**Pathways Executive Summary**

On May 20, 2019, The Pathways Commission provided recommendations, steeped in best practices, to Bishop Rozanski, the principals and pastors of our Catholic schools, and a number of priests of the Diocese of Springfield to revitalize the Catholic schools of our Diocese. We believe these recommendations will ensure the availability of a Catholic education to the families of the Diocese of Springfield well into the future. As a people of faith, we believe in God’s help and assistance in solving many challenges and hope that, by focusing on five distinct areas, we can start to solve some of these challenges, and reorient our schools toward a path of vitality.

The five areas that define our vision moving forward are as follows:

* Catholic schools must participate in the **evangelizing mission** of the Church.
* Catholic schools must be **excellent** academically, and **in all aspects** of school life.
* Catholic schools must be **accessible to everyone** who desires a Catholic education.
* Catholic schools must be **good stewards** of their resources and **financially sustainable**.
* Catholic schools must be **governed** in a manner that **engages** and **empowers people** and places accountability at the right level.

By placing emphasis in these five areas, it is the belief of the Pathways to Faith Commission that a sustainable Catholic education in the Diocese of Springfield will bring more vitality to the Catholic churches of our Diocese. This will, in turn, provide increased access to a truly transformative education for more and more students and families who will benefit from our Catholic schools. While in many ways this report attempts to be comprehensive, there are many challenges that face our schools which we may not have identified. Further research is needed to better understand the sentiments of families not in our schools, the views of the priests of the Diocese of Springfield with regard to Catholic education, and even the overall financial potential in our area to support schools. The recommendations to engage and empower an increasing number of people who are working to find solutions for our schools can bring about the much needed shared leadership to adapt to those challenges when they come.

In the short-term, hiring the appropriate personnel, allocating existing funds more equitably, meeting with key stakeholders, and identifying families who currently desire a Catholic education are important first-steps to help our schools better accomplish their mission.

There cannot be an ‘ultimate goal’ of this report as it is like lighting the first torch on the pathway to successful Catholic education in our Diocese. As we walk along, more research will be needed. Strategic plans for the schools and the school system must be developed that are connected to the mission of Catholic education in our Diocese. We believe that the recommendations presented will bring about concrete changes in the short-term to inject more life into our schools. We also believe that the recommendations will point the Catholic schools toward a path where individually and as a system, they better accomplish the mission of Catholic education given us by the Church, and provide increased access to a high quality Catholic education for our families for generations to come. While our hope is to provide a Catholic education for everyone who desires one, we believe our ability to attain this aspirational goal can only be accomplished if we start on the “Pathway” set forth in this report.