Organization, Position & Person Profile

Associate Superintendent for Operations

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The Organization

The Catholic school system of the Archdiocese of Chicago educates 89,139 elementary and high school students in 256 schools in Cook and Lake Counties and is overseen by the Office of Catholic Schools (OCS). It is the second-largest Catholic school system in the United States.

Catholic schools give young people a firm foundation for life by providing them with both strong academics and the fundamentals of their faith. Pastors, principals, and teachers are free to create a God-centered environment in the schools that demonstrates faith in action.

Catholic schools also provide “a safe place for people to learn because of what we believe about love and respect.” Catholic schools also perform a profoundly important civic function by grounding students, both Catholic and those from other faith traditions, in the virtues that produce good citizens. By forming future adults who respect themselves and others, the Catholic schools provide an invaluable service to the community as a whole.

Catholic schools also offer strong academic preparation, including in neighborhoods where public schools are underperforming. High school graduation rates in urban areas are dramatically higher for students in Catholic schools. Recently, a blue-ribbon task force identified inadequate public education as such a grave problem that it presents a national security crisis. Keeping Catholic schools available to children, therefore, has become a civic and moral imperative.

In the Chicago Archdiocese the overall report card on student outcomes is excellent. Test scores and graduation rates are high throughout the system. Dedicated principals and teachers produce these results at a cost per student that is considerably below that of the public schools. The financial picture of the overall Chicago Catholic Schools system is more troubling, however. Although many schools are self-supporting, a subset of schools is dependent
on increasing amounts of financial support from the Archdiocese. The Archdiocesan Board of Education recently adopted a comprehensive strategic plan to address the issues important to Chicago Catholic schools today. Among those challenges are: financially assisting Catholic schools that are not self-sustaining, successfully marketing Catholic schools as an affordable alternative to public and private education, providing professional development for principals and teachers, and garnering financial support from individuals, foundations and corporations outside the Catholic community.

The Board’s overarching goal is “To increase Catholic school enrollment and provide every student desiring Catholic education with excellent academics and strong faith formation in an economically sustainable way.”

This Plan addresses six core goals for the Catholic school system: Catholicity, Academics, Leadership, Operations, OCS Reorganization, and Funding.

The Board is confident that focused, proactive attention to all six areas will not only avert the dire consequences to schoolchildren that will result if the current financial crisis is left unaddressed but also will increase the number of students benefitting from an excellent Catholic education.

The Plan’s action steps to achieve the six goals include measures to (1) insure the continuing strength of the schools’ Catholic identity; (2) make sure that academics stay strong and in pace with the highest norms; and (3) find, foster and reward excellent principals and teachers. Implementation of the plan also requires (4) an immediate hands-on assistance program which has already begun to stabilize struggling schools by helping them institute best practices. (5) In addition, the OCS management structure will be reorganized and staffed to make sure these efforts are effective. (6) Finally, the Plan proposes a substantial fundraising campaign to create a sufficient endowment going forward. In the next few months the School Board will also produce a more detailed list of
specific tasks tied to a timeline to implement the Plan.

The Board believes that targeted funding and strategic use of both old and new infrastructure will help ensure their overall goal: to provide a great Catholic education, teaching who Christ is, to every child who wants to enter a Chicago Catholic school.

For additional information about Chicago Catholic schools, please visit http://schools.archchicago.org/

The Position

Reporting to Sister Mary Paul McCaughey, Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese, the Associate Superintendent for Operations is responsible for the overall effective and efficient operation and maintenance, financial stability, marketing and fundraising for the Chicago Catholic school system.

The Associate Superintendent will oversee a staff of 38 in the Office of Catholic Schools, with 12 direct reports and manage school grants and loans of $20 million. The Associate Superintendent will also oversee the six vicariate teams who advise and support schools in financial management and marketing.

Specific Responsibilities

The Associate Superintendent for Operations will:

- Manage the work of vicariate field teams, composed of field leaders, marketing consultants and financial consultants to help schools achieve required improvements, with a strong focus on financial and operational management, enrollment growth and fundraising;
- Assess and hold field team members accountable for
performance;

- Identify gaps in local operational competency and capability and work with local schools to identify and implement processes, support and tools to fill those gaps;

- Identify needs for new policies and develop, communicate and implement them;

- Develop and manage detailed work plans to assure consistent performance improvement throughout the organization;

- Work with vicariate field leadership to address school-related issues and concerns as they arise.

- Work closely with the Associate Superintendent for Programs to assure excellence in academic programs and the recruitment and retention of strong academic leaders—both principals and teachers.

- Work closely with the Associate Superintendent of Catholicity to assure schools nurture Catholic identity;

- Work closely with the Office of Catholic Schools’ Director of Finance and the Director of Communications to assure consistent implementation of best practices in both areas at the central office and in the field;

- Communicate regularly and clearly with stakeholders in the Catholic School System including the OCS leadership team, Episcopal Vicars and Presbyteral Council.

- Foster a climate of openness, trust and harmony while initiating and fostering necessary change within the Catholic School System;

- Perform other assignments as requested by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools.
The Person

Qualifications & Experience

This person can demonstrate a minimum of 10 years in a complex and demanding management position in which he/she has been successful overseeing, managing and developing strong financial and marketing programs. He/she can also demonstrate success in developing and implementing strong professional assessment programs and benchmarking within an organization for a variety of positions and programs.

Leadership & Management Behavioral Competencies

This person is a leader who has a demonstrated interest in faith-based education and has a firm grasp of the management skills required to lead in a complex, de-centralized and changing school system. A bona fide agent for change, he/she can demonstrate the ability to drive change throughout a complex, matrixed organization.

He/she is a collaborative leader who believes in accountability and develops, communicates and implements well-constructed, comprehensive and understandable performance goals throughout an organization. This person is a team builder who can demonstrate the ability to work with individuals at all levels of an organization.

The successful candidate has strong business and financial management skills and has the ability to work closely with a variety of individuals at all levels of the organization to assure financial goals are met. This person believes in accountability—in setting goals and regularly measuring progress toward them for members of the staff at every level.

He/she understands marketing and can demonstrate his/her ability to work effectively to build brand and the organization’s reputation for excellence.

He/she understands the fundamentals of fundraising and is able to effectively make the case for giving to a variety of Catholic and
secular audiences, from parents and neighborhood groups, to major foundations, lawmakers, corporations and high net worth individuals.

This person is strategic and analytical; he/she is skilled at compiling and analyzing data to find solutions to a variety of issues, including financial questions. A natural problem solver, he/she looks for new approaches to problems.

The successful candidate is a strong, clear communicator who disseminates information throughout the organization. This person is a strong, competent decision-maker who not only effectively conveys his/her decision, but also communicates the “why” behind it. He/she understands the importance of clearly communicating strategy and helping each person identify their role in fulfilling the organization’s mission.

He/she enjoys working as an essential member of a senior management team. This person achieves buy-in from people throughout the organization.

Personal Characteristics

This person has a true passion for education and for developing systems, processes and policies that support and advance the quality of education in a racially, ethnically and socially diverse school system. The successful candidate has a clear understanding of the value of a faith-based education.

He/she is highly collaborative and enjoys working as part of a team to identify needs and issues and develop approaches to deal effectively with them. A self-defined “people-person” and team player, the successful candidate believes in communication and works to assure those above and below him/her are “in the loop” about important issues. He/she is a bona fide persuader, able to rally people to support necessary change.

This person understands the value of a Catholic education and is aware and respectful of the Church’s values, faith and mission. He/she is familiar with the Church’s parish structure and understands the unique role Catholic schools play in the parishes in
which they are located.

The successful candidate is an insightful, motivated problem solver who enjoys challenges. A strong decision-maker, he/she works to assure buy-in to change and new programs at every level of the organization.

This person is comfortable and effective dealing with a variety of people from different racial, ethnic and social strata. He/she sets high standards for him/herself and is a person of exceptional commitment whose personal and professional reputation is beyond reproach.
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