Following are the complete results of the Vision Survey which was disseminated to the diocesan community in March. The Vision Survey was the culmination of nearly a year-long process of drafts and revisions utilizing input from pastors, principals, boards, and teachers identifying a common mission and vision for our diocesan Catholic schools. The results of this diocesan-wide survey were used by our diocesan board’s Vision Committee to refine the mission and vision for our schools into a final format. If you have any questions regarding the Vision Survey or the comments shown below, please contact the Office of Catholic Schools at (616) 246-0590.
Which of the following best describes you?

I am a Principal of a Catholic school
Other
I am a Student in a Catholic school
I am a Parishioner with no kids in a Catholic school

With which Parish and/or school are you most closely associated?
It is helpful for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids to work together in a more organized way. While our diocesan schools are not a single school system, we are a system of schools. Does the phrase, "Alliance of Catholic Schools" help to describe strength in the unity of our schools, while recognizing each school's independence?
Alliance of Catholic Schools: The following word or phrase better describes this relationship.

- Alliance of Catholic Schools that are uniquely "Parish"
- Alliance of C.S. to me implies a hierarchy
- Partners in Catholic Education
- You are NOT recognizing our independence!
- Unity of Catholic Schools
- cooperative or consolidated
- MY CHILDREN WENT TO ST PAT'S MANY YEARS AGO
- Catholic Schools of The Diocese of Grand Rapids
- I like the word Alliance very much
- The Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic Schools
- cooperation
- union
- Affiliation or Partnership or Association are better
- Schools for a Catholic Education
- Family of Catholic Schools or Partnership of Catholic Schools
- Alliance
- All school are not created equal, some should be geared toward city and others geared toward rural
- Grand Rapids Diocese Alliance of Catholic Schools
- United Catholic Schools
- It depends upon your intentions of its use. If you mean it as a relationship based upon mutual interest, yes. If you mean a step in the direction of any consolidation, no.
- A parish school that is micro-managed by the greater GR Catholic Schools
- United Catholic Schools
- Family of Catholic Schools
- not sure but alliance sounds too geo-political
- Catholic Schools
- An (Association) or (Cooperative) of Catholic Schools
- Federation
- Cooperative
- This seems to be like worrying about what color to paint a collapsing house.
- Catholic Schools independently united
- simply "Catholic Schools"
- Team of Catholic Schools?
- Union of Catholic Schools
- strong
- working together
- strong
- alliance is a bit of a strong word
- Member of Catholic School District of Diocese, Grand Rapids
- Coalition of Catholic Schools; Catholic Schools of Grand Rapids Diocese; Diocese of Grand Rapids Alliance of Catholic Education; Alliance of Catholic Education; Coalition of Catholic Education
Alliance of Catholic Schools is a nice phrase, but what is the meaning behind the phrase. The opening statement of this question talks about working in a more "organized way". If this means closing and consolidating schools I disagree.

cooperation
We have to coordinate with our local public schools.
Fellowship of Catholic Schools
Just don't like it but don't know what would be better
I believe schools should work the local schools. Schools in Grand Rapids go until the 8th grade mine does not. They are not the same and should not be treated the same.
Association of Catholic Schools
Partnership Among Catholic Schools PACS
Team
Catholic School Association
Ever Growing Church Builders of Catholic Faith
schools working together
volunteers and helpers of catholic schools
we should work together
pact
I really don't know about any of that at all/ have no opinion.
hostile friends
"Family of Catholic Schools"
THE COMMUNITY OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
Catholic School Alliance
Catholic School Alliance
Coalition of Catholic Schools
Collaboration
Don't people understand the concept of diocese?
Catholic Schools of the Grand Rapids Area
Would like to see the word "Partners" in the phrase
Partnership
Synergies will not be realized unless it is one body. Consolidation at the high school and middle school level independence at the primary level
Catholic Schools in Congruence
Catholic Schools shared Faith and Vision
Brotherhood of Catholic Schools
Family of Catholic Schools
confederation of independent catholic schools
Coalition, Network, cohort,
Cooperative of Catholic Schools
No matter what you call it, it drains finances for a select few
Community of Catholic Schools
communion
Catholic Schools Cooperative (sounds less political, at least)
Catholic School System
Individual stake holders promoting their own agendas and not maximizing resources
family
Family of Catholic Schools
United Catholic Schools
Schools
Alliance has little biblical or theological significance for me.
Catholic Schools Association
Together as one in Christ
following thru with actual alliance deeds is more important
I would prefer something with more of a religious overtone
Catholic Schools Co-operative
Coalition of Catholic Schools
Catholic Schools Working Together
I don’t understand the question
Diocese of Catholic Schools
Office of Catholic Schools
Alliance of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Grand Rapids
Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Grand Rapids
Coalition
I do not feel it needs to be so strong. I feel that I am being forced in to a relationship. I am not liking the forced relationship.
Community of Catholic Schools
The Associated Catholic Schools
I don’t understand the phrase "not a single school system, but a system of schools." I don't know how to describe a relationship that is poorly defined.
collaboration, rather than alliance
The Unity of the Catholic Schools
Catholic Schools working together, Or Working, Learning & Praying together.
Perhaps "Community of Catholic Schools"
Partnership of Catholic Schools
Partners in Catholic School Education
Schools Forgotten by the Diocese
Association
Community of Catholic Schools
The bishop is the boss!!!!
Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic School System. "Alliance" sounds too much like Star Wars
Community of Catholic Schools
Network of Catholic Schools Alliance sounds like they all agree and they will not. It has its own flavor and that is a good thing
Catholic Schools Working Together
Economic consolidation
Grand Rapids Catholic Schools
Grand Rapids Catholic Schools
Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Grand Rapids
"Alliance" is still confusing; a top down system is best
Communion of Catholic Schools
consortium
Doesn't matter the phrase, there must be cooperation
GR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
need a different word than alliance
your asking two different questions above
Unity
I have hesitations about "alliance" because it sounds governmental/militaristic. I keep trying to think of a more scriptural term without success. Partnership?

As long as there is a Parish school, the schools need to be marketed for their specific individual strengths. Otherwise, consolidate all the schools and make one nice healthy larger school. Separate small schools are not 'one'.

Schools and Parishes should have more freedom in things such as school schedules and calendar

Catholic Schools Association of Greater Grand Rapids

Partnership - connotes a share in rather than political overtones as the word alliance is used today in government or Ministry as servants within the Catholic Church.

I agree but am adamantly opposed to a middle school system

Instead of the first two questions, just ask for our name

Catholic Schools under the Diocese of Grand Rapids

family

Catholic Schools Community in the Diocese of Grand Rapids

Communion

Coalition

Alliance - an industry term most people don't understand

network

Catholic Schools Collaborating Together for a Better Today

We are so different we cannot believe something that is not necessarily true

Coalition or maybe Unity - Alliance sounds somewhat cold

alliance sounds like a dictatorship

Consortium

does nothing for me

I think Diocesan Schools is fine. We don't have an "Alliance of Catholic Parishes" yet we know we're communities within a community.

Cooperative - Collation -

The word chosen is not likely to make much difference.
All Catholic school mission statements should be a description of why they exist. Does the mission statement in the slide above describe why our diocesan Catholic schools exist?
Why We Exist: A better statement would be…

- Don't like Alliance, sorry.
- Don't feel the word "alliance" seems nonpersonal and like a business. I also don't like how it says, "Christ illumines Learning & Love". A better way to word it might be, "Partners in Catholic education discipling the people of God." or "Partners in Catholic education, discipleship led by the light of Christ (or Spirit of God)."
- Faith based learning is a life lesson
- do not know what exists now so can not make an informed choice.
- Not fond of word "illumines", maybe change to enlightens or influences.
- Christ illumines learning and life decisions
- I think the word "Illumines" should be replaced with a more common word.
- "Illumines" is not frequently used. I think a better word could be found.
- I agree but the leadership with _________ and _________ drove people away from their faith or wanting to be a Catholic. Both Hypocrites.
- ...Christ is the center of our lives and learning.
- The Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic Schools exist to form our children in virtue and our Catholic faith!
- ...where Christ is the center of our life and our learning
- Salvation and Education!!
- Where we live and learn in Christ
- While I understand that you want a united message, this statement doesn't describe why they exist. The schools exist to educate students. Our mission needs to be directed at our students. Ex. Grounded in Christ's teachings, the Alliance of Catholic Schools will advance the formation and education of each student in spirit, mind and body..
- "Living and Learning in Christ" (Does Christ really teach/illuminate at the schools? Any meditation time set aside? probably not, so suggested statement doesn't match reality.)
- Catholic Schools Dedicated to bring Authentic Catholic Principles. To open up Hearts and Minds to CHRIST or KING
- Use of the word Illumines is not common and will not be understood broadly I am afraid educating a student's mind, body, and spirit in the Roman Catholic tradition
- I believe to appeal to the wide range of Parents and backgrounds simpler words should be used
- drop "An" if this is for individual school mission statement
- To a certain degree, the above statement does describe why we should exist. However, put into practice, we need to improve our system for kids that are not excellent students. Christ would not want our schools to exist merely for the academically gifted.
- United Catholic Schools rich in faith and family traditions preparing a child academically and spiritually for life
- An alliance of Catholic schools where Learning and Life are Christ centered.
- (Christ isn't allowed to illumine our time-share 'specials' which can be 1/4 or more of our school day.)
- the word illumines will not be well understood
- No, I do not think the wording states 'why' the schools exist.
- Where Christ Enlightens in Learning and Life
- Christ guides..........illumines is a tough word
- Strengthening mind body and spirit
- ...where the Catholic Faith informs all that we do and teach.
- Catholic Schools beacons of the light of Christ
- An alliance of Catholic schools where Christ ILLUMINATES learning and life
- where Christian and Catholic teachings focus on Learning and Life
- Learning about Jesus and God
- working together
- one bread one body one school
- to help the people in need
- Catholic School Mission is to teach the Catholic Faith as defined by the Pope
- Catholic Schools Mission to teach, instruct Christ, Catholic Faith for Life
- Life and Education illuminated by Christ
- ...Christ illumines our lives through prayer, living, and learning
- Really don't care for the word "alliance" and it should be "in which" instead of "where."
- Don't like the word Alliance AT ALL
- I don't know
- the word alliance implies "falling in line" while partnership indicates working together
- Where God directs our learning.
- The flame is still going do the schools are maintaining
- An alliance of schools where learning and life centers on Christ
- an alliance of catholic schools
- An alliance of catholic schools where God is with us forever
- The Alliance of forever Catholic Faith
- for education for the students
- worship god
- praying
- Christ lights our way.
- Hostile Allies for Christ
- The Community of Catholic Schools where Christ illuminates learning and life
- Our Children First in the Eyes of Christ through the Catholic Alliance
- Our Children First in the Eyes of Christ Through the Catholic School Alliance
- Don't care for the word illumines
- An alliance of Catholic schools where Christ exemplifies learning and living the faith
- not much content
- I would add something to the mission statement above that speaks to living out our catholic faith.
- too broad and we shouldn’t have to state our alliance with each other.
- "Illumine" is kind of an obscure word.
- illumens????
- Illumines is an awkward word
- experience becoming one church one body of Christ through one education platform (Diocese of GR)
- Illumines ~ is hard to say and understand what it means for the children
- Learning and Living the Word, Learning and Living With Christ
- How about the word Jesus instead of Christ
- educates our young people to be the future leaders of our church
- The word alliance sounds cold, is there a better word?
- An alliance of Catholic schools where Roman Catholic teachings illuminate Learning and Life
- A majority of people would not know what illumines means. This mission statement would be hard to remember. I like the Portland St. Patrick mission - We Pray! We Learn! We Achieve!
Christ Focuses Learning and Life
Catholic based education for life
Illumines is an archaic word. May a better word is illuminates - Christ Illuminates Life and Learning
Illumines is an archaic word. May a better word is illuminates - Christ Illuminates Life and Learning
Instill Christ-centered principles and superior academics to prepare students for lifelong success
Include language as to preparation for extended education
Imparting the Roman Catholic faith through high academic standards.
Catholic schools foster the ability to think independently in the light of Christian teaching
Christ illuminates learning and service. The schools do not focus as much on "life" but more about learning and developing the students as a "whole".
...where learning and life is Christ centered
Dedicated to the sacred ministry of providing quality education, anchored in the Roman Catholic tradition, which nurtures children in Catholic values and promotes excellence in education and a life of service.
No, At least be honest. Catholic Schools exist to show a Catholic presence in a community regardless of cost and/or hardship.
Community of Catholic Schools where learning to live the gospel is the hallmark
Christ transforms learning and life
Illumines is a word I have never heard and many others would not recognize or know meaning.
Think there is a better world than illumines...will students understand this word?
I would rather see 'Illuminates' than 'Illumines'.
A place for learning to love, and a place to love learning, a place to live the Gospel of Jesus
At least substitute "lights" for "illumines"
The Unity in Learning and Life of Catholic Schools through Christ's Love and Compassion as it shines from us all.
An alliance of Catholic Schools where our faith illuminates the path of learning and life.
the above statement is too abstract Christ light shines on our learning and life
AN should be THE, or maybe 'An alliance of' should be omitted. There needs to be a dash or something between schools and where
Inclusion of academic excellence, but only if it is true for each school.
Spelled illuminate wrong
This sounds like a slogan, not a mission. Describe what the Alliance Does - why does it exist
I can't think of it right off but the focus should be on members of the faith community of children, youth and adults who experience and share Christ's illumination. As it reads now, it seems the focus is "the alliance."
add "exceptional" learning since catholic schools should strive to provide an outstanding education
I like to see missions as verbs and I'm pretty sure "illumines" isn't a word. What about: provide superior education and learning guided by the light of Christ.
An alliance of Catholic schools, education centered in Christ.
Catholic Schools Co-operative mission is to educate the whole child; mind, body, and spirit, using Christ as our guide and model.
Christ Centered or Faith Based, Working as one community
• An alliance of Catholic Schools where Christ illuminates Learning and life for students of all faiths.
• not sure I like "illuminates"
• Catholic schools, Living and learning excellence in Faith and Education
• It seems like you're mixing two different concepts here; the schools themselves and the "alliance"
• "Where Christ and Catholic values inspire learning and development"
• The Catholic Schools of Grand Rapids unify Christ and the education of our children.
• A Coalition of Catholic Schools were Faith, Knowledge, Morals and Discipline are taught
• Yes Christ does determine our meaning but again why are we being pushed into this.
• An alliance of Catholic schools where faith is an intrinsic part of academic education
• Catholic Schools United, where Christ illuminates Learning and Life
• A System of Catholic Schools Where Christ Illuminates Learning and Life (note consistency of capitalization and "illuminates")
• again, collaboration of schools (alliance takes some of the individual school independence away)
• A community of Catholic Schools in which Christ is the foundation that enlightens/illuminates/bolsters/supports (strongly dislike the word "illuminates") Learning and Life
• ?DON'T LIKE "ILLUMINES"
• I don't have a dictionary at hand. Illumines? Not illuminates? I like it very much if 'illuminates' is correct.
• Where the Diocese seeks to create an elitist prep school while keeping parents in the dark on any vision.
• An association of Catholic schools dedicated to excellence in education centered in Jesus Christ
• An Alliance of Catholic schools dedicated to Christ centered learning and life.
• I'm not sure of a better phrase, but I don't think "Illumine" is the right word
• Where are the certified nuns?
• The Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic Schools -- Where Christ's presence shines through in our teaching and learning
• The word 'illuminates' is not easy to understand, use a different word
• Again I don't like the word alliance Council of Catholic Schools Incorporated, integrated
• An alliance of Catholic Schools where we are one in the Lord.
• add for ALL STUDENTS WANTING A CATHOLIC EDUCATION
• Graphic is great! Language? Keep it common; simple. Alliance? Illumines? Christ is the focus of Learning and Life in Catholic Schools
• Catholic Schools - Enter to learn; leave to serve while you walk in the footsteps of Christ
• An Alliance of Catholic Schools: where Christ illuminates learning and life - redundant to say alliance twice
• A statement that is a complete sentence...1. this seems to be missing a subject. "(????? is) an alliance of catholic schools where Christ illuminates Learning and Life" 2. Illumines is an unusual word. Better to use a more familiar, commonly used word. Illuminates? 3. Holy Trinity is a more complete, inclusive description. Christ is the example, but isn't separate.
• Catholic Schools: Focused on Centering our Youth in Christ with Faith and Learning
• "where Christ illuminates the path for learning and life"
• An integrated K-12 school system delivering superior academics emphasizing the Roman Catholic faith.
Too vague, doesn't convey a concrete message. Also, illumines is an unusual verb—not one that is commonly used. I suggest: As partners with Christ and with each other, we will teach our students to pray, learn and achieve.

something without illumines

A consortium of Catholic schools where our learning and lives show Christ to the world.

An alliance of Catholic schools where Christian faith and morality play a central role in education.

the word "illumines" is an odd choice...the average person will think this is a typo!

An alliance of Catholic schools where education, moral principles, and life formation are fostered by the presence of Christ.

the word illumines needs to be changed.

Where Christ is Central to learning and life.

where Christ is the center of learning and life.

Unity of Catholic Schools...together with Christ we accomplish great things.

To develop our children into intelligent, caring adults through a Catholic Educational Ministry.

To develop the children we teach into caring Christian adults through a faith-based education.

Not sure "Illumines" is actually a word? Don't you mean illuminate?

Not sure, but this doesn't tell me why you exist. What is the purpose of an alliance?

I think illuminates sounds much better than illumines ~ Illumine is rarely used and it seems pretentious, Christ is anything but pretentious.

Illumines may be to complex of a word for the general public.

I don't really like the term "illumines."

That word alliance tripped me again.

The word illumines is very confusing.

At present, the schools exist because of their legacy and there is still some support. There is nothing wrong with healthy competition between Parishes. Otherwise, merge every school into 1 main school to better utilize the resources. And it is not clear to me how the above statement reflects ALL the schools.

The statement does not explain why the "alliance" exists. The statement is fine of you remove the word "alliance"

The ministry or partnership of Catholic Schools......

add following the traditions of the Catholic Faith.

As a whole yes, Mission statements for each school represents each schools independence.

No reason for the phrase "An alliance of . . .".

"Illumines" is not a word that I would have used in this, sounds pretentious.

Don't use the word alliance. sounds like a war is coming.

Flowing from the mission of the Church, Catholic Schools Community in the Diocese of Grand Rapids where Christ illuminates learning and life.

it think it should state something about teaching God children Gods way so that they can answer the call from God. You know, not very many priests or nuns come from public schools.

illuminates.

An Alliance of Roman Catholic Schools where Christ Illuminates life and learning within the pillars of our Faith.

illuminates instead of illumines.

Christ - a turn-off word for seeking public funds and support. Incorporate "Parent", Perhaps "Faith Based"
doesn't say anything about our relationship with Christ, which is a two way street, not just from Christ to us.

- Academic excellence is missing from the statement.
- The word alliance really needs to be replaced. It sounds like the schools are just friendly with one another.
- We exist because people in certain Catholic neighborhoods valued Catholic Education.
- Catholic School where Christ illuminates learning and life.
- I am not comfortable with the word "alliance." I like the rest of the statement.
- "Illumines" is not a commonly used word and may be confusing - "illuminates" is clearer.
- I find the word "illuminates" to be a poor choice...I get the meaning; I just don't think it very eloquent.
- "to let Christ Illuminate learning and life" the way you have it phrased is not a mission it is a description. The definition of a mission statement is NOT just a description of why they exist. RETHINK this!
- The formation of another generation of informed and practicing Catholics?
- Illumines is a strange word. I might use "centers"
An Alliance of Catholic Schools

- **Mission in Practice**
  - Prayer and sacraments
  - Know and use the scriptures
  - Leadership by example
  - Positive “can do” outlook
  - Strong relationships
  - Diversity is valued
  - Gifts are empowered
  - Transparent communication
  - Global/universal perspective
  - Grow to serve more parts of the diocese
  - Accountability and responsiveness
  - Robust academic programs
  - Full curricular and co-curricular programs
  - Student support systems foster achievement
  - Parents’ role is embraced

Assess each of the following elements of Mission in Practice according to importance with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important.
Mission: One Critical Missing Element

