



**Strategic Intent Map
January 29, 2024**

1 Direction *(Snapshot of current practices)*

Diocesan Schools

- 26 elementary/5 H.S. with 6,445 PK-12 students (2023/24); 16 childcare programs
- New elementary schools (2018, 2024); Enrollment growth for last 3 years
- 11 parishes in north deaneries with no Catholic schools
- 36.2K school-age Catholic children in diocese; 16.99% attend Catholic schools
- Students outperform local, state, national peers on standardized assessments
- 9.3% of our students have identified learning needs that are being served
- Families pay average of 47% of elementary cost and 68% of H.S. cost; remainder covered by parish/development efforts
- Diocesan admin. shared services to support schools have been implemented
- Unprecedented amount of short-term federal/state funds available to private schools via pandemic stimulus funding with restrictions

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7 Responsibilities

(What we do)

- Partner with parents and recognize their role as the primary educator of their children
- Model the active practice of our Catholic faith in daily life
- Educate children for life, vocation and eternity
- Meet the individual learning needs of each child
- Rigorously prepare students for the next level of education
- Nurture the dignity of each student
- Develop the leadership potential of all children, emphasizing servant leadership
- Support, respect and encourage the unique gifts of each child
- Provide a safe environment that allows each child optimum growth and development
- Make Catholic education accessible to all who desire it

8 Philosophy of Education

(What we value)

- Celebrating God's role and relationship (mind, body, soul)
- Providing a healthy learning environment
- Guiding students to develop a moral compass
- Fostering an environment of positivity, discipline and respect for all
- Supporting and educating parents
- Providing individualized care and education
- Nurturing children to reach their highest potential

Characteristics of Catholic Schools*

- Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ
- Contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church
- Distinguished by excellence
- Committed to educate the whole child
- Steeped in Catholic worldview
- Sustained by gospel witness
- Shaped by communion and community
- Accessible to all students
- Established by the expressed authority of the bishop

*From National Catholic School Standards

5 Competitive Landscape

(Why parents make other choices)

- Major competition from Fremont Christian
- Prevailing public school disposition that non-public and homeschooling are not viable alternatives
- Solid public school system
- Promise zone in Newaygo county (2 years at Muskegon Community or Baker College)
- Schools of choice; homeschooling
- Parent financial quality of life choices
- Convenience/geography
- Seeking greater diversity
- Extracurricular activities
- Transportation availability

Environment

Bishop Baraga Academy

- An interparochial school supported by 4 parishes; Starting from scratch
- One other multi-age school model in county
- Intend to attract Catholic, non-Catholic, and non-traditional students
- Intend to grow as fast as the need requires and staff is available
- Only two additional rooms available to expand; may run out of space as we grow; plenty of land
- Marketing and development efforts essential to success
- Awaiting capital resources to open in 2024
- Good RESA program for preschool in area; important for BBA to work with them

13 Strategies *(Our shared agenda for success)*

Enrollment

- Attain licensing; develop and implement enrollment plans to attract Catholic, non-Catholic, and non-traditional students.
- Collaborate with the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) to assist with enrollment activities and promotion.

Marketing Communications

- Develop and implement a marketing communications plan to promote BBA as an infant care, pre-school, and micro-school (K-5) to attract new students.
- Communicate with all parish/parishioner stakeholders; be transparent.

Attract and Retain Teachers

- Seek primarily Catholic teachers/staff; offer competitive compensation (salary and flexible benefits); discounted/free tuition or childcare options.
- Foster a positive, loving, faith-based work environment (be a compassionate employer).

Curriculum

- Research, develop, and implement a modern curriculum that offers encounters with Christ in all subject areas; utilize Montessori and Reggio pedagogies.

Family Enrichment

- Develop and offer resources on parenting; inform families of opportunities/services available for non-Catholic families.
- Develop partnerships for intergenerational opportunities.

Finance

- Identify qualified accounting/finance resources (PT data entry person and/or service).
- Develop a five-year budget, including capital needs.

Faith Formation

- Develop comprehensive infant and 3-10-year-old Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program.
- Offer multiple weekly school Masses.
- Evangelize and provide access to our Catholic faith to anyone interested.

Facility

- Research and seek grants to fund a playground (commercial grade or natural).
- Develop a capital plan to maintain and improve the facility; upgrade as needed.

Safety

- Review existing parish safety documents and diocesan resources; update to coordinate between school and church; share with all appropriate personnel.

Technology

- Align technology needs to curriculum that is in development.
- Research software platforms to benefit BBA as it grows (advancement, admissions, administration, accounting).

