

Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools

A protocol is a process used by the Archdiocese of Chicago in deciding significant change for a school. The process identifies the nature of the need, who is involved in the decision making process and how a decision is made. The Office of Catholic Schools is the lead agent for activating the protocol steps and provides information in an ongoing manner. The steps of the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools* follow:

1. The Office of Catholic Schools, the Episcopal Vicar or the Pastor/Principal (or another appropriate agent) identifies the specific need.
2. A Feasibility Study is conducted under the direction of the Office of Catholic Schools upon endorsement by the Canonical Juridic Person.
3. The findings of the Feasibility Study are shared with all stakeholders (e.g., Episcopal Vicar, pastors, principals, boards, etc.) through a communications plan.
4. The Feasibility Study Team submits its recommendations based on the findings to the Office of Catholic Schools (Regional Director) and Episcopal Vicar.
5. The Regional Director presents the recommendations to the School Planning Forum and responds to the Feasibility Study Team.
6. The School Planning Forum makes its recommendations in writing to the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Episcopal Vicar and Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools.
7. The Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Episcopal Vicar and Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools present their recommendation to the Archbishop of Chicago for approval.

Particular aspects of this protocol are described in additional detail in subsequent sections.

Feasibility Study

A school of the Archdiocese of Chicago is subject to a feasibility study when archdiocesan and/or local school leaders are considering the possibility of some form of significant change such as expansion of services, renovation, new construction, joint venture with other schools, change of mission, consolidation or closure. For any of these types of changes, the feasibility study engages all stakeholders in studying the current situation, recommending direction and making decisions for action to be taken.

Archdiocesan leaders such as the Episcopal Vicar (Vicar) or the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS) may call for the feasibility study of a school. This may occur when new initiatives are identified due to certain market demands or when a school is in serious jeopardy. In such cases the feasibility study will engage local constituents in considering direction for the future.

Steps for conducting feasibility study

1. The Pastor or other Juridic Person, Vicar and/or the Regional Director will call for a feasibility study when engaging stakeholders in a serious decision about the future of the school.
2. The Regional Director convenes a Feasibility Study Team which represents the stakeholders who will be affected by the study and any recommendations that are made (includes Pastor or Juridic representative, Principal, School Board, Parish Council, OCS Planning Consultant (Planner), Vicariate Administrative Consultant (VAC), Office of Research and Planning (ORP) consultant, etc.).
3. The Regional Director meets with team members to explain the steps of the process and establish a time line.
4. Subcommittees are established to study data: school quality, buildings/environment, finance, population/demographics/external environment/market studies and communications plan. See the section entitled, "Data to be considered for Feasibility Study," for additional information.
5. A communications plan is established with the Office of Catholic Schools.
6. The Feasibility Study Team analyzes the data and determines support for a new initiative or change of status.
7. The Feasibility Study Team presents recommendations to the Office of Catholic Schools and the Vicar.

Data to be considered for Feasibility Study

- Population and demographic studies
- Market analysis to determine need
- School data
 - School Mission Statement
 - School Improvement Plan (SIP) / AdvancEd (AED)
 - Certifications (NAECE, NCA, Blue Ribbon, NCEA, etc.)
 - FAST form
 - School Annual Budget
 - Professional Development Plan
 - Technology Plan
- Parish data
 - Parish Mission Statement
 - Parish Pastoral Plan
 - Parish Five Year Financial History
 - Parish Annual Budget
 - Annual Report (School and Parish data)
 - Parish Reserve Study / Capital Plan
- Office of Catholic Schools
 - School Profile
 - Professional Employee Roster
 - Recognition/Certification Status of School
- Documents
 - Letters from sponsors, organizations, constituents supporting feasibility study
 - Minutes of feasibility study proceedings (Parish Council, School Board, School Organizations, Congregation, etc.)
 - Minutes of Parish/School Core Planning Committee for Facilities Construction Initiative
- Scope of Project (in construction proposal)
 - Master Plan (developed by an approved architect, reviewed by the Office of Facilities and Construction)
 - Financial Plan (approved by VAC, Regional Director and Capital Projects Committee)
 - Approval of Office of Catholic Schools

The data listed above are considered as evidence to support recommendations for action. These data are studied by all stakeholders involved in the planning process. The data will also be used by local and archdiocesan leadership to determine allocations of funds to support schools in need.

