



DIOCESE *of* SACRAMENTO
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic School Department Strategic Plan

As parents and educators, the most important job we have is to mold today's students into tomorrow's leaders. This includes nurturing our children both spiritually and academically. It is through our students that our shared Catholic values and morals will live on into the future; the more educated they are, the more likely they will be to assume the kind of leadership roles that will allow them to positively impact society.

Studies show that the road to college success begins during a student's elementary years. True college preparation begins in the early grades, not high school. In today's economically competitive climate, college success means not just attending college, but obtaining a degree. With this in mind, the Catholic School Department (CSD) has developed the following strategic plan as a road map to providing our students with an unparalleled faith, academic and leadership education on a daily basis.

Our goal is that the results we acquire from the implementation of this strategic plan will give parents more confidence that their children are receiving what is irrefutably the *best* education available in their neighborhood. The assessment goals of the strategic plan provide us with the tools to measure the academic progress of our students and programs against that of other schools. Within a few years of implementation, we will accurately determine the degree to which our students are on track for college success at any given point in their academic career, beginning in the early grades. With this information in place, we can provide dynamic, carefully targeted instruction that can be adjusted as necessary to ensure each and every child's success. The bottom line is that we will find out what is and isn't working and adjust our teaching methods to ensure that each and every student is on track to succeed in college and beyond.

Following is a comprehensive list of the measurable approach we will take to build and enhance the most critical aspects of our educational program beginning in the 2012-2013 academic year. This plan is the result of months of in-depth research by our recently restructured CSD staff, a nationally recognized and highly respected education consultant and a handful of prestigious Catholic universities. We have taken a careful look at each and every one of our schools to identify which programs are working and which have room for growth. We have surveyed parents to identify their goals for their children, and to receive input about our schools' programs.

Finally, we have extended our research to examine the primary, high school and collegiate educational environments to accurately gauge how we measure up and what we need to do to ensure the Diocese of Sacramento's schools provide an unparalleled education.

Goal 1

Faith Formation: We will nurture, celebrate and instill our Catholic faith, values and traditions in all students and staff.

While our students will continue to be taught about Catholic values in the classroom, we will also offer increased opportunities that allow students to nurture their spirituality by practicing these values in their community and parish.

- Students will have more opportunities to participate in a greater variety of events, activities and service opportunities that are designed to help them build and practice their faith.
- Religious curriculum will be constantly evaluated and adjusted to make sure our students have a thorough understanding of the Catholic Church, its teachings, and how they fit into and can be applied to the modern world.
- We will expand our partnerships with Catholic colleges throughout the country. This will help students build a Catholic network to support them when they embark on college, whether they choose to attend a Catholic or secular school.

Our teachers and principals play an important role in instilling and nurturing our students' faith. In turn, it's our job to cultivate a staff that is well educated in Catholic faith and traditions.

- Principals and teachers will have more frequent opportunities to continue their own religious education and growth. These opportunities will include Catechist Certification, quarterly retreats, workshops and in-services, along with regular organized discussions about spiritual concepts and teaching tools.

Faith Formation Plan of Action

The CSD will:

- Organize additional annual events, activities and service opportunities
- Collaborate with the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis (DEC) to provide students with Catholic leadership and evangelization opportunities

- Review and revise religious curriculum as necessary
- Establish stronger partnerships with Catholic colleges and Newman Centers
- Conduct monthly meetings with DEC to facilitate ongoing teacher education
- Promote and host monthly events that lead to Catechesis Certification for teachers and principals

Goal 2

Academic Excellence: We will create and maintain a dynamic curriculum that meets the developing needs of our constantly evolving world and that prepares our students for success in college and beyond.

The goal is no longer just attending college—it's succeeding in college and graduating with a college degree. We strive to grow well-rounded graduates who are prepared with all of the skills they need to thrive in a highly competitive and quickly changing world.

- We will be one of the first dioceses in the nation to adopt the [Common Core State Standards](#) (CCSS) for English Language Arts and Math programs. With the development of a college preparatory curriculum, our students will have a strong advantage in college admissions and, more importantly, a significant jump-start on their college curriculum. In other words, this new college *success* curriculum exceeds the college preparation coursework currently in place at CSD schools.
- Each school and student will be evaluated every quarter to make sure *all* students are academically proficient in *all* subjects and that **each student is maximizing his or her full potential**. In cases where they are not, teachers will adjust their instruction quickly and as necessary.
- School resources will be inventoried once a year to make sure each school has all of the tools (technological and otherwise) that our students need.

Academic Excellence Plan of Action

The CSD will:

- Adopt and implement CCSS for Math and English Language Arts programs
- Adopt new curriculum and resources to support the CCSS standards
- Provide teachers with a by-quarter instructional guide based on CCSS standards
- Complete a yearly inventory of each school's resources
- Review assessments of students' academic progress quarterly to make sure they are on track according to CCSS
 - When necessary, programs will be adjusted

Goal 3

Ongoing Assessment: We will use a uniform, system-wide assessment and reporting tool to accurately monitor and determine the relevance of our curriculum and the academic success of our students.

It is important that each student is provided the opportunity to excel by taking into consideration his or her specific needs. It is also imperative that all schools (not just some) reach high levels of academic success. We are moving away from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The ITBS is a norm-reference test that students have traditionally taken in the fall. The data from this assessment does not provide our teachers with enough current information about what standards students have mastered and what standards require more review. This new assessment system will provide us with an easy, reliable means of measuring student academic progress and teaching effectiveness. Assessments will be completed four times per year so that we have a constant gauge of what is and is not working. Teachers will make course corrections accordingly.

- Teachers across the diocese will collaborate to create a standards-based report card, so that all students at all schools are measured against the same rigorous standards.
- Principals will play a key role in monitoring student progress on a regular basis.
- We will transition from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to Acuity, a state-of-the-art, technology-based system of formative assessments.

Ongoing Assessment Plan of Action

The CSD will:

- Assess students five times per year, with one diagnostic, three interim and one summative assessment
- Create a uniform, standards-based report card
- Evaluate assessments within one week of the testing window to identify strengths and weaknesses throughout the system
- Analyze student data for formal assessment measures in K-8 and standardized measures in 9-12
- Provide ongoing professional development support to principals and teachers so they can interpret and analyze assessment results

Goal 4

Professional Development: We are dedicated to cultivating and nurturing unparalleled leadership and teaching.

A great education begins with great teachers. Our teachers are dedicated to going above and beyond the call of duty. It's our job to support them in their own ongoing education and development.

- We have created a dynamic and flexible professional development program that includes targeted, ongoing training for both teachers and principals. This training will be based on teachers' current needs, strengths and weaknesses, as informed by student assessments and more routine classroom observations.
- We are attracting and hiring the most qualified and enthusiastic faculty available, selecting individuals who will inspire our students through their own passion for life-long learning and the Catholic Church. Additionally, we are recruiting new teaching talent by partnering with prestigious Catholic colleges to create career ladder programs.
- Ongoing professional development will help ensure that we retain great teachers by providing them with the resources and support they need. We will engage and challenge them by constantly developing their professional skills.

Professional Development Plan of Action

The CSD will:

- Host monthly professional development days for instructional leadership for all diocese principals and professional development for all diocese teachers three times per year
- Contract with local agencies to provide professional development
- Carefully align professional development with assessment results to target specific support and training to teachers
- Develop an instructional leadership performance evaluation tool for principals and improve the existing teacher evaluation tool
- Create a talent and succession planning system to attract and maintain the best teachers available
- Further partnerships with renown Catholic universities to enhance career ladder development for teachers
- Expand candidate searches to better identify the best of the best teaching talent