Transportation

- Explore creative/non-traditional transportation and funding options (to connect Newaygo County families primarily); recommend and implement.

Advancement/Development

- Immediately develop/implement a capital campaign: Phase 1: to open the school; Phase 2: to sustain/grow the school.
- Design and implement an annual development calendar with intentional touchpoints and budgetary goals.
- Consult with the CFWM to develop an endowment to promote planned giving opportunities.

12 Critical Realities *(Issues affecting our work)*

- New school/no history; fundraising is imperative
- Fremont/surrounding area is growing; some Hispanic influence
- Newaygo considered a "desert" for childcare
- Recruiting childcare and preschool employees is a challenge
- Poverty/food insecurity gap between families in Fremont area
- Post covid has caused some suspiciousness about education
- State reimbursements not enough to deliver "just wages" for employees
- Transportation is a challenge
- Church sex abuse issues will need to be addressed
- Community/parish demographics – aging population

4 Catholic Educational Practices

(How we are similar/different from others)

Typical

- Standardized curriculum
- Shared platforms: learning management system, student data, financial systems
- Weekly Mass; daily prayer service; student participation
- Governance structure
- Tuition assistance/parish subsidy
- Tight budgets
- Technology (in future - Chromebooks, iPads)

Atypical

- First new Catholic child care and preschool in the diocese without a full grade school
- First new Catholic child care and preschool in northern deanery in many years
- Located in rural area
- Interparochial school
- Micro-school/multi-age classrooms
- Rare to have a doctoral level principal
- Educational and Catholic connections of principal
- Unique pedagogy (Montessori and Reggio based)

3 Trends *(Economic, social, technological, religious, etc.)*

- Economic uncertainty; credit debt increasing
- Political/community polarization
- Increase in non-traditional families
- Parents/students have many school options, including homeschooling
- Parents have high expectations
- Social media plays significant role in our lives
- Security of children/school safety are concerns
- Attitudes of relativism and individualism: whatever you believe is ok; secular world
- Post pandemic mental health challenges remain for students, families, staff
- Recognition of social injustices
- Gender identity issues at odds with Catholic teaching
- Continuous/rapidly changing technology (AI)
- Continuing influence of remote work/learning
- Post covid - parents want their kids in school
- Fewer practicing Catholics in U.S.
- Severe teacher shortage
- Lower birth rates

10 Vision Metrics

(Quantitative indicators that we have reached our vision)

Enrollment

- May 2024: 16 under 36 months in childcare; One preschool room with 9-10 students
- August 2024: 16 under 36 months in childcare; Three preschool rooms with total of 27 students
- 5 years: Childcare, preschool, K-5 microschool
- Preschoolers advance to K-5 school

Marketing Communications: Brand is recognized; All needed communications developed and utilized

Attract/Retain Teachers: 6 lead childcare teachers, 4 assistant teachers, 2 certified elementary teachers; all modeling Catholic/Christian values

Curriculum: Consistent offering of encounters with Christ for all (childcare - 5th grade), Montessori and Reggio modified (throughout curriculum)

Community/Family Enrichment: Parental guidance/resources (including family safety) available and promoted

Faith Formation: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Weekly Mass attendance

Facility: Expansion/updates required due to growth

Safety: School wing is secured

Technology: Current in classroom needs; Technology utilized for efficient administration; copy machine

Transportation: Board committee in place and active; innovative solution researched and implemented

Advancement/Development: Board committee in place and active; plan developed and implemented

Finance: Board committee in place and active; Accounting resources utilized; Annual balanced budget

11 Stakeholder Perceptions

(How we want to be known, and by whom)

Pastor: "BBA is the most fruitful apostolat of our parish."

School parent: "I felt after the first day of enrollment that we made a very good decision."

Student: "I can't wait to go to school everyday."

Prospective parent: "Of all the options in the community, this looks to be the best."

Teacher: "My classroom allows me to live out my faith and be a catechist for all the people."

Board member: "It has been exciting to be involved in the start up of a new opportunity for faith growth in this area."

Parishioner: "I am hopeful about the future of the Catholic Church in Newaygo because of BBA."

Catholic leader: "BBA has brought vitality to our Catholic community, as families have returned to Mass and the sacramental life of the church."

Community: "Students from BBA demonstrate mastery of themselves and are over-prepared academically when they assimilate into the public school."

Licensing/Accreditor: "There is nothing you could do better; you are a role model for all others."

9 Vision
(what we aspire to achieve)

Our priority is to nurture children to reach their highest potential as disciples of Jesus through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.