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Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Educat

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## ARTICLES

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# MAKING GOD KNOWN, LOVED, AND SERVED: THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

NOTRE DAME TASK FORCE ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION

*University of Notre Dame*

## PREFACE

In June 2005, shortly before I became president of the University of Notre Dame, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released a pastoral statement, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*. This document, building upon the rich experience of two hundred years of Catholic elementary and secondary education in the United States, underscores the essential role played by Catholic schools for the life of the Church.

This report articulates the University of Notre Dame's response to the bishops' call for Catholic higher education to help address the future of elementary and secondary Catholic schools. It represents the work of a national task force I convened upon my inauguration, in response to the invitation issued by the bishops in their pastoral statement, to study the problem in breadth and detail.

As a university community, we stand ready to engage the critical challenges that face this national treasure. We offer these reflections and recommendations with hope and renewed conviction that, just as our forebears in the faith responded with such generosity and courage to the challenges of their time, so too shall we. The best days for Catholic schools are yet to come.

Sincerely yours in Notre Dame,  
Rev. John I. Jenkins, CSC  
President

## INTRODUCTION

We know the story well, perhaps too well. Today, Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States remain the largest private school sys-

tem in the world and still provide remarkable, often transformative, education, often on shoestring budgets. These schools arose as a response to public schools deemed anti-Catholic in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They flourished because of the bold vision of bishops, pastors, and religious orders and the sacrifices made by immigrant peoples who found in their Catholic schools comfort from a new and sometimes hostile culture and, at the same time, the opportunity for their children to participate more fully in American society. But, so the story goes, the glory days of Catholic schools have passed, abiding mainly in our collective memory of a time when every parish had a school (or so it seemed) staffed by nuns and bursting with students.

Forty years after their peak enrollment of over 5 million, Catholic elementary and secondary schools now serve half as many students even as the Catholic population has soared. Another painful round of school closures at the outset of the 21st century has erased the modest enrollment gains of the 1990s. The religious are almost gone. Pastors are overwhelmed. Mass attendance is down. So are collections. Faculty salaries are still too low. Costs and tuition are rising. Enrollments are declining. Thus goes the litany.

Yes, we know the story well. Has it become so familiar, though, that we could forget its ending is not inevitable? Must we resign ourselves to fewer, less vibrant, and less influential Catholic schools for the Church and for the United States? In light of the grim statistics and trends, we might wonder: is it even possible for those of us who, in the words of Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, see Catholic schools as “national treasures” that must be preserved, to imagine a bright future of increasing enrollments and vibrant, financially stable schools?

This report issues from our conviction that Catholic schools can and must be strong in our nation’s third century. While recognizing the challenges that face Catholic schools, we are convinced that extraordinary chapters lie ahead if the Catholic community and other stakeholders summon the commitment to respond generously to the call of the bishops in their recent pastoral statement, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*. Indeed, the bishops’ decision to use the phrase “third millennium” in the title bespeaks their faith in the resiliency of Catholic schools, their appreciation of Catholic schools’ unique evangelizing and educational efficacy, and their desire to inspire us to take the long view as we strive to sustain and strengthen these “national treasures” for present and future generations.

Because, as the bishops remind us, Catholic schools are “the responsibility of the entire Catholic community,”<sup>22</sup> this report articulates the University of Notre Dame’s response to the bishops’ call for Catholic higher education to help address the future of elementary and secondary Catholic

schools. It represents the work of the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education, a national group convened to accept the invitation issued by the bishops in their pastoral statement. Chaired by Fr. Timothy Scully, CSC, director of Notre Dame's Institute for Educational Initiatives, this Task Force brought together over 50 leaders of diverse background and expertise in a year-long effort to study the issues in breadth and detail (see Appendices A-C). Our response is at once hopeful and, in some ways, counter-intuitive.

First, we take hope in the guiding presence of the Holy Spirit and our conviction that Catholic schools are instruments of grace as necessary for "the Church of today and tomorrow"<sup>3</sup> as they were for past generations. Considering the scarce resources of the Church in the United States in the mid-19th century, who could have foreseen the size and scope our Catholic school system would achieve in 100 years? Catholic schools matter, now more than ever, and they work, as study after study demonstrates. Doubtless the bishops' goal of "making our Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children"<sup>4</sup> will entail sacrificial gifts of time, talent, and treasure. And yet the only cost greater than investing whole-heartedly in this effort is the cost of doing anything less. With the bishops, we believe that the stakes could not be higher for the Church and the country, and this report is animated by at least three deep-seated convictions we share:

1. "Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the fourfold purpose of Christian education, namely, to provide an atmosphere in which the Gospel message is proclaimed, community in Christ is experienced, service to our sisters and brothers is the norm, and thanksgiving and worship of God is cultivated."<sup>5</sup>
2. The vitality of the Church is inextricably linked to the health of its Catholic schools because they provide the most effective way to evangelize and form holy men and women who make God known, loved, and served.
3. Catholic schools will continue to play a vital role in American civic life, as they exemplify how to prepare citizens for full engagement in democracy and commitment to the common good.

Second, the familiar storyline of the last 40 years must be re-thought. This is not to deny the painful loss of schools and students or to suggest that we are not facing a real crisis. In many ways, we are. Yet, when viewed in light of the sudden emergence of daunting challenges that began to confront Catholic schools in the late 1960s, the common focus on school closures as a sign of systemic fragility or obsolescence can obscure the impressive tenacity of

these institutions to adapt, survive, and even flourish in a period of tumultuous change. Consider that in little more than a generation, Catholic schools have undergone an almost complete transformation in how they are staffed and how they are financed. The migration of millions of increasingly mobile Catholics from cities to suburbs has altered the original mission of many urban schools, which now frequently educate disadvantaged children of their neighborhoods regardless of their religious affiliation.

To restate, our nation's Catholic schools are the 19th century product of what has been described by the eminent Harvard political scientist, Robert Putnam, as the most intensive period of social entrepreneurship in the history of the United States. However, as Putnam points out, the institutions created for one period often need to be reinvented in subsequent eras.<sup>6</sup> Over the past year, the work of our Task Force has heard testimony after testimony that suggests the stirrings of a new and equally creative age of institutional invention in the arena of Catholic schooling. Across the nation, we observe the birth and growth of innovative models to find and form faith-filled teachers and leaders, renewed efforts to enhance the quality and identity of the Catholic education we offer, and successful initiatives to make our schools affordable and accessible to all. Ultimately, these efforts promise a new vitality for our Catholic schools.

Of course, as *Renewing Our Commitment* demonstrates, worrisome external and internal challenges make the future uncertain and demand decisive action. The Catholic Church and its schools face complex, interrelated challenges external to the schools: fundamental demographic shifts, the changing role of religion in the lives of American Catholics, the increasing options for parents' educational choices for their children, and the pressing responsibility to embrace the growing Latino population that has such an important role to play in the future of the Church in the United States. These external pressures influence the four major internal challenges facing Catholic schools today: strengthening Catholic identity, attracting and forming talented, faith-filled educational leaders, ensuring academic excellence, and financing schools effectively so that they might be accessible to all families who choose them.

We are pleased to offer this report to the leaders of the Church in the United States. This report provides an overview of how Notre Dame will deepen its commitment to serve Catholic elementary and secondary schools and offers to Church leadership five recommendations drawing on themes articulated in *Renewing Our Commitment*. It represents the distilled study and reflection of a diverse group, united in their passion to renew Catholic schools in the United States.

As we begin this new chapter, we applaud the bishops for their consistent affirmation of Catholic schools. The call to arms in *Renewing Our Commitment* continues a tradition of advocacy for Catholic schools going back to John Carroll's invitation to Elizabeth Ann Seton and moving forward through the Baltimore Council of 1884 to the important pastoral letters and statements written since the Second Vatican Council. The historical record is clear and full of hope—our schools thrive when the bishops not only speak as a unified body on their behalf but also support them with matching creativity and zeal in their own dioceses.

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME'S RESPONSE**

A leading theme in *Renewing Our Commitment*, and one echoed in the findings of our Task Force, is that the Church in the United States has abundant resources to meet the challenges facing Catholic schools. Catholic higher education, for example, represents a robust though oft-untapped partner in this effort, and we thank the bishops for inviting us and the nation's Catholic colleges and universities to respond to these challenges with creative and committed imagination.

Over the past 40 years, Catholic colleges and universities have frequently neglected their responsibilities to Catholic elementary and secondary schools. As staffing has shifted from religious to lay in K-12 schools, a parallel process of abandonment and "secularization has taken place in teacher education programs at Catholic colleges and universities."<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the closure in 1973 of Notre Dame's once prominent Department of Education, a department that for decades had annually educated scores of Catholic school faculty and administrators, is a prime example of this disengagement. We thus respond to the bishops' call in humble acknowledgement that Notre Dame absented itself from the ministry of Catholic elementary and secondary education for 2 decades at a time of great need in the Church.

