



INSTITUTE FOR SCHOOL & PARISH DEVELOPMENT

INITIAL ASSESSMENT



GREENWELL SPRINGS, LA

MARCH 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I: Introduction	Page 3
Background	
Scope of Analysis	
Appreciation	
Development as a Frame of Reference	
ISPD	
Section II: Key Input	Page 6
Section III: Interview Questions	Page 8
Summary/Analysis	
Section IV: Ultimate Question Survey	Page 14
Summary/Analysis	
Section V: Highlights	Page 20
Section VI: Areas of Assessment	Page 22
Section VII: Recommendations	Page 29

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Through the invitation from Kristy Monsour (principal), St. Alphonsus Catholic School in Greenwell Springs, LA has engaged the Institute for School and Parish Development (ISPD) to consult with the school in a number of Operational Vitality areas:

Assessment of the Operational Vitality efforts at St. Alphonsus Catholic School

Abbreviated Strategic Growth Plan process centered around the four domains of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*:

- Mission and Catholic Identity
- Governance and Leadership
- Academic Excellence
- Operational Vitality

Identification, enlistment, and training of the Steering Committee to help guide the above

Tony Bonura is the ISPD lead associate working with St. Alphonsus Catholic School. As part of the consultation, ISPD conducted an initial assessment of the school. This report outlines the data examined, major observations, and a set of strategic recommendations.

Scope of Analysis

The Initial Assessment is a general look at St. Alphonsus Catholic School, with particular examination of the areas of leadership and planning, development, communications, enrollment management, organization, challenges, and revenue generation. In essence, ISPD is taking a “snapshot” of the inner circle of the school, looking at areas of strength and areas needing improvement.

Input for this Assessment was received in the following manner:

Initial discussions with Kristy Monsour, principal, and the leadership team at the school, including Father Jason Palermo, pastor;

On-site interviews with various school personnel, leaders, parents, faculty/staff, parishioners, and others;

ISPD electronic questionnaire seeking information of 25+ areas;

The Ultimate Question Survey conducted by the school and facilitated by ISPD;

Gathering of materials requested by ISPD.

Appreciation

The staff of the Institute for School and Parish Development wishes to thank the people who took the time to meet with Mr. Bonura to share their opinions, concerns, and hopes for St. Alphonsus Catholic School. We strongly believe that we can only get to know a school through the eyes of its leaders. Special thanks go to Kristy Monsour and others who gathered and organized the materials and information requested for this Assessment.

Development as the Frame of Reference

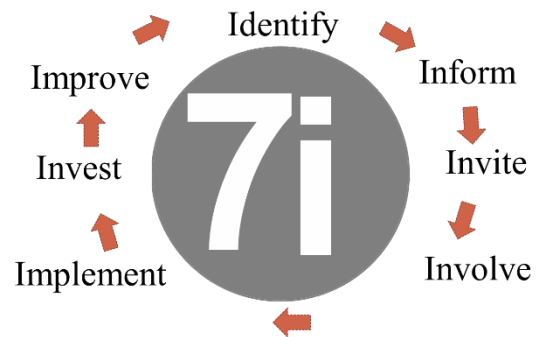
One of the major challenges Catholic leaders faces is educating the key internal constituencies about the meaning of the words *Catholic Development*. And, closely associated with the meaning is the understanding that *development* is a continuous process, not a program to be plugged in only at specific times when money is needed. ISPD does see the words *development* and *advancement* as synonymous in that both point to developing and advancing a Catholic school.

Development is defined as **the meaningful involvement of people in your mission and vision for the future**. We strongly believe that building a culture of belonging is necessary for generating substantial and sustained commitment. Thus, we say, “Belonging leads to believing.” By the very definition of the word, *development* takes time — usually two to four years from the time *development* efforts are begun until a school begins to see substantial results.

The model that the Institute of School and Parish Development teaches throughout the country is called “The Seven I’s of Catholic Development.”

The Seven I’s of Development

Identify: Specifically, the people, processes, values and goals that will be the keys to the school’s future.



Inform: Reach out to the members of the school community, informing them of the Development process and the essential elements of your school.

