



Stakeholder Survey Report October 2024

compiled by Cindy Byrd, founder/owner



This report presents the results of the Stakeholder Survey conducted during August and September, using questions collaboratively developed with and agreed on by the members of the Catholic Schools Consortium, designed to achieve the following objectives:

Project Objectives	Actions
Obtain broad input	Identify stakeholder groups
Seek relevant input aligned with desired data and information	Customize questions for each stakeholder group and determine questions to ask of all stakeholder groups
Determine methods and timing of survey distribution	Develop survey notification and distribution plan
Ensure accessible, equitable options for providing input	Create stakeholder survey in hard copy, electronic, and Spanish versions; schedule focus group sessions with education commission members
Provide quantitative and qualitative data for steering committee consideration	Analyze survey responses; create report and deliver presentation

Surveys/Focus Groups

The Stakeholder Survey was completed anonymously and did not require respondents to directly associate themselves with any specific school or parish. The following groups were invited to participate in the survey:

16	Business Community (Illinois Valley – Peru, LaSalle, Oglesby)
136	Current Parents (Peru Catholic, Trinity Academy, and Holy Family)
480	Parish Members (Peru parishes, LaSalle parishes, Holy Family in Oglesby, and Nativity of Our Lord in Spring Valley)
41	Current CCD Parents (Peru parishes, LaSalle parishes, Holy Family in Oglesby, Nativity of Our Lord in Spring Valley, and St. Mary’s Church in Utica)
34	Current Faculty and Staff (Peru Catholic, Trinity Academy, and Holy Family)
707	Total Submissions

Additionally, four **focus groups** (two in-person and two virtual) were conducted with 21 Education Commission members from Peru Catholic, Trinity Academy, and Holy Family:

September 9, 5:15pm – 5 participants	September 10, 5:15pm – 4 participants
September 9, 6:30pm – 9 participants	September 10, 6:30pm – 3 participants

Findings were reviewed and analyzed to identify overarching themes regarding:

- What factors are considered when choosing a PreK-8th grade school option
- What existing aspects of the PreK-8th Catholic school experience are desired strengths
- What existing aspects of the PreK-8th Catholic school experience need to be improved
- What is missing from the PreK-8th Catholic school experience
- What level of parent/family support may exist if the school model changed
- What general perceptions and perspectives exist about Catholic school education

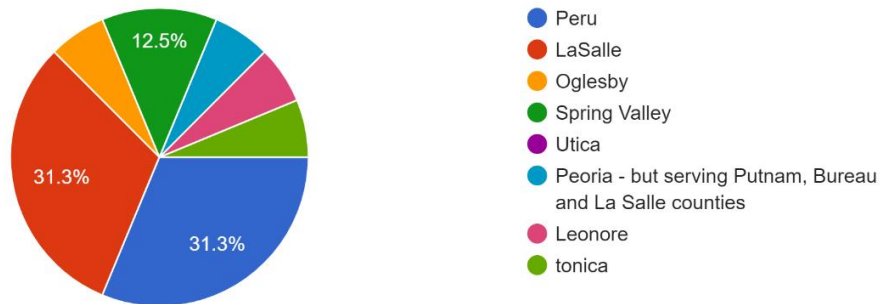
Key Findings

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Business Community Summary

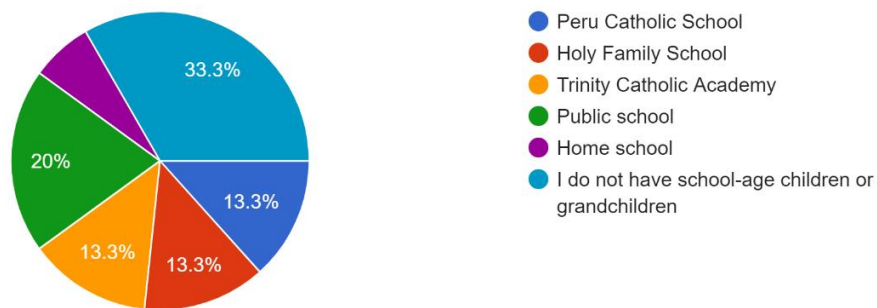
Where is your primary business location or place of employment?

16 responses



If you have school-age children or grandchildren, where do they attend PreK-8 school?

15 responses



Primary factors that would influence a decision to enroll in Catholic school:

Top Three
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proven academic program 2. Low teacher-student ratio 3. (TIE) Family-friendly school culture; secure and caring environment

When asked to identify the top five greatest educational needs:

	In the local workforce/community in general	In their specific business or organization
1	Reliability and accountability	Reliability and accountability
2	Communication skills	Communication skills
3	Problem solving/decision making	Teamwork and conflict resolution
4	Critical thinking	Problem solving/decision making
5	Professionalism in appearance	TIE - Initiative and self-drive and professionalism in appearance

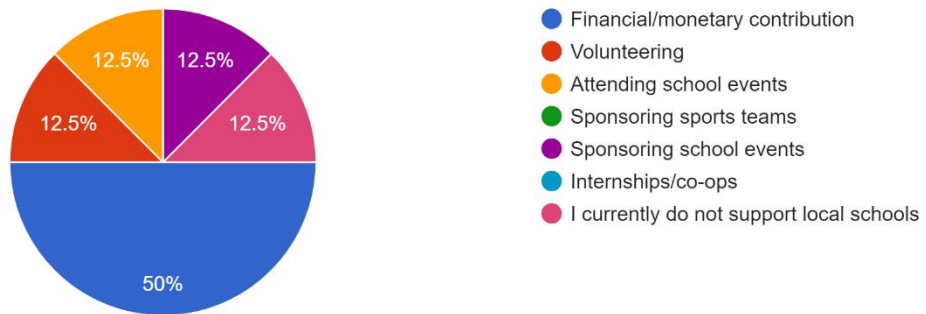
When asked to identify what matters most when considering which individuals to hire, these were the top three factors:

1. Reliability and accountability
2. Initiative and self-drive
3. Communication skills

They were also asked the following questions:

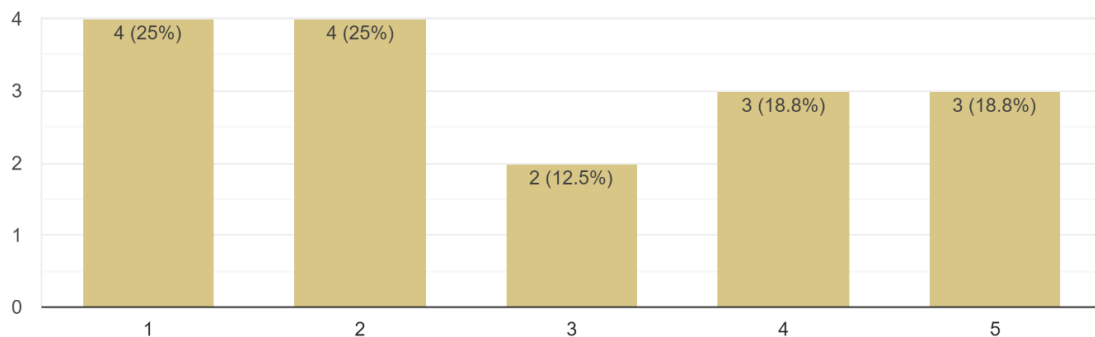
What is your preferred way to support local schools? Please mark only 1.

16 responses



Please indicate the likelihood that a tax deduction benefit would influence your business to make donations to Catholic school education.

16 responses



What do you think could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools?

I think expanding on the importance of community and being involved. As a tight knit community, I think it is important that we support each other and create a culture that these students want to remain a part of.

