

Diocese of Sioux City  
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

# ILLUMINATING OUR PATH

STRATEGIC PLAN  
2023-2028

## SHINING LIGHT FOR BRIGHT FUTURE

# Diocese continues tradition of excellence in Catholic education

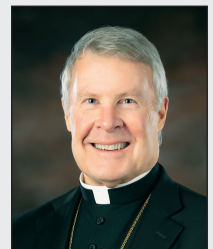
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We know from the Catechism of the Catholic Church that “parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.” (CCC 2223) The church recognizes this awesome responsibility to raise children in the faith.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton blazed the trail for Catholic education when she founded the first Catholic school system in our country in 1810.

The strong faith of past generations allowed the faithful to blaze their own trail, establishing Catholic schools throughout our diocese. Today, we have a strong 16 Catholic schools, with dedicated administrators and educators working as a team with our parents to help our young people grow deeper and deeper in love with our Savior Jesus Christ.

Continuing this tradition of excellence in Catholic education that we have enjoyed for decades in the Diocese of Sioux City, we are pleased to present Illuminating Our Path, the 2023-28 Strategic Plan for our diocesan schools.



I commend the work of our Catholic Schools Office, our steering committee and task force, Diocesan Board of Education and school administrators for the many hours that went into Illuminating Our Path. We now have the path and the framework “illuminated” to successfully guide our schools into the future.

As your bishop, I thank you all for your dedication to growing and enhancing the academic and religious education offered in the Catholic schools of Diocese of Sioux City.

Pope Francis reminded us in April 2022 of the importance of this work to share the faith to our young people, “Catholic education is also evangelization: bearing witness to the joy of the Gospel and its power to renew our communities and provide hope and strength in facing wisely the challenges of the present time.”

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads “+ R. Walker Nickless”.

**Bishop Walker Nickless**  
Diocese of Sioux City

## ILLUMINATING OUR PATH

# Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Sioux City

Greetings,

Along with Bishop Walker Nickless, it is my pleasure to present “Illuminating Our Path,” the Diocese of Sioux City Catholic Schools Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. This strategic plan is the result of a collaborative effort involving Bishop Nickless, chancery staff, school administrators, pastors, and stakeholders from our school communities.

The resulting document is detailed, comprehensive, and thoughtful. It lays out a bold but achievable vision for the future of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Sioux City. Our vision is to educate students, created in the image and likeness of God, in the dignity of truth, beauty, and goodness. These will be hallmarks of every Catholic school in the Diocese of Sioux City.



Strategic planning has been a part of the culture in our Catholic schools for many years. The goals and strategies in this plan complement and build upon the work of previous plans while laying a new foundation to move our schools forward over the next five years. My sincere thanks and gratitude to our steering committee and planning task force, who helped craft the plan by offering their time and insight.

Now that it is finalized, the real work begins. It will take diocesan and school-wide commitment to accomplish the goals laid out in this plan. As you will see, the plan includes what we want to achieve, and the strategies we believe will help get us there. In addition, we have developed an implementation plan to track our progress and hold ourselves accountable along the way.

Those of us in education are facing a number of challenges over the next several years, including staff shortages, declining numbers of Catholics in our diocese, and declining numbers of ordained clergy. We believe this strategic plan will “illuminate our path” in navigating these challenges, position our Catholic schools to think innovatively, and help us form students on their academic and spiritual paths. We look forward to working with each of you as we bring this new plan to life.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patty Lansink".

**Patty Lansink**

**Superintendent of Catholic Schools**

## Catholic Schools Mission Statement

Essential to the educational ministry of the Church, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Sioux City are fulfilling the Church’s mission to teach as Jesus did. Together with the support of parents, teachers, administrators, clergy, parishioners and the community at large, we are committed to providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where Catholic doctrine and values and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service and integrity.

# ILLUMINATING OUR PATH: Four Strategic Areas

Mission and Catholic Identity  
Governance and Leadership

Academic Excellence  
Operational Vitality

## STRATEGIC AREA

### Mission and Catholic Identity

The Church's teaching mission includes inviting young people to a relationship with Jesus Christ or deepening an existing relationship with Jesus, inserting young people into the life of the Church, and assisting young people to see and understand the role of faith in one's daily life and in the larger society. "This unique Catholic identity makes our Catholic elementary and secondary schools 'schools for the human person' and allows them to fill a critical role in the future life of our Church, our country and our world" (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997). The following standards address Catholic identity and culture as vital to the mission of Catholic schools in the United States.  
– NCEA NSBECS 2020

#### GOAL 1 | Mission and Catholic Identity

All schools will employ the "The Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools" as presented in the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS).