Invite: Invite key people to take a close look at you as you look at them.

Involve: Involve people in the development and planning process in meaningful ways.

Implement: Put into action strategic plans that have been created through their involvement.

Invest: Arrange for involved people to invest in the future of their school and their own personal future.

Improve: Implement an evaluative process to ensure longevity of the Development process.

The Institute for School and Parish Development will be viewing St. Alphonsus Catholic School from this particular frame of reference: that is, from the context of the “Seven I” approach to Development.

ISPD

The Institute for School and Parish Development is a national Catholic consulting firm headquartered in the Greater New Orleans Area. All associates who work with ISPD have backgrounds in Catholic schools, parishes, and dioceses, serving as either former or present principals, presidents, advancement directors, diocesan officials, and Catholic leaders in their community. ISPD works exclusively with *Catholic* schools, parishes, and (arch)dioceses across the country through on-site consulting and workshops.

The company started its 36th year in June 2025 and concentrates its consulting, coaching, and educational services in the following areas:

Assessments	Total Stewardship
Long-Range Strategic Planning	Board Development
Development Office Set-Up	Faculty, Parent, and Board Unity
Development Director Hire and Train	Mission and Vision Formation
Building the Development Core Team	Communications and Marketing
Strategic Plan for Development Efforts	Publications
Annual Funds	Feasibility Studies
Enrollment Management	Capital Campaigns
Major Gift Process	People Engagement Processes for Catholic Parishes and School

With the experience of working with many Catholic schools, parishes, and dioceses throughout the country, and understanding what is working well and what is not, ISPD is pleased to present this Initial Assessment Report to the leadership of St. Alphonsus Catholic School.

II. KEY INPUT

To conduct this Assessment, ISPD requested and reviewed a range of information, publications, samples of communications, and other forms of data indicative of the operational well-being of the school. Secondly, ISPD conducted one-on-one confidential interviews with people who offered representative viewpoints of the school. Thirdly, ISPD requested that school leaders complete a questionnaire that assesses many aspects of school life and administration. The sources of data are listed below.

Materials Reviewed

ISPD reviewed a range of information, documents, samples of work, and other sources of data which were provided by school leaders.

2025-26 school budget

Newsletters: The Buzz

- January 8, 2026
- December 18, 2025
- December 11, 2025
- December 4, 2025
- November 20, 2025

Enrollment Management Parent Survey

Information on 13th Annual Hornet Fun Run, 2025

St. Alphonsus Athletic Sponsorships

Flyer for SAS Home and School Family Bingo Night

Flyer for SAS Church and School Christmas Craft Show and Festival

Flyer for Raising Funds with Raising Canes

Flyer for 2025 Hive Golf Tournament

Flyer for raffle tickets

Flyer for Daddy—Daughter Sneaker Ball

Flyer for SAS Book Fair

Flyer for Christmas Market (see above)

Flyer for Church Fundraiser – Festival of Two Rivers

Letter to Bishop concerning need for burial space

Information on Columbarium Burial Policies, May 2025

Administrative Memos

- January 11, 2026
- January 4, 2026
- December 14, 2025
- December 7, 2025
- November 30, 2025
- November 16, 2025
- November 9, 2025
- November 2, 2025

- October 26, 2025
- October 19, 2025
- October 12, 2025
- October 5, 2025
- School Mission Statement
- Open House promo information
- School Board Minutes
 - November 19, 2025
 - October 22, 2025
 - September 24, 2025
- Finance Committee Minutes
 - October 15, 2025
 - September 23, 2025
 - June 17, 2025
 - August 19, 2025
- Annual Report

Assessment Questionnaire

There was a binder of questions that ISPD sent to St. Alphonsus Catholic School. Listed below are the main areas that were examined:

1. Present governance structure
2. Internal communications
3. Long-range planning
4. General demographic trends
5. Marketing research
6. Communications
7. Publications
8. Website and social media
9. Enrollment Management
10. Alumni
11. Volunteers
12. Business/Corporate Community
13. Database management
14. Fund-raising events
15. Annual Fund Drive
16. Major Gifts
17. Grant Writing
18. Endowment/Foundation
19. Planned Giving
20. Capital Campaign
21. Development/Advancement Office
22. School/Parish Relationship
23. Board effectiveness and focus

24. School leadership challenges

III. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

ISPD conducted one-on-one interviews with selected school representatives. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes and addressed the following questions.