I'm not that involved with the Catholic school system, so I don't know.

Engagement with Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA, which offer boys and girls both social/leadership development and fun outdoor activities, serving body, heart and mind. Scouting is an excellent complement to Catholic education.

Acceptance

Don't go woke

More fundraising opportunities that are engaging for the community (love trivia nights, golf outings, etc). People are more open to donate when they're enjoying themselves while they do it

Community understanding the importance of a good basic reading, writing and 'rithmetic' along with learning to respect others.

More economical and racial diversity. Acceptance of other religious and cultural identities without judgement.

Better teacher pay, which would retain more long term teachers.

Trinity Academy campus would better serve the community. Church, School and ample parking!

Provide bussing, change the cost to include everything- NO constant fundraisers

Need to have a safe space committee. Kids need to feel safe at school.

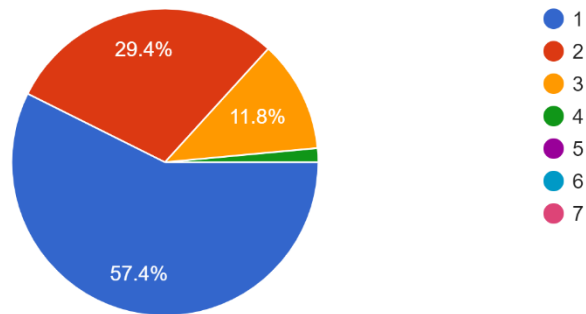
Additional comments (optional)

I love Catholic schools. My only issue is that my grandson was bullied at 2 Catholic schools in the area making it VERY difficult to support the school. I believe that if there is a NON-bully program, that needs to be implemented. (both the principal and the teacher resigned after the incident). My grandson was scared by the two schools. We have 3 other grandchildren and they will not be attending due to this. Very sad. He was in Peru and Oglesby. I think a welcome committee for sports and in general would help. He had transferred in a higher grade leaving him with NO friends and challenged. Please keep kids safe. We had hope and it was stolen from our whole family.

Current School Parent Summary

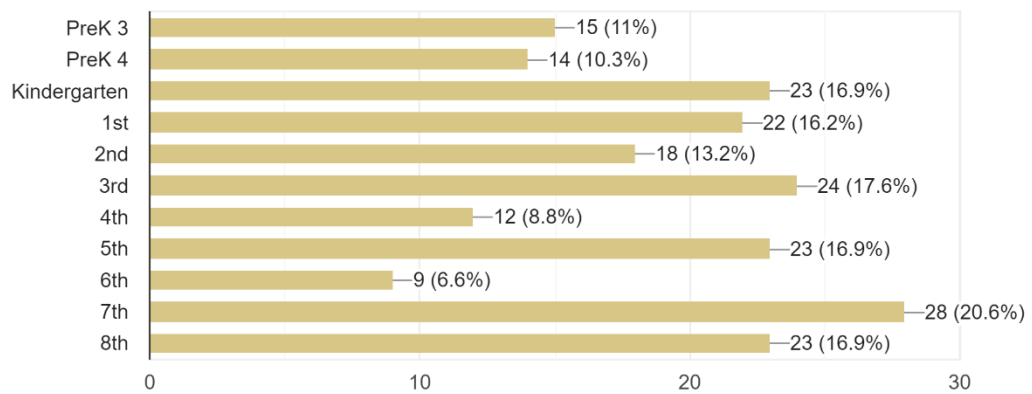
How many children do you currently have attending a PreK-8 Catholic school?

136 responses



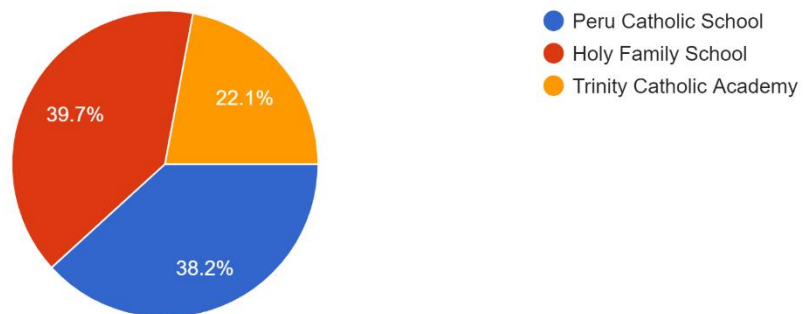
And in which grades? Please check all that apply.

136 responses



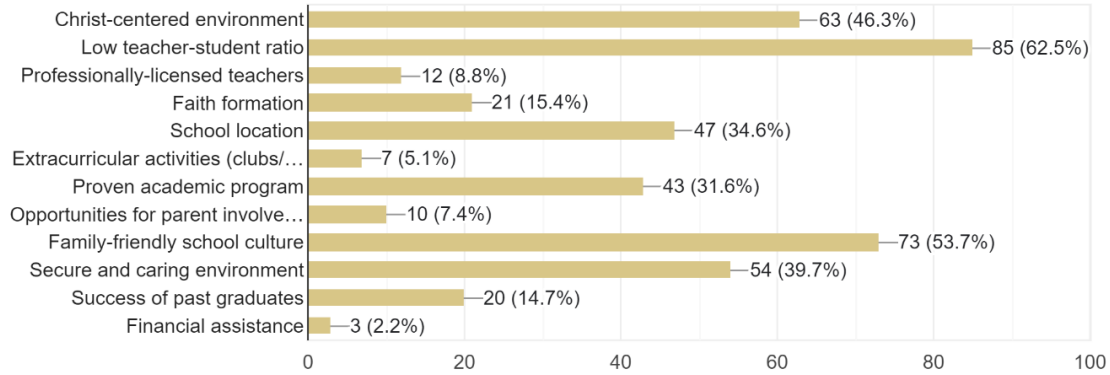
Please indicate where your children attend school.

136 responses



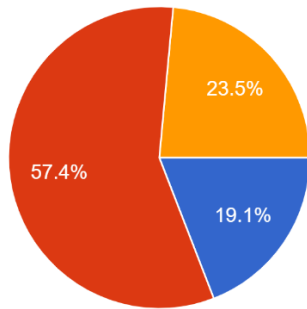
What were your top three primary reasons for enrolling your child/children in a Catholic school?
Please mark only three.

136 responses



Part of ensuring school viability is determining optimal class sizes. Which of the following statements most accurately conveys your mindset concerning class size?

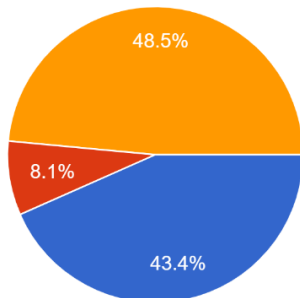
136 responses



- Class size would not determine my family's choice to attend/not attend a Catholic school.
- I would not send my child to a school with classes larger than 20-25 students.
- I would not send my child to a school with classes larger than 30 students (with a certified teacher's aide).

A School Model defines the physical structure of a school (for example: a school in one building, a school with multiple campuses, etc.). Enhancing ...eK-8 School Model best meets your family's needs?

136 responses

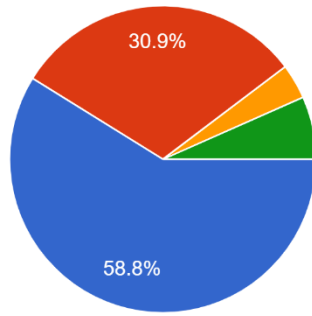


- My family supports either model.
- My family supports a School Model that includes multiple campuses.
- My family supports a School Model that contains grades PreK-8 on the same campus.

