processes required by the State of Kansas School and AdvancED will be vehicles for continual school improvement. The Superintendent's Office will also provide support to schools.

### B. Comprehensive Strategic Plans

#### 3. A comprehensive strategic plan will be developed for secondary education in Johnson County. An overall vision and common direction is needed for the high schools in the region.

##### *Strategies*

- 3.1 The means for accountability and oversight must first be clarified in the governance structure of the high schools. Then the planning initiative can begin with direction from the Catholic Schools Office.
- 3.2 Specific goals for the planning process will be agreed to by the parties involved. The Catholic Schools Office will bring expertise to guide the process and achieve the goals.

## **C. Collaboration**

### **4. Catholic schools in Johnson County will collaborate so more children receive a Catholic education and children benefit from sharing of resources.**

#### *Strategies*

- 4.1 A systematic referral process will be established to direct parents to other Catholic schools when their parish school does not have room or their parish does not have a school.
- 4.2 In order for the referral process to work, the sending parish and its sending families will be responsible for the per pupil cost of the receiving school. Archdiocesan policy 6050.1 gives specific guidelines as to how the cost for parents and parish will be determined.
- 4.3 The Superintendent of Schools will work with the pastors and principals in the region to develop procedures and forms for all schools to use when working with families seeking enrollment in a Catholic school outside their parish.
- 4.4 Parish clusters will afford an excellent opportunity for Catholic schools to work together to share resources and collaborate. Each cluster will identify opportunities for collaboration.

## **D. Marketing and Enrollment Management**

### **5. Marketing programs will be active in all schools.**

#### *Rationale*

*Marketing Catholic school education must be a core function of all schools. Marketing schools provides opportunities for collaboration in the region. It also builds brand, image, value, enrollment and financial support.*

#### *Strategies*

- 5.1 Every school will have an integrated and multidimensional marketing plan including a budget with funding sources.
- 5.2 Every parish with a school will create, activate, and monitor a marketing committee to assist the principal.
- 5.3 Schools in Johnson County will secure marketing expertise and training. The Catholic Schools Office will provide direct assistance and connect schools with resources as requested.
- 5.4 With assistance from the Catholic Schools Office, a regional marketing plan will be developed to guide marketing activities in Johnson County. The plan should be a coordinated effort with archdiocesan initiatives and should take into consideration marketing initiatives for Catholic schools in Wyandotte County.
- 5.5 Market research will be conducted and used to shape marketing plans. Market research should investigate why parents do or do not enroll their children in schools, perceptions of schools, perceptions of the competition, expectations of schools and the value of Catholic education. Both formal and informal investigation will occur on the local level and more structured study must be conducted on a regional basis.
- 5.6 All schools will proactively address retention, and some will take corrective action to improve retention due to the net loss of 48 to 87 students per year across the region. Schools with losses shall investigate, through market research and other means, the reasons for their enrollment decline.

## **6. Schools will operate efficiently with full classes.**

### *Rationale*

*Full classes are necessary to maintain an efficient operation and affordable cost per pupil. This helps control costs for parishes and parents. Full classes are generally understood to be 24 to 27 students in 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Teacher assistants may be hired to support teachers.*

### *Strategies*

- 6.1 Maintaining full classes is necessary to control cost per pupil and to provide a viable financial model. All schools will determine how many classes they plan to maintain long-term in each grade and then work to fill those classes.
- 6.2 When schools are faced with small classes, they must make adjustments such as consolidating classrooms, reducing the number of classes, or possibly sending students to neighboring schools with open seats when another class is not justified.
- 6.3 The Catholic Schools Office will request and track accurate enrollment data, develop a formal mechanism to monitor schools for signs of viability, and raise concerns when early signs of trouble are identified. Schools will address serious concerns when raised by the Catholic Schools Office and will take timely, proactive steps to address those concerns while options for solutions are possible.

## **E. Funding**

### **7. Parishes with stewardship funding models must remain vigilant in stewardship education and hold to the principles that make this model successful.**

#### *Rationale*

*Five parishes operate their schools with a stewardship model. A stewardship school must not become synonymous with “free school”, as the cost of education is significant. Correctly and fully understood, every individual is accountable to God, therefore stewardship is an obligation, not an option. Christian stewardship applies to everything: all personal talents, abilities and wealth. The stewardship way of life requires extended perseverance. Parishioners must accept responsibility for their parishes and the religious education of their young people and contribute generously, in terms of both money and personal service, to their programs and projects.*

#### *Strategy*

- 7.1 In parishes utilizing the stewardship model of school funding, both the priest and the parish leadership must (1) maintain a clear commitment to stewardship; (2) take a holistic and Biblical view of time, talent, and treasure, understanding the expectations and blessings of living as God’s steward; and (3) take responsibility for involving the parish and producing finances sufficient to maintain both a vital parish and an excellent school program.

