CATHOLIC SCHOOL RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

Catholic Schools are challenged always to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in ever more effective ways, to live the Gospel themselves more fully and to be an ever more powerful experience of the Kingdom of God for all members of the school community.

At the same time, they are challenged to find ways always to improve and make more effective the learning experience of each child.

They are challenged, too, to accountability, to parents, to the Church and to government, ensuring compliance with Government requirements and expectations.

PURPOSE

There are two fundamental elements needed to address each of these needs: Looking back through the process of review and looking forward to the process of planning.

It is essential that a formal, structured process is in place to enable these challenges to be met effectively.

The process of Catholic School Renewal provides that review and planning structure.

It provides, too, the opportunity for the school community to identify, to enjoy and to celebrate its many successes while courageously addressing areas of need.

PRINCIPLES

There are many elements of Catholic teaching in which the process of Catholic School Renewal in the Diocese of Sale has its roots. The following are a small sample:

- The Gospel itself presents the first and greatest challenge to the Church: “Make disciples of all nations, baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey all the commandments I gave you.” (Matt 28:11)

- In more recent times, the Church reminds us the Catholic School is centred within the pastoral mission of the Church. It “participates in the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church” and “takes its stand within the organic pastoral work of the Christian community”. (Catholic Schools on the Threshold of the Third Millennium para 11,12).
• Catholic schools need always to be self reflective, seeking to improve, because “loyalty to the educational aims of the Catholic school demands constant self criticism and a return to basic principles”. (The Catholic School para. 67).

• The Catholic School must, at the same time, be a good school, even in secular terms, seeking to improve learning outcomes for students. Indeed, “that which does not reproduce the characteristic features of a school cannot be a Catholic school”. (The Catholic School para 25).

• The Catholic School is challenged to high levels of performance. Indeed Canon Law requires that “Directors of Catholic schools¹ are to take care under the watchfulness of the local ordinary that the instruction which is given in them is at least as academically distinguished as that in other schools of the area”. (Code of Canon Law 806.2).

• The Catholic School must always be seeking to meet new needs and new environments. “In the specifically educational field, the scope of educational functions has broadened, becoming more complex. New requirements have given force to the demand for new contents, new capabilities and new educational models… Such an outlook calls for courageous renewal on the part of the Catholic School… and so, now as in the past, the Catholic School must be able to speak for itself effectively and convincingly”. (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium para 2, 3).

POLICY

Each primary and secondary school, will engage in the ongoing process of Catholic School Renewal in line with the published manual. This process includes the schools presenting its own review for validation once each five year cycle.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

When this policy is effectively implemented in the diocese:

• Each school will be able to demonstrate that it is on a path of continual improvement.

• Each school will be able to demonstrate that it complies with State and Federal Government requirements and have that compliance validated.

• Each school will be able to report effectively to parents and the wider community and be able to celebrate its successes.

• The Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Sale will be able to report with confidence to the Bishop and to secular authorities on the performance of all schools in the diocese.
REFERENCES

Code of Canon Law at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/P2N.HTM

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