NOTE: Here is the rest of the question above that was cut off for some reason: Enhancing Catholic schools may include considering school model options. Which PreK-8 School Model best meets your family's needs?

How far would your family be willing to drive for Catholic school?

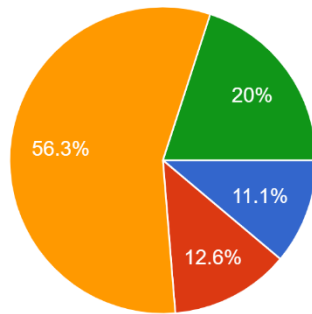
136 responses



- My family would drive 10 minutes.
- My family would drive 20 minutes.
- My family would drive 30 minutes.
- My family would drive the necessary distance.

What tuition scale structure would your family support?

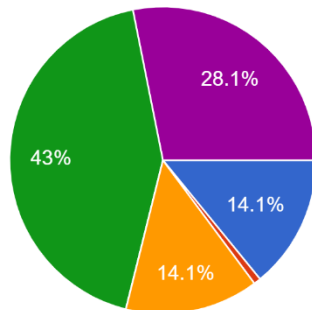
135 responses



- An expectation that parents pay the actual cost to educate each of their children.
- A per child tuition scale for families, regardless of the number of children.
- A tiered tuition scale for families with multiple children
- A sliding scale based on financial need

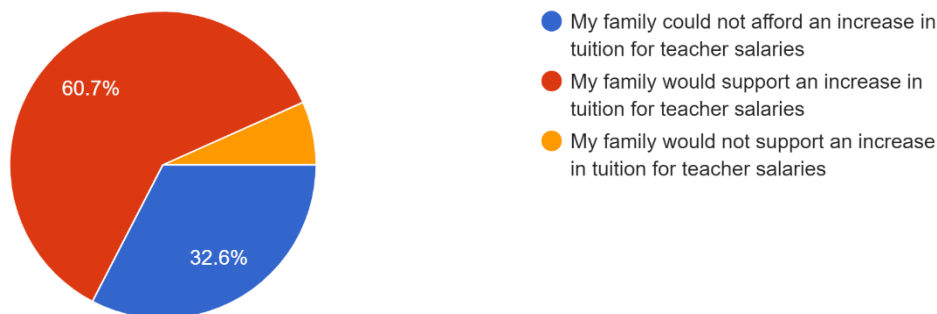
If the tuition scale were a tiered structure, what tuition range is affordable for your family?

135 responses



- My family will pay the needed tuition for a quality religious education and a competitive teacher compensation package.
- Between \$5,000-\$6,000 for one child rate
- Between \$4,000-\$5,000 for one child rate
- Less than \$4,000 for the one child rate
- A tiered tuition scale for multiple children

Our teachers are currently compensated less than their peers in the respective local school districts. Would your family support an increase to your current tuition for teacher salaries to increase?
135 responses



What are 1-2 aspects you love about Catholic elementary school education that you would like to see continue? Common responses and their ranking are summarized below:

Ranking	Topic
1	Small class sizes/student-teacher ratio/1-on-1 education
2	Sense of community/family; family friendly, family oriented
3	Faith, faith-based, faith formation
4	Teachers (caring, great, dedicated)
5	Religious structure/religious education/mass
6	Family/parent involvement
7	Prayer/Prayer Partners/ability to pray to God during school
8	Character development/morals/values/respect
9	Challenging curriculum/strong academics/good, great, quality education
10	Location/close to home

What could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools? Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Staff	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified/licensed teachers • Improved ability to recruit and retain quality teachers • Better salary/pay/benefits • Professional development for teachers • More aides, paraprofessionals • Social worker/counselors • School nurse • Janitorial staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General improvement/upgrade • Air conditioning • Restrooms • Athletic facilities • Outdoor play area • Maintenance

Academics	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern education in Catholic setting • Better, tougher, improved • Curriculum development • Spanish • Music • Writing (themes, essays) • Math • More hands-on, applied learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support staff/services • Services for students with special needs, learning disabilities • Academic support/tutoring • Social worker/counselors • Aides/paraprofessionals • School nurse • Hot lunches
Technology	Extracurriculars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Classroom usage • Upgraded/up to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities other than sports • Band, Choir • Drama
Tuition	Diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower cost • Lower tuition rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More inclusive • Greater diversity in classes

What's missing from Catholic elementary schools? Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Academics	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign language/Spanish • Career Tech Education (CTE) • Advanced classes/honors • STEM • Remedial classes • Science in kindergarten • Music, theater, art • Better prep for St. Bede • Field trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI support • Services for students with IEPs • Accommodations for students with special needs, learning disabilities • Counselors • School nurse • Hot lunches
Facilities	Extracurriculars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air conditioning • Safe outdoor space • Up to date technology • Athletic facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choir and band • Stagecraft • Sports • Athletics for lower grades • Golf and tennis
Tuition	Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance • Lower tuition rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses • Bus system
Staff	Class Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better pay, continuity, certification for teachers • Janitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger, to increase diversity • Limited to 20 • No combined classes

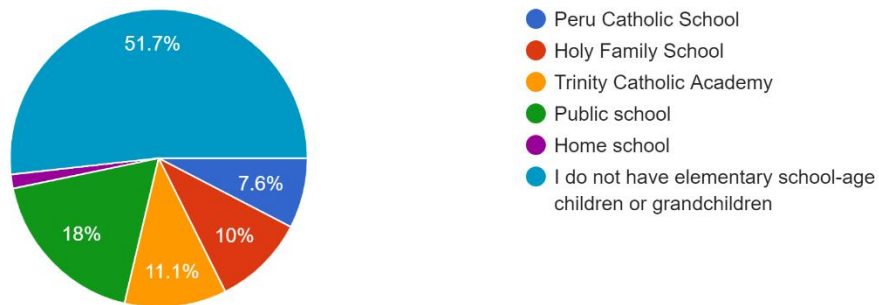
Parents were also invited to add optional comments. Notable comments include:

- The inconvenience/challenge of multiple locations related to:
 - Time it would take if children were at multiple locations
 - Transportation
 - Start and dismissal times (would they be different at each school)
- Maintaining curriculum standards and teacher certification are important
- Weary of constant fundraising and tuition increases
- Concerned about larger classes and the impact on one-to-one attention (student to teacher ratio) and on friendships that have formed
- Prefer that their child would be confirmed before high school
- Support consolidation
 - With the expectations of improvement and more competitive with public schools
 - Believe tuition should go down, however, if not going to be getting the “full small private school” experience they signed up for
- Opposed to consolidation - would send their children to public schools (2)

Parishioner Summary

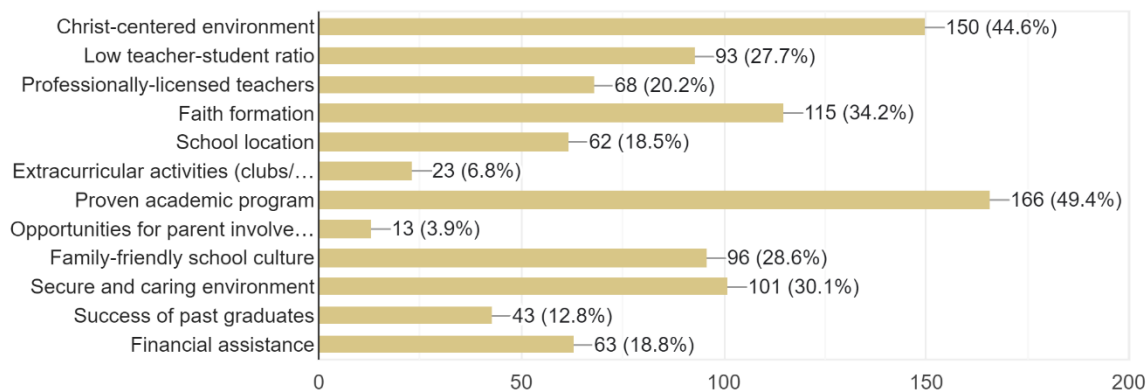
If you have school-age children or grandchildren, where do they attend PreK-8 school?

