

Thriving K-12 Catholic Schools

Grant Type: *Dollar*

Grant Amount: *\$1,019,528*

Organization: *Tracy Family Foundation*

What was the objective of your grant or initiative?

We wanted 10 west-central Illinois K-12 Catholic schools to thrive, not just survive.

What was your approach?

We engaged an organization to assess each of the 10 schools. We engaged the same organization to work with each of the 10 schools to develop a long-range strategic plan. We then provided support (i.e., people, resources, and the development of a grant program for the schools) to help the schools implement their long-range plan. We set up a reporting system that, moving forward, would drive accountability and the plans.

The enrollment results from this work are unique, as compared to the national results and those of our local diocese.

What were the outsized results?

The 2012 versus 2013 Catholic school enrollments were:

- Nationally: decreased by 1.5%
- Diocese of Springfield, Illinois, schools: decreased by .8%
- 10 schools our foundation worked with: **increased** by +1.9%

Vital to the 10 schools were (and are) pressure and support. Furthermore, it takes a village to achieve a goal. We brought in experts in the field to lead the work; made ourselves available and approachable; developed relationships with key stakeholders; and worked really hard, kept positive, and focused on the goal of thriving schools, even when bumps in the road came along.

In October 2014, the National Catholic Education Association awarded the Foundation with the Elizabeth Ann Seton Award, which is given to individuals and organizations that the association believes have made outstanding contributions to Catholic education or youths.

