

## **CORE VALUE #1: CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

### **BELIEF STATEMENTS:**

1. We believe that the Catholic identity of our schools is richly expressed through daily prayer, liturgies, the integration of values and morals throughout the curriculum, individual behavior, service to others, the display of symbols of our faith, reception of the sacraments, and the celebration of Catholic traditions.
2. We believe Catholic schools are strong academically, producing polite, well-behaved, respectful students and good citizens.
3. We believe that Catholic schools must continue to strengthen their tradition of faith formation on behalf of the school family, the parish at large, and the local Catholic community.
4. We believe that a “disconnect” often exists between parish and school, and this gap must be bridged to create a stronger bond.
5. We believe that we must increase and improve efforts to educate the public about Catholic schools and dispel the notion that they are restricted only to Catholics and to the wealthy.

### **ACTION STEPS**

The following initiatives need to be enhanced to improve the **Catholic Identity** of our schools:

1. Ensure that every school’s mission statement prominently reflects a strong Catholic identity and is lived each and every day; ensure that the Holy Eucharist and the Gospel are intricately woven in to the life of the school;
2. Work with the Archdiocese to encourage strong pastoral support for and presence at our schools;
3. Foster the presence and involvement of religious communities at our schools;
4. Develop faith formation programs at the local and/or regional level involving both the school and parish communities;
5. Effectively market our rich tradition of Catholic identity, emphasizing family, morality, values, and the schools’ commitment to developing the next generation of practicing Catholics and good citizens;

6. Continue to promote the practice of our faith and visibly display its key symbols;
7. Recruit teachers and administrators who embrace Catholic identity and provide them with ongoing formation and leadership opportunities;
8. Cultivate the journey of faith formation by developing more of a continuum between kindergarten and college;
9. With the support of the pastor, work to integrate the school more effectively into the parish as a visible member of the community, Examples:
  - a. Schedule monthly children's liturgy with different grade levels participating each month; have school children dressed in uniforms for the liturgy and participating in Mass as lectors, cantors, and members of the children's choir;
  - b. Invite parishioners to the school for all events; recruit them as volunteers;
  - c. Offer to assist the parish with its own service projects;
10. Educate all Catholics – including those in parishes without schools – about how Catholic schools embody the teaching mission of the Church;
11. Develop outreach efforts to promote the benefits of a Catholic education for a more diverse audience including the Hispanic population and those of other faiths;
12. Utilize the schools to host programs and speakers addressing issues of interest to the school, parish, and local communities.