460 responses



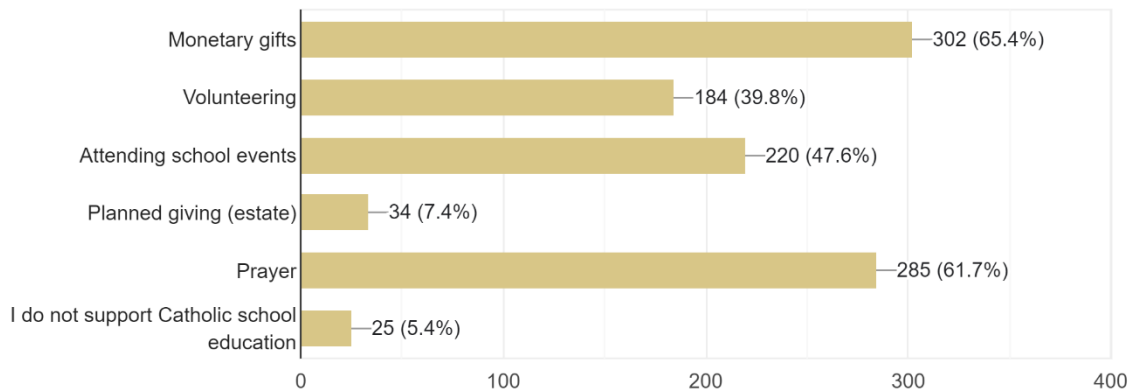
If your children/grandchildren are not currently attending Catholic School, please mark the 3 primary things that you believe would influence a decision to enroll in Catholic School. Please mark only 3.

336 responses



What are your preferred ways to support Catholic school education? Please mark all that apply.

462 responses



What are 1-2 aspects you love about Catholic elementary school education that you would like to see continue? Common responses and their ranking are summarized below:

Ranking	Topic
1	Religion/religious education/prayer/mass/sacraments
2	Sense of belonging/community/family
3	Faith, faith formation
4	Morals/values/discipline/respect/reliability/responsibility
5	Small class size/smaller school
6	Strong academics/high standards
7	Teachers/administration
8	Community service
9	Extracurricular opportunities, uniforms (tie)
10	Diversity and safety (tie)

What could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools? Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Diversity	Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase diversity of student body • More inclusivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus service (if consolidation occurs) • Transportation assistance • Bus from western parishes • Bussing if 10+ miles away
Class Size	Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No combined classes • Keep small classes • No small classes • Individualized instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No bullying (10) • Consistent behavior management • Teaching kindness • Stop turning a blind eye to bullying
External Relations	Funding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community outreach • More marketing and advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore creative ways to increase funding

What could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools? Continued.

Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Staff	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More religious teachers • Quality teachers and administrators • Competitive pay; living wage • Utilize volunteers more to assist staff • Teachers who know and live faith • Principals who lead in both faith and conflict resolution and in teacher development • Support for teachers • Music/choir teacher shared by IV schools • Sound leadership in priests (value student involvement in church events) • Teachers who are actually Catholic • Certified teachers • Assistant teachers, aides • Salary and benefits comparable to public school teachers • Re-evaluate Diocesan policies • Part-time interventionist • More nuns • Make nuns and priests serve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New facilities • Improved facilities • Air conditioning • Improve older buildings • Modern facilities and equipment • Security cameras at all entry points • A great playground • Improved technology/media • Up-to-date technology in classrooms • Better technology for students • A full kitchen
Academics/Curriculum	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase emphasis on reading, writing • Art, music, Spanish • Sign language • Service learning • Better Catholic faith-based curriculum for every subject, not just religion • Better Catechism • More focus on faith formation • Basic finance, HomeEc, shop, music • Fine arts • STEM • Health • Vocational classes • Languages • PE daily • Improve science and sex ed classes • Wider-based curriculum • Stronger, higher quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support special needs students • Must adjust/adapt to students with learning differences • Services for kids with learning disorders • Tools to support different learning styles and needs • Support diverse needs • Social, emotional learning • Tutoring • Specialized help • Speech and physical therapy • Counseling • Services for neurodivergent students • Hot lunch

What could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools? Continued.

Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Tuition/Costs	Extracurriculars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support of different cultures and their ability to pay • Lower cost/more affordable • Tuition assistance • State scholarships • Ability to buy uniforms at affordable stores vs. online store • Exchange program – i.e., work at the school for tuition assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic program favoritism is out of control/limited opportunities • Too much focus on sports • Increased variety of clubs • Increased community service • Choir, theater • Student council • More clubs • Social club for teens
Consolidation	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only way the schools will survive • Consolidate and follow the example of closing parishes • One building for Peru-LaSalle-Oglesby • Combine 3 into Illinois Valley school • Time to have only 1 school • Combine – more cost effective • Some combining may be inevitable • Consolidate the schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent involvement • Seamless transition to high school • Stress importance of students attending weekly mass • Encourage parishioners to participate in school activities/keep us informed • Keener awareness of today’s family structure/challenges of young families • Freedom of religion • More involvement in mass • Partner with public schools on community service projects

Parishioners were also invited to add optional comments. Notable comments include:

Prefer home school/Seton home study for these reasons:

- Better Catholic experience than in the schools
- Catholic schools have just become private schools – majority of teachers and students are not Catholic; majority of teachers and children don’t actively attend church
- Schools have gotten away from a true Catholic education
- Lack of a faith-based environment
- Lack of focus on Christ
- Most teachers not teaching faith

NOTE: Home school committee/program claims to have more Catholics attending their group than are actually in the local Catholic school

Prefer public school for these reasons:

- Stronger academics
- Higher quality teachers and updated teaching practices
- Serve students with different/special needs
- No cost
- More diversity

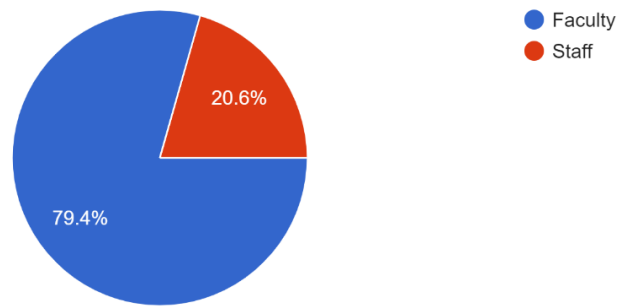
Additional notable comments:

- Believe the Diocese should increase funding to schools
- Agree that parents should have a choice between public and Catholic schools
- Support consolidation (12 respondents)

Faculty/Staff Summary:

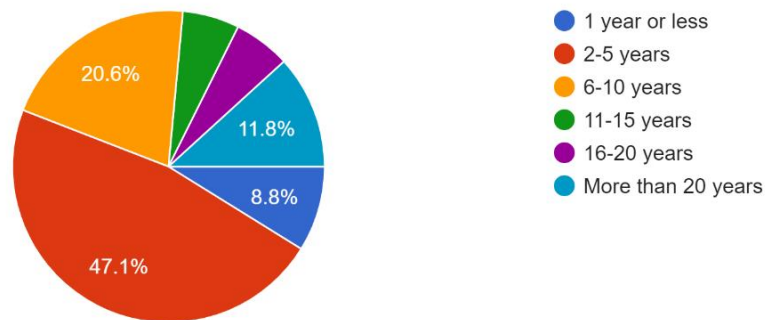
Which of the following best describes you?