- Education, Learning, Teaching
- Applying Catholicism to your everyday life; Partnering with parents to embrace the Catholic faith; Understanding how your "personal" faith effects the community at large
- Support for our teachers.
- foster a personal commitment to Catholic Faith
- academic excellence
- Uniform Policy is horrible
- what exists now?
- Inclusive
- Past priest did not embrace Catholic Ed
- Catholic Schools are CATHOLIC not in name only
- The other peoples in the parish like myself who had children in St. Michael's at one time
- financial accessibility to all families
- just important is having fun and looking forward to being there
- Lifelong Learning is Expected
- educate children at all academic levels
- History of Catholic Church and faith
- Leadership by example. ______ is invisible, and wants everything to go through ______. ______ is not experienced to handle the responsibility given. Please re-evaluate! Point #2- we were catholic and universal long before "diversity" was in vogue. Let's remain catholic (universal and inclusive). This respects our essence. Global/universal perspective also describes this. If we use "diversity" like every other school, it becomes harder for prospective candidates to recognize our uniqueness, and understand why catholic schools were founded and continue presently. Point #3- How is the school supporting the parent's role? As a member of the WE CARE parent committee, we feel very little "embrace" from administration. No inter-communication linking parents with administration.
- gifts of the Holy Spirit, moral virtues vs vices
- must know JESUS personally
- Note: the "3"s are ones that sound good but I don't know what they mean
- Servant Leadership
- Robust academics and prayer
- MORE student respect needed for each other
- Gospel truth is integrated in all subjects
- American Catholic Schools
- Grammatical consistency in the phrasing
- ACCOUNTABILITY OF STAFF AND TEACHERS
- Respect for others and self
- Diocesan Support
- Physical wellbeing
- The Founders and Constitution
- union of all religious faiths.
- as a bullet list, syntax of items does not match; let's have our public statements look literate and well-educated
- Well educated and well prepared teachers
- Parishioners who chose to send their children to a catholic school
- Community involvement and social responsibility are emphasized
- God centered
- I would like to see more partnerships in shared volunteer resources and pooling of monetary resources to purchase equipment or fund programming.
- Respect for self and others
- Live and Demonstrate the Golden Rule
- faithful to Catholic doctrine
- Value local input. One model does not fit all.
- respect
- affordability
- Health and care for ones body
- Christ is our role model
- time to do all this!
- Serving Others
- education for children with ADHD
- education for learning disabled
- Catholic and Christian Cohesiveness
- Faith
- loving each other
- Going to different churches for mass
- Love
- leadership
- service available to younger students
- connection
- Teaching Catholic Beliefs
- Catholic beliefs and Catholic tradition taught
- Social Justice
- positive, empathetic and forgiving relationships - mistakes can't be fatal
- Global Universal Perspective? The perspective of the Roman Catholic Church or the perspective of the secular world. I do not like this statement; too ambiguous.
- communication with staff
- Great for the average and bright students! What about the struggling students??
- THE ARTS!
- unique
- Supported by parish communities
- getting nuns back in our school systems should be a very important element of catholic schools
- service
- The individual is valued
- cake
- Teachers are highly qualified in their subject area
- leverage resources econ of scope/scale
- Christ centered
- Eucharist
- respect
- Empowering Faith in Jesus
- Standing up for God no matter what
- serving god
- call to prayer & fasting
- Love everyone and help with bullying.
• athletics
• understanding the needs of the children in the schools and solving bullying
• Going to Mass weekly
• Following through on discipline
• Receiving the Eucharist
• Reaching out to the community
• Service
• Lack of minimal educational support services for students at secondary level
• love one another as Christ loves us
• TEACHERS AND STUDENTS COMMUNICATION
• learn to live and serve like Christ
• Fasting
• change of some words--know to knowledge; grow to growth
• Know and use the Catechism
• Catholicism -- learning what and why it is
• local school independence
• Academic programs that exceed state, national and public school levels and expectations!
• Teaching staff is valued and adequately compensated
• important, but not being equally met
• Foster respect for self and others
• implementation of faith throughout all aspects
• strategic mission for future development/improvement
• the mass
• need more on education
• community interaction
• Specific role of athletics
• Embracing all learners
• Christ centered
• The weakest among us....
• Respect (for Environment)
• Number 6 concerns me....what type of diversity? I hope it means racial and ethnic diversity, not sexual diversity.
• supporting individual vocations
• Technical expertise in an increasingly technical world
• technology accessibility
• Exceptional faculty / teachers
• Living the sacraments by example
• Lifelong
• Inclusion of CCD students as well as school students
• commitment to justice in actions/relationship
• friendship
• Same vision and mission for BOTH High Schools
• Living your Christian faith
• Builds and cooperates with family life
• serving God by serving others
• Growth
• Pay – you’re kidding yourself if you can't get to a family supporting wage for your employees.
• community service
• love
• A communal journey with Christ as our guide
• Faithful to Catholic Doctrine and Magisterium
• academic programs
• Equality in Financing is missing
• faith
• A welcoming community
• Support by the Diocese
• Ritual, tradition and closeness with God.
• Embrace learning challenges through resources available and teacher accommodations, thereby allowing a Catholic education for all who desires it.
• faith
• disciplined character development
• education
• Consistent, frequent communication
• Accountability- knowing right from wrong and doing the right thing.
• cooperation
• Disciples of Christ
• Stronger academic focus
• academic excellence
• Students of all abilities are welcomed
• Diversity is valued
• Communion with Christ
• Off topic, but please avoid the choice of the trendy word "transparent." It is so overused it is nearly meaningless.
• reflective of God's love and care
• Produce Exceptional Role Models in the Community
• Accessible!
• not sure what some programs represent
• Tolerance
• Bullies, drugs and smoking still find away into schools.
• "challenging" should be stated
• all learners are embraced
• Catholic
• leadership that is committed to working with parents and not steam rolling as has been the case with this bishop. I am paying for a service and i have a right to what goes on and there needs to be transparency and not "blind faith" in individuals ie the bishop who has not earned this
• Grading system counter to actual comparative success
• We embrace all learners
• faith education for all
• Weekly Mass & Participation in Sacraments
• SACRIFICE BY LEADERS INSTEAD OF ALWAYS PARENTS/FAMILY
• These things occurring now
• All children are seen as learners. Each child is served according to their learning style and abilities.
• student self discovery
• service/charity
• servant leadership
• concept of a strong physical education program
• transparency is not actually happening . . .
• ministry of parish
• Fostering life-long relationship with God
• Parents role is not only embraced, but primary
• Responding to MARKET needs. Sustainability. Financial sustainability and accountability
• Inclusiveness of students at all academic levels
• interfaith discussion-cooperation with other religions for greater cause
• "We need YOU."
• Respectful attitudes toward all
• parental commitment

• FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
• concern with 'parents' Where do guardians fit?
• common positive vision/objective
• Emphasis on Global Catholic Unity
• Appears to embrace all areas of education.
• Faith in daily life
• detailed communication from Bishop
• parish support in all aspects of the school
• Parish members embraced! Each Parish must take an active role in their parish schools
• follow Christ's word, not man's
• Love
• All who seek a Christian learning environment are welcome.
• mission
• Not only knowing the Scriptures but living out the Gospels values on day to day basis.
• self-initiative learning and problem-solving
• obedience to bishop, teachings of the Catholic Church
• Leadership at the higher levels who recognize needs of more than the higher academic students
• students mental well being (teens)
• community service
• Catholic Faith at the center of learning
• Exemplary Academics
• Respect for diversity
• prayer and sacraments
• love of Christ
• safety
• spirituality
• embracing all students at all levels
• Faith-based
• Relationship with Christ reinforced daily
• Foster relationship with the Trinity
• discipline
• Celebration of the Catholic Faith and Mass
• being conscious of our actions so that they reflect our knowledge of the scriptures and so that we may lead by example
• cooperation
• tough love
could use an explanation on transparent communication - it's a good goal but what specifically does that offer?
- Respect for each school's ingrained traditions.
- Respect
- students want to take the journey of a Catholic Education
- hard working dedicated professional educators, ie teachers
- differences from public schools embraced (sacrificing for a greater purpose)
- Faith in action
- Diversity
- Ecumenical
- Services to meet all kinds of learners!
- Sharing with the Community
- strong moral belief system
- Christ centered
- Orthodoxy
- Safety
- Positive, supportive, each person is a gift
- Change robust to Competitive Academic Programs
- Catholic, in Christ - if you took the phrases away from the mission statement you'd have no way to know it's a Catholic School teaching the works of Christ. I also think less "PC correct" words would be more effective and have a longer lifespan for use...keep it simple and impactful. Just say it clearly but keep focus on Catholicism or Christian
- Highest quality education
- faith
- Christ Centered
- These are fantastic. It's hard to think of something that might be missing.
- Inclusion
- supporting priest & parish families
- connection to Roman Catholic Church
- Gifts are empowered is vague? What exactly do you mean? Gifted students are encouraged to excel? Or gifted students are stuck with lower achieving students to balance out the classroom? Transparent communication is desired, but rarely available. Even the intent of this survey appears vague and it is as though the decision has been made as to what to do and now others are 'invited' to offer input. Robust academic programs are desired, unfortunately most schools cannot afford to cover the basics...the schools are simply too small.
- responsibility
- Fair tuition
- Reasonable goals achievable
- Catholic Identity
- Parents are partners in education. Note, I mark elements with 2 because they are poorly phrased
- Parish/community Relationships
- Lifelong learning and growing in faith
- faith formation
- strive for excellence
- school identity and pride
- morals/ethics
- growing in spirituality.
• Christ centered
• know Jesus
• promoting the formation of the local community
• Catholic Faith
• Affordable for all
• remembering that most priests and nuns come from catholic schools, we need to keep them full or we will end up with fewer and fewer available
• Honor & Respect Christ in all
• grow to serve the world
• Christ centered
• Christ centered education
• Leadership
• Being in the world but not of it
• Active and Useful Citizens
• Catholic doctrine
• Faith curriculum equal to sports & academics.
• moral accountability both individually and corporately
• social justice the constitutive element of Gospel
• Acceptance
• Fostering Vocations & Christ at the center of all aspects of daily life
• LIVE OUT OUR FAITH
• the purpose of this survey is not clear...
• Service to Christ
• Academic excellence
• High Academic Standards and Performance
• it's about service to Christ not the diocese
• Fundamentals of the Catholic Faith
• Living our faith
• Respect
• embracing the Catholic Faith
• Social Justice
• conversion
• Aligning our schools with liturgical year/practices not secular
• Special Needs need to eventually be addressed and served
• "Strong relationships" with whom?
• Service to the community
• Achievement
• Prepare for success in future endeavors
An Alliance of Catholic Schools

Add Value to All Schools by:
- Establishing a Culture of Collaboration through a Process of Continuous Strategic Planning
  - Inquiry
  - Transparency
  - Response
  - Improvement

Does a culture of collaboration and continuous strategic planning help our diocesan schools to be more responsive to the needs of our communities?
Add Value to All Schools by:

- Optimizing resources for stewardship and sustainability
  - Extending relationships through development efforts with parents, community and alumni
  - Utilizing common network and data management systems, technological services, help desks, online digital media, marketing, etc. creating greater economies of scale
  - Expecting schools to participate actively in parish stewardship
  - Taking ownership for financial health
  - Leveraging the capacity of every learning space for afterschool, evening, and summer school
  - Utilizing single-grade and Multi-grade classrooms of one teacher to 20–25 students
  - Eliminating unneeded facilities with deferred maintenance

Assess each of the following elements of stewardship and sustainability according to importance with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important.
Stewardship and Sustainability: Most Critical Missing Element…

- Diocesan responsibility to provide financial support for all schools
- Getting the entire Catholic Community, even non-Catholic schools, to embrace Catholic education
- Continuing to be a Mission of our parish!
- Understanding that rural communities is a separate and has a total different "culture" than city (Grand Rapids) parishes.
- Keeping each community unique, each school is in a separate community with unique needs
- Statement of strong collective support on a diocesan level for the vision of Catholic education
- Continued focus on 'alliance' rather than individual parish schools; leverage resources
- I think 20 students should be maximum per class
- Years past the school did not meet needs of those that were very bright or those who needed extra help. Example child needed extra help. Teacher said she would help 3 weeks out. By then he would be even more lost. Got a tutor to come after school to work with child but needed a room. ______ said NO that would not work because she or an adult needed to be there BUT You could use the picnic table OUTSIDE. I said great! What happens on a rainy day or when snow comes? Response: dress warm! Yes I was very bitter with _______ and also the lack of support of ________.
- Drop state accreditation and allow our Catholic Schools to fully be the Holy Catholic schools they were meant to be
- How important the Catholic school is to the overall community as a beacon of hope
- Realization of financial constraints
- (Stop using "education jargon" which has little use to the general public
- Note: I marked "3"s by the ones where I didn't understand exactly what you meant. Exactly what parish stewardship? Who is taking ownership for financial health, what is implication of the single & multi grade classes?
- Servant Leadership
- Leveraging purchasing power of the group to secure supplies and resources at a lower cost
- Significant scholarship support
- Not just schools but make financial responsibility and ownership on every parent need-based or otherwise.
- I would like to see class sizes capped at 20.
- Instead of the idea of elimination of schools, how can we make a Catholic education affordable for more students?
- Utilizing common networks: busing and lunch programs
- Again: missing comma in bullet point 2, and (in above version) capitalization error in #6.
- Protecting the principal's role as leader and advocate for students and teachers within their own school vs. becoming one of many financial development directors for the diocesan school district.
- Close schools that are too small to operate and merge students into one or two main schools
- One model does not fit all. All settings pose unique gifts and solutions; some cannot be consolidated.
- Teachers who want to teach, not just get a paycheck.
how to increase enrollment
Collaboration Among All Catholic Schools
removing a pastor's control over a school he has no interest in and/or has no education to run
Getting rid of all the waste and duplication that is going on
this is very confusing
Mission trips for different states
good teachers
bringing communities together
none
having schools participate
active church-going
Reaching out to rural areas
Continue use of the word Alliance, indicates that the word" Alliance" has been chosen
Effect of "eliminating unneeded facilities" in a community setting: How will closing this (building/school) affect the community it sits in?
ownership for financial health
focusing first and frequently on Catholic community - self accountability - schools are evangelization for Catholics then other interested parties
Again, what is the underlying motive of these questions? Specifically, the question which talks about utilizing single grade and multi-grade classes of one teacher etc. It is well documented that smaller teacher to student rations is the way to go. However, if this means closing schools because you want to "optimize" resources I disagree. Within your mission statement it stated "grow and serve more points of the diocese." If we close schools WE will limit the outreach to many Catholics within the diocese of Grand Rapids.
...not meeting the needs of all students...class size should not be more than 20
Embracing the arts within the schools and the community.
Working in the local community church.
Define elements of commonality and uniqueness for each school
Recognizing a schools individual identity-personality
teachers need to be a role model for our faith in AND out of school environment as well as our religious!
providing education to the families who are unable to pay
In Plain English: we are closing schools? Your wording is sounding very political here.
giving less homework
STRONG leadership that is common sense based and completely dedicated to hard work for the good of the students and improvement of the school.
showing respect for teachers
Eliminating unwanted/unneeded specials
Families sticking together or knowing what is going on in each others lives
learning
Not sure
ending ozone layer destruction
stopping global warming
Sanitary Facilities
Sanitize Buildings
Encourage support from Churches without schools
fill all schools by making education available for all
Introducing the ability for parents to home school part time and go to Catholic School the rest of the time (Northpointe Christian Schools)
utilizing common networks
Allowing individual schools to maintain their unique identities.
Utilizing teachers in diverse ways to better serve the needs of the students and interests of the parents in maintaining class sizes and single grade classrooms should parents prefer that model.
As long as all of these do not "bring down" schools who are successful with these on their own, but rather bring others up to a higher level of success.
Again, these are very important, but not being consistently met or addressed...

Giving priority to individual circumstances
I do not want to see it be mandatory for one teacher/child ratio
Utilizing available resources to serve the greatest academic concentration of students (high vs. low achieving)
Mention of the role in supporting schools by parishes w/o schools
pursuing purchasing agreements/discounts by having schools order together (textbooks, etc)
Each school should have a specialty
Parishes should have more control over their schools. It does not matter the class size if the parish supports it. Whatever happens, we need to keep Catholics in our parishes and not drive them away.
Ensuring faithfulness to our Roman Catholic faith through leadership by the Dominican Sisters of Ann Arbor
Having Catholic education available to all Catholic students
mutual accountability
Lower tuition costs
quality of education..not quantity of students..lots of factors and where did that number come from?
School budget should not be 50% of a parish budget, raise tuition to cover costs.
Small classrooms give students more opportunities to learn.
Clear direction and support from the Bishop & Diocesan staff
non-school parishes contribute financially to support catholic schools within the diocese
Diocese will provide financial support to supplement tuition and parish subsidies
eliminating unneeded facilities
Having priests that want schools!
maintain the identity of each individual school/parish
Both diocese- and parish-level support for collaboration among schools
Listening to individual school needs
Focusing on education and demonstrating the "3-R's" through proven teaching techniques and prayer.
I would agree with single-grade classes only
Tithe....tithing is next to impossible for us, now that we are paying tuition. Tithing has always been very important to us.
I feel #3 should also include: expecting parishes to participate actively in school stewardship.
respect
These are catch phrases. What does the first one even mean??
An Alliance is required for cost control & survival!!!
bottom up collaboration not top down
- Support of Diocese for keeping schools running. By minimizing the importance of the schools, the Diocese minimizes the strength of our future.
- allowing schools to have their OWN personality
- Don't reinvent the wheel with after school programming-tap into existing community resources, collaborate with existing community initiatives and other faith-based groups.
- Develop a middle school or schools - class sizes shrink at middle school level, you could consolidate kids from several schools
- Creating space, environment and aid to allow for special needs students to attend a Catholic School
- class size of 20-25 is too large to meet the needs of many learners
- AVOIDING multi-grade classes of one teacher to 20-25 students
- smaller class size-20-25 students are too many
- I do not think multi-grade classrooms is a good idea for most schools. 20 students per class in early elementary should be the limit. Children in early elementary levels are learning skills in reading and math that often require more one-on-one time!
- Recognizing the unique abilities for each school to address the needs for the community it serves
- Highly Qualified Educators
- I always feel you are not telling us what these mean. I would like more clarification on underlying meanings
- tech info
- alliance of catholic school working together to eliminate duplicating efforts
- do not agree with multi grade classes or student to teacher ratio above 22 students to one teacher
- Zero participation of the parish priest assisting in religious instruction, vocations encouragement, and being visible. Catholicism vs Christianity
- A wider culture of support for Catholic schools such as the Diocese of Wichita
- Converting unneeded school facilities to other Parish uses or eliminating them. (in place of the last entry)
- maintaining adequate parish support of schools
- Active parishioner involvement in school programs
- Parishes without schools should be helping parishes with schools. They should be encouraging a Catholic Education whenever possible.
- The entire Catholic Church should be responsible to education all Catholics, not just the Catholic schools. Every parish should pay toward Catholic education even if they don't have any parishioners attending Catholic Schools.
- What are unneeded facilities?
- The needs of multiple learning styles
- 20-25 students should be 25-30
- understanding and responding to the market
- A concrete plan for environmental sustainability throughout the diocesan schools, including recycling, etc.
- diocesan standard curriculum (does not mean undermining unique needs or student population)
- Make sure none of the above will sacrifice the welfare of the students...not sure about multi grade classrooms, but limited class size is important
- a total commitment to the parish (church and school) by ALL parish members, especially the young.
- Final decisions should remain with the school’s parish
• the uniqueness of each parish school - when did Catholic education become "Big Business"
• Diocesan and Parish Financial Support
• Diocesan wide administered tuition assistance application planning
• Emphasize financial stability of the catholic school system versus each independent school
• It would be important to ensure each school still has a defined identity, however, crossing over use of large facilities and functions makes sense.
• The overall collaboration of neighboring schools.
• Do you believe answers to these elements raised above and others will be manipulated to an already answered goal?
• eliminating high schools that are a drain on the parish
• recognize parish history of prioritization of Catholic education
• study groups for students who need extra help
• meeting the needs of all the students
• Difficult to understand. 'Stewardship' is not easily understood in the context of the bullet points. The bullet points are very important but need a different title. 2. Don't understand bullet #1 "Extending relationships thru development'
• To be truly Catholic Christians we must plan to serve the "least of our brethren" and become inclusive and not exclusive schools. Our students will live in and serve a very diverse, small world.
• Utilizing single-grade and multi-grade classes of one teacher to 20-25 students
• tracking data, adjusting goals
• students who are academically challenged
• Diocese must require schools to comply with Diocesan academic direction - this cannot be an option!
• what is UNNEEDED to the diocese is not always the case for the small schools that have been targeted for closure, if we have students we are NEEDED!!! careful with that wording
• utilizing purchasing power of greater numbers for supplies and resources
• decreasing enrollment
• improving the percentage of parishioner families with children in the school
• the words are vague, all-encompassing and can mean anything to anyone; thus the powers that be end up "ruling"
• working together to realize and maximize our individual school/parish strengths in an effort to optimize the diocese as a whole
• How important individual parish schools are to the individual parish
• Respecting the uniqueness of each school.
• Teamwork
• use of learning technologies like Khan Academy (see the TED talk from Sal Khan)
• All of these need to offer the assurance of being in line with the Catholic mission. I would be livid to later find out I had part in some protestant use of our "facilities" in order to make money. "Taking ownership for financial help" sounds like it could put school leadership in a position to confuse our mission of catechizing youth into doing whatever one has to do to remain financially able. More important is to use the given population to live out our Catholic mission.
• obviously the HUMAN element. Educators need to connect with students, parents and fellow educators as people for a school system to succeed.
More Priests and diocese at large embracing schools rather than viewing them as financial drains and the failure to consider prospective of future Catholic parents who have never been asked our views (we are expecting a baby).

Combining schools. Close some of the older buildings.

Utilizing as much talent of parishioners/parents as possible.

All communities - In Newaygo County, we have nothing. I am a Falcon, WC'74

Expecting measurable, positive results from new teaching methods, materials, testing, and accountability in all areas.

If any of these elements are imitated, the entire Catholic community of parents need to be involved, not just a committee from cathedral Square.

Cooperating with parishes and parish staff

Accountability for fiscal and academic responsibility from diocese and pastors.

Not every school would fit in to this mold, nor should they be expected to... again definition of words is going to be questioned as many people will not understand and therefore you are risking people making up their own realities which will then have an adverse impact on what you're trying to achieve.

The Parish Schools are the future of our Church. We MUST find a way to keep them open.

Making schools K-12 when possible. This is done well at many other private schools.

Expecting parish families (non-school) to actively participate in parish stewardship.

Clarify stewardship as meaning time, talent and treasure.

Utilizing single-grade and multi-grade classes of....

A solid education is critical. Great staff exist at many of the schools today, trust and utilize them. No need for standardized testing all that does is give administration a reason to have a job. Schools produced excellently prepared students for years without worrying about a standardized test. Raise classroom standards, you'll produce great students. On the previous question #5 you asked if a collaboration and strategic planning will help you be more responsive...obviously 'yes', however history shows the diocese and many times the parishes simply do as they wish, not considering the input of their respective community.

That fact that all schools do not participate; some seem to "opt out" of various events, plans etc.

Many school facilities are shared by other parish groups; these elements do not recognize that element.

Foster mission to serve the poor.

Personal relationships with parish families.

Small Class Size.

Continued development/training for board members (non-direct staff).

I believe in this days economy that it is not possible for small country schools to be self sustaining 100%, although I do recognize the need for some cost cutting, I believe that the catholic diocese has always helped financially all over the world to wherever it was needed, well right now it's needed right in your own backyard and I don't see a problem with the diocese helping sustain the schools who produce their priests and nuns.

Extending relationships through development of community partners to sustain / expand Catholic education.

Recognize/embrace each child's unique gifts to help foster stewardship for life.

I don't agree with the ownership of financial health. The school is a mission of the church community.

Tapping into outside companies or colleges to better education.

Don't forget that the buildings need to be open to Rel. Ed. and others!
• Cost savings cannot become more important than academic and spiritual excellence.
• Allowing schools to flourish without diocesan mandates or threats of closing
• Experientially teaching students to do more with less
• Will parents buy into multi-grade classrooms if they have a choice of traditional classroom in P.S.?
• No faith focus, any public school could have the same basic goals
• Challenge priests and parish workers to vocally support their parish schools!!!! We have no support from our priest or the people who work in the office!
• These questions are not "gathering" information as far as I can tell...so what is the point?
• Allowing each parish their own say, we moved to this area for this community, it's values, our environment
• Evaluate the sustainability and responsible maintenance of existing facilities
• These are all leading questions
• Sharing staffing e.g. administration, language studies, special needs, counseling, etc.
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- Add Value to All Schools through:
  - Innovation and Collaboration
    - Academics
    - Competitive and Quality Programs
    - Integration of Catholic Faith and Reason
  - Parental Engagement
    - Value parents as the primary educators of their children
    - Optimize input and talent
  - Parish Relationships
    - Cultivate and Strengthen Partnerships
    - Schools lead Stewardship Initiatives and Development Efforts
  - Technology Environment
    - State-of-the-art equipment and instructional support
    - Web-based interactive learning and global connectivity

Assess each of the following elements of innovation and collaboration according to importance with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important.
An Alliance of Catholic Schools

- Add Value through:
  - "Customized" School Features

1. Small Schools (serving primarily rural, some urban)
   Add Value by **Right-Sizing and Creating New Models**

2. Urban Schools (serving large or growing populations of minority, immigrant, or families with low income)
   Add Value by **Regionalizing Outreach and Increasing Development**

3. City-Edge Schools (serving primarily suburban populations)
   Add Value by **Becoming the Best Choice among Neighboring Districts**

4. Multi-Parish Schools (serving more than one parish)
   Add Value by **Partnering to Build Regional Community Identity**

5. High Schools
   Add Value by **Improving Catholic Culture and College Readiness**

6. Satellite Schools (in growing suburban or rural Catholic populations)
   Add Value by **Sharing Administration and Services in Various or New Locations**

Which of the following best describes the types of schools with which you are associated? (check all that apply)
How would you rate the "Add Value by" statements related to your type(s) of school(s) with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important?
Vision

Our Alliance of Catholic Schools Strives:
- to illumine learning and life in the light of Christ
- to expand Catholic educational ministry
  - that is affordable and accessible
  - to families investing time, talent, and treasure
  - through an innovative and collaborative approach

Please assess each of the following elements of the draft Vision Statement according to their importance to the overall vision with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important.

