



August 15, 2010
Solemnity of the Assumption
of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the fall of 2008, the Diocese of Joliet began a strategic planning process to determine the current situation of its Catholic schools and develop a comprehensive plan to ensure their continuing Catholicity, excellence and availability. Our planning process involved a large number of people from across the diocese who served on the Planning Committee (comprised of diocesan staff, school board members, school administrators, pastors, community leaders, and parents with a demonstrated commitment to Catholic education); the Steering Committee (comprised of the bishop and key diocesan administrators); the Joliet Diocesan Board of Education (comprised of educators, pastors, and lay representatives from across the diocese); and the Catholic community at large (through a number of public consultations and a professional survey).

Today I am happy to present our complete plan, "Lighting the Path to Our Future: Strategic Plan for Catholic Schools."

Catholic schools are a treasure in our country and in our diocese. They have educated generations of faithful Catholics, involved citizens, and leaders of business, government and Church. Catholic Schools are at the core of the Church's mission to hand on the Catholic faith, and thus first and foremost we proclaim that Jesus Christ is the reason for our schools. Their proven academic excellence has not only prepared students for a successful life but also helped lift the poor out of poverty. These and many other blessed benefits of Catholic education will continue well into the future.

I am very grateful to the hundreds of people who have participated in our discussions and consultations as well as the thousands who have participated in surveys and other means of contributing their ideas. Their work is truly bearing fruit. With hope and joy we look forward to the overall strengthening of Catholic education in our diocese. Just as we have been bequeathed a system of wonderful schools by those who came before us, we have a responsibility to do the same for those who come after us.

The goal of every endeavor we undertake will always be to walk by the Light who is Christ and do as He desires. I am confident that He has been with us in this process and will continue to guide us moving forward.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Sartain".

Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain
Bishop of Joliet