

**Catholic Education Improvement Models: An
Annotated Bibliography of Online Resources
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Regional School Model

Characteristics of Successful Regional Schools:

- Shared responsibility for a single school by a group of parishes
- Centralized management with increased efficiency in collection of tuition, combined buying power, and reduced duplications of staff and facilities
- Increased uniformity, higher salary levels, expanded number of sports teams and extracurricular activities
- Improved marketing and fundraising potential
- Lower tuition

Cons:

- Potential loss of ownership and involvement when schools are no longer associated with a single parish
- May require students to travel longer distances to school

Examples of Successful Regional Schools

Successful regional schools in Alabama include St Benedict School in Elberta, drawing from churches in the surrounding area, and two elementary schools and one high school in Montgomery that have combined into the Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School, supported by nine area parishes.

[Mobile's Catholic schools](#)

<http://www.al.com/news/mobileregister/index.ssf?/base/news/109757267233150.xml>

Regional schools in Charlotte, North Carolina have developed a system with uniformity to rival that of public schools, with teachers in different schools paid on the same salary levels, and a wider variety of sports and extracurricular clubs available to students than in the public schools.

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The City Center Consortium, a group of 13 elementary schools in Washington D.C., has also developed a successful regional school model, serving a primarily non-Catholic, inner-city population. The Consortium has focused on administration and centralized fund-raising to aid poor, urban schools.

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Regional “Peace” School Model

Operating under a model of collaborative parish control, the Bishop McVinney Regional School in Providence, Rhode Island responded to financial problems by seeking alternative funding sources, restructuring the curriculum, developing partnerships with area businesses for community service projects, and adding an after-hours childcare program to attract more families. Designed to find ways to share resources, promote joint fundraising, and develop cost-cutting measures, the Providence Catholic Schools Collaborative was founded in 1998 to benefit the McVinney school and three other area Catholic schools. In 1999, the McVinney schools’s mission was reformulated to reflect the theme of peace, in response to recent neighborhood violence.

The early years: The grand experiment took root 30 years ago

http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/ri/browse_school/407/

San Miguel School Model

Characteristics of San Miguel Schools

- 8 ½ hour school days
- Year round classes
- 9-1 teacher ratio
- Emphasis on basic reading and math skills
- Students pay only \$30-40 dollars a month
- About 45% of operating income is derived from individual donations, with 25% coming from foundations, and 18% from corporations
- Half of San Miguel teachers are volunteers, who receive room and board and a monthly stipend and live together in the neighborhood where they teach
- Graduate support programs offer after school tutoring and mentoring, monthly mentoring sessions, weekly visitations by San Miguel staff to the high schools, monthly parent meetings, and college counseling

Sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers, San Miguel operates two co-ed, Catholic middle schools serving inner-city children in Chicago. San Miguel students spend 80 minutes of each day reading, and participate in experiential fieldtrips around the country.

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Innovative schools renew mission to the poor

<http://www.san-miguel.org/visitor.html>

Jubilee Schools

Established by the Diocese of Memphis to raise and manage funds for impoverished Catholic schools in the Memphis area, the Catholic Memphis Urban Schools Trust provides tuition assistance and help with operational costs to Memphis’ Jubilee schools. Serving some of the poorest families in Memphis, the Jubilee schools set high academic standards and offer extensive remediation to under-performing students to help students test at or at least near their respective grade levels. Tuition is offered on a sliding scale, and the schools take an active role in many aspects of the lives of the students and their families, providing food and clothing to students, and adult literacy training, job training, health care and housing programs to parents. Based on a formula easy to duplicate in

other cities, the Jubilee school model provides the Catholic education system with a proven method for successful investment in inner-city education.

[Miracle in Memphis](#)

<http://cdom.org/schools/jubileeschools/miracle%20in%20memphis.htm>

[Catholic Memphis Urban Schools \(CMUS\)/Jubilee Schools: A Prospectus](#)

<http://cdom.org/schools/jubileeschools/jubilee.htm>

[Missionaries of the New Millennium](#)

<http://cdom.org/schools/jubileeschools/missionaries.htm>

Nativity School Model

The Jesuits and others have a network of 43 Nativity schools nationwide. The schools, serve mostly middle school students, and provide intensive education, with classes that begin early in the morning and end late in the day, as well as summer programs, and help for graduates with getting through high school and into college. While costs can exceed \$6,000 per student per year, parents are expected to pay only a small portion of the total cost, requiring the schools to raise large amounts of money. A foundation provides assistance to Nativity schools in their beginning phase, but the schools must obtain their own resources to continue operation, making the model more difficult to operate in smaller cities with fewer resources to draw from.

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Many independently run Nativity schools are single-sex middle schools, a feature that may account for much of their success. The schools also focus on the basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic, equipping students with a sound foundation for further schooling. The Jesuits Nativity Mission Center, open since 1971 on Manhattan's lower east side, is an example of the success of the Nativity model. Serving primarily Hispanic students at its all-male middle school, 89% of the school's graduates go on to graduate from high school, compared to just 63% of their Hispanic peers nationwide, and 75% of the school's graduates attend college, compared to just 32% of their Hispanic peers. In Milton, Massachusetts, the Episcopalian-run Epiphany school receives about a quarter of its students from the foster care program, with seats allocated through a lottery.