1. What most impresses you about St. Alphonsus Catholic School?
2. What would you consider to be the areas that need the most improvement in the school?
3. How well does the school communicate with its various constituencies (parents, alums, staff, feeder schools, parishioners, key donors, etc.)?
4. How familiar are you with the Development/Enrollment Management/Fund-Raising efforts of the school?
5. As you look to the future, what would you like to see happen here at St. Alphonsus Catholic School over the next 1 – 3 – 5 years?

ISPD ASSESSMENT INTERVIEWS: SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

I. OVERALL IMPRESSION

St. Alphonsus Catholic School is perceived as:

- A **strongly Catholic, family-centered school**
- Experiencing **positive momentum under current leadership**
- Academically solid
- Enrollment stable or growing
- In need of **facilities expansion and infrastructure investment**
- Lacking formal advancement systems (Annual Fund, alumni structure, donor database)

The school enjoys deep goodwill and strong community pride. The dominant tone across interviews is **supportive and hopeful**, not critical.

II. CLEAR STRENGTHS

1. Strong Catholic Identity & Parish Connection

Repeated themes:

- “Catholic identity very strong”
- Faith-centered
- Church attendance by school
- Pastor involvement appreciated
- Spirituality is central to mission
- Religion program strong

There is broad affirmation that the school is:

- Authentically Catholic
- Mission-aligned
- Supported by parish leadership

This is a major institutional asset.

2. Family Atmosphere / Community Culture

Most frequently repeated strength.

Common phrases:

- “Feels like family”
- “Tight-knit community”
- “Small school feel”
- “Kids are known”
- “Don’t feel like a number”
- “Parents step up”

Students, parents, faculty, alumni, and board members all echoed this.

However, several cautioned:

- Growth must not eliminate the family feel.

This is both a strength and a strategic tension.

3. Leadership Confidence

Principal Kristy Monsour received significant positive commentary:

- Responsive
- Strong communicator
- Good recruiter
- Makes families feel wanted
- Momentum is positive
- Finances are healthy
- Enrollment increasing

Father Jason also received favorable comments regarding:

- Visibility
- Involvement
- Support of school

There is confidence in current direction.

4. Academics

Positive remarks include:

- Strong academics
- Students prepared for high school
- Teachers are caring and experienced
- Small teacher-pupil ratio
- High expectations
- Reading resource program
- Math and science teachers praised
- Grace Program and dyslexia support mentioned positively

There is broad perception of academic strength.

5. Communication (Parents)

Communication to parents is widely praised:

- “The Buzz” newsletter
- Emails
- Social media
- Facebook pages
- Immediate teacher response
- Alert system

However:

- Alumni communication weak
- Donor communication weak
- Parish communication could improve

Parent communication = strength

External communication = inconsistent

6. Fundraising Events

Hornet Run frequently cited as:

- Successful
- Enjoyable
- Major fundraiser

Fair/Auction also mentioned as successful.

However:

- No Annual Fund
- No advancement office
- No donor database
- No alumni system
- Principal carrying development responsibilities

This is structurally significant.

III. MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN / IMPROVEMENT THEMES

1. FACILITIES & SPACE (Most Dominant Concern)

This was the most consistent theme across all 21 interviews.

Frequently Mentioned:

- Need more space
- Middle school building tight
- Admin building deteriorating
- Temporary buildings not adequate
- Library outdated
- Computer lab upgrades needed
- Need new gym / larger gym
- Athletic field improvements

- Covered walkways inadequate
- Security concerns (middle school, back field)
- Playground missing / inadequate
- Drainage issues
- Front entrance visibility
- Carpool congestion
- Need additional cafeteria
- Desire for 3 sections per grade
- Some mention possible high school addition

There is widespread acknowledgment that:
Growth is pushing the physical plant beyond capacity.
Facilities planning is an urgent strategic issue.