- To expand Catholic educational ministry
- That is affordable and accessible
- Through an innovative and collaborative approach
- To illumine Learning and Life in the light of Christ
- To families willing to invest their time, talent, and treasure
Vision: Critical Missing Elements

- Stop micro-managing our Parish Schools especially our rural and small city schools! We are not like the Greater GR Schools in any way or fashion...
- The education of the students - needs to be a focus and priority - these elements do not convey this enough
- Rural schools will have a difficult time succeeding with a city school guideline. We need to keep in mind the individual needs of each school collectively.
- How about helping Catholics with tuition instead of free rides for non-Catholics for diversity and sports.
- just not sure
- To keep each school unique in the community which the parish thrives.
- Real mechanisms to assist families of lower financial means to go to a catholic school. Our schools are not accessible to those of lower socioeconomic means despite the stated otherwise
- Recognize that the school can only supplement what the PARENTS are already doing
- make cath. education open to non Catholics w/o prothletizing
- Make all schools Charter schools. In AZ Charter schools, also charge tuition. In GR there seems to be a fair amount CRC schools which are chartered.
- Frustrated we tried to help but were declined by Degaw to use CATHOLIC texts and place Catholic Religious sisters and brothers back into our schools
- Excellent teaching staff with superior qualifications and Catholic faith backgrounds
- Illumine is not even in my Webster's Dictionary. Say illuminate, or light of Christ, not both in one sentence; and mention the student. i.e. Illuminate Christ within the Learning and Life of each student, so that they universally reflect the light of Christ.
- Need to accept every family that wants to send their child to a Catholic school environment, no matter what financial and/or academic situation. We shouldn't turn ANYBODY away.
- something about accepting students where they are at and helping them be use their talents to be their best selves.
- Note: I like this statement ("To illumine Learning and Life in the light of Christ") better than your earlier mission statement ("Christ illuminates Learning and Life")
- Servant Leadership
- Again the word illumine not best word in my opinion for understanding
- All families should have to invest time, talent, and treasure not just families who ‘can afford it’.
- Paying customers only. If you want a charity school, then set it up as such.
- Leadership academy approach would set Catholic Schools apart.
- None of these is specific enough to comment on. What is important is teaching sound Catholic doctrine at an affordable price.
- that is child-centered as well as Christ-centered
- i do not like this
- This needs to be more kid friendly as I don't understand a lot of things in being a 6th grader.
- I don’t get this test thing
- Having buses
- provide better education
• Kids showing respect to other students and teachers
• More students
• Variety in students
• Great values
• "Illuminate learning and life in the light of Christ" is a lot of alliteration -
• Focus needs to be on Catholic families and Faith first - diversity fine but as past primary focus has diluted the value of the schools - value is that faith is integrated throughout day - not left in am and picked up in pm
• Again, we need to work together as a Catholic community. However, the underlying "theme" I get from word "collaboration" is not really what I think is needed. What about getting our schools back to basics. Orthodox teaching and serving ALL members of the community and not just the affluent.
• Let us not weed out those who desire the Catholic school but economically cannot...let us not educate only the wealthy...
• Embracing the role of music within the school and Catholic Masses.
• I really don't like the word "alliance." I keep thinking of _____ asking ______, "Do you want to form an alliance with me?" and snickering.
• As part of our Catholic community of parishes
• Nothing new in any of these questions
• Each child is nurtured to become their very best self; emotionally, spiritually, and academically to thrive!
• That would make people happy
• God always being in your life
• What about the ninjas? DON'T SIDE WITH THE PIRATES!!!
• Service
• Concerned that schools truly remain Catholic.
• Diversity in education and acceptance of all
• Catholic education is not for everyone....more specialization and differentiation is required for survival: translated aggressively eliminating waste with redundancies while aggressively investing
• And that is supported by the entire diocese
• All parishes should the parishes that have schools
• It seems in the United States that the Catholic church is in a retreat mode. It needs to become more aggressive and get more people in the churches and schools. Parish numbers seem to be down in GR, not just the school numbers. More needs to be done for the "salvation of souls" not just a marketing plan for the schools. Schools are very important, but more development and outreach programs are needed to get people back in the pews and see the importance of religion.
• To return to a formula that made Catholic schools growing and great - run by religious
• Living the gospel in word and deed
• According to the teaching and traditions of the Catholic church
• This is a much better way of stating the first line of the vision with illumination
• Still do not like wording of vision statement
• Does "accessible" cover students with disabilities?
• Provide a high-quality academic experience and encourage a continuing desire to learn
• I feel that all children regardless of economics of their families should be able to attend our Catholic schools.
• Something about academics
• Respect
• The last one is ambiguous. No opinion. If families invest their time, it should be valued.
• Cost Control is required for survival
• Expand the educational ministry to include grades 7 & 8 in the rural areas.
• We have to try to keep a quality education at a reasonable & affordable price
• I don't like the word illumine - is that even English?
• something that expresses diversity; something that expresses option for the poor
• your vision shouldn't be a restatement of your mission...a vision outlines the environment we wish to create - the 2 set of bullets is more of a vision, but I think should be worded like one.
• To offer a Christ-centered, positive alternative to families struggling with economic and socially challenging circumstances
• high academic standards/outcomes
• I sometimes wish it did not feel like such a sacrifice and that I was giving up so much to send my child there
• money saver have you seen how much we pay?! we are family of 5 kids you hear that 5 and with my dad battling cancer we can’t afford it CHEAPEN IT WE NEED MONEY FOR DAD
• "accessible" seems to contradict the course that the high schools are taking with regards to minimum grade standards
• committed leadership to keeping the schools affordable and excellent - not the current environment all new hires at IHM have been straight out of school because they are cheap
• Promote Catholicism as a family unit, actively encourage vocations
• affordable and accessible to all who desire...not selective
• Invoking Christ for nebulous goals doesn't accomplish anything. We need to convince parents and the community at large that a Catholic education is the very best thing for children in our modern world. We need to convince our bishops that there is no greater ministry than Catholic education for building and forming the body of Christ.
• High tuition is making families go elsewhere….very very sad. People are struggling.
• All parishes need to support Catholic Education
• I feel it is very disheartening to find that children who have parents who have invested in the Catholic School system not getting as much financial help as minorities who have not invested in our Catholic faith to get the sports acclaim or as they say multicultural experience. I know my nieces and nephews have said that the kids that are getting the full ride at West are causing the most problems and they did not go to the Catholic grade schools.
• "...through an innovative and collaborative approach" What does this mean? what does it encompass? what does it strive to accomplish?
• Parish involvement
• I find the phrase "Illumine learning and life in the light of Christ" annoying. I get the point (and agree that it's important), but say it more clearly. This is the most important phrase and it needs to be reworked. "Expanding Cath. Educational ministry" is extremely important, but it seems as though you are trying to shrink the population "allowed" to receive a secondary education. Eliminating remedial classes, then claiming you can't service remedial children is not very expansive, accessible or Christ-like. I understand there is a point at which the high schools cannot service a special need, but it seems as though children of average to lower intelligence with no specific learning disabilities are being turned away or encouraged to go elsewhere because they don't fit this new image of the college prep school. The Catholic identity (including God's love for ALL of His children, not just the smart ones) is the driving force for me to pay money. Strong academics (at all learning levels) are expected to go along with that.
• don't get carried away with trying to make everything alike, variety with the same goal.
• Do not leave out – life experiences (sports, clubs, social learning, etc.)
• Importance of uniqueness of smaller schools seems to be missing
• Abstaining from carefully-worded surveys that seek to falsely wrest support through questions that make wrong assumptions.
• Do you believe that this survey was created by asking questions with the goal already in mind (e.g. the first question vis-a-vis the whole rest of the document)?
• More inclusive of students of average or somewhat below academic ability
• The mental health of every student but the teens years are very important
• to allow students with learning disabilities to be served in our Catholic schools.
• Not clear what is meant by 'To illumine Learning and Life is the light of Christ', and To expand Catholic educational ministry (does this mean every child is expected to do at least one ministry)?
• You seem to ignore those families who desire a Catholic Education but cannot afford it. Why not a scholarship program??
• where does the special need child fit in
• giving 8th graders a chance to blossom at the HS level regardless of testing, to make a well rounded academic atmosphere
• "To families willing to invest their time, talent, and treasure" alienates and offends families who do invest their time, talent and treasure, but are prohibited by economic conditions from using Catholic schools
• make it affordable
• I'm not sure we want to put place requirements on who can take advantage of Catholic education...
• what does "Catholic educational ministry"?
• illuminate the path toward life and learning
• I believe that if the first principle is an authentic orthodox Catholic framework, the market is there.
• A Catholic school education should be accessible to any Catholic child in the diocese that wants one
• A Catholic Education should be available to all Catholic Children regardless of their financial position
• I don't like the wording of this part. Please see my suggestion at the beginning of this survey.
• Affordable is a relative term..."To families willing to sacrifice and invest their time, talent, and treasure..." Our culture seems to want to take expensive vacations instead of pay tuition. We must be willing to be "counter cultural" to reap the benefits of following Christ.
• What about the teachers? I am mystified that they've had nary a mention in an educational survey. For our schools to have excelled to the level they have over many years has required the dedicated labors of highly dedicated educational professionals. Such professionals seem to be of little concern, based upon the content of this survey.
• More state of the art education
• please have someone edit this slide. there are several grammatical errors and awkward writing that makes this slide difficult to read
• In my world, there is no accessibility. We are a closed non-inviting parish. Very different than when ______ was a presence in our community. We have shrunk instead of grown. We are now trying to grow again, but the reversal is slow compared to the exodus of the last 5 or 6 years.
- This whole slide is mumbo/jumbo. Be Clear to your audience....your using too many "idea" words....use more concrete words. Drop the word "Illumine" seriously, it may sound good to you in admin but to the lay person, it sounds like an admin person talking. MAKE IT REAL Dave! Pretend you are talking to a parent with a basic education. Are they going to understand this????
- Alumni of other Parochial Schools (Catholic and others) frequently interacting with students
- "affordable" should be a 10 on the scale, this vision sounds good on paper but if tuition keep rising, this will all be for nothing
- some children do not have supportive families but are in greater need of Catholic education than those who do
- diversity
- inclusive rather than exclusive
- Find a way to keep small Parish schools open and successfully help them to increase enrollment.
- Again, I think illumine should be changed to illuminate.
- knit into parish life
- You need to come up with a better word than illumine to reach all people.
- The first statement sounds phony...as does much of the content here. Why is it difficult to assemble great staff and families seeking a Catholic education and simply let it work. What has happened in the past 40 years that administrators have found the need to mess up something that worked? Why not find out 'why' Parishioners refuse to send their children to your parish schools and why non-Catholics are rejected from the schools? Any opportunity to share Catholicism with a non-Catholic MAY help them consider converting. The results will not likely be immediate, but people do gravitate to what they know. There seem to be many school aged children at Mass on the weekends, why do these kids not attend a Catholic school? Don't worry about the fancy marketing of the 'light of Christ'...why will they not enroll?
- pool resources to create Catholic Education Opportunity for all
- individual school identity
- Where is the excellence in education in the statement?
- Welcomes a diverse student body - race, socioeconomic and different faith traditions
- Illumine is correct but more people can relate to the word "illuminate"
- Why the word "illumine" and not "illuminate"?
- I think we need to let people know that all are welcome, even the ones who can't afford it on their own, I think there are a lot of people out there that do not realize that their is financial help for them. I didn't know that until after we sent our kids there for a year. We don't need the financial help but I think its great for those who do.
- What do you mean by illumine?
- Commitment to worship each week as a family. External funding other than parish subsidy & tuition.
- Academic excellence
- First statement is too complicated but would like it if it flowed easier. We have to be the BEST academically and we need to have it proven by test scores. No one denies that faith plays a huge role in catholic education. People will send their child to be best academic and affordable school.
- is this survey for real?
- To all CHILDREN --not all "families" are of ideal nature, if we can get their children--we can offer hope
- Create strong, Catholic leaders
The phrase "to illumine..." is nice but not real language that people use every day. It should be re-worded.

all questions are leading...who would NOT strongly agree?

The formation of another generation of informed and practicing Catholics

Additional Comments

Catholic education should be available to all people. If the parent is involved or not, should not be part of our mission as it goes against the church teaching, allowing access to all people. Some children who would greatly benefit from a Catholic education do not have the parental involvement. WE as a catholic people should have a system in place to seek them out and bring them to our schools. Our schools should shy away from becoming "elite" in the sense that they are too hard for all to enter in. For example foster kids or children of broken families.

I feel strongly that a Catholic Education is a privilege. It is for families who are willing to make sacrifices and to take on the responsibilities associated with the benefits of a Catholic school education. If the vision is to combine schools for savings, will those savings be passed on to the parents that are paying their tuition?

One question asked our feelings about class size related to instruction. I do not ever wish my child to be in a multi-level grade (i.e. 2nd/3rd split). I would hope that would never be proposed.

Stop running parishes and their schools as individual businesses which survive on their own. We are a UNIVERSAL CHURCH, THOSE WHO HAVE SHOULD PROVIDE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT. This applies to the CSA also.

We need support from the bishop for Catholic Education. He has the money and the knowledge to erect a small conglomerate of buildings downtown Grand Rapids with little regard for scholarship programs for Catholic Education for the needy parishioners in our parishes. Parishes have been required to pay for these buildings and they feel such little connection to all his missions. He was the worse choice for bishop for Grand Rapids. The leader of this flock is a poor role model and he has not brought people together. He has torn this diocese apart. What a shame! Hopefully, his tenure is short-lived.

I think the schools need to market to people of different faiths. It is good for students to know other students of different faiths and it could potentially help enrollment. If you don't have an 'open door' policy to others, schools could close due to low enrollment.

Just to reiterate what I have said...Stop your micro-managing!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Need more emphasis in the mission and vision statements about the Diocese, school systems and teaching staff providing the best education possible for the students and actively engaging the parents towards this goal. Even though learning in a Christian based environment is extremely important, there needs to be an educational value and return on investment.

I pray that the Diocese continues to recognize the value of smaller schools and that our Faith is built and passed on through families having the opportunity to send their children to a Catholic School. We are a 4th generation family who have had 4 children of our own attend St. Michaels school.
My concern has always been for the continuing education of those who have and are currently attending Catholic Schools. There is so much emphasis put on the value of a Catholic education for those, but (pretty much) nothing is provided for ongoing education after graduation. Sure, each parish offers something little, but in comparison, there needs to be a shift in the emphasis and value of the lifelong journey as well as opportunities within the parish family to achieve this. SO many come out of the Catholic School System and their ongoing needs are found in other church communities. This is reflective of the emphasis on curriculum as well as the social/spiritual needs provided on the parish level. I believe it starts (on the rural parish level) by the outward example of the face that we do not value "dynamic" programming for continuing education. I am specifically talking about those seeking to grow from ages 7th grade - retirement. Such a void! Also, expecting the rural parishioners to travel to G.R. to take part in many of the programs is an unrealistic expectation. I am in complete agreement that the right hand (the Diocese) needs to collaborate w/the left hand (our own parish family); however, realistically we need to be on the same page as to what we value as a whole in terms of education.

- Let the schools and teachers do their jobs with minimal interference from the diocese.
- We need a lot more than words on a page. I suspect you will say that we need to start with a "mission". Maybe, but it is just a bunch of words to me. I need to see the action behind the words. Then again, my youngest is graduating from high school, so any impact will not be immediate. Maybe it is nit picking, but if I have to look up “illumine” in the dictionary because I am unfamiliar with the word, maybe a better choice would be "illuminate".
- As you can see by some of my responses, I believe, each Catholic school is unique and each school can offer a slightly different style to the community. I do not agree at all with making all schools the same, one size does not fit all. Please carefully look at each school as a precious gift from God to the community and not a waste of time and money. Thank you.
- Quit trying to be like the public schools. We are unique. The diocese should NOT be tearing down schools and closing them. There should be waiting lists to attend the Catholic schools. The focus should be on the children. Keep the politics out of the schools. I pray our school doesn't become closed due to politics.
- The vision stated by all appearances sounds grand but experience has constructed a vision that is not compatible with reality. Our schools are in contraction as is the number of enrollments. Currently I am putting two children through the system. I am not always sure the educational quality meets the bar we have set. I am sure by observation we do not have a mechanism in place to aide the really economically beset into our schools. I am not sure we will have two high schools in the near term little lone a grade school feeder system to ensure future high school attendants. I am not convinced the diocese of Grand Rapids uses its financial resources to create a strong well used school system from primary to high school. Respectfully.
- I admit I don't know the reasons why this has not been done before, but I think a multi-child discount offered for any family with more than 1 child in K-12 would be extremely helpful in handling the cost of catholic school education.
- For all of the monies spent going to Catholic school, it does not ensure that the child will follow the Catholic faith into adulthood. The school should be building up the numbers in the church of young people but where are they? What is the missing link for the young adults that fall away, what can we do?
- Our children are currently in the public school system but will be attending catholic schools in the very near future; certainly for high school
I do not agree with giving anyone an athletic scholarship.

Bishop needs to revisit the uniform policy and allow parents to purchase blue pants, white shirts at a vendor who's cost is reasonable, not a shop in Lansing who is overpriced and the quality of the garments is left to be desired. What's worse is that when the concerns were brought to the principle and the board, she was more worried about disciplining those who broke the uniform policy rules than actively listening and creating a solution for parents who are very upset that the choice to buy clothes is narrowed to only a vendor in Lansing. Why is Holy Trinity the only school that requires an iron-on decal? Why did it take so long to get the “kick-back” details from the principle regarding the vendor in Lansing? It is all very disheartening. I've also prayed about this as it was the ultimate reason why I'm not sending my kids to Catholic school moving forward.

felt i was filling out something w/o the background knowledge and preparation

Having lived through Vatican II, it is too bad we could not see, the future of this on the control the Catholic Church have on people. I certainly don't have the sense of family I had before, with the Church. I think not having the availability of Catholic school, we have many non practicing Catholic, then we had during the Cradle Catholic Days. Whatever you do, look for your desired outcome and plan backward.

As a former parent that believes in Catholic ed was very disappointed with the former lack of powers above. ex ______ in a sermon point blank said I am a product of public ed instead of endorse the values and great ed catholic. Instead Catholic ed was engraved going to church will be a time of getting in trouble. _______ made it very difficult to unite kids/parents to utilize the gym (the gym that parishioners paid for) All in all if it were not for the parents and kids I would never had sent my children to ________...except for a FEW teachers. I hope Catholic ed stays if proper teachers / admin / priest all believe in the goal to have a passion for Catholic education. Finally, Catholic education does not do a good job of youth groups or young adults still staying involved in being a good Christian.

Catholic Schools MUST BE 100% CATHOLIC not just in name. State accreditation needs to tossed out the window! Parents like myself aren't going to sacrifice for a Catholic education if they can get the same thing from the public schools. In my opinion, that is exactly what accreditation does, it gives us the same thing we can get for paying our taxes! We need to start the children's day, everyday, going to Mass and make sure classes are taken to confession on the First Friday of the Month. Participation at Sunday Mass should be mandatory with the parents signing in their family each Sunday. If a family is missing from Mass, a parish outreach person should be contacting the family as soon as possible to see if they are ill or need assistance in anyway.(maybe they have a large family and their van broke down and the father is recovering from an injury...) If the family continues to miss Mass a visit from the priest should occur. Every effort needs to be made to bring back teaching orders like the Sisters from Mary Mother of the Eucharist in Ann Arbor to our schools. In fact, their Academies should be used as a model for our schools. Those schools would be worth sacrificing for! Across the Diocese, in every single Catholic school, the Faith needs to be taught with solid texts like the Faith and Life series from Ignatius Press and the Didache series from Midwest Theological Forum, also available at Ignatius Press. Latin should be taught once more using texts like Memoria Press prints and Catholic History texts from Catholic Schools Textbook Project should be used. A SOLID math program like the Mathematics for Christian Living series from Rod and Staff publishers needs to be used. The lives of the saints should be read and discussed in class and held up as virtuous role models and heroes for our kids. The Virtues need to be taught and kids taught how to live them. Our libraries should be filled classic literature and good current literature from authors like Melissa Wiley. Children in every class should be read aloud to from the classics and
required to narrate back what they have heard. Our rural schools, especially those an hour or more north of GR, need to be supported, not closed. And kids from these areas need the same chance at a Catholic Education as their city counterparts, not just for grade school but all the way through the 12th grade. And ideally that K-12 education would be a FREE stewardship based education and not cost the parents $3,500.00 per head! And lastly, we MUST make Special Ed a top priority. Every school MUST accommodate children with special needs and recruit CATHOLIC special ed teachers like _______, a parishioner of _______, to teach in these classrooms. I look forward to the day when our Catholic Schools are TOTALLY CATHOLIC and proudly returned to their former glory.

- St Michael's school has served our community for many years and is well known in our area as having an excellent school that educates it's children in mind and soul well. My husband and I moved to this area to put our children in St. Michael's school and we are very glad we did. As the public school are not allow to mention God and as a public school bus driver of 27 years I see the need for our school more today than I did when we moved to this area. So many of the children now days have more idea of who God is, let alone his son Jesus. We need to keep our school when Christ the center and mentioned in all ways every day.

- I do NOT believe that academic achievement should be the basis for admission to catholic schools. There are many children who need and would benefit from catholic education and are NOT high academic achievers - so please do not make it a "status symbol" to be attending a catholic school. I also believe that if more money were allocated to CCD type programs and less to keeping catholic schools available - ALL children would benefit by learning more about their catholic faith and the principals of Christian living. Catholic schools have almost become exclusive - therefore leaving out many students. CCD programs would be fantastic if more qualified - not just volunteer - teachers were available and had the funds to develop really exciting and attractive programs - no person will ever leave a catholic school to go into a world of only catholic people - they will always be with those of many faiths and sometimes catholic school experiences do not lead to an understanding of "real world" situations. Thank you for the opportunity to express my feelings.

- Catholic schools have a long tradition of strong academics, athletics and faith formation. Whatever changes are implemented, the first priority should be best developing the mind, body, and spirit of each child. That is why we choose Catholic schools for our children.

- #8 - this question means nothing to me. Suggest you focus on schools that are in trouble - either student count, financially, or not offering competitive academics.

- Larger classes will become necessary because costs will rise and are already unaffordable. We have seen costs rise, increase tuition, loose a few more students, raise tuition a bit more, lose a few more students, raise tuition a bit more. It MUST stop! We have already seen many of our grade schools close and consolidate. Why, because we have made tuition unaffordable.

- Included in the Vision for Catholic schools should be that teachers/staff etc be practicing Catholics. How can you truly teach and live the Catholic faith if you are some other religion? (We have two teachers that are not Catholic in our tiny school.) We send our kids to a CATHOLIC school.

- I think we need to challenge ourselves as to why people choose Catholic Schools. So many people choose Catholic Schools and after Confirmation we still lose many students and their parents do not encourage continuous involvement. Being Catholic is more than sending the kids to a Catholic School and attending Sundays. It is a life-choice. It is a way of living the "Way". We must put as much emphasis on continuing
Catholic education as we do schools. In a parish with a K-6 or K-8 school, do we spend as much resources proportionately on the grades 9-12 youth? I don't think so. Perhaps the paradigm is shifting, but I have not seen it. Peace.

- If alliance implies consolidation, class size should not exceed 20. The student - teacher ratio is one of the most important assets within the system. If consolidation occurs between West and Catholic, I hope the West campus is utilized. If consolidation occurs, the because cost should also decrease for an increase in usage.