As it turns out, the decision to close Notre Dame's Department of Education made possible our return to the field of education with a renewed mission that remains wholly focused to "sustain and strengthen Catholic schools."<sup>78</sup> In 1994, Fr. Timothy Scully, CSC, and Fr. Sean McGraw, CSC, founded the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) program and placed 40 college graduates in under-resourced Catholic elementary and secondary schools in eight dioceses across the southern United States. To prepare these highly motivated new teachers, ACE provides an intensive 2-year service experience encompassing professional preparation, community life, and spiritual growth. At the outset, the University of Portland generously collaborated to prepare ACE teachers for the classroom through a Master of Arts

in Teaching program conducted on the Notre Dame campus. By 1998, Notre Dame returned to the academic preparation of teachers with the establishment of its Master of Education program specifically designed to prepare the ACE teachers. Currently, ACE annually supports nearly 200 teachers in over 100 elementary and secondary Catholic schools in over 30 communities from coast to coast.

Together, the growth of ACE and our deep awareness of the lateness of Notre Dame's return to a meaningful partnership with our Catholic schools inspire us to do all in our power to invigorate these "national treasures." Indeed, the foundational charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross rests in our mission as "educators in the faith," as men and women who seek to renew the Christian faith, to regenerate society, and to "bring about a better time" by a constant response to the most pressing needs of the Church and of society.<sup>10</sup> Our founder, Basil Moreau, advocated passionately and relentlessly for Catholic schools, and "in everything he undertook, he did not simply wish to maintain it—he wanted to renew it, to refashion it, to reconstruct it."<sup>11</sup> To this end, Notre Dame will pursue a multi-dimensional strategic plan recommended by the Task Force to meet four major needs of elementary and secondary Catholic schools outlined in *Renewing Our Commitment*:

- To strengthen Catholic identity.
- To attract and form talented leaders.
- To ensure academic excellence.
- To finance Catholic schools so that they are accessible for all families.

Recognizing the interrelated nature of these four major needs, Notre Dame offers 12 complementary recommendations to extend and enhance our own commitment to Catholic schools.

## **1. RECRUIT AND FORM A NEW GENERATION OF EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS**

Through ACE, Notre Dame is wholly committed to find and form our nation's next generation of Catholic educators. These bright, faith-filled, and enthusiastic teachers, some of the most promising young leaders in today's American Church, energize the school and parish communities where they serve and strengthen the Catholic vitality of those institutions. In 2006, for the 12th consecutive year, ACE grew both in terms of its geographic reach and in the number of Catholic school teachers placed. From its initial commitment to mission dioceses in the southeastern United States, ACE has expanded to serve dioceses throughout the Southwest, with a particular focus on inner-city (and predominantly Latino) schools and parishes. To carry out

this mission, ACE now has an operating budget of over \$3.5 million (not including the significant in-kind contributions of the University), a staff of over 20 full-time faculty and pastoral administrators, and over 20 part-time faculty from Notre Dame and universities across North America to provide academic and spiritual formation to these new lay Catholic educators (see Appendix D).

Several years after its inception, when it became clear that ACE could not keep pace with the requests from dioceses across the country, we sought partnerships with other universities to help meet the demand for teachers with robust professional and pastoral formation. Since 1998, ACE has assisted in the birth and development of the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE), a growing national movement of colleges and universities in alliance with diocesan school systems nationally. By 2006, the 13 UCCE programs annually support more than 450 teachers and hundreds of graduates. Together, we have attracted and formed over 1,500 Catholic educators in the span of just over a decade.

Currently, Notre Dame prepares more teachers for Catholic schools than any institution in the country and continues to disseminate the ACE model of teacher formation to other universities. Our goal is to continue to improve the quality of our participants and our program so that ACE becomes the nation's premier teacher formation program and the locus of energy for a quickening movement on behalf of Catholic schools. By pursuing excellence in this area, we hope to expand this movement, inviting additional Catholic colleges and universities to respond to the opportunities inherent in serving elementary and secondary Catholic schools in focused, deliberate ways.

## **2. RECRUIT AND FORM EFFECTIVE CATHOLIC SCHOOL LEADERS**

Today, lay people comprise over 95% of the faculty and staff in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. The situation is quite different among school leaders, as nearly 50% of school principals are either professed religious or ordained. However, the transition from religious to lay leadership is well underway, and the challenges of this transition now and in the coming years are magnified when one considers that many former sisters, brothers, and priests are now numbered statistically among the lay leadership that has emerged in Catholic schools. They remain shaped by their formation and their experience prior to leaving their religious communities. Most retain deep commitment to the Church and its mission, displaying great capacity for spiritual leadership and the ability to instill Catholic culture in the schools they administer.



Within 10 to 15 years, lay people with no experience in religious life will be responsible for leading nearly all Catholic schools. The Church must attract and form school administrators with the vision and talent to build upon this tradition of excellence. The need to find and form strong leaders is one of the most important observations of the Task Force. Research consistently shows that effective leadership is the most significant element of an effective Catholic school.<sup>12</sup> Simply put, where we see strong principals we almost always see successful Catholic schools regardless of the demographic context.

Our Catholic schools need leaders who have been formed specifically to build school communities rich in Catholic identity and manifestly strong in their academic programs. “Only in such a school can [young people] experience learning and living fully integrated in the light of faith.”<sup>13</sup> To meet this need and respond to the interest among many ACE graduates to lead schools, Notre Dame established in 2002 the ACE Leadership Program, a 14-month administrative certification program open to candidates who already possessed a Master’s degree. Beginning with six participants, ACE Leadership has grown dramatically. Now the largest preparer of Catholic school leaders in the nation, it admits cohorts of 20 each year and has prepared over 80 committed administrators for service in schools from Alaska to Florida.

We have two main goals for ACE Leadership to be realized within one year—to increase our cohort size and quality, and to develop a 26-month degree program, a Master of Arts in Educational Administration, designed to prepare leaders for Catholic schools. The Goizueta Foundation has recently renewed its founding support of ACE Leadership through a \$1.1 million grant to expand cohorts by 50% and to build the Master’s degree. In addition, a University benefactor has recently endowed this program perpetually. This degree program will not only enable more thorough preparation and support of new Catholic school leaders, but will attract a broader pool of candidates because an advanced degree is no longer a prerequisite for admission.

### **3. CULTIVATE A LAY APOSTOLIC MOVEMENT IN SERVICE TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

While the declining number of priests and religious has had a tremendous impact on the cost and staffing of schools, the decline has also had an obvious impact on Catholic culture in these institutions. Yet the financial and cultural challenges resulting from this loss only tell part of the story. Indeed, we must also confront the loss of entrepreneurial vision and energy that has accompanied the overall decline in the number of sisters, brothers, and priests. The history of dioceses and religious orders in the United States is in large part a history of the establishment and growth of Catholic institutions,

especially hospitals, colleges, and elementary and secondary schools—institutions that continue to strengthen the Church and contribute powerfully to civic life. While acknowledging the pressing challenges of preparing a new generation of leaders, we should not yield to nostalgia for bygone eras. We must confront forthrightly the questions before us: where will the entrepreneurial energy of the Church emerge, as it must? What might be done to seed and cultivate it?

As faithful and active members of the Church, we seek to engage this rich historical moment in American ecclesial life. At Notre Dame, we find hope in the more than 225 new teachers who enter ACE and other UCCE programs each year. Equally hopeful, and of providential surprise, is that so many continue their service in Catholic schools after graduation. With over 70% of ACE graduates still in the field of education, and the majority of them in Catholic schools, this infusion of new life into the Church recalls the words of Pope John Paul II: “We see a true source of hope in the willingness of a considerable number of lay people to play a more active and diversified role in ecclesial life, and to take the necessary steps to train seriously for this.”<sup>14</sup> At the same time we ask: in this transition from religious to lay vocations to our Catholic schools, what have we lost and, as importantly, what have we gained?

One tremendous legacy we inherit from the religious and priests who built, led, and staffed Catholic schools is the most compelling setting for lay vocations in the history of the American Church. The call of being a Catholic school teacher or principal provides young lay people with an inspiring ecclesial identity, along with a call to ministry that is not only powerful, visible, and captivating, but also desperately needed. In seeking to form the new generations of teachers to step into the positions created by religious, we recognize with regret the loss of explicit religious formation and identity, as well as community mission and support, so naturally and effectively provided by religious communities. At the same time, we have discovered an extraordinary opportunity to cultivate a more fully developed lay vocation in the Church—one that embraces what is appropriate of past religious vocations to Catholic education, while also striving, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, toward an authentic and compelling ecclesial identity for lay teachers.

To facilitate the continued engagement of ACE graduates and others toward sustaining the vision of a revitalized and enriched Catholic school system, the ACE Fellowship was founded in July 2004. The mission of the ACE Fellowship is to engage and inspire ACE graduates—and their families and friends—in their professional and personal growth as men and women of faith to become lifelong advocates in lasting service to Catholic schools.

