



## Strategic Growth Plan

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# Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System







OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF SCRANTON  
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SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 18503-1279

*“For I know well the plans I have in mind for you - oracle of the Lord - plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

January 7, 2025

Dear Friends of Catholic Education,

We are filled with joy and gratitude as we announce the completion and release of our Strategic Growth Plan for the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System. The Plan, contained in this booklet, is comprehensive and provides us with a roadmap to strengthen and enrich the educational experience for our children.

Over the last 21 months, there has been a tremendous amount of work and thoughtful listening that has been taking place. This collaborative effort involved the invaluable insights of parents, teachers, priests, and even parish religious education families who are not currently involved in our schools. Utilizing the results of 1,453 surveys received, your input has guided us in crafting a plan that addresses our strengths and areas for growth. We thank you for your participation and honest insights.

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 realistic goals and action steps to meet our mission of providing a Catholic education that is “spiritually sound and academically excellent.”

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. This enrollment growth is a strong foundation for our future, yet we recognize that challenges remain. Chief among them is addressing a significant financial shortfall we face. 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.

We are filled with hope for what lies ahead. As the quote from Jeremiah above explains, we can trust that God has wonderful plans for each of our students, guiding them to grow in both wisdom and faith. As we begin the process of implementing the goals and action steps contained in this plan, we must trust that our efforts will lead to great achievements in ways we may not yet even comprehend.

As we move forward, we want to sincerely thank you for choosing a Catholic education for your child(ren). Your support and dedication are vital to the success of our school communities and, together, we will prepare our students to be “faith-filled leaders and life-long leaders dedicated to serving the church and society.”

As you read the following Strategic Growth Plan, prayerfully consider how you can help us create vibrant school communities. Your continued participation will be essential as we begin to implement this Plan, building a legacy of faith and excellence that will last well into the next generation.

With heartfelt gratitude and hope, we are,

Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Scranton

Kristen Donohue  
Diocesan Secretary of Catholic Education/Superintendent



# Catholic Mission & Identity

**Goal 1: Increase and enhance collaboration among each Catholic school and nearby parishes to evangelize and catechize, forming disciples of Christ.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Create a working team of visionary priests and school and religious education leaders to develop strategies for parishes and schools to better collaborate.
- Inform priests and parish staff of activities and ongoing faith formation in the schools. Provide a periodic update to the deans/deaneries on the schools' faith formation/ Catholic identity programs and progress.
- Schools and parishes should collaborate on varied opportunities for parents and families to deepen and share their faith with their children and the school community.
- Coordinate an annual meeting for school administrators, pastors, and clergy to discuss, plan, and evaluate steps to effectively lead Catholic school children and families in becoming an integral part of parish life.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for the Diocesan Bishop to visit each school annually for the celebration of the Eucharist, visit classrooms and receive an update regarding each Catholic school.



**Goal 2: 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.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Ensure that in each school, life and learning are centered around teaching/living Gospel values, prayer, service opportunities, community building, moral formation and missionary initiatives.
- As part of the orientation for new teachers and staff, focus on the ministry of a Catholic school teacher/staff member, including expectations of their role in evangelization and being a witness to their faith, living and building community, and enhancing the school's Catholic identity.



- Hire new teachers for their desire to promote the Catholic mission of the school as well as for their professional qualifications and skills.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities and guidance through the Catholic Schools Office for principals and teachers on integrating Catholic values and principles into the entire curriculum.
- Enhance opportunities to orient students, their families, and faculty/staff of other faith traditions in understanding Catholic culture, traditions and worship, while respecting their faith traditions.





# Academic Excellence



## Goal 1: Define, assess, and refine student support services to ensure data informs student learning at all levels.

### Action Steps Include:

- Identify the academic support resources needed at each school and include a cost analysis of projected needs.
- Support the work of the Individualized Instruction Program Diocesan Working Team to focus on growing and expanding resources and providing ongoing professional development for faculty and staff.
- Optimize potential areas where personnel and resources are most needed and/or could be shared among schools.
- Pursue and utilize all resources for academic support through federal, state, and private funding sources to maximize teaching/learning opportunities for students and teachers.