##### KEY STRATEGY CI | 1.1

The Catholic Schools Office will assist schools and board committees in implementing a self-assessment using the NSBECS.

##### KEY STRATEGY CI | 1.2

The Catholic Schools Office will ensure diocesan, and school mission statements are reviewed, clarified, and, if necessary, updated, and the commitment to the mission is renewed annually, including an emphasis on discipleship and improving the Christian community.



#### GOAL 2 | Mission and Catholic Identity

In collaboration with the diocese and parish communities, Catholic schools will intentionally form missionary disciples and evangelizers in the world.

##### KEY STRATEGY CI | 2.1

The Catholic Schools Office will facilitate an annual meeting between pastors and administrators to discuss the school's spiritual, catechetical, and evangelical mission and work.

##### KEY STRATEGY CI | 2.2

The Catholic Schools Office will support administrators and teachers in strengthening their faith leadership in their schools and classrooms.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 2.3

Schools will offer parents and guardians inspiring opportunities for Christ-centered adult faith formation and support their work as the primary educators of their children in the faith.

## GOAL 3 | Mission and Catholic Identity

Catholic schools will utilize resources authentic to the Catholic faith to intentionally create a vibrant Catholic school culture and disciples of Jesus.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 3.1

All schools in the diocese will use age-appropriate, catechetical resources authentic to the Catholic faith.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 3.2

The teaching of the Catholic faith, with a focus on Jesus Christ, will permeate all academic content areas.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 3.3

Catholic Schools Office will support schools in forming students to respond to contemporary social issues from a Catholic perspective.

## GOAL 4 | Mission and Catholic Identity

The Catholic Schools Office will identify strategies to encourage and support Latinos and other cultures' greater participation in the gift of Catholic schools.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 4.1

School leaders will analyze changing demographics in the Church and make connections to Catholic social teaching.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 4.2

The Catholic Schools Office will encourage administrators to educate staff, students and stakeholders to address cultural trends in their communities.

## GOAL 5 | Mission and Catholic Identity

The Catholic Schools Office will work with administrators and pastors to draw families into the heart of parish life.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 5.1

Provide catechesis on the importance of the Mass being the source and summit of the Catholic faith.

### KEY STRATEGY CI | 5.2

Increase access and decrease barriers to weekend liturgies.



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## STRATEGIC AREA

### Governance and Leadership

Central to the mission of the Church is the work of Catholic school education. The success of this mission depends on the key components of effective governance, which provides direction or authority, and leadership, which ensures effective operations. Catholic school governance and leadership can be seen as a ministry that promotes and protects the responsibilities and rights of the school community. Governance and leadership based on the principles and practices of excellence are essential to insuring the Catholic identity, academic excellence, and operational vitality of the school. Although governance models vary based on the sponsorship of the school, those who serve on the governing body or leadership team in Catholic schools provide for an environment for the teaching of doctrine and Sacred Scripture, the building and experiencing of community, the serving of others, and the opportunity for worship.

– NCEA NSBECS 2020

#### GOAL 1 | Governance and Leadership

Diocesan, parish, and school leadership will work in close cooperation to ensure each school's fidelity to its mission.

##### KEY STRATEGY GL | 1.1

Diocesan leadership will continue to define and support the role of diocesan clergy in all Catholic school systems.

##### KEY STRATEGY GL | 1.2

The organizational and staffing structure within each school and school system will be evaluated and reviewed annually.



#### GOAL 2 | Governance and Leadership

Diocesan leadership will empower and support leadership throughout every level of the Catholic school system.

##### KEY STRATEGY GL | 2.1

The Catholic Schools Office will support the development of essential aspects of leadership in Catholic education, including a commitment to the mission of Catholic education and the formation needed to assume the role of faith and instructional leader.

##### KEY STRATEGY GL | 2.2

Improve recruitment and retention of administrators and teachers.

##### KEY STRATEGY GL | 2.3

The Diocese of Sioux City will provide the necessary staff and resources for the Catholic Schools Office, with the proper experience and expertise, to effectively and fully implement the strategic plan at the diocesan and local levels.