- I think the Vision for Catholic schools is very strong!

- We need to place a high value on passing on the faith to our children. In our high schools there needs to be room for those students who are not college bound.

- The Diocese instituted a major change last year. I think it would be very wise to do a survey of students, staff, and parents concerning the change. In case a survey does not materialize, I feel there is a real void. I mean that with no disrespect to _____. I appreciate that _____ is doing the best they can in the situation, but the school is a ship without a rudder. It is not clear to me after a year what _____ does. I see _____ falling short. I don't see ______. What is the experience of others? It was too high a price to pay to become fiscally sound.

- Small schools far from GR should follow local Public school schedule as many families have students in both systems. Makes it difficult for planning family time.

- May be time to combine to two west side of Grand Rapids Catholic elementary schools to save on operation dollars. More collaboration needs to be done...much like the All Saints academy across the river

- Too many go thru grade school not really knowing their basic faith. Whatever happened to memorization of basics? thanks

- I think the new vision needs to be student centered instead of parent centered. As a parent I want my opinion to be considered, but I send my kids to Catholic Schools because I think it's what's best for them not necessarily what is best for me, so I would hope that their best interest is always you first thought also.

- Good idea to have multiple types of schools (small, urban, satellite, etc), rather than your previous goal of making all the schools the same. While taking this survey I got the feeling (in only one or two cases) that you were trying to address problems that I do not have the background on. Some of your aims sound like they grew out of a specific, and possibly contentious, environment. I don't know what the background is, and maybe its not a problem to design a mission statement around it. But again, maybe it is a problem because it would lead to a short-sighted mission. Only you can evaluate that. (But I have noticed in the GR Press that there are some strong feelings, so I'm not surprised) I agree very strongly that you do need to do this though. Please publish info and updates on the diocesan website. I already read several reports you published from consultants about the issues, challenges, potential solutions. Are they the same? I am interested in what you see as the challenges, issues, potential solutions - and how you plan to measure success. I'd like to be able to read on your website as these change and evolve.

- Our role model is Jesus Christ. Jesus was the ultimate Servant. Catholic schools can grow and prosper thru that example of Jesus Servant Leadership. Catholic schools should and must be supported by the entire parish. Not just by the families that send there children to the catholic schools. The education of students in our catholic schools must be centered on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. For the most part our current education is our catholic schools are secular based. Many of our Catholic parents have chosen to Home School, Charter and or Public Schools to educate their children. This is due to their concerns of the lack of authentic Catholic Education. The Home Schoolers know that they are the primary educators of their children, and want to provide
a Christ centered education for their children. Teaching them the truths of the Church and the Kingdom to come. We have ten children that we have been home schooling for 23 years. We love Jesus Christ and the Church he founded. We have taken our responsibilities of raising these gifts to Know/Love/and Serve GOD. To have this New Spring Time within our Church we must teach the TRUTH in season and out of season. I can be reached at kevinrvh@vanderhyde.com

- My concern is that in some instances, closing the smaller rural Catholic schools, or combining them would drive more families away due to transportation issues. Preserving schools like this, which have been a part of the parish communities for decades, is an integral part in maintaining the close-knit faith communities for which rural areas are known and loved. In many cases, the school is a part of the parish community that encourages fellowship among not only the parents of children who attend, but even extended family members, friends and the rest of the parish. Going to a rural Catholic school has given me the framework to have a successful life in faith, home life and work. I am proud and excited to be able to send my children into the same environment, in which they are already flourishing. I would hate for the system to change so much, it was more disruptive to them than helpful.

- Look to our past as a path to the future. Our very solid foundation was built on the religious community and exceptional support from the parishes. While the religious community is no longer an option to keep costs artificially low, the parish support seems to waiver. As a parent of MCC students, I can see how great of a system we have and wish it could be experienced by every child I see in mass on Sunday. From the info that is shared throughout the catholic community, not every parish shares a common goal of seeing that every child in their congregation is a MCC student. Our past clearly shows that when we had the primary focus on our CHILDREN, the parishes thrived. Just like our personal lives, when we don't pay appropriate attention to the basics, other aspects of our life suffer. Focusing our attention on the overall formation of our children is the greatest gift we can provide to them and our community.

- Catholic schools are slowly becoming less and less affordable for us every year. If tuition would become more affordable, would the amount of students that will have access to the schools increase? If this were the case, you would see a thriving Catholic school system.

- A Catholic Education in our Diocese is becoming more and more of an opportunity only for those that are wealthy and academically gifted. This is not a diverse population. I do not believe that this sends a proper message, nor follows in the teachings of Christ. I believe we need an elected Board that has voting power. I would have more faith in a more democratic, equally balanced system. I hope that the diverse population of schools is preserved. The schools should not be cookie cutter images of one another as one size does not fit all. I have many questions regarding development. Do we have enough human resources working on grant writing, fundraising, endowments, marketing, etc.? What about school vouchers? Would this help our schools to not only sustain what we have, but to grow? Do we have somebody working actively with our legislature to help support Catholic schools? Do we involve businesses in our area enough? Their investment in our schools is an investment in future human capital. Do our tuition rates align with what parents can afford? Could we become more sustainable and attract more students with a percentage based tuition scale? Could we incentivize tuition? Maybe high performing students could receive a financial reward for their hard work? (This would incentivize parents to become more active in their child's education.) How can we encourage religious vocations so more priests and nuns return to the classroom? Tradition is important to me. Tradition keeps families coming back. Tradition also appeals to new families. Tradition forms Catholic community “families” – families that stay connected for life. There are a large percentage of students that come from parents
(and grandparents) that went to Catholic schools in our area. I send my children to Catholic school because I want them to have what I had. Dismissing long time faculty and administration hit this community hard. It damaged relationships and created distrust. Is there not a better way? I am thrilled to see a tradition brought back this fall - the CC vs. East scrimmage. This used to mark the start of the school year many years ago. Everybody would see their friends, parents would reunite, our community felt strong. Events like this encouraged and helped build relationships - relationships among diverse cross sections of people. Whole communities became involved. We attracted great, positive attention. I support these types of events very strongly. Perhaps the biggest athletic and social event of the year is still missing – the WC vs. CC football game. Why something so popular, well attended and eagerly anticipated was canceled, I do not understand. Many people do not. We continually hear that "we are going in a different direction", but are given no concrete reasons why or where we are going. For the schools to survive there obviously needs to be some change. But, the change that I have seen the past year seems to slant in a negative direction. I agree with applying more lean practices, but at what expense? A smaller administration feels to me like we have less of a voice and not enough presence in our community and beyond. I'm afraid that we may be sacrificing for the short term which will have devastating, negative, long term effects. I hope I am wrong because I pray that my grandchildren will have the opportunity to attend Catholic school. My last thought right now about our vision is about this survey and where it is coming from. Is our future being mapped out by a consulting company? I have heard that Meitler Consulting has been a large part of the decision making process and I think that's something all stakeholders should be clearly aware of. God Bless, you for all your efforts and thank you for your time.

- Suggest that you consider the Wichita, Kansas model of tithing to increase financial support for the schools by all parishes. Suggest that a thorough demographic analysis be completed to determine what tuition level is reasonable and what competitive niche our schools can fill. Suggest that more scholarship funding be available to support families who want to send their kids to our Catholic schools but cannot afford to do so.
- Lately it seems as if the Catholic schools my family has been associated with are more worried about the financially challenged families. Our school is basing all Scholarships on financial need with no strings attached. The students who excel at sports and grades have all ways had strings. Furthermore we have educated our children always in the Catholic Community, the recent changes are the first time we have thought about sending them just to a Christian School.
- Possible consideration of a "Home School" support area for the schooled at home community.
- The general Catholic population needs to be educated more on the opportunities for financial aid and scholarships available for their children. Many families probably don't even consider Catholic schools because of the cost and don't realize that there are many ways to make it more affordable.
- Transparency is VERY important. There are transparency issues in Muskegon. True leadership is also paramount - for the health of academics and direction of the school. Perhaps open a Catholic Montessori??
- I think an alliance of Catholic schools is a great idea and furthers the mission of the Church on many levels. There needs to be more collaboration between churches and priests to preserve Catholic education for the future. I’m glad to see Bishop Hurley taking a leadership role and being open and willing to make changes for the betterment of the Catholic community.
• Uniforms are great for the children...how about the teachers? Some are not dressed professionally and I believe the children follow by example. If the teachers can wear it, why not the children? They should be following the same rules. No sandals without socks...no teachers should be allowed to do the same. More emphasis should be on helping children realize how they treat others. Not impressed with how discipline is enforced for the small things but the bigger things are ignored. Parents should be notified when ANY instance happens with their children, whether it be by phone or email. My oldest has been bullied, excluded, ignored by his peers the whole time at this school. After notifying the school, nothing has been done to help encourage or discourage this type of behavior. My child feels disliked by all and after requesting help with confidence issues, nothing has been done. If there is a vision for catholic schools, it should be how to treat individuals in a Christian-based way or at least to inform parents of the behavior of their child. Have been very disappointed.

• I would like to see more scripture teachings, that also involve more of a detailed background of the scripture and surrounding storyline. I send my children to a catholic school to get the best education and a knowledge of the Bible. I do not want to see any indoctrination on a political level, a government run school offers that for free.

• Glad to know the Diocese is working to be innovative in keeping Catholic Education alive. While I agree that College Readiness is a very important goal for the High Schools, what of Catholic Education for those who may not choose college? Years ago I saw a glaring grammatical error on the CC home page and was horrified and embarrassed. Let's be sharp with our grammar and usage!!

• I would like to see our schools remain available to all whom seek a Christian education. It is important to provide a quality education to those who struggle financially and academically. There are many schools that are able to do this and we should be one of them.

• It would be beneficial to the students if faculty and staff actually knew and believed in the precepts and teachings of the Church. If necessary, coursework to support faculty in learning more about their faith would be helpful. For example, I know teachers that don't believe in the sacrament of reconciliation, believe marriage is optional, and have never heard of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. As much as technology instruction is vital, we would do well to carve out the time given to this, and other "specials" according to age-appropriateness. Also, allowing public school teachers (who do a great job for the most part) into our schools may save money but does not allow for Christ to be the center of any of those classes. In my opinion, this is particularly important in our technology courses where the teachings of Christ should be a necessary guide to young, curious students. But no Christ in art? In music? What lost opportunities. I would have been happy to have been asked about the importance of state-of-the-art science labs. Well-educated Catholic scientists, doctors, nurses, etc. will make a difference in our broader culture for having had a strong, morality based education, particularly in the life-sciences.

• The remaining elementary schools are getting very small. It may be time to close schools with less than 150 students and feed them into schools with larger student counts and room to spare. When a school falls under 300 students, it is questionable whether enough families believe in the school to keep it running. There was a time waiting lists existed for most Catholic schools. Today, it is difficult to convince Parish families to send their students to the Catholic schools. Instead they opt to Home-School or send to Public school. Catholic education at one time was top notch! Today, the curriculum is weak and it appears there is more desire by administration to bring in computers to entertain rather than teach the students the basic skills they need in the early elementary levels. Students have plenty of time to acclimate to computers at home and in high school. In elementary
and junior high students need mathematics, science, gym, history, and art. Rumor is that a new testing will be forced onto the schools so bigwigs in administration can read reports on 'how' the students perform. How about placing qualified staff in the classrooms and principal's office and run the school the right way? These folks are supposedly 'trained', so why are they not trusted to do their jobs rather than take out 2-3 weeks of their teaching time and replace it with standardized tests? My comments about your 'vision' is that it is NOT going in a direction that is sustainable. Rather it is going the way of lower class public schools with a bigger price tag and better people to affiliate with. When students within the Catholic School steal from each other, damage another’s property, lie, and even talk back to staff, use drugs and alcohol (and brag about it online) the price of the education is no better than a public school and it is very far from the teachings of Christ. So, Christ-like and light and all the other buzz words may be used to market your vision. It unfortunately doesn't fix the problems already a few of the schools.

- An increase in community awareness that Catholic Schools still exist through "advertising" is important.
- Sounds like we are finally moving in the right direction! What a wonderful vision - I will pray that it becomes a reality. If this vision is to become a reality it would be a blessing for not only for Grand Rapids, it would prove to be a beacon of light for other diocese nationwide to follow our lead.
- Educating teachers in their religious educational teachings. I would like to see surveys / evaluations sent home to parents occasionally to give us a say on what is going on in the schools and to rate our satisfaction with teachers
- I believe most families that are committed to Catholic education are also committed to their individual schools and parishes. While we can support the Catholic community at large, I think it is extremely important that we are able to maintain our school identity. I think the support of both our high school sports teams is very reflective of the overall sense of community we present to the public. I am concerned that the nature of these questions does not give any specific details about goals or plans. How will this information be able to be used?
- We home school because there are NO Catholic schools in the entire diocese that adequately teach the Catholic faith. We couldn't afford it if there was one. My experience with teachers and administrators in our Catholic schools is they are of a generation of Catholics that was badly catechized themselves and so can't adequately pass the faith on to others. I got tired of trying to convince Catholic school principals that we should be celebrating All Saints instead of Halloween as a school. This shouldn't have even been an issue. Clueless principals, teachers who don't know their own faith. Recruiting teaching sisters from orthodox teaching orders like the St. Cecilia Dominicans might be a start. Home schooling is not the ideal way to teach kids, certainly not by high school, but we feel there is no other alternative. We are hopefully educating a generation who will be qualified to teach in Catholic schools when they grow up and revive the system. All the "visioning" and "collaborating" and "illuminating" is not addressing the issue.
- Having all five of our children educated at I.H.M. and Catholic Central, and being very pleased with the results of their education, we want to see this same opportunity continue for others in the future. Hopefully, there will be transparency and more public input as decisions are made about the future of our Catholic schools.
- Catholic schools are the nursery of our future brothers & sisters in faith. Our Catholicism future is made brighter by the students walking the halls today. We must give our all to keep these candles burning!
- You cannot continue to support these schools with so few students. Combining schools and closing schools are the only sensible way to educate in this economy.
• Our school has a lot going for it. It could be better if we all worked for the good of the children.

• As a parent in a rural community, we depend on bussing that is available with the public school. I also feel that the school year schedule should go with the Chippewa Hills district as much as possible. I also attended St. Michael school many years ago, it is very important for our area. With the economy, fuel prices, etc. we need to be able to have access to bussing. Many parents have to drive a distance to their jobs and not always able take children to school.

• This was a very confusing survey and I do not understand what our goal is in taking the survey. Many of the terms and questions were vague. No one was here to answer any questions, so I am not sure if I have provided value-added feedback.

• My most important concern is how are we going to make Catholic education more affordable to more families to increase our enrollments.

• These questions were very difficult to answer; very vague. I'm not sure many people will be able to give opinions about many of them.

• No comments.

• Parents must have more say in the governance of their schools. There are parish priests who do not want to be involved with a school and/or do not have the education to run a school and therefore should not be in control. Also, there are many children who are ADHD (or similar disorders) who are not being serviced. Some elementary schools do a fair job but the high schools fail. Children with these disorders deserve a Catholic education as much as any student.

• Good Luck...It must be a big undertaking to "Turn the Ship"....my prayers are with you...and it can be done!

• This whole thing is for adults and high schoolers I being in 6th grade don't understand a lot of this and it would be easier if it were more kid friendly.

• This is very confusing this is not for a sixth grader I like me to understand it is better for parents that are involved in schools.

• Please make more easy for people to do. I hope you make this easier. Make it so easy that a monkey could answer it.

• It was ok but confusing

• Very good system have fun, bye!

• this survey was very confusing

• This survey is a little bit confusing for a sixth grader, such as me. My school is a multi-parish school because we have many different priests that lead Masses on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Also, the students here go to many different parishes around the Diocese.

• I thought this survey was really hard most of the questions were meant for Adults to answer. The questions were confusing for a 6th grader like me to understand it is better for parents that are involved in schools.

• This test was in a way easy and in a way hard. It was like that kind of test were like you don't feel like you are going to cry but a test that was a little bit harder than what your used to.

• This survey is very important but, some of the vocabulary is hard to understand.
I thought that the survey was mildly difficult in vocabulary. The survey was also a good way to get a students perspective of how important a Catholic education is and how valued an education is to students.

I didn't understand much of the words
I thought this survey was very confusing and very hard for a 6th grader!
If you want honest answers from 6th graders and lower grades try to make the wording a bit easier but after that the survey was fine.
Very Confusing!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
I think this test is a little confusing and hard
It was the most confusing test I ever took
That this test should be more student friendly. Also that schools provide a comfortable study style to the students.
It was a little hard as being a 6th grader. I found some of the question kinda easier. but it was a good survey.
I would like to add that we students are ahead in math, but we have so many talented kids that I believe that we need more creative electives available. And some local schools are also ahead of us on numerous subjects.
I have found about this survey that it's very confusing and hard.
I did not understand half the questions like, how does the power of the gifts help our communities?
This survey is hard to understand. but the questions were good
Some of the questions were confusing and hard to understand, i would make some of the questions more clear.
It was a tough test but, I think we need more religious classes or longer religion classes because I think we don't fully understand what Christ did for us.
a big family
I didn't understand this test at all there were lots of words like "empowered gifts" that I don' get, also "satellite schools"
I think this should be more kid friendly because I did not understand have of the words
I think this was a very good survey to put out there. I think that people need to understand the importance of Catholic schools and to have their say in what goes on. i did however think that many things were confusing but in the end I understood.
The survey was very hard to understand but the questions that made sense were good questions.
I thought this survey was very confusing and kinda understandable.
I know Catholic schools must consolidate for financial reasons. We need to remember, while consolidating, that gas prices, both parents working and after-school sports, etc. will require bus transportation of students. Costly as this will be for the school system, it is a necessity. I see after-school care as another important component of the school system. Preschool and daycare in our Catholic schools will be needed too.
We need Catholic schools if we want Catholic Families
An organization of Catholic Schools should have the Mission of providing assistance to member schools on a requested basis as well as providing information regarding any new developments of education. Without intrusion in their individual operation. No big brother operation.
Question #5 - Comment: The model is a circle of perpetual addressing initiatives with no room for concrete change; too much needs assessment, not enough focus. Could include one more bullet point to address room for lasting change. Question #6 - Comment: ~
"Taking ownership for financial health" is a Diocesan responsibility; Catholic schools exist to serve (child) and a parish is there to guide and grow (parent). Diocese is there to assure health, assist when necessary, and strengthen (grandparent). ~ Some schools are excellent at parish stewardship. ~ Elimination is wrong lens to look at change through. Some needs are greater than financial (ie: community that school serves; location of school, does the closing affect economic region?; Does it serve a greater purpose?) Be thorough. Think outside the box in terms of what the community can benefit/gain and how many families will fall through the cracks as a result. Question #8: ~What does "Right sizing" mean? Whose definition of Right? The planner's or the community's? ~ Rural schools deal with as much or more low income families as urban schools (See http://www.milhs.org/kids-count/mi-data-book-2010) with the additional burden of transportation and lack of assistance programs; especially in light of government education cuts and regionally-based assistance clusters (i.e.: DHS covering 2-3 counties; Community Mental Health covering 5 counties) families in rural counties cannot 'hop on a bus' to get to these assistance centers. More often, the Catholic schools/parishes are the main artery for spiritual guidance and community moral center and/or long-standing pillar of a rural community. Need to re-assess "Add value by" to include such needs.

- I really think you are on the right track here. Although it's nice to have a lot of parish schools and have them individually operated and managed by their own parishes, I think that in this day and age in order to keep the Catholic school system from dying out, we really need to focus on collaboration between schools, sharing of resources, streamlining etc.... I think having a superintendent is a great idea. I think the most important things for the schools in the 21st century is rigorous academics, faith formation, technology, developing future leaders, and keeping the schools financially savvy.
- Where I scored an area below 5, it was usually because I wasn't sure what intention the words carried, so I scored lower or in the middle.
- Hopefully this document represents a significant step up in leadership. Last child graduated CC in 2008. Observed a significant decline in the leadership in the 6 years there - the "tone at the top" became significantly negative and punitive with the appointment of the priest as president. The prior president's tone was exciting - important things were happening in Catholic schools. Experience at the (2) elementary schools could not have been more opposite - positive character building loving support of kids. Please focus on loving the kids, empathy and mercy do not appear to have important daily role that creates good citizens.
- I would say you missed a few points. 1) Financial Well Being / Community - What about tithing? I think you should look at the model used in Wichita, Kansas. Throughout the survey it talked about working together as a community. If we all tithed or did what we could as as COMMUNITY both spiritually and financial we would not have many of our problems. 2) Who do we serve? Unfortunately the kids going to Catholic schools these days are the kids whose families can afford to do so. We need to be sure WE as a Catholic community are serving ALL kids within our parish (privileged and the less fortunate).
- I have to applaud you all for these insightful questions and the willingness to continually evaluate our administration, our vision and our resources. With all the corruption and waste seen in public education, I am *SO PROUD* and *SO THANKFUL* to send my children to our parish Catholic school. The selflessness, sacrifice and love shown by everyone from parent volunteers to the principles and even upward still to all of you seeking to create and sustain a system of schools that focus on the children, families and community is so very heartwarming and I cannot thank you all enough. If you do not often hear it (or even if you do), I thank you and thank God for your leadership.
Congratulations and I am anxious to see the results of these surveys and excited to hear your plans for the future.

- It is most important that we continue to offer Catholic education. To address affordability we need to make affordability a higher priority and improve support from all members of the Parish. We must continue to support Foundations that make our Catholic Education more accessible to our Catholic youth and families. Failing to continue Catholic Education makes it more possible for our Catholic youth to drift away from the Church. Religious Education will not make an acceptable substitute. Loss of Catholic Education will also have an adverse effect on vocations.

- The key for success is more attitudinal than anything else. I would love to see parents, grandparents, others give their time, treasure, and talents to their schools/parishes so many would benefit, not just their children/grandchildren. How do we motivate people to give of themselves because it is the right thing to do, it is what Christ taught us?

- It saddens me that the arts were not mentioned at all in this survey. One of the reasons we send our children to a Catholic school is because the public schools lack music & art programs, but our particular Catholic school does offer fine arts programs. If the Catholic schools so casually dismiss the importance of the arts, we may start looking elsewhere for our children's education.

- Stewardship has to be part of the equation for long lasting results. And look at the surrounding schools even in a neighboring Diocese.

- Advance Placement classes are very important at the high school level. Parents and students save a great deal of college tuition. Taking the Cleff tests as freshman can help students waive freshman classes.

- Our parochial schools are suffering greatly as are many of our parishes due to the lack of professional and spiritual quality leadership. My husband and I were VERY active in our parish and school for many years until the scandalous lifestyles of some of our priests and the lack of character of so many of the parish community drove us away from our parish community life. Our faith in God has not diminished, nor has our belief in a sound catholic education with which to build a good quality life. What has changed us is the way our hierarchy has chosen to deal with so many of the issues that DID set us apart from the rest of the world. We are sorely lacking in morals and values in the Catholic church and teaching our children that "live and let live" is not going to fix and rebuild our catholic church. Right is right and wrong is wrong. God drew the line in the sand thousands of years ago and no amount of "tinkering" is going to make things better than what God gave us. WE have to be able to live up to Gods standards-not lower the standards so all can "fit in"! That is what we need to teach our children, and that is no easy task in today’s society-thus creating so many fallen away Catholics such as my husband and myself.