## Goal 2: Develop a “master plan” to continue fully implementing STREAM throughout the curriculum and in the classrooms.

### Action Steps Include:

- Continually research the facilities of schools (locally and nationally) with an exemplary technology program and determine what additions and improvements to the existing school facilities are required.
- Prepare a comprehensive, year-long professional development program to assist faculty in fully implementing a next-generation methodology.
- With technology continuously advancing, create a committee of school faculty and community members who are experts in the technology field to determine the best technology platform(s) for students to support their studies.



## Goal 3: Improve teacher recruitment and retention by increasing salary and benefits.

### Action Steps Include:

- Use financial projection analysis as the foundation for setting compensation goals and increases for faculty and staff.
- Once a balanced budget is achieved, work toward establishing a salary scale for faculty that recognizes local regions, years of experience, and educational credentials.
- Develop ways to incentivize compensation through various benefit offerings and options, advanced educational opportunities, etc.



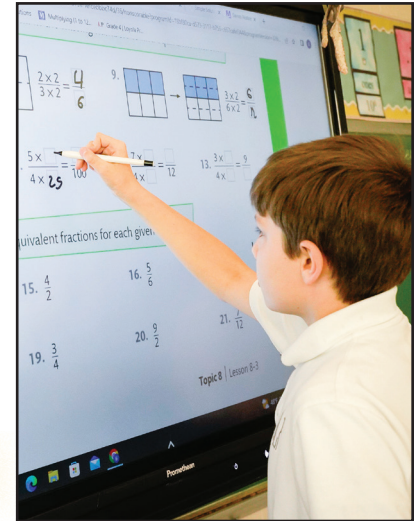


# Governance and Leadership

**Goal 1: 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.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Establish bylaws for the consultative body and determine appropriate roles and responsibilities for members. Potential areas of interest for the Diocesan School Board could include long-range planning, Catholic mission effectiveness, long-term financial and funding issues, and serving as a community sounding board.
- Create the process to select members based on essential skills and expertise to assist diocesan leadership and the Catholic Schools Office in supporting the schools in their mission. Representation would be from among clergy and laity and from geographic areas of the diocese to provide a broad vision and perspective.
- Conduct a process review for the implementation of the “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future” strategic growth plan through the Diocesan School Board and Catholic Schools Office.



**Goal 2: Ensure every school has a comprehensive, multi-year strategic growth plan to inform decision-making.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- If warranted, create local School Advisory Councils (consideration could be given to using the current Parent-Teacher Group (PTG) as this group) or creating a smaller separate Advisory Council. Focus on aligning local school plans with the Diocesan plan.
- Establish bylaws for the consultative body and determine appropriate roles and responsibilities for members. Engage pastors and clergy as members when available.
- Conduct a process review for the implementation of the “Our Faith. Our Students. Our Future” strategic growth plan through the Diocesan School Board and Catholic Schools Office.



**Goal 3: 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.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Formalize a first-year orientation program for new principals, experienced or new to administration within the diocese, through a collaborative effort of veteran principals and the Catholic Schools Office.
- Collaborate with local colleges/universities to assist in providing a pathway for developing existing and potential principals.
- Enhance the ongoing professional development and individual growth plan process and program for school administrators with ongoing leadership development as the emphasis.



# Enrollment Management

**Goal 1: Increase student enrollment of all schools to ensure they operate at 85% or more of the identified enrollment capacity.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Create a written enrollment management plan at each school addressing recruitment, admissions, and retention with effective strategies to build enrollment.
- Develop a diocesan-wide marketing and recruitment plan or campaign to aggressively market Catholic schools broadly to the public. Promote the mission and value of schools, identify and promote distinctive and data-based benefits and outcomes, and what distinguishes Catholic schools from other options.
- Set benchmarks to increase student retention, specifically at transition levels (preschool to kindergarten; elementary to junior high school; junior high school to high school). Focus efforts over the next three years on retention from 8th to 9th grade throughout the system.
- Use tuition assistance effectively to build enrollment as well as support the mission of Catholic schools by serving those most in need.
- Provide direction for all school personnel to increase their awareness of their role and importance in the marketing of and recruitment for their school. Share best practices/strategies for interacting with the public.
- Design action plans to establish connections with Catholic families whose children are not yet of school age and in local daycares and preschool programs to draw attention to Catholic school pre-K and kindergarten programs.