### **GOAL 3 | Governance and Leadership**

In alignment with changing demographics, diocesan and school leadership will focus on recruiting multilingual, culturally diverse administrators, teachers, and staff.

#### **KEY STRATEGY GL | 3.1**

Administrators will ensure school budgets support multilingual, culturally diverse teacher and leadership development.

### **GOAL 4 | Governance and Leadership**

The Catholic Schools Office will provide education and training to support local school boards.

#### **KEY STRATEGY GL | 4.1**

The Catholic Schools Office will provide local school boards with the knowledge and skills to strengthen board committees in alignment with the NSBECS.

#### **KEY STRATEGY GL | 4.2**

The Catholic Schools Office will provide school board development, in-service opportunities, and support materials.

### **GOAL 5 | Governance and Leadership**

The Catholic Schools Office will guide administrators and local school boards in developing and implementing local strategic plans aligned with the diocesan strategic plan.

#### **KEY STRATEGY GL | 5.1**

The Catholic Schools Office will support school boards and administrators in the development of a strategic plan at the local school level.

#### **KEY STRATEGY GL | 5.2**

Local school board committees will develop action plans to guide the implementation of their strategic plan.



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## STRATEGIC AREA

### Academic Excellence

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops affirms the message of the Congregation on Catholic Education that intellectual development of the person and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand. Rooted in the mission of the Church, the Catholic school brings faith, culture and life together in harmony. In 2005, the bishops noted that “young people of the third millennium must be a source of energy and leadership in our Church and our nation. And, therefore, we must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education” (Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary School in the Third Millennium, 2005).

– NCEA NSBECS 2020

#### GOAL 1 | Academic Excellence

The Catholic Schools Office will collaborate with administrators to develop a shared vision around learner-centered Catholic education.

##### KEY STRATEGY AE | 1.1

The Catholic Schools Office will facilitate the formation of common beliefs around why learner-centered Catholic education is necessary for each child to achieve their God-given potential.

##### KEY STRATEGY AE | 1.2

The Catholic Schools Office will offer summer academies for administrators and teachers around learner-centered, equitable Catholic education.



#### GOAL 2 | Academic Excellence

Expand the knowledge and skills of administrators and teachers to develop inclusive, culturally-responsive schools.

##### KEY STRATEGY AE | 2.1

The Catholic Schools Office is committed to supporting school leaders and educators in inclusive education valuing each child’s human dignity and unique abilities.

##### KEY STRATEGY AE | 2.2

The Catholic Schools Office will promote culturally responsive instruction especially in areas with high populations of English learners.



## GOAL 3 | Academic Excellence

School leaders and educators will investigate innovative, research-based academic programs built around the shared vision of learner-centered Catholic education.

### KEY STRATEGY AE | 3.1

The Catholic Schools Office will collaborate with administrators to research models of learner-centered education that meet the needs of each school based on their key finding data.

### KEY STRATEGY AE | 3.2

Explore the benefits of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Iowa along with work-based learning opportunities, internships, and community partnerships.

### KEY STRATEGY AE | 3.3

Teaching and learning will empower learners to incorporate current technology tools and encourage them to become responsible digital citizens that incorporates reasoning based on our Catholic faith.



## GOAL 4 | Academic Excellence

School leaders and educators will create a guaranteed viable curriculum with clear expectations and a progression of learning that leads to mastering graduation expectations.



### KEY STRATEGY AE | 4.1

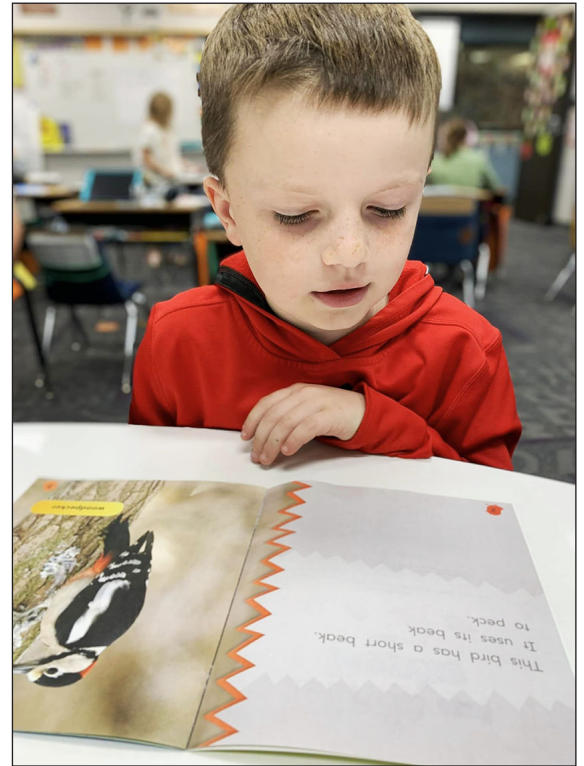
With input from key stakeholders, school leaders will establish a graduate profile, a clear visualization of the expectation of what every learner must know, understand, and be able to do when they graduate from our Catholic schools.