2. Class Size & Growth Management

Mixed perspectives:

Some say:

- Enrollment growing steadily
- Good momentum

Others caution:

- Class sizes larger than competitors
- Need smaller classes
- Need more sections
- Need teacher aides in lower grades
- Managed growth preferred
- “Not too much growth – don’t lose family feel”

This is a strategic inflection point.

3. Athletics

Recurring themes:

- Struggle athletically
- Need improved facilities
- Competing with larger schools difficult
- Need football field
- Need stronger athletic identity

Athletics are seen as:

- Important for enrollment competitiveness
- Currently under-resourced

4. Advancement Structure Gaps

Clear systemic concerns:

- No Annual Fund
- No advancement position
- No donor database

- Alumni connection weak
- Parishioner awareness limited
- Development communication inconsistent
- Too many small fundraisers (some comments)
- Fundraising “all over the place”

Several stakeholders explicitly stated:

A strategic plan would be helpful.

This is a classic ISPD finding: strong goodwill, but no formal advancement system.

5. Academic Program Refinement

While overall strong, areas noted:

- Reading program concerns (phonics, shift dissatisfaction)
- Writing curriculum uneven
- Discipline consistency concerns
- Need stronger discipline policy
- More enrichment (foreign language, drama, arts)
- Offer high school credit courses
- Improve writing skills
- Improve resources for struggling students
- Add more middle school teachers

These are program-level refinements, not structural failures.

6. Alumni & Donor Engagement

Consistent themes:

- Alumni database lacking
- Alumni engagement weak
- Donor communication weak
- No system in place
- Parishioners not fully informed

This is a major development opportunity.

IV. PERCEPTION OF ENROLLMENT

Observations:

- Enrollment had dipped (~600 mentioned) due to Central school formation.
- Enrollment is now increasing again.
- Open House move to daytime seen as positive.
- Families from outside immediate parish are enrolling.
- Opportunity to become destination school (Clinton, Zachary, North areas).

There is growth opportunity — but facilities constrain expansion.

V. CULTURAL OBSERVATIONS

1. High Goodwill

Very little hostility or negativity.
Even critiques were constructive.

2. Strong Parent Involvement

Parents described as:

- Engaged
- Generous
- Stepping up

3. Faculty Commitment

Teachers praised for:

- Caring
- Longevity
- Alignment with mission

4. Some Tension Areas

- Discipline consistency
- Some past bullying issues
- Finance office process confusion
- School/church disconnect perception (minor theme)

VI. EMERGING STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Based on interviews, the top five strategic priorities likely are:

1. Facilities Master Plan

- Middle school expansion
- Admin building replacement
- Athletic improvements
- Classroom growth
- Security upgrades

2. Managed Growth Strategy

- Class size targets
- Sections per grade
- Maintain family culture

3. Formal Advancement Infrastructure

- Launch Annual Fund
- Create advancement position
- Build alumni database
- Donor tracking system
- Development communications plan

4. Academic Enhancements

- Reading/writing alignment
- Discipline clarity
- Enrichment offerings
- Support for struggling learners

5. Competitive Positioning

- Become destination Catholic school north of Baton Rouge
- Improve athletics visibility
- Strengthen brand in surrounding communities

VII. OVERALL ASSESSMENT CHARACTERIZATION

If summarized in one sentence:

St. Alphonsus is a strong, mission-centered, family-oriented Catholic school with positive leadership momentum, facing facility constraints and needing better and formal advancement systems.

VIII. Language Heard Most Often

- “The school enjoys exceptional goodwill across stakeholder groups.”
- “The Catholic identity is both authentic and visible.”
- “Facilities are the dominant concern across constituencies.”
- “Advancement efforts are event-based rather than system-based.”
- “There is clear readiness for structured strategic planning.”
- “Growth is occurring organically but requires intentional management.”

IV. THE ULTIMATE QUESTION SURVEY

I. Purpose of This Report

This report provides a comprehensive analysis, compilation, and executive summary of the 2025 Ultimate Question (Net Promoter Score) Survey conducted at St. Alphonsus Catholic School.

