

To Nurture the Soul of a Nation:

Latino Families, Catholic Schools, and Educational Opportunity



A REPORT OF

The Notre Dame Task Force on the
Participation of Latino Children and
Families in Catholic Schools



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Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



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Preface



It is difficult to think about the participation of the Latino community in American Catholic schools without calling to mind Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. In 1531, the Virgin Mary appeared to an indigenous man on Mount Tepeyac, near Mexico City, calling out, “¡Juan Diegito, el mas pequeño de mis hijos!” “Dearest Juan Diego, the smallest of my children!” To signal the new life she represented, *la virgen morena* (the brown virgin) sent Juan Diego to the top of a barren hill in the middle of winter, where he found a miraculous field of roses. The blooming of roses in December on that desert hilltop, along with Our Lady’s image on San Juan Diego’s cloak, represented the

beginning of a new era—one of dignity and salvation—for the people of the Americas.

As we have watched the Latino population in the United States grow while more than 1,400 Catholic schools have closed their doors this decade, we know too well the chill of diminished opportunities for our nation’s urban communities, many of which are increasingly Latino. Every Catholic school that closes represents a lost opportunity to educate a Hispanic child, to improve the lot of a Latino family, to benefit the common good. These newly empty buildings and the city centers where they are found are too often, like the desert summit of Mount Tepeyac, barren and lifeless.



But like Juan Diego, we must seek out the new life that Our Lady of Guadalupe has made possible, even in the midst of the chill of winter. And so we search for signs of hope, for “roses in December,” with

With hope and faith, we can find extraordinary—even miraculous—stories of urban Catholic schools serving Latino communities with zeal and tenacity, in the most unlikely of places.

faith that disciplined inquiry and dedicated belief will bear fruit. This Task Force report demonstrates that we can find extraordinary—even miraculous—stories of urban Catholic schools serving Latino communities with zeal and tenacity, in the most unlikely of places and with exceptional results.

Our goal with this report is to shine a light on those schools, those roses in December, in order to identify ways to attract and support the Latino community’s fuller participation in Catholic schooling in the United States. For the University of Notre Dame, this report is a first step toward a long-term commitment to attract and support the Latino community through U.S. Catholic schools. In it, this task force puts forth an audacious challenge: for the Church to provide a Catholic school advantage to 1 million Hispanic children within a decade. Doing so will entail doubling the percentage of Latino children, from 3 percent to 6, who currently

benefit from the educational, social, and spiritual advantages of Catholic schooling while simultaneously reversing the trend of urban Catholic school closures that disproportionately affect Latino communities and

other populations in dire need of effective schools.

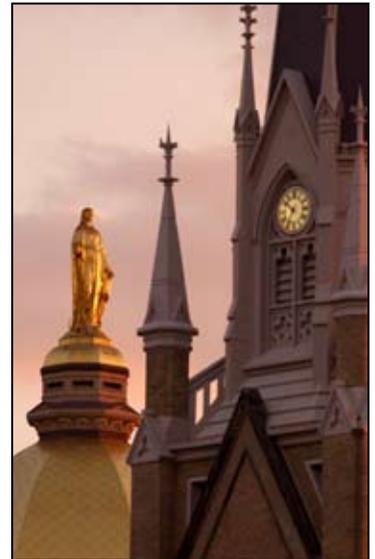
We offer these reflections and recommendations in the spirit of San Juan Diego, with prayerful faith that the roses in December described here might enliven Catholic schools—and through them, Latino communities and the common good—just as Our Lady of Guadalupe brought new life, first to the barren hillsides of Tepeyac and then to all the Americas.

In Notre Dame,



Rev. John I. Jenkins, CSC
President

December 12, 2009
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



Introduction



“We’ve turned old lumber into computer tables, cardboard boxes into window shades and hundreds of at-risk children into high school graduates. It’s our modest attempt to follow a man who turned a few loaves and fishes into a meal for thousands.”

These words—used to describe St. Rose of Lima Catholic School in an informational brochure—capture the vibrant purpose and achievement of the students, parents, teachers, and leadership embodied by this Catholic elementary school located in a low-income, predominantly Latino neighborhood in the Archdiocese of Denver. And the achievement of St. Rose graduates warrants the comparison to the miracles of Jesus: In a city where less than 20 percent of Latino male eighth graders graduate from high school, every Latino male graduate of St. Rose elementary school goes on to graduate from high school with a real opportunity

to realize his full human potential. Over the past 15 years, St. Rose of Lima alumni boast a 98 percent high school graduation rate, compared to 53 percent for Latinos nationally and less than 30 percent for Latinos in Denver.¹

By comparing their efforts to the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the school community of St. Rose suggests that the school is a miracle, and in some ways, it is. Parish resources are scarce; the parish itself is, at 300 families, very small, and even with financial assistance from the archdiocesan foundation, *Seeds of Hope*, most school families must make tremendous financial sacrifices to educate their children at



St. Rose. According to Tanya Garcia, a parent with two children at St. Rose, “I could go to the public school free. But for me it’s worth it to pay for this education because not only are we getting academics, but we’re getting the religious reinforcement, the Catholic lifestyle reinforcement.” Mrs. Garcia’s conviction, echoed by many other parents, that the academic rigor, the strong sense of welcome and community, the emphasis on character formation, and a counter-cultural religious identity are hallmarks of St. Rose were articulated by the pastor, principal, and faculty in separate conversations as well. Blessed with strong and unified leadership, a dedicated and superb faculty, and abundant, purposeful parental involvement, St. Rose of Lima is a special school. And in light of the pervasive Catholic school closures of the past decade, it certainly feels miraculous to encounter an urban Catholic school with a waiting list serving low-income families.

And yet, if we explain this school as a miracle, we risk blinding ourselves to seeing what sheer grit and innovative thinking—in the context of faith—can accomplish. God at times chooses to bless with grace—sometimes in miraculous abundance—unstinting commitment to serve God’s children. Indeed, St. Rose *is* a miracle! But it is not unique, for similar success stories, similar “miracles,” can be found in a variety of cities and contexts across the United States. When we look beyond the hun-

dreds of Catholic schools that have closed in the past decade—when we seek out the St. Roses and study their success—we see that the sorts of miracles that make St. Rose successful are within the reach of many others.

Success stories like St. Rose’s can be found in cities across the United States. While it is true that hundreds of urban Catholic schools have closed every year for the past decade, thriving urban Catholic schools can be found in Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, Chicago, Memphis, Tucson and elsewhere.

Success stories like St. Rose’s can be found in cities across the United States.

Unless those success stories can be replicated broadly, however, the story of Catholic schooling in the first decade of the 21st century will almost certainly focus instead on the hundreds of schools that have closed since 2000. This story can be seen at Easton Catholic, a parish school in a mid-sized industrial city in the Diocese of Allentown. Citing financial struggles born of a declining enrollment that recently slipped below 100 students, in 2009 the diocese closed the school’s doors after decades of service to the local Catholic community.

Founded to serve Catholics from Italy, Easton Catholic (originally St. Anthony until renamed in the early 1970s as a consolidation of three parish schools) experienced a host of challenges over the past few decades: a teaching force in





transition from vowed religious to lay; rapidly rising personnel costs; changing demographics in the local neighborhood; a shift in the local economy from manufacturing to service; and the attendant financial challenges related to these changes. Sadly, we know this story all too well, as it has been played out in literally hundreds of parishes across the country. Since 2000, more than

can population has been replaced by a largely Hispanic population. Indeed, census data tell us that over 800 Latino children ages 5 to 14 live within walking distance of the now-empty Easton Catholic school building.

For Rev. Joseph Corpora, CSC, a Catholic priest and a graduate of Easton Catholic, the school provided a critical formative experience in his life. In an op-ed in his hometown paper upon learning of its closure, he wrote, “The education and formation that I received there for nine years shaped and marked my life forever. I will always be grateful.” In his letter, Fr. Corpora, himself a pastor responsible for Catholic schools in urban communities for the past 20 years, mourned the loss of this school in his home community, describing the task of keeping “a parish alive, active, strong and nurturing vocations” is, in the absence of a parish school, “like keeping the lights on at the cemetery.”

Certainly each of the Catholic schools that have been closed represents a loss to the Church in terms of missed opportunities to form young people in faith, but each closed Catholic school also represents a lost opportunity for the local community and the common good. Research tells us that if the Hispanic Catholic children living near Easton Catholic had an opportunity to attend a Catholic school, they would be 42 percent more likely to graduate from high school and two and a half times more likely to

Since 2000, more than 1,400 Catholic schools have closed and nearly half a million students are no longer in Catholic schools.

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And yet, the steady decline in enrollment and eventual closure of Easton Catholic was not inevitable. Its neighborhood has no fewer school-age children than it did when it was enrolled to capacity just 40 years ago. In fact, there are no fewer Catholics in the neighborhood—the largely Italian-American

Saving Taxpayers \$20 Billion Annually

The success of Catholic schools is important to the Catholic community but has implications for the greater common good as well. As the largest alternative to public schooling, Catholic schools help keep public schools accountable to the public, and their viability ensures that Catholic schools continue to save public schools billions of dollars each year. For example, it costs Chicago city schools more than \$10,000 annually to educate each elementary school student and more than \$13,000 to educate each high school student. By educating 96,197 students in the 2007-2008 school year, Catholic schools in the Chicago area saved the public school system \$1,031,415,280.² Nationally, Catholic schools save taxpayers more than \$20 billion.³

graduate from college.⁴ Similarly, a recent study in Los Angeles found that 98 percent of low-income, minority children who attend Catholic schools graduate from high school in four years, compared to only 66 percent of public school students.⁵

Decades of research tell us that no system of schools—charter, private, or public—has demonstrated such proven effectiveness for children most vulnerable to unsatisfactory schooling.⁶ Research also tells us that Catholic school graduates are more tolerant of diverse views, are more likely to vote, are more likely to be civically engaged, and even earn higher wages than their public school peers.⁷ And no system of schools achieves this success with such dramatic economic efficiency, typically educating students at less than half of the cost of neighboring public and charter schools.⁸ So just as bishops, pastors, educators, and parishioners mourn the loss of Catholic schools as effective venues for transmitting the faith from generation to generation, so too should local communities mourn the closing of each school as remarkably effective educational institutions that have been successful at erasing the American achievement gap for low-income and minority children.

And the effects of that achievement gap are far-reaching and pernicious. They impact us all. A recent analysis by McKinsey & Company determined that achievement shortfalls have dramatic effects on the national economy and the common good.⁹ The report found that

the achievement gap “imposes on the United States the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession,” inhibiting the gross domestic product (GDP) by as much as \$525 billion—or 4 percent of the U.S. GDP—annually. These findings make it all the more alarming that 18 percent of Catholic schools—the only schools that have a researched track record of closing the achievement gap—have closed in the past decade at the very same time that the Hispanic population has grown rapidly across the country.¹⁰

The success of St. Rose and the closure of Easton Catholic call to mind dozens of questions. How is it that two schools in such similar circumstances can diverge so radically? What leads one school to close while the other adapts and thrives?

Why, nationally, do only 3 percent of school-age Hispanic children attend Catholic schools, especially when research has demonstrated convincingly that Catholic schools are especially effective at closing the achievement gap for minority students? Given Catholic schools’ established track record of success, why are Latinos so decisively underrepresented in Catholic schools?

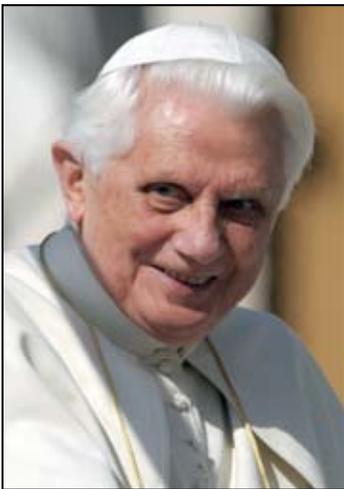
The Catholic School Advantage

Sociologists have described a “Catholic school effect,” which describes the educational benefits that accrue to children who attend Catholic schools.¹¹ In this report, we refer to this effect as the “Catholic school advantage,” a broad range of advantageous holistic outcomes connected to Catholic schools, which are most pronounced for low-income, minority students. In reality, there are many dimensions to the Catholic school advantage, including higher graduation rates, demonstrated records of academic achievement, character formation, civic engagement, and a variety of prosocial and pro-ecclesial effects.

Research tells us that if the Hispanic Catholic children living near Easton Catholic had an opportunity to attend a Catholic school, they would be 42 percent more likely to graduate from high school and two and a half times more likely to graduate from college.

And, perhaps even more alarmingly, why is this gap growing year by year? To what extent do Latino parents value Catholic education for their children? To what extent

For the future of the Latino community that is so well-served by Catholic schools, it is imperative that we not only stop closing effective Catholic schools, but that we fill them to capacity and open more.



CNS Photo

do they feel a sense of ownership for Catholic schools in their neighborhoods? To what extent do finances and tuition play a role in Hispanic families' decisions about education? What effect does school environment have on attracting and retaining Latino students? How effectively are Catholic schools marketing themselves to Latino families and others who could benefit from a Catholic education? Are there significant connections between governance models and leadership that impact enrollment?

These questions must be considered in the light of three crucial facts. First, Catholic schools serve Latino and other underserved stu-

dents well. The research on this point is established and clear, and sociologists have come to call this phenomenon the "Catholic school effect."¹³ Second, most Catholic schools currently operate below capacity and will become stronger, more robust institutions, more attuned to their mission, by enrolling more Hispanic students. Third, in the United States, Latinos now comprise 35 percent of all Catholics¹⁴ and 67 percent of practicing Catholics aged 18-34,¹⁵ and the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that Latino populations will continue to grow dramatically. By the year 2050, more than 30 percent of Americans will self-identify as Hispanic,¹⁶ and so the Church itself needs to respond with imagination and urgency at this historic juncture.

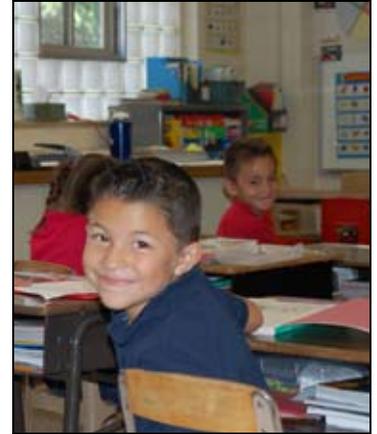
At the close of a decade that has seen the lamentable persistence of the Latino achievement gap and has also seen the closure of more Catholic schools than any other, the University of Notre Dame has convened a task force to study and address these questions. This report reflects what we have learned about how to strengthen and sustain Catholic schools to serve the growing Latino population that soon will comprise the majority of American Catholics. For the future of the Latino community that is so well-served by Catholic schools, it is imperative that we not only stop closing effective Catholic schools, but that we fill them to capacity and open more. For the future of the Church and our country, it is critical

To Nurture the Soul of a Nation

In his 2008 address to U.S. Catholic educators, Pope Benedict XVI implored his audience: "Do not abandon the school apostolate; indeed, renew your commitment to schools, especially those in poorer areas." Fully aware of the financial challenges facing contemporary Catholic schools, Benedict exhorted: "Their long-term sustainability must be assured. Indeed, everything possible must be done, in cooperation with the wider community, to ensure that they are accessible to people of all social and economic strata. No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation."¹²

A Beacon of Hope

Stories of hope for urban Catholic schools are not hard to find. Consider St. Anthony, a parish elementary school in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Currently the largest Catholic elementary school in the nation, St. Anthony is filled to capacity with more than 1,000 Latino children in grades Pre-K to 9. Like the now-closed Easton Catholic, St. Anthony is located in an economically disadvantaged urban center that has seen a demographic shift from European to Latin American residents over the past decades. But as Easton Catholic closed its doors, St. Anthony has been scrambling to open new ones. Indeed, the school has grown so quickly over the past decade that the parish has had to rent out office space for classrooms, has added a second campus, and has just opened a new Catholic high school. St. Anthony's reflects several of the best practices identified by the task force, but the two most important factors contributing to St. Anthony's success are financial and organizational. First, families benefit from the nation's oldest voucher program, which allows low-income parents the opportunity to choose a Catholic education for their children even if they would not ordinarily be able to afford private schooling. Second, St. Anthony holds students to high expectations for academic achievement and implements a no-excuses school culture that produces real results in their daily class work, language proficiency, and on national tests of reading and mathematics. As promotional materials claim, St. Anthony School is indeed a "beacon of hope."



that we preserve these incubators of intellectual growth, faith, character, civic responsibility, and leadership for the common good.