### KEY STRATEGY AE | 4.2

School leaders will create a guaranteed, viable, Catholic-infused curriculum that is horizontally and vertically aligned to standards and establishes expectations for what learners will know and be able to do at every performance level.

### KEY STRATEGY AE | 4.3

Once expectations for learning and mastery are clear, ensure all stakeholders have a shared awareness of the learner's continuous progress with standards-referenced grading.



## **GOAL 5 | Academic Excellence**

School leaders will ensure and sustain effective teaching and learning in every classroom.

### **KEY STRATEGY AE | 5.1**

School leaders will develop and promote a mentoring and induction program for all teachers new to diocesan schools.

### **KEY STRATEGY AE | 5.2**

Teachers will use a variety of student data to inform their instructional practices and to plan for continued and sustained student growth.

### **KEY STRATEGY AE | 5.3**

School leaders will align professional development and evaluations to the newly developed diocesan vision of academic excellence and student reporting.

## STRATEGIC AREA

### Operational Vitality

Catholic schools are temporal organizations committed to the Church and the mission of Catholic education including a commitment to a culture of excellence and rigor. These schools exist in a milieu of constant socioeconomic challenges grounded in continuous need for sustainable financial planning, human resource/personnel management and professional formation, facilities maintenance and enhancement, and the requirement for institutional advancement and contemporary communication. Catholic schools must adopt and maintain standards for operational vitality in these areas and define the norms and expectations for fundamental procedures to support and ensure viability and sustainability. When a school does not maintain standards for operational vitality, the continuation of academic excellence is in grave jeopardy. Over time, even an academically rigorous school with strong Catholic identity will not survive without operational vitality. Standards for operational vitality must focus on the “operation” of the school – how it works and how it is supported – in four key areas: finances, human resources/personnel, facilities, and institutional advancement. The leader/ leadership team must manage each area and be subject to the direct oversight of the governing body in these matters.

– NCEA NSBECS 2020

### GOAL 1 | Operational Vitality

All Catholic schools will optimize enrollment through effective marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts at both the local and diocesan levels.

#### KEY STRATEGY OV | 1.1

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Sioux City will maintain an enrollment management plan.

#### KEY STRATEGY OV | 1.2

Each Catholic school in the Diocese of Sioux City will appoint an Enrollment Champion to implement the enrollment management plan and be a liaison with the Catholic Schools Office.

#### KEY STRATEGY OV | 1.3

School budgets will include a line item to fund marketing and enrollment management initiatives.

#### KEY STRATEGY OV | 1.4

All schools will implement a parent satisfaction survey to measure attitudes, perceptions, and expectations to internally assess school performance, areas of strength, and areas of needed growth or change.



## GOAL 2 | Operational Vitality

With the fastest-growing number of school-age children being immigrants, our Catholic schools will expand outreach to the Hispanic community and families of other cultures to promote greater access to our Catholic schools.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 2.1

Investigate scholarship opportunities specific to cultural diversity to make Catholic education more accessible.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 2.2

The Catholic Schools Office will partner with stakeholders to bring awareness to cultural challenges in light of the gospel.



## GOAL 3 | Operational Vitality

Diocesan leadership will research options for assessing and monitoring the financial health of the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Sioux City.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 3.1

Business managers will prepare timely financial reports, the annual budget, and critical statistics relating to the school's financial condition, and in collaboration with the school administrator, share with the local school board.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 3.2

Diocesan leadership will provide annual education on school finance, budgeting practices, and accounting practices of scholarship funds for school business managers, bookkeepers, school administrators, and pastors.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 3.3

Diocesan leadership will guide schools in communicating a summary overview of the school budget and financial information to parents and necessary stakeholders.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 3.4

The Diocese of Sioux City will establish minimum expectations and essential responsibilities for the school bookkeeper/business manager positions.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 3.5

Catholic Schools Office and diocesan leadership will annually review viability benchmarks for each school.