34 responses



How long have you been teaching or working at a Catholic school?

34 responses



What are one-two aspects that you love about your Catholic school that you would like to see continue? Common responses and their ranking are included below:

Ranking	Topic
1	Family/closeness/community
2	Faith, faith-based, faith formation
3	Morals/values/character development
4	Prayer/mass
5	Small class size/smaller teacher-student ratio
6	Prayer Partners/Church Buddies
7	Collaboration and communication among teachers/administration
8	Strong academics/academic excellence
9	Catholic identity
10	School-wide events, location, safe environment (3-way tie)

What could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools? Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

<p style="text-align: center;">Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive salaries • Support staff • More staff and resources for staff • More aides • Social worker • Janitor to do daily cleaning • Special education teacher • Certified teachers • Dedicated person for students with learning disabilities, IEPs, 504 plans 	<p style="text-align: center;">Student Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special education • Support for struggling students • Support for students with learning disabilities • Support for students who need aides • Support for diverse learning needs and styles • Access to testing and help for struggling students • More than 2 days of RTI
<p style="text-align: center;">Academics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More specialized classes, such as Spanish and music • Curriculum in general • Music, Spanish • More electives • Newer, better curriculum • Advanced classes 	<p style="text-align: center;">Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better facilities • Cleanliness • Safety needs to be improved (cameras at doors and in hallways) • Cleanliness of bathrooms
<p style="text-align: center;">Tuition/Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More affordable for middle- and lower- class families • Better support from Diocese • More fundraising/donors to lower cost 	<p style="text-align: center;">External Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the positive aspects of the Catholic school system • Show the help/tuition assistance that is offered already
<p style="text-align: center;">Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For curriculum and learning tools • Updated materials and supplies • To be able to purchase needed materials and supplies 	<p style="text-align: center;">Student Behavior/Ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline and challenge have decreased • Teach students to show more respect • Do not hesitate to remove students who fail to thrive after several years
<p style="text-align: center;">Extracurriculars</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Parent Involvement</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental religious leadership
<p style="text-align: center;">Transportation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Other</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To and from school • To and from extracurricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priests explaining the parts of mass, Benediction, Adoration in age-appropriate language for each class

What is missing that should be part of the Catholic elementary school student experience?

Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Academics	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latin • 21st century technology skills • More electives for junior high • Fine arts (theater, choir, band) • Music • Spanish • More opportunities for field trips • Liturgical music and choir • More electives • Increased rigor • STEM and coding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special education • Social/emotional learning • Chromebooks • New textbooks each year, especially religion • Updated hot lunch menu (same each week) • Support for disabilities • Counseling • Academic support
Facilities	Priests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better facilities • Modern technology (smartboards) • Air conditioning • Security system • Dedicated space for a chapel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased presence • Visit classrooms regularly • More priest interaction and involvement with the schools
Extracurriculars	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sports lacking • More clubs, sports, after-school activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each student should have a qualified teacher • Learning aides • Support staff for struggling students or those facing difficult challenges
Community Service	Parent Involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actually doing community service, not just approaching the community when fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More involved in encouraging their children

What is missing that should be part of the Catholic elementary school teacher and

staff experience? Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Staff	Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraprofessionals • Special education • A technology director • Aides • Special assistant for students needing more help • More substitute teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Latin and church history • More professional development as a group • More retreats focused on bringing God and religion into the classroom • More targeted professional development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning staff • Teachers with special ed degrees • More 1-1 aides • Dedicated personnel for recess duty at lunch (not teachers) • Support in the classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More informed about trends and best practices in education • More opportunities for religion development • Professional development specific to teaching in Catholic schools • Workshop with PDF hours on ways to enhance religious teaching, crafts, and activities to strengthen student knowledge of religious history
Facilities	Compensation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern technology (smartboards and Chromebooks) • Air conditioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pay • More competitive pay • Adjusted pay scales to reflect cost of living and job expertise • Beginning of year stipend
Other	BLANK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written explanation of building procedures (attendance/grading system, extra duties, etc.) • Planned staff meetings that are taken into account in the school calendar • More planning time during the day • Longer lunch periods • IDs 	

Additional comments (optional) 8 responses

There is so much positive in the Catholic education system that as an educator I did not know existed here for families. better PR.

I just want to thank you all for investing time and energy into figuring out what Catholic education in the Illinois Valley needs in order to sustain well into the future. God bless you all.

I taught at St Pat's in LaSalle for 15 years. I then moved to a public school and taught for 23 years. I came out of retirement to teach here. I love teaching here. I do feel 3 schools are too many in our area.

I want to emphasize the importance of considering the impact on our families who work tirelessly to provide a Catholic education for their children. Many of our families already travel significant distances to attend our schools, and it's crucial that any decisions about maintaining multiple locations take this into account. Ensuring that we minimize the burden on our families by considering travel distances will help continue to support and honor their commitment to our educational community.

It's time to make Catholic education a priority, way better marketing, updated schools

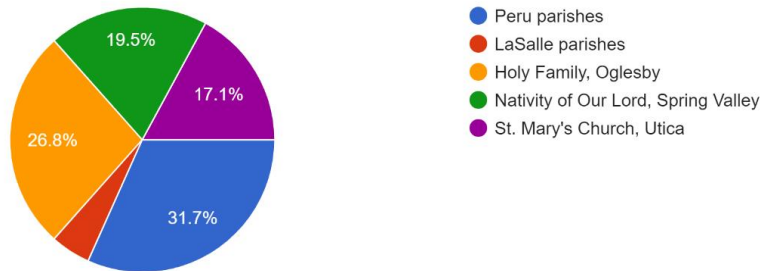
Lots of parents feel very strongly about keeping their school building as in many cases they themselves may have gone to school at these Catholic schools in our area. I fully believe a consolidation needs to happen however it needs to happen in a very careful compassionate way as it will be very stressful times for parents, students, and teachers. There is a lot of emotion tied up in this potential process.

I feel very blessed to teach at a Catholic school and be able to talk about God, Jesus, our Blessed Mother Mary and the saints and how we can do our best to live our lives like them. Religion class is one of my favorite classes to teach as it is the most rewarding for me and my students but also, the most engaging for my students. There is nothing it seems they like to talk about more than their faith.

CCD Parent Summary:

Please select the parish where your children participate in CCD.

41 responses



Please indicate how many children you have and their ages:

# of children	1 - 5 resp.	2 – 17 resp.	3 – 14 resp.	4 – 1 resp.	5 – 1 resp.	7 – 1 resp.
Age breakdown	8 None given 12 9 6	11 & 13 13 & 11 8 & 6 10 & 7 10 & 8 10 & 5 16 & 12 6 & 2 6 & 8 13 & 8 17 & 12 16 & 11 13 & 19 14 & 13 9 & 5 4 & 7 6 & 9 10 & 8 10 & 5	2, 5, & 7 21, 17, 10 13, 12, & 8 7, 4, & 2 17, 11, & 8 7, 13, & 14 7, 4, & 1 22, 15, & 10 11, 10, & 8 10, 8, 6 mos. 12, 10, & 8 All 10 yrs. 9, 7, & 2 16, 14, & 10	no ages given	3, 12, 14, 16, and 18	5 ½, 7, 8, 9, 12, 20, 22

Where do your children attend PreK-8 school?