On this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the University of Notre Dame offers this report, the work of a national task force convened one year ago today and charged to study the participation of Latino children and families in Catholic schools, to make key recommendations, and to develop an implementation plan to increase demand for and access to Catholic schools for Latino families, with special emphasis on those from low-income backgrounds who stand to gain the most from participation in these institutions.

Currently, only 3 percent of Latino school-age children attend Catholic school in the United States.

The goal of this task force is to make recommendations and implement initiatives that will double that percentage within a decade. Given population growth estimates, this goal means increasing the national enrollment of Latino children in Catholic schools from 290,000 to over 1 million students, thus greatly enhancing the quality of the lives of thousands—indeed, millions—of Latino families. We can, and we must, meet this challenge and this historic opportunity.

The goal of this task force is to make recommendations and implement initiatives that will increase the national enrollment of Latino children in Catholic schools to over 1 million students.

The University of Notre Dame's Response



In 2005, in response to the pastoral statement issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, the University of Notre Dame convened a national task force to study ways to strengthen Catholic schools. The task force sought to develop a strategy to meet the four major needs registered by the United States bishops in their pastoral statement:

- **To strengthen Catholic identity**
- **To attract and form talented leaders**
- **To ensure academic excellence**
- **To finance Catholic schools so that they are accessible for all families**

As this year-long national study proceeded, one common denominator emerged across all four themes: Catholic schools need to reach out more effectively to serve, engage, and empower the Latino community. Indeed, the bishops explicitly address this point in *Renewing Our Commitment*: “We must also serve the increasing Hispanic/Latino population....Catholic parishes and schools must reflect this reality and reach out and welcome Hispanics and Latinos into the Catholic faith communities in the United States.”¹⁷

The task force's final report, *Making God Known, Loved, and*

Served: The Future of Catholic Education in the United States,¹⁸ published on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 2006, described a number of initiatives in response to this recommendation, including the development of Notre Dame's English as a New Language program. There was, however, widespread recognition by the task force that more intensive and focused study was needed to address the complex, multifaceted issues surrounding Hispanic participation in Catholic schools. While the University alone could muster a traditional research report to describe the problem and make recommendations, it seemed clear that the counsel of outside experts—particularly practitioners and leaders in the Latino community nationally—would be critical to conduct on-the-ground research and shape the recommendations essential to contribute to increasing Latino enrollment nationally while stemming the tide of Catholic school closures.

In December 2008, therefore, University of Notre Dame President Rev. John Jenkins, CSC, commissioned a second task force to direct strategically targeted inquiry into the challenges and opportunities related to the participation of Latino families and children in Catholic schools. The task force is co-chaired by Dr. Juliet Garcia, president of

the University of Texas-Brownsville and a leading national figure in the Latino community, and Rev. Joseph Corpora, CSC, a Holy Cross priest and former pastor with two decades of experience founding, turning around, and growing urban Catholic schools in Latino communities. The task force includes 52 thought-leaders working in Catholic schools and with the Latino population, including bishops, diocesan superintendents, pastors, school leaders, teachers, philanthropists, community organizers, marketing experts and leaders of national organizations like the National Catholic Educational Association, the United

The task force includes 52 thought-leaders working in Catholic schools and with the Latino population, including bishops, diocesan superintendents, pastors, school leaders, teachers, philanthropists, community organizers, marketing experts and leaders of national organizations.

States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options, and the National Council of La Raza.

The task force comprised six teams that conducted careful analysis in four major areas: school environment, marketing, finance, and school leadership. One team was devoted to exploring each of these areas, with two additional teams



**Alliance for Catholic Education
and the Institute for Latino Studies**



Throughout the task force process, the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) and the Institute for Latino Studies (ILS) at the University of Notre Dame have served as headquarters for the task force, taking advantage of the extensive national networks ACE and ILS have developed over the past 15 years.

Founded in 1993 by Rev. Timothy Scully, CSC, and Rev. Sean McGraw, CSC, the ACE program sustains and strengthens under-resourced Catholic schools through leadership formation, research, and professional service to ensure that all children, especially those from low-income families, have the opportunity to experience the gift of an excellent Catholic education.

In 1999, the University of Notre Dame established the Institute for Latino Studies, which supports interdisciplinary initiatives to foster understanding of the U.S. Latino experience. Led by sociologist Gilberto Cárdenas, named three times by Hispanic Business Magazine as one of the 100 most influential Latinos in the United States, the ILS supports the mission, tradition, and distinctively Catholic values of Notre Dame by conducting research and providing policy information about Latino communities, promoting and developing Latino-focused scholarship at the University, and engaging in community outreach on campus and beyond.

Through ACE and the ILS, the University has developed trusted working relationships with dozens of diocesan school offices and Latino community leaders and organizations, including more than 1,200 ACE graduates, many of whom are Latino leaders themselves or have extensive experience working with the Latino community.



Rev. Timothy R. Scully, CSC
Director, Institute for Educational Initiatives
University of Notre Dame

“We face an urgent moral imperative to serve our nation and our faith by making the Catholic school advantage accessible to millions of talented, underserved Latino children.”



Gilberto Cárdenas
Director, Institute for Latino Studies
University of Notre Dame

“In Catholic schools, Latino families should find places where their children are surrounded by the faith, values, and culture of the home.”



Juliet García
President
The University of Texas at Brownsville
Task Force Co-Chair

“Much is at stake. No less than the future generation of leaders for our country. Catholic schools must remain a steady and strong conduit for the many new generations of Latinos at their doorstep. Never has their success been so important to our nation and to the future of the Catholic Church.”



Rev. Joseph Corpora, CSC
Director, University-School Partnerships
Alliance for Catholic Education
Task Force Co-Chair

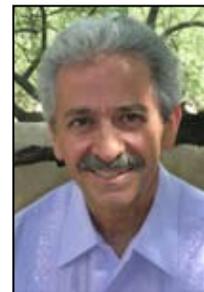
“My own life has been greatly shaped and formed by my Catholic education. I hope that our work can make a Catholic education possible for thousands and thousands more children. Please God.”



The Most Rev. Jaime Soto
Bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento

“The Guadalupana vision of a culture enlivened by faith challenges us to open for Latino children the rich opportunity of a Catholic school education.”

“Latino children deserve the best education possible, the type of education provided by Catholic schools. This project has the potential to change lives, to change families; indeed, to change entire communities.”



Celestino Fernández
Professor of Sociology
University of Arizona

dedicated to supporting the overall work of the task force. A research team provided valuable background demographic and statistical information that informed the more focused work, and eventually the recommendations, of the area teams. A case studies team conducted site visits to dozens of exemplary Catholic schools serving Latino communities across the United States in order to provide on-the-ground, applied examples of particularly effective structures, services, and practices.

These visits were designed to ensure that the recommendations of the area-focused sub-teams would be anchored in real-world best practices and that they would be clearly illustrated with thick description. Exemplary schools were chosen to reflect a variety of demographic regions and contexts in order to find and share lessons applicable to a wide variety of schools and systems. As the work of the task force proceeded, it became increasingly clear that successful strategies exist and that one important role of the task force would be to collect and present, from a national platform, field-tested recommendations. By exam-



Rev. Allan Figueroa Deck, SJ
Executive Director
Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church
USCCB

“The Latino presence, more than any other factor, offers Catholic education the opportunity to renew itself and face the vexing challenges of the 21st century. We are being presented with a fundamental choice that we ignore at our peril.”

ining best practices and focusing on the realm of the possible, the task force hopes to design and promote a plan for identifying effective strategies and bringing them to scale.

Through this process, we learned that numerous dioceses, schools, and universities have been engaging these issues independently. Given the crisis facing urban Catholic schools and the ethnic and other demographic shifts in the composition of the Church, we were not surprised that others were wrestling with these same issues, and their insights and experience advanced this work considerably. For example, the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Arlington, the Specialty Family Foundation, and others have engaged in strategic planning processes, outreach programs, market research, and other efforts to improve the capacity of Catholic schools to serve Latino families. We are grateful for their willingness to share their findings with this task force. We fully expect that the publication of this report will bring more such efforts on the part of Catholic institutions and individuals to our attention, and we hope this report will spark both an on-going national



Sr. Rosann Ruiz, FMA
President
St. John Bosco School, San Antonio, TX

“A quiet reality is that Catholic education has had a big part to play in the health and prosperity of this nation. A stunning realization is the future of this nation without it.”

“Most of our Latino leaders today have gone through some phase of Catholic education; as our numbers increase so does our responsibility to both Church and society. Catholic schools have been and will continue to be crucial for the development of Latino Catholic leadership.”



Rev. Virgilio Elizondo
Professor of Pastoral and Hispanic Theology
University of Notre Dame

“Catholic schools give Latino children the environment, encouragement and moral values needed to become well-rounded citizens who will always come back to serve their family, their parish, and their community.”

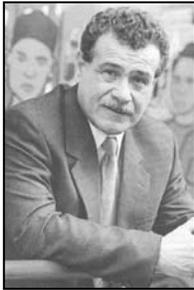


Theresa Fragoso
Director of Programs
Catholic Education Foundation
Los Angeles, CA



Sara Martinez Tucker
Former Under Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education

“Starting my education in a Catholic school changed the trajectory of my life. I want all Hispanic children to have that chance.”



Anthony Colón
President
Hispanic Council for Reform and Educational Options

“I believe that a Catholic education is a viable option for our community.”



The Most Rev. Oscar Cantú
Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of San Antonio

“Catholic schools help to ensure a bright future for their students, while the Latino family can help to ensure the continuing mission of Catholic schools.”

conversation and sustained action in Catholic communities across the United States.

While we hope this report provides a meaningful roadmap for achieving the goal of seating 1 million Latino children in Catholic schools by 2020, we also recognize that the publication of this report represents only the first step in what will be a long journey. Some may ask, “What can a school in northern Indiana that calls itself the home of the ‘Fighting Irish’ do for Catholic schools serving Hispanic communities in South-Central Los Angeles or Spanish Harlem?” The University of Notre Dame recognizes that it can only play a part in what must be a larger mobilization of resources and energy among re-

ligious, civic, philanthropic, educational, and government leaders. It is with great humility that the University recognizes the enormity of the task at hand. After a year of study, we recognize that this report will only begin to shed light on some of the obstacles and opportunities we can expect to encounter, and we certainly do not purport to have all the answers. This publication will, we hope, catalyze a national conversation, and we expect to follow this report with others on a regular basis to share news of the progress we hope to see, to provide resources for those who share our goal, to report new research and strategies that we uncover, and to continue to refine the recommendations we set forth in this document.

Hispanic or Latino?

In bringing together leaders from across the nation, it quickly became clear that the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” both had limitations, and neither term was entirely embraced by everyone on the task force. The task force discussed the nuanced differences between “Latino” and “Hispanic,” recognizing various connotations and preferences attached to each. We recognize the diversity of the people these terms are meant to represent: While these terms can be used to refer to people who may have arrived just yesterday from the southern tip of Chile, they are also used to refer to people whose families were among the first to settle parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and Florida. The terms are often used to refer to native Spanish speakers, but they can also refer to people whose families have been native English speakers for six generations. While these terms are limited and the categories they represent are, to some extent, artificially defined, we recognize that they also have some general utility given the real social, economic, and educational achievement differences between people who self-describe as Latino or Hispanic and those who do not.

For the purposes of this report, the task force has decided to use the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” interchangeably to refer to people who live in the United States and who trace their ethnic backgrounds to the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Mexico, Central, or South America.

The Notre Dame Task Force on the Participation of Latino Families and Children in K-12 Catholic Education

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Rosemary Croghan, Founding Chair, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, Chicago, Illinois
The Honorable Ted Cruz, Former Solicitor General of Texas
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The Honorable Sara Martinez Tucker, Former Under Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education
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Joe Walsh, Consultant, Buck Family Foundation, Chicago, Illinois
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Our Latino Community



Although the Latino population has grown rapidly since the 1970s, it is important to keep in mind that many who now identify as Latino/Hispanic have lived in the United States since the time Europeans made their way to the Americas, albeit with major concentrations in the Southwest and more recently in all major urban centers. By 2000, Latinos had become the largest minority group in the United States.¹⁹ The percentage of Latino students in American schools has more than tripled since 1972, accounting for nearly one in five students by 2003.

