



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS COMMISSION UPDATE - MARCH 2011

From Commission Co-Chairs: John McMahon and Karen Rauenhorst

On March 21, 2011, the Catholic Schools Commission was addressed by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt who briefly outlined his vision for Catholic schools and his commitment to Catholic schools as central to the mission of this local Church. The entire Office of Catholic Schools staff were introduced and provided an overview of what they do. Commission members reviewed the progress that the working committees have made over the past month. Below is a summary of discussion at this meeting.

I. COMMISSION OVERALL:

a. Input:

i. Meetings/conversations with key stakeholders –

1. The Catholic Schools Commission has now met with school principals three times at monthly Catholic School Leadership Day meetings in January, February and March. We will continue to seek input and remain engaged with school principals throughout this process. The Commission is on the principals' agenda for the final meeting of the program year in May.
2. An update on the work of the Catholic Schools Commission was included in the electronic *Archdiocesan Update* newsletter published in mid-March. This newsletter is read by clergy and business administrators. This same update is posted online (please see [February Update – Catholic Schools Commission](#) .)

- ii. **Focus groups**—The first round of focus group discussions took place in late February. Six more focus groups, targeted to particular committee deliverable areas, are scheduled for late March through mid-April. These focus groups consist of 10-12 volunteers from urban, suburban, exurban and rural school communities across the Archdiocese. We have attempted as much as possible to ensure balance of participant composition of these groups.
- iii. **Web surveys** -- There will be web surveys beginning in mid-April targeted to stakeholder groups designed to provide feedback on specific issues under discussion by the committees of the Commission.
- iv. **Information collected via comments made to csccommission@archspm.org**. We have received many very insightful and useful comments and suggestions that we are incorporating into the Commission's work. We encourage all school stakeholders to share their comments at csccommission@archspm.org. Committees are drafting recommendations now so now is a great time to provide input.

II. ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE:

- a.** Retained a nationally recognized branding firm to help develop messaging for Catholic schools.
- b.** Reviewing input being collected during an oral history project aimed at distilling sentiment regarding the value of Catholic schools. This project is being carried out by an independent local communications firm retained for this purpose. Information gathered will be helpful in the development of the overall message about Catholic schools in this Archdiocese.

III. EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE:

- a.** Identified ten elements of successful Catholic schools which align with Strategic Plan criteria.
- b.** Committee recognizes need for Archdiocesan wide assessments in multiple grades that can be compared to public school assessments and is working toward developing a proposal to meet the needs of students, schools and the Archdiocese.

IV. FUNDING MODELS COMMITTEE:

- a.** Reviewing templates for financial planning and reporting and best practices related to planning, reporting and analysis of financials.
- b.** Considering tuition-setting practices, taking into consideration potential changes to archdiocesan parish assessment formula.

V. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:

- a.** Charter and membership profile for Archdiocesan Schools Advisory Board – final review
- b.** Best practices, roles, responsibilities and membership for individual and regional school advisory boards – 2nd draft reviews
- c.** Framework and operating principles for Catholic schools' relationship with parishes and Office of Catholic Schools - beginning review
- d.** Office of Catholic Schools model - beginning review

We continue to ask for input and participation in this important process. You may email your comments, concerns or questions at any time to csccommission@archspm.org.