The purpose of the survey was to measure:

- Family satisfaction
- Likelihood of recommendation
- Institutional loyalty
- Areas for strategic refinement

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) framework measures not only satisfaction, but advocacy — a critical indicator of enrollment growth, retention stability, and long-term vitality.

II. Survey Overview

- **Total Surveys Completed: 324**
- **All responses included a recommendation score (0–10 scale)**

Rating Distribution

Rating Count

10	192
9	30
8	35

7	18
6	12
5	21
4	4
3	3
2	4
1	2
0	3

III. Net Promoter Score Analysis

Promoters (9–10)

- 222 families
- **68.5%**

Passives (7–8)

- 53 families
- **16.4%**

Detractors (0–6)

- 49 families
- **15.1%**

Net Promoter Score (NPS): +53.4

Formula:

% Promoters – % Detractors

IV. Interpretation of the Score

An NPS of **+53** is considered **Outstanding**.

Industry Context

NPS Range Interpretation

0–20	Average
20–40	Strong
40–50	Very Strong
50+	Exceptional

St. Alphonsus Catholic School falls into the **Exceptional category**.

This indicates:

- Strong family loyalty
- High levels of advocacy
- Positive word-of-mouth momentum
- Emotional commitment to the school

Nearly **7 out of 10 families are enthusiastic Promoters** — a powerful institutional asset.

V. Thematic Analysis of Comments

While the quantitative score is strong, qualitative comments provide insight into what drives satisfaction — and what requires refinement.

A. Strengths Identified by Promoters

The most frequently recurring themes were:

1. Family Atmosphere

Parents consistently describe the school as:

- “Family”
- Welcoming
- Supportive
- Connected

2. Strong Community

Families value:

- Relationships among parents
- Accessible leadership
- Visible faith integration

3. Catholic Identity

The faith environment is viewed as authentic and meaningful.

4. Dedicated Teachers and Staff

Parents appreciate:

- Caring faculty
- Academic commitment
- Personal attention

5. Safe & Nurturing Environment

Emotional safety and belonging are repeatedly affirmed.

Interpretation of Strengths

The school’s **mission identity is strong**.

The culture is relational.

Families feel known and valued.

This is not accidental — it reflects intentional leadership and faculty commitment.

VI. Areas for Refinement

Even in high-performing schools, feedback identifies improvement opportunities.

Key recurring themes among Passives and Detractors include:

1. Middle School Experience

“Middle school” appeared repeatedly in improvement comments.

Possible areas to explore:

- Student culture
- Academic rigor
- Social dynamics
- Discipline consistency
- Communication clarity

2. Discipline & Student Behavior

Some comments reference:

- Consistency in enforcement
- Classroom management
- Behavioral expectations

3. Communication & Parent Partnership

A minority of respondents desire:

- Greater clarity
- More proactive communication
- Stronger partnership structures

VII. Strategic Interpretation

The data does **not** indicate systemic weakness.

Instead, it shows:

A strong, healthy school with identifiable refinement opportunities.

With 68.5% Promoters and only 15% Detractors:

- The institution’s foundation is solid.
- The majority of families are enthusiastic.
- Growth potential lies in converting Passives and addressing specific concerns.

VIII. Strategic Opportunities

1. Protect the Promoter Base

Promoters are the school’s ambassadors.

Strategic actions:

- Celebrate faculty excellence.
- Highlight faith identity.
- Showcase family culture.
- Invite testimonials.

2. Convert Passives (16%)

This group is satisfied but not enthusiastic.

Potential strategies:

- Strengthen communication rhythms.

- Increase parent engagement.
- Enhance middle school experience.
- Personal outreach from leadership.

Converting even half of Passives would elevate the NPS into the 60s.

3. Address Detractors Thoughtfully (15%)

49 families represent valuable feedback.

Leadership approach:

- Encourage leadership follow-up.
- Commission focused listening sessions.
- Review middle school programming.
- Monitor discipline clarity and consistency.

IX. Enrollment & Development Implications

An NPS of +53 is a strategic growth asset.