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In the two largest school districts in the United States, New York and Los Angeles, Latinos account for the majority of students.²⁰ The influx of Latino students has contributed to a rise in the number of students who speak a language other than English at home, which had risen to 21 percent of all public school students by 2007.²¹

Recent immigration from Latin America accounts for much of this growth in diversity. And while previous waves of European immigrants tended to assimilate culturally and linguistically in a generation or two, contemporary Latino immigrant descendants maintain their cultural and linguistic ties with more persistence. For example, while it is not unexpected that 95 percent



of first-generation Latinos²² in the United States speak both English and Spanish, it is striking that 90 percent of second-generation, 43 percent of third-generation, and 30 percent of fourth-generation Latinos have maintained the family's native tongue. This does not, however, mean that Latinos are not learning English; research suggests that for young people in the Latino community, true bilingualism—not Spanish monolingualism—is the norm, as 85 percent of children who speak Spanish at home also speak English well or very well.²³

Large urban areas are home to particularly dense clusters of Latino students. Many of these children live in segregated ethnic enclaves, where students “are clustered into under-resourced, high-poverty schools that too often have not met the expectations of residents.”²⁴ Latino students in particular find themselves in heavily segregated schools that “tend to be the most underfunded, with few advanced courses and the most low-level technical courses.”²⁵

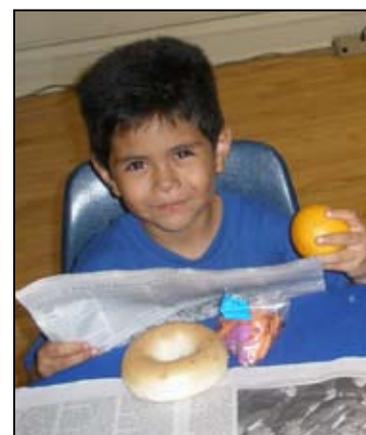
Research underscores the failure of these urban schools for Latino students—both those whose families recently immigrated and those whose families have lived in the United States for several generations. In 2003, only 53 percent of Hispanic students graduated from high school with a regular diploma, a rate 25 points behind non-Hispanic whites.²⁶ And while college attendance rates have risen for African American and white students over the past few decades, Latino

Prominent Hispanic Catholic School Graduates

The Catholic school advantage can be especially beneficial in the Latino community. Research tells us that the advantage that comes with attending a Catholic school is significantly larger for Hispanics than for non-Hispanic whites. One need only look at the woman who has recently become America's highest profile Hispanic, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a graduate of Blessed Sacrament School and Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx. Other prominent Latinos, among many others, who have attended Catholic schools include Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Antonio, secretary of the interior Ken Salazar, former under secretary of education Sara Martinez Tucker, Miami mayor Manny Diaz, former secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros, Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, former CEO of Coca-Cola Roberto Goizueta, presidential medal of freedom winner Dr. Pedro José Greer, Jr., and authors Richard Rodriguez, Sandra Cisneros, and John Philip Santos.

rates have not improved,²⁷ and Latinos complete bachelor's degrees at less than one third the rate of non-Latino white students.²⁸ Researchers have determined that only 16 percent of Hispanic students are considered college-ready, based on high school completion rates, curricular offerings, and literacy scores.²⁹ In 2006, 25 percent of 18- to 24-year-old Latinos enrolled in college, compared to 32 percent of blacks and 44 percent of non-Latino whites.³⁰ Perhaps most troubling are findings suggesting that “the educational progress of Mexican Americans does not improve over the generations;”³¹ the achievement gap is evident even into the fourth-generation for Mexican Americans, for example, whose high school graduation rates lag 17 percent behind their white peers.³²

By 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau projects 1.2 million Latino children will enter kindergarten. If the status quo is maintained, 720,000





of these children will not graduate from high school. These eager young learners deserve to walk into schools that provide a rigorous, yet nurturing environment that will develop their academic, social, and spiritual selves.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects the Latino population in the United States will continue to grow rapidly, reaching 66.4 million by the year 2020, an 86 percent increase since 2000.³³ As the Latino population continues to grow, it is imperative that access to high-quality educational opportunities increase, not decrease. Latino families, particularly low-income families, currently have insufficient access to high-quality educational opportunities that can narrow the achievement gap and prepare Latino students

for higher education while schools proven to reduce the achievement gap, Catholic schools, are closing at rapid rates.

For decades, research has consistently shown that Catholic schools educate young people uncommonly well for the common good. There is overwhelming evidence that low-income, minority students, more than any demographic group, benefit the most from access to a Catholic education—in academic achievement, civic engagement, and the development of character. In many of our nation's communities, Catholic schools have long been national treasures, institutions that have formed productive citizens and leaders.

As the Latino population continues to grow it is imperative that access to high-quality educational opportunities increase, not decrease.



Summary of the Findings of the Task Force

To understand better the nature of Hispanic participation in Catholic schools, the Task Force engaged in five distinct research efforts: demographic analysis, parent focus groups, surveys and interviews of principals, and case studies of successful schools.

Demographic Analysis

First, the research sub-committee used census and national survey data to conduct a broad analysis of demographic and economic trends in largely Hispanic urban areas to gauge the capacity of Catholic schools in those areas and to determine economic motivators for school choice decisions. Key findings include:

- For the 2007-08 school year, there were **over 691,000 empty seats in existing Catholic schools**, and 36 percent of those seats were in 13 states where the Latino population was either the largest population or the fastest-growing over the past 10 years.
- The **dioceses with the highest number of empty seats are located around the largest metropolitan areas with large numbers of Latinos**. The metropolitan areas of Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City, and Philadelphia not only have the highest number of empty seats but they are magnet La-

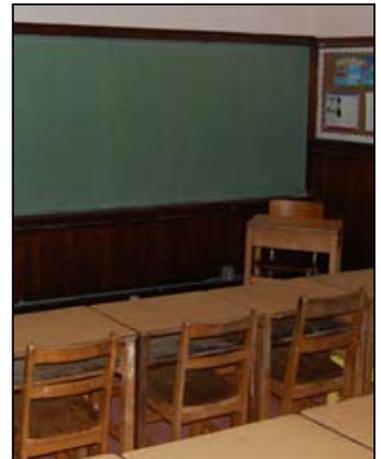
tino migration destinations from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.

- **The number of Hispanics enrolled in Catholic schools has remained stagnant for the past 15 years** despite the robust increase in the Hispanic population. Or, in other words, the percentage of school-age Latinos in Catholic schools has declined.

Parent Focus Groups

The research sub-committee also coordinated and analyzed the results from focus groups of Latino parents who belong to parishes but do not send their children to Catholic schools to understand better parent motivations for school choices. Focus groups were conducted in Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Phoenix, San Antonio, and South Bend. Key findings include:

- **Major areas of consensus emerged independent of differences** in participants' geographic locale, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or generational time in the United States.
- **Parents uniformly expressed admiration and affection** for Catholic schools. They often indicated they would feel "more comfortable" with their children in a Catholic school.
- **Affordability** was the first and



most commonly cited reason why parents did not place their children in Catholic schools.

- **Parents often found it difficult to find information** about Catholic schools.
- Schools would be more attractive to the extent they could help to **address issues vital to working families such as daycare and transportation.**
- **Language barriers are real;** parents expressed the desire for Spanish-speaking contacts at the school to provide information and guidance.

Surveys of Principals

The school environment sub-committee distributed and analyzed an on-line survey of Catholic school principals. The survey was distributed to more than 40 (arch) dioceses with large Latino populations and more than 200 principals across the country participated. More than half of the schools surveyed were majority Latino. The school environment sub-team focused its investigation in particular on four dimensions of school environment: pedagogy, physical environment, language, and school community. Key findings include:

- Principals of schools that are successful at serving the Latino community credit their success to **transforming the school culture in response to the culture of the population the school serves**, integrating culturally responsive approaches to teaching into a rig-

orous curriculum, and providing and promoting financial support for families.

- Of the majority Hispanic schools, principals **need help preparing teachers to effectively take culture into account.** While most principals report that teachers consider culture when planning curriculum and instruction, they report doing so in largely limited ways. Examples include adding texts by Hispanic authors, singing Spanish hymns at Mass, or, as one principal reported, “We try to remember holidays and festivals.”
- In schools that effectively recruit Latino families, the **existing mechanisms of the parish—the Mass, the bulletin, and social networks—provide the main tools for promoting the school.** Nearly half of the majority Latino schools surveyed report actively recruiting Latino families. Of those that self-identify as successful at recruiting Latinos, one third report recruiting in Spanish, while another one third actively recruit at and after parish Masses.
- There was **no pattern in the usage of Spanish in schools that serve Hispanic communities.** Responses ranged widely, from “We are an English-speaking school” to “Students are allowed to use Spanish” to “Spanish is used to scaffold instruction” to “We use Spanish as much as possible.”
- Schools that serve majority Latino student bodies **employ more Latino teachers than other schools.** In majority Latino schools, 44



percent of teachers were Latino, compared to under 20 percent in all schools and 12 percent in schools with less than 50 percent Latino enrollment.

Interviews with Principals

The marketing and communications sub-committee conducted on-site interviews with dozens of school leaders in four different dioceses throughout the country: the Archdiocese of New York, the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the Diocese of El Paso. The principals interviewed led both elementary and high schools that were all in proximity to significant Latino populations and had varying degrees of effectiveness in engaging the Latino population as measured by enrollment. Key findings include:

- Many **pastors and principals lack the knowledge and technical capacity to effectively promote** their schools.
- **Marketing efforts tend to be ad hoc and modest** in their implementation, most likely reflecting the capacity constraints in staffing.
- **Less than half of the schools had any bilingual materials** and few schools reported using bilingual materials in all communications.
- **Less than one third of schools reported using direct marketing and recruiting techniques**, such as personal conversations, announcements at Mass, invitations to visit the school, meeting parents at other events, and promoting the school in public venues.

Case Studies

The best practices sub-committee conducted site visits to dozens of Catholic schools serving Latino communities across the country. Task force members met with key stakeholders in the school community to better understand how the school successfully engages and serves the Latino children and families in their community. Key findings include:

- **Strong and stable leadership from the principal is essential** in all school contexts and the pastor's support is extremely helpful in a parochial context. Effective leaders maintained high expectations for students and faculty alike and articulated clear, communicable visions of their school mission.
- **Schools can serve as a "hub" for broader social services.** Successful schools recognize that the educational needs of their students are inseparable from the larger social needs of their families and function as conduits to community resources and social services.
- **Innovative funding models are vital** to ensure that families have access to the quality education these schools provide. Regular fundraising, development, tuition assistance funds provided by a consortia of parishes, diocesan managed assets, or independent Catholic school foundations, and, in certain regions, public funding options are among the many strategies employed by successful schools.





- Schools can create innovative ways to create access through language. Without exception, every school recognized that language barriers between parents and school could also inhibit full parental participation in the education of their children. These schools implemented innovative services and policies to ensure that parent-school communication was available in English and Spanish.

- Forging a sense of community is critical. Effective schools capitalize on the social relationships and networks in the Latino communities they served and involve stakeholders in the mission of the school. These efforts facilitate strong community connections that many people described as “family.”

- Extended day, after school, and early childhood programs allow schools to provide additional educational opportunities for their students and safe, affordable options for working parents. These schools offered extended services ranging from traditional daycare to academic enrichment and training in the arts.

Through these five modes of inquiry, the task force has sought, ultimately, to shed light on the important questions surrounding the issue of Latinos in Catholic schools. Through this process, the task force has identified the key obstacles and corresponding opportunities that need to be addressed if we are to succeed in our goal of seating 1 million Hispanic children in Catholic schools by 2020.



Findings: Obstacles and Opportunities

Access to Catholic Schools

OBSTACLE
Catholic schools are fast disappearing from urban areas.

As noted above, nearly one in five Catholic schools have closed since 2000, and elementary schools in major urban areas have been hardest hit. Enrollment in those urban elementary schools that have remained open has dropped nearly 30 percent in that time, and so there are fewer and fewer children occupying seats in fewer and fewer schools. Most fragile are the parochial elementary schools in neighborhoods that are increasingly occupied by Hispanic communities, and so opportunities for Hispanic children to enjoy the “Catholic school advantage” are waning rapidly.

OPPORTUNITY
Signs of hope abound in the urban Catholic schools that remain open.

Almost every major metropolitan area in the United States has a success story like St. Rose of Lima. In more than 50 cities, Cristo Rey and NativityMiguel network schools are demonstrating that unique school finance models can make it possible for Catholic schools to provide excellent educational opportunities in low-income communities. Parish schools like St. Anthony

in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and St. John Vianney in the Diocese of Phoenix demonstrate what is possible when public or quasi-public funds are available through tax credits or voucher programs to support parents who choose to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to children in Catholic schools. Parish schools like St. Ann and Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary in the Archdiocese of New York prove that innovative partnerships and dedicated development efforts make it financially viable to provide the unique programmatic offerings and robust Catholic formation that appeal to low-income families.



Effective Networks

Among the most notable recent efforts to strengthen Catholic education in urban Hispanic communities are the Cristo Rey and NativityMiguel networks. Cristo Rey schools are modeled after Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago, in which four students share a corporate internship, with each student working one day each week. Corporate partners pay salaries directly to the schools, allowing Cristo Rey to keep tuition costs affordable. NativityMiguel schools are low-cost middle schools that offer extended day and extended year programs designed to help students who have fallen behind catch up and close the achievement gap. The networks have spread rapidly: There are now 24 Cristo Rey schools serving more than 5,000 students, 55 percent of whom are Hispanic; there are 64 NativityMiguel schools serving 4,400 students, 39 percent of whom are Hispanic. These networks have demonstrated impressive achievement as well: 99 percent of Cristo Rey school graduates were accepted to college,³⁴ while nearly 90 percent of NativityMiguel alumni graduate from high school in 4 years and 75 percent enrolled in college.³⁵



Recognizing Our Capacity

We do not need to look far to find the Catholic students who will fill the staggering number of vacant seats in our Catholic schools. Many of these students already belong to the parish that supports a Catholic school. One principal of a Catholic school in Tennessee told us that if all the children in her Catholic parish actually attended the parish school, “our building probably wouldn’t be able to support them.” These words challenge us to think creatively about making a Catholic education accessible for the children and families in our parishes and communities, particularly those who could benefit most from a Catholic education.

OBSTACLE

Most existing Catholic school buildings are located where the majority of Latinos are not.

The vast majority of urban Catholic school buildings are located in the Northeast and Midwest United States, which should not be surprising; after all, the American Catholic school system was established largely by European immigrants who settled in cities like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Nearly 80 percent of Latinos, however, live in the Southern and Western regions of the United States, which is also not surprising. What is surprising is the ratio of Catholic school seats to Latino children in these areas. Nationwide, there are more than four Latino children for each seat in Catholic schools. In the Northeast, there are two Latino children for each seat, but in the West there are more than 13 Latino children for every seat in a Catholic school.

OPPORTUNITY

There are at least 691,000 empty seats in existing Catholic schools.

Despite the large number of school closures in recent years, Catholic schools continue to have an abundance of capacity to serve more children. The estimated 691,000 empty seats in American Catholic schools in the 2007-08 school year represent an enormous opportunity to increase the number of children who will enjoy the Catholic school advantage. Moreover, although La-

tinians remain concentrated in the Southwest in areas with disproportionately low numbers of Catholic schools, their numbers are increasing in other regions of the country, representing an opportunity for Catholic schools in many communities of the Northeast, Midwest, and South to fill their empty seats by serving this population.

OBSTACLE

Many low-income families cannot afford to send their children to Catholic schools.

The average Catholic school tuition in 2008-09 is approximately \$3,200 for elementary school and nearly \$8,200 for high school, and the cost-to-educate is \$5,900 and \$10,200, respectively. More than 93 percent of Catholic elementary schools offer some form of tuition assistance, but for many Latino families, the difference between what the school charges for tuition—even with financial aid—and what the family can afford to pay is too great. A parent in Chicago explained that her children were offered scholarships, but “what I earned with my job was still not enough to pay the rent and the [decreased] school tuition, so I declined the scholarship, giving it to another family that could pay.” Cost, in every focus group, emerged as the number one issue for Hispanic parents who do not send their children to Catholic school.

In fact, case studies of successful schools revealed cost to be the number one challenge for the

school community even among parents who do have children in Catholic school. So as tuition rises to keep up with the cost-to-educate, low-income and working-class parents find themselves increasingly unable to pay tuition costs, and fewer children are enrolled in Catholic schools. At the same time, schools struggle to find revenue to cover the difference between what families can contribute and what it costs to educate, leading to increasing school debt in many places. Evidence suggests that the tuition-driven parochial school is not sustainable over time in low-income and working-class communities, and many of those communities are increasingly Hispanic. For these schools to survive, alternative funding models must be created.

OPPORTUNITY

Money does not tell the whole story.