Results of the Feasibility Study

The results of all feasibility studies for the purpose of significant change in the future direction of an elementary or high school are reviewed by the Office of Catholic Schools with the Office of Research and Planning, Office of Finance, and the Office of Facilities and Construction. This will happen at a meeting of the School Planning Forum called for this purpose by the Office of Catholic Schools. The School Planning Forum will present their recommendations to the Vicar, Superintendent of Catholic Schools (Superintendent), Pastor or other Juridic Person for specific action to be taken. The Vicar, the Superintendent and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools (AOC School Board) will recommend their decision to the Archbishop of Chicago and to the Moderator of the Curia for final approval.

New Construction

In the case of a building expansion or new initiative that requires facilities construction, the construction feasibility study is completed by the Parish/School Core Planning Committee as described in the construction guidelines developed by the Office of Facilities and Construction. In this case, the recommendations of the Core Planning Committee are brought to the School Planning Forum for review and approval. The Regional Director and a representative from the Office of Research and Planning must be on the local Core Planning Committee. The policies of the Archdiocese of Chicago must be followed for all building projects.

Special Circumstances

There are special circumstances when feasibility monitoring has been done by the Vicar, religious congregation leader, the Office of Catholic Schools and other agencies of the Archdiocese. This usually has happened over years of investigating the situation of a school with the Pastor, Principal and local stakeholders. In these particular circumstances a Feasibility Study Team described above may not be appropriate for making a decision about the future of a school. Whether the feasibility study is conducted in the manner described above or in another way, the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools* must be followed.

School Planning Forum

The School Planning Forum is an administrative structure representing agencies of the Archdiocese that have a significant role in planning for Catholic school viability. It is part of the review process for the approval of new initiatives and expansions for elementary and secondary schools, as well as change of status of schools as outlined in the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*. The lead agent of the School Planning Forum is the Office of Catholic Schools.

The School Planning Forum is convened to review the recommendations submitted by the Feasibility Study Team. After reviewing the recommendations presented by local leaders with appropriate agency consultants, the School Planning Forum can recommend revisions for consideration by local leaders. Once revisions are made locally the School Planning Forum will state their findings and recommendations in writing to the Episcopal Vicar, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools for final action.

Purpose:

1. Review all local and area planning recommendations for new initiatives, change of mission, building expansions, reconfigurations, or closure of Catholic elementary and secondary schools as part of the consultation process.
2. Identify appropriate revisions to local/area planning recommendations for consideration by local planning groups.
3. Approve recommendations as part of consultation process with appropriate constituents and present them to the Vicar, Superintendent and AOC School Board for review.
4. Vicar, Superintendent, and the AOC School Board recommend a decision to the Archbishop of Chicago for approval.

Membership:

- Office of Catholic Schools
- Office of Research and Planning
- Office of Finance
- Office of Facilities and Construction (as appropriate)

Meetings:

The School Planning Forum is convened as needed by the Regional Director or other representative of the Office of Catholic Schools.

Steps for Planning and Decision Making

Consultation Procedures for Approving New Initiatives and Change of Status for Catholic Schools

In considering an initiative that points to a new direction for a school of the Archdiocese of Chicago, or for change of status of a school, the following steps for consultation and decision making are observed by archdiocesan and local leaders as directed by the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*. These steps lead to a formal decision of the Archbishop of Chicago. The specific situations include the following:

Protocol for Planning New Initiatives

These steps outline the process of planning for new schools, reconfiguration of schools or a change of mission. This Protocol includes a "Planning Tool for Decision-Making" and "Criteria for Decision-Making." Ordinarily these steps have been used at the secondary school level where local leaders are considering a change in the mission of the school and a major reconfiguration of its services. They are consistent with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

Change of Status: Protocol for Determining Catholic School Presence in an Area

This protocol is designed to assist church leaders in an area of the Archdiocese to collaborate in making recommendations that will determine the future of the schools for the area. The process may include planning for a new school as well as reconfiguration of existing schools. This protocol is consistent with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