The ACE Fellowship looks to build community and develop leadership among graduates and others who are eager to deepen their service to Catholic schools and the Church, whether or not they remain professionally committed to the field of education. The ACE Fellowship continues to grow and evolve as our response to the late John Cardinal O'Connor's challenge to Notre Dame in 1998 to nurture a lay apostolic movement in support of Catholic schools.<sup>15</sup> We anticipate in hope that the ACE Fellowship will become a powerful vehicle for passing on the faith in the coming decades for the Church in the United States.

#### **4. BUILD A NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR THE ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Canon Law has clearly stated that Catholic schools must ensure academic excellence: "Directors of Catholic schools are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in other schools of the area."<sup>16</sup> Since the research of James Coleman in the 1960s, scholars have noted a Catholic school advantage in comparison with public schools, in particular for low-income, minority students.<sup>17</sup> Studies have affirmed that Catholic schools offer more effective academic instruction and also form more civic-minded and justice-oriented citizens.<sup>18</sup> Undeniably, our schools work for students, for democracy, and for the Church. Given these demonstrated successes, some might suggest that we simply continue to do what we already do so well. We suggest that to do so would be to miss both a challenge and an opportunity. The emphasis on public school reform and innovation leading to effective magnet and charter schools and the increased popularity of home schooling encourage focused attention on our part to strengthen the academic quality of Catholic schools. The emergence of new thinking in research-based curriculum and instruction offers an important opportunity to improve our schools.

Catholic schools that are perceived as strong in Catholic identity and excellent in academics typically have waiting lists. Overall the Catholic school advantage still exists; however, our schools today must confront more recent evidence that has been less favorable.<sup>19</sup> While many factors have contributed to enrollment declines in Catholic schools, we have learned that the lack, or perceived lack, of academic excellence in some Catholic schools has played a significant role in these declines.

In response to the challenge and opportunity to strengthen the academic excellence of Catholic schools, we plan to launch, through the University's recently established Institute for Educational Initiatives, the Notre Dame Initiative for the Academic Improvement of Catholic Schools. This initiative

will invest deeply in the research, development, and implementation of effective assessment, curriculum, and instruction in Catholic schools in the following ways:

- Conduct research on current best practices in curriculum and instruction.
- Provide professional development workshops for teachers, principals, and superintendents on curriculum development, instruction, and assessment.
- Provide a rubric for the collection of student outcomes data.
- Develop benchmark goals tied to data for student results.
- Communicate an assessment process for annually and publicly evaluating student outcomes along with protocols for the use of this assessment to improve curriculum and instruction.
- Invest in the expansion and effective use of technology in Catholic elementary and secondary schools.
- Create the Alliance for Catholic Education Press to facilitate the rapid and inexpensive publication of articles, books, and resource materials nationally.

All of this will be done with full attention to the mission of Catholic schools to be “places of evangelization, of complete formation, of inculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds”<sup>20</sup> (see Appendix E).

## **5. BUILD A NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO STRENGTHEN THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF OUR SCHOOLS**

Results from a national survey published by CARA in 2006 found that principals of Catholic elementary schools significantly underestimated the importance of religious education in parents’ decisions to send their children to Catholic schools. In fact, the CARA study reveals that “quality religious education” is the item most frequently cited by parents (81%) as “‘very important’ to their enrollment decision.”<sup>21</sup> This finding is heartening inasmuch as it shows that most parents who choose Catholic schools do so in large part because they desire strong religious education for their children. At the same time, the tendency of principals to underestimate this parental motivation accentuates the importance of improving the Catholic identity of our schools and the religious education programs within them.

Notre Dame seeks to direct substantial energy to identify specific needs and to help strengthen religion curriculum and instruction in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. We will pursue the additional resources necessary to engage in this initiative the University’s Institute for Church Life

and its Center for Ethical Education (housed in the Alliance for Catholic Education). We also look to address this challenge in partnership with the NCEA and the USCCB, which have consistently supported efforts to enhance Catholic identity in schools. To strengthen Catholicity is not only essential for our schools to be true to their mission, but, as the research implies, will help attract higher enrollments and thereby ease financial burdens.

## **6. FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER CATHOLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

Since the 19th century, Catholic elementary and secondary schools have provided Catholic colleges and universities with well-formed and well-educated students. For their own good and the good of the Church and the country, Catholic colleges and universities must shoulder greater responsibility for strengthening elementary and secondary Catholic schools. Notre Dame pledges to continue to strengthen alliances with Catholic colleges and universities through existing organizations such as the Association of Catholic Leadership Programs. We will also seek partnerships to find innovative solutions to issues and opportunities as they arise. In 1994, for example, the University of Portland extended valuable teacher education expertise to allow the University of Notre Dame to commence our efforts to form teachers. In 1998, we joined Boston College and the University of Portland to form the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE), which develops alternative Catholic teacher education programs at other Catholic colleges and universities. Today, with over a dozen member institutions, the UCCE has convened a community of national universities committed to sustaining and strengthening Catholic elementary and secondary schools. We anticipate that the success of the UCCE will attract additional members and provide traction for greater collaboration in research, teacher and administrator preparation, and entrepreneurial outreach programs.

One of the most pressing initiatives for Notre Dame and other colleges committed to elementary and secondary Catholic schools is to “build a field of Catholic education.”<sup>22</sup> The specific articulation of this challenge has been posed to us most recently by Professor Lee Shulman, Director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who argues persuasively that the renewal of Catholic schools depends greatly on our ability to create a new and robust academic field, that is, to form and engage first-rate scholars who conduct research on Catholic education from a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives. He encouraged us, for example, to question how learning takes place in faith-based contexts, as there is a huge need to research how learning, indeed, how the very complex process

of formation in a profession, occurs in a climate where faith is taken seriously. An internationally renowned expert in how university programs prepare professionals in a particular discipline (medicine and ministry, for example), Shulman has extended an invitation to host, together with Notre Dame, in autumn 2007 at the Carnegie Foundation in Palo Alto, the first in a series of conferences of key stakeholders to survey the landscape and identify partners eager to build this field. We have received funding for this national gathering. We believe that this conference, together with subsequent conferences at Catholic universities, will help build the movement in Catholic higher education (and among researchers in secular institutions as well) to study and serve Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

## **7. DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDIVIDUAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS—THE MAGNIFICAT MODEL**

In our conversations with principals, pastors, and superintendents, it has become evident that many Catholic urban and inner-city schools can benefit from direct and continued institutional support and professional development in order to survive in the short term and thrive in the long term. Diocesan schools' offices are in many cases too understaffed, overworked, or stretched thin to provide the resources and attention necessary to turn the tide in these struggling inner-city schools. With many Catholic schools, parishes, and dioceses unable to reverse the trend of inner-city school closings, Catholic higher education stands in a unique position to offer useful partnerships. In fact, we have a responsibility to do so. We cannot stand by while urban Catholic schools close their doors every year.

In response to this need, we have developed the "Magnificat Schools" model in which Notre Dame, upon the invitation of the diocese, will form special partnerships with individual Catholic elementary schools to improve their leadership, academic quality, financial management, and vitality. The goal is to give principals, pastors, boards, and parents the knowledge and skills to enhance and maintain the quality and viability of the school into the future. The Notre Dame Magnificat Schools will receive three important services: continuous assessment of key success factors, intensive professional support and development, and resources specific to the instructional needs of the school. Meanwhile, the ACE program will gain a site for the ongoing professional development of its ACE graduates, and Notre Dame faculty will have a site for continuing research on Catholic education. By the end of the anticipated 5-year partnership, we expect a stronger Catholic school community, increased and stabilized enrollment, and significantly improved student achievement. Empirical research on student enrollment trends, faculty trends, student achievement, school stakeholder satisfaction, and strategic

planning processes and results will both inform practice in the school and enable rigorous evaluation and adaptation of the model as necessary.

We have already entered into partnership with two Magnificat schools: St. Adalbert in South Bend, and St. Ann in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood. Over the next 2 years, we will expand our partnerships to two more schools in large, metropolitan (arch)dioceses. A number of other Catholic universities have launched similar efforts. For example, Dominican University (June 2005)<sup>23</sup> and Boston College (March 2006)<sup>24</sup> entered into partnerships with St. Edmund School in the Archdiocese of Chicago and St. Columbkille School in the Archdiocese of Boston, respectively. As we determine the effectiveness of the Magnificat model in close collaboration with partners such as Dominican University and Boston College, we hope to expand this model beyond these pilot schools and to encourage additional Catholic colleges and universities to form similar alliances with struggling parochial schools in their dioceses.

