

DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

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From the desk of the Superintendent of Schools

A LETTER FROM BILL RYAN

Our Diocesan School Advisory Council is proud to present our inaugural newsletter to share with you the important role this advisory group plays in supporting the work of Catholic schools.

We are hopeful the newsletter will keep parishioners, school families and stakeholders abreast of the Catholic Schools ministry, our strategic planning initiatives, and the good news about Catholic schools across the state. We work to prepare our students for the future – mind, body and soul.

I would like to thank our Diocesan Schools Advisory Council for their hard work on the newsletter and their commitment to our mission. Together with our schools we are “Ignited by Faith – United in Learning.”

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Ryan".

Bill Ryan
*Secretary for Education
Superintendent of Catholic Schools*

DSAC

THE WHO, WHAT AND WHY



“...to further the advancement of quality education for the Diocese Catholic schools by providing leadership, advice, assistance and support...”

With a mind and deliberate intent to revitalize and strengthen Catholic schools, the diocese developed and implemented a strategic growth plan, *We Believe*, in 2016 to address four key areas in Catholic education for each school: *Mission and Catholic Identity, Operational Vitality, Academic Excellence, and Governance and Leadership.*

To assist in this endeavor, the strategic plan created the Diocesan School Advisory Council (DSAC) to further the advancement of quality education by providing leadership, advice, assistance and support to the Bishop of Charleston and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

DSAC is comprised of principals, clergy, volunteers and representatives from each region of the diocese with a wide range of expertise and backgrounds. The council meets regularly to serve in an advisory capacity to the bishop and the superintendent. Each member also serves on a committee that addresses one of the four key areas of Catholic education identified above.



DSAC CURRENT MEMBERS

- *Most Rev. Jacques Fabre-Jeune*, Bishop of Charleston
- *Rev. Msgr. Anthony Droze*, Vicar General
- *Father Michael Okere*, Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Church and School, Columbia
- *Father Renaud West*, Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Chaplain to The Charleston Catholic School
- *Father Andrew Fryml*, Priest of Christ Our King Church, Chaplain to Bishop England High School and College of Charleston
- *William Ryan*, Secretary of Education, Superintendent of Schools
- *Shaileen Riginos*, Associate Superintendent
- *Kathy Preston*, DSAC Chair, Retired Principal, St. Peter Church, Columbia
- *Jackie Edgerton*, DSAC Vice-Chair, Parent at Bishop England High School and Christ Our King-Stella Maris School
- *Michael F. Acquilano*, Secretary of Communications and Public Affairs
- *Sandra Leatherwood*, Coordinator of Strategic Planning
- *Jacqueline Kasproski*, Coordinator of Special Projects
- *Dr. Michael Martocchio*, Secretary of Evangelization, Director of Catechesis and Christian Initiation
- *Ron Poles*, Principal of St. John Neuman School, Columbia, Leadership Coordinator
- *Steven Cunningham*, Principal of Prince of Peace School, Taylors, Catholic Identity Coordinator
- *Debbie Wilfong*, Principal of St. Andrew School, Myrtle Beach, Academic Excellence Coordinator
- *Donavan Yarnall*, Principal of St. Joseph School, Columbia
- *Kristin Galemme*, Principal of St. Anthony School, Florence
- *Mamie Boyd*, Interim Principal of St. Anthony of Padua School, Greenville
- *Wydna Lee Martin*, Parent at Cardinal Newman School, Columbia
- *Kim Hopkins*, Office Coordinator, Office of Catholic Schools

2021-2022 DSAC MEMBERS INCLUDED:

- *Shelia Durante*, DSAC Chair, Retired Principal, Holy Trinity School, Myrtle Beach
- *Patti Lanthier*, Retired Principal, St. Paul the Apostle School, Spartanburg
- *Kimberly Wheat*
- *Mary Ruth Singer*
- *Chris Trott*, Parish Manager, St. Gregory the Great Church, Bluffton





MISSION



Making Disciples of All Nations

Catholic school education is a critical ministry of the diocese. Its stated mission is:

Taking to heart the call to 'make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19), the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Charleston offer families of all backgrounds the richness of a quality Catholic education rooted in a dynamic encounter with Jesus Christ, whose living presence suffuses a relevant, rigorous, and competitive curriculum, inspires the great ideal of Catholic Education, and empowers all to respond to the challenge of sharing the Gospel of salvation in both word and loving action.

The diocese and DSAC is committed to ongoing improvement and growth of Catholic schools and continues to plan thoughtfully and look to the future. Together, DSAC and the Catholic Schools Office manage accreditation of our schools. The most recent accreditation process was completed in April 2022. DSAC also spent the 2021-2022 school year creating a new, comprehensive strategic plan entitled *Ignited By Faith — United In Learning* to guide the diocese's system of Catholic schools over the next three years.

Our school system will continue to thrive with collaboration and communication between all stakeholders in Catholic schools, including principals, pastors and diocesan officials, plus with the very important support and engagement of parishioners and families across the state.

To that end, DSAC seeks to share Catholic schools' winning strategies for success, growth and, most importantly, the development of Catholic school students into stewards of Christ.

Please be on the lookout for DSAC's future presence on the diocesan website (charlestdiocese.org) with updates and ways to support Catholic education.