[Nativity school model being replicated](#)

<http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=9384>

Independent Private Catholic School/Nativity Model

Formerly run by the archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Gesu elementary school in inner-city Philadelphia was closed by the archdiocese in 1993 and is now operated as an independent not-for-profit Nativity School, providing Catholic education to 430 students in an impoverished area of Philadelphia. While over half the students are raised by single parents in some of Philadelphia's poorest neighborhoods, Gesu students test above the national average in reading and math, with ninety-five percent graduating from high school and seventy-five percent enrolling in college. The school owes much of its success to the efforts of entrepreneur Win Churchill who endowed a development office to raise

money for the school, treating the school as it would any fledgling or middle-stage company.

www.gesuschool.org

Stewardship Model

Characteristics:

- Tuition free schools
- Parishioners tithe 8% of income to the church
- Children of non-parishioners pay tuition, but receive discounted rates

The stewardship model, developed in Wichita, Kansas, and recently adopted by one parish in Mobile, encourages active involvement and participation in the parish school by all parish members, in the form of tithes, or donations to the church. Wichita Catholics are asked to donate 8% of their income to the church and 2% to other charities. The money received by the church is used to provide tuition-free Catholic education to the parishioner's children. American Catholics typically donate about half as much to their church, as do Protestants, a figure that must be significantly increased to improve the viability of Catholic education.

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Because of stewardship, low-income parishioners don't have to swallow their pride in search of scholarships or tuition support, an experience that would otherwise be a deterrent to enrollment. Making a good faith effort ensures a "place at the table" in the Wichita Catholic educational system, and enrollment levels have risen in each of the past 13 years. Students that are not parishioners in Wichita must pay tuition at Catholic schools, but the cost is partially subsidized by the diocese.

[Why we can't afford to close Catholic schools](#)

<http://www.uscatholic.org/2001/05/feata0105.htm>

KIPP College Preparatory School Model

The KIPP Indianapolis College Preparatory charter school, modeled after the highly successful Knowledge is Power Program, will prepare middle school students to succeed in college through a rigorous curriculum and extended school days, weeks, and years. The school will provide tuition-free, open enrollment schooling to underserved middle school students, beginning the first year with the fifth grade and adding a grade each subsequent year until the school becomes a complete middle school with fifth through eighth grades. Established in 1994 as a program for fifth graders in inner-city Houston, the KIPP academies have an excellent record of high student achievement, with more than 95 percent of students from the original KIPP academies having been accepted into college preparatory high schools. Currently, 38 KIPP academies are being operated in 13 states and the District of Columbia, including an elementary school and a pilot high school in Houston.

[Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson attends KIPP Indy ribbon cutting ceremony](#)

<http://www.kipp.org/pressdetail.cfm?pageid=nav7&a=118>

Improved Marketing and Fundraising

Immediate strategies to preserve Mobile's remaining Catholic elementary schools include: increased fundraising, increased recruitment of new students, reducing operational costs, and seeking additional government support. More radical strategies include charging little or no tuition and relying instead on the "missionary impulses" of Catholic and even non-Catholic lay-people dedicated to serving the poor and improving the community. While the typical parish paid 63% of a school's cost in 1969, parishes in 2003 met only 23% of costs, relying on tuition to cover 61% of operating costs and on fundraising to cover the remaining difference. As financial problems threaten to overcome smaller, poorer parish schools, more systematic and professional fundraising and marketing efforts have been organized, with an emphasis on the development of increasingly sophisticated ways of asking for money. Bingo games, raffles, fairs, and candy sales are being replaced by alumni appeals, endowment drives, and capital campaigns. St Mary in Mobile has been a pioneer in improved fundraising and development, with increases in enrollment from under 200 students in the late 1980's to over 270 students in 2004, nearly reaching its 289 student maximum capacity. Much of the credit for the school's rebound can be attributed to the institution of an annual fund-drive to cover operating expenses, and the development of a marketing campaign including a newsletter designed to keep church members and others up to date about the school. Nationwide, marketing has been identified as a crucial component of school viability. Catholic schools must promote their image as high-quality educational institutions, experts say, and should emphasize, rather than downplay the religious nature of the Catholic educational experience.

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Founded in 1997, the City Center Consortium launched the Faith in the City endowment drive in 2001, to raise money to provide tuition assistance and academic scholarships to some of Washington D.C.'s neediest families, to upgrade learning facilities and make infrastructure improvements, to offer increased salaries to enable schools to attract and retain teachers, and to achieve parity with public school salaries in the D.C. area.

[City Center Consortium](#)

<http://www.centercityconsortium.org/support.asp>

Chicago's "Big Shoulders Fund" provides support to Catholic schools in the neediest areas of the city. Funds raised by the Big Shoulders program are used for scholarships, special education programs, instructional equipment, much needed facility improvements, faculty support, and operating grants. The program operates by matching a Patron, often an individual, company, or foundation, with an inner-city Catholic school. Together with the school's leadership, the Patron creates an advisory board and formulates a long-term business strategy for the school. The Patron also contributes funds or in-kind products and services to support the school.

[Big Shoulders Fund](#)

<http://www.bigshouldersfund.org/>

Aid from Business

Inner-city schools across the country have turned to the business community to help the urban poor attend Catholic schools. Most notably, the Catholic Schools Foundation in Boston, headed by investment manager Peter Lynch, raised 5.5 million to send to 5000 mostly inner-city students at 62 schools this year. In Memphis, Tenn., non-Catholic donors gave millions to help the diocese reopen seven inner-city elementaries. Catholic leaders in Memphis solicited support from businesses on the premise that Catholic schools can play a vital role in teaching job skills to students otherwise stuck in ailing public schools.

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Government Aid

While school choice decisions are currently left up to individual states, several states have school voucher programs under way. Cleveland, Milwaukee, Pensacola, and Washington D.C. currently have voucher programs.

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At least 1,700 low-income students in Washington D.C. will be eligible to receive up to \$7,500 in vouchers to pay for private or parochial schools in 2004-05. While funds from the voucher program will cover only the cost of tuition, not capital improvements, the Catholic school system hopes to attract many of the voucher-eligible students.

[Catholic schools buck U.S. trend](#)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A3975-2004May5.html>