- Our school, is unique and should be treated that way. We rely on the public school bussing. Our children have a great education here and we want to keep it that way. We are NOT a PUBLIC school of Grand Rapids and should not be treated that way. The new start date of school beginning in August is not supported by our school parents.

- Thank you for your efforts to continually improve and move forward in these difficult times. We must remember our roots in Catholic education and strive to provide the best to all who want to participate and not to the elite few who can afford it.

- The wording of these statements is strange, and it would be refreshing if you would eschew obfuscation. The statements sound more like the ramblings of a political campaign than the honest goals of a religious organization. This vision leads me to question what you’re trying to hide rather than understanding what you're trying to make clear. Is your best interest in the children that attend our schools, or are you trying to get
the approval of certain statements so you can continue to slice and dice the schools as the
diocese sees fit?
- Seems very wordy and confusing at times. This "vision" appears to have been written by
many authors with differing styles. It tends to come across as just words without a sense
of sincerity.
- Thanks so much for your leadership. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to provide
feedback, and understand the importance to embrace the much needed changes to
improve our schools.
- Any school run by the diocese that is educating young people to know God and learn the
basics of reading, writing, and math is doing what it should and should be kept open to
all people regardless of religious affiliation or ability of the parent to pay. If a person can
read well, they can learn almost anything through more reading on their own. If a person
can "cipher", they can handle basic challenges of living. If the students are being taught
well and are encouraged to be inquisitive, they will keep trying to learn. Students who
are at risk because of geographical area or economics are even more important to teach.
Schools not able to keep a large enrollment are just as necessary to keeping the Catholic
presence in the area seen and valued.
- Families that contribute time and talent but may not be able to contribute as much
treasure should be equally treated as those that can contribute treasure and afford higher
tuition but do not contribute time and talent. Should look at the support of Catholic
Schools in the Diocese by those Parishes that do not have a school affiliated with them.
Without this I believe we will end up with no schools or schools that are so high priced
that people can't afford to send their children to them.
- I am very proud to be a Catholic.
- This was a great survey
- I love catholic schools!:)  
- I love going to a Catholic School  
- I like going to a catholic school it teaches us good things.  
- i love going to a catholic school and going to a catholic church  
- It was difficult answering some of the questions and I may not have answered some
correctly because it was not crystal clear on what I was being asked. It would have been
very helpful to have a "help" or alternative description of what was being asked. I
suggest adding a help # to call someone and to be able to ask questions on what was
being asked to get better understanding. Or even a link to a "help" document that would
have a layman's language.
- God should always be in your mind and with you.
- I think we need to get more kids to go to these schools and learn about God
- I'm a student at Holy Trinity and I love my school, teachers, and parish. My mom is a
teacher at Southwest Community Campus and doesn't nearly get enough appreciation
that we do here. Please what I am trying to say is that you’re doing a good job leaning
towards faith.
- I would like to do more technology based stuff
- I have a strong concern about the closing of St. Andrews school. I don't know exactly
what the answer is, or what the future holds, but it seems important to work at re-
establishing the most "urban" school in the diocese in order to reach a population that
needs Christ-centered education. I have heard that there is talk of having the school
demolished and I think that will prove to be a mistake in the long-run. Thanks.
- More accurate education, regarding rights of speech in regards to politics, i.e. while
Priests are not given a right to endorse a particular candidate for office, they do have the
right and in fact, the duty to speak out on the issues. The book, "Rediscover Catholicism" by Mathew Kelly, should be mandated into course curriculum. More calls for prayer, fasting, more teaching on Heaven and hell, more calls to sacrifice & living out the tenets of our faith, just as the Saints did.

- I think that the children should learn about how Jesus was human, like us, and had feelings, like us, and had friends, like us.
- No uniforms, so we can express our individuality.
- No uniforms because they don’t let us express who we really are
- Attracting the best educators and hold accountable for results.
- I feel like the Catholic Schools in this diocese lack a focus and requirement for community service. I would like to see this implemented at all levels.
- I’m not sure that cookie-cutter conformity is the direction that we ought to be going.
- I’m not sure the "add value to" statement for high schools was worded the best way to convey a positive value. "Improving Catholic culture" left a negative feeling. It may be worded in a more positive way to draw families to continue Catholic education for their children.
- The new secondary admittance policy is making my husband and I question our involvement in the Catholic schools. The fact that the secondary schools now appear unwilling to provide a continuum of even minor special educational accommodations/modifications for students with very mild learning issues make me question why I have invested my time, talent and treasure to the schools. I work closely with the Christian Schools (as well as the Catholic schools) and see how their creative thinking and dedication. I now wonder why we, as Catholics, will accept and teach these students (with mild learning differences) at the elementary level only to turn them away at the critical secondary level. Not only does this policy, in my opinion, go against Catholic social teaching but I believe it will become a true marketing/business issue in the long run.
- The Vision is great if you can take each student and get to know them and know what their biggest need is for learning. Whether to make time for mentors at the library, or to have the teachers explain the lesson differently, not everybody’s mind is the same.
- Utilize procedures and ideas that are working in successful parish schools to troubled schools
- I feel this project was well thought out.
- I think the first step to improve Catholic schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids is to have Bishop Hurley resign.
- Would love to become involved in helping secondary Catholic Schools to become more affordable- loved idea of creating a North Catholic High School concept- WITH the Education Foundation "tuition-free" school. Is it possible?
- As a single working mother, the catholic school calendar was very challenging for me this year. It was extremely frustrating. I had to make special arrangements way too often because the catholic calendar did not coincide with our local public school calendar. There was always a bus/transportation issue as well as arranging care for my child. Hard to find care when the public school is in session and we are not. I think the school should be able to follow the local public school calendar so that transportation is not such an issue. I have had a student in the catholic school system for over 10 years and this year was more bothersome than in years past. One week we did not have school and then the next week the public school did not... we had to juggle care and transportation issues... why couldn't they have been the same days off. I feel strongly that this should be changed. Although we would like the luxury of being a stay at home Mom, there are
many of us that have to work for a living. Please strongly take this into consideration!

- I have a concern that schools will lose their "Catholic" identity. I support better technologies, academics, etc., but learning and living the catholic faith should be a priority in the school. I am also interested in having more high school opportunities. Possibly a satellite high school, a home-school hybrid type option, etc.

- It is a shame that the Catholic schools do not collaborate more. I see glimpses of it now, but I would like to see more of this done in the future. I have witnessed many talented students and gifted staff leave Catholic schools because of this.

- My daughter is in the arrowsmith program. The program is possible due to the small size of the community as well as the dedication of the parents in support of this program and school. We do not have a mission as parents to educate my daughter in religious education but appreciate that she is in a Christian framework with involvement in worship services. I appreciate the opportunity to maximize my daughter's achievement and development of a moral framework for her life. This is why she is at this particular school. I don't know whether the attainment of your vision will be a blueprint for success for all the students, but the particular stability of this school has drawn and retained the support of both the students, families and alumni.

- Wishing there was more support for special education.

- I am all for the Catholic School enhancing their identity; however the collaborations some schools have created with the public school districts is also important - primarily busing. We have struggled this year without the schedule coordination with the public school (Rockford) and their busing. This resulted in a cost increase in daycare and loss of work time due to no bus transportation and off school days not matching. We have coordinated the best we can with other school families to disperse the burden, but there is financial burden just the same.

- My biggest concern as a parent with students in elementary school (and who will attend Catholic HS) is that when I hear collaboration of many schools it often has an unintended consequence -- that underperforming, low attendance, lower expectation, or with lesser financial resources "bring down" schools who are successful with these on their own rather bring others up to a higher level of success. Making it better for everyone or the group of schools creates a bureaucracy -- the exact sort of the public schools we choose not to send our kids to! Dumb down ours or other higher achieving schools to be sure others with less resources, etc. can also keep up or "achieve." What I see going on in public schools all around me (and I work in over 60 each year!).

- Please allow the schools to follow the bus schedule of their public school transportation provider. I see no benefit of having a common schedule with other catholic schools.

- I fear that the Diocese will take a more socialistic approach to controlling operations of our parish school, thus degrading the uniqueness of the experience my child receives every day. I prefer a hands off approach to management the elementary level schools, although I think the standards for curriculum in all schools should be the same highest standard.

- Please do not combine the K-8 schools. We like our little school. That's one of the reasons we left the public (big) schools. Keep the high schools the way they are. Small and great for learning.

- I don't like the Mission Statement as it is written. It is sounds to lofty and pretentious to me.

- "To illumine..." could be a more clear/less vague statement to make it clearer
• I am aware that one of our Catholic Schools further north does not receive much support from the Diocese and has their own school foundation. I believe these schools are entitled to this money as it was a gift from individuals and should not have to be deposited into the diocese foundation. Also, having been an educator in the public school system for thirty years, I would like to share that split grades are not the answer for declining numbers for Catholic schools.

• Individual schools offer flavor. If you take away the flavor by control/and demands you will take away the incentive to support the schools. Be open to diversity among schools and allow them the freedom to meet needs which can only be assessed within a community not from a "bigger governing body".

• Many parents in elementary school feel they will not be able to afford to send their children on to Catholic high school due to the cost. They are now deciding at which grade level to assimilate their child into public schools. Is there anything currently being done to either a) reduce the tuition costs or b) start conversations with these parents early on in their child's education.

• We need a middle school! All Saints is the model of what is possible but we need to advance this even further. The Christian Schools have done a great job realizing this and have already broke down barriers. Unfortunately given the lack of leadership many schools have their own fiefdoms and resist change. We need to consolidate more schools and create dynamic healthy feeder school for the health of the entire diocese. For example, think of the redundancy that occurs in our back yard in Rockford/Belmont. Consolidate OLC and Assumption where K-5 is in one building and 6-8 is in the other. This would improve the number the resources etc. Similarly consolidation of IHM/St. Paul, St. Thomas could create viable super schools that would draw in more students and prepare them for Catholic High School. Also there is a need for specialization. Why not offer an all girls school, all boys boarding school. These resources existed a generation ago. (Mt. Mercy, Marywood) I think these programs would draw in more students.

• Even though I like the collaboration among the various schools in the diocese, I am a bit leery that we could easily fall into what's good for this school will definitely be good for that one. Each school has its own makeup and needs to be respected for its differences.

• Good luck. Prayers go out to each person working on this challenge.

• I feel that you are on the right track!! Very Exciting!

• I think the Diocese needs to remember that all Catholic Schools are NOT in urban areas, sharing transportation with the City of Grand Rapids. The change in schedule for the last two years, has affected suburban areas that SHARE busing with the public schools, IMMENSELY. It is NOT helpful when an older child is not home on a day that the younger children have off. I've been quite disappointed that the change in school schedule was made, with NO regard to those of us who share buses with our public schools.

• I do not believe enough is said about the quality of education
• Perhaps if you haven’t already done so, research what the Christian Schools have done. Also why is there a greater alliance between Christian grade. HS and Calvin College, than there appears to be between the Catholic Schools and Aquinas. In my opinion alliances mean closure, not a way to grow Catholic education Such as WC & CC

• The 2 catholic schools with which I have experience are excellent. They are St. Paul the Apostle and Catholic Central. All 5 of my children graduated from both and my grandchildren now attend. If anything both schools have improved over the years. Recently a friend who is not Catholic was telling me about his daughter, the youngest of 5, who is completing her master’s degree. She has been far more academically successful than his other children. When she was ready for high school he made the decision to send
her to Catholic Central and he credits the education and self confidence she gained there for her success.

- As far as classroom size, please DO NOT make the classrooms any bigger than 24 kids. We pay tuition for smaller class sizes. Also, please DO NOT combine two grades in one classroom. We went through that at our last school and it was a MAJOR setback in our son's education!

- Many people make the choice for Catholic vs. Public school based on their location. There are many good public schools that dedicated parents don't use if they have a Catholic school nearby. When there is NOT a Catholic school within a reasonable distance, many may then opt for the public school due to lack of busing availability and their ability to get their child to school and events while still getting to work, etc. Combining/eliminating schools is making that a harder decision for many parents.

- I had a hard time completing this survey. I don't think the questions were very clear. I don't think the visions flows or is very clear. Without knowing what the discussions have been, I would suggest something more like the following: Our Alliance of Catholic Schools strives, through the Light of Christ, to illuminate learning and life. To expand the ministry of Catholic education to be affordable and accessible to all families investing time, talent, and treasure in the Catholic ministry. I don't understand the "innovative and collaborative approach" section of the Vision so I think that needs to be made clear.

- Remember to keep each school individuality intact while focusing on the higher goal...a great education while leading by Christ values and morals. Supporting small schools in communities that have a strong faith is just as important as providing a progressive school that is willing to try new things and embrace all students regardless of ability.

- Being a supporter of the CSA I wonder how much of this money is earmarked for schools. Why aren't all parishes assessed a certain % of the total CSA assessment to go directly to the schools. If the catholic schools are building our future parish leaders then this would be why we can't afford not to do this. Schools must then become transparent from a financial position if all are contributing.

- Too much testing. Making all the schools the same is a mistake. It is in our differences that we advance. You are making the Catholic schools too much like the public schools.

- This was an awful survey to complete- very complicated and even with an MA degree, I had a lot of difficulty understanding what it was you were asking.

- Provide diocesan support for collaborative efforts among parishes with large minority populations. Encourage financially sound parishes to adopt less fortunate (financially) parishes as 'sister' parishes.

- I'm not sure if our diocese embraces home schooling. Since parents are the primary educators of their children, I would encourage reaching out to those families as well. Catholics that choose to educate their children are providing a Catholic education. Our parish is home school friendly. Perhaps offering classes to homeschooled children?

- In these times when public education is facing a huge funding crisis now, more than ever, the Catholic Diocese needs to unite and provide the best possible religious and academic education for students. This is truly an opportunity for our schools to shine and attract, or win back, students from around the area. This can't be accomplished without the support of all parishes, whether or not they have a school. Our school leaders need to be strong, driven, and proactive. Unfortunately we do not have this at our school, but we certainly hope through a more unified diocese school system it can be remedied.

- Yes. My children are all special needs. They cannot attend Catholic school since our type of diversity is not welcome. No amount of saying "we just don't have the resources" will change the fact that you deny my children a Catholic education.
Thanks for involving the community in this survey.

Without the schools there will be no need for the church. The schools and children are the future of our parish.

It seems recent marketing has been done to try and reduce costs to parishes, which is good if there is another ministry that is lacking in a parish. For some parishes the school is the main ministry for the parish. I wish there were more decisions at the parish level, and I do not mean just the parish priest who often just signs a document the bishop wants. There is so much good work the parishes could be doing overall. We need more programs to reach out to those who left the church and ways to convert people. I know this is about the schools in the diocese, but the schools cannot be successful if the parish is not. The parish is the main advertisement for the school. The better the parish, normally the better the school.

I hope the diocese has looked at the Dominican Sistery of May Mother of the Eucharist in Ann Arbor. They started in 1995 with 4 sisters with a mission to revitalize Catholic schools. They have over 100 sisters now and satellite missions in several Catholic schools across the country. Their order is explosively growing and shows the need for traditional Catholic schools which homeschooling families try their best to emulate. If the diocese would ask for a teaching mission in our parish where the school closed long ago you would find overwhelming interest and people coming from Grand Rapids to enroll their children. This could be a satellite experiment. It seems like the diocese tries too much to emulate the public schools, relying too much on technology. I think the #1 focus should be on helping to save their souls and having high academic standards with Catholic sisters as examples of religious life and how important our vocations are to us. A mission school in our diocese would astonish us all with its success.

There seems to be a real lack of mention of creating programs for ALL students who want a Catholic education. In many ways the wording might tend to lead one to think that Catholic schools should become conservative, somewhat elitist institutions. I fear the path this effort to homogenize Catholic education will lead to the collapse of the entire school structure.

Some of this was hard to fill out. I was thinking of my own school but this made me think of a broader vision. Some of the questions/statements were a bit leading and there wasn't room for comment after each section which would have been useful.

If you are talking about combining elementary schools to improve the bottom line, I am NOT a supporter.

I really value the part about family and parental involvement. However, I question the wording of some sections. Children from broken homes or single parent families may feel left out if their parents are unable to attend many of the events due to circumstances.

I was confused what was meant by "Right sizing and creating new models". Care needs to be taken not to take too much control away from individual schools. Part of what makes our daughter's Catholic education so great is that we know our voice is heard at the school and that we are important -- not just "another parent"

We have had a child in SSPP Ionia since 1995 and the last one is in 2nd grade so we have a few more years left :) We love our school and the academic challenge it provides our children. Each year the public High School announces it's top students and the majority of those students had ties w/ SSPP school! What an awesome testimony to our school and more importantly to our teachers. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to improve our children’s lives through Catholic Education. And one more point...My husband and I are just now joining the Catholic church! It's taken the youngest telling us she wanted to become Catholic to lead us to join. As the Bible says....A little child shall lead them. So the school not only serves the parish but also the community.
Catholic schools are great if the cost of supporting them does not have a detrimental effect on the finances of the parish. Why is there no mention of the Religious Education programs? We have less than 100 students in our Catholic School and 500 in our Religious Education Program. Some parishes have no school and only a Religious Education. How can we talk about only one of these programs and their importance? Isn't the future of all of our children important? My concern about this survey is that it will be used to justify more control by the Diocese.

I believe the church school should reflect the prophetic mission of the gospel. I want the Catholic schools to model the radical commitment as Jesus did.

Keep the Catholic schools the way they have been for the last 100 years!! I am an alumni of C.C.along with MANY members of my family, dating back to 1926. We have all been successful because of our wonderful Catholic education at various grade schools and the BEST high school___Catholic Central!! West C.C. is great too. Just keep them running independent from each other!!!

I often feel like these surveys are a waste of time because the decisions have really already been made by a select few. My children can really get a good education for free at a public school. What I am paying AND PRAYING for is that they receive a truly Catholic education that will be the basis for every decision they make in their life. If they graduate as seniors and their faith foundation is not strong, you have failed as a Catholic high school, regardless of the student's GPA.

It is difficult to answer some of your questions because many of your statements are written in a corporate-speak euphemistic style. I wish you could state in plain English what you are trying to accomplish. Instead, it seems like you're trying to trick us into a school system with a centralized control. Maybe that is not your goal but that is the impression I get based on your language. Secondly, I am shocked and appalled with what is happening with the Grand Rapids Catholic Secondary Schools and their new enrollment criteria. When the policy was presented, it made sense that a policy would be required. However, nowhere did it state at what level the bar would be set. I found out recently that 8 students from All Saints Academy were "deferred" from enrolling in GRCSS schools based on academics. One of these students had all A's and B's with only one C through three quarters of his 8th grade class. If there are similar numbers from other schools (I know the diocese wouldn't discriminate against ASA) then there could be hundreds of potential students who will not be able to attend a GRCSS school next year that could have if they had been a year older. This tells me that the bar is being set very high and many students who want a Catholic Education will be denied. How can this be? Is the diocese trying to create an exclusive Catholic high school? Catholic Central has been around for over 100 years but it won't be around for much longer if this is the approach the diocese takes. What happened to Catholic education accessible to all? These actions should be damned!

It is important that not only that the schools give a quality education, but also it should be apparent what is different about a Catholic school as compared to another private school or a public school.

Hearing a lot of negative from high school families recently with new changes, which I hope will settle down soon. The perception is that the Bishop's vision is to close schools... which is unfortunate.

I love my school and I love that I have the privilege to go to a catholic school

I think it is important for each school to retain their own identity and community. At the same time, I also feel it important for them to identify with the diocese and other schools.
• I really think that a lot of this survey is just confusing weasel-wording designed to justify preconceived decisions. What ever happened the clear, concise, straightforward language--the kind I learned to write with when I was in Catholic School???

• Michigan Catholic health care options for employees is not a benefit that allows families to benefit from the shared salary sacrifices that your employees make. Catholic teachers can't afford to sign up a family for health care coverage because the benefit is too expensive for the family based on the wages offered in the Diocese. To attract and keep the best teachers D of GR needs to look at the social justice of paying your teachers at a wage that allows them to support their families. There is a reason for mostly women in the field. Men can't afford to work for the school unless they are administrators. That needs to change.

• Make it relevant and relative. Make it actionable and understandable. Why is Catholic education important to the parents? Does your vision answer this question?

• Our Catholic schools, the high schools in particular, do not welcome and serve students with disabilities (or even those who do not perform in the upper half of their class academically). This blatantly contradicts our Catholic values. I hope to see this perspective change.

• I would like to have more small schools than one big school like ASA because that happened to me it took away my family's very nice school very close also when they made ASA so we had to move and now that makes it so that we kids are now going to have to go to a public high school. We also before that we had to go to three other catholic grade schools before we had to move. Also make it cheaper. Thank you very much i needed a time to say.

• I prefer small schools because you can make friends easier and I feel very close and safe. I also feel like I have my own place. Small schools like St. Patrick I can be known. Thank You

• I think our Catholic school system is already very well organized, it doesn’t need much change in my perspective. Although i do wish that there was a easier way to "make a dent" in the tuition of going to a catholic school.

• I believe that our Catholic schools should have stricter uniform codes. I love our Catholic schools, I have gone to a small school and thoroughly enjoyed it.

• They aren't as connected as you think they are. They actually do act more independent than in groups.

• I worked on a catholic school board for 2 years and was a volunteer for many while my children attended until we decide to put them in a public school. I feel it is more important for children of all races and religions to go to school together. I think the Catholic church should drop their school system and concentrate on after school programs. I think parents should be more involved in public schools. That being said I know it won't happen so I also feel after being on a school board that there should not be "parish" schools. So many times after deciding on something and working on it for weeks, the priest would then just decide he didn't like that and went with his own decision. The catholic school would be run by the diocese not parish and should also be funded by the whole diocese to take the financial burden off from individual parishes. Our parishes priest are already short on time, this would free them up from having to deal with running a school.

• I am glad to see that the diocese is starting to look at our school system as a whole instead of as a fragmented network. I think Bishop Britt's idea of having regional school boards had a lot of merit and could complement the vision outlined in this survey. Also, given how much money the diocese has spent on the downtown Cathedral Square, it would be nice if some of our CSA money could be used to subsidize tuition. If we want
to keep the diocese a vibrant, faith-filled community, nothing can be more important that ensuring our children grow-up receiving an education grounded in Christ and the Catholic faith. However, tuition rates are putting that education out of reach for many working families. Finally, I feel like the time is ripe for the diocese to coordinate a comprehensive marketing campaign that promotes Catholic education. Right now, it seems like Catholic schools in our area are all competing for the same students.

However, rather than cannibalizing each other, we should be working to bring in other families that currently have students enrolled in public schools. As the state continues to reduce education funding and parents look for alternatives, we should be telling them about the opportunities our schools offers. However, this type of comprehensive campaign really needs to be undertaken by the diocese instead of individual schools.

- We have to make catholic schools affordable. We spend 1/4 of our income on tuition. We make choices about whether to by food or prescriptions. We don't take expensive "spring break" vacations, we drive 10 yr old cars. Financial aid should be for people who really need it. Nor should financial aid be more generous because of the race card or immigration status.

- Looking at the county wide calendar before making the cc calendar.