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“DSAC seeks to share Catholic schools' winning strategies for success, growth, and most importantly, the development of Catholic school students into stewards of Christ.”
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NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

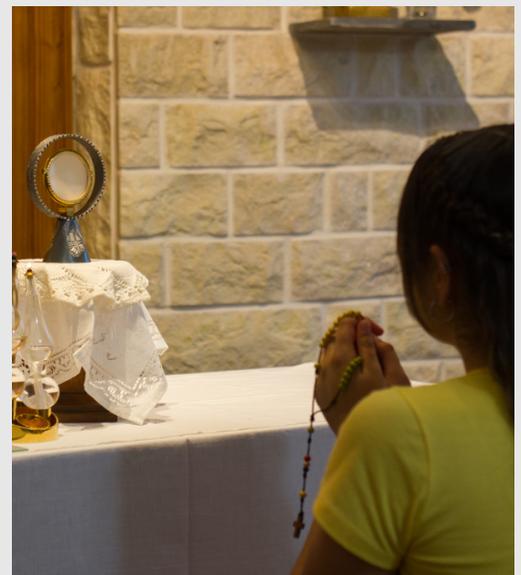
The Catholic Schools Office and DSAC spent 2021-2022 creating a new, comprehensive strategic plan to guide diocesan Catholic schools over the next three years. This strategic plan seeks to further the success and development of Catholic education in South Carolina and, importantly, to continue to form our students in lifelong Christian discipleship.

IGNITED BY FAITH – UNITED IN LEARNING

DSAC is excited to unveil the completed strategic plan, *Ignited by Faith – United in Learning*, at charlestdiocese.org/schools/strategic-growth-plan-for-catholic-schools.

The strategic plan provides an overview of the history of diocesan Catholic schools, information on the current state and a vision for the future.

Specifically, this new plan focuses on critical initiatives falling under each of the key pillars of Catholic education: *Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence and Operational Vitality*. Each pillar has an overarching goal with identified, critical initiatives to meet over the three-year period.



STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS



CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Catholic Identity's goal is to strengthen diocesan Catholic schools in their mission to bring children to Christ and his Church and to encourage students to develop a mature commitment to lifelong discipleship. Examples of critical initiatives to reach the goal include cultivating a cross-curricular collaboration among faculty to infuse religion into other disciplines, and to develop a useful tool to assess students' faith knowledge.

GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

Governance and Leadership's goal is to enable the diocese to hire, develop and retain qualified leaders in administrative roles, create oversight to produce consistent results and to strengthen supportive services to schools. Critical initiatives will contribute to reaching the goals of developing individual strategic plans at each school and providing ongoing training and faith formation for principals and professional development resources for school faculty.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic Excellence's two-fold goal is to assist Catholic schools in offering a challenging curriculum and instructional practices while also offering academics inclusive of diverse abilities of students with special needs. The critical initiatives will be developing and implementing a communication platform for teachers across the diocese to collaborate and share curricula and best practices, plus developing and implementing a guide program for special needs students.

OPERATIONAL VITALITY

Operational Vitality's goal is to assist schools with foundational strategic frameworks, actionable enrollment and marketing plans, efficient operational models, impactful financial models and measures to track and monitor progress. To reach the multi-faceted goal, critical initiatives include providing online school budgeting tools to schools and resources for tuition planning to parents, developing template job descriptions for school positions, and the creation of enrollment management plans to increase retention and recruitment.

“ . . . to bring children to
Christ and his Church
and to encourage
students to develop a
mature commitment to
lifelong discipleship.”

KUDOS CORNER



DSAC is excited to share good news and events from across the state from our schools and the Catholic Schools Office. If you have news to share, please send to khopkins@charlestdiocese.org subject line "Kudos Corner."

To kick off our first newsletter, we share successes from the Catholic Schools Office, which has been hard at work implementing key initiatives of the Strategic Plan—*Ignited by Faith — United in Learning*. Along with diocesan schools, several initiatives are underway to strengthen the schools' pillars of *Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence and Operational Vitality*.

During the 2021-2022 school year, a group of schools in the diocese piloted the Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) online test for students in grades 2-12. The leaders of those schools came together to analyze the data and determined that the assessment would be effective for schools to track religious knowledge and growth of students, plus collect longitudinal data. The Catholic Schools Office coordinated the effort to administer ARK to all students in grades 2-12 in Spring 2023.

The 2022-2023 school year kicked off with the Catholic Schools Office providing a multi-tiered professional development day for teachers and administrators to focus on goal-setting with students and use data to drive instruction.

The day began with a message from keynote speaker Dr. Chase Nordengren, author of *Step Into Student Goal Setting*. Attendees then participated in virtual sessions presented by the Catholic Schools Office and experts from Northwest Evaluation Assessment on using the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing results to drive instruction, maximize learning and communicate student growth with parents.

Teachers and school administrators from across the diocese also reviewed, updated and restructured the academically rigorous standards for diocesan schools. They worked to create curriculum guides on how students should be taught, while also recognizing that each school is unique, and curricula must be tailored to the individual needs of each school and student body. They addressed English Language Arts in Summer 2021 and Math in Summer 2022. All academic standards can be found at charlestdiocese.org/schools/diocesan-curriculum-for-our-catholic-schools.