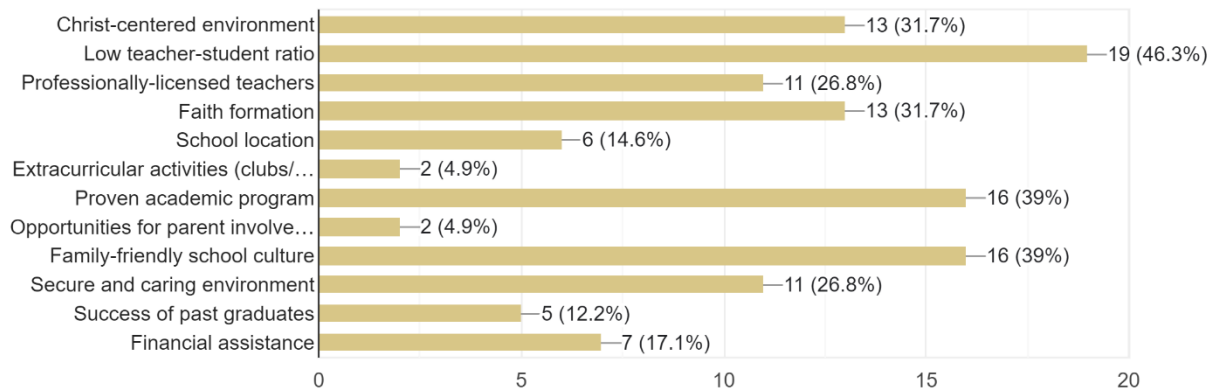
- Northview – 6
- Parkside – 3
- JFK – 4
- Waltham Elementary – 6
- Deer Park – 2
- DePue Unit School – 3
- DePue High School - 1
- Peru Public – 2
- Northwest Elementary – 2
- Oglesby Lincoln - 6
- Oglesby public schools - 1
- St. Mike Streator - 1
- Oglesby #125 - 1
- Peru Catholic – 1 PreK and 1 10yrs.
- Dimmick - 1
- Oglesby Washington - 1
- Peru Catholic - 1
- Lincoln junior high – 1
- Lincoln Elementary - 1
- Ladd School – 1

What are the primary reasons you chose to enroll your child/children at that school?

Ranking	Reason
1	Cost - 13
2	Location – 11
3	Good school/curriculum – 10
4	Great or experienced teachers - 8
5	Access to extra resources for students needing accommodations, IEP’s etc. – 5
6	Classes were too small at Catholic school - 2
7	Family works there - 2
8	Extracurriculars – 2
9	Friends - 1
10	Better preparation for the future - 1

Please mark the 3 primary things that would influence you to enroll your child/children in Catholic School. Please mark only 3.

41 responses



What could be better, enhanced, or improved in Catholic elementary schools? Responses fell into the following primary categories (not in any ranked order):

Cost	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower price/tuition • Affordability • Tuition assistance • Payment plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More help for kids with learning disabilities, 504, IEP's • Speech therapy • Better resources
Academics	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer classes • Music • Spanish and other language • 21st century learning • More tech-related applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated schools • State of the art technology • Advanced technology • Updated classrooms
Staff	Morals/Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued education for teachers specifically in Executive Function disorders • Aides to accommodate students with learning disabilities • Pay teachers more/well • Certified, licensed, qualified teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less focus on sports • More focus on being good, caring people
Extracurriculars	Consolidation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities that aren't sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine schools for better class size and for better sports programs

Additional comments (optional)

Despite being a graduate of a local Catholic school who had a good experience as a child, I chose to send our kids to public school and attend CCD. This decision was due to cost, the fact that my spouse is not Catholic, and because we did not feel comfortable with the atmosphere of the local Catholic schools. There seems to be way too much emphasis on sports and money and not enough on God. Many times our kids had games scheduled on Wednesdays with the Catholic schools because no one thinks about the kids who have CCD on Wednesdays. If you go to your game, you get an unexcused absence at CCD. If you go to CCD, you may not get to play in the next game. The schools seem very clique-y and unwelcoming to those of us who are not rich. I believe my kids have learned more in 1 hour per week about our faith than many of the students who attend Catholic schools full time, and that is very sad to me.

I feel most Catholic Schools have proper school rules and handbooks however, I know that enforcement of such rules is selective! This situation is NOT new it has been happening for decades and it negatively impacts both school enrollment and church attendance.

I would love for both of my children to attend a Catholic school in the Illinois Valley area, preferably Peru. The stairs are a challenge for my daughter & the Physical Therapy my daughter receives through an IEP would not be honored in a Catholic school setting makes it very difficult to switch to a Catholic school. As a Holy Cross alum, I already know the value of a Catholic education but unfortunately the Catholic school systems do not serve special needs well.

We loved having our children attend the Catholic school but we were turned away during a child's difficult time. It's been a few years and it's still hard to process how a child of God was asked to leave and not offered assistance or understanding. This will forever affect my son who has now received the assistance through public schools to manage his disability and grow into an amazing student.

We would love to send our kids to catholic if it didn't cost an arm and a leg.

My youngest would still be enrolled at Peru Catholic if not for the small class size and the constant revolving door at principal.

More welcoming from the teacher to families with low income.

Education Commission Focus Groups Summary

What influenced your decision to be a member of the Education Commission?

Number	Reason
8	Have kids attending the school
8	To make the school better/shape the future
8	Wanted to be more involved and supportive
5	Was asked/invited by priest or principal
2	To represent our geographic region or parish
2	Long-time supporter of Catholic school

What is the primary reason you support the school you serve as a commission member?

Number	Reason
6	Dedication to Catholic schools and faith
4	Community feel/school is like family
4	Kids attend the school
4	Moral teachings/values
4	Better than public school
3	Location
3	Smaller school, smaller classes
3	Know the staff and teachers
3	Faith formation
3	Education/academics
2	Parish member
1	Good teachers

What would the ideal Catholic PreK-8 School look like or be like?

Staff	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teacher for every grade • Support staff • Top teachers, well compensated • Competitive wages • Certified teachers • Decreased teacher turnover • More aides • Career-oriented teachers (longevity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in one building • New, modern building • Two gyms (to help with scheduling practices) • New building for all, new school • All new amenities and technology • Nice athletic facilities • 350-400 students in a new building
Academics/Curriculum	Finances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Music • Quality education • Good education program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially sound • Sustainable, stable • More money to support schools • Economies of scale (1 vs. 3)
Location	Environment/Culture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to a church • Drive time 30 minutes or under • Parks near by • Drive time no more than 15 minutes • Good traffic flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of community • Positive • Diverse • Strong Catholic identity • A board vs. Education Commission
Class Size	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not over 25 • Medium – 15-25 students • Good teacher/student ratio • Keep classes smaller 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot lunches • Tutoring • IEP support • Occupational & physical therapy
Extracurriculars	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics • Band and choir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable tuition • Competitive with public schools

What do you believe would build the kind of brand loyalty that would cause people to turn down sending their children to (or people working for) other schools and choose a Catholic school?