When the Task Force set out to study the question of Latino participation in Catholic schools, the problem of finances was the first to surface. Because private schooling for children from low-income families presents a problematic business model, many assumed that solving the problem of encouraging more Latinos to enroll in Catholic schools would require, in all cases, a massive infusion of financial resources. It turns out, however, that economics do not entirely explain why only 3 percent of Latino families send their children to Catholic schools.

Innovative Funding Models

Schools that effectively serve the Latino children and families in their community have adopted a variety of innovative funding models to ensure that families have access to the quality education they provide. Schools like St. Anthony in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee accept vouchers, while Hope Rural School in Indiantown, FL, in the Diocese of Palm Beach, and San Miguel in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis rely on fundraising and benefaction to virtually eliminate tuition costs altogether. Schools in the Cristo Rey Network put students to work through their innovative work-study program to defray costs, while Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary and St. Ann, both in East Harlem in the Archdiocese of New York, rely on active school boards to help finance their efforts. Many schools take advantage of tuition assistance funds provided by consortia of parishes, diocesan managed assets, or independent Catholic school foundations. Still others have relied on the work of development directors or development boards populated with young Latino business leaders who share their business expertise and personal experience in Catholic education. No matter the specific mechanism, effective Catholic schools seek innovative ways to make the excellent education they provide accessible to all students.

Demographic and economic analysis indicates that, while the cost of attending Catholic school is prohibitive for some Latino families, income only appears to account for about one third of the discrepancy between the number of Latinos who send their children to private schools and the number of non-Hispanic whites who send their children to private school. So there must be factors other than income—cultural, educational, demographic, or environmental—that account for the low number of Latinos in Catholic schools. And therefore there must be opportunities for attracting more Latinos to Catholic schools that are not entirely contingent on finding alternative funding models.





Access to Catholic Schools

Catholic schools are fast disappearing from urban areas.	Signs of hope abound in the urban Catholic schools that remain open.
Most existing Catholic school buildings are located where the majority of Latinos are not.	There are at least 691,000 empty seats in existing Catholic schools.
Many low-income families cannot afford to send their children to Catholic schools.	Money does not tell the whole story.

Demand for Catholic Schools

Catholic schools in Latin America serve a very different clientele than those in the urban United States.	Latino parents express the desire for Catholic education.
Latinos often do not feel a sense of ownership in Catholic schools.	Culture, religion, and the Catholic school environment converge in a powerful way in Mexican-American communities, in particular, in the person of Our Lady of Guadalupe.
The enterprise of Catholic schools has changed considerably over the past forty years, placing increased demands on the resources of the parish and requiring more from the leadership of the pastor.	Schools with large enrollments often have pastors who embrace and endorse Catholic education in the Latino community.
Principals and pastors of schools serving Latino communities often do not have the time or resources to effectively and energetically promote the value of their schools.	Latino parishes often include rich social networks that can serve valuable recruiting and marketing functions for Catholic schools.
Language gaps between the home and school can reduce demand.	Thoughtful programs can reduce the language barrier in low-cost ways that invite fuller participation of the community.

Catholic Schools and Systems: Institutional Contexts

Church efforts to address the enrollment decline are sporadic and isolated, and traditional “one size fits all” governance paradigms no longer meet the needs for many urban Catholic schools.	There is an observable sense of urgency and openness among many dioceses to address these challenges in new and collaborative ways.
There are huge challenges to meet the demand for well-formed teachers and leaders, especially those of Latino background.	There is a new energy in many institutions of higher education and among many dioceses to embrace this challenge effectively.
Many contemporary Catholic schools are perceived as “outsider” institutions by Hispanic community members.	Catholic schools that operate like community centers add value to Latino communities.

Demand for Catholic Schools

OBSTACLE

Catholic schools in Latin America serve a very different clientele than those in the urban United States.

Interviews with parents, pastors, principals, and teachers consistently pointed toward a fundamental difference of paradigm between Catholic schools in the United States and those in Latin America, especially Mexico. In the United States, the Catholic school system was largely built by low-income and working-class European immigrant communities, and many of the schools they built continue to serve low-income, minority families. In Mexico and other parts of Latin America, however, most Catholic schools are elite institutions, serving only the upper class. This difference represents a cultural obstacle that demands a systematic approach to educating the Latino residents of the communities Catholic schools serve.

OPPORTUNITY

Latino parents consistently express the desire for Catholic education.

Focus groups of Latino parents who do not have their children in Catholic schools showed remarkable consistency across geographic, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines; they uniformly reported great admiration for Catholic schools and in nearly every case would prefer to enroll their children in a Catholic school were one nearby and, most impor-

tantly, affordable. In the Atlanta focus group, one parent said, “I would feel blessed if I had the chance to send my children to a Catholic school,” while another in New York told us, “If I could get a job and send my children to a Catholic school, I would do it without thinking about it. And I would work only for that. Sincerely.” So if the barrier of cost can be lowered, in reality and in perception, the evidence suggests that many Latino parents would opt for Catholic schooling for their children.

OBSTACLE

Latinos often do not feel a sense of ownership in Catholic schools.

The shift in the composition of the teaching staff in Catholic schools is one of the most significant differences between contemporary Catholic schools and those of a century ago. The most obvious difference is the shift from a teaching force that was, until the 1960s, almost entirely composed of vowed religious women and men to one that is now 96 percent lay. A less obvious—but no less important—shift has occurred with respect to the cultural backgrounds of teachers. While the typical parish school at the turn of the 20th century might have been staffed entirely by sisters and priests, those women and men were likely of the same ethnic background—and speakers of the same native language, and perhaps even from the same neighborhood—as the children they served. In 2009, most

“Like all parents, we have dreams...”

When asked why they send their children to Sacred Heart Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Washington, DC, one parent eloquently stated, “Like all parents, we have dreams. And we want the best for our children. And I want my children to go to a good school, and we decided that we are going to make a lot of sacrifices because we wanted the best for our children.”



CNS Photo



urban Catholic schools that serve Hispanic students are staffed entirely by non-Hispanic, non-Spanish-speaking teachers and school leaders, many of whom are not part of the parish community. The principal survey found that on average, only 34 percent of the teaching staff in urban Catholic schools with a predominantly Latino student body are Latino. In this survey principals also reported that 41 percent of their teaching staff did not know any Spanish, while the remaining teachers represent a wide range of Spanish language ability. As a result, the schools may not be perceived by Latino parents and parishioners as

organic parts of the larger parish community.

Additionally, teachers in the schools surveyed were not likely to have any formal training to prepare them to tailor their curricular or instructional approaches to the particular community they serve. While research suggests that classrooms that take culture into account can be more effective and can result in higher achievement,³⁶ the principal survey suggested the need for professional development that could help teachers increase their capacity to be culturally sensitive while maintaining high expectations for academic achievement.

Invitation to Ownership and Leadership

Some suggest that old European-American parishes in America's inner cities haven't been "welcoming" enough to Latino communities that have taken the place of the Irish, Italians, Poles, Bohemians, Germans, and Lithuanians. But if we consider the history of urban Catholic schools carefully, we see that the need to be "welcoming" is perhaps not the right paradigm for serving the Latino community.

The Catholic schools of the early twentieth century United States did not seek to "welcome" Poles, Germans, or Lithuanians to their schools. The Poles built and ran schools for Poles. The Germans staffed German-speaking schools for German children. The Lithuanians brought over hundreds of Lithuanian sisters to teach the Lithuanian children of their parishes. Parents and families knew the sisters and priests who staffed their schools, and they could speak to them in their native languages.

Now, however, we find that the Catholic schools of our urban areas were not built by Latinos to serve Latino children and often are not staffed by Spanish-speaking Latinos. Instead, research and our experience tell us they are largely staffed by white, non-Spanish-speaking college graduates who often do not live within several miles of their workplace. By perpetuating a paradigm of "welcoming" and "inviting" Latinos into old European-American schools, we may be trying to pour new wine into old wineskins. Instead, we might think about how schools can make changes to the school environment that have the capacity to reinvent the schools entirely, transforming them into new wineskins for a different community.

In other words, the goal might not be to welcome Latinos into European-American schools; instead, the goal ought to be to transform those schools entirely. The key question when considering how to change the school environment to attract the Latino community cannot be, "How do we welcome *them* into our schools?" Instead, the question must be: "What can existing Catholic schools do to invite Latino investment, involvement, and, especially, a real sense of ownership of these schools?"

OPPORTUNITY

Culture, religion, and the Catholic school environment converge in a powerful way, in Mexican American communities in particular, in the person of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, is widely recognized as a symbol of Hispanic Catholicism and is particularly important to the 66 percent of Hispanics who are of Mexican origin.³⁷ Our Lady of Guadalupe is not only “a very Mexican manifestation of the Virgin Mary” but is also considered “the foundation of Mexican identity” and the foundation of Mexican Catholicism in particular.³⁸

The teachers at St. Ann, a case study school in the Archdiocese of Chicago, explained the abundance of Guadalupana murals, t-shirts, and art seen in the local neighborhood. As one teacher explained of her students’ devotion to the image, “She’s *ours*.” Another teacher offered that Mexicans are proud that Mary chose to appear in Mexico. The image stands as an indicator of the dignity and worth of the Mexican people, and her feast day, December 12, is one of the most important Holy Days of the year in Mexico and in the United States wherever Mexicans and Mexican-Americans live.

Catholic schools that effectively serve Latino communities make use of this icon of Latino Catholic culture in important ways. In the principal survey, administrators de-

scribed the importance of purposefully integrating culturally specific religious traditions, like honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe, into the curriculum and physical environment. In the open response portion of the survey, principals most frequently recommended that schools weave together cultural and religious identities in order to build a community of mutual respect among stakeholders. Environmental markers—physical manifestations in the school building of the students’ home culture, faith, and language—are important indicators to parents and children of how the school values their specific Catholic and ethnic identities.

OBSTACLE

The enterprise of Catholic schools has changed considerably over the past 40 years, placing increased demands on the resources of the parish and requiring more from the leadership of the pastor.

Pastors are responsible for the spiritual and temporal well-being of the parish and provide leadership and oversight for her many ministries. The parish school is often the largest single ministry of the local church with increasing demands on the leadership of the pastor: school budget, facilities, supervising school leadership, Catholic identity, and almost every other important dimension of school operations. The 2008 *Notre Dame Study of U.S. Pastors*, a national survey of over 1,000 pastors, found that pastors have a



“I credit our pastor...”

“I credit our success hugely to our current pastor. He was very proactive in reaching out to the Hispanic community in our area, and he did it in a number of ways. He started a bilingual Mass, he started a Spanish Mass, he had the school be the site for the county’s adult ESL training, so that would bring in people that were trying to learn English in the school in the evening. He worked a great deal with the diocesan Hispanic ministries to target people, to find them and minister to them. And then it was a very short period of time when he started getting families into the school.”

-Sedona Prater
Principal,
Sacred Heart Cathedral School,
Knoxville, TN

high valuation of Catholic schools, but are increasingly concerned with the financial and enrollment management resources required to keep them open, accessible, and sustainable. Furthermore, as many urban and rural dioceses face pastor shortages and increased deficits, it has become clear that, as one priest in the pastor study explained, “Pastors can’t do it all anymore...We need professionals” to help run schools.³⁹ Or as Bishop Jaime Soto of the Diocese of Sacramento told the task force, “We can’t keep putting all our eggs in the pastor’s basket.”

OPPORTUNITY

Schools with large enrollments often have pastors who embrace and endorse Catholic education in the Latino community.

When pastors understand and embrace the school as a ministry of the parish and endorse Catholic schools from the pulpit on many and regular occasions, and when they write about the school in their newsletters and other written communications, awareness of the school is raised among Latino parents, who are then more likely to explore the possibility of enrolling their children in the parish school. In addition, pastors who get out and meet their parishioners in the parking lot and in their homes, who enlist the support of mavens and connectors in the community who catalyze communication, and who take the time to talk about the school in their day-to-day encounters with

folks like supermarket checkout clerks and the operators of the local daycare, have found great success in increasing enrollment.

We have learned that when pastors are sincerely involved in the life of the school, Latino parents more readily make a connection between the parish Church and the parish school and are more likely to consider sending their children to the school because of their familiarity with and trust of the pastor. That said, even the most enthusiastic and energetic pastors can struggle if they have to face the challenge of running school operations alone, so it is important to underscore the need for pastors to engage the broader lay community in the leadership of the school. Successful pastors must increasingly rely on lay leaders to assist in meeting the many and increasing demands of running a parish school.

OBSTACLE

Principals and pastors of schools serving Latino communities often do not have the time or resources to promote the value of their school effectively and energetically.

Our principal survey and interviews and parent focus groups suggest that Catholic schools often do not actively recruit families to enroll. Our surveys suggest that pastors and principals often do not feel that promoting the school is even part of their responsibility. And principals and pastors often are so

overwhelmed and overworked that they simply do not have the capacity to market their schools effectively. But in the successful schools we studied—in all cases—principals viewed recruiting, promotion, and marketing as a central element of their job description. At St. Rose of Lima, for example, Jeannie Courchene deems growing enrollment as a key responsibility. She and her pastor, Fr. Jerry Rohr, work with pastors of neighboring parishes without schools to recruit students and have involved parishioners in making posters to display in all the pre-schools in the area. “We draw from 25 zip codes,” she notes. “When I got here enrollment was 140 and now we are at 200—we tried to increase every year by at least 10 students.”

Parents who do not send their children to Catholic schools suggested that marketing and more information would be helpful. In San Antonio, a parent told our focus group, “Catholic schools [are inaccessible] because many of us are afraid of even getting close: We are afraid because they are too expensive.” She explained that, for most parents in her neighborhood, they do not bother approaching the school because they are afraid to learn “how much they are going to be charged.” Ultimately, she said, “There is not enough information, and people are afraid to go there and ask.” This parent’s advice to Catholic educators was simple: “Above all, schools should give more information. If there were possibilities that our children could attend, then we

Multi-Faceted Strategy for Boosting Enrollment

St. Ignatius Martyr School in the Diocese of Austin experienced an enrollment increase of 35 percent in one year after school leaders embraced the recommendations of a local community organizer to spread the word about the school. By inviting small groups of parents to school for coffee to conduct informal focus and information sharing groups, St. Ignatius enrollment jumped from 183 to 252 students in a single year. Additionally, St. Ignatius dropped the in-parish/out-of-parish rate distinction, which had effectively discouraged neighboring pastors whose parishes did not have schools from encouraging parishioners to send their children to St. Ignatius, out of a fear that parishioners would switch parishes to get the cheaper rate. As a result, pastors from nearby parishes started letting St. Ignatius recruit during and after Masses, and the school now draws children from 15 different parishes and 37 zip codes. One key recruiting strategy: making friends with parish secretaries at all the non-school parishes nearby. When families move to town and join the parishes, be sure the parish secretary holds information about your school.

would want more information, to know if they can help us, if there are scholarships.” Clearly, more effective communication with Latino families must be part of the solution.

OPPORTUNITY

Latino parishes often include rich social networks that can serve valuable recruiting and marketing functions for Catholic schools.

Lay leaders in the parish community can also be effective promoters of Catholic schooling. Given the likelihood of increasing pastor shortages, a growing number of parishes with schools will lack a full-time pastor. Moreover, given the increasingly complex nature of running a contemporary parish and school, parishes cannot rely exclusively on pastors to promote Catholic schools on their own. Thus, promoting the





value of the school must be a shared responsibility of the principal and other stakeholders in the school, including faculty, staff, parents, parishioners, and board members.

