



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Superintendent of Catholic Schools

SEARCH PROSPECTUS



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Start Date: July 2025



OVERVIEW

The Diocese of Grand Rapids, home to more than 180,000 Catholics across 79 parishes, maintains a vibrant presence in Catholic education. There is an alliance of 31 dynamic, faith-filled learning communities serving more than 6,400 students across 26 elementary schools and five high schools. Under Superintendent Dave Faber's extraordinary 14-year tenure, Catholic schools in the diocese have inspired tens of thousands of young people to grow in Catholic faith and grace and achieve more in school and in life.

Rev. David J. Walkowiak as the 12th Bishop of the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Bishop Walkowiak now seeks a missionary disciple to serve as the next superintendent of schools, one who will build on Superintendent Faber's strong and steadfast leadership. There has been demonstrated enrollment growth in seven of the last ten years. This growth stems from establishing a shared vision for an alliance of Catholic schools expanding outstanding educational ministry and implementing new governance models diocesan-wide that feature boards of limited jurisdiction.

Under the direction of Bishop Walkowiak, Superintendent Faber led the Bishop's Catholic Schools Initiative, a three-year, three-part effort that further solidified Catholic schools by increasing their affordability through scholarships, increasing the professional capacity of the Office of Catholic schools, and created a strategic plan for the future vitality of Catholic schools in the diocese.

Catholic schools continue to do well and have achieved a fourth consecutive year of overall enrollment growth for the first time in at least a generation. The next superintendent will discover extraordinary commitment and talent among principals, teachers, staff, and volunteer leadership. There is profound and warranted pride in the educational accomplishments of the diocese.

FAST FACTS



31
schools



26
elementary schools



5
high schools

There is also a recognition of the opportunities to be undertaken which include: financial realities and the desire to maintain affordable tuitions, the creative and visionary need to promote academic excellence and ongoing faith formation that is transformational and Christ-centered, shifting demographics, increased need to advocate for school choice options, changes nationally in traditional school governance structures, and demographic trends impacting sustainability. Visit [“Catholic Schools: Bridging Faith and Future 2023-28” strategic plan](#) for more information.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

The next superintendent will lead the alliance of Catholic schools in its mission to prepare students to seek and fulfill God’s plan for learning and life and continue to be the face and voice of the vision for an alliance of Catholic schools expanding outstanding educational ministry. The following strategic priorities of the Catholic Schools: Bridging Faith and Future Plan 2023-2028 will continue to guide this work in service to the Catholic schools within the Diocese:

1. Catholic Culture and Mission

- » Enroll an increased number of families/students who desire a Catholic education
- » Nurture in each student a deeper relationship with Christ and participation in the sacramental life of the Church
- » Promote active engagement of students and families in parish life
- » Integrate Theology of the Body and the value of the human person throughout the school culture
- » Welcome families of diverse cultural heritage and raise cultural awareness to support an increasingly universal population
- » Support programs to increase vocations to the priesthood and religious life

2. Programmatic Excellence

- » Embrace a growth mindset through continuous strategic planning and consistent implementation
- » Retain and recruit excellent talent; grow leadership capacity/diversity at all levels; deliver competitive compensation
- » Implement collaborative processes for Catholic school curriculum development and updates
- » Create a culture of restorative practices (acceptance of responsibility, repair, forgiveness and reconciliation)
- » Promote/maintain a standard of excellence in school facilities
- » Vigorously promote the value of Catholic schools with expanded audiences

FAST FACTS



6400+
students



99%
graduation rate



1300
school Masses annually

3. Accessibility and Investment

- » Include and support students with a broad range of learning needs
- » Increase accessibility for middle-income families
- » Explore the feasibility of launching new/additional schools and expanded programming
- » Leverage the Catholic Foundation of West Michigan to grow development efforts for schools and parishes

4. Stewardship and Sustainability

- » Encourage schools to optimize funding sources (tuition, parish support, development)
- » Advocate for and utilize federal, state and local funding
- » Leverage shared services across the Alliance to ensure efficiency and impact
- » Fully utilize classroom capacity

SCOPE OF ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

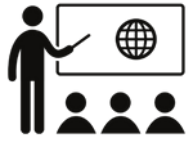
The Superintendent will be responsible for leading in the following areas, based upon Creighton University's *Standards for Leaders of Catholic School Systems* (2024). [The complete position description for the role can be found here.](#)

· Leadership and Mission

The superintendent will embrace and communicate the mission of Catholic education to all stakeholders, guide the development of mission statements, policies, programs, planning, and the curriculum within the alliance of schools.



FAST FACTS



15:1

average student:teacher ratio



8400+
student confessions
heard annually



35

students baptized in 2023-24



· Catholic Identity Integration

The superintendent will ensure that Catholic schools in the diocese adhere to rigorous academic standards for an evangelizing catechesis and religious education in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.

· Student Faith Formation

The superintendent will ensure that the leaders of individual schools attend to the essential task of Christ-centered student faith formation, and that schools are informed of faith formation resources available to assist with students' religious growth.

· Adult Faith Formation

The superintendent will seek opportunities for personal faith formation, and promote similar opportunities and resources for adults at all levels within the alliance of schools.

· Governance

The superintendent will work collaboratively with the Bishop, Vicar General, Chancellor/CFO, and the diocesan Catholic school board and schools to establish best practices and policies and to ensure fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

FAST FACTS



7500+
hours of Eucharistic adoration



\$500K
awarded in Bishop's
Scholarships in 2023-24

- Curriculum and Instruction

The superintendent will set expectations for educator hiring and academic programs for individual schools aligned with professionally accepted, research-based curriculum standards and the mission of Catholic schools.