## **8. USE NOTRE DAME'S MARKETING EXPERTISE TO ATTRACT NEW FAMILIES TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

Our Task Force findings underscore that word of mouth is the most powerful marketing tool for schools. What parents communicate in the grocery aisle has greater influence than glossy brochures or advertising campaigns. The most important marketing tool for any Catholic school is its own reputation for academic excellence and strong spiritual and moral development. All the same, as illustrated by a Task Force study on the Catholic school marketplace, expanding the demand for Catholic schools holds real opportunities to reverse downward enrollment trends.<sup>25</sup>

Since 1995, the declining enrollments have affected parochial schools only, as other forms of Catholic schools have actually grown by 6 to 10%. Further, there is unmet demand in many suburban areas, and we do well to recall NCEA reports that 30% of parochial schools have waiting lists. Finally, while there is evidence of changing religious practice (e.g., declining Mass attendance), it may not reflect a decline in religiosity. These observations suggest a latent demand for Catholic education that could be tapped by more deliberate approaches adapted to various market segments. Five fundamental principles should guide diocesan efforts to increase demand for its schools:

1. Align supply to demand and need.
2. Align tuition to cost and ability/willingness to pay.
3. Assume leadership in standards-based educational practice with special attention to personalized, differentiated instruction.

4. Acculturate schools and parishes to local populations through fellowship.
5. Develop an integrated communications strategy centered on stories of hope.

Notre Dame will bring together expertise from a number of University constituencies to conduct and disseminate further research on marketing issues facing Catholic schools. We have recently entered into a pilot partnership with the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to employ our findings to market its Catholic schools more effectively within the local community. Based on the success of this pilot project, Notre Dame will pursue similar collaboration with other interested diocesan school systems.

## **9. ATTRACT AND SUPPORT THE LATINO COMMUNITY THROUGH OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

As *Renewing Our Commitment* emphasizes, the Church in the United States has undergone a profound demographic transformation due to the dramatic growth of the Latino population. Latinos will soon comprise the majority of Catholics in the US, yet only 3% of Latino families send their children to Catholic schools.<sup>26</sup> The Church and its schools must find ways to attract, serve, and be engaged by the growing Latino population.<sup>27</sup>

Historically, Catholic schools in the United States have played an important role in incorporating European immigrants into the Church and in providing a quality education for their children. Today, Latino Catholics represent a similar opportunity and calling, with well over half of all Latino school children being the U.S.-born offspring of immigrants, or immigrants themselves. Although nearly three-quarters of Latino immigrants are Catholic, their children and grandchildren are much less likely to be Catholic.<sup>28</sup> Further, academic outcomes for Latino students attending public schools, on average, have been poor.<sup>29</sup> Thus, both the needs and the opportunities to expand the presence of Catholic schools in Latino communities are clear.

We know that formidable obstacles need to be overcome to expand Latino enrollment in Catholic schools: the perception among many Latin American immigrants that Catholic schools are for the elite, financial concerns surrounding tuition, and linguistic and cultural barriers in many Catholic schools.<sup>30</sup> Still more research is needed to understand and address this situation with attention to its nuanced complexity, yet examples abound of existing Catholic schools that have successfully adapted to the changing demographics, as well as new Catholic schools that have been created to serve Latino families. Notre Dame, through its Institute for Latino Studies and Institute for Educational Initiatives, is well-prepared to support, through applied research and training, efforts that will enable Catholic schools to



become more visible, attractive and responsive to the educational and spiritual needs of Latino families. We will seek additional resources to conduct research focused on how best to encourage Latino families to choose Catholic schools with greater frequency. The study, design, and implementation of more effective marketing strategies and practices will be of particular value to schools and dioceses.

We also recognize that increasing the demand for Catholic schools among Latinos is inseparable from the supply side of the equation—improving the schools themselves. To this end, ACE established in July 2006 an English as a New Language (ENL) program specifically targeted for teachers who work in Catholic schools. Our goal is to expand and develop a first-rate, affordable ENL program in an effort to prepare teachers to support Latinos, indeed all immigrant families, in our Catholic schools.

## **10. DESIGN AND BUILD THE ACE CONSULTING INITIATIVE**

The two best-known firms currently offering consulting services to Catholic schools and dioceses are Catholic School Management and Meitler Consultants, Inc. Both have strong reputations and have demonstrated that struggling Catholic schools can be improved, even transformed, through comprehensive guidance. This is typically an expensive and time-consuming process, and we have learned that there is unmet demand for professional support. Given the widespread managerial and financial problems facing Catholic schools, ACE looks to make first-rate consulting expertise available and affordable to at-risk Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Therefore, we propose to develop the ACE Consulting Initiative, which will work to provide expertise to elementary and secondary Catholic schools in a variety of areas, including marketing, governance, board training, management, strategic planning, and investing.<sup>31</sup>

As part of this larger effort to bring effective professional services to Catholic schools, we will build a program to attract and form experienced professionals who will share their expertise with needy Catholic schools. Similar in many ways to Notre Dame's Tax Assistance Program and the Ignatian Volunteer Corps—two successful models that provide structures for seasoned professionals to use their gifts and experience to serve needy populations—this program will engage those eager to give back to Catholic schools and dioceses through pro bono work. The program will also provide both professional and spiritual formation to strengthen this professional community in service to Catholic schools.

## **11. DEVELOP A NATIONAL PROGRAM TO FORM EFFECTIVE PARISH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAMS**

Parochial schools in urban and rural areas typically represent the most fragile Catholic schools. While supportive pastors are vital for parochial schools to thrive, the declining number of priests, among other factors, continues to increase the workload of pastors. Now more than ever we see the importance of collaborative leadership among pastors, principals, and school boards to ensure a vibrant parish school. To that end, Notre Dame will develop a National Parish School Leadership Team Workshop to convene pastors, principals, and school board presidents from selected dioceses to learn and discuss best practices in marketing, leadership, strategic planning, financial management, and other relevant areas, especially Catholic identity. Building on a national pilot project hosted at Notre Dame in July 2006, which brought together the key leaders of eight parish schools sponsored by the Congregation of the Holy Cross, we have secured funding to expand and improve this initiative and conduct multiple 4-5 day workshops throughout the year. We envision these workshops to become, in time, a replicable national model to galvanize more effective leadership that recognizes the pastor's role and enhances the administrative practices associated with parochial schools.

## **12. ACCESS PUBLIC FUNDS AND RESOURCES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND THEIR STUDENTS**

As we discuss in more detail below, Catholic schools "render a public service and therefore have a right to financial assistance."<sup>32</sup> Such assistance, of course, can take a wide variety of forms: school-choice programs, tuition tax credits and deductions, publicly-funded transportation and textbooks, loaned computers and technology, special-education resources, and so on. The Task Force recommends that, consistent with its character as a Catholic institution of higher learning and research, Notre Dame commit to the careful investigation of these and other education-reform policies. The University will also support efforts to educate citizens and leaders about the issues of social justice surrounding access to educational opportunity and the rights of parents who choose Catholic schools for their children to the support enjoyed by those who choose public schools. Failure to provide public economic support to private and religious schools that need public assistance and that render a public service to society is an injustice.<sup>33</sup> We believe access to quality education constitutes the social justice challenge of our generation.

The University will take up this challenge in a number of ways. We will consistently advance the school choice issue because it is one of religious

freedom and social justice, and espouses the preferential option for the poor. Too often, public leaders are not informed about the simple justice of school choice. We seek to redress that.

In addition, our Initiative for the Academic Improvement of Catholic Schools and ACE Consulting will make good on the University's commitment to school choice as social justice. At present, hundreds of millions of dollars to which Catholic schools and students are already entitled under a range of state and federal programs go unclaimed. Valuable resources that are available to assist and strengthen Catholic schools—from school lunches to telecommunications discounts—are, in effect, often left on the table. In some instances, this results from resistance by local public educational authorities. In others, it simply reflects the difficulties that Catholic educators face in navigating bureaucracy, or their lack of awareness of the opportunities available to them. We will, in a systematic way, work to help our schools to obtain the public funds and support that are already available and to use these resources effectively.

In conjunction with interested faculty from the Notre Dame Law School, the University will identify a core of lawyers and legal scholars who will help Catholic dioceses and schools advocate for, access, and use public funds and resources. By serving Catholic schools and their mission in this way, interested alumni of Notre Dame Law School will live out the school's longstanding commitment to social justice and to educating a "different kind of lawyer." Law School alumni will provide the expertise necessary to maximize a Catholic school's attainment of the local and federal funds needed to serve its students most effectively, and to continue its inspired mission to form the leaders of tomorrow.

Finally, the essential vocation of any university is to engage with vitality and rigor the world of ideas. Powerful ideas have the power to change the world. In order to provide a forum for discussion and debate about fair access to quality education, we seek to convene a periodic conference of educational-policy scholars and experts, public officials, administrators, ecclesial officials, and other stakeholders for the purpose of examining and evaluating competing formulas for improving access to quality schooling. These gatherings will contribute both rigorous research and moral vision to the ongoing public debate about education reform.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES**

In *Renewing Our Commitment*, the bishops insist prophetically that supporting Catholic schools is "the responsibility of the entire Catholic community." At a time when Catholic schools are increasingly supported by two

groups—the families that pay tuition for their children and the staff who typically sacrifice via lower salaries than their public school counterparts—the bishops' call to the larger community to make Catholic schools accessible and affordable to all families is deeply counter-cultural. Of course, this call is deeply Catholic, a profound reminder that as members of the Body of Christ, we are called to care for one another with generous love. In this section of the report, we offer the broader Church community five recommendations grounded, in the end, on a central question: how might we foster a culture in which the entire Catholic community takes more responsibility for Catholic schools?