Parishes are natural social networks that astute school leaders utilize to promote the school and increase enrollment. At Holy Redeemer Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, a “*madrina*” (godmother) program formalizes the natural social networks in the Latino community by identifying “connectors,” socially influential people in the parish community who serve as mentors to and sponsors of new families coming to the school.

The success of Holy Redeemer’s *madrina* program reflects another broader lesson: Schools that extend personal, one-on-one invitations to Latino families have more success than those that extend blanket invitations.

In successful case study schools, the most prominent maven in the school community was often the school or parish secretary. The

people who work in the office can play a pivotal role in determining the “face” of the school to the community. At St. Rose of Lima, for example, administrative assistant Esther Gutierrez “wears about ten hats. She’s the secretary, the registrar, she coordinates athletics, she coordinates all the volunteers. She’s the heart of the school—she’s incredible. She just has a sense for what parents need to hear.”

OBSTACLE

Language gaps between the home and school can reduce demand.

The survey of principals revealed that the vast majority of teachers in Catholic schools that serve Latino communities are neither Latino nor Spanish-speaking, though in those schools that self-described as particularly effective at serving Latino communities, the number of Latinos and Spanish speakers on staff was unusually high. The survey found that leaders of 91 percent of these self-described effective schools attributed their success to the presence of Latino and Spanish-speaking staff and the language support they are able to provide to Latino families. Similarly, qualitative survey results and site visits suggest that schools that are particularly effective employ a Spanish speaker in the front office, ensuring that newcomers to the school will find someone who can speak both English and Spanish.

“I remember our first Hispanic student...”

“I remember our first Hispanic student. He came to us in the eighth grade, barely passing in the public schools. But when he came, our faculty tested him in Spanish and found out this is a bright young man. And when he found out that a faculty member was going to stay after school every day for an hour with him until he caught up, he caught up rather quickly and then went on to Knoxville Catholic High School. And then he was the first person on either side of his family to go to college. And that to me is one of the exciting things that we are seeing happen with our students.”

*-Rev. Al Humbrecht
Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Knoxville, TN*

OPPORTUNITY

Thoughtful programs can reduce the language barrier in low-cost ways that invite fuller participation of the community.

In our increasingly global economy, our nation benefits greatly by educating a bilingual citizenry, and our Latino students, many of whom are bilingual, will be well-positioned to take leadership roles if we organize our schools to support mastery of both English and Spanish. While bilingual schooling may be beyond the capacity of many Catholic schools, all Catholic schools can treat students' home language as a resource rather than as a problem.⁴⁰ At the very least, Catholic school educators must "begin with seeing the culture of our families—including faith and language—as an asset," according to David Card, president of Escuela de Guadalupe Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Denver. While schools like Escuela de Guadalupe and Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago implement a dual-language curriculum, other effective schools honor the home culture, faith, and language of the students in other ways. The key, according to Card, is that "we treat our kids with dignity with regard to their language, and that we don't treat their home language like an obstacle to be overcome."

The survey of principals and case studies revealed that the most successful schools tend to employ Spanish speakers in the main office, and the most effective teachers of

¿Habla español?

Consider the 8th grade Spanish teacher at the Academy of Our Lady in Waukegan, Illinois, in the Archdiocese of Chicago, who asked the class to raise their hand if they could speak Spanish. None of them did. The teacher soon came to realize that many of her students could indeed speak Spanish but were embarrassed to admit it. As a result, this teacher is "trying to build up the pride in, and the acceptance of their language, their culture, who they are. It's ok to raise your hand and say, 'I speak Spanish.' Can you imagine how horrible that must be to those kids to get to that point, where they don't want to admit who they are?"

Latino students demonstrate a willingness to learn Spanish and use it in the classroom to help students develop English language skills. This is consistent with linguistic and educational research suggesting that English language learners who receive instruction in their native language and in their target language make greater gains than those whose native language is left out of the classroom.⁴¹

Language barriers between the parents and school can also inhibit full parental participation in the education of their children. Thankfully many schools have recognized this potential obstruction and have taken steps to ameliorate its impact. For example, many schools send home all official school communication in Spanish and English, have Spanish-speaking staff members in the front office, employ a Hispanic parent-school liaison, provide translators for parent-teacher conferences, and even offer English classes for parents at night and on the weekends. The embrace of Spanish by school personnel reflects not only an acceptance of the language

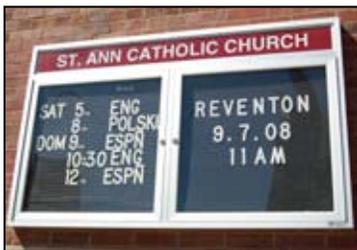


of the students being served but also an appreciation for Latino culture more broadly, thus communicating an acceptance and appreciation for these individuals and their culture as both legitimate and valuable.

Catholic Schools and Systems: Institutional Contexts

OBSTACLE

Church efforts to address the enrollment decline are sporadic and isolated, and traditional “one size fits all” governance paradigms no longer meet the needs for many urban Catholic schools.



Task force members met people across the country who have invested enormously in Catholic schools serving Hispanic communities. We encountered numerous hard-working people whose good will and faith have done much to preserve the Catholic school advantage for thousands of children, including bishops, clergy, vowed religious, and lay people who have spent significant parts of their lives shedding sweat and tears for Catholic schools. Unfortunately, it often takes Herculean efforts to achieve success, and for all the heroes we met this year, Catholic schools need many more leaders willing to fight for the Catholic school advantage.

Historically, the Catholic parish school has stood as a powerful paradigm of effective education as well as an incredibly effective organizer of social capital. Catholic schools

have been far more nimble and innovative than many other systems—creating better educational results on far fewer resources than public and even charter schools. And many charter school models, like the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) and Achievement First, have taken many of the most successful elements of traditional Catholic schools and have applied them to small public schools to produce some of the most innovative and successful public school systems in the history of American public education.⁴²

Despite its long history of effective education for cultural minority communities, the urban Catholic parish school has become an institution that, as constituted, may not endure in low-income and working-class communities without new approaches. The decline of the low-cost vowed religious teaching force, the rising costs of employing a lay teaching force, the shortage of pastors, and the changing demographics in urban areas all contribute to a new challenge we face as a Church, unparalleled in the history of religion in America, to transform radically our parish schools. If we are to turn the tide and start reopening and building schools instead of closing them, we must find ways to adapt with energy, imagination, and urgency to the changing situation that presents itself.

Where innovative efforts have succeeded, they have largely happened as a result of the heroic efforts of isolated individuals. Very

few of the best practices uncovered by the task force were the result of diocesan-wide interventions, and most were the result of entrepreneurial individuals facing almost certain school closure. A key issue facing our parish schools is the issue of school governance. There is no doubt that new models must be imagined for the governance of parish schools in many communities, and dioceses and parishes need information about alternative governance models. Some alternative governance models promise to increase the investment of lay leaders in the school's operations, which may lead to increased investment among Latino and other committed professionals who will serve on school boards and in parish leadership positions.

Some of these governance systems, while they may reduce the administrative demands on the pastor as the chief executive officer of the

school, tend to flourish when they celebrate the vital spiritual leadership of the pastor and preserve the relationship between the parish and the school. While there are many possible advantages to a model of governance that reduces the school's dependence on the pastor, the important role that *el padrecito* plays in the life of the Latino community must be taken into consideration.

OPPORTUNITY

There is an observable sense of urgency and openness among many dioceses to address these challenges in new and collaborative ways.

Bishops across the country have developed innovative approaches to enlivening schools while simultaneously relieving the often enormous burden that school administration can place on pastors, allowing them more freedom to serve the spiritual



and pastoral needs of the parish and school. In the Diocese of Bridgeport, for example, the governance model has shifted from parish-based schools to diocesan schools on a large scale. This administrative transition was designed to allow pastors to exercise pastoral support for the school while empowering local school boards and educational professionals in the Catholic Schools' Office to oversee school operations. Other effective governance innovations include the Mid-Atlantic Consortium, in which several dioceses on the East Coast share resources and ideas by collaborating frequently, as well as the Carver governance model adopted by the Lasallian schools of the Christian Brothers of the District of San Francisco.

number of Latinos in leadership roles in Catholic schools. Parents and children more readily identified with Latino faculty members and school leaders, and effective Latino teachers drew on their shared cultural backgrounds to enhance instruction.

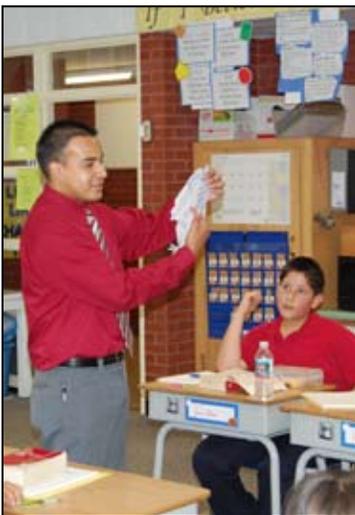
This is not to say that Latino children must be taught by Latino teachers. On the contrary, the current reality is that 94 percent of Latino children in Catholic schools will be taught by non-Latino teachers, and those teachers need to be better prepared to work with students who do not share their cultural background. Most schools and dioceses lack professional development programs that deal directly with culture in the classroom, though in those that do, enrollment gains seem to follow. In the Diocese of Arlington, for example, after a study of Latino participation in Catholic schools, the diocese implemented a professional development program in two schools, using the book *Managing Diverse Classrooms*,⁴⁴ to prepare teachers to enhance their capacity to work with students whose backgrounds differ from their own. The program is new but early benefits include significantly improved teacher morale, educational gains for students, and positive word-of-mouth in the Latino community.

Colleges and universities need to enhance efforts to recruit future Latino teachers and leaders into teacher preparation programs. The experience of the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) and The Mary

OBSTACLE

There are important challenges to meet the demand for well-formed teachers and leaders, especially those of Latino background.

As Catholic school classrooms increasingly enroll Latino students, Latinos are strikingly underrepresented in teaching and leadership roles. Only 6 percent of teachers nationally are Hispanic,⁴³ and most of the case study schools were led by non-Hispanic white teachers and school leaders, many of whom were unable to speak Spanish. School leaders in these successful schools consistently expressed a desire to hire more Latinos, as they saw numerous benefits to increasing the



Ann Remick Leadership programs at the University of Notre Dame are telling; Latinos are underrepresented in both programs, despite significant efforts to promote and recruit teachers and leaders to serve in Latino schools. New and innovative efforts must be developed for Catholic schools to build capacity in a major way to form a new generation of teachers and leaders—including Latinos and non-Latinos alike.

OPPORTUNITY

There is a new energy in many institutions of higher education and among many dioceses to embrace this challenge effectively.

While ACE has served Hispanic schools for more than a decade, it has consistently tried—not always successfully—to recruit both Latino leaders and non-Latinos who are motivated to work in the Latino community. Other Catholic colleges and universities that have teacher preparation programs similar to ACE and that comprise the University Consortium on Catholic Education (UCCE), particularly those that serve largely Latino school communities, have also turned their focus toward developing Latino teachers and leaders in recent years.

Several UCCE institutions, joined by other Catholic colleges and universities, have recently formed the Catholic Higher Education Collaborative (CHEC), through which higher education leaders dedicated to supporting Catholic K-12 education

seek greater collaboration on shared issues. In 2009, Loyola Marymount University hosted the first CHEC conference, which focused on issues related specifically to the Church's capacity to educate Latinos, especially the newly-arrived. Through this organization, university-based researchers and practitioners from across the country shared ideas and resources for enhancing teacher and leadership preparation programs to achieve this goal.

Also, at the request of several CHEC participants, the American Educational Research Association recently created a special interest group dedicated to issues surrounding Catholic schooling, providing a formal venue in a major institution for on-going research, discussion, and collaboration around these issues.

OBSTACLE

Many contemporary Catholic schools are perceived as “outsider” institutions in Hispanic communities.

A combination of factors already described contributes to the perception among many Hispanic parents and parishioners that Catholic schools are not organic parts of the parish community. The perception of Catholic schools as being reserved for the elite, the perception that Catholic schools are financially out of reach for the average parishioner, and the lack of Spanish speakers and Latinos among school teachers and leadership often lead





to the conclusion that Catholic schools are “theirs” and not “ours” by Latinos in the community.

OPPORTUNITY

Catholic schools that operate like community centers add value to Latino communities.

Successful Catholic schools in Latino communities often host evening and weekend events that welcome Latinos so that the school is seen more as a community center than simply a traditional daytime school. In recent years many promising community-centered efforts to engage Latinos in education have demonstrated success.⁴⁵ Several case study schools have become community centers as well. For example, Holy Redeemer Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon, had ESL, citizen-

ship, and computer classes in the evening for Latino families. This brought families to the school who eventually inquired about sending their children to the school. Sacred Heart Cathedral School in the Diocese of Knoxville, Tennessee, arranged for the county’s ESL courses to be taught in the school building, which attracted people to the facility. Shortly thereafter the principal reported an increase in enrollment. Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in the Archdiocese of Chicago leases its school building to community organizations on a regular basis, so that there is an event or meeting being held at the school nearly every night of the week. And the Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis shares space with the Colin Powell Youth Leadership Center in a facility designed specifically to double as a school and community center. As a result, the building serves 25,000 neighborhood children and parents in addition to the students enrolled in the school. When schools become organic parts of the community—and when people grow comfortable being in the building on a regular basis—the barriers to enrollment tend to fall away. The school becomes a less intimidating place, and misperceptions about cost and culture can be replaced with accurate information and by a sense of belonging to a community.

Recommendations

What will it take to accomplish our goal, to double the percentage—and more than triple the number—of Latino students in Catholic schools by 2020? The following recommendations flow from an honest appraisal of the challenges and opportunities that emerge from the findings of the task force, especially informed by the lessons of success and best practices already underway in many schools and dioceses across the country. We acknowledge the breadth and depth of the challenges before us, but underscore that the obstacles and opportunities identified by this task force can be successfully addressed to the extent that we continue to strengthen networks and move people to action locally and nationally.

Our implementation strategy focuses on locations where we can make significant progress in a relatively short time: dioceses with large and/or significantly growing Latino populations and a significant number of empty seats in Catholic schools. We recognize that even if nothing is done, the number of Latino students in Catholic schools is likely to increase by about 75,000 over the next ten years given present demographic trends. In order to reach our enrollment increase of roughly ten times that number, we propose to pursue the following four-part strategy:

- Challenge schools to increase existing enrollment;
- Fill empty seats by increasing the demand through strategies proven to work;
- Reopen recently closed schools near Latino populations; and
- Build new schools in areas with high Latino populations.