- Let’s call them what they really are to start with. They are private schools, there is no consistency in the funding of these schools, the way they operate, or the importance placed on them by each different diocese. Most priests do not even want parishes with schools and do not see the need for them. It is the parents’ desire for a private education that keeps these going, not the bishops or the priests. This is not to say there are not a few priests out there who support their schools. Also, the tuition at the High School level is to the point where I am afraid way too many parents do not wish to put the financial pressure on themselves to send their kids. The schools are turning to elite private schools where the upper middle and upper class send their kids. The Catholic Church should find a way to fully support these schools so tuition is reasonable and train priests in the Seminary that want to have schools how to support and run them to be successful. I know way too many parents who chose to send their kids to public high school after K-8 in a Catholic School. Most of these are good parents who have good kids, many are more active in their church’s than the ones that send their kids to the Catholic High Schools. With the cost of college, how can you blame any parent that wants to save their funds for their child’s college fund instead of spending it for four years of High School. All my kids have gone through K-8 Catholic Schools, and I have had one graduate from Catholic High School and two more currently there. I am still not convinced it was worth the cost and financial stress. I am fortunate for what I make, and so far have been able to pay the tuition bills, but its stressful and too many good people simply can't afford it.

- "Alliance ..." is probably the best way to identify what you’re obviously trying to achieve, so go with it. I gave it a lukewarm response in Question 1 because, at that point, I did not understand what you were getting at. Many of the terms used in the survey were so vague as to be incomprehensible, therefore difficult to evaluate, consequently decreasing the validity of the survey results. Moreover, using these terms in communications with parishioners and parents will detract from their understanding of what the schools are trying to achieve. Instead, please revise the terminology you have chosen in order to state your concepts in plain English -- and Spanish.

- Make sure this is just not one person's vision. But the peoples vision. And that it is not about the almighty dollar.

- teachers should have a union and a contract. all families do not have computers so you are reaching all the community with this survey that you find a way to finance the school so that ALL children whose parents desire to send their child to a Catholic school may do so and that our schools are just not for the elite. That the COMMUNICATION between
the diocese and the catholic schools is more open and above board. we (senior citizens) seem to have been lost in this. Since our priest seem to have so many duties in the parish perhaps they should spend less time on school board and more time on the spiritual needs of their flock.

- We love the diversity, size and relationships that St. Stephen exemplifies.
- I feel as if our Catholic school is heading towards being a rich kids school. Why wouldn’t we want to be able to give this strong Catholic education to everyone we could, not just those who can afford it.
- Students should respect elders as well as each other.
- I don't understand the intent of the survey.
- I am concerned that as family we will have a hard decision to make when my youngest son completes 8th grade. Do I spend the money to send him to Catholic Central or use the money for his college education? College Tuition is sky rocketing and my wages have decreased every year in the last five years due to the economy and the automotive market. My professional is a Vice President of Engineering and I have been blessed to stay employed these last five years but I have taken wage and benefit cuts that have reduce my income by 20% to 25% from where I was five years ago.

- Come from the Western side of the state with the only Catholic School in our Deanery and sure would not like to lose this school due to other parts of the State taking over our area. Our school is producing wonderful students and those that are going on for Doctoral degrees. We have a wonderful and dedicated staff that are willing to work hard for these students and at an even lesser pay scale for themselves and yet are willing to stay and work. Do not try to incorporate us with other areas, let us keep our own place on this part of the State. Our school system is doing great.

- Involved pastors, parish support, collaborative REP and school, respect for education staff members, realistic expectations, innovative technologies and curriculum...all are important.

- Having served for a couple of years on the school board, I find it disturbing the cookie cutter approach that has been relayed by the Diocese. I believe the Diocese should concentrate its efforts and resources on bettering EVERY school, not making the Diocese comfortable with the structure outlined on paper to be viewed from afar. Quite trying to make all the schools the same, instead, work to ensure the schools have what they need for our children to be successful!! I find it boggling that the schools are made to feel like a burden to the Diocese, when the schools should be the drum that the Diocese beats. Demonstrating through action and deeds that the catholic children are valued and are the key to securing the church's future. It is an investment that the true dividends cannot be put into an abacus.

- The "vision for Catholic schools" has outstanding points, promises, ideas, and avenues to venture down. Technology is definitely the future for our students. My hope and prayer is that their Faith remains as steadfast as their ability to operate the interactive white board and computer, along with all the abilities of the cell phone. God sometimes takes a back seat . . . unintentionally perhaps, but this should not be happening on our watch. God Bless!

- I am hoping that the schools that welcome minority and non-catholic students will be allowed to continue their mission of giving a quality education to those families that have entrusted their children to us. It would be nice if the diocese would give some financial help to those parish/schools who have taken on this mission. The Catholic High Schools also need to help students that are more suited to go one to vocational training as opposed to college. Not all students are college bound; but vocational training after high school is a very valid and essential career.
We are moving one of our daughters from St Stephen to EGR Public next year primarily because of our dissatisfaction with the level of academic rigor at her current school. Our other daughter will follow when she gets to sixth grade. I think the schools need to focus on academics more. I also think that tuition at Catholic Central is getting too high for many families.

I don't think the mission is clear.

We have to show the importance of being a school for ALL children, those who are middle class and special needs are probably in the minority in the Catholic school system.

I have heard from a few parents that "politics" has crept into the high school and now has groups of students against each other. Also, with financial aid cuts (not that I get any, I pay in full each year and have already paid NEXT year’s tuition in full, BUT I am not a person of means and save up for this each year) I am concerned that the children who DO come from "families" of means will outnumber those who do not. I know that a few families have left CC due to the change in culture. I attended Lake Michigan Catholic in St. Joe and have ALWAYS valued a Catholic education, but things I am hearing are making me consider City for my child (he is in 4th grade) so that he is in a broader socioeconomic and cultural school.

In the process of trying to make the schools more financially independent, please don't forget the many Catholic families that desire to raise their children with a Catholic education and are unable to afford straight tuition. I know many families that have children currently enrolled that are sick with worry that they may have to pull their children from a school they love. We can't let Catholic education be only available to the wealthy.

Thanks for asking for my input.

I think for the Catholic schools to be viable the education delivered should align with the education desired by parents of younger generations getting ready to make the decision on where to send their kids. As a younger parent I do not send my kids to catholic schools to learn how to read the bible. Most younger parents want to send their kids to a school where they learn good values, have opportunities to succeed and excel in what comes naturally to them and can be part of a close community where friendships last a lifetime. Catholic schools can excel in this area but that message needs to be conveyed - refrain from much of the "Bible" reasons to attend catholic schools - that message is lost on the younger generation.

I'm a little worried about what this collaboration means for schools financially - how the alliance will take over the development role with families is worrisome. I know that we give money to our school beyond our student's tuition because we feel it's important and wish to ensure the school stays vital and strong. In that vein of transparency, how will the Alliance change how we give to our school - or will we not have the choice anymore and simply give to the "alliance" to spend as they see fit?

I think that more collaboration needs to be done between area schools. GRACEAC should be more organized for the sports programs!

There are tremendous opportunities to be appreciated in having the schools work cooperatively within the diocese, and with available technologies, with Catholic schools throughout the world. At the same time, the value of allowing individual schools the ability to tailor their costs, class size, and curriculum options to reflect the needs and intentions of the local community and/or parish should not be underestimated. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

While I agree that a basic, standard curriculum should exist diocese-wide, I think that individual schools should be allowed to fine-tune their curricula as they see fit. This may
mean choosing different textbooks and other teaching materials. I would hate to see cookie-cutter schools, where innovation in education is squandered in an effort to keep all things equal or exchangeable.

• It is important for the community to understand that if we are to be one group categorized as the Diocese, that we have the same standards, technology, educated staff, expectations of students and families.

• I believe our Catholic Schools should not be for the rich and brilliant students only. Many parents want a solid Catholic education for their students who struggle intellectually as well as those who are strong students. Also there are many parents out here who forgo vacations and any added frills to educate their children in the Catholic school. We should never lose sight of this nor should we make any school unaffordable or too elite educationally for any student.

• Accessibility is key to "city-edge" students. The cutting of bus services has weighed heavily on our decision to pursue Catholic High School options. Transportation is something that could certainly be improved upon in order to attract more students. It is disheartening when we see Christian Reformed transportation roaming all over the districts to gather up students. There should be some form of committee developed to brain storm better options for gathering up students that WANT to participate in Catholic education at the high school level. Partnering with school districts? Dean Transportation? With Catholic School transportation in its current state, we will be pursuing public school options for High School. Sad but true.

• I feel that the urban schools currently don't have the perception that they are welcoming to poor / economically challenged families. I feel that we need a huge turn-around in this area. Also, I believe my school's parent population perceives CC / WC as schools that are not attainable. They typically make just enough salary not to qualify for much assistance. Very often, they want to send their child to the Catholic high school, but instead choose the neighboring suburban high school. They can afford our parish school, but not the Catholic high school. (This in part because they have multiple children.) Because of this, parent don't feel as though they have a choice in this area.

• You have a Bishop that is not committed to affordable transparent education who is a dictator. This attitude trickles down to the lousy suburban priest that we have who views the school as a financial burden. So financial decisions are made by a dictator who has no vested interest in outcomes or reproducible outcome measures.

• I always feel they are asking us to complete these surveys but never letting us be informed enough about what it means. Does it mean my school could be eliminated or combined, does it mean something else? I just don't ever feel informed enough about what they are trying to do. Sometimes I don't want the fancy words I just want my child to have a good education, get into college, be a good person and be happy. I feel sometimes the church is no longer about the people and what we want but others making decisions for us.

• too expensive I NEED MONEY FOR DAD!

• working together to combine duplicate efforts among area schools to help defray costs (i.e. one buying entity for school food program and distributing food to the various schools with one food program/budget/buying office for the entire diocese)

• It is very idealistic.

• More autonomy for LOCAL school boards. Less diocesan micromanagement!

• I love having my children learn about their Catholic heritage and faith at school. I did not attend a Catholic school growing up and I feel very fortunate that my children are able to. As a teacher I know that there are a lot of challenges with budgets and other issues, but I worry somewhat that when we take on too many children in a classroom or are not strict
enough with enrollment policies or are enrolling students that need a lot of extra help that we cannot provide that we are almost, in a way, becoming like the public school except for the fact that we teach religion. I think that small classrooms and small student-teacher ratios are a big draw for some parents and they would be willing to pay tuition for their child to be in a smaller classroom. However, because we are trying to enroll as many students as possible, we can end up with larger classrooms that may deter parents from wanting to send their children to a Catholic school (Catch 22, I guess)

- Having children at both the elementary level and high school level, some of the decisions made are counter to promoting Catholic Schools and enhancing the possibility of college acceptance. As I send a child off to college, I recognize that it was a disadvantage to sending him to West Catholic rather than to Rockford. 1. Rockford is on a 10 point grading system, WC 7. My child would have had a 3.86 GPA rather than 3.6 GPA. 2. Rockford gives additional credit for honors courses. My child has grading for honors courses considered equally with remedial courses. Based on that, his GPA would have been raised and additional point. The guidance counselor made no effort to explain this to the colleges. Notre Dame, Hope College, MSU, Michigan, GVSU...not one was aware of this difference!!!! His GPA at Rockford would have been approx. 4.1, while at West Catholic, 3.6. All the above would have accepted him!!! So at least he learned a little Catholicism!

- We are extremely pleased with our Assumption school. The one area we would like to see grow in the Catholic schools is that there are different learning styles. We need to embrace that. There needs to be different levels of Math - not every student excels in Math. Also, more of the school work needs to be completed in school. Many adults do not work a full day and come home and do more of their job responsibilities at home. Why do we expect this of our children. They need the opportunity to relax and be kids.

- Not happy about the new High School entrance testing. Turning away those who desire a Catholic education should NOT be a part of our mission. Testing for the result of better TEACHING is more appropriate. We have an OBLIGATION as Catholics to education our young.

- Faith must be the #1 focus for our children. Although we open our doors to many non-Catholics, it is our responsibility to focus on why the majority of parents choose Catholic Education, "The Faith"! If we are in the business of political correctness and sacrifice the principles upon which Catholic Education was founded, then we are no better than the public school systems which has taken God and Prayer out of everyday life. We cannot be an elitist system where we segregate the rich from the poor and the smart from those who struggle. We must be willing to promote our high schools within our elementary schools and not worry about offending those who do not choose Catholic High School Education. God Bless.

- Thank you for your efforts and I will pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you.

- The opening vision statement should read the way it does in the final part of #9: Illumine learning and life in the light of Christ. The parallelism in two of the sections is lacking. Some statements within a section start with a verb and others with an adjective or noun, etc.... Input from JH/HS language teachers would be valuable.

- I was fortunate enough to attend Catholic Schools my entire life. My parents sacrificed a lot to keep their family in a faith based environment. I am a single mom and am trying to do the same thing for my children. I am looking at pulling my 2 children from the Catholic Schools because of tuition. It is a very heavy weight on me - wanting the best and right thing for my children - or being able to stay in our home.

- I appreciate all the hard work you have done. Thanks for being an advocate of improving and maintaining the vision of successful Catholic Schools. :)

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Although I agree with most of the statements of this survey, I don't understand where this is going. The level of transparency is non-existent. Communication between the high schools and grade schools is sparse at best. I really think that better leadership would yield many of these goals.

I'm not convinced combining Catholic schools will save as much money as some people think. I think a smaller school versus a large school is more beneficial for students. I think a smaller school creates a better sense of community. Students needs can be addressed more individually and efficiently in a smaller school setting. Bigger is not always better.

Keep West Catholic and Catholic Central as two high schools.

This survey seems to be biased towards merging schools and/or limiting parish input. If you really want to go that direction just come out with it rather than hiding it under positive sounding questions.

Thank you for working hard to improve our area Catholic schools. Each school is a blessing to the people that walk through the door each day. As a parent, it is an honor and a privilege to have our children enrolled in Catholic school. They are immersed in their faith, which is our personal goal for our children. We admire the tremendous efforts of our school staff - how they care for our children, truly strive for success for our children and how they share their faith with our children in their actions, words and teaching. It is a financial sacrifice to send our children to Catholic school, but it is a sincere joy to have them there! God bless our Catholic schools!

Let’s make our high school students follow the rules and if they are caught violating them do not just slap them on the wrist and send them on their way. We have too many kids thinking that they can get away with breaking rules at our high schools if their parents are part of a group or invest enough money or contribute here or there and the parents know how to make sure their children are not punished as well. Make all the rules apply to all the students all the time that they are representing the school no matter where they are. Make our kids proud to be part of their school so that they can be held up as an example over others.

I support the leadership and vision of Dave Faber, our Superintendent. He will empower students, families and schools to live and grow in their faith.

The parishioners here at Holy Family don't really have a good option for a Catholic grade school. My children went to SJV. This bus trip was 45 minutes, which was very difficult for the students and the bus drivers. At least it was an option, which allowed us to send our girls there, and I do appreciate that. Catholic Central wasn’t too bad, once we were able to have a car for our 5 children to use, however, the trips out to the CAT were very inconvenient. Even with these difficulties, my husband and I are very happy with the education and experience our children have had at SJV and CC! Thank you very much!

I would like to see Catholic education available for all those who want it and are willing to give of their time and talents if they cannot afford the education. Let's make this a priority.

I believe as time goes on we will find more schools combining into academies due to the decline of enrollment. I also believe students should be engaged more with stewardship and forming bonds within their community.

Parental involvement is very important.

The mission and vision seem nebulous - I would rather see something more specific and more obviously MEASURABLE that does not use catch phrases such as "illumine learning and life" (what does that MEAN? tell us in plain language) or buzz words as in the phrase "innovative and collaborative approach" (while you do attempt to define "collaborative," there is no meaning for "innovative" Also - I think it would help people a
great deal if the survey document itself carried an introduction to produce a common understanding of the objective here: What is the purpose of this survey? Why do we need a mission and vision statement? (what's in it for schools? community? churches? etc.) What exactly will be the outcome, how will it be reported back and when?

- I see the Catholic High School going from a Catholic School for all God's children to a school for the rich and college prep only. It has survived for 100 years as a school for all God's children, why change now. God told us to bring him our Children not just are rich and highly intelligent children, all our children. Doug Haney CC class of 67, plus three Blessed Sacrament graduate and CC grads, and hopefully my grand children

- I'm a grandmom who's children all attended St Thomas G.R., & now have grandchildren in the system. This vision is great!

- We feel it is important to involve those parishioners who are in their young 20s and 30s, since they are the ones who are recently or soon to be married and will be having children that will be most affected by the changes in the Catholic schools. Certainly it is important to involve those families who already have children enrolled in Catholic education, but in order to maintain and even increase enrollment, our diocesan schools must be competitive with other excellent area school systems. In order to find out what attracts new families, we feel there is an untapped resource in young adults who are considering having children in the next 10-15 years. We are also concerned about the admittance examinations for the Catholic high schools. We have experience with a prospective student, who wants nothing more than to attend a Catholic high school and has been working and studying hard. This student is extremely nervous about the examination. We feel that this situation is unnecessarily stressful and are unclear as to how these examinations continue our Catholic educational mission. What is good about keeping someone out of the schools who so desperately wants to put in their best effort and wants to be in a Catholic environment? We are baffled as to the purpose of this exclusionary measure. We believe Catholic education should be available to anyone and everyone, regardless of academic prowess or socioeconomic standing. It could even be helpful for someone with less academic confidence to be in an atmosphere of high academic quality, especially within a Catholic environment. Sincerely, Two alumni of the Grand Rapids Catholic Schools

- It looks like great thought and time was put into this survey. Just hope the parents of the school age children take note of this and participate in the survey. Thank you!

- I feel we are doing a great job teaching the main stream student. The classes are taught to the majority and it is understandable. The minority are the gifted, remedial, and special needs. My hope is we can diversify to offer a few programs to serve the minority groups. I am practical to understand the cost of such programs is high while the students served may fluctuate. My fourth grade son is academically gifted. He took the Northwestern above grade level testing and when I review his high scores I wonder what his school can offer him for enrichment. He appears to be at the ceiling easily getting A's. The Northwestern results show me our son is "earning" his A's with his God given intellect. My husband and I feel we need to supplement his activities at home to challenge him in new ways and help him achieve his potential. Yet we are disappointed our school cannot offer these opportunities. On the flip side I work as a substitute teacher in GRPS with special needs students. I know that the children in most Catholic schools with LD or special needs are not offered all the tools they need to achieve their full potential. At St. Anthony we have students with needs and we are able to give extra help with our skills support teacher and counselor, but it has its limits. We don't have a sensory room, paraprofessionals, or extensive services for those who need these interventions yet we enroll them and service them with limited capabilities. The parents compromise thinking a little is better than none... but we are offering these children the whip cream while forgetting the rest of
the sundae. I fear we are hindering the ability to thrive on both ends of the spectrum. This is an issue all schools face, yet it appears the Catholic schools have made a decision to teach the main stream and the rest are an afterthought.

- As a teacher who has attended many Diocesan Professional Development days and gatherings, I find it often frustrating with the progress that is being made. We have been asked to work on and create the curriculum when in turn it is completely being changed. I understand the importance of working together and collaborating amongst the schools but our work is being left at the way side.

- As a teacher in the diocese, I am excited about the collaboration between schools. However, I am often frustrated at diocesan meetings because it seems like we are asked to do work that will end up changing in 6 months. The example would be working in subject areas and creating pretests and posttests when the core curriculum will soon be implemented and all of that will change. In my opinion, the first step should be to get all schools using the same texts and materials and then collaborate on implementation and enrichment. It seems a waste of time to create things for everyone to use when we are not using the same tools/methods to teach. Thank you for your time in reading this.

- I have children who perform at the top of their classes and I have no doubt they will be admitted to WC/CC. Keeping this in mind, I do not like the message sent that they are "smart enough" to deserve a Catholic education while those who are less smart are not. That's a horrible, un-Christ like message for my children and especially for the children who are being turned away. There is no reason the high schools cannot accommodate lower-performing mainstream students with no major learning disabilities other than the fact that those on the lower end of the spectrum will bring down your test scores and college admissions statistics. Shame on you if this is the motivation for denying certain students access to learning in a Catholic environment. As I said before, the Catholic identity (including God's love for ALL of His children, not just the smart ones) is the driving force for me to pay money. Strong academics (at all learning levels) are expected to go along with that. I also want to comment on the sports programs...I know we have experienced some great successes in the past year (some celebrated extensively, some completely overlooked...) but please make sure all of the sports programs and those who coach and administrate them are held to the same behavioral, moral, and ethical standards to which I expect all employees within the Catholic school system to adhere. All teachers, coaches, ADs, and administrators must set a good example for the children they influence. A God-given artistic, academic, or other talent is just as important (more important, actually, once you get into the real world) as an athletic talent and should be equally cherished and celebrated. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions.

- I hope we leave final decisions at the parish level, not the Bishop

- I truly hope to see support of all Catholic Schools in the Diocese - it is our future!

- I realize that money seems to be more at the core of this survey, what schools to close because they aren't "profitable". Look at the effort missionaries put into instilling Catholic education in to foreign countries. Are not our children just as important? Will we eventually have to "import" missionaries from foreign countries to education our Catholic students? Everything seems to be based on having the "latest" of everything in schools. Our students are not at a disadvantage when they receive a good strong basic education in all subject areas. For years our students have been the leaders of our communities. Don't give in to the "pressure" of having the newest and latest of everything instead of relying on what has made our schools different - the teachers true love of Catholic, Christian education. Invest in your teachers first!

- Excellent. I'm just sensitive to the fact we have grandparents raising children, and perhaps the 'parents' part needs to be expanded.
As with most surveys, it is quite vague. I realize due to the financial picture, changes need to be looked at and decided upon. I don't think one size fits all works. We sent our kids to Catholic schools for the Christ centered-ness/faith/sacraments, high academic expectations, and something 'close to home'. I think you will find that most people who send their children to Catholic schools, do support them, with time and treasure—as much as they are able. If you want to reach a larger population, you are going to need to be able to accept those who cannot afford it too. I don't think it should become 'elitist'. Also, because we have had children in Catholic schools for nearly 20 years, the few changes that have already come down from the Diocese, while minor, change the picture of a parish school for me. I am not sure that it brings a good feeling with it.

This diocese has been an educational train wreck for the last 10 years. Certain current "leaders" have acted in a manipulative manner in order to achieve suspect objectives. Some are outspoken in their contempt of Catholic Schools; others are less obvious, but likely more destructive. Community has suffered. Absent a directional miracle, a fractured community will be the legacy of the current local church. There is a separatist and elitist attitude by some lay persons in positions of leadership. There has been poor communication. The Diocese and parishes have done a poor job of tapping into talent. And the waning financial support is indicative of an overall attitude of non-prioritization. None of this is lost on the various congregations, regardless of what is stated publicly so as to avoid being "on the outs" with a given priest or administrator. If and when the GR Catholic Schools fail in the relatively near future, people will look back to the years 2004 and forward and see the pattern of decline and lack of support. My 4 children at Immaculate Heart of Mary will be attending public high schools. I will not pay a ridiculous tuition and expense amount only to have those children exposed to "leadership" with poor ethics, poor communication skills, poor decision-making capabilities and community disinterest amidst lip service to the contrary. There are more people who feel this way than those who do not. It is a not a crisis of faith, but a failure of those charged with being caretakers of the faith. Spirituality has actually probably grown, but only as a necessary survival response to actions that have undermined community belief in the necessary practice of religion. In the current personnel situation, Catholic Schools would be better run without any Diocesan or parish control. I never thought I would say that, and was adamantly opposed to that attitude 10 years ago, but I have now seen (firsthand) that (some) priests, (some of) the secondary school board and (much of) the diocese are out of touch and ill-suited to the task(s) at hand. Not all involved are incompetent, but enough to bankrupt the faith needed for the mission. Thank God for the teachers. They are today's saints and the local mission-directed achievers. They are the reason for a positive Catholic Schools experience through my children’s formative years. I don't want to damage that development by exposing my children to a letdown in the high school environment due to adults and leaders making a power struggle or political game of their life opportunities. P.S. This survey, while a good idea in general, was insulting....a blatant effort to word questions so that those responding are essentially forced to accept as given some supposed positive attribute of the work product of the West Michigan Catholic School System. This type of pandering as a marketing effort is self-absorbed and shallow. It is akin to a thinly-veiled attempt at brain-washing. It fuels anger and resentment (more than is likely realized). I hope my honest responses have made that clear to those reading this. To be clear, nobody inside or outside the Catholic Schools cares what we call the affiliation of Catholic Schools--it will later likely be shortened to a series of letters in common parlance anyway (like "IHM" has become when the proper name should be held sacrosanct as a prayer of devotion); people care about what is being accomplished academically and spiritually, how lives are being impacted and how love, respect and charity are reflected in the development of
young lives and the larger community. It is really that simple. That takes a shared
community of believers. Manipulation and expediently making moving-targets of
educational objectives does not beget belief.