## **1. THE TEACHING AUTHORITY OF THE BISHOPS**

At the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884, the United States Bishops sparked a remarkable period of growth in Catholic schools and, as a consequence, in the vitality of the Church, by taking a decisive stand. Troubled by discriminatory public schooling, they mandated that parishes do everything possible to establish and maintain schools, which were often constructed before churches as parishes were founded. At this time, bishops and pastors exercised their teaching authority with relentless consistency, insisting that parents entrust their children to parochial schools whenever possible. As a result, Catholic schools became apostolic, academic, and civic success stories, forming leaders for the Church and society.

Today, the American Church finds Herself in a different cultural moment—mandates to support Catholic schools are neither possible nor practical, especially when tuition remains the dominant funding mechanism. Yet as *Renewing Our Commitment* illustrates, with its numerous citations of Church documents over time, the USCCB has maintained an unwavering endorsement of Catholic schools as “the fullest and best opportunity to realize the fourfold purpose of Christian education.”

The consistent message and unified leadership of the bishops as a national body deserves signal recognition. At the same time, we encourage even more vigorous education about the value of Catholic schools and advocacy for Catholic schools by all bishops so that efforts in each diocese reflect full and active support of the USCCB's position. To cultivate widespread enthusiasm for Catholic schools, compelling arguments about their centrality to the evangelizing and social justice mission of the Church must come relentlessly and univocally from all Her leaders, to national and local audiences, through publications and the pulpit. People will listen, will be inspired, and will respond. For in the midst of the secularizing pressures of modernity in the United States, one can discern the stirrings of spiritual restlessness, signs of a dawning realization of the emptiness of consumerism and

self-absorption. We believe that many Catholics and other people of faith will welcome the voices of their bishops emboldening them to build the kingdom of God by building up our elementary and secondary Catholic schools.

We recommend that the bishops prioritize the revival of Catholic schools on their national and local agendas, fully aware of the sobering number of domestic issues requiring the attention and resources of the Church. How do we best serve the needs of Catholic immigrants, especially from Latin America? How do we increase vocations to priesthood and religious life? How do we increase regular Mass attendance and engagement in the sacramental life of the Church? How do we reverse the trend toward ignorance of Church doctrine and teaching? How do we serve the poor? Amid this crowded agenda, strong investment in elementary and secondary Catholic schools offers a proven way to address all of these challenges and more. Some dioceses have already fashioned strategic plans to ensure a strong future for Catholic schools. We applaud this foresight and urge all bishops to form strategic planning committees to do likewise in a spirit of hope and bold vision.

## **2. THE PASTOR, THE PULPIT, AND PARISH LIFE**

The call for all pastors and priests to give vigorous support to Catholic schools in word and action must begin with the acknowledgement of some hard facts about our historical moment. Parochial schools require substantial resources, both financial and human. In most parishes, the school accounts for a high percentage of the overall operating budget and, often enough, can be perceived as a burden on parish finances or a distraction from other parish ministries. In most cases, the presence of a parochial school certainly adds to the administrative workload of the pastor. And with fewer priests serving a growing Catholic population, the job of the pastor has, arguably, never been more difficult. Out of necessity, older priests are pressed to delay retirement while younger priests commonly assume responsibility for leading parishes soon after ordination. Is it any wonder, then, that many pastors long for assignment to parishes without schools and their attendant headaches?

Catholic schooling is grounded in the belief that parents are the primary educators of their children. It is the awesome responsibility of parents, assisted by the people of God, to strive to form saints. An authentically Catholic school thus assists parents in their charge to prepare children for life on earth and life in heaven. Nothing could be more important, and we all need to be reminded of this on a consistent basis. If Catholic schools are indeed the most effective ways to assist parents in their duty to educate in faith, pastors have a special responsibility to proclaim this truth and do what they can to

encourage and enable families to attend. Yet how frequently and effectively do pastors use the pulpit to encourage and challenge parents, indeed the entire faith community, to fulfill to the best of their ability the promises they made when their children were baptized?

We must find ways to promote Catholic schools without anxiety over offending those who may not share our passion. All pastors must be encouraged to endorse consistently and effectively the bishops' position on Catholic schools. If our pastors and priests do not advocate for them in word and deed, how can we expect more parishioners to enroll their children or increase their contributions to support the school? While we cannot mandate, we can persuade. And if persuasion fails at first, we must continue to invite. Over time, the persistent support of pastors from the pulpit, the bulletin, and the parking lot is essential to enflame a renewed commitment among more lay men and women. With so many Catholic schools struggling financially, pastors must appeal earnestly to Catholics of all generations to invest in them through their time, talent, and treasure. The life-giving nourishment that parishioners receive from purposeful service and support of parochial schools will also strengthen their communal and spiritual bond with the parish community. Ultimately, we encourage pastors to see robust Catholic schools as opportunities to enhance the vitality of parish life for everyone.

How often have we heard claims that the parish subsidizes the school? From another perspective, which views Catholic schools as the best investment the Church has ever made, one might respond that schools often subsidize parishes by inspiring the high levels of commitment and generosity commonly observed among families whose children attend the school. We recommend concerted efforts to move beyond the misleading language of subsidy. There exists an elective affinity between strong parishes and strong Catholic schools. Pastors without schools should be invited to challenge their parishioners to support Catholic schools as well. The only true financial subsidy in regards to Catholic schools goes to this country's taxpayers, who save billions of dollars annually that would otherwise have to be applied to public education.

### **3. THE GIFTS OF THE LAITY: ENHANCING AND DISSEMINATING EFFECTIVE OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

In the 19th century, largely through the leadership of bishops, pastors, and professed religious, the parochial school emerged as a creative and wildly successful organizational structure. Scholars have noted the immense social capital generated for both the parish and the school as a result of the integrated and reciprocal nature of the parochial school-parish relationship.<sup>34</sup> The

parish school remains the dominant model, yet also remains the type of Catholic school most under duress, most vulnerable to demographic shifts and eventual closure. From 1998 to 2004, while the enrollment at all other types of Catholic and public schools grew along with the growing school-aged population, parochial schools alone declined by 18% nationally.<sup>35</sup> Our challenge is to refresh the parochial model to make it effective where it has potential to flourish and to explore new models for other contexts.

The diverse initiatives in Catholic schools over the past decade suggest that the Church may already be in the midst of a new era of innovation. The Diocese of Wichita has institutionalized total stewardship and eliminated tuition for its elementary and secondary schools. The Cristo Rey, Nativity, and San Miguel schools have begun to proliferate across our nation's inner cities to serve needy, predominantly minority families. And across the country, some dioceses have experimented successfully with alternative administrative structures and governance arrangements. Several dioceses, including Washington, Indianapolis, and Memphis, have developed school consortium models for their urban schools that centralize administrative responsibilities, freeing principals and pastors to focus on the academic and spiritual needs of the students. These consortia often operate with separate incorporation and/or separate juridic person status and with boards of limited jurisdiction. Enrollment and academic progress have improved, and these dioceses have managed to save and stabilize these schools. In the last 5 years, the Diocese of Memphis has actually re-opened eight Catholic schools to serve local urban neighborhoods.

These success stories demonstrate that when bishops, pastors, and lay leaders collaborate to adopt effective and canonically legitimate ownership and governance structures, Catholic schools can flourish where they once struggled. Upon review of various governance arrangements currently in place across the country, the Task Force concluded that appropriate and effective models already exist. Our challenge is to raise awareness, underscoring the importance of selecting and enhancing the best model for a particular school or diocesan context. One size does not fit all.

In accord with the recommendation of the Task Force and upon the guidance of the USCCB, we will establish a Catholic Schools Revitalization Campaign to prepare a menu of canonically legitimate ownership and governance models for elementary and secondary Catholic schools.<sup>36</sup> We will convene regional gatherings that culminate, in the end, with a national forum at Notre Dame for bishops, pastors, superintendents, leaders of Catholic higher education and of Catholic educational organizations, and influential lay people supportive of Catholic schools. These meetings will serve to enhance and disseminate the range of governance options, share best practices, and

advance a unified movement to renew and, where it makes sense, reinvent Catholic schools for the 21st century.