Academics/Curriculum	Administration/Operations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same curriculum as public schools • Top-notch academics • Art • Music • Students that excel • Preparedness for high school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run like a business • Organized and respectful (no last-minute info/requests) • Well-run systems and communication • Active, involved clergy
Staff	External Relations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership (open and collaborative) • Administration and teachers demonstrate values • Increased teacher compensation • Quality of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market as a private vs. Catholic school • Increase enrollment • Showcase what the schools are doing • Increase community involvement, such as non-Catholic professionals
Extracurriculars	Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winning athletic programs • More, such as a track team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New, up-to-date building
Cost	Faith/Faith Formation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower costs (but balance with Christ-centered environment) • Keep tuition down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious education • Mass • Prayer Partners • Church Buddies

From your perspective, what's already going well that would support a brand like that?

Environment	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive, safe • Supportive • Family feel • Welcoming • Camaraderie • Parent involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good administration • Good faculty • Teachers • Strong administration and leadership • Visionary leaders • Teacher retention and all are certified
Academics	Morals/Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellence • Student outcomes • Quality • Top students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No bullying or theft • More disciplined and respectful • Values • How to be good people • Well-rounded, higher values
Extracurriculars	Class Size
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good options • Co-op sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small school • Smaller classes

From your perspective, what needs to be improved in order to become a brand like that:

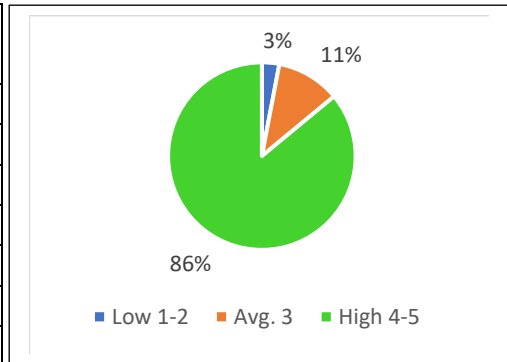
Finances	Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A boost in support • An endowment fund • Financially sound • Decreased fundraising (too many) • Centralized fundraising (1 vs. 3 schools) • Diocese needs to increase support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher status (qualified, professional, certified) • Higher quality teachers • Decreased teacher turnover • Recruitment and retention of qualified teachers • Aides
External Relations	Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better marketing (close proximity of 4 schools – reluctant to compete with each other for students) • Increased advertisement • Increased community involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower cost • Show that tuition can be affordable (monthly breakdown)
Facilities	Academics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated buildings • New technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish • Music
Class Size	Student Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No combined classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to serve special needs

Additional Data

General Perceptions/Perspectives about Catholic Education

The following question was asked of all six stakeholder groups: “How important do you think a Catholic school education is to the communities in this area?” Please provide your rating on a scale of 1 being not at all important to 5 being very important.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	0	3	18
Faculty/Staff	0	0	1	4	29
Parishioner	2	8	40	90	332
Current Parent	3	5	22	27	79
CCD Parent	1	2	13	10	15
Business Community	1	1	4	5	5
TOTALS	7	16	80	139	478

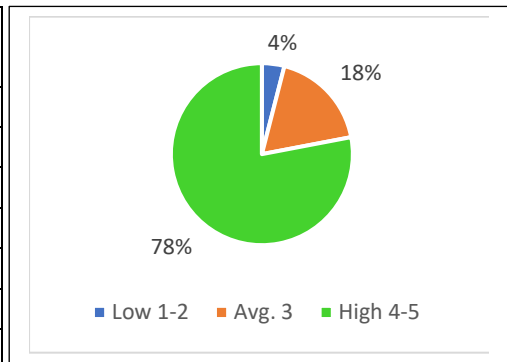


All stakeholder groups were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following eight statements. The rating was 1, strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

NOTES: 1) The business community was not asked to rate statement #1. 2) Some respondents did not rate all eight statements.

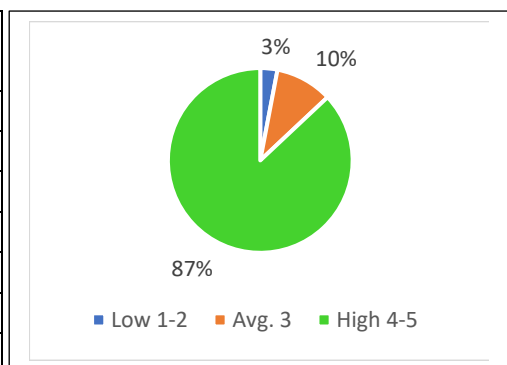
Statement 1: Catholic Schools form children to be disciples of Jesus.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	1	6	13
Faculty/Staff	0	0	3	4	27
Parishioners	6	13	73	143	237
Current Parents	2	8	31	36	59
CCD Parents	0	1	15	14	11
Business Community	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTALS	8	22	123	189	347



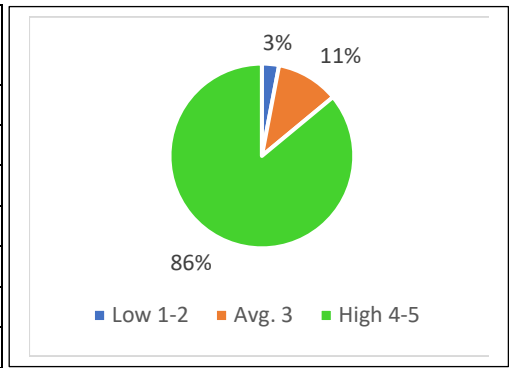
Statement 2: Catholic schools enhance children’s moral development and self-discipline.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	0	2	18
Faculty/Staff	0	0	1	4	29
Parishioners	3	10	43	127	287
Current Parents	2	2	13	48	71
CCD Parents	0	2	10	17	12
Business Community	0	0	5	5	6
TOTALS	5	14	72	203	423



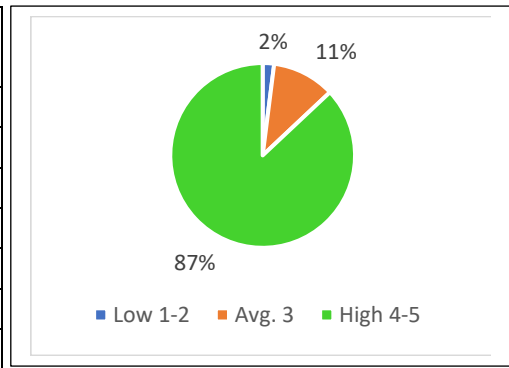
Statement 3: Catholic schools foster a sense of community and belonging.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	0	3	17
Faculty/Staff	0	0	1	1	32
Parishioners	4	12	52	116	286
Current Parents	1	0	15	42	78
CCD Parents	1	0	12	13	15
Business Community	0	0	2	6	8
TOTALS	6	12	82	181	436



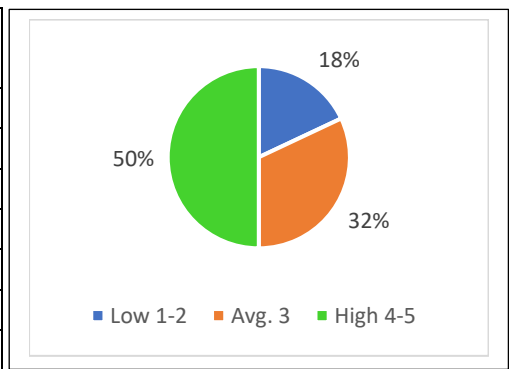
Statement 4: Catholic schools provide opportunities for service.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	0	4	16
Faculty/Staff	0	0	1	3	30
Parishioners	4	7	50	131	276
Current Parents	0	2	17	44	73
CCD Parents	0	0	11	20	10
Business Community	0	0	3	8	5
TOTALS	4	9	82	210	410