### **8. Parishes in a tuition model need a plan to grow funding for tuition assistance.**

#### *Strategies*

- 8.1 Examine the logistics and administration of parish tuition assistance programs to ensure they are accessible, advertised, confidential, and adequately funded for the need both now and in the future.

- 8.2 Each parish will have a plan to increase tuition assistance funding. Sources for funding will typically be parish stewardship, school development programs, annual funds, planned gifts, major donors, and school endowments.
- 8.3 The Catholic Schools Office will evaluate current practices for administering and funding tuition assistance programs and make recommendations for best practices which all schools will follow, including new terminology, scholarships, parent education, and outside needs assessment.

## **F. Goals for Early Childhood Programs**

### **9. Early childhood programs in Catholic schools and parishes will be of high quality and available to Catholic families in the region.**

#### *Rationale*

*The preschool years are an excellent time to reach children and their families with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Early childhood programs are a natural mission of Catholic schools because they provide age-appropriate faith formation, evangelization, and quality education. Many Catholic parents choose an early childhood program for their children and will seek these programs from secular or other religious providers when not available in their parishes. According to the National Institute for Early Education Research, in 2007 51% of three-year-olds and 74% of four-year-olds were enrolled in an early childhood program nationally.*

*Early childhood programs with excellent reputations also can serve as a marketing tool for Catholic schools and are important feeders for kindergarten. Parents frequently choose a school for their children beginning at pre-kindergarten. This will become even more important for parish schools in areas with an aging population and greater competition for fewer children.*

#### *Strategies*

- 9.1 Pre-kindergarten programs for three-year-olds and four-year-olds will be considered for addition by Catholic schools that do not have them, will be under the school and will be integral to the school mission.
- 9.2 Schools without these programs [Ascension Parish, Good Shepherd Parish and Nativity Parish] will consider conducting a market study to assess interest in a quality program if it were offered as part of the school, looking at the impact on existing Catholic preschool programs due to overlap between parishes. As parents desire full-day care services in addition to the educational program, parishes need to adapt their programs to the needs in their area.
- 9.3 Catholic schools will offer options for kindergarten, both full-day and half-day, regularly assessing the need for options as part of their proactive planning.
- 9.4 Parishes will include in their master planning classroom space for early childhood and full-day kindergarten programs, even in cases where parish sites are generally finished. Parishes lacking space for early childhood offerings or full-day kindergarten shall consider renovations or new construction so that these options can be offered as an extension of the Catholic education and as a tool to strengthen enrollment. When this is not feasible, parishes will consider collaboration in order to provide programs where they are not available.

## **G. Recommendations for New Schools**

### **10. New parishes will provide Catholic school education by opening a parish school if feasible. Master planning for facilities will be designed with facilities that can be used for a Catholic school, whether the school opens right away or at a future date.**

#### *Strategy*

10.1 At the time a new parish is ready to begin, a professional enrollment study will be conducted to determine the timing for a Catholic school. The study will take the following steps:

- Form an initial vision and preliminary plan for the proposed new school.
- Identify a preliminary funding model for the school.
- Include neighboring schools in the study who are potentially impacted by a new school.
- Conduct survey research and demographic study.
- Analyze survey results in light of population projections, enrollment patterns, and other demographics.
- Collect information on competitor schools in the area, both private and public.

The outcome of the study will:

- Assess short-term and long-term enrollment potential
- Determine how large the school could be long-term
- Determine who will be served
- Measure level of interest in Catholic education
- Evaluate impact on existing Catholic schools
- Identify parent expectations

### **11. Sacred Heart Parish in Gardner will plan for a Catholic school and early childhood program as part of the parish master plan.**

#### *Strategy*

11.1 A market study is needed to guide planning for a school and early childhood center. The study needs to demonstrate enrollment demand and demographics are sufficient to sustain viable programs long-term. St. Paul School needs to be part of the study.

11.2 Facility planning will incorporate a school for double classes in each grade and early childhood programs. The specifics should be confirmed by a market study.

### **12. St. Paul School will be relocated to a new site with new facilities as part of a long-range plan to relocate St. Paul Parish.**

### **13. When a parish does not have a school, a collaborative arrangement will be formed with a neighboring parish to provide Catholic education to parish families.**

#### *Strategy*

13.1 An agreement will be written that specifies:

- Priorities for admission
- Financial support from sending parish and formula for support
- Representation on school advisory board
- Nature of the collaborative relationship between the parishes
- Commitment to promote Catholic education in the parish and develop a partnership with the school