Our specific recommendations follow the major themes identified in our findings. These themes include:

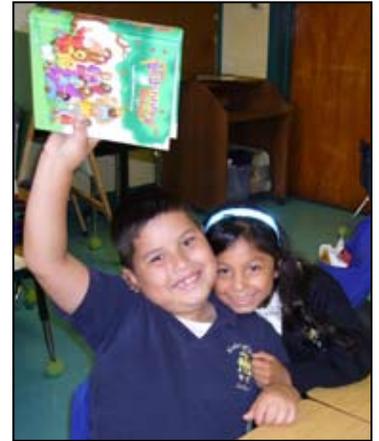
I. DEVELOPING DEMAND
Informing, attracting, and lowering financial barriers for Latino families;

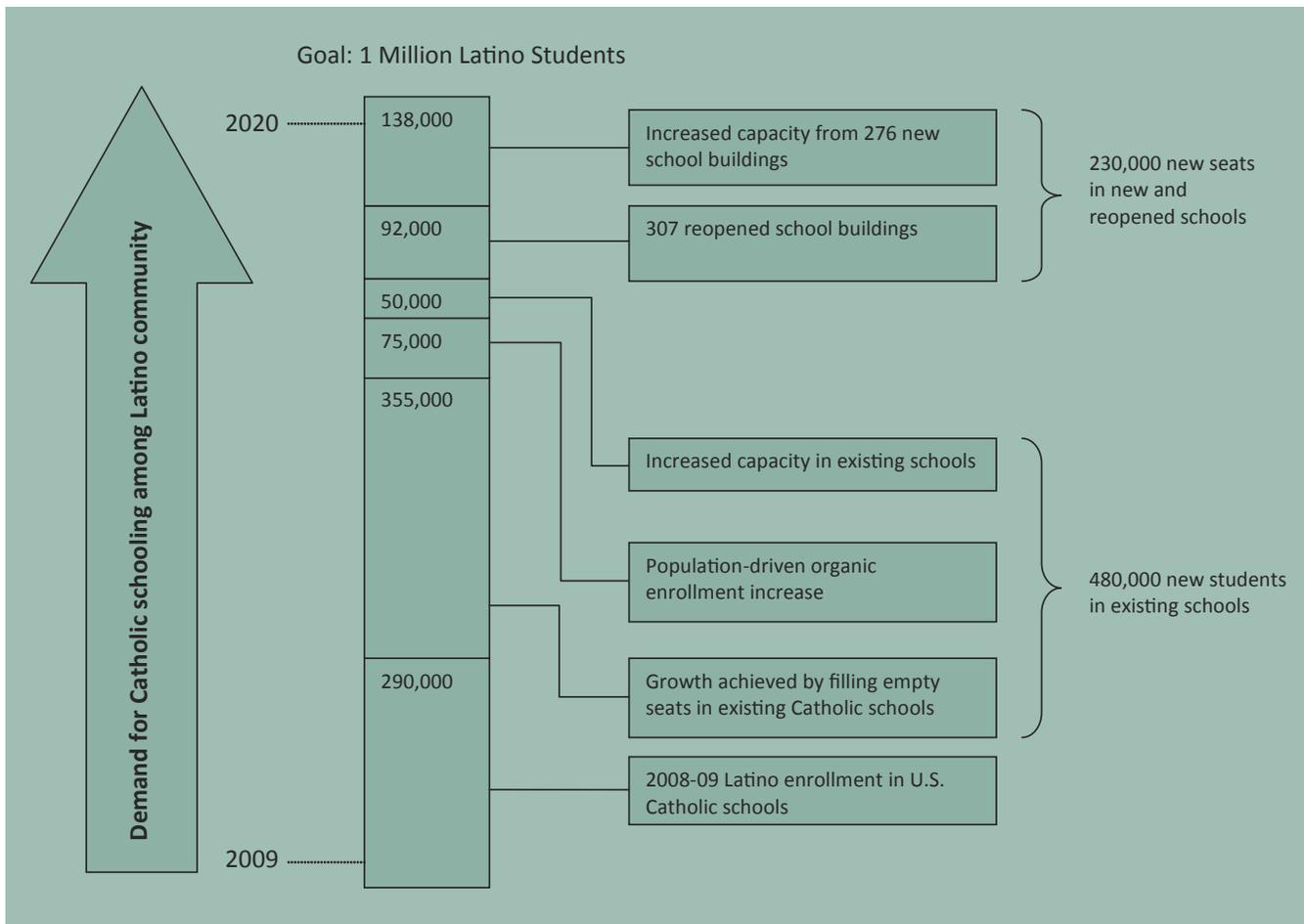
II. DEVELOPING ACCESS
Reopening and building facilities;

III. DEVELOPING LEADERS
Building human capacity for leadership in classrooms, schools, parishes, dioceses, and other areas; and

IV. TRANSFORMING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND SYSTEMS
Enhancing institutional structures and processes.

Within each theme, we suggest initiatives as appropriate for the five main stakeholder groups we have identified, namely, the Latino community (parents, families, and civic leaders), Church leadership, school





leadership, civic leaders (business, community, government, philanthropy), and higher education, where we highlight initiatives that will be pursued by the Alliance for Catholic Education, the Institute for Latino Studies, and the Institute for Educational Initiatives at the University of Notre Dame.

I. Developing Demand *Informing and Attracting Latino Families*

Increasing the demand for Catholic schools among Hispanic families is both essential and feasible. Our recommendations about marketing and communications respond

to findings that Latino families often lack information about Catholic schools, their benefits, and their orientation toward serving families of modest income even as there is widespread, if latent, desire for their children to have the Catholic school advantage in its broadest sense. While strategic national and regional initiatives specifically targeted to promote the value proposition of Catholic schools for Latinos are certainly advisable, especially to keep this issue squarely before the larger Church and civic community, any national or even diocesan efforts must underscore the importance of local action and outreach. Not surprisingly, individual schools and the people connected with



them—pastors, principals, faculty and staff, and parents—have tremendous leverage to increase demand.

Our findings suggest that the adoption of a clear and coherent set of marketing and communication initiatives at the school level can yield substantial enrollment gains of Latino students in a fairly short time. Catholic schools proximate to Latino populations can achieve remarkable results by implementing key lessons from successful schools about the most effective ways to attract Latino families.

SCHOOLS CAN:

Implement targeted and personalized recruiting efforts.

Open houses and blanket invitations are not as effective as personal invitations and small group approaches. Open houses sponsored by the school to attract new families flourish most when Latino parents are present to host them and answer questions. School leaders should consider hosting monthly coffee hours with small groups of parents and parishioners and should invite local community members to assist in recruiting new families to the school.

Review the amount and nature of paperwork and forms.

Perceived bureaucracy is a major disincentive to attracting new families, and schools should ensure that someone from the school is avail-

able to help parents, if necessary, complete any essential paperwork. Schools that seek to serve Spanish speakers must ensure that all outreach to parents, including information, application, and registration materials and financial aid forms, should be user-friendly and available in Spanish.

Take advantage of social networks.

Whenever possible, schools should employ someone from or well-connected to the local Latino community who works in the office and functions as a liaison. Schools should make a special effort to employ or otherwise draw in parish *madrinas* and *padrinos* (literally, “godparents”), and other revered and trusted figures in parish communities.

Create an appealing physical environment that reflects the culture and values of the community served by the school.

Our research suggests that Latino families that place their children in Catholic schools do so because they are often drawn by their Catholic identity and by an expectation that the school will aid in their own efforts to transmit the religious, ethical, and cultural values of the family. Catholic schools that serve Latino communities can distinguish themselves from public and other private alternatives by being visibly Catholic in both their outward appearance and in their inner workings.

How Did We Determine These Numbers?

Our analysis suggests that filling empty seats offers the greatest impact, and it has the virtue of enhancing the financial stability of schools currently operating below capacity. Filling half of the current empty seats in ten years would provide half of the total growth needed to meet the goal. Increasing capacity in schools with waiting lists (over 25 percent of Catholic schools have waiting lists) can generate modest but important gains. Reopened schools are likely to be a mixture of sizes, some with one of every grade and others with two or more of every grade. We project a mean enrollment of 300 for these re-opened schools. For new schools, we base our projections on 500 students per site, a number that presumes roughly 500 students per school, a reasonable figure for an elementary school with two classes per grade or a modest-sized high school.

Familiar iconography that resonates with the home culture can critically strengthen connections between the home and school, with emphasis on culturally responsive holy days such as *El Día de los Muertos* (All Souls' Day, November 2), the Christmas-season celebrations of *Las Posadas* (commemorating Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, December 16-24) and *Los Tres Reyes Magos* (Epiphany, January 6), patronal saints' days like the feast of San Juan

Engage Spanish speakers.

Catholic schools have historically privileged the cultural resources of the families they serve, and the successful establishment of urban Catholic schools in the nineteenth century was largely a function of Catholic willingness to engage communities in their native languages. In an increasingly global and information-driven economy, facility with multiple languages is a distinct advantage that our schools should value and teach. To ensure high quality academic achievement, all Catholic schools must ensure that their graduates are fluent in English. Educational research indicates that the best predictor of student ability to adopt a new language is facility with the native language, so students should not be discouraged from speaking their native language in an effort to adopt English. Dioceses should encourage all teachers to take advantage of the linguistic skills students bring with them to the classroom. In schools where students speak Spanish at home, Spanish should be welcomed and, to the extent teachers are able, used in the school.

Establish boards and committees to involve parents and leaders from the parish and local community in the leadership of the school.

There are numerous ways to get parents and community leaders involved in schools, but empowering



CNS Photo

Bautista (the patron saint of Puerto Rico, June 24), and other festivals, especially those that celebrate *apariciones* of Our Lady, including *La Virgen de la Caridad de Cobre* (the patroness of Cuba, September 8), *Nuestra Señora de Altagracia* (the patroness of the Dominican Republic, January 21), *Nuestra Señora de la Divina Providencia* (the patroness of Puerto Rico, November 19), and *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (the patroness of Mexico and all the Americas, December 12).

I. DEVELOPING DEMAND

SCHOOLS CAN...

- Implement targeted and personalized recruiting efforts
- Review the amount and nature of paperwork and forms
- Take advantage of social networks
- Create a culturally responsive physical environment
- Engage Spanish speakers
- Establish boards and committees to involve parish leaders and parents
- Provide high quality early childhood educational programs
- Offer high quality childcare after the school day
- Function as parish and community centers in the evenings and on weekends

DIOCESSES CAN...

- Effectively promote the value of Catholic schooling
- Promote from the pulpit
- Make outreach a priority
- Aggressively expand and promote tuition assistance
- Increase Catholic giving

CIVIC LEADERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION CAN...

- Increase local scholarship funds
- Expand publicly funded scholarship programs

II. DEVELOPING ACCESS

ALL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO...

- Fill empty seats
- Reopen closed schools
- Build new schools

III. DEVELOPING LEADERS

SCHOOLS AND DIOCESES CAN...

- Transform school culture to address the specific needs of the Latino community
- Recruit and educate Latino teachers and school leaders

HIGHER EDUCATION CAN...

- Develop teachers' and school leaders' awareness and expertise to transform classrooms and schools
- Prepare teachers to work with Latino students
- Create an exchange program for vowed religious teachers from Latin America

IV. TRANSFORMING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND SYSTEMS

DIOCESES AND SCHOOLS CAN...

- Consider new models of governance and school organization
- Forge partnerships between higher education and individual Catholic schools

ALL STAKEHOLDERS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO...

- Improve technological infrastructure in schools





a school board and other committees to share appropriately in the governance, development, and strategic planning of a school can be a particularly effective way to invite and increase Latino ownership of Catholic schools.

Provide high quality early childhood educational programs at elementary schools.

Esther Flores, principal of St. Anthony School in Harlingen, Texas in the Diocese of Brownsville, credits the preschool program as a major cause of the school's high enrollment in the lower grades, explaining, "Parents come to experience and treasure the caring environment and academic emphasis of our PreK program." She argues that families accustomed to paying for childcare and preschool are more

likely to see elementary school tuition as a worthwhile and expected expense once they witness how their children are nurtured in the preschool program. Similarly, Sister Josephine Cioffi, principal of St. Ann Catholic School in Harlem in the Archdiocese of New York, suggested that the development of an early childhood program contributed greatly to a recent 93 percent jump in enrollment.

Offer high quality childcare after the school day.

For many families where both parents work full-time, and especially in single-parent homes, reliable childcare is vital. Catholic schools are much more welcoming and valuable to the extent that they offer affordable and effective childcare through the late afternoon.



NOTRE DAME'S COMMITMENT

I. DEVELOPING DEMAND

- Conduct a national marketing study
- Form partnerships with dioceses & schools to gather and disseminate expertise
- Educate priests, deacons, and lay leaders about the Catholic school advantage
- Strengthen local scholarship support for Latino students
- Support the expansion of publicly funded scholarship options

II. DEVELOPING ACCESS

- Provide consultative support to local efforts

III. DEVELOPING LEADERS

- Develop a school culture model that schools can implement
- Develop a principals' academy
- Promote lay involvement in school boards
- Establish the ACE Teaching Fellowship

IV. TRANSFORMING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND SYSTEMS

- Serve as a base of operations for ongoing research and program development

Programs that are both fun and educational are shown to increase demand and to advance academic achievement. Both Mt. Carmel-Holy Rosary Catholic School and St. Ann Catholic School in East Harlem, for example, offer an extended school day program, in which students are in class until 4:00 p.m. and after-school programming is provided until 6:00 p.m. The 64 NativityMiguel Schools nationwide likewise provide both an extended school day and an extended school year, both ensuring that students have ample opportunities to catch up to their peers to close the achievement gap and that parents can rest assured that their children are spending their afternoons in a safe, productive environment.

Function as parish and community centers in the evenings and on weekends.

Catholic school buildings can be important civic centers as well as educational institutions. Members of the community should be invited to make use of the facility in the evenings and on weekends for programs that benefit the common good and for meeting space. Schools should focus on creating opportunities for the people of the local community to enter the building; once in the building, information and promotional materials should be conspicuously available.

Dioceses can assist schools in their efforts to serve more Latino students in several ways.

DIOCESES CAN:

Effectively promote the value of Catholic schooling.

Bishops can help to reinforce—especially among pastors, priests, deacons, and superintendents of Catholic schools—the important connection between outreach efforts aimed at Hispanic Catholics and the Catholic school advantage. Our findings suggest the widespread potential for stronger collaboration between Catholic schools’ offices and offices of Hispanic ministry. In some cases, diocesan offices of the permanent diaconate might be charged with leading efforts to promote Catholic schools at Masses and in parish programs.

Promote from the pulpit.

The role of the pastor, regardless of the governance model, is vital to the well-being of the school. When pastors support Catholic schools from the pulpit and on other occasions, this raises awareness and encourages all parents, but especially Latino parents, to consider their parish school or, if their parish does not have a school, other Catholic schools in the area. When pastors are involved in the life of their schools, Latino parents are more likely to value the school for its strong Catholic identity. In addition, priests assigned to parishes without schools should be encouraged to promote neighboring Catholic schools to their parishioners. Conversely, pastors of parishes with

Consistently Praiseworthy

“In all my experience, from research to working in the White House, Catholic schools have consistently been one facet of Catholic life that has elicited well-justified praise far and wide from Catholics and non-Catholics alike.”

*-John Dilulio
founding director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives*



schools should ask pastors without schools for permission to recruit at weekend Masses and other parish events.

Make outreach a priority.

Superintendents of diocesan schools would be wise to foreground outreach and service to Latino families as a major theme for their principals and to ensure through ongoing professional development that these leaders have the tools to market their schools more effectively to Latinos. Dioceses would be well-served to ensure that someone in the central schools' office can function in the role of a Spanish-speaking liaison.