Change of Status: Protocol for Developing Alternative School Models

The commitment of the leadership of the Archdiocese of Chicago is to make Catholic school education available and viable across Cook and Lake Counties. Different models are necessary to keep Catholic schools affordable and accessible across the Archdiocese. Alternative models can promote a broader base of ownership, governance and collaborative planning to ensure strong Catholic schools long-term. The alternative school model, in communion with the parish community(ies), offers a unique opportunity for local leaders to develop innovative ways of sharing resources, leadership and effective practices as good stewards to make schools increasingly more vital and viable. This protocol is consistent with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

Change of Status: Protocol for Closing a Single School

This describes the procedure for deciding the closure of a school. The procedures are activated after feasibility studies have been completed locally with the assistance of the Office of Catholic Schools and other agencies of the Archdiocese. This protocol is consistent with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

Process for Appeal to the Episcopal Vicar

This process provides an opportunity for constituents directly affected by a decision to change the status of a parish or archdiocesan sponsored elementary or secondary school to appeal the decision to the Episcopal Vicar.

Protocols for Planning New Initiatives

Protocol for Planning New Initiatives: Secondary Schools

These steps are taken in the process of planning for new schools, reconfiguration of schools or a change of mission. It is expected that the local Episcopal Vicar, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools are informed of this planning at the earliest phase. The steps align with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools* to be observed for final approval by the Archbishop of Chicago.

1. In a meeting with the Vicar and Superintendent, representatives of the appropriate board at the local school level (Advisory, Provincial, Trustees, etc.) recommend a feasibility study for a new initiative. At this meeting the parameters of the feasibility study are defined.
2. The feasibility study necessarily includes meetings and data sharing with other Catholic schools that could be impacted by the proposal. Opportunity must be given for consultation and dialogue regarding options for collaboration. The Superintendent's representative from the Office of Catholic Schools staff must be present during these meetings.
3. The Religious Congregation and the local School Board must review and approve the proposal. A written copy of the proposal shall be presented and explained to the Superintendent and the Vicar.
4. The Office of Catholic Schools presents the proposal to the School Planning Forum of the Archdiocese of Chicago for review and recommendations to the Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board.
5. The Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board submit the final proposal with their written recommendation to the Archbishop of Chicago. The proposal must be submitted by September 15th for consideration for the following school year.

A Planning Tool for Decision Making: Secondary Schools

*Indicators of Viable Initiative: Changing the Mission of the School
(Single gender to Co-educational or Co-institutional; PK – 12; 6 – 12)*

Changing School Mission:

- The initiative proposes to advance the mission of Catholic education.
- The initiating school follows the *Protocol for Planning New Initiatives: Secondary Schools* established by the Office of Catholic Schools.
- All relevant persons and groups are provided with feasibility data indicating the interest or need of constituents for a change in mission and their willingness to support the initiative.
- The initiative is a response to an unmet need in the area.
- The initiative has the support of the Schools sponsorship, governance, staff, students, parents and alumni.
- School administrators implement a process for curriculum adaptation to accommodate the needs of all students.
- Education, communication and experiential processes are structured to help transform the culture of the school for the full inclusion of all students.
- Co-curricular offerings will demonstrate, at the outset, the provision for equitable and appropriate participation by all students.
- Staffing will become increasingly more gender-balanced in all areas, including administration, when changing from a single gender school to other models. All should aspire to racial balance.
- The facility is modified to meet the needs of all students.
- The initiators engage in dialogue with administrators of existing high schools to reach a shared understanding of the feasibility data, the merit of the initiative and its impact on existing high schools.
- The initiators develop a proposal which is responsive to the explicit unmet need and which gives evidence of attending to all the "indicators of viable initiative," with serious consideration for the impact of the initiative on existing high schools.
- At the completion of the protocol steps, a recommended decision is made by the Episcopal Vicar, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools to the Archbishop of Chicago for his approval of the proposed initiative.

Criteria for Decision Making: Secondary Schools

Change in the mission of secondary school

(Single gender to coeducational or co-institutional; PK – 12; 6 – 12)

1. All steps of the *Protocol for Planning New Initiatives: Secondary Schools* are completed, including the provision for equitable participation in the total life of the school by all students.
2. There is evidence that this option will serve an unmet need for families in a specific geographic area.
3. The initiative ensures an intentionally diverse population of students.
4. There is no evidence that this initiative will singularly jeopardize the existence of existing schools.
5. Enrollment will not be accepted from existing Catholic secondary schools during the first two years of implementing the initiative.
6. The Episcopal Vicar, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools recommend their decision, based on these criteria, to the Archbishop of Chicago for final approval.

