

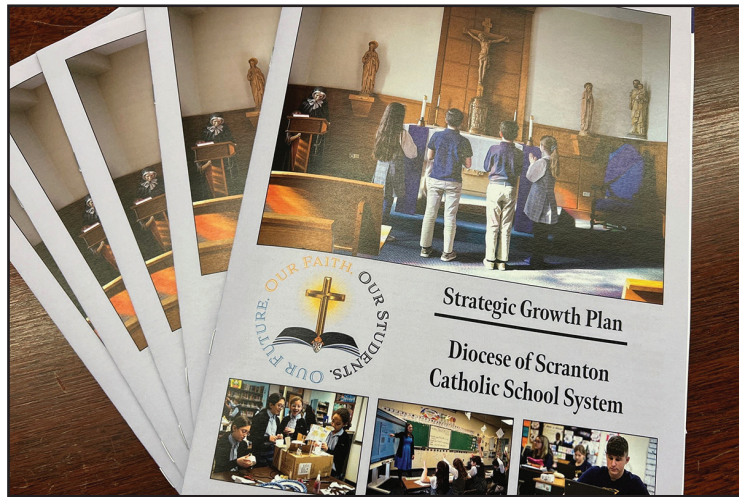
“Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future.”

Catholic School System releases Strategic Growth Plan

SCRANTON – After nearly two years of consultative work and thoughtful listening, the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System has released its Strategic Growth Plan entitled “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future.”

On Jan. 8, 2025, all Catholic school families received a copy of the plan, which Diocesan leadership hopes will help to “strengthen and enrich the educational experience” of all Catholic school students.

The Strategic Growth Plan is broken down into seven key areas: Catholic Mission & Identity; Academic Excellence; Governance & Leadership; Enrollment Management; Development; Infrastructure; and Financial Stability. Each section contains high-level goals as well as action steps that can be taken to meet those goals.



After approximately 21 months of work, the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System released its Strategic Growth Plan, “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future.” on Jan. 8, 2025. (Photo/Eric Deabill)

“Our Catholic School System has much to celebrate, with enrollment this year reaching its highest level in seven years, which is a testament to the dedication of our educators, administrators,

staff, and supportive community,” the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, and Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/ Superintendent, wrote in a

joint letter to families. “With a clear vision and collective commitment, we know that we can build on our successes and strategically navigate the path forward to ensure our Catholic School System continues to thrive and serve future generations.”

The Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System launched its Strategic Growth Planning Process on March 31, 2023. Over the last 21 months, a comprehensive study of community and parish demographics, school finances, enrollment history and patterns, and facility assessments all took place.

Nearly 1,500 Catholic school parents, teachers, priests and even parish religious education families took part in surveys to share their thoughts on the strength and areas for growth within Catholic schools.

“We are filled with hope

for what lies ahead,” Bishop Bambera and Donohue noted.

Some of the high-level goals included in the plan include increasing collaboration between Catholic schools and parishes to form disciples of Christ, establishing a Diocesan school board to support the mission and vision of the Bishop and the Catholic Schools Office, and developing a balanced operating budget to ensure long-term viability.

The Strategic Growth Plan now moves into the implementation phase. An Implementation Leadership Team will be established to provide oversight and direction to ensure that progress is made on the goals and action steps contained in the plan.

To read the “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future.” Strategic Plan, visit dioceseofscranton.org.

Goals of “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future.” Strategic Growth Plan

- Increase and enhance collaboration among each Catholic school and nearby parishes to evangelize and catechize, forming disciples of Christ.
- Deepen the faith commitment of administrators, faculty, staff, and governing bodies through ongoing formation, allowing them to grow and serve as witnesses to their faith.
- Define, assess, and refine student support services to ensure data informs student learning at all levels.
- Develop a “master plan” to continue fully implementing STREAM throughout the curriculum and in the classrooms.
- Improve teacher recruitment and retention by increasing salary and benefits.
- Establish a Diocesan School Board that supports the mission and vision of the Bishop and Catholic Schools Office, focusing on Catholic school vitality and sustainability.
- Ensure every school has a comprehensive, multi-year strategic growth plan to inform decision-making.
- Develop/Implement a plan to identify potential Diocesan Catholic School Office personnel and local school administrators from within the diocese and support them in their first years.
- Increase student enrollment of all schools to ensure they operate at 85% or more of the identified enrollment capacity.
- Expand marketing/recruitment opportunities and strategies to serve families in areas of growing or changing demographics and confront/overcome challenges for those who desire a Catholic school education.
 - Establish a diocesan advancement/development position(s) for Catholic schools to collaborate with the Diocesan Development Office and Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton to strengthen local stewardship efforts.
 - With the support of the new advancement/development personnel, increase development and fundraising to 8-10% of total annual operating revenue at each school.
 - Engage in, and support, initiatives of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton in building future funding for Catholic school education.
 - Prepare a master facility plan at each school site prioritizing short-, mid-, and long-term capital needs.
 - Develop a balanced annual operating budget for the Diocesan Catholic School System by 2026-2027 to ensure long-term viability.
 - Explore the potential and develop plans to undertake major campaigns as needed at the local school level.



Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships donate \$150,000 to Saint John Neumann Regional Academy

WILLIAMSPORT – Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships recently announced its continued support of educational and religious programs at Saint John Neumann Regional Academy with a very generous donation of \$150,000 to the Diocese of Scranton Scholarship Foundation.

“The Saint John Neumann fundraising committee is extremely grateful to Blaise Alexander and of his family’s contribution and commitment to the families and students of Saint John Neumann,” Paul Rooney, Saint John Neumann Regional Academy Fundraising Chair, said.

The funding will go a long way to support student scholarships as part of Pennsylvania’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program.

“With this EITC donation, we are able to serve many local families who request or who deserve financial assistance or scholarships to our Academy at all levels. This support sets us apart from the other schools around,” principal Alisia McNamee shared.

The Blaise Alexander scholarship funding is earmarked for tuition scholarships for local students, from pre-K to grade 12, who wish to attend Saint John Neumann Regional Academy.

The academy has three locations locally. Its pre-K campus is located at Saint Lawrence Church in South Williamsport. The Saint John Neumann Regional Academy Elementary Campus location houses kindergarten through 5th grade at Saint Boniface Catholic Church, and the 6th through 12th grade classes and Catholic Community Center exist at the High School Campus, 901 Penn Street, Williamsport.

“At Saint John Neumann, we offer competitive courses. We offer Advanced Placement (AP) Courses, Dual Enrollment with multiple local colleges and universities, and unique learning opportunities via online course work for our students,” Dr. Chad Greevy, Curriculum Director, explained. “Additionally, we keep our class numbers smaller than any other school in the multi-county region to provide better one-on-one attention for our students. This individualized learning philosophy is one more way that sets us apart from those bigger guys around us.”

Anyone wishing to donate to Saint John Neumann Regional Academy can contact the Academy via phone at (570) 326-9953 or email admissions@sjnra.org.

Saint John Neumann is a Catholic, faith-centered community dedicated to



The Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships recently presented a \$150,000 check to the Diocese of Scranton to support educational and religious programs at Saint John Neumann Regional Academy. Attending the check presentation are, front row, from left: Aubrey Alexander, Blaise Alexander Family Dealerships; the Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton; and Paul Rooney, Saint John Neumann Regional Academy Fundraising Chair. Second row, from left: Kristen Donohue, Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Superintendent; Alisia McNamee, Saint John Neumann Regional Academy Principal; Joshua Lovell, 12th grade student; Kaidance Meixel, 12th grade student; Dr. Chad Greevy, Saint John Neumann Regional Academy Curriculum Director; Michele Long, Assistant Superintendent; and Malissa Heim, Saint John Neumann Regional Academy Director of Admissions and Marketing.

academic excellence, fostering personal and spiritual growth, the promotion of a life of faith, and the development of leadership expressed in service to others. “Come check us out, see what we can do for your family,” McNamee encouraged.

SAVE THE DATE! 1.27.25!

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

LIVING THE S.T.R.E.A.M.

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OUR FUTURE IS IN GOOD HANDS!

IMAGINING A BETTER. MORE JUST WORLD!

SPONSORS AND BENEFACTORS INVITED!

To hear about unique support opportunities for this high-energy, high-exposure initiative, call Sandra Snyder at 570-591-5004 or email ssnyder@dioceseofscranton.org.

Join us on dioceseofscranton.org for the launch of the first round of a first-of-its-kind student imagination exposition that will change the way you see the world!

Diocese of Scranton
CATHOLIC
 SCHOOL SYSTEM
 FAITH • ACADEMICS • SERVICE

The Diocese of Scranton is committed to educating our students in an environment that is academically excellent and facilitates the development of moral judgment and Christian decision-making. We are proud to share the following successes of our students in the classroom and in their service to others. Each day, our schools are fulfilling their mission of preparing today's youth and young adults to become tomorrow's faith-filled leaders.



Eighth grade students at **Saint Nicholas/Saint Mary School in Wilkes-Barre** shared their talents while performing The Living Nativity just before their Christmas break.



Students and families of **Holy Rosary School in Duryea** partnered with Nativity of Our Lord Parish to make sure the less fortunate in the greater Pittston area have food to eat during the winter months.



Emily Strand, a third grade student at **Notre Dame Elementary School in East Stroudsburg**, won the Keep Christ in Christmas poster contest sponsored by the local Knights of Columbus.



The Most Rev. Joseph C. Bambera, Bishop of Scranton, celebrated Mass with the students, faculty, and community of **Holy Redeemer High School in Wilkes-Barre**. In his homily, he reminded attendees that receiving the Eucharist is more than becoming one with Jesus, it is a responsibility to make us one with every person we encounter, whether we know them or not, whether we like them or not.



Local author Paulette DeBella visited with the students at **Saint Jude School in Mountain Top** and read them her book, "The Tiniest Angel's Gift."



What's better than decorating a cookie, eating tasty snacks, posing in a photo booth with Santa, taking a chance to win a raffle basket, and dancing the day away? Nothing, if you ask the students at **All Saints Academy in Scranton** who had the best time at the school's Christmas Carnival.



Students at **Saint John Neumann Elementary School in Williamsport** enjoy their new library furniture while Principal Alisia McNamee reads them a story.

Fourth grade Falcons at **Our Lady of Peace School in Clarks Green** created beautiful manger scenes to present to their families as Christmas gifts this blessed holiday season.





Georgel Biah, Student Council Secretary at **Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School in East Stroudsburg**, serves her fellow Spartans cookies as the Student Council offered Christmas treats during lunch.



Seniors from **Holy Cross High School in Dunmore**, along with their principal, Mr. Ben Tolerico, visited a variety of community offices, including the PA State Police Barracks in Dunmore, sharing gifts and Christmas cheer just before their winter vacation.



The Maker Club from **Epiphany School in Sayre** crafted hand-made Christmas ornaments, desk calendars, and cards for shut-ins of the Epiphany Church community as part of a three-month service project.



Eighth grade students from **Saint Clare/Saint Paul School in Scranton** had an opportunity to visit the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. They learned more about the skeletal system and careers that work directly with our bones and mobility. Workshops included hands-on activities introducing the skeletal system, understanding forensic science, and using X-ray images to learn about breaks and fractures.



The fourth & fifth grade boys' basketball team at **La Salle Academy in Jessup** spent time off the court spreading Christmas joy. They made cards and sent Christmas cookies to the priests at St. Mary's Villa. Santa was watching all their good works and made a surprise appearance at the end of one of their practices to thank them for keeping the true spirit of the holiday.



Students from **Saint Agnes School in Towanda** want everyone to notice that they blessed the school doors when they returned from Christmas break. The chalk inscription includes the letters "C," "M" and "B" representing the three Magi and the current year of 2025.



The kindergarten class at **Saint Mary of Mount Carmel School in Dunmore** presented The Living Nativity just before their Christmas break.

Students and their families from **Wyoming Area Catholic School in Exeter** supported the "Greater Pittston Area Shop with a Cop" during the holidays to support the program which helps families in need to receive toys for their children at Christmas.