Latino community organiza-

tions and leadership also have an important contribution to make in communicating to their constituencies the good news about Catholic schools and working with diocesan and school leaders to optimize outreach initiatives to Latino families. The task force expects to work closely with these groups in the years ahead to find the most effective ways to enhance the dissemination of important information to parents and families.

The task force has identified several roles for the Alliance for Catholic Education and the Institute for Educational Initiatives at the University of Notre Dame to undertake to help increase demand.

ACE and the IEI WILL:

Conduct a national marketing study.

Parental focus group analysis conducted by Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies establishes the need and lays the groundwork for a comprehensive national marketing study to obtain a thorough and highly nuanced understanding of the attitudes of Latino parents toward Catholic schooling. A rigorous national study, conducted with partner institutions, will provide an essential research base to inform the development and improvement of national and local marketing and communications efforts aimed at increasing demand for Catholic schools among Latino families.

Charging "Fair-Share" Tuition

For college-bound students, the cost of an education can be staggering, but at "need-blind" universities like Notre Dame, financial aid processes ensure that students are admitted regardless of need and that 100 percent of each family's need is met by financial aid. Pastors and principals would do well to think about tuition in similar terms.

For small Catholic schools, whether there are 14 students in a class or 24, the cost to teach each class remains constant. The class requires the same teacher, the same principal, and the same utility costs. If, for example, the per-pupil-expenditure is \$4,000 per child, why not charge half that for a family who cannot afford the full amount? All parents can fill out financial aid applications, and the pastor or principal can contract with an independent company to review applications and make suggestions for financial aid. Such a system would allow schools to provide a Catholic education for more children and realize revenue they might not have. For struggling schools, this might make the difference between staying open and closing their doors. And while some might suggest that those who pay more will feel it is unfair for others to pay less, this fear does not meet with the experience of many pastors and principals with whom we spoke. In the event such perspectives should arise, is it not an opportunity for pastors, principals, and lay leaders on boards and committees to advocate for this need-based approach as a matter of Christian justice? During the 2007-08 school year, there were 691,000 empty seats in our Catholic schools nationwide. A targeted, need-based tuition system might help fill many of those seats.

Form partnerships with dioceses and schools to gather and disseminate expertise.

Acknowledging the many successful efforts in schools and dioceses across the country, the University of Notre Dame embraces the opportunity to engage in partnerships with these dioceses and schools to continue to refine and share best practices in marketing as broadly as possible. Some of this work is already being pursued through ACE Consulting, and the University looks to develop a centralized depository of best practices that emerge from dioceses and schools and to make them broadly available in a variety of ways, from web-based platforms to professional development services. For example, ACE plans to offer dioceses and schools a range of workshops on how to market schools more effectively to Latino families and has recently appointed Rev. Joseph Corpora, CSC, to lead this effort.

Educate priests, deacons, and lay leaders about the Catholic school advantage and equip them with the necessary skills and strategies to attract and serve Hispanics.

Professional development programs are needed for pastors, priests, deacons, and lay leaders to help them become more effective advocates and leaders of parishes and schools that serve Latino families. The University of Notre Dame will seek partnerships with the dioceses with

the largest Latino populations to provide professional development to priests, deacons, and lay leaders nationwide.

Making Catholic Education Affordable

Although the Task Force findings suggest that inability to pay tuition is not the sole explanation for low Hispanic enrollment, increasing demand for Catholic schools hinges on finding and communicating solutions to widespread concerns about affordability. There is a lamentable irony worth noting about this challenge, an irony related to the historic efficiency with which Catholic schools educate so effectively. Despite this efficiency, tuition remains a legitimate barrier for some middle-class families even when, for the vast majority of Catholic schools, revenue from tuition does not approach the per-pupil cost-to-educate and is usually augmented by parish and diocesan support and aggressive fundraising and development activity.

DIOCESES CAN:

Aggressively expand and promote tuition assistance and effectively inform Latino families about financing available.

Many dioceses have established endowments to support tuition assistance for low-income families. Without Big Shoulders in Chicago or The Catholic Education Foundation in Los Angeles, for example,

“Catholic schools are the responsibility of the entire Catholic community.”

-U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Renewing Our Commitment





many Latino students would not have access to Catholic education and many more schools would have shut their doors. All dioceses are encouraged to develop and expand these programs and to seek support from the Catholic community as well as from potential benefactors of all faith traditions who recognize and value the contribution of Catholic schools to the larger society. Bishops and other leaders within the Church, ordained and lay, should take confidence in the knowledge that no ministry of the Church prompts more enthusiastic admiration from diverse quarters than its Catholic schools.⁴⁶

Increase Catholic giving through the offertory collection and through other vehicles to make a Catholic education accessible to all parents and guardians who desire one for their children.

As the bishops of the United States make clear in *Renewing Our Commitment*, support for Catholic education is the “responsibility of the entire Catholic community.”⁴⁷ The task force calls for a national initiative to study the giving patterns and attitudes of Catholics and to

find ways to increase the percentage of income contributed to the Church, which is less than 2 percent of income.⁴⁸ The task force also recommends that dioceses explore concrete ways to enact the bishops’ assertion in *Renewing Our Commitment*. Dioceses should, for example, explore whether some form of parish sharing to support Catholic education might spread the responsibility for Catholic schools to all parishes and Catholics within a diocese, preventing financial burdens from being unevenly distributed, as they currently are, to parishes with schools and the parents who choose them. No parish should remain disconnected from this critical diocesan challenge.

**CIVIC LEADERS,
in partnership with Catholic higher
education and dioceses, CAN:**

Increase local scholarship funds

The goal to educate one million Latino children in Catholic schools will require great investment from a variety of stakeholders. We are persuaded, of course, that the magnitude of this investment pales in

New Construction

What may seem like an outrageous dream in the midst of a decade that has seen the closure of 1,400 Catholic schools becomes possible when one observes a countertrend over the past 25 years with regard to new Catholic schools: In the last decade, for all its economic turbulence, almost 300 new Catholic schools have been built and opened. In light of this trend, opening 300 new schools by 2020, in areas where Latinos are currently underserved, is clearly something we can do.

comparison to the economic, human, and civic costs of ignoring this opportunity and responsibility. The task force recommends the development and strengthening of local scholarship funds, akin to the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, to support financial assistance for needy Latino students so that they may benefit from the Catholic school advantage.

Expand publicly funded scholarship programs.

Schools like St. Anthony in Milwaukee illustrate the astonishing potential for Catholic schools to serve Latino communities and the common good when public funds are made available to low-income parents. Direct scholarship programs like those in Milwaukee, Cleveland, New Orleans, and Washington, DC, have provided enormous benefits to families in those cities, and state tax credit programs like those in Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Arizona have given thousands of Latino families unprecedented financial access to high-quality K-12 Catholic schools. Because Catholic schools are typically more efficient than public schools, these programs directly benefit the common good both by saving taxpayers billions of dollars each year and by preparing well-educated and active citizens. The task force is convinced that we must work to increase access to private schooling through the creation and expansion of voucher and tax credit programs, as such initiatives

are the most direct and highly leveraged means of empowering families to select the education they determine best for their children.

ACE and the IEI WILL:

Develop a strategy to strengthen local scholarship funds to support Latino students.

Thousands of Hispanic families currently benefit from local scholarship opportunities, but there is need for greater support. Notre Dame proposes to partner with local scholarship foundations and philanthropists at the diocesan level to explore ways to enhance tuition assistance. Innovative partnerships are needed to strengthen efforts to increase access to Catholic schooling in Latino communities.

Support the expansion of publicly funded scholarship options to provide educational alternatives for needy families.

The University has launched an ambitious agenda in this realm, primarily focused on continuing research, raising awareness among religious and civic leaders, developing leaders, and encouraging community advocacy. To begin, Notre Dame has initiated a series of gatherings for academics, policymakers, and members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on the most effective means of expanding the number of scholarships for families interested





English as a New Language

In 2009, the University of Notre Dame tripled the size of its fledgling English as a New Language (ENL) certification program to over 40 participants. This ENL program prepares veteran Catholic school teachers to serve more effectively students whose home language is not English and to help others on their faculty and at other schools in the diocese improve their practice.

in accessing K-12 Catholic schools.

In a similar fashion, the University plans to pursue opportunities to engage key civic and legislative leaders, highlighting the experience of policymakers who have successfully designed and implemented publicly funded scholarship programs for their constituents. Also, the University recently launched an integrative formation experience designed to develop the next generation of leadership for the parental choice movement, the ACE Parental Choice Symposium. Created to provide both an intellectual and experiential immersion in the movement to expand access to K-12 Catholic schools, this venture, sponsored by the ACE Fellowship, gives participants unparalleled exposure to the leading scholarship in the movement and allows them to work directly within an urban area that has had success designing and implementing a publicly funded scholarship program. Finally, the ACE Fellowship will explore opportunities to serve as a resource for Latino communities that seek to learn about publicly funded scholarship opportunities.

II. Developing Access *Reopening Facilities and Building New Ones*

ALL STAKEHOLDER GROUPS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO:

Fill empty seats.

To meet the goal of educating 1 million Latinos in Catholic schools

by 2020, we must first concentrate on filling roughly half of the nearly 691,000 empty seats that currently exist in operating Catholic schools nationwide. Areas of opportunity center on regions with a high density of Latino families and plentiful open seats—states such as California, New York, and Illinois—but this needs to be a national effort, especially given the increasing Hispanic presence throughout the United States. We would also do well to focus initially in states with publicly funded parental choice programs in place, including Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, where resources are available to enable qualified families to choose alternative schools.

Reopen closed schools.

To reach our goal, we also project the need to reopen over 300 closed Catholic schools over the next ten years. The facilities are there, and the students will be too, once the work of increasing demand and accessibility among Latino families gathers momentum. We call upon all stakeholders to collaborate in imaginative yet disciplined ways to develop and articulate strategies to reopen recently closed schools in areas of need and opportunity.

Build new schools.

Finally, the task force sees an opportunity to build new schools in areas, especially in California and the Southwest, where Latinos are

most underserved. We propose that roughly 300 new schools will need to be built over the next ten years. The following example brings into sharp relief the extent to which Hispanics are underserved by Catholic schools because insufficient schools are available where they live. Consider that the Diocese of Pittsburgh has one Catholic school for every 6,400 Catholics while the Diocese of Brownsville has one for every 64,000.⁴⁹ In other words, the ratio of schools to Catholics is approximately ten times larger in Brownsville, one of the most heavily Latino dioceses in the nation. To meet this need, the task force endeavors to find partners to build more Catholic schools in states such as Texas, California, Florida, and Arizona. We will look to innovative organizations like Habitat for Humanity as paradigms for developing a national program, with local offices, to build attractive, affordable school buildings in these high-need regions.

ACE and the IEI WILL:

Provide consultative support for local efforts.

We will pursue collaborative work with Notre Dame’s School of Architecture and the University’s extensive alumni network in the design and construction industries, to advance this goal. Also, through ACE Consulting and ACE Fellowship, the University will help dioceses to encourage grassroots campaigns by parents and parishioners to build schools and to pursue the most ef-

fective strategies for raising the necessary funds.

III. Developing Leaders
Building Human Capacity

The drive to fill empty seats and create demand for more Catholic schools will be guided by capable leaders.

**SCHOOLS and
DIOCESES SHOULD:**

Transform school culture to address the specific needs of the Latino community.

Dioceses should encourage Catholic schools that seek to serve Latino communities to look to the Catholic school history of serving cultural minority populations through culturally responsive teaching practices. Urban Catholic schools emerged in the nineteenth century as safe havens for marginalized minorities who were not always well-served in America’s public schools. Those





Las Hermanas

Some entrepreneurial pastors are already bringing Latin American sisters to the United States. When Rev. Mike Enright became pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Chicago, he read the parish history and realized that every immigrant group that had arrived in the U.S. came with vowed religious women and clergy to lead the school. He arranged for the Daughters of Mary of Guadalupe from Mexico to come and run the parish school, with the help of Springfield Dominicans and lay teachers on the faculty. The sisters all live in the neighborhood and are deeply involved in parish life, bridging the divide that often separates schools and parishes. The large presence of sisters on the faculty contributes to the Catholic identity of the school and appeals to parents in the community.

Catholic schools were designed to value the language, culture, and faith of the home. Today's Latino community faces no less a challenge. To this end, dioceses—in partnership with Catholic colleges and universities—should offer accessible professional development to help teachers take up culturally responsive teaching practices, which include research-based instructional approaches that resonate with the tradition of Catholic education in the United States.

Recruit and educate Latino teachers and school leaders.

Nationally, Hispanics account for only 6 percent of the teaching force.⁵⁰ Dioceses and schools must invite Latino educators into greater ownership of Catholic schools by recruiting Latino teachers and school leaders more effectively. This represents a key opportunity to deepen and develop partnerships between dioceses and higher education. Catholic colleges and universities can develop and refine programs that successfully attract and prepare Latino teachers and leaders for Catholic schools. Indeed, for all their success in forming a corps of talented educators and for their efforts to increase its racial and ethnic diversity, the University of Notre Dame's ACE Service Through Teaching program and the 13 other teacher preparation programs in the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE) can and must find ways to recruit more Hispanics

into its degree programs for teaching and school leadership.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION CAN:

Create new and enhance existing programs that prepare teachers and school leaders by developing their awareness and expertise to transform classrooms and schools.

There is an abiding need for more Catholic colleges and universities with programs in education to find ways to emphasize the formation of leaders and teachers who have expertise in attracting and serving Latinos and other ethnic minorities. We humbly acknowledge Notre Dame's absence from the field of K-12 education for two decades, between 1973, when the University closed the Department of Education, and 1993, when the Alliance for Catholic Education was founded. Notre Dame's absence from the field came at a time of great challenge for Catholic schools while many Catholic universities continued to contribute to the field. As we look forward, however, we recognize that Catholic higher education has an opportunity to help foster the renewal of Catholic schools in the coming years.

Of late, we see a new energy to this end. The rise of ACE and now 13 other graduate programs that comprise the University Consortium for Catholic Education (UCCE) brings a specific focus on forming

leaders for Catholic schools. Other umbrella organizations such as the Association of Catholic Leadership Programs (ACLP) and the nascent Catholic Higher Education Collaborative (CHEC) offer avenues to collaborate on research agendas germane to Catholic schools and the issues explored by this task force. Ultimately, these organizations also offer opportunities to share best practices in the field of teacher and school leader formation to prepare the educational leaders needed to transform Catholic schools in ways that remain rooted to their historic success at educating students of ethnic minority groups, the majority of whom in the coming decades will be Hispanic.

Support dioceses and schools by providing professional development aimed at preparing teachers to work with Latino students.

Schools and dioceses should encourage and support teachers in their efforts to learn more about how to serve Latino students, especially English language learners, most effectively. In collaboration with dioceses and school networks like Cristo Rey and NativityMiguel, Catholic colleges and universities can create professional development programs that emphasize culturally responsive pedagogy and a knowledge base conducive to serving diverse ethnic groups, with a special emphasis on Latinos.

Create a religious exchange program for vowed religious teachers from Latin America.