Protocol for Planning New Initiatives: Elementary Schools

These steps are taken in the process of planning for new schools, reconfiguration of a school or a change of mission. It is expected that the local Episcopal Vicar and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools are informed of this planning at the earliest phase. The steps align with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools* to be observed for final approval by the Archbishop of Chicago.

1. In a meeting with the Vicar and Superintendent, the Pastor and Principal recommend a feasibility study for a new initiative. At this meeting the parameters of the feasibility study are defined.
2. Opportunity for consultation and dialogue regarding options for collaboration with other Catholic elementary schools may be explored. The Superintendent's representative from the Office of Catholic Schools staff must be present during these meetings.
3. The Pastor and Principal must review and sign the proposal. A written copy of the proposal shall be presented and explained to the Superintendent and the Vicar.
4. The Office of Catholic Schools presents the proposal to the School Planning Forum of the Archdiocese of Chicago for review and recommendations to the Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board.
5. The Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board submit the final proposal with their written recommendation to the Archbishop of Chicago.

A Planning Tool for Decision Making: Elementary School

Indicators of Viable Initiative: New school, reconfiguration of a school or change of mission

- The initiative proposes to advance the mission of Catholic education.
- The initiating school follows the *Protocol for Planning New Initiatives: Elementary Schools* established by the Office of Catholic Schools.
- All relevant persons and groups are provided with feasibility data indicating the interest or need of constituents for the initiative and their willingness to support it.
- The initiative is a response to an unmet need to the area.
- The initiative has the support of the School's sponsorship, governance, staff, students, parents and alumni.
- School administrators implement a process for curriculum adaptation to accommodate the needs of all students.
- Education, communication and experiential processes are structured to help transform the culture of the school for the full inclusion of all students.
- Co-curricular offerings will demonstrate, at the outset, the provision for equitable and appropriate participation by all students.
- The facility is modified to meet the needs of all students.
- The initiators engage in dialogue with administrators of existing elementary schools to acknowledge its impact on existing elementary schools.
- The initiators develop a proposal which is responsive to the explicit unmet need and which gives evidence of attending to all the "indicators of viable initiative," with serious consideration for the impact of the initiative on existing elementary schools.
- At the completion of the protocol steps, a recommended decision is made by the Episcopal Vicar, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools to the Archbishop of Chicago for his approval of the proposed initiative.

Criteria for Decision Making: Elementary School

New school, reconfiguration of school or change of mission

1. All steps of the *Protocol for New Initiatives: Elementary Schools* are completed, including the provision for equitable participation in the total life of the school by all students.
2. There is evidence that this option will serve an unmet need for families in a specific geographic area.
3. The initiative ensures an intentionally diverse population of students.
4. There is no evidence that this initiative will singularly jeopardize the existence of existing schools.
5. Enrollment will not be accepted from existing Catholic elementary schools during the first two years of implementing the initiative.
6. The Episcopal Vicar, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools recommend their decision, based on these criteria, to the Archbishop of Chicago for final approval.

Change of Status: Protocol for Determining Catholic School Presence in an Area

These steps are designed to assist local leaders in ascertaining the future of Catholic school presence in an area or deanery of the Archdiocese. A result of the process may be a change in the status of the schools through the creation of new initiative, reconfiguration of schools or closure. The steps align with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

1. Statement of Intent

The pastors and principals meet with the Vicar and the Regional Director to discuss their willingness to lead their people through a feasibility study that will result in a recommendation determining the future of the schools for the area. The Pastors sign this intent with the Vicar and Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

2. Formation of Feasibility Study Team

The Regional Director convenes a representative group of school/parish stakeholders to serve on the Feasibility Study Team with the principals and pastors. Meeting dates are established and the time line is set. A chairperson is chosen.

3. In-service of the Team

The team meets with the Regional Director to learn about the feasibility process and their role on the team. It is made clear to the team that they are being asked to be part of a research group to help the pastors make a recommendation to the Episcopal Vicar and Superintendent of Catholic Schools. The Regional Director and a representative from the Office of Research and Planning, and the Vicariate Administrative Consultant attend team meetings as appropriate.

4. Collection of Data

Sub-committees are appointed by the chairperson to collect the necessary data for the feasibility study. Sub-committees are assisted by the OCS Planner.

5. Meetings

The team meets for several months to study the situation and analyze their findings. With the assistance of the Office of Catholic Schools a communications plan is established to report to the parish/school constituents on a regular basis. When it seems appropriate, parish and school parent meetings take place to share information.

6. Possible Models/Scenarios

The team designs options or models as an outcome of the analysis. One or two models are recommended as options.

7. Meeting with Vicar

The team meets with the Episcopal Vicar and the Regional Director to share their findings and recommendations. After this meeting the Feasibility Study Team finalizes the recommendations.

8. Meeting of the Archdiocesan School Planning Forum

The Regional Director presents the recommendations to the members of the archdiocesan School Planning Forum for review and approval. Any recommendations for revision are given to the Regional Director to share with the Feasibility Study Team. Recommendations of the School Planning Forum are studied and changes made by the Feasibility Study Team.

The School Planning Forum reviews any revisions and approves recommendations to the Vicar and Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

9. The Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board present their approval of the recommendations in a written memorandum to the Archbishop of Chicago.

10. The Archbishop of Chicago formally approves the decision.

11. The decision is shared with the people and procedures to implement the transition are set in motion with the assistance of the staff of the Office of Catholic Schools and other agencies as appropriate.

Change of Status: Protocol for Developing Alternative School Models

The following steps are in alignment with the *Protocol for Decision Making for Significant Change in Elementary and Secondary Schools*.

1. The pastor(s), principal(s), and other canonical person(s) submit a letter of intent to the Episcopal Vicar, Superintendent of Schools, AOC Board and the Regional Director. See section entitled, "*Letter of Intent Guidelines*," for additional information.
2. The Regional Director meets with local leaders to review the *Protocol for Developing Alternative Catholic Models* and the supporting planning tools to prepare them for writing a proposal.
3. The Board of Specified Jurisdiction or the School Advisory Board works with the principal(s) and pastor(s) in preparing the proposal. The Regional Director assists the school leaders as needed.
4. The pastor(s) and principal(s) submit a copy of their proposal for an alternative school model to the Regional Director.
5. The Regional Director distributes copies of the proposal to the members of the School Planning Forum in preparation for their meeting with local leaders. Copies of the initial proposal are given to the Episcopal Vicar and Superintendent at this time.
6. The Regional Director convenes the School Planning Forum to review the proposal with school leaders. If additional information or modifications are requested by the Planning Forum, the proposal will be returned to the school leaders. School leaders must make a response before the Planning Forum makes a recommendation to the Episcopal Vicar and Superintendent of Schools based on their analysis of the data in the proposal.
7. The Episcopal Vicar, Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools review the proposal and School Planning Forum recommendation before submitting their recommendation to the Archbishop of Chicago for a decision.
8. The Archbishop of Chicago makes the final decision about the proposed alternative Catholic school model.

Decision Making Criteria for an Alternative School Model

1. All steps of the protocol are complete.
2. There is evidence that this proposal will provide a more sustainable model for Catholic school education in the area.
3. The proposed model demonstrates or is open to an intentionally diverse population.
4. There is an acknowledgement of the effect(s) of the model on neighboring Catholic schools who are not participants in the planning process.
5. The School Planning Forum, Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board review the proposal and make recommendations to the Archbishop of Chicago for acceptance or non-acceptance.
6. The Archbishop of Chicago makes the final decision about the proposed model.

Planning Tool: Guidelines for the Development of a Letter of Intent

A *Letter of Intent* is sent to the OCS Regional Director to formally begin the process of identifying an alternative school model. The letter states the interest and purpose of partnering schools in becoming an alternative model Catholic school in the area. The letter must be signed by the participating pastor(s), principal(s), and chairperson(s) of the Board of Specified Jurisdiction or School Advisory Council.

The letter must provide information that answers the following questions:

1. What data about the current operation of your school influenced your research/study of alternative models?
2. Who are the constituents (i.e., names and school affiliation) that participated in making the decision?
3. How do you envision the children, the Church and the local community benefiting from a change of model?
4. What is your estimated timeline for presenting a proposal?
5. Will you support the outcome of this process?

The *Letter of Intent*, with the afore-mentioned signatures, must be sent to the Episcopal Vicar, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Regional Director. The pastor(s), principal(s), and chairperson(s) will receive a response from the Regional Director informing them of the next steps in the process.

Planning Tool: Outline for the Development of a Proposal for an Alternative School Model

- I. Introduction
 - a. Summary of research/study of alternate school models
 - b. Synopsis of the Letter of Intent
- II. Feasibility study of an alternative model
 - a. Description and rationale for a preferred model
 - b. Changes that must occur for the model to become a reality
 - c. Stakeholder responses of support and concern
 - d. Other models considered and their limitations
- III. Indicators of Readiness for Change
 - a. Catholic Identity
 - i. School name, campus site(s), and participating parishes
 - ii. Catholic apprenticeship experience in Christian living
 - iii. Mission Statement
 - iv. Evangelization and participation of families in life of the Church
 - v. Principal and teacher competency expansion and faith formation
 - vi. Evidence of principal and teacher catechetical certification
 - b. Academic Excellence
 - i. Distinguishable curriculum, programs, and services
 - ii. Diverse needs of students
 - iii. Technology-supported curriculum
 - iv. Emphasis on assessment outcomes to meet student needs
 - v. Student proficiency and achievement
 - vi. Self-organizing, goal-oriented students
 - vii. Staffing requirements identified
 - c. School Vitality
 - i. Enrollment management
 - ii. Marketing practices

- iii. Facilities (building(s) condition; life-safety code status)
 - iv. Financial management practices
 - v. Governance: Board of Specified Jurisdiction
 - vi. Leadership: Administration of internal operations
- IV. Assessing the Financial Impact of the Proposed Model
- a. Estimated cost of implementing the model
 - b. Financial benefits and risks associated with implementing the model
 - i. Projected budget: conservative enrollment estimate
 - ii. Projected budget: moderate enrollment estimate
 - iii. Projected budget: optimistic enrollment estimate
 - iv. Three-year projected budget (trend)
 - v. Projected profit/loss
 - c. Alternative sources of revenue for implementing the model
- V. Action Planning for Implementation of the Model
- a. Identify AED goals, objectives, and action steps
 - b. Estimate date of attainment for objectives and action steps and associated costs
 - c. Implement action plans
 - d. Monitor implementation of action plans
 - e. Evaluate action plan impact, effectiveness, and efficiency of resource usage
- VI. Appendix Section (i.e., attach data and other supportive information)

Planning Tool: Criteria Indicating School Readiness for Change

As part of the proposal development process, a self-assessment of school readiness for change should be performed. As you explain how your school meets the readiness criteria, use the following question to help frame your thinking and written explanation of your school's ability to support and implement the alternative model:

What are the features and characteristics of the Alternative School Model that will serve the evolving mission of the Church in the changing world of these times?

Indicators of Readiness for Change:

Catholic Identity

Description: The school visibly promotes the mission of the Church and provides opportunities for worship, instruction in the Gospel message, faith development, and service to others.

Criteria:

- Consensus on the name and site of the proposed school model by participating pastors, principals, and Board of Specified Jurisdiction or School Advisory Council members
- Provides students with opportunities for apprenticeship experiences in Christian living
- Mission Statement
- The religion curriculum encourages evangelization and participation of families in the life of the Church
- Evidence of principal and teacher catechetical certification
- Evidence of principal and teacher competency and faith formation through professional development and other opportunities
- Evidence of outreach to parents to assist them in their role as primary educators of their children – especially in their faith development

Academic Excellence: Curriculum, Programs & Services

Description: The school has a challenging academic program for all students

Criteria:

- The school has programs that distinguish it from other schools in the area
- The school's programs enable it to serve students' different needs
- The school has a technology-supported curriculum
- The school uses a variety of assessment outcomes to address student learning needs

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- The school's students demonstrate proficiency and achievement
- The school prepares its students to be self-organizing, goal-oriented learners
- The school staff has the knowledge, skills, abilities and certification(s) to implement the new school program

School Vitality:

Enrollment Management

Description: The school is necessary to keep Catholic education available in the geographic area

Criteria:

- The school has a successful enrollment management plan to attract and retain students
- The school has a student base to ensure sustainability
- The school is able to show a trend or predictability toward enrollment growth

Marketing Practices

Description: The community perception of the school is one of Catholic, Excellent, and Vital

Criteria:

- The school has a unique value proposition and Mission orientation
- The school's use of marketing surveys confirm support of the school's image
- The school receives recognition and support from community leadership
- The school provides evidence of the resourcefulness of both internal and external stakeholders
- The school serves as an anchor for the community by offering opportunities for spiritual and academic growth, and social justice
- The community perception of the school is one of "welcoming" and "inclusive"

Facilities

Description: The school's facility is structurally sound, well-maintained, and spacious enough to house the full academic and co-curricular programs with a potential for growth.

Criteria:

- The school meets state and local life/safety codes
- The school has an operational maintenance schedule
- The school is clean and inviting
- The school's location is easily accessible

Financial Management Practices

Description: The school utilizes financial management practices that ensure sustainability

Criteria:

- The school follows parish best practices for internal control
- The school reports financial data regularly
- The school meets FAST goals
- The school has a pattern of financial stability
- The school has funding for tuition scholarships

Governance and Leadership

Description: The school's administration and board demonstrate the leadership and management needed for a successful Catholic school in the 21st Century

Criteria:

- The pastor and principal work closely with the Board of Specified Jurisdiction to advance the mission of the school
- The Board of Specified Jurisdiction cultivates connections and partnerships with its stakeholders and within the wider community
- The Board of Specified Jurisdiction is responsible for the financial solvency of the school

- The principal hires and retains qualified staff
- The school's staff gives evidence of actively contributing to the total life of the school
- The school has a strategic plan that demonstrates progress toward school goals

Change of Status: Protocol for School Closure

For an individual Catholic Elementary or Secondary School

These steps are observed for reaching a decision to close an archdiocesan elementary or secondary school.

1. The Pastor, Episcopal Vicar and/or the Regional Director inform local parish and/or school communities of the situation of the school. This may be done through a feasibility study.
2. The Pastor informs the Dean that the school is in jeopardy of closing.
3. The OCS Director of Marketing and Communications informs the Office of Communications and other agencies as appropriate, about the situation and develops a communications plan with local leaders.
4. The Pastor, President, Principal and the Regional Director consult with parish and school leaders about the need for closing the school.
5. After appropriate consultation and communication, the Pastor formally agrees with the Vicar and the Regional Director that the school should close.
6. The recommendation for closure of the school along with feasibility data is presented for review by the Regional Director at a meeting of the archdiocesan School Planning Forum.
7. The School Planning Forum approves the recommendation for closure.
8. The Vicar, Superintendent and the AOC School Board formally present the recommendation for closure with supportive evidence in a memorandum to the Archbishop of Chicago.
9. The Archbishop of Chicago finalizes the decision to close in writing to the Vicar and Superintendent.
10. The Episcopal Vicar communicates the decision to the Pastor, President, Principal, and Dean.
11. Local leaders inform all constituents of the decision to close with the assistance of the OCS Director of Marketing and Communications.
12. Constituents most affected by the decision may appeal the decision by following the process for appeal to the Vicar.
13. The Office of Catholic Schools with other agencies coordinates procedures to implement the closure with the school community.
14. The Office of Catholic Schools supports ways to fund alternative placements in neighboring Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Schools. The Archdiocese of Chicago may also provide scholarships to displaced students.

Process for Appeal to the Episcopal Vicar

The process for appeal is provided to constituents who are most directly affected by a decision to change the status of a school.

1. After the school community is informed about the decision to change the status of the school, constituents of the community may appeal in writing to the Episcopal Vicar.
2. The Vicar writes a response to the constituents.
3. If further appeal is made, the Vicar and the Regional Director meet with an appropriate representation of the school community to hear their concerns.
4. The Vicar summarizes his conclusions in writing to the constituencies, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and to the Archbishop of Chicago.
5. The Archbishop of Chicago communicates his final decision to the Episcopal Vicar, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the Archdiocese of Chicago Board of Catholic Schools.