**Goal 2: 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.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Use community demographic data research to identify areas of growth among those who could have an interest in Catholic school education. Focus recruitment efforts in targeted boroughs, regions, and neighborhoods with potential for increasing enrollment. Provide marketing materials in various languages as needed.
- Research the potential implementation of programming that would support the enrollment growth for an area with changing demographics. This is in response to what diocesan parishes are already experiencing.
- Strive to identify and cultivate leaders and educators of diverse origins, backgrounds, and languages to serve on School Advisory Councils, as parent partners/ambassadors, as well as administrators, faculty and staff.







# Enrollment Management

## 2024-2025 School Year Capacity Table for All Catholic Schools

The Diocese of Scranton's 19 Catholic Schools are all different in terms of size and capacity. The numbers in the table below represent a school's true capacity if no additional staff were hired or class sections formed.

Overall, enrollment in K-8 schools has grown by 9% since the 2019-2020 school year, growing by 18% since the pandemic ... however Junior/Senior High School enrollment has experienced a 17% decline since 2019-2020.

<i>School</i>	<i>Enrollment</i>	<i>Capacity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Grades</i>
<b>Bradford County</b>				
Epiphany School	100	200	50%	PK-6
Saint Agnes School	107	200	54%	PK-6
<b>Lackawanna County</b>				
All Saints Academy	251	300	84%	PK-8
La Salle Academy	214	275	78%	PK-8
Our Lady of Peace School	346	475	73%	PK-8
Saint Clare/Saint Paul School	373	525	71%	PK-8
St. Mary of Mount Carmel School	173	250	69%	PK-8
Holy Cross High School	328	432	76%	9-12
<b>Luzerne County</b>				
Good Shepherd Academy	549	550	99%	PK-8
Holy Family Academy	121	250	48%	PK-8
Holy Rosary School	198	250	79%	PK-8
Saint Jude School	294	400	74%	PK-8
St. Nicholas/St. Mary School	265	350	76%	PK-8
Wyoming Area Catholic School	158	250	63%	PK-8
Holy Redeemer High School	439	534	82%	9-12
<b>Lycoming County</b>				
St. John Neumann Elementary	133	200	67%	PK-5
St. John Neumann Jr./Sr. High School	83	175	47%	6-12
<b>Monroe County</b>				
Notre Dame Elementary School	207	250	83%	PK-6
Notre Dame Jr./Sr. High School	187	300	62%	7-12
<b>Elementary School Totals</b>	<b>3,489</b>	<b>4,725</b>	<b>74%</b>	
<b>Junior/Senior High School Totals</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>72%</b>	

All Catholic School families can help support enrollment initiatives and boost the visibility of their local schools. Some possible ways include:

- Sharing Positive Experiences with Friends/Family
- Inviting potential families to attend open houses
- Highlighting your school's religious traditions
- Using social media to share photos of school events
- Encouraging students to talk about experiences
- Offering family testimonials



# Advancement/Development

**Goal 1: 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.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Establish an advancement/development position(s) with the purpose of this position providing assistance to schools for third-source funding and philanthropy.
- Provide representation, and serve as a liason, with the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton to advocate for Catholic school education and support the efforts and initiatives of the Foundation.