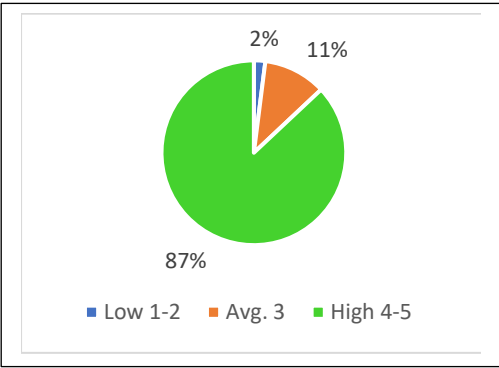
Statement 5: Catholic schools support students with different learning styles and needs.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	6	8	3	3
Faculty/Staff	3	5	9	10	7
Parishioners	23	42	130	110	149
Current Parents	7	22	53	30	24
CCD Parents	4	11	17	8	1
Business Community	1	2	7	1	5
TOTALS	38	88	224	162	189



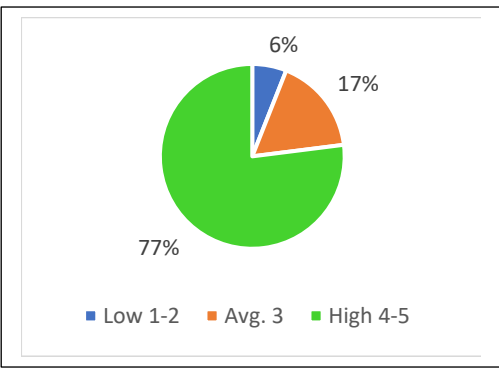
Statement 6: Catholic schools are safe and secure.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	1	6	13
Faculty/Staff	0	1	2	12	19
Parishioners	3	7	47	146	262
Current Parents	0	1	15	53	67
CCD Parents	0	0	7	22	12
Business Community	0	1	5	6	4
TOTALS	3	10	77	245	377



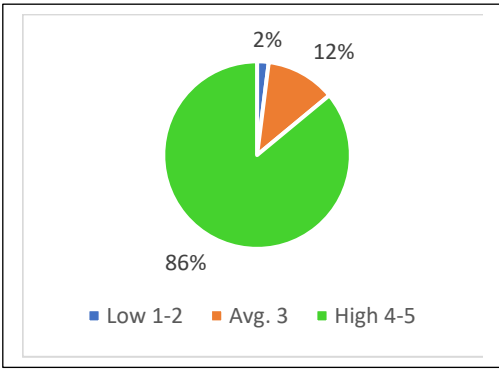
Statement 7: Catholic schools have a diverse student body and welcoming atmosphere.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	1	3	6	10
Faculty/Staff	0	0	5	8	21
Parishioners	6	20	65	131	241
Current Parents	1	6	26	56	47
CCD Parents	3	2	16	12	8
Business Community	1	3	5	3	4
TOTALS	11	32	120	216	331



Statement 8: Catholic schools challenge students academically.

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4	5
Education Commission	0	0	1	4	15
Faculty/Staff	0	0	0	6	28
Parishioners	5	9	50	136	265
Current Parents	0	2	13	44	77
CCD Parents	0	1	12	16	12
Business Community	0	0	6	5	5
TOTALS	5	12	82	211	402



Conclusions

An analysis of survey and focus group responses reveals the common themes in two broad categories: 1) What is going well; what influences enrollment decisions and 2) what could be better, changed, or is missing. Within each matrix, there is an indication of how each group ranked their **top three**. This ranking can be correlated to the importance and/or value they associate with each factor.

If a factor was mentioned but did not rank in the top three, it is marked with an X.

	What is going well; what would influence enrollment decisions	Bus. Comm.	Current Parent	Parish Member	Faculty Staff	CCD Parent	Educ. Comm.
1	Sense of community/family feel and culture	3	2	x	1	2	1
2	Faith-based, faith formation		3	3	2	3	x
3	Low teacher-student ratio/small classes	2	1	x	x	1	x
4	Teachers/administration		x	x	x	x	1
5	Religious education and daily/weekly integration		x	1	x		
6	Morals, values, discipline, character development		x	3	3	x	2
7	Location or cost		x		x	1	
8	Extracurriculars (clubs/sports)			x		x	x
9	Strong or proven academics, student outcomes	1	x	1	x	2	3
10	Christ-centered environment; secure and caring environment	x	3	2	x	3	x

	What could be better, changed, or is missing	Bus. Comm.	Current Parent	Parish Member	Faculty Staff	CCD Parent	Educ. Comm.
1	Staffing	3	x	1	3	1	2
2	Affordability, tuition assistance		x	x	x	2	x
3	Facilities		3	3	x	3	x
4	Academics/curriculum		1	2	1	2	x
5	Student resources		2	3	2	3	
6	Safety, attention to bullying, morals, and values	2		x	x	x	
7	Extracurricular opportunities		x	x	x	x	x
8	Catholic identity			x	x	x	
9	Increased diversity	x	x	x			
10	Community engagement/ external relations	1		x	x		3
11	Bus transportation	x	x	x	x		
12	Class sizes (larger, but not too large; no combined classes)		x	x			x
13	Funding/finances			x	x		1

Summary of Key Strengths and Weaknesses	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sense of community/family feel and culture -Low teacher-student ratio; small classes -Strong or proven academics, good student outcomes -Faith-based, faith formation -Morals, values, discipline, character development -Christ-centered environment; secure and caring environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Academics, curriculum -Staffing (pay, recruitment, retention, lack of specific staff support) -Facilities (outdated, unclean, uninviting) -Discipline/bullying not adequately addressed -No services for special needs students -Affordability, funding gaps -Extracurricular opportunities -Lack of bus transportation -Use of non-certified teachers

Typically, strengths show where value is added and weaknesses show where value is lacking. However, it's also critical to understand the role of competitive necessities, which are what schools **must** do because they are expected of all providers. For Catholic schools, there are two categories of competitive necessities as shown below:

Competitive Necessities in Education	Additional Competitive Necessities in Catholic Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student-centered -Quality faculty who work collaboratively -21st century technology integration -Student outcomes/assessment/testing -Core standards -Caring, welcoming atmosphere -Challenging, contemporary curriculum -Extracurricular activities -Experiential/applied learning -Character, life skills, and leadership development opportunities -Online presence (website, social media) -Clean, safe, adequate facilities -Opportunities for parent involvement -Special needs services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religion classes -Teaching Catholic morals and values -Incorporating the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic Church into all aspects of the curriculum and student life -Daily practice -Sacraments, saints, special feasts, holy days -Mass, liturgy, rosary, confessions -Maintaining a Catholic identity -Catholic Schools week -Communion -Confirmation -Financial assistance/parish support -Extracurriculars associated with Catholic values and teachings

Consequently, two key assessments must be made:

- 1) Whether or not strengths can be classified as competitive necessities and, therefore, leveraged through enhancement (either in the existing school model or in a different school model)
- 2) Whether weaknesses are undermining the ability to maintain the required competitive necessities, let alone create distinction that is compelling enough for families to choose Catholic school education

Note: If families perceive (or experience) too many competitive necessities as subpar or non-existent in Catholic schools (especially the ones they highly value), they will be more likely to choose other options, including home schooling.

As the steering committee considers the findings of this report, along with other data and information already presented, members are encouraged to keep the concept of competitive necessities in mind. In particular, how can – and should – any existing strengths that increase competitiveness and distinction be leveraged in a new school model; and, especially important, will a different school model provide an improved opportunity to address weaknesses.