- Perhaps more recruiting would help increase enrollment.
- I do not like the way our parish has "forced" the payment of our Sunday collections in
  the annual budget to benefit tuition assistance for families who are financially stable and
can afford to pay for themselves. The diocese needs a tuition assistance plan that is
administered equally to all.
- While the uniqueness of any one individual school should not be undervalued, I also
believe that we should not sacrifice the progress of the student body as a whole by over
emphasizing individual needs. When all these students come together in high school, I
think it is important that they all be (as much as possible) on the same page and moving
at the same pace. Some parishes need to recognize that a sacrifice on their part for the
benefit of a less privileged school may help them in the long run because when these
students unite in high school, their progress maybe improved. We are only as strong as
our weakest link.
- We are strongly considering sending our child to a Catholic high school (west or central);
we have attended the public school so far. However, the uncertainty of combining etc.
does make me nervous. I have heard the rumors and talked to the administration at both
schools. The administration notes the schools will remain separate; however, the rumors
note the opposite. I do wish the leadership would fill us in on what direction they feel
they are headed with the two Catholic high schools.
- As has been my experience since becoming involved with the Catholic School in my
area, I feel As if I am constantly defending the necessity of the existence of the school to
faceless people in GR. Whether this feeling is real or perceived is immaterial, as
perception is reality. The mission of Diocese, as it relates to schools and in my opinion,
should be to include all schools/ parishes in figuring out how to keep and grow all
schools. I'd happily discuss this more in depth with anyone who would like to listen.
- This survey is blatantly pointed in its questions and progressions. The Vision for
Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Grand Rapids can't rise from such things as a survey
that first asks, "Does the phrase, 'Alliance of Catholic Schools' help to describe..." and
then continue to refer to our Catholic Schools in the survey as an Alliance of Catholic
Schools. The same thing occurs with the word "Illumine" and several others. I recoil
when I am asked questions that are subsequently and summarily answered by future
questions. On a separate note regarding stewardship, I did notice the absence of questions
eliciting opinions about increasing the budget and scope of the Office of Catholic
Schools. An Alliance with Collaboration and new approaches to Unity and Sharing
Resources will give rationale for the increase of a centralized staff and budget.
Institutions tend to do just that, although often with the best of initial intentions--get top
heavy until the whole thing topples and has to be rebuilt.
- Saint Patrick’s is a good example of a high school that doesn't work. Most of the kids
stop going to church after graduation. If keeping the high school open just for sports is all
it's about then you're setting a poor example of what education is all about.
- Private schools are developed to meet the needs of an institution and therefore are a form
of segregation. Since we are no longer run by religious it would be worth asking if they
should be at all.
- I recently heard that students who did not do well on the high school entrance exams are
not allowed to attend Catholic Central. This breaks my heart! Are we not an environment
that will help those who need help with their education while embracing them with the
catholic values and faith. I don't find this a plus for our Catholic school vision. I know
that I will be praying for the "committees" who over see these decisions to reconsider how students are "selected" to attend Catholic schools.

- There must be a threshold financial ratio for the parish. Our school while important, is only one aspect of the church's total ministry, yet consumes 40% of the total operating budget, preventing other ministries in realizing their full potential and mission. Something must be done with the finances of the schools. We cannot operate a school total enrollment of 140 with a capacity of 450. This does not make financial or good stewardship sense to me.

- The number one priority is that we have to figure out how to make Catholic education affordable for ALL families who want to send their students to Catholic schools. We need to figure out if attending a Catholic school is a right or a privilege. If it becomes a privilege then I think we have lost the message of the Jesus. The schools should spend more time SHARING resources. The same text books should be used at all the grade schools. (Perhaps even the same uniforms). The days of individual parish schools is nearing an end. We need more schools like All Saints Academy. Grand Rapids needs to get over the 'cliquish' mentality of "my parish or school is better than yours."

- Consolidate/eliminate your schools...wasting parish money that could be aiding the poor!!! Without scholarship aid how many students would you have?? What does that tell you?? there is no real interest among the parishioners to send their kids to our catholic schools.....only when you can bring back the good sisters/nuns to Fully staff [100%] the classrooms and pound education into our young people will you garner greater support!!! its time to replace the mediocre/less qualified lay teachers with NUNS and until then CLOSE/CONSOLIDATE our parochial schools!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

- We are 35 min. drive from nearest school. Perhaps an offering that combines satellite schooling with a portion of a catholic home schooling program/ collaborative learning would meet all criteria. This would require core technology and parental involvement which would meet some mission goals.

- I feel that the recent testing of eighth grade students and provisions that some must meet in order to be accepted at the two Catholic high schools has caused much pain to parents who have sacrificed so that their children might receive a Catholic education both at the elementary and high school levels. The high schools, in the name of Christ, must make more provisions for those less academically qualified.

- The overall Vision is great. The ideals are well thought out and show the talent and commitment to the schools. Please look more into the mental health problems of the teens. This is a very important area that does not seem to be addressed both at the private and public schools.

- Our Catholic schools are an important part of our Catholic community, We need to continue to attempt to provide accessibility to all students that would like to attend. It is important that all teachers in our schools are from the Catholic faith to allow our children' faith to grow.

- I am overall pleased with my school, ABVM in Belmont. It's very important to me and my husband as parents to have a very rich Catholic presence within the academic process. Academics and the drive for better and better, should not overshadow a love of learning, which can be enriched within a strong Catholic identity. Encouragement by staff to attend weekly Mass, receive the Sacraments, take part in special activities during different liturgical times of the year, and tying in the history and richness of our Faith within the various subjects the students are learning...science, math, language, music and arts, is needed even more. The Church has a wonderful history in all these areas and it should be part of their education. Also, it would help to dispel many myths that are present in today's world that paint the Church in such a bad light in regards to these
subjects (topics). On another note, I am not particularly pleased with the Virtus Touch Safety program that the Diocese expects our schools to teach to our kids. I realize it's not Sex Ed., but parents should be respected as the first educators in such sensitive subjects. Staff and teachers are already trained to be aware of inappropriate behavior or suspicious behavior in individuals. And if there is a strong rapport and trust between staff and student body, then there are no "secrets". With the Virtus program, I believe the burden or onus is placed on the children, because, "now they've been instructed in what is appropriate or not- behavior". I know you can opt out of the program, but I am not comfortable with it in our school. Thank you for providing this survey. I appreciate the opportunity to share my opinions and communicate to you my thoughts on the many facets of our Catholic Schools and their educational needs.

- Stop wasting money......charge full tuition, no scholarships, and see how many students you really have!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!If necessary combine or CLOSE schools...the parishes can do more with the $$$ helping the POOR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!...stop using parish general fund contributions to subsidize a failed parochial school system that produces students who start higher education well behind their peers!!!!!!!!!!!

- What is the audience for this document? If the audience is administrators/teachers/school board it is probably ok. However, the average parent/parishioner will have a very hard time understanding many parts of the text/wording. Need to spend a lot of time on re-working the wording for the public if that is the final audience. Example: words, like 'illumine' are difficult to interpret. 2. You don't stress Top Notch Academics enough. I would ONLY consider sending my child to a Catholic High School if I was convinced it was one of the best academic schools in the area. I am not currently convinced of this. I CAN HOME SCHOOL RELIGION. There are many very good public school districts in the area, for example, East Grand Rapids, Forest Hills, Rockford. Top graduates from these schools are getting into the best schools in the country and their parents aren't paying thousands of $$ a year in tuition. Now, I will say, you have been improving your PR for the Catholic High Schools over the last couple of years, but you have more work to do.

- What has made the Catholic Schools in Grand Rapids and community great has been the diversity in parishes and schools. It sounds like the "Alliance" wants to homogenize and that will make the parishes and schools lose their vitality. I think is it possible to share services and support without having one large solution (control). A network or web.

- Any student wanting a CATHOLIC education should not be turned away. They have as much right for a nurturing Catholic atmosphere as the next student. You never know when a future priest or religious may answer the call because of something said or done in a Catholic school. We need strong leaders from all academic and social levels to make the church well rounded.

- I attended elementary Catholic Schools (St. Alphonsus and St. Mary's New Salem) in the 40's-50's. I was truly blessed and owe my faith to my parents, grandparents and the community of New Salem.CCD does not afford the immersion into the life of faith that comes from the experience of attending a catholic school, especially when this also includes daily or at least a weekly mass. God bless your endeavors to save our catholic schools.

- Catholic school marketing should not alienate or offend Catholic families who are forced to or who have chose to use public schools to educate their children. In the Portland community, there is a social superiority radiated by parents and children who go to Catholic school towards the public school children and families and that should be discouraged. I don't know if it the same way in other communities, but that is present in Portland. Marketing should not reflect superiority over public school families, but it should reflect superiority in education over public school education. My daughters
attended St. Patrick Catholic School in Portland for a few years. Due to economics, health issues, and some bullying problems at school faced by my youngest daughter, my daughters have now gone back to public schools. St. Patrick Catholic School in Portland remains a far superior educational system over the public school and my daughters lives were improved from the opportunity to attend. Thank you.

- Catholic schools must be forced by the Diocese to collaborate and use the 'sum of the parts' to strengthen the entire Catholic school community. Catholic schools have been living on islands for far too long. When priests and nuns dominated the teacher colony (thus keeping tuition low) that business model worked as the education was affordable for most all parishioners...parishes could afford to invest in schools when the classrooms were full and there was a waiting list. Lay teachers now dominate - thus tuitions are high and affordability is low for many families. Catholic schools must market themselves and compete against public schools; and many 'blue ribbon' public schools are tough competition! Catholic schools MUST join hands - they MUST offer consistent curriculums that are centered in Christ while at the same time producing students that graduate at the top of the academic scales. Catholic schools should always hold an academic edge to public schools because parents that invest in Catholic education are motivated to be involved and to hold their children to higher standards. The Diocese must market the 'successes' of Catholic school students constantly - this message will resonate with parents who want the best for their kids. If you build it, they will come!

- I'm very excited with the new vision for St. Michael/Joseph/Catherine schools. I think it is very important to be willing to change traditional learning methods and incorporate the technology that our world today is using.

- Living in Newaygo County we have no real option for sending our children to Catholic Schools. I treasure the Catholic School education I received in IL/WI and it would be nice for my children to experience the same. I know setting up schools is a long process and may not happen in time for my children to take advantage of the school, but it would be nice for others to have the option here in our county.

- I would like for the school board and parents to have more say in the running of the school including selecting the principal. While that process in some schools is completed in an open way with a lot of dialogue, that is not always the case. Having come from _____, we were struck by the unwillingness of _____ and bishop to remove a failing principal who destroyed a wonderful school and created a culture of deceit and mistrust among the families. I should add that _____ tried to remove the principal (who should have never been hired without any educational experience) only to have the bishop reinstate the principal for an additional year. We have been pleased with what we have seen at _____, but are very nervous about changes that can cause traumatic effects in just a few short years (over 50% of enrollment in just a 3 year period with the elimination of four teachers which could have been prevented).

- Excellent job!

- Wish more people could afford to send their children to the Catholic School. It is the best investment we made for our four children

- We all need more students and a bigger percentage of parish families in the schools. More affordable, more accessible, as well as investment in collaborative, innovative and rigorous academics and programs, will help achieve that! Keeping school leadership and teachers motivated, insisting on their "above average" performance and talking about excellent results, are critical. Thank you for your work in this particularly challenging time.

- The Diocese, and thus the School System associated with it, suffers from a poor reputation for doing things "its" way and not including the thoughts, comments and
efforts of the "stakeholders" (!!) BEFORE action is taken or read about in the Grand Rapids Press. It's a shame. There are many great visions and understandably people in leadership hold some of them. But "forcing" those visions is not the most "transparent" way to communicate and include "diversity" when trying to build an "alliance."

- I would like to add that I feel it's especially important, during these times, that we work together in a collaborative way - I have not seen emphasis placed on this area. this is possibly because it has not been needed as much as it is now, but I believe the schools find themselves in 'defense' mode. It would be nice for the schools (and parishes) to be able to have a clear path for helping to support other parishes and schools by knowing what resources are available at which locations and exactly what those schools and parishes are doing well as well as know where help is needed.

- I think that a formal uniformity from a K-12 perspective for all the Diocese' schools is a good idea; from curriculum, religion programs, course offerings, specific teacher training and continuing ed, policies, enforcement, and school uniforms, etc. will give clarity, consistency and defined expectation for the families.

- Not sure what the long range plan is but the Vision look interesting - thought the question on "add value" and #6 was about "satellite" was confusing. Nicely done in regards to the presentation. The shorter the survey the better...

- We need to look at how important Catholic education is to every Catholic child, and make that our top priority when we look at funding the many programs of the Catholic Church. The more good Catholics we develop, the stronger the Catholic faith will be. We, as Catholics, struggled in the past to develop highly attended Catholic Schools. With hard work and innovation we can do it again.

- That a Catholic Education Should be available to any Catholic Child who sincerely wants to be educated

- In regards to this survey: A couple of the questions were confusing and therefore impossible to answer. What does it mean that each school should be responsible for it's own financial health? While that is true to a degree, shouldn't there also be some financial assistance from the Diocese in times of need? What does "deferred maintenance" of schools mean? I have no idea---so did not answer this question at all. Please, as you move forward with this, remember that each of these schools is unique. This alliance has the potential to serve a very good purpose---and I hope that the end result is that the schools are allowed to remain unique, retaining their own histories and traditions. You'll have to be very careful not to come up with a One Size Fits All policy that overlooks or even worse, squelches those things.

- As I stated in a previous answer, check out what Khan Academy is doing to revolutionize the quality of education. In particular with Math subjects. It increases the amount of one-on-one student-to-teacher time roughly ten-fold. http://blog.ted.com/2011/03/09/lets-use-video-to-reinvent-education-salman-khan-on-ted-com/

- until they learn how to spend money AND make Catholic schools available to all Catholics, there is no sense to them

- To insure that transparency drives this vision through the integrity of our Catholic faith. That all leaders, teachers, parents and students included are held accountable to their actions that mirror what our Catholic fundamental doctrine states.

- Having not heard of this new direction that the diocese is taking, my first thought / concern was that our parish school would lose its identity or become expendable if tough times were ahead. Our school is at the edge of the diocese and in my opinion, has always been able to be self sufficient. A concern of mine is that some of our limited resources be re-appropriated for these new programs. Being on the corner of the diocese, I am not sure how these new programs can be efficiently offered to us. Part of our identity is our
independence. On the other hand, it is always a great idea to network with peers and look at other ways of doing things. I think that the goal is that every parish gets more out of this than what they put in. I think that if this is administered correctly, that is a real possibility and everybody is a winner. However, I don't think that it is up to the diocese to pick winners and losers. No one wants their school to be closed. I think with word of mouth marketing or paid marketing, almost all Catholic schools within the diocese can flourish. Catholic schools have a lot of excellent selling tools at their disposal. I think that the general public needs to be made aware of these competitive advantages that our schools offer.

- This may seem a trivial point, but a timely one for me. Spring break is upon us and my children are painfully aware of our family’s sacrifices now that "everyone" has headed to Florida or other places of extravagance. It is a valuable opportunity to teach about the importance of Catholic education to our family. I would appreciate our Catholic schools' 100% support by continuing quality instruction right up until (and including) the last hour of the last day of the school term. Accommodating vacationing families leaving early to the detriment of students staying here until school ends should never be an option. Families leaving early should understand that the rest of us pay tuition for instruction, not day care. Families leaving early may be sacrificing a few grade points for their children and definitely a quality lesson. We should be accommodating students who stay, not students leaving. If that last few days of school before spring break is actually optional, make spring break begin there, please. Also, our substitute teachers (when used) should be highly qualified, credentialed teachers. Our economical slow down affords us with scads of unemployed teachers. Pulling teachers from retirement as an act of kindness toward them should not be a practice. Our students are paying premium prices for substitute teachers to call roll and circulate handouts. EVERY day should be highly effective instructionally in every class. Dress down days merely equate with public schools. We must dare to customize our Catholic schools rather than try to mimic public schools. Dress down days seem to apologize to our students for their expected state of dressing with dignity. Dressing down is for the weekend. All school days should reflect dignity. Peers evaluate the wardrobe of their classmates on those dress down. Students whose families are sacrificing by foregoing the trendy clothes are marginalized on these dress down days. (Catholic Schools Weeks can be fun without dressing down or dressing in pajamas, etc.)

- Catholic schools do need to attract more students and keep costs as low as possible. Historically, very little has been done to promote and publicize the considerable success our schools have enjoyed. Academically the ones with which I was associated performed as well as or better than the best public schools in the region, while instilling Catholic values and a sense of community that were absent in these institutions. Very little of this success was ever made known, nor was it widely known that Catholic schools were more than happy to welcome students whose parents didn't earn a lot of money. These disconnects have been factors, perhaps very significant ones, in forming opinion about our schools. Unless a better, people friendly, effort is made to inform the general public of the high quality of the Catholic schools; and unless more is done to enthusiastically welcome a more economically and culturally diverse community than we now serve, Catholic schools will be on the decline regardless of how much technology and management sophistication are crammed into them. From the survey, I sense that the "human element" is absent from the planning. I'm a logical, bottom line type person. However, I've learned over time that most projects are doomed to failure if they fail to move people on an emotional level. Thus I'd strongly urge that all sorts of genuine emotional connects be incorporated into this plan. If the plan can connect positively in
that way, as well as through the nuts and bolts of logic and common sense, it has a much better chance to be effective and to ultimately succeed.

- I don't see how we are giving any input with this survey. I don't feel this was very well presented. It was a very confusing survey. I didn't see a whole lot of value in it.

- Over the years, we have participated in work groups that involved multiple parishes, schools, etc. Lots of talk and data collection about "what to do". We have not seen much "action" based on those meetings. Keep it simple, versus all of these fancy words and strategies. If you want to serve the community better, just do it... Eliminate the strategy meetings and let see action.

- We are very disappointed in the slanted survey which was performed last year regarding a new school out in Caledonia/ Cascade/ Ada. We were frankly surprised that the survey did not ask engaged, newly married, or recently married couples their views on this important new school topic. We could not believe that this demographic was not asked its views since we were more likely to want a new school than parents who had already chosen a school (either public or private) and thus would be unlikely to change schools at this late juncture. It made the survey frankly seem like it was designed to reach a preordained result. We think you are short-charging your future at this point by essentially abdicating education in this suburban area which is the financial and leadership future of this diocese. Even the first question on this survey demonstrates that this segment of the population is undervalued. It failed to have a category for parishioner with children who will enter a school within 6 years or couples who have not yet conceived but hope for children in the future.

- More communication is vital. Survey was too complicated. Schools should have been combined years ago. Our community needs one high school. We should give all the extra maintenance money to the poor. We have too many buildings half full.

- I am glad to see that there is direction on trying to maintain and then expand Catholic Education. Catholic Education I believe is at a critical juncture where more and more families do not see the value or the need. It is also very important to communicate to all Parishes, Family members, even the media on the direction of the schools. We went through the closing of St. Andrews which was painful and not necessarily handled well and we would not like to see occur again. It is important to remember that there are parishioners from non-school parishes that choose to send their children to Catholic Schools. There are also non-Catholics that choose to do so. It is important to embrace all (the one comment was to include Ecumenical). These groups of families could feel that they are 'left out' from the school/parish events.

- I do not see a problem in having the Catholic schools of the Diocese interact more. However, the increased interaction should not mean that each Catholic school does not still have flexibility to adjust their services to meet the needs of THEIR community. For example, I find it completely unacceptable and inconsiderate to force all of the Catholic schools to be on the same schedule. Catholic schools that rely on the local public school system for services and transportation should be allowed to set their schedule so as to match the local public school schedule. Parents already make large sacrifices in terms of time, resources and money to send their kids to Catholic school. Requiring parents to take time off from work to transport their kids to and from school when transportation is not available because the local public school is closed is a large burden for many families with working parents. A decision such as this by the Diocese shows a complete lack of understanding and respect for the sacrifices that parents of Catholic schools' kids make every day. I can think of no reason for forcing all of the Catholic schools to abide by the same schedule. Catholic churches throughout the world are given flexibility in scheduling worship services and other events and the same courtesy should be given to the schools. When it comes right down to it, the kids themselves feel no comfort from
knowing that somewhere 30 miles away there are kids in another Catholic school at the same time as they are. What the kids do feel is the burden the situation places on the parents. Any claimed benefit from forcing all of the Catholic schools to be on the same schedule cannot outweigh the burden such a decision places on students and families.

- As an alumna of both Holy Trinity and West Catholic, I am eternally grateful for the education my parents gave me. I do realize what a gift it was. Unfortunately, the economy will not allow me to provide that for my children. I am underemployed and my husband is unemployed (after working out of state for several years). I truly wish that something could be done in northern Kent County, (maybe Sparta?), or southern Newaygo County that was affordable and accessible. I have given my gifts, of time, talent, and treasure to the Diocese for many years, but I now have only talent left to give. There is no treasure in my house as we are now on Food Stamps despite my employment of 65 hours per week. Sub-standard wages in Michigan made this possible for my family. (Yes, I am educated. I have a Master's in Education from Aquinas College, but am unable to find fulltime employment. I currently work 2 low paying part-time jobs.) Can you hear the pain? My children deserve better than this! They deserve the opportunity to have a Catholic education. I will not send them to Providence Christian in Fremont as several fellow parishioners are doing with their children. It is run by the Christian Reformed Church and these children come back to Religious Ed with many questions about the Catholic Church because of what they are being taught in Fremont. One example comes from an 8th grader, "Is it true that Catholics aren't really Christians?"

- Positives: The visuals are nice to look at and you get an A for effort Negatives: It sounds like a group of people who have never been in school wrote this. What does "illuminie" mean to the average Joe. Cut to the chase. What do you want to accomplish and who do you want us to be...you want our Catholic Schools to be the Light of Christ...which they are...Just say that. Don't try to fancy up all your ideas. Just say them clearly and concisely. Drop the flowery wording.

- the catholic schools need to make sure that every teacher is doing their job and that each student is working to their full potential. Diversity is great but all ethic students need to speak English and understand the English language so that they have the best opportunity to succeed just like all of the other students. We have kept minorities in poverty because they are not immersed in our language and our culture. Catholic schools should take the lead on these issues if we believe that all people are created equal in the eyes of God.