#### 4. SCHOOL CHOICE: A MATTER OF JUSTICE

The Catholic bishops in the United States have, time and again, demonstrated courage and leadership by challenging Catholics and all people of good will to engage and embrace the Church's rich social-justice teachings. On a variety of issues and in many different contexts—the sanctity of unborn life, the death penalty, war and peace, economic justice, and so on—the bishops have exercised, prudently but forcefully, the teaching authority of their offices. In this way, they have served as faithful shepherds and pastors.

We believe it is crucial that the bishops in the United States teach clearly and with one voice that parents have a right to send their children to Catholic schools, that these schools contribute to a healthy civil society and provide special benefits to the poor and disadvantaged, and that it is unjust not to include students who choose to attend Catholic schools in the allocation of public benefits. School choice is not just a policy option or a political question; it is an issue of religious freedom and social justice.

In recent years, the arguments in the public square for school choice and equal treatment of religious schools have moved from libertarian arguments about competition to moral arguments about equality, opportunity, and religious liberty.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, support for school choice has expanded beyond a politically conservative base and now enjoys increasing bipartisan support, particularly among the poor and ethnic minorities. School choice and Catholic schools treat the poor as citizens of equal dignity. They promote the independence upon which constitutional government depends. And, they empower parents to pass on their values to their children.

These developments resonate strongly with principles of social justice, with principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, and with the preferential option for the poor. Public funds should be disbursed in such a way that parents are truly free to exercise their right to educate their children in Catholic schools, without incurring hardships or double-taxation.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, in the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Religious Freedom*, the Church proclaims that "Government...must acknowledge the right of parents to make a genuinely free choice of schools and of other means of education, and the use of this freedom of choice is not to be made a reason for imposing unjust burdens on parents, whether directly or indirectly."<sup>39</sup>



## 5. MANAGERIAL OPPORTUNITIES: LEVERAGING ECONOMIES OF SCALE

The principle of subsidiarity is, undoubtedly, one of the historic strengths of the organization of Catholic schools. Local decision making resists bureaucracy, mitigates organizational tendency toward inefficient, even wasteful, administrative overhead, and allows for nimble responsiveness to the needs and opportunities of a particular school community.

We would do well to consider how best to preserve the benefits of local autonomy while taking advantage of economies of scale available to the Church because of its size. Too often, we think and act much smaller than we are. Stewardship—the support of the Church’s mission through time, talent, and treasure—also has a managerial dimension less frequently articulated and enacted. While Catholics in the United States must give more generously to the Church, those responsible for directing and administering its operations must actively and wisely pursue opportunities to leverage its size in the areas of health care, portability of benefits, purchasing, and investment. We applaud the bishops for underscoring, in *Renewing Our Commitment*, the “Michigan Catholic Conference’s portable employee benefit program as a possible model for others to replicate.”<sup>40</sup> We encourage similar efforts in health insurance procurement, purchasing, and advocacy for public funding.

The findings of the Task Force suggest that pooled investment may hold the greatest potential growth opportunity of all. Though some dioceses pool individual schools’ endowment funds and manage them at the diocesan level, many of these investment vehicles lack the flexibility and opportunity to earn significantly higher returns because their endowments are too small. Therefore, we propose a voluntary pooled, national investment vehicle to take advantage of opportunities open to large endowments with sophisticated managerial oversight. The Notre Dame investment office is prepared to outline the structure and strategy of this national endowment pending the essential support of the USCCB. Over time, higher annual rates of return will ensue, helping to make Catholic schools more financially stable and affordable.

## CONCLUSION

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the power of Catholic schools is to imagine the Church in the United States without them. What would it look like? Would it be as robust and vital? How would it produce generous leaders? How would it serve immigrants? How would it provide avenues of educational opportunity to the poor, especially those in our cities? The rise of evangelical Christian schools shows that other Christian communities have learned what many Catholics have forgotten or are willing to ignore—that

there is no substitute for spending 35 hours each week in an educational environment permeated by faith and Gospel values. To those who wonder how we can afford to make the investment necessary to sustain, strengthen, and expand Catholic schools, we respond by turning the question on its head. How can we afford not to make this investment? Our future depends on it more than we may suspect.

Will it be said of our generation that we presided over the demise of the most effective and important resource for evangelization in the history of the Church in the United States? Will it be said of our generation that we lacked the resolve to preserve national treasures built upon the sacrifice of untold millions? Will it be said of our generation that we abandoned these powerful instruments of justice that provide educational opportunity and hope for families otherwise trapped in poverty? Surely not. Instead, when the story of Catholic schools is written, historians will look back on our age and marvel that against great odds, we changed the ending. By then, of course, we will know one thing better than those who write this history. We will know—we will see—the promise that Christ himself made: that He will come, that He will inspire us through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit as history unfolds to make all things new, and that He will never leave us orphans but reveal to us that we are all beloved children of our Father.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Margaret Spellings, in her address at the 11th commencement exercises of the Alliance for Catholic Education, referred to Catholic schools as “national treasures.”

<sup>2</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Watzke, John. “Alternative Teacher Education and Professional Preparedness: A Study of Parochial and Public School Contexts.” *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice*, vol. 8, no. 4 (2005), 463.

<sup>8</sup> The mission statement of the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE): to sustain and strengthen Catholic schools.

<sup>9</sup> Congregation of Holy Cross Constitution: 2, paragraph 12.

<sup>10</sup> Congregational Document, *The Charism, Spirituality, Mission, and Common Values of Holy Cross*.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Holland, P.B. *The Catholic High School Principalship: A Qualitative Study*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University (1985); Manno, B. *Those Who Would be Catholic School Principals: Their Recruitment, Preparation, and Evaluation* (Washington, DC: NCEA, 1985); Mastalerz, L. *The Dynamics of Burnout in Catholic School Principals*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Roosevelt University, Chicago (2000); Sergiovanni, T.J. *Leadership for the Schoolhouse* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *To Teach as Jesus Did: A Pastoral Message on Catholic Education* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1972), no. 103.

<sup>14</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Ad Limina Apostolorum* (25 January 1997), no. 2, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition (February 5, 1997). See also *Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1995); *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> See Appendix D.

<sup>16</sup> Beal, John P., James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green, Ed. *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), Canon 806, Section 2.

<sup>17</sup> Coleman, James, Andrew Greeley, and Thomas Hoffer. "Achievement Growth in Public and Catholic Schools", *Sociology of Education*, vol. 58 (1985), 74-97; Coleman, James, and Thomas Hoffer. *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 54-55.

<sup>18</sup> Bryk, Anthony S., Peter B. Holland, and Valerie E. Lee. *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>19</sup> Preliminary findings reported by Maureen Hallinan and Warren Kubitschek based on a U.S. Department of Education study of academic achievement in Chicago Catholic and public schools suggests that in some areas public schools are either meeting or surpassing Catholic schools on some dimensions of achievement, particularly in the area of mathematics. See Urbany, Joel, et. al. *Draft Report of the Market Sub-committee of the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education* (15 July 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), no. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Gray, Mark. M. and Mary L. Gautier. *Primary Trends, Challenges and Outlook: A Report on Catholic Elementary Schools* (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate and the National Catholic Educational Association, 2006), 55.

<sup>22</sup> In his advice to the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) during a programmatic consulting visit, Lee Shulman urged ACE and the Institute for Educational Initiatives (IEI) at Notre Dame to "build a field of Catholic education."

<sup>23</sup> In a phone conversation with the Task Force, Christine Kelly, Director of the Administrative Leadership Program at Dominican University, described Dominican University's partnership, begun in June 2005, with St. Edmund School, a local Chicago Catholic elementary school which was at risk of closing due to declining enrollment and financial problems.

<sup>24</sup> In March 2006, Boston College announced a partnership with St. Columbkille Elementary School in Boston's Allston-Brighton neighborhood which would have been unable to remain open without the support and resources that Boston College will offer. Dunn, Jack. "BC to Aid Parochial School: Partnership with parish, archdiocese is first of its kind." *The Boston College Chronicle*, vol. 14, no. 14 (March 30, 2006). ([http://www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/rvp/pubaf/chronicle/v14/mr30/partnership.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/rvp/pubaf/chronicle/v14/mr30/partnership.html))

<sup>25</sup> Urbany, Joel, et. al. *Draft Report of the Market Sub-committee of the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education* (15 July 2006).

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Latino Catholics—more than 30 million strong—now comprise nearly half of all Catholics in the United States, nearly doubling in number since 1990. In contrast, growth in Latino Catholic school enrollment has been very slow, with Latinos only 12% of all Catholic school students. Latino children are little more than half as likely to enroll in Catholic schools as non-Latino White children. See *National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Survey* (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Espinoza, Gaston, Virgil Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda. *Hispanic Churches in American Public Life: Summary of Findings* (Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> Schneider, Barbara, Sylvia Martinez, and Ann Owens. "Barriers to Educational Opportunities for Hispanics in the United States." In *Hispanics and the Future of America*, Marta Tienda and Faith Mitchell, ed. (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Richard J. Burke, President of Catholic School Management and member of the Task Force, has offered to assist in the development of the ACE Consulting Initiative. We are grateful for this generous offer and anticipate a fruitful relationship between our university-based enterprise and CSM, a company with an impressive track record of strengthening Catholic schools.

