



STRATEGIC COMPASS

Charting the future of Catholic education.

2025-2027



October 1, 2025

Dear Diocese of Albany School Community Members,

With gratitude and hope, we are pleased to present the Strategic Compass for the Catholic schools of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany — a forward-looking plan that honors our rich heritage, embraces the challenges of today, and boldly charts the future of Catholic education across our Diocese.

For more than 150 years, our schools have formed generations of students in mind, body, and spirit, deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and guided by our Catholic faith. We remain steadfast in our mission to educate young people to be faithful, compassionate, and courageous leaders. Our Strategic Compass renews this commitment by ensuring our schools remain vibrant centers of academic excellence, spiritual formation, and moral integrity.

This plan is anchored by four key pillars:

- Mission and Catholic Identity
- Teaching and Learning
- Governance and Leadership
- Sustainability and Resources

As part of this broader vision, we are excited to integrate our efforts with the diocese-wide *Remade for Mission* initiative. Launched this summer, *Remade for Mission* calls us to reimagine how we proclaim the Gospel, serve those in need, and build communities of faith and service across every parish and school.

This initiative encourages prayerful reflection and discernment, asking us to examine how we serve Christ's mission, evaluate our current capacity, and explore areas for renewal and growth. It highlights the importance of wise stewardship, urging us to manage resources sustainably so that all our institutions, whether a standalone school or a network, thrive not just today, but for generations to come.

Together, with clergy, educators, parents, alumni, and benefactors, we are called to steward this sacred mission faithfully. Through prayer, collaboration, and trust in God's providence, we will continue to build schools where faith and knowledge flourish in harmony.

We extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to this vision and creation of this document. We warmly invite each member of our diocesan school community to walk with us as we bring this Strategic Compass and the spirit of *Remade for Mission* to life.

Yours in Peace,



The Most Rev. Edward B. Scharfenberger
Bishop



Ninette Kondratowicz
ADSB President



Very Rev. Robert Longobucco
Vicar General



Dr. Christopher Bott
Superintendent of Schools



INTRODUCTION

The mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Albany remains unchanged since the establishment of the first Catholic schools in our diocese more than 150 years ago, and we continue to answer the call to teach as Jesus did more than 2000 years ago.

The Albany Diocesan School Board aspires to graduate knowledgeable and collegial problem solvers with global vision and values rooted in the Gospel. To achieve this goal, our diocesan and parish schools must continue to evolve, as we always have, to ensure our

students can not only meet but exceed expectations in academics, citizenship, and leadership while embracing our Catholic heritage.

The strategic compass of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Albany nurtures connections among people of all faiths and cultural backgrounds within our school communities, while enhancing the opportunities for spiritual growth and awareness, improved teaching and learning outcomes, innovative governance and leadership models, and responsible resource management for long-term sustainability of Catholic education.



MISSION & CATHOLIC IDENTITY

In an ever-changing world marked by shifting societal norms and cultural landscapes, the preservation of Catholic identity and mission within our diocesan schools is paramount. Grounded in these rich traditions, values, and teachings of the Catholic faith, we continue to guide our schools toward a deeper understanding of their purpose and a more profound commitment to their mission.

Through deliberate initiatives and collaborative efforts, we aim to uphold our Catholic heritage, cultivate vibrant school communities, and fulfill our mission of fostering the holistic development of individuals dedicated to serving others.

Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and guided by Catholic principles, our mission is to nurture the intellectual, spiritual, and moral developments of students empowering them to become compassionate, ethical leaders in their communities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Educate the whole student in body, mind, and soul, preparing them to be knowledgeable, compassionate, and productive citizens in a global society.
- Identify our value proposition: who we are and why we exist.
- Ensure our Catholic identity is evident in all curriculum areas and community member experiences in our schools.
- Support schools in understanding their individual identity and charisms.
- Review and modify mission statement(s) and use them as the foundation for the future.
- Support religious education and faith formation of students and educators through meaningful professional training and curriculum development.
- Encourage evangelization of the faith and the sacramental life of our students, families, and employees through enhanced Catholic service programs, retreats, and spiritual experiences for all community members.
- Improve schools' and students' connectedness with parish communities, the clergy, and those who live consecrated lives as well as strengthen links with other Catholic organizations and institutions.
- Emphasize utilizing an ecumenical approach that embraces our diversity and allows for a broad view of Catholicism by engaging with those of other religious backgrounds, encouraging inclusion, and fighting exclusion.



TEACHING & LEARNING

At the heart of each of our Catholic schools is the desire to educate the whole child. As we progress through the 21st century, we discover that the teaching and learning landscape continues to evolve, prioritizing effective communication, collaboration, and problem solving skills that prepare students for success in careers and vocations. As Catholic School educators, our mission extends beyond academic instruction as we strive to create well-rounded global citizens capable of standing out in an ever-changing world. We constantly seek ways to support our schools moving toward greater cohesion and alignment within the diocesan system to create a caring, loving, and nurturing environment where all students can succeed.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Shift towards a more cohesive and consistent system of instruction across the diocese and create a process of vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment within our schools.
- Maximize professional development time (on a local, vicariate, and diocesan level) to help close gaps for students, implement best practices, etc.
- Begin to develop systems to empower teachers, principals, and students regarding academic decisions moving forward and provide a student-centered learning experience in every classroom.
- Diversify our course and extra-curricular offerings to students in our Catholic schools.
- Continue to find ways to incorporate state initiatives including the literacy briefs and Regents Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations, and create a profile for a portrait of a Catholic school student.
- Understand, monitor, and embrace the power of AI in our classrooms.



GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

While the governance models of parish elementary schools and diocesan high schools have endured for generations, circumstances of geography, personnel, enrollment, and resources give our diocesan, school, and parish leadership an opportunity to reconsider what our schools will look like for the next generation of Catholic school students. By focusing on developing governance models that empower our diocesan school system to better support the common mission of our parishes and schools, we will be able to better develop our next generation of leaders. Strategic and well-thought-out modifications to our current practices will open endless opportunities for our students, staff, and community members, strengthening and sustaining our Catholic schools and communities for decades to come.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Establish a common philosophy and mission across all areas of Catholic education including schools, faith formation programs, campus ministry, and all areas covered by the Vicariate of Catholic Faith Formation and Education.
- Focus on the recruitment, development, and retention of parish and school leadership.
- Establish strategic and intentional succession planning for leadership positions.
- Support the ongoing formation of principals, pastors, and other members of leadership.
- Link pastoral planning to governance and leadership discussions in schools.
- Consolidate administrative functions and business operations among schools.
- Evaluate and modify the role, function, engagement, and effectiveness of the Diocesan School Board and local school boards.
- Identify strategies to strengthen the relationship between diocesan leadership, the Diocesan School Board, parish leadership, and school leadership.
- Ensure that our governing body includes the racial, economic, religious, and geographic diversity of the RCDA school community.
- Assess the current effectiveness of our current governance models and leadership practices in meeting our school communities' needs; explore and study other models; with data related to our current systems and ideas from models used elsewhere, and determine if modifications to current governance models and leadership practices are appropriate and aligned with our goals, mission and Catholic identity.



SUSTAINABILITY & RESOURCES

Catholic schools are at a critical juncture to secure an operationally, educationally, and financially sustainable future. Innovative approaches, creative problem solving, and collaborative efforts are key to achieving that goal. By emphasizing responsible stewardship, optimizing resource allocation, collaborative partnerships, and strengthening efficiencies through economies of scale and strategic partnerships, we aim to transform the Catholic School Office (CSO) into a service-oriented entity to ensure our schools' continued success and growth.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Establish professional business and accounting operations in all schools while implementing better efficiencies through economies of scale and resource sharing.
- Using an operational vitality report card, track and report progress to stakeholders for transparency and accountability.
- Update facilities and infrastructure maintenance criteria.
- Strategically enhance enrollment management and strengthen recruitment, development, and retention of staff.
- Explore regionalization and other education models while advancing the service-oriented entity the CSO strives to be.



CONCLUSION

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Albany constantly look for ways to create a caring, loving, and nurturing environment where all students can be successful. By orienting our schools toward greater cohesion and alignment within the diocesan system, we continue to pave the way for increased student success through a strong academic foundation, a sense of pride, and healthy civic mindfulness for a life built on purpose and faith.

Critical to achieving that goal is operational planning and implementation with a long view of our challenges and opportunities. Within the framework of the system accreditation improvement plan, our strategic plan for

sustainability and resources in Catholic schools in the Diocese of Albany sets a clear path toward a thriving and secure future.

By focusing on responsible stewardship, collaborative partnerships, and innovative resource management, we are committed to ensuring the continued success and growth of our educational institutions. Through these strategic initiatives, we aim to preserve the rich tradition of Catholic education while adapting to the challenges of today's world. Together, with the support of our community, stakeholders, and dedicated staff, we are confident in our ability to achieve our sustainability goals and provide a high-quality education for generations to come.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL OFFICE STAFF

Dr. Christopher Bott | Superintendent of Schools
 Dr. Teresa Snyder | Associate Superintendent of Schools
 Jo Ann Gamello | Director of Financial Operations
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 Very Rev. Robert Longobucco | Vicar General
 Dr. Christopher Bott | Superintendent of Schools



CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

ALBANY

Blessed Sacrament School
 Mater Christi School

AMSTERDAM

St. Mary's Institute

BALLSTON SPA

St. Mary's School

DELMAR

St. Thomas the Apostle School

EAST GREENBUSH

Holy Spirit School

GLENS FALLS

St. Mary's Academy

GUILDERLAND

St. Madeleine Sophie School

HERKIMER

St. Francis de Sales Regional Catholic School

LATHAM

Catholic Central School

LOUDONVILLE

St. Pius X School

NISKAYUNA

St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish School

SARATOGA SPRINGS

St. Clement's Regional Catholic School

WATERFORD

St. Mary's School

WYNANTSkill

St. Jude the Apostle School

CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

LATHAM

Catholic Central School

SARATOGA SPRINGS

Saratoga Central Catholic School

SCHENECTADY

Notre Dame-Bishop Gibbons School





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