

Superintendent of Schools Attends Strategic Leadership Conference

What should leaders of Catholic schools be doing now to ensure that Catholic school education continues to form the hearts and minds of our young people for generations into the future? The strategic leadership of Superintendents and Directors of Education is required to ensure our Catholic schools are equipped to deliver the best educational and religious experience for our children and their families

The *Superintendents Strategic Leadership Conference*, held in late June at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., enrolled 35 superintendents from archdioceses and dioceses in 18 states and the District of Columbia. ACE Consulting, part of Notre Dame's Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE), coordinated and launched this inaugural leadership event. Among the participants was Alberto Vazquez-Matos, Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

During this three day conference, a series of panel discussions and in-depth conversations addressed the "Incarnational Aspects of Catholic Education" and the strategic decision-making processes required of leaders to enhance financial management and academic leadership. Participants also engaged in conversations regarding parental choice and other public policy issues and considered ways to create a culture of continuous improvement in schools. They grappled with a common challenge of finding effective ways to increase Latino enrollments and respond to this Catholic, immigrant group of children who are currently underrepresented in our school communities.

Among the conference presenters were John J. Brennan, Chairman Emeritus and Senior Advisor of The Vanguard Group, Inc.; Erin Hoffman Harding, Associate Vice President for Strategic Planning, University of Notre Dame; and Mary Ann Remick, ACE Advisory Board member and philanthropist.

Serving as a panelist was Brooklyn, N.Y., Auxiliary Bishop Frank Caggiano, who said the Church's teaching mission remains the same. But "the paradigm of Catholic education is changing," he told the superintendents. "It will either happen with us or to us."

The overall conference goal was to give superintendents better tools to formulate and implement strategies that "will preserve and revitalize our nation's Catholic schools," said Steve Perla, senior director of ACE Consulting.

ACE Consulting is comprised of professional leaders and educators who provide consulting and professional development services to archdioceses and dioceses in support of Catholic schools.

ACE's presence in the St. Petersburg Diocese includes a house where six ACE teachers live in community while serving in five local Catholic elementary and high schools.

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