Recall that, upon their establishment, when Catholic schools were filled to capacity, they were different in a crucial way: They were able to “accompany” their cultural minority communities because they brought their sisters and priests with them. Exploratory conversations with leading Latin American prelates suggest initial enthusiasm for a program that would strategically place vowed religious from Latin America in U.S. Catholic schools for a fixed period of time and offer them educational opportunities at a consortium of Catholic universities. Such a program would prove mutually beneficial and would strengthen the Catholic and cultural identity of targeted Catholic schools while adding a valuable educational component for members of religious orders flourishing in Latin America.

ACE and the IEI WILL:

Develop a school culture model that schools can implement.

ACE will develop a portable school culture model that invites the ownership of the Latino community and that holds high expectations for academic achievement, fosters cultural competence in students and teachers, and embraces a worldview informed by a desire for service and social justice. Drawing on research,

“Education is the one key”

“I am more and more convinced that we must address the issues of Hispanic poverty with an intense practical emphasis on education—education in general and education in the faith. Every expert on poverty tells us that education is the one key to getting out of it....We need to push for...public support for private education, especially in our poorest districts. And we need to assemble all the resources of our own network of Catholic schools to meet this challenge.”⁵¹

*-Most Rev. Jose H. Gomez
Archbishop of San Antonio*

Of the U.S. bishops who are Latino, two thirds attended Catholic schools.

best practices, and lessons learned during the task force process, ACE will develop an operational school culture to be disseminated through written materials accompanied by a series of professional development workshops that will prepare school

professional competence of communities of administrators. Leaders of schools serving Latino communities will be recruited to participate in this new initiative, which will explore ways to use technology to enhance administrator learning and to facilitate the extension of communities of school leaders committed to and capable of advancing their schools.



Develop a national initiative to promote lay involvement in school boards.

The ACE Fellowship will pursue, in partnership with Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business and participating schools and dioceses, an initiative that offers training to prepare effective board members for service to Catholic schools. Partner dioceses will include those most affected by recent growth in the Hispanic population.

Establish the ACE Teaching Fellowship.

The ACE Fellowship has created a program to enhance teacher retention, with a special focus on dioceses in Texas with large Latino populations. The Teaching Fellowship is designed to incentivize teachers' commitments to making a long-term impact in the classrooms of Catholic schools, developing excellence as a classroom teacher and exercising leadership in broader educational circles. ACE Teaching Fellows commit to teach at their current schools for an additional three years while

leaders and faculty to implement a school culture that transforms the educational enterprise. ACE will develop and pilot this school culture through its Notre Dame ACE Academy partnership initiative. The experience of pilot dioceses will inform a series of print materials made available broadly to aid dioceses and school personnel with concrete strategies for implementing culturally responsive pedagogy and leadership in urban Catholic schools.

Develop a principals' academy.

A joint venture by ACE Consulting and ACE Fellowship, the principals' academy will strengthen the profes-

researching, implementing, and reflecting on the effects of best practices in the classroom.

IV. Transforming Catholic Schools and Systems *Enhancing Institutional Structures and Processes*

While it can be quite valuable to look to the historical experience of American Catholic schools for guidance about how to organize school environments to better serve Latino students and families, we must also be willing to depart, when necessary, from other elements of that historical experience. The urban landscape has changed, and the social dynamics facing parishes and schools have changed radically since the days when it was not unusual to find 1,000 children in an urban Catholic parish school, 60 or more in a classroom taught by a vowed religious sister. Among the most important changes: Catholic schools are no longer subsidized by the low labor costs of vowed religious men and women, and pastors are in increasingly short supply, particularly in the urban and rural communities that serve immigrant populations.

PARISHES and SCHOOLS MUST:

Consider new models of governance and school organization.

Alternatives to the traditional “one parish-one school” model must be

sought to both relieve the pastor’s burden of total school management and to increase lay Latino investment and sense of ownership in the school. The task force encourages the adoption of effective alternative school models, attentive to local context. The task force will make itself available to consult with dioceses and school networks to advise them on how best to establish models that are viable and sustainable over time. Additionally, governance options need to be clearly described and made available for parishes and schools that serve Latino communities.

Forge partnerships between higher education and individual Catholic schools.

Catholic colleges and universities can partner with existing K-12 Catholic schools in innovative ways to support both the adoption of best practices in instruction and curriculum and to explore alternative models of school governance. The Boston College–St. Columbkille partnership and the Notre Dame ACE Academies represent two relevant experiments. At a time when maintaining the status quo is no longer an option for most urban Catholic schools, we encourage institutional openness to experimentation. Consider the success stories of the Cristo Rey and NativityMiguel networks, which have responded with passion and imagination to the central challenge and opportunity underlying this task





force. Lessons learned from these innovative models may well have impact beyond their scale.

**ALL STAKEHOLDER
GROUPS MUST WORK
TOGETHER TO:**

**Improve technological
infrastructure in schools.**

Technology should play an important role in meeting the task force's goal, as technological innovations hold the potential to enable increased access to schools and to diminish the cost to educate. Indeed, some researchers predict that "disruptive innovations" in technology may, in the near future, transform education at all levels and foster rapid reductions in educational costs.⁵² At first glance, Catholic schools may appear unlikely to act as pioneers in this movement, as technology costs have typically been experienced as burdens to schools in financial difficulty. Yet the financial challenges confronting Catholic schools could

be seized as an opportunity, particularly as the relative absence of bureaucracy even in large dioceses would facilitate experimentation and evaluation. We encourage Catholic schools to explore and evaluate educational technologies that embrace the value and enhance the quality of the teacher/student interaction even as they advance new models of education. With new technology, curriculum, instruction, and assessment can be targeted to meet individual learning needs, leading to new and more effective pedagogical strategies that benefit the greater school community, especially students from low-income families.

Colleges and universities have an opportunity to work with schools and dioceses to improve the technological infrastructure in schools and the way that educators use technology to maximize educational gains for each student, improve access to families, and achieve lower costs to educate. Foundations and philanthropists should be encouraged to invest in school-based programs



that have the effect of reducing school costs and increasing access through technology. Because technological innovations that substantially improve education are still nascent, a sub-group of the task force will form a standing committee to continue to explore the role technology will play toward meeting the larger goal of providing a Catholic education to more Latino families.

Above all, we must work together to build a national movement that involves hundreds of organizations and thousands of people. Fully aware of the myriad challenges, but inspired by the worthiness of the goal,

ACE and the IEI WILL:

Serve as a base of operations for ongoing efforts.

Through ACE and the IEI, the University will provide a venue for a standing committee of the task force that will serve as a think tank to continue work on this important issue. The task force will develop interactive promotional materials to promote the Catholic school advantage for Hispanics in communities across the nation and will construct an interactive website to advance this theme and invite widespread participation. This implementation committee will publish annual progress reports and will seek to build additional partnerships and strengthen current ones, to study

and learn from others what works, and to disseminate those findings and best practices nationally via a regular series of publications and on-line resources. We seek allies from all quarters who recognize the urgency of the moment and share our conviction that Catholic schools represent the most powerful and proven means of enhancing Latino educational attainment and encouraging fuller participation and leadership in civic life and in the Church.

In the end, we cannot be daunted by the magnitude of the investment required to open 600 schools, to fill empty seats in schools across the country, to prepare a new generation of committed and capable educational leaders, to strengthen the schools themselves so that they can extend their legacy of excellence, and, most importantly, to increase educational opportunities for Latino children. For the magnitude of the investment shrinks dramatically when one contemplates the loss for the Church and our country if we maintain the status quo and succumb to the temptation of false and paralyzing prudence. And since the economic impact favors this course of action, how much more compelling is the realization that increasing access to Catholic schools for Latino children will transform thousands—and, in time, millions—of lives and will go a long way to fulfilling the promise of equal opportunity foundational to American democracy?



Conclusion

The decade ahead presents us with a window of opportunity, in the midst of major obstacles, to continue the uniquely American Catholic tradition of providing high quality educational opportunity to all, with special emphasis on

Today's Latino families need and deserve the Catholic school advantage.



those who are marginalized by their racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The growth of the Latino community in the United States presents us with a demographic imperative to increase our national capacity to serve Latino families, and Catholic schools have a robust role to play in educating the next generation of American Latinos, who will be the future leaders of our country and the Church. Today's Latino families need and deserve the Catholic school advantage. As this happens, our nation's Catholic schools, with their legacy of transforming young people, will in turn be renewed and transformed.

What could be more appropriate as an image of the challenges and opportunities before us than the multiplication of loaves and fishes featured so prominently at St. Rose of Lima school in Denver? When Jesus tells his disciples to have the five thousand who had followed him to a remote place sit down for dinner, his closest fol-

lowers balk at the audacity of his request. "There is a small boy here with five barley loaves and two fish, but what is that among so many?" questions Andrew. And yet, how vital was the forthcoming generosity of that young child, whose gift enabled all to be fed! Indeed, the hopefulness of that child inspires us to do likewise today.

After generations of failure for so many Latinos in traditional schools and a decade that has witnessed widespread closures of Catholic schools amid severe economic turbulence, the goal of increasing Latino enrollment threefold and opening 600 schools in the coming decade may, at first glance, seem more quixotic than audacious. This task force is convinced not only that our goal must be achieved—for the good of the children and families served by these schools, for the good of our civil society, and for the good of the Church—but also that it *can* be achieved, as the successful schools described in this report demonstrate. Our work and the people we have encountered in this process encourage us to have faith that we will, as Our Lady of Guadalupe promises, find roses in December. Indeed, for all the concerns that do and will emerge surrounding the challenges we recognize and embrace, is it possible that our greatest concern should be this: Have we aimed too low?

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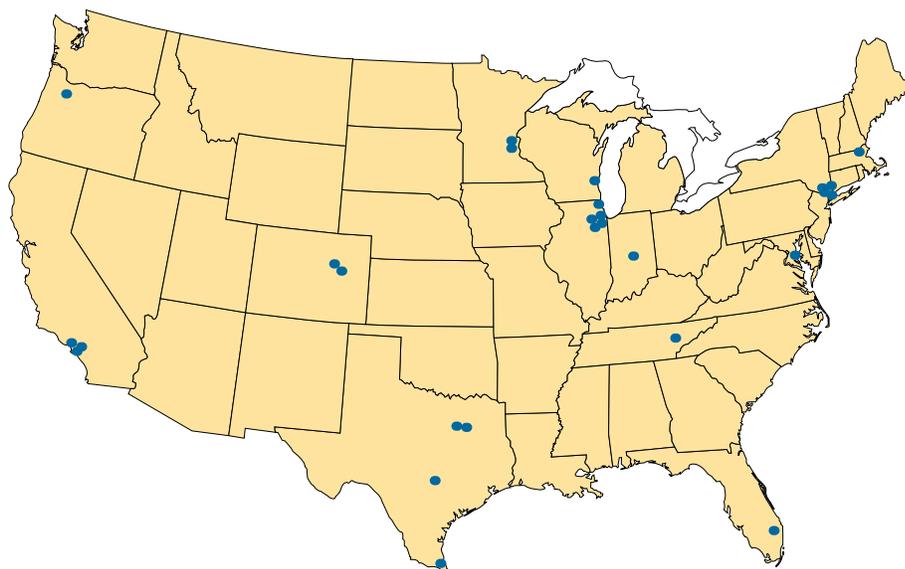
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Appendix

Case Study Schools

Special thanks to all of the Catholic schools that served as case studies. The task force is grateful to school leaders, pastors, teachers, and other stakeholders who so generously shared their experiences of serving the Latino community effectively.



Academy of Our Lady (PreK-8)
510 Grand Avenue
Waukegan, IL 60085
847-623-4110
www.acadofourlady.org

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School (9-12)
1852 West 22nd Place
Chicago, IL 60608
773-890-6800
www.cristorey.net

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School (9-12)
2924 4th Ave South
Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-545-9700
www.cristoreytc.org

Escuela de Guadalupe (K-5)
3401 Pecos Street
Denver, CO 80211
303-964-8456
www.escuelaguadalupe.org

Holy Redeemer Catholic School (PreK-8)
127 North Rosa Parks Way
Portland, OR 97217
503-283-5197
www.holyredeemerpx.org

Hope Rural School (K-5)
15929 SW 150th Street
Indiantown, FL 34956
772-597-2203
www.diocesepb.org/education/schools/hope.asp

Immaculate Conception School (K-8)
8739 South Exchange Avenue
Chicago, IL 60617
773-375-4674
www.immaculateconceptionsouth.org

Mother of Sorrows Catholic School (PreK-8)
100 West 87th Place
Los Angeles, CA 90003
323-758-6204
www.motherofsorrowsla.com

Mt. Carmel–Holy Rosary School (PreK-8)

371 Pleasant Avenue
 New York, NY 10035
 212-876-7555
www.mtcarmelholyroary.org

Nativity Catholic School (PreK-8)

944 West 56th Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90037
 323-752-0720
www.nativityschoola.com

Sacred Heart Cathedral School (K-8)

711 Northshore Drive SW
 Knoxville, TN 37919
 865-588-0415
www.shcschool.org

Sacred Heart School (PreK-8)

1625 Park Road NW
 Washington, DC 20010
 202-265-4828
www.sacredheartsschooldc.org

Saint Ann Catholic School (PreK-8)

2211 West 18th Place
 Chicago, IL 60608
 312-829-4153
www.stanncrusaders.org

Saint Ann Parish Elementary School (PreK-8)

314 East 110th Street
 New York, NY 10029
 212-722-1295
www.stannschoolnyc.org

Saint Anthony Catholic School (PreK-6)

349 Warman Avenue
 Indianapolis, IN 46222
 317-636-3739
www.archindy.org/mtca/schools-anthony.html

Saint Anthony School (PreK-8)

1015 East Harrison Avenue
 Harlingen, TX 78550
 956-423-2486
www.saintanthonyeagles.com

Saint Anthony School of Milwaukee (PreK-8)

1669 South 5th Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53204
 414-384-1729
www.stanthonysschool.org

Saint Augustine Catholic School (PreK-8)

1064 North St. Augustine Drive
 Dallas, TX 75217
 214-391-1381
www.staugdallas.org

Saint Helen School (PreK-8)

2347 West Augusta Boulevard
 Chicago, IL 60622
 773-486-1055
www.sthelenchicago.org

Saint Ignatius Martyr (PreK-8)

120 West Oltorf Street
 Austin, TX 78704
 512-442-8685
www.st-ignatius.org/school

Saint John's School (PreK-8)

3143 Kingsbridge Avenue
 Bronx, NY 10463
 718-548-0255
www.stjohnschoolbronx.org

Saint Mary of Carmel Catholic School (PreK-8)

1716 Singleton Avenue
 Dallas, TX 75212
 214-748-2934
www.smcschool.org

Saint Mary of the Assumption School (PreK-8)

301 Haverhill Street
 Lawrence, MA 01840
 978-685-2091
www.stmaryassumption-lawrence.org

Saint Rose of Lima School (K-8)

1345 West Dakota Avenue
 Denver, CO 80223
 303-733-5806
www.strosedenver.org

Saint Vincent School (K-8)

2333 South Figueroa Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90007
 213-748-5367
www.home.pacbell.net/svs1911

San Miguel Middle School of Minneapolis (6-8)

3800 Pleasant Avenue
 Minneapolis, MN 55409
 612-870-1109
www.sanmiguel-mpls.org

Visitation Catholic School (K-8)

171 West 239th Street
 Bronx, NY 10463
 718-543-2250
www.visitationschoolbronx.org