



Dear Diocesan High School Communities,

With the approval of Most Rev. Louis Tylka, Coadjutor Bishop of Peoria, the Office of Catholic Schools is embarking on the creation of a new **Strategic Plan** for each of the six diocesan high schools to assist and guide secondary education in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria during the next five years.

As we look to the future of our diocesan high schools, we know that a long-term Strategic Plan will proactively address challenges and leverage opportunities that support the commitment of the Diocese to provide an exceptional Catholic education that maximizes every student's growth in faith and academics.

The Office of Catholic Schools is working with Boston-based **Partners in Mission** to develop the new Strategic Plan for each high school. Partners in Mission has facilitated highly successful, individualized strategic planning processes with hundreds of Catholic schools and dioceses across the United States. As each school begins to build its Strategic Plan, they will be incorporating the ideas and opinions of key constituents throughout their school community.

A **Strategic Planning Steering Committee** will be identified for each diocesan high school, which will include representation from Commission on Education and H.S. Advisory Committee Members, current parents, alumni parents, alumni, faculty and staff, coaches, and advisers. With the assistance of Partners in Mission, the Steering Committee will be meeting over the course of six months to gather data from eight key school domains: **Academics, Advancement, Catholic Identity, Enrollment, Facilities, Finance, Governance and Student Life**. The perceived strengths and weaknesses of each of these individual domains will be collected via school climate surveys, focus groups, and individual interviews with a broad range of constituents in each school community.

The ultimate purpose of the planning process is to continue helping our diocesan high schools evolve from being excellent private schools to graduating students who are faith-filled,

lifelong learners whose commitment to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ is witnessed daily in word and deed. This purpose will be achieved by leveraging alumni to share their experiences, seeking out innovative ways to tell each school's story, highlighting new opportunities, and identifying areas of improvement.

Partners in Mission is currently in the process of reviewing and assessing each school's most recent Strategic Plan, which was developed with the assistance of the Office of Catholic Schools in 2014-2015 through its **Faith in Our Future Planning Initiative** for all 42 elementary and secondary schools in the Diocese. Under the guidance of Partners in Mission, each high school will utilize its previous planning document as a foundation to spark conversation in the creation of a new Strategic Plan, which will guide their school through the year 2026.

In the near future, each of our diocesan high schools will be contacting members of their school community and asking them to participate in the various stages of the strategic planning process. After an extensive assessment and analysis is complete and the new Strategic Plan is in draft form, it will be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools for approval in the spring of 2022. The Strategic Plan for each school, based on stakeholder input, will include goals, objectives, relevant benchmarks, and an implementation framework. The finished product will serve as a transformational, guiding light over the next five years.

Through this planning initiative, it is my hope that after five years, five months, even after five days – *we will start seeing positive change!* It is my desire to provide more opportunities for students to discover their passions, to give back to their communities, to make a difference, to connect with others, and explore their faith. My goal is to ensure a bright future for each of our diocesan high schools, with students walking through the doors, the hallways, and across the stage at commencement for generations to come!

Partners in Mission kicked off the strategic planning process with a “soft launch” for diocesan high school administrative teams on June 10th at the Spalding Pastoral Center in Peoria. The Office of Catholic Schools appreciates your prayers throughout this process as each high school forms its Steering Committee and begins the hard work of developing a new Strategic Plan.

Sincerely,
Dr. Sharon Weiss
Superintendent of Schools