

Developing Leaders For Our Catholic Schools

In their 2005 statement *Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, the United States bishops call on Catholic colleges and universities to work with diocesan education leaders to prepare leaders for Catholic schools. In response, the Creighton University Education Department and the Omaha Archdiocese Catholic Schools Office formed a task force to create a framework for leadership in Catholic schools and develop a graduate certificate program that fulfills the framework.

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Uses for the Framework

The Catholic school leadership framework benefits current Catholic school leaders and teachers, new Catholic school educators with a public school background, Catholic Schools Office personnel, Creighton University Education Department faculty, school board members, pastors, and selection committees.

Possible uses for the framework include:

- Assessing oneself for leadership
- Identifying future leaders
- Training former public school leaders
- Constructing growth plans
- Appraising current leaders
- Hiring principals
- Composing interview questions
- Aligning university coursework to Catholic school needs
- Creating professional development opportunities

Catholic School Leadership Framework

Personal Attributes

An effective Catholic school leader exhibits:

- Strong faith and morals
- Awareness of ministry
- Vision for Catholic schools
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Passionate commitment
- Ability to inspire
- Servant Leadership
- Commitment to social justice
- Patience and flexibility
- Lifelong learning
- Empowerment / Delegation
- Valuing of persons and relationships

Leadership Capabilities

An effective Catholic school leader demonstrates capability in each of the six specialized domains listed below:

Faith Leadership

- Articulates and models active faith and morals
- Leads the community in worship and prayer
- Builds school faith community
- Generates a positive Catholic culture and environment in the school
- Facilitates the systematic mission formation of school personnel

Mission Leadership

Catholic Church Teachings

- Knows the fundamentals of Catholicism
- Conversant with Catholic teaching, especially in relation to current moral/ethical issues

History and Philosophy of Catholic Education

- Knows the evolutionary story of Catholic schools locally, nationally, and worldwide
- Understands the distinctive mission and philosophy of contemporary Catholic schools as promulgated by Church documents and scholars
- Communicates the Catholic identity and mission of the school verbally and in writing at every opportunity

Organizational Leadership

- Understands site-based management in relation to Catholic schools
- Understands Catholic school governance structures; especially the role of the parish pastor, pastoral council, parish finance committee, school board, Catholic Schools Office, and state Department of Education
- Promotes shared leadership in school administration and governance
- Demonstrates effective stewardship of school resources

Educational Leadership

- Inspires and leads the school community toward educational excellence
- Fosters a professional learning community that values lifelong learning and involves families
- Recruits, selects, supervises, and evaluates school personnel in light of mission
- Ensures that Catholic teaching and religious values are infused throughout the educational program
- Provides a high quality religious education program staffed by qualified teachers

Community and Political Leadership

- Positively influences relationships between the school and its communities
- Uses public relations strategies to promote the school and its mission to all publics
- Advocates the support of Catholic schools by the entire Catholic community
- Collaborates and networks with others who share in the mission of Catholic education
- Works with the local Catholic diocese, local public school district, other government agencies, and school parents to access available public funds
- Mobilizes the school community to seek additional public funding

Strategic Leadership

- Knows current trends and directions in Catholic school education
- Inspires all toward a shared vision for the future
- Initiates, monitors, and evaluates the strategic planning process to fulfill the school's mission, actualize its vision, and position the school for the future (e.g., marketing, student recruitment)
- Promotes innovation, change, and collaboration in achieving the Catholic educational mission
- Creates a development plan that explores additional sources of revenue (e.g., alumni giving, grants)