**Goal 2: With the support of the new advancement/development personnel, increase development and fundraising to 8-10% of total annual operating revenue at each school.**



*Action Steps Include:*

- Provide diocesan training and in-service opportunities for school advancement/development teams and volunteers. Sessions can focus on promoting giving all year, engaging alumni, planned giving & major gifts.
- Transition from fundraising and special events as the primary means of third-source revenue to more relational, stewardship-based development efforts. Use fundraising and special events as community building activities.
- Initiate and/or enhance efforts to secure EITC/OSTC funding and educate/encourage potential donors to use their funds for the benefit of multiple schools.

**Goal 3: Engage in, and support, initiatives of the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton in building future funding for Catholic school education.**

*Action Steps Include:*

- Develop a case statement to create a concise and coordinated diocesan approach to funding Catholic school education. Use the case statement for public relations and funding initiatives at the local/diocesan levels.
- Include in the case statement the list of needs and opportunities that could be funded through a major capital campaign: facility needs; educational initiatives; mission enhancement programs; and scholarship funding.





# Facilities

## Goal 1: Prepare a master facility plan at each school site prioritizing short-, mid-, and long-term capital needs.

### Action Steps Include:

- Create a facility master plan at each school based on the findings and results presented in the Quandel facility assessment reports. Update the master plan a minimum of every two years as programs and needs change.
- Ensure each school has a scheduled maintenance plan (ongoing and deferred) with cost estimates that are updated.
- Develop a funding plan and budget to address the short-, mid-, and long-term facility needs. Funding could come from the annual operating budget, development efforts, major gifts, donations and/or capital campaigns.
- Establish a depreciation fund (1%-3% of annual expenses) as a line-item expense in the annual operating budget for each school that is transferred into a reserve account.

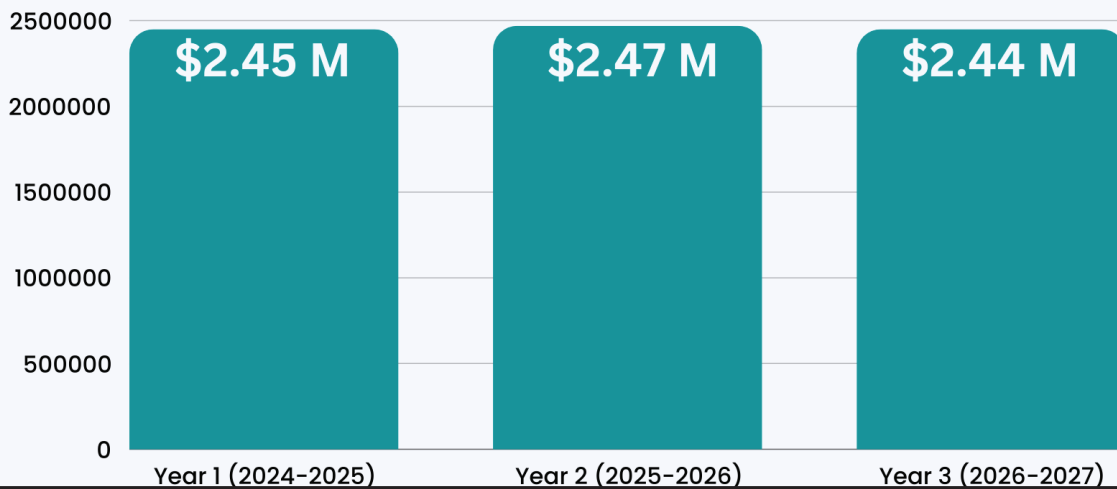


## Funding Infrastructure Priorities for the Upcoming School Years

As part of our Strategic Growth Plan, the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System recognizes that it must continue to invest in buildings that are safe and secure, which will require ongoing maintenance costs.

### SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES

Estimated amount (by year) that will need to be spent on critical school building projects for all schools



Among the priorities that will be needed in school buildings across the Diocese within these three years:

- Roof Replacement Projects
- Window Replacements
- HVAC System Upgrades
- Electrical Upgrades
- Masonry Projects
- Improvements to School Grounds



# Finances

## Goal 1: Develop a balanced annual operating budget for the Diocesan Catholic School System by 2026-2027 to ensure long-term viability.