- Assessment and Data

The superintendent will use diocesan-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, ensure appropriate transparency of student performance data with stakeholders, and use student performance data to inform the continuous improvement of curriculum, instructional practices, and programs.

- Programs and Services

The superintendent will provide guidance and support for programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

- Finance

The superintendent will model collaborative financial planning with an emphasis on faithful stewardship and sustainability.



- Human Resources

The superintendent will leverage diocesan personnel and resources to develop appropriate human resource/personnel policies for schools consistent with Catholic social teaching and ensure adherence to diocesan policies and procedures as well as applicable legal standards.

- Facilities and Technology Management

The superintendent will provide guidance to school leaders regarding planning of facilities maintenance, equipment purchase and upkeep, and technology management to ensure the stewardship and sustainability of the educational mission and to meet responsibilities for environmental stewardship consistent with Catholic social teaching.

- Institutional Advancement

The superintendent will provide guidance and resources to school leaders regarding comprehensive strategies for institutional advancement.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

The superintendent of Catholic Schools:

- Must be a faithful, practicing Catholic in good standing and an active member of a parish community, who is engaged in the sacramental and prayer life of the Church, and assents to the Church's teaching on all matters, with particular care for matters relating to the education and formation of young people, such as:
- Have a passion for the proclamation of the Gospel and nurturing a relationship with God as well as a strong desire and commitment to passing on the fullness of the faith through an evangelizing catechesis designed to form disciples



FAST FACTS



1

National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence



3

Cardinal Newman Honor Roll Schools

AP

2

AP Honor Roll High Schools



- Possesses comprehensive knowledge of the Catholic Church, including history, structure, doctrine, and teaching. Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of Catholic education and school administration, planning, organization and personnel, along with knowledge of church organizational and operational procedures
- Demonstrates conviction for, and can articulate, The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, its educating mission, and the Catholic intellectual tradition. Possesses keen awareness of the cultural and educational narratives, ideologies, and pedagogies that conflict with the Catholic worldview, Christian anthropology, and the Catholic intellectual tradition, and can articulate how to address these issues faithfully and intentionally in the context of Catholic pedagogy and schooling
- Is an engaging, joyful, collaborative, and faith-filled leader, capable of formulating and articulating a persuasive vision for Catholic education, building mutually respectful relationships with key constituents, and translating that vision into practical execution
- Is a clear and persuasive communicator, both verbally and in writing
- Is skilled at training, mentoring, and supervising
- Is able to support and promote Parish/School relations
- Must be able to handle multiple projects/priorities, build consensus, make difficult decisions, and be open to input
- Thinks creatively and is willing to try new ideas and approaches to more effectively form the Catholic faith in children and young people and renew the Church especially by drawing on the riches of the Catholic spiritual, intellectual, artistic and liturgical tradition

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- Has demonstrated facility with strategic planning, budget and fiscal management, staff leadership, enrollment marketing, donor relations, and compliance with local, state, federal and Church (canon law and safe environment) regulations
 - Has a Master's degree or higher in Educational Leadership or Administration as required and State Administrative Certification or eligibility is preferred
 - Demonstrated missionary zeal in the field of Catholic educational administration or other organizational leadership is essential



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

- The next superintendent of Catholic Schools will steward the remaining goals and initiatives of the Catholic Schools: Bridging Faith and Future 2023-28 Strategic Plan.
- The next superintendent must be equipped to articulate effectively the value-proposition of Catholic schools in the diocese and the role of Catholic education in the New Evangelization and transformation of culture.
- The next superintendent must build and steward relationships with pastors of parishes without schools and keep them informed about the work, plans, and outcomes of the Catholic schools in the Diocese.
- The next superintendent must focus on the recruitment and retention of mission-aligned school leaders and teachers, including the continued focus on leadership succession-planning at all levels.
 - The next superintendent must benchmark and discover models of innovation, academic achievement, and national standards of Catholic school excellence outside the Diocese.
 - The next superintendent must continue to be mindful of the demographic shifts in the diocese as it relates to the operational vitality of current and potential future schools, in particular, the continued growth of the Hispanic/Latino population in the area.



ABOUT THE AREA

Grand Rapids, located in the heart of West Michigan, is a vibrant and rapidly growing city known for its rich cultural heritage and thriving economy. Nestled along the banks of the Grand River, it offers a perfect blend of urban amenities and natural beauty. With its lively arts scene, including the renowned ArtPrize festival, a diverse array of restaurants, and numerous breweries, Grand Rapids is a hub of creativity and innovation. The city is also home to several museums, galleries, and theaters, making it an ideal destination for those who appreciate art and culture.

Beyond its cultural attractions, Grand Rapids boasts a strong job market and a low cost of living compared to national averages. The city is home to several major employers in sectors such as health care, manufacturing, and information technology, providing ample career opportunities for professionals at all stages of their careers. Additionally, Grand Rapids is known for its excellent educational institutions and family-friendly neighborhoods, making it an attractive place for individuals and families alike. With its welcoming community and abundant recreational activities, including parks, trails, and nearby lakes, Grand Rapids offers a high quality of life for those looking to build their future in a dynamic and engaging environment.

The city is home to a significant Catholic population, with approximately 25% of the area's population identifying as Catholic and an increase in the number of Latino Catholics in the diocese. Between 2000 and 2020, the Latino population in Grand Rapids more than doubled and today comprises approximately 16-17% of the area's population.



APPLICATION PROCEDURE

To apply, please submit the following **four** documents, confidentially, and as separate PDF attachments.

- Cover letter that aligns your experiences and skill sets with the current needs of the diocese as you understand them
- Statement of Catholic educational philosophy
- Current resume with all appropriate dates included
- List of five references, including your current pastor. This list must include names, relationships, phone numbers, and email addresses (No references will be contacted without your knowledge and approval.)

SEND TO:

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