<sup>32</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), no. 241.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Coleman, James S. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94 supplement (1988), S95–S120; Coleman, James S., and Thomas Hoffer. *Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities* (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

<sup>35</sup> Urbany, Joel, et. al. *Draft Report of the Market Sub-committee of the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education* (15 July 2006), 2, 13-14.

<sup>36</sup> This campaign will be led by Sr. Lourdes Sheehan, RSM, and Fr. Richard Warner, CSC. Consultative assistance will be provided by Richard J. Burke, President of Catholic School Management, and Fr. John Coughlin, OFM, Professor of Canon Law, University of Notre Dame.

<sup>37</sup> See Coons, John E. & Stephen D. Sugarman, *Education By Choice: The Case for Family Control* (1978); Joseph P. Viteritti, *Choosing Equality: School Choice, the Constitution, and Civil Society* (1999); Nicole Stelle Garnett & Richard W. Garnett, "School Choice, the First Amendment, and Social Justice." *Texas Review of Law & Politics*, vol. 4, 301 (2000).

<sup>38</sup> Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), 241.

<sup>39</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Declaration on Religious Freedom: Dignitatis Humanae, on the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious* (7 December 1965), no. 5.

<sup>40</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), 12.

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## APPENDIX A

### The Method and Activity of the Notre Dame Task Force

In response to the bishops' invitation in their June 2005 Pastoral Statement, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, Fr. John Jenkins, CSC, commissioned the Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education to assess the current landscape for Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States and develop a strategic plan for improving the viability and effectiveness of these schools. Fr. Timothy Scully, CSC, chaired the year-long effort, which had two main objectives: to craft a white paper addressed to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and to include in that white paper recommendations for how the University of Notre Dame can and will assist in sustaining and strengthening Catholic elementary and secondary schools nationwide.

The executive committee of the Task Force worked for several months during the summer 2005 to delineate a process that would be both inclusive and comprehensive. The executive committee enlisted the support of eight strong leaders, each with significant executive experience, to chair six sub-committees composed of educational leaders, educators, entrepreneurs, consultants, and experts in targeted fields. These six sub-committees were organized around major themes:

- Current environmental landscape and market demands for Catholic schools (e.g., Latino, African-American, suburban, urban perceptions of Catholic schools);
- Financial management of Catholic schools;
- Governance and ownership questions facing parishes, dioceses, and archdioceses pertaining to Catholic schools;
- Public funding options for Catholic schools and Catholic school parents;
- Existing “best practices” in maintaining viable and successful Catholic schools; and
- Creative new financing alternatives for Catholic schools.

The executive committee lent assistance to the sub-committees, guided the overall process, and helped to integrate the findings and recommendations into the final report. The executive committee is also charged to develop a plan to implement the Notre Dame recommendations.

Our process emphasized broad participation to develop effective recommendations and to build momentum nationally for the themes pronounced in *Renewing Our Commitment*. We began a five-phased process in September 2005. The objective of Phase One was for each sub-committee

to gather a comprehensive fact base on the current landscape for Catholic schools. In Phase Two, each sub-committee deepened its research and began to develop preliminary recommendations. Phase Three focused on integrating the findings and systematically assessing and revising the final recommendations. In Phase Four, the executive committee, in collaboration with the sub-committee Chairs, compiled the findings and recommendations into the final report of the Task Force. In Phase Five, the executive committee will focus on the dissemination of the final report as well as the implementation plan for Notre Dame. Each phase of the process was punctuated by a gathering of the entire Task Force at Notre Dame to discuss the findings and refine the recommendations.

Throughout the process, the Task Force also sought the input of hundreds of diocesan officials, school principals, and parents of school-aged children. The Task Force convened for the last time as a full group at Notre Dame on September 29, 2006, roughly one year after the process began. The group discussed and endorsed the draft of the final report and offered valuable feedback on implementation strategies.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Full Membership**

#### **Notre Dame Task Force on Catholic Education**

##### **Executive Committee**

\*Reverend Timothy R. Scully, CSC, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Institute for Educational Initiatives, University of Notre Dame

Thomas A. Bambrick, Assistant Director, Alliance for Catholic Education

Viva O. Bartkus, Associate Professor of Management, Mendoza College of Business, University of Notre Dame

Erin Hoffmann Harding, Assistant Vice President for Strategic Planning, Office of the President, University of Notre Dame

John J. Staud, Director of Pastoral Formation and Administration, Alliance for Catholic Education

##### **Church Governance Sub-Committee**

\*Lourdes Sheehan, RSM, recently retired, formerly Secretary for Education, United States Catholic Conference

\*Reverend Richard V. Warner, CSC, Director of Campus Ministry and Associate Director of the Holy Cross Mission Center, University of Notre Dame

Gwendolyn P. Byrd, Secretary of Education and Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Mobile

Reverend John J. Coughlin, OFM, Professor of Law, University of Notre Dame

Reverend Ronald J. Nuzzi, Director, ACE Leadership Program, Alliance for Catholic Education

The Most Reverend Daniel E. Pilarczyk, STD, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Mary Anne Stanton, Executive Director, Center City Consortium of Schools, Archdiocese of Washington, DC

##### **Creative Financing Alternatives Sub-Committee**

\*Gregory J. Besio, Corporate Vice President of Mobile Devices Software, Motorola, Inc.

\*Elizabeth E. J. Bohlen, Partner, McKinsey & Company, Inc.

W. Clark Durant III, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Cornerstone Schools, Detroit

Mary J. Hughes, former Executive Director, Koch Foundation, and Member of the Executive Committee, National Catholic Educational Association

- R. Ryan Mullaney, Regional Sales Manager, RBS Greenwich Capital's Asset-Backed Sales Office, Chicago
- R. Michael Murray, Member, McKinsey Advisory Committee, McKinsey & Company, Inc.
- Thomas K. Reis, Program Director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Stephen W. Ritterbush, Managing Partner and Co-Founder, Fairfax Partners
- Darla M. Romfo, President and Chief Operating Officer, Children's Scholarship Fund
- Monsignor Kenneth J. Velo, President, Big Shoulders Fund, and Senior Executive for Catholic Collaboration, DePaul University
- Drew Haase, Graduate Student, University of Notre Dame Law School

**Existing Best Practices Sub-Committee**

- \*John A. Sejdinaj, Vice President for Finance, University of Notre Dame
- Richard J. Burke, President and Senior Executive Consultant, Catholic School Management, Inc
- Thomas L. Doyle, Academic Director, Alliance for Catholic Education
- John R. Eriksen, Graduate Student, Kennedy School of Public Policy, Harvard University
- Thomas J. Guinan, Associate Controller, Office of the Controller, University of Notre Dame
- Mary C. McDonald, Secretary of Education and Superintendent of Schools, Catholic Diocese of Memphis
- Andrew M. Paluf, Assistant Vice President for Finance and Controller, University of Notre Dame
- Karen M. Ristau, President, National Catholic Educational Association

**Finance Sub-Committee**

- \*Scott C. Malpass, Vice President and Chief Investment Officer, University of Notre Dame
- Michael D. Donovan, Managing Director of Private Capital Investments, University of Notre Dame
- Mark C. Krcmaric, Managing Director for Finance and Administration, Investment Office, University of Notre Dame
- John H. Schaefer, recently retired, formerly President and Chief Operating Officer, Morgan Stanley's Global Wealth Management Business
- Patricia A. Tierney, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Diocese of St. Augustine
- Joseph F. Trustey, Managing Partner, Summit Partners



### **Market Sub-Committee**

\*Joel E. Urbany, Professor of Marketing, Mendoza College of Business,  
University of Notre Dame

Daniel F. Curtin, Executive Director, Chief Administrators of Catholic  
Education

Reverend Virgilio P. Elizondo, Professor of Pastoral and Hispanic Theology,  
University of Notre Dame, and Vicar, St. Rose Parish in San Antonio

Joyce V. Johnstone, Ryan Director of Educational Outreach, Institute for  
Educational Initiatives, University of Notre Dame

Barry P. Keating, Professor, Department of Finance, Mendoza College of  
Business, University of Notre Dame

Keisha McKenzie, Graduate Student, Mendoza College of Business,  
University of Notre Dame

Timothy P. Ready, Director of Research, Institute for Latino Studies,  
University of Notre Dame

### **Public Funding Sub-Committee**

\*Richard W. Garnett, Lilly Endowment Associate Professor of Law,  
University of Notre Dame

Robert B. Aguirre, President, Robert Aguirre Consultants, LLC

David E. Campbell, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of  
Notre Dame

Michelle L. Doyle, Chief Executive Officer, Michelle Doyle Educational  
Consulting, LLC