## GOAL 4 | Operational Vitality

Diocesan leadership will create a centralized support network for schools to streamline specific administrative roles and services across schools in the diocese.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 4.1

The Catholic Schools Office and diocesan leadership will create a database for staffing needs and available centralized administrative and support services.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 4.2

The diocesan technology committee will work with schools and school systems to develop and prioritize technology and technology integration.

## GOAL 5 | Operational Vitality

The funding model for schools will reflect a sustainable balance among revenue sources.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 5.1

Schools will transition to a new tuition model through a phased approach that more closely reflects the actual cost of education.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 5.2

Revenue from published tuition and fees will be at least 50% of total operating revenue within three to five years.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 5.3

The Catholic Schools Office will standardize best practices for diocesan and local scholarship awards.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 5.4

The Catholic Schools Office and diocesan leadership will support schools in initiating local annual campaigns.

## GOAL 6 | Operational Vitality

The diocese will explore the potential to undertake a major campaign to support schools and other diocesan ministries with a commitment to ensure schools remain available, accessible, and affordable to all parents and students.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 6.1

Diocesan leadership will prepare a formal diocesan case statement that will serve as the foundation for developing a major campaign to sustain quality Catholic education in the diocese.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 6.2

Diocesan leadership will develop a list of needs and opportunities that could be funded through a diocesan campaign for Catholic education.



### KEY STRATEGY OV | 6.3

Initiate planning for the diocesan campaign for Catholic education to commence in the next four to five years.

## GOAL 7 | Operational Vitality

The Catholic Schools Office will facilitate intentional conversations around increased compensation for school administrators, faculty, and staff.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 7.1

The Catholic Schools Office will create a diocesan teacher salary scale for parish and system schools to serve as a minimum guideline in establishing future faculty and staff compensation.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 7.2

The Catholic Schools Office will research and share opportunities for alternative approaches to compensation to ensure all staff are appropriately compensated.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 7.3

Standardize employee benefits for all schools.

## GOAL 8 | Operational Vitality

Catholic Schools Office and diocesan leadership will support schools in developing a master facility plan that prioritizes short and long-term physical needs.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 8.1

Collaborating with diocesan leadership, the Catholic Schools Office will develop a template with criteria and expectations required for each master facility plan.

### KEY STRATEGY OV | 8.2

Each school will schedule facility advantages and limitations assessments to support academic and extracurricular programs.





# DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY Catholic Schools

[sccatholicsschools.org](http://sccatholicsschools.org)

## ALGONA

Bishop Garrigan Schools  
[bishopgarrigan.org](http://bishopgarrigan.org)

## ALTON

Spalding Catholic Elementary  
[spaldingcatholic.org](http://spaldingcatholic.org)

## BOONE

Sacred Heart School  
[shboone.com](http://shboone.com)

## CARROLL

Kuemper Catholic School  
[kuemper.org](http://kuemper.org)

## DANBURY

Danbury Catholic School  
[danburycatholic.org](http://danburycatholic.org)

## DENISON

St. Rose of Lima School  
[stroselimacatholic.org](http://stroselimacatholic.org)

## EMMETSBURG

Emmetsburg Catholic School  
[emmetsburgcatholic.org](http://emmetsburgcatholic.org)

## FORT DODGE

St. Edmond Catholic Schools  
[st-edmond.pvt.k12.ia.us](http://st-edmond.pvt.k12.ia.us)

## HUMBOLDT

St. Mary School  
[stmaryhumboldt.org](http://stmaryhumboldt.org)

## LE MARS

Gehlen Catholic Schools  
[gehlencatholic.org](http://gehlencatholic.org)

## POCAHONTAS

Pocahontas Catholic  
[pokycatholic.org](http://pokycatholic.org)

## REMSEN

St. Mary Schools  
[rmschools.org](http://rmschools.org)

## SHELDON

St. Patrick School  
[stpatssheldon.org](http://stpatssheldon.org)

## SIOUX CITY

Bishop Heelan Catholic Schools  
[bishopheelan.org](http://bishopheelan.org)

## SPENCER

Sacred Heart  
[spencersacredheart.com](http://spencersacredheart.com)

## STORM LAKE

St. Mary School  
[stormlakecatholic.com](http://stormlakecatholic.com)



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