- Closing Schools does not keep the students growing in their faith by forcing them to the public schools

- I did not understand the second to last part of the survey. The way I read the request for giving a value to each of the components didn't make much sense to me. -- sorry

- Being high school parents, all we ask is that West Catholic gets the same press that Catholic Central gets. I was told that the CSA slide show that was presented in Church, was of CC students and none from West. If the vision is for CC and WC is to "get along" then give equal time for both. This has always been an issue for the 2 schools, and as the administrators, you need to get a handle on this problem.

- Found this survey to be less than illuminating on what the "vision" is (and also the consequences of that vision). It would be helpful if you used straightforward language, and explained what the 'business-speak' was getting at. The tone and choice of words reminds me of when I worked in social service agencies and non-profits. No one could understand what you were getting at, except those others who worked in the same field. Intentional?

- I hope all this surveying results in real results. We have taken surveys time and again and nothing ever comes of them
• Make sure that the terminology used is readily recognizable to the audience being called to action

• Thank you for the wonderful work you do on behalf of our Catholic Schools. We need to keep our schools strong and vibrant for our future generations.

• Catholic schools have historically served a wide variety of students from a broad spectrum of social and economic backgrounds. We have also served those students who are not necessarily academically gifted. Some of our greatest saints were not "the brightest pennies in the pile". I would hope that we would remember that God has given us a responsibility for all of the children he has entrusted to us. We are called by Him to help them all reach their potential to fulfill his plan for them as committed Christians. This is the real purpose of the Catholic school.

• After working in a diocesan school for 16 years, I feel there is very little direction from the diocese.

• It helps make the sacrifices and time we spend to send our kids to a Catholic school, when I see or hear my children acting "Christ-like". It's nice to know my children are loved and their best interests are put first over business, test score or awards. Dedicated and loving teachers and administrators are a must.

• I would be more than willing to work with the Diocese in any way possible. Being a CFRE and well aware of the work needing to be done to position the schools for sustainability and growth - I'd be happy to offer my services for anything that is needed including marketing, branding, fundraising, etc. I have done a lot of work with Strategic Planning and Branding. So however I can be utilized, please feel free to contact me.

• This is sounding like the government's idea of "value added". Our school is perfect as is. Why can't we let it be?

• I spent much time trying to carefully answer each question to this survey, the whole time worrying about how my opinion might be twisted to justify what is currently being done to our schools and churches. I then went through and deleted all my opinions because I believe the questions have different meanings and responses might be misrepresented. So I decided instead of not responding at all I would give a short simple response. I believe in local control of our churches and schools, each being response for their own and helping others when they are called to do so. I do not like dictatorships which in the end breeds corruption, and quite honestly, if we aren't already there I feel that is the end result. I have no problem with the Diocese making recommendations and providing limited governance to Parishes while having authority over Scripture and Religious teachings. I also believe God calls all of us to be kind, giving, and generous people. God recommends 10% but he never ordered anyone to come take it from us ...(i.e. CSA appeal!!!) Finally, surveys are only helpful to those that will listen to the people and accurately interpret responses.

• Churches without schools should help with the funding of Catholic Schools. I feel the schools should be combined as one through funding to help the schools who are less fortunate.

• Every time we close a Parish school or combine with other parishes, we lose some students who could and should be benefiting from a Catholic education. Catholic schools, whether small rural schools or large city schools, should be first and foremost in the eye of our diocese. With the decline of morality today, and the decline of religious vocations at an all time low we need to better serve the youth and teach them the way Jesus instructed us. That is where our Diocese dollars need to be spent: Educating the parents on the importance of a Catholic education, help with the funding so as not to be a heavy burden on family or Parish, helping our struggling parishes to keep their schools
open, and providing a superior education TO ALL as has always been our practice in the past. I truly believe new priests would eventually result from that kind of plan.

- The Diocese needs to realize that there is a definite need for high schools in the satellite areas. This could easily be addressed by making more schools k-12.
- Wonderful work...well articulated and reflects the progressive nature of our schools. The technology component is wonderful, and stands out as an important part of our vision.
- need to put more emphasis on the importance of catholic education in the results of stas in the form of life careers of children who attended Catholic school.
- The Catholic Faith needs schools in West Michigan more than ever...because our faith is the foundation of Christianity. Protestant/Christian schools are going up in every small town and parochial schools are diminishing. A strong Catholic movement is overdue. Thanks for your efforts Dave!
- Could the "value added" for high school be broadened to include those who will not go to college? A faith-filled life or something like that?
- My children attend SJV and the school has done a great job of adjusting to their declining enrollment. I work in a school that is near several other Catholic schools and every year is a challenge. We don't have enough students to fill the classes. Each year that passes makes it more obvious that combining 2 or more of these schools would strengthen all of them. The programs would be stronger and more things could be offered. I think it is time to make the tough decisions & get down to saving our schools!!
- Focus on why current families do not utilize the Catholic schools they DO have access to. The gimmicky marketing of 'light of Christ' and comments similar to this sound more like something from a Baptist or Reformist would say (except they may you 'light of Jesus' rather than 'Christ'). Nothing in this survey appeared to be something where the input wasn't more than obvious. It looked and read very much as though there is only 'I' correct answer and yet most of the questions didn't provide an opportunity to comment. Many of the schools are too small. Satellite schools don't appear to be more than a home school environment 'at' the Parish school, why bother enrolling in a school? If the schools are going to start bringing more Internet and Video activity to the classroom, the students can do this at home today, so why should they pay to enroll in a Parish school? Unfortunately, this sort of information is not completely discussed on this survey nor is there a place to comment about it except for here. Thank you for your time
- Please keep in mind that small Catholic schools should have a say in the diocese too. We have been affiliated with a small Catholic school in our hometown that was closed in July a few years ago with NO warning to school families or teachers. The parish was notified of it happening after the face and then the priest had a town hall meeting. In my opinion, the meeting should be held before the decision has been made by the bishop. Several business owners in the area came to the priest to ask how much was needed to keep the school opened. They were told it was too late. I feel this school should have had the chance for one more year to see what would've happened. My fear is that we (and approx. 10 other families from our town) are driving 10-15 miles one way to send our children to St. Charles, what is to say that the bishop will put them on the chopping block and not let anyone know in advance. I pray that this doesn't happen. St. Charles is definitely a bigger school then the one I mentioned that was shut down. I was amazed at how un-Christian the school was shut down though. Teachers were without work with school starting up in a month and kids had to be shipped to different schools without any notice. That was a huge disappointment to many families. So, I hope that the vision for Catholic Schools does include the small schools too.
A portion of the total Diocesan CSA should be used to establish an equal K-12 per pupil expenditure that is awarded to all Catholic schools in the Diocese based on enrollment.

There is a danger in trying to be collaborative, through meetings, and innovative, through activities. Excessive meetings rake valuable time away from living out our calling and excessive activities in schools create a frenzy which detracts from consistency and significant loss of learning time. A time study would likely already reveal that schools have an overabundance of activities and little consistency. Learning suffers as the future will reveal. The sad motto that Catholic schools have adopted is “More is always better” and “We fear quiet”.

I can see how the Vision for Catholic Schools will make our schools great into the future but we need to be sure we are always doing everything we can to meet the needs of the children and families of our Diocese. I feel that there is a need for the schools within the Diocese of Grand Rapids to have a common calendar (or as common as can be) and common standards that all the schools are expected to follow. The common standards should be closely related to the State of Michigan GLCES. As Michigan is transferring their standards to the national standards the catholic schools should do the same. Our children will be fighting for the same careers the public school children will be. We need to assure parents that even though our catholic students are excelling in school they are learning what they are going to need to know for their life in the future.

The term "Alliance for Catholic Schools", indicates a very negative connotation to me. When I see the term "Alliance", I think of war, the military, and battles. I like to think our Catholic Education and relationship with Christ is MUCH MORE positive than that.

A global vision needs to be taken to provide quality education by region and serve areas that do not have Catholic education currently available. Pool resources and have a comprehensive fundraising approach for Catholic Education Parishes without adequate resources need to have Catholic Education made available to their parishioners.

The goal primary goal of this survey is clear. While I agree that collaboration can be an important part of efficiency, it is not a model that should be pursued at the expense of individual Catholic schools. An elementary and middle school concept fits public schools because it is free. However, I will not pay for it. I pay tuition to be a part of a parish and school community. If the purpose of this survey was to be able to claim objective support for an elementary and middle school program, I would appreciate being told of that direction now, so I can make long term decisions for my children's education.

I don't feel that there is enough emphasis on the actual "education" part of the vision. Shouldn't it state somewhere about "academic excellence and spiritual depth" or somehow a combination of the two that people will remember and more importantly believe in. Illumines is not rolling off the tongue of most people I know. Make the vision true, strong and catchy.

My own experience is that very few schools in the diocese appear to have any level of student diversity. A friend and parent of a current student recently attended the fourth grade songfest and asked me "where are the black students - only one school represented seems to have any diversity?" Beyond the presence of minority students, there is a lack of tolerance and acceptance of diversity among the students at CC, particularly those who come from more homogenous schools (i.e. most feeder schools). This lack of tolerance is one reason why my child will not be returning to CC next year. Perhaps a focused effort to recruit students and faculty of color, bolstered by a more robust scholarship program, could help the Catholic schools become more inclusive and more representative of the community at large.
- Our family has been very thankful for our experience with St. Stephen School. We have four children, and the financial cost is our only concern and worry at this point. We highly desire to keep our children at St. Stephen, but we do not know if it will remain financially feasible for us to do so. Thank you for your efforts to provide aid and scholarships to families.

- Ensure that the model of governance of each school can be adapted to the unique circumstances associated with a particular school in a particular area. Diocesan scholarships should be available to ALL students needing financial assistance whether the school is tuition or stewardship based.

- I feel the Office of Catholic Schools is going in the right direction with the Satellite Schools. I also would like to thank them for this opportunity. No one is trying harder than the three schools involved to see this union work well for our children and our communities. If at times people in these three communities tend to seem a might bit stubborn, we get that from our ancestors who worked this land and supported these churches. Brave Irishmen settled in Dennison, Michigan and dared to start a Catholic Church in this very Protestant area. Sometimes success begins with stubbornness. Thanks.

- Perhaps I missed something....this exercise did not come across as a survey in the true sense. 2. All great and happy thoughts, not sure what your plan is for funding?

- It appears that the decisions have already been made about these issues, such as calling it an alliance of catholic schools. the survey was very cumbersome to read and get through.

- Catholic School has to be a place of Faith Forming and accessible to the families, especially the poor.

- The Diocese of Grand Rapids is to be commended for accepting the challenge of creating a better school system through this process. I am happy to be a Board member involved in this process.

- In reference to the statement "To families willing to invest their time, talent, and treasure" - Some families are not willing to invest because they have no perspective on the power of a good education. We must be open to seeking these families and accepting they may not invest their time, talent, or treasure, but we serve God's call by reaching out to them and helping their child through a good education. We must focus on the needs of the children not served because their parents do not care about education. My wife comes from a family where education was unimportant; she and I make a point to ensure our boys understand the great benefit of an education. But we, as educators, must accept that some families do not care about schools; we need to help those children where we can.

- B) We must reach out to similar religions - notably Episcopalian and Lutheran - and seek to build bridges so they too wish to send children to our Catholic schools. As a former Catholic, now Episcopalian, I had no intention of sending my boys anywhere but a Catholic school, so long as we can afford it. There are some differences, but not enough to be a wall. We should push to gather these children to our schools by building bridges - communion - with those other faith without a church-school and see how we can adapt to make a better educational opportunity for these faiths as they are so close to the Catholic faith.

- I understand wanting each school to be sustainable, but I think it an unfair unrealistic approach to expect the small rural school to be able to sustain themselves as the larger schools do, there just isn't the same population available to all schools. Just like the financial wealth isn't the same for every city or neighborhood. I don't want our children who come from small towns to have the opportunity taken away from them simply because of finances when there is plenty to go around since we help thousands of people.
and countries around the world. We need to make sure and help our own children who are right here serving the Lord.

- I believe that there are many more people out there that would like to provide their kids with a Catholic education but are unable to do so because of the cost. We need to make it easier for those who need help to get help. An annual tax statement does not take into account the financial struggles a family might be facing. Families should not have to choose between Catholic schools and paying their bills. We need to find a means of getting kids into the school. I am convinced that once they are there, they will stay. What can we do to get the government to let us spend our tax money on Catholic school? How can we make Catholic education more affordable to parishioners? Can families work off payment?

- Please keep the vision open for ALL, especially at the High School level. We all have different gifts/challenges and as ONE body in CHRIST, we should help those (members of His body) whose challenges may prevent them entrance into our high schools based on low academic performance - not due to lack of effort or desire.

- Including the word illumine seems unapproachable. Do people need to use a dictionary to understand the statements where it is included?

- Diocese provide extended support and resources to the schools for stability. Combination of all parish and school community funds to establish the same tuition rate at all catholic schools in the Grand Rapids Diocese.

- The teachers are excellent at what they do and with the time they have to do it in. I wish the schools were giving allowances for more general help within the school. Classroom helpers, teacher aids, and/or tutoring.

- It is maddening to hear teachers say parents are the "primary educators of children" because kids are in school all day, and parents have them only a few hours each evening. It suggests we should spend that time in a structured learning environment. At the end of a day filled with learning, they need their physical and emotional needs met - not more structured learning. If this is what you mean, than the phrase needs to be revised. The current statement minimizes what educators do and places undue stress on parents who want to be the best they can be for their kids. I send my daughter to Catholic school so she can: 1) Learn critical thinking. Too often in Public Schools, judgment is called discrimination. This dilutes education to mere memorization. If my daughter can learn critical thinking, she will be able to learn anything. 2) Incorporate her faith into her daily life. Public schools require separation of faith from education. Children need to learn how to live a faithful life in a sinful world. 3) Learn accountability, discipline, and personal responsibility and be in an environment that supports and enforces those virtues (as opposed to entitlement). I have often thought that if Catholic schools marketed based upon these values they would find increased interest in what they have to offer. Be proud of what makes Catholic Schools different from Public schools. Public schools are restricted from teaching these very important things. This comparison should not be done in a way that is derogatory to Public schools. Public schools are filled with good people who are doing the best they can with what they have. They have limits placed upon them just as we do. They will successfully educate many kids. But the world also needs kids who have developed critical thinking, personal discipline, and the ability to live faithfully; these kids will be well equipped to lead their peers into the future. That is what Catholic schools can offer, and it is valuable indeed!

- I have a lingering sense that this survey uses trendy terminology that is vague and reflective of a secular influence. What does all this mean concretely, simply, and in light of a Catholic education system based in the hierarchy of truths outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. A robust academic program is important but not enough.
the sacramental and fundamental faith experience our youth need to enable them to encounter Christ in their daily lives? This is the anchor that will sustain them as they move out responsibly into the vineyard of the Church and the world.

- Make sure that the money and cost of things does not become more important than an excellent education. The size of a classroom does not matter as long as the learning taking place is superb.
- We need to find a way to reverse the Catholic drop out after graduation. We need to find a way to transition students from Catholic School to Religious Ed where complete K - 12 is not available. We cannot presume that the parish will automatically cover deficits for Catholic Education and neglect other areas of parish needs.
- Disappointed that there is not more of faith, Gospel centered vision. Focus seems to be mostly on structuring and finances.
- No recognition given to continuous improvement. Education is a dynamic process of continual change. Are we staying ahead of the curve or falling behind?
- Without data, it's just an opinion. We have to have data to show where we stand academically against public, charter, and other faith based schools. Parish priests and workers need to vocally, openly support catholic education. We shouldn't have to fight to get space in the bulletin or time at the end of the mass.
- The statement to illumine learning and life may be over people's heads - I understand what is trying to be said but I would suggest use stronger and simpler words.
- The WINGS Initiative of St. Catherine, St. Joseph and St. Michael is sure to provide lift, but will potentially take a bit of time to fully take flight and engage others/everyone! Exciting things are happening!
- I believe we really need to take out the word alliance as it feels as we are only on friendly terms with one another and not working with one another. Also, many schools are not affordable to families right now and to put it in the mission could be a slap in some peoples face. If we were more affordable more families would be attending our schools at this time, which sadly they are not.
- Not a fan of the proposed mission statement. Remember your audience. 1) Illumine? Use illuminate. I would also consider going short, to the point...snappy! The trend in missions is to go short and memorable An example (MCC) Faith Moving Forward
- We need a large tuition assistance endowment to help parents pay for their children.
- I feel very strongly that the Vision for Catholic schools and their sustainability does not have to equate to having a ratio of 20-25 students per 1 teacher. This ratio is an irresponsible decision, made by few, which will negatively impact the students in the diocese's schools.
- I think you are moving in the right direction.. I do however, think we are strongly lacking in the promotion of Catholic Schools, especially within the school parishes themselves. Those sitting in the pews need to know the difference, why it's worth it, and why Catholic Schools are so much more than just another "choice" of school. I know this area may be emphasized further down the road once this initial Vision process is complete. Thank You and God Bless!
- Please, and with all due respect, in the future if you really want opinions from us, then ask. This tool did seek to gather such information, just agreed with your opinions. Who in their right mind would disagree with these questions? Wasting time?
- Keep up the good work!
- ROBUST??? What is with this word?? Serve the DIOCESE ?? It is not about the diocese!!! It is about gathering the children to Christ. We need to capture our children's
interested in the Catholic Church so they will be comfortable and feel "at Home" as adults.

- All of the efforts can not to improve the schools must be bilateral and not for the sole benefit of the city schools. Cost should not be unfairly push down to the suburban schools. Transparency on how and why changes are to be made should be easily accessible, including such things as the expected cost to make the change and impact to the students of the school system. The diocese as a whole should also set quantifiable metrics by which academic performance/progress is to be measured with improvement targets for the schools and accountability.

- I don't care for the word "Alliance". It sounds like there is something the schools need to band together to fight against. Further, it is a word that is often used in jokes due to the many reality television shows that use the word alliance. Some of the wording is difficult to understand. For example, it is not "transparent" what is meant by the word "Transparency" when it is without the explanation. Another example is the use of "Greater Economies of Scale". I have an advanced degree and found I had to read everything very slowly to understand it. I wonder if the large majority of people will have the same trouble.

- Since our own school, Sacred Heart of Jesus/GR, is becoming a school that serves kids/families in various parts of the city/near suburbs, its effect on the PARISH community is not as great as it used to. The parishioners are financially supporting such a mission of the parish, but the recipients of that support belong to several other parishes (or none at all!). Another question might be: how much of the local parish influences the school, which has such a diverse student population. As for any mission statement of any Catholic institution (parish, school, whatever), that's simple: Matthew 28, vss. 19 & 20

- I think that if parents have made the choice to send children to Catholic schools they are already aware of the mission of Religious education, and a Christ like atmosphere, and that it is expected daily. To draw from a broader pool of potential students you need to push the visions and missions of educational benefits first. Structure, focus, accountability, excellence, are all the right words. I understand as a religious school organization you must sell the religion side of these facilities, it is what makes these schools special. But, many non-Catholic families who may wish to send their children to these schools (and help boost enrollment) can be intimidated (or put off) by some of these statements (if they are just comparing private schools on paper). I think that the focus group creating this Mission should actively review some non-Catholic private schools Missions and compare and contrast how the message is delivered. I love our local Catholic School (Corpus Christi), the staff is absolutely fantastic and I would love to see it thrive and grow. I guess my only point to all of this is... It says Catholic school on the front of all the building, if you enter, you likely know what to expect. These missions presented tend to be limiting the pool to draw mainly Catholics, not a broader group who seeks a structured religious educational experience for their children. If these missions are for internal use only within each school-- they are great. If they will be used as recruiting tools, I think they need to be softened and more inviting to those outside the faith.

- You asked how we felt about the "Alliance of Catholic Schools" and Vision statements as thought they were being offered for consideration, though through the entire survey they have been used as though they are already a decided issue. It's just my opinion, but "Alliance" sounds more like a circling of the wagons: more isolating, and separate from the Diocesan umbrella. "Alliance" generates thoughts of groups joining forces against a common enemy--not a community within a larger community. All of those Ls in the Vision statement make it sound more like a speech therapy exercise than a guiding
statement. Even just finding a substitution for "illuminate" would help a lot. That's a pretty lofty word!

- This vision must be more than just words. It needs action. As far as inclusion in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, on the 1st/2nd page of the survey, you omitted Corpus Christi Catholic School in Holland. We have two students at Corpus Christi, and one at Catholic Central. Next year, we plan on having two at Catholic Central. ANYTHING you could do to continue to make Catholic Secondary Education available to those farther away, would be wonderful. We really appreciate the bussing made available to us this year, with the closer pick-up/drop-off locations and hope to see them at the same or closer (@ Corpus Christi in the a.m.) next year. Please continue to show your support for families on the outer edges of the Diocese by providing the bussing that makes it possible for our students to continue their Catholic Education at the Secondary level.

- Sometimes the rhetoric of the vision and goals seems pie in the sky and not very practical in its reality

- It is important the parishes are matching the support and willingness to help the schools succeed.

- Please avoid the politically correct, highly amorphous catch phrases like "value diversity." They express nothing held in common because they are purposefully designed to let anyone believe that what they are thinking is being said and that everyone else thinks the same -- at least until they get in the same room and start talking to one another. There is no consensus on what "value diversity" means, and we all know it.

- Just that phrase "To illumine..." I think you are going to turn people off right away by using that language right out front. It is correct and important, but since the schools are a hot bed subject you should try making this all the more accessible to everyone. It is a lovely and creative phrase, and important, but not in touch with real people.

- Something must be done to make tuition affordable for ALL students. We are simply over-priced as there are many families who would like to send their children to a Catholic School but are unable if they have more than one child enrolled. As a result, they look elsewhere. Let's concentrate more on the education and less on sports. Many pastors/administrators struggle with trying to schedule parish activities (Mass - Religious Education & Faith Formation) around other activities that have nothing to do with our Catholic faith.

- I think that as we can benefit from working together we still need to remember that each school knows its students the best. We need to remember to listen to the school parents and leaders.

- Mission statements need to include all students of the parish too often there is a separation in the students that attend St. Charles school and those who only attend religious education there. Many parents feel that the non St Charles students don’t always "belong". It is the parish’s responsibility to educate all the children of the parish.

- Please support our Catholic Schools in each and every way and remember that we are all UNIQUE and DIFFERENT. Also, remember that the people of each INDIVIDUAL parish are the life and future of THEIR school.

- I'm very impressed and I admire what is being done. This survey really helped me understand what is being done to make our Catholic Schools great places to work and attend. Thank You for all of your work.

- This survey, like the previous, is worded in such a way as to NOT garner information as much as it is to affirm what you are already doing/intending to do.....

- If Catholic Schools prepare another generation of informed and practicing (church-going) Catholics in a setting that is academically competitive, then I am supportive of the Church's resources being used to make them available to all Catholic families. If not,
then I would prefer to encourage the parents in our parishes to take an active interest and involvement in their public schools and to give high priority in their families' scheduling and support to the faith formation programming of their parishes.

- I do not understand why the schools are not governed by one body. This would require a melding of priorities and ownership, but it would seem to be fiscally responsible. A single governing body would provide efficiency and make systematic the delivery of a Catholic education in Grand Rapids and surrounding areas. More non-Catholics may weigh a parochial education as a viable alternative to attending a public school, as school of choice is now viewed.