Nicole S. Garnett, Associate Professor of Law, University of Notre Dame

Stephen A. Perla, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Worcester

John A. Schoenig, Director of Development, Alliance for School Choice

Stephen F. Smith, Professor of Law, University of Virginia

Joseph P. Viteritti, Blanche D. Blank Professor of Public Policy, Department  
of Urban Affairs and Planning, Hunter College, City University of New  
York

Christopher S. Pearsall, Graduate Student and Research Assistant, University  
of Notre Dame Law School

\* Chair

## APPENDIX C

### Dioceses and Stakeholders Involved in the Process

#### **Finance Sub-Committee CFO Conference Attendees**

Diocese of Albany: Sr. Mary Jane Herb, IHM, Superintendent

Diocese of Austin: Mary Beth Koenig, Chief Financial Officer

Archdiocese of Baltimore: John Matera, Controller

Archdiocese of Baltimore: Bill Glover, Director of Information Services

Archdiocese of Chicago: Nicholas Wolsonovich, Superintendent

Diocese of Davenport: Mary Wieser, Superintendent and Director of Faith Formation

Archdiocese of Detroit: Sr. Mary Gehringer, OSM, Superintendent

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend: Joseph Ryan, Chief Financial Officer

Diocese of Fort Worth: Peter Flynn, Director, Finance & Administrative Services

Diocese of Fort Worth: Donald Miller, Superintendent

Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux: Sr. Immaculata Paisant, MSC, Superintendent

Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux: William Barbera, Fiscal Officer & Business Manager

Archdiocese of Indianapolis: Jeff Stumpf, Chief Financial Officer

Diocese of Lafayette: Sr. Lois Ann Meyer, SNDdeN, Superintendent

Diocese of Metuchen: Thomas Toolan, Director of Finance

Diocese of Oakland: Lynne Jones, CPA, Fiscal Controller

Diocese of Peoria: Brother William Dygert, CSC, Superintendent

Diocese of St. Augustine: Patricia Tierney, Superintendent

*In total: 18 participants from 15 dioceses*

#### **Existing Best Practices In-Depth Case Studies**

Archdiocese of Indianapolis

Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Mecklenburg Association of Catholic Schools (MACS)

Diocese of Memphis: Jubilee Schools

Diocese of Ogdensburg: Catholic Schools Education Council of Watertown, NY and Immaculate Heart Central Schools

Archdiocese of Washington, DC: Faith in the City: The Center City Consortium

Diocese of Wichita: Stewardship

### **Existing Best Practices Survey Participants**

- Diocese of Albany: Sr. Mary Jane Herb, IHM, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Arlington: Tim McNiff, Superintendent  
Diocese of Austin: Mary Beth Koenig, Chief Financial Officer  
Archdiocese of Baltimore: John Matera, Controller  
Diocese of Baton Rouge: Joe Scimeca, Assistant Superintendent  
Diocese of Belleville: Thomas Posnanski, Director of Education  
Diocese of Birmingham: Sr. M. Leanne Welch, PBVM, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Bridgeport: Martin Tristine, Director of Finance  
Diocese of Brownsville: Sr. Marcella Ewers, DC, Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati: Br. Joseph Kamis, SM, Superintendent  
Diocese of Dallas: Charles LeBlanc, Director of Catholic Schools  
Archdiocese of Denver: Richard Thompson, Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of Detroit: Sr. Mary Gehringer, OSM, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Fall River: George Milot, Superintendent  
Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend: Joseph Ryan, Chief Financial Officer  
Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend: Rebecca Ellswerky, Associate Superintendent  
Diocese of Fort Worth: Donald Miller, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Fort Worth: Peter Flynn, Director, Finance and Administrative Services  
Diocese of Gary: Kim Pryzbylski, Superintendent  
Diocese of Grand Rapids: Bernie Stanko, Associate Superintendent  
Diocese of Green Bay: Robert Kroll, OFM, Superintendent  
Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux: Sr. Immaculata Paisant, MSC, Superintendent  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis: Jeff Stumpf, Chief Financial Officer  
Diocese of Kalamazoo: Frank Wippel, Superintendent  
Archdiocese of Kansas City: Kathleen O'Hara, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Lafayette: Sr. Lois Ann Meyer, SNDdeN, Superintendent  
Archdiocese of Los Angeles: Patricia Livingston, Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of Louisville: Leisa Speer, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Metuchen: Thomas Toolan, Director of Finance  
Archdiocese of Miami: Christine LaMadrid, Assistant Superintendent  
Diocese of New Ulm: Wayne Pelzel, Director of Schools  
Diocese of Oakland: Lynne Jones, Fiscal Controller  
Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: Sr. Catherine Powers, CND, Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Orlando: Harry Purpur, Superintendent  
Diocese of Owensboro: Jim Mattingly, Superintendent

Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee: Susan Mueller, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Peoria: Brother William Dygert, CSC, Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Diocese of St. Augustine: Patricia Tierney, Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis: Jim Lundholm-Eades, Director of Planning

Diocese of Salt Lake City: Sr. Catherine Kamphaus, CSC, Superintendent

Archdiocese of San Antonio: Sr. Marcelle Stos, SSND, Assistant Superintendent

Diocese of Shreveport: Sr. Carol Shively, OSU, Superintendent

Diocese of Sioux City: Kevin Vickery, Superintendent

Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau: Leon Witt, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Toledo: Jack Altenburger, Superintendent

Diocese of Tucson: Sr. Rosa Maria Ruiz, CFMM, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Tulsa: Todd Goldsmith, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Venice: Rosemary Bratton, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Wichita: Bob Voboril, Superintendent of Schools

Diocese of Worcester: Steve Perla, Superintendent

Diocese of Youngstown: Michael Skube, Superintendent

*In total: 51 participants from 49 dioceses*

## APPENDIX D

### Background on the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE)

At its heart, ACE represents an invitation to discipleship, to follow ever more closely Christ the Teacher and “go forth and teach” the Gospel in Catholic schools. ACE teachers represent a broad variety of undergraduate disciplines, with a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences. With over four applicants for every opening, we have been blessed to attract talented (average undergraduate GPA has steadily risen to exceed 3.5) and committed (retention rates typically exceed 95%) participants.

In addition to providing skills and credentials to become professional educators, ACE also engages its participants with manifold opportunities for spiritual growth. During the academic year, ACE teachers live, work, and pray together in communities of four to seven. These intentional faith communities not only offer invaluable professional support amid the rigors of beginning teaching, but they also provide new teachers with a peer community that nourishes and challenges their service and their spiritual lives. Finally, the development of the ACE teachers is significantly shaped by local resources—bishops, priests, school superintendents, principals, and assigned mentor teachers, all of whom nurture their professional and personal growth and help them to share the faith life of their local parish and school communities.

The integrated formation program and the multi-layered supports offered by ACE not only maximize retention during the two years of service, but also contribute to one of the unanticipated blessings of the program. At this point, over 70% of ACE’s 750 graduates remain in the field of education, with the majority continuing their service in Catholic schools. Seeing the Holy Spirit at work in powerful ways after presiding at commissioning Eucharist for the ACE teachers and learning more about the program, the late John Cardinal O’Connor invited us to see ACE as more than a program. Instead, he advised us to dream much larger, charging ACE to recognize its teachers and graduates as members of a lay apostolic movement in service to Catholic schools. As a result, prayerful discernment of one’s vocation has become a central theme of pastoral formation in ACE, and the percentage of recent graduates who remain in education continues to increase.

## APPENDIX E

### Build a National Initiative for the Academic Improvement of Catholic Schools

Recognizing that Catholic schools are called to be different from public schools, the initiative will also seek to build an interdisciplinary field of study that views Catholic education as an integrated endeavor—Catholic identity that informs moral and civic formation, which in turn permeates curriculum and instruction. Existing studies have addressed different aspects of Catholic schools, but often have done so in ways that fragment the holistic nature of the person—the student—who is the subject of formation. This initiative will allow researchers and practitioners to center their efforts on assessing coherently the structures, objectives, and outcomes of Catholic schools in order to lay a sound foundation for improvements that will ensure the excellence and effectiveness of Catholic primary and secondary schools nationwide. By expanding the exemplary work of the Center for Research on Educational Opportunity here at Notre Dame, led by Professor Maureen Hallinan, and investing in research on Catholic schools nationally, we can use existing institutional resources to facilitate the creation of the field of Catholic education. Whether examining notable innovations already in place in many Catholic elementary and secondary schools or investigating the extent and particulars of the “Catholic school advantage,” empirical research will be used to inform and reform practice as well as validate successful practices.

In addition, the Notre Dame Initiative will invest in the expansion and effective use of technology in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Many Catholic schools have achieved remarkable success in preparing students for the technological world even though they lack the technological resources that other public and private schools have. Still, it has become increasingly important for Catholic schools to have effective technology that meets administrative needs and advances instruction for both teachers and students. We will commit to increasing the presence of technology in Catholic schools and to providing teachers with the professional development and support to utilize this technology effectively in the classroom.