### Action Steps Include:

- Continue to use and update the schools' financial projections every year and reflect the true cost of education, potential enrollment and tuition costs.
- Develop ways to ensure transparency and accountability with school finances so stakeholders are aware of the actual cost of education, the gap between the cost of education and tuition and key revenue sources.
- Work with individual schools that are facing significant enrollment and/or financial challenges. Communicate with school families to help them understand the school's experience and plan how they can continue to take an active role in their school's future.
- Enhance balance in the revenue model for the schools, addressing metrics for tuition/fees, parish investment/support, fundraising, development, and school investments based on each school's cost of education.

## Goal 2: Explore the potential and develop plans to undertake major campaigns as needed at the local school level.

### Action Steps Include:

- When a parish or school is able, a capital reserve fund will be established and funded every year by the operating budget. Additional funding can also come from special gifts and capital campaigns.
- Explore the potential to conduct a major campaign for Catholic schools.
- Working with the Diocesan Development Office, create a significant system-level annual fundraising initiative to engage the Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Scranton, Catholic schools and the diocese in support of Catholic education.


## WHAT IS THE TRUE COST OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION?

Average Cost to Educate one Elementary Student in the Diocese of Scranton:

# \$7,730

Average Cost to Educate one High School Student in the Diocese of Scranton:

# \$13,814



\*\*Average Costs listed above are for the 2023-2024 academic year\*\*



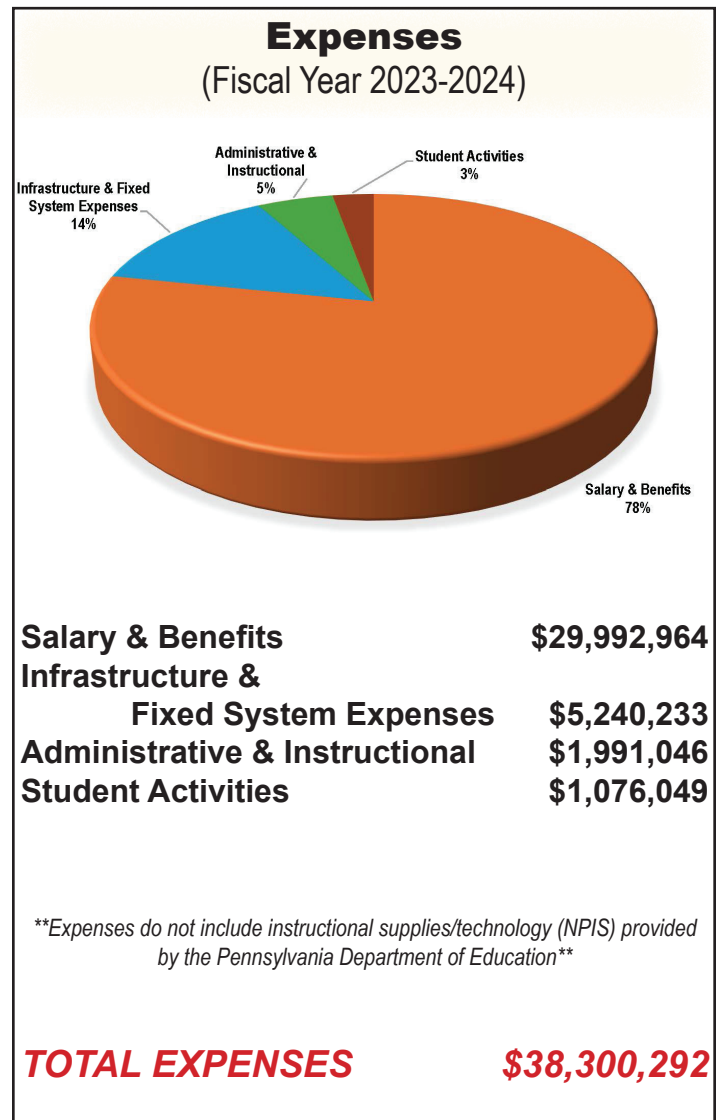
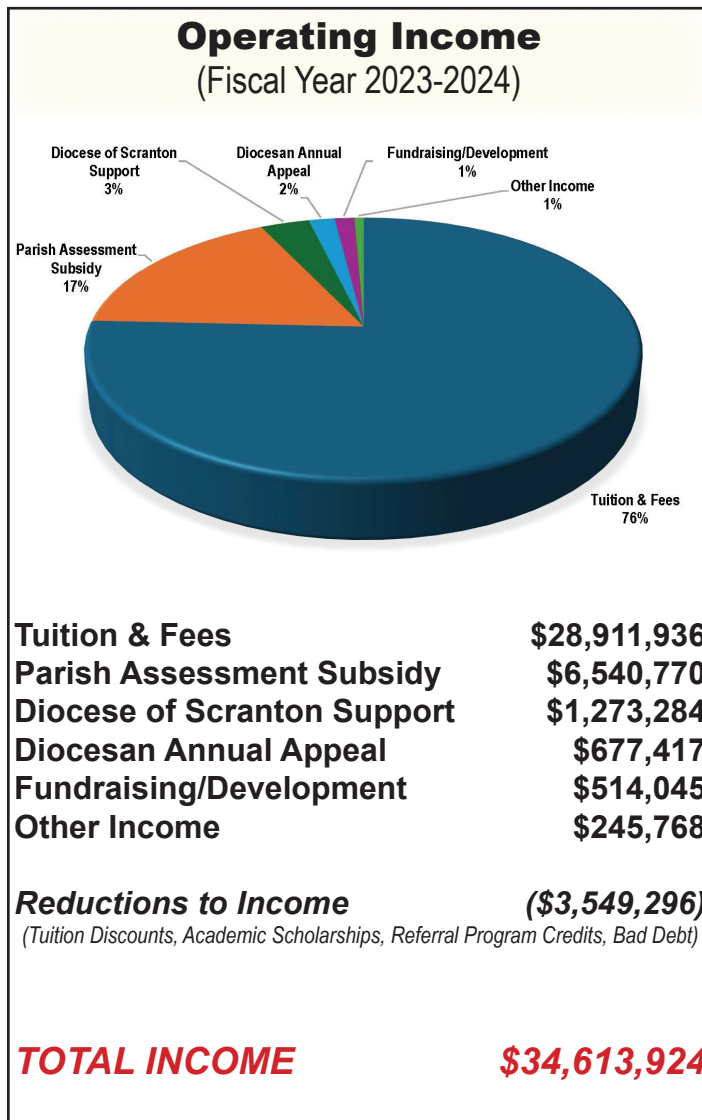


# Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Financial Report

As we begin to implement the goals and action steps outlined in this Strategic Growth Plan for the Diocese of Scranton Catholic School System, it is critical to address our financial realities. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, as indicated below, the System itself had a deficit of **\$3,686,368**.

This situation highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to financial stability. While tuition is a vital component of our revenue, it does not cover the full cost of delivering the exceptional education our families expect and deserve. As indicated throughout this plan, we must explore diverse funding sources, including grants, donations, and community partnerships (from families, alumni, parishioners and local businesses) to create a sustainable financial model.

Financial stability is the backbone of this Strategic Growth Plan. It will enable us to maintain high educational standards, invest in our teachers and staff, and provide enriching programs that nurture the spiritual and academic growth of our students. As we look to the future, the importance of financial stability cannot be overstated. With a collective commitment to supporting our Catholic schools, we can turn this deficit into an opportunity for growth and renewal. Together, we can ensure that our Catholic School System can continue to provide a nurturing environment where students can become faith-filled leaders and life-long learners who thrive academically and spiritually.







# DIocese OF SCRANTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

We, the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Scranton, are committed to educating students and their families in the Catholic faith. We provide a Catholic education that is spiritually sound and academically excellent. We strive to prepare our students to be faith-filled leaders and life-long leaders dedicated to serving the church and society.