High advocacy correlates strongly with:

- Retention stability
- Referral enrollment
- Parish confidence
- Development support

This data supports:

- Structured parent ambassador programs
- Intentional referral campaigns
- Marketing built around testimonials
- Development messaging rooted in satisfaction

X. Governance-Level Recommendations

Leadership should:

1. Request annual NPS benchmarking.
2. Monitor middle school climate metrics.
3. Ensure discipline policies are clearly articulated and consistently applied.
4. Encourage a “You Said / We Did” communication model.
5. Integrate NPS into strategic planning dashboards.

XI. Overall Executive Summary

St. Alphonsus Catholic School is in a position of institutional strength.

With:

- 324 total responses
- 222 Promoters
- An NPS of +53.4

The school demonstrates exceptional family loyalty and advocacy.

The culture is strong.
The Catholic identity is valued.
The faculty are appreciated.

Areas for refinement exist — particularly in middle school experience and communication consistency — but these are improvement opportunities within a healthy system, not indicators of institutional distress.

The strategic task before the leadership is not rescue — it is stewardship and leverage.
The question now becomes: How do we build upon this strong foundation to deepen excellence and accelerate growth?

V. POINTS OF EMPHASIS (HIGHLIGHTS)

Upon reviewing the collected data, the compiled interview responses, and the completed survey, ISPD offers a set of key observations. These are ISPD’s initial observations of the school and may not reflect the reality of some members of the school community. As more information becomes available over time, these observations may need to be revised and clarified. Please note that these comments are not in any particular order.

#	Highlight	Type	Summary
1	Strong Catholic Identity & Parish Support	Positive	SAS is widely regarded as authentically Catholic, with visible faith practices, a strong religion program, regular church attendance, and clear pastoral support. This is a major distinguishing asset and central to mission.
2	Exceptional Family Atmosphere & Culture of Belonging	Positive	Families repeatedly describe SAS as “family,” “tight-knit,” and “a place where kids are known, not numbers.” This aligns with ISPD’s core lesson that belonging leads to believing and is clearly in place at SAS.
3	Outstanding Parent Loyalty (NPS +53.4)	Positive	With 68.5% Promoters and only 15.1% Detractors, SAS sits in the “Exceptional” NPS category. This indicates strong advocacy, high satisfaction, and powerful word-of-mouth potential for enrollment and development.
4	Leadership Confidence & Positive Momentum	Positive	Principal Kristy Monsour and Fr. Jason are viewed as responsive, visible, supportive, and mission-driven. Stakeholders sense “momentum,” healthy finances, and increasing enrollment — creating confidence in the school’s direction.
5	Solid Academics with Caring, Stable Faculty	Positive	Families and stakeholders affirm strong academics, good preparation for high school, effective reading/math/science instruction, and targeted supports (Grace Program, dyslexia). Teachers are seen as caring, experienced, and committed to the mission.
6	Strong Communication with Current Families	Positive	“The Buzz,” emails, social media, and rapid teacher response create a feeling that parents are well-informed and able to connect quickly with the school. Internal communications and parent-facing communication are a clear strength.
7	Facilities & Space at a Critical Point	Area to Improve	Facilities are the single most dominant concern: tight middle school space, aging admin building, outdated library/computer lab, limited gym/athletics, drainage, carpool, security, playground, and covered walkways. Growth is straining the campus, signaling an urgent need

			for a Facilities Master Plan.
8	Need for a Managed Growth & Enrollment Strategy	Area to Improve	While enrollment is rebounding and there is demand beyond parish boundaries, concerns exist about class size, the need for more sections and aides, and fear of losing the “family feel.” SAS is at an inflection point where intentional enrollment management and clear class-size targets are needed.
9	Advancement Infrastructure Largely Absent	Area to Improve	Fundraising is heavily event-based (Hornet Run, fairs, raffles), with no established Annual Fund, no dedicated advancement position, no robust donor database, and weak alumni systems. The principal is carrying development tasks — a structural gap given the school’s size and opportunity.
10	Alumni, Donor & Parishioner Engagement Underdeveloped	Area to Improve	Communication with alumni and donors is weak and unstructured; parishioners are not consistently informed about school successes or needs. Given the high goodwill among current families, building systematic