



Diocese of Rockford

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Office of the Bishop

Faith Forward: Building Our Blueprint for Catholic Schools

The Mission of Catholic Schools in the Rockford Diocese is to ensure that the person of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, learned, experienced and lived by students in their homes, their classrooms, their parishes, and in their communities at large. We pursue the development of the whole child through spiritual, academic and physical formation; working together with parents, clergy and parish communities. The ultimate goal of the educational process is to form dynamic, responsible and service-oriented adult Catholics who participate fully in the sacramental life of the Church and are empowered by their love for God and desire for eternal salvation.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For the past year and a half, the Diocese of Rockford with expertise of professional consultants from the Meitler group, have worked to form a strategic plan for Catholic Schools in our diocese called *Faith Forward: Building our Blueprint for Catholic Schools*. A draft of that strategy was shared with pastors, Catholic school principals and educational commission members and leaders during a Catholic School summit meeting on October 27, 2016. That draft document was taken up for discussion by the consultative groups to the diocesan curia and was also posted on the diocesan website for review by parents and the general Catholic public. All of the above parties were invited to share suggestions, comments and critical feedback in regard to the content of the strategic plan.

That input was reviewed, and where necessary and appropriate, was incorporated into the final draft of the *Faith Forward* document.

The document will now be the source of further study and work. Not all of its proposals can be implemented in the Diocese of Rockford and some of the suggestions will serve as long-term goals. Nevertheless, the document will be the basis for the next steps in our work to strengthen Catholic education in the Diocese of Rockford.

We have learned a great deal in this process. We have learned that while we have considerable issues to face and overcome such as changing demographics, declining enrollments, flawed structures and financial shortfalls, our greatest asset is that our Catholic schools provide an exemplary education to our students.

The *Faith Forward* plan addresses all of the issues facing our schools in the areas of Catholic identity and mission, governance and leadership, academic excellence and operational vitality. I believe that as we move ahead to implement the goals and strategies of *Faith Forward* we will not only improve, but will also secure the long-range future of all diocesan Catholic schools.

I have been extremely gratified these past months by the great work of all the committees, education professionals, clergy and concerned Catholic people who have contributed to making this strategic plan a true blueprint with which we, together, will set forth and build the next structure for the future of quality Catholic education in the Diocese of Rockford.

On behalf of all those members of the Faith Forward planning and steering committees and you my brothers and sisters of this diocese, both now and in the future, I present to you the *Faith Forward: Building Our Blueprint for Catholic Schools* strategic plan.

I ask for your continued participation, partnership and prayers in accomplishing the ideals set forth in this document.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *David J. Malloy*

Most Reverend David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford