

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TEACH IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?

The above question is an important one. We have an excellent system of Catholic Schools here in the Diocese of Rapid City, and we appreciate your interest in becoming part of our school community.

We are also concerned that you understand clearly what we are trying to do in our schools, and the commitment that each teacher makes when he/she accepts a position here. It would not be fair to you, or to us, to encourage your application if you are not in agreement with this philosophy.

Please reflect upon the following general statements of philosophy and objectives, which have been adopted by the Diocesan Board of Education as applicable to Catholic education in our community. The following statements from the American Bishops' letter on Catholic education describe the special aims of our Catholic schools; they pursue these in addition to maintaining high academic and professional standards.

- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:**

The educational mission of the Church is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: the message revealed by God which the Church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit; service to the Christian community and the entire human community.

Of the educational programs available to the Catholic community, Catholic schools afford the fullest and best opportunity to realize the threefold purpose of Christian education among children and young people.

These Catholic schools are called to integrate religious truth and values with the rest of life. While this is done by curriculum development, it is accomplished especially by the presence of teachers who express an integrated approach to learning and living in their private and professional lives.

We believe that building and living community must be prime to explicit goals of the contemporary Catholic school.

These Catholic schools are called to be communities of living faith in which the formational efforts of Catholic families are complemented, reinforced, and extended. Parents, teachers, and students are involved in this together.

Toward this end, the Board and Catholic Schools are committed to develop programs whereby Catholic schools will continue to serve persons of all races and all economic levels.

In order that you may see how the schools fit into the broad program of Diocesan Catholic education, we give below the statements, which apply to every aspect of the Church's educational mission here.

1. **To Nurture a Hunger for God**--Developing within our children strong and permanent Christian morals;
2. **To Build on the Catholic Tradition of Excellence in Education**-- Providing the knowledge, courage, and faith needed to succeed;
3. **To Foster a Caring, Christian Community of Peace, Justice, and Love**-- Working together in harmony with respect, open communication, and self-discipline;
4. **To be Accessible to All Who Want to Benefit from Catholic Education**-- Striving to see that no child is turned away because of finances or special needs;
5. **To Be a Dynamic Community Partner**--Actively participating in wider communities in which the school exists; and
6. **To Promote Life-long Education**--Developing life-long learning.

The Board, the Superintendent's and Principal's Offices recognize that *Parents are the first to communicate the faith to their children and to educate them*. Further, it recognized that the Christian community must make a generous effort today to help parents fulfill their duty. The larger Christian community shares this effort with the parents and includes pastors, all members of the presbytery, professional religious educators, and the board of education.

These following excerpts from "Catholic Schools and the Common Good" embody concepts, procedures, and values to which our Catholic School System is dedicated:

- Catholic schools exist for the express purpose of instilling a basic set of values, derived from religious tenets, as moral absolutes that will guide their students through the vagaries of life. Parochial schools do not shrink from concepts like "right", "wrong", "good", "evil", "pride". But they also emphasize that while morals are absolute in abstract terms, one's capacity to judge is not. Thus, they caution that even as one pursues what one believes is good, one's righteousness may be corrupted by pride and ambition.
- Parochial schools, respond to the demands of parents through the discipline of the market. They compete for students on the basis of quality teaching, attention to individual needs, results, and overall results, all in accordance with their expressed religious mission.
- Effective Catholic high schools function on the basis of four foundational characteristics: a delimited technical core, communal organization, decentralized governance, and inspirational ideology.

- Catholic high schools work well because instead of trying to teach everything, they confidently prescribe a college-preparatory curriculum for all their students. Schools cannot be renewed without that spiritual energy and authority of ideals.
- U.S. Catholic schools find themselves in a paradoxical position. Their academic prestige has never been higher, but the strain to balance their budget is relentless. Their situation is like that of a movie-maker who has just won Academy Awards for best picture, best script, and best director, but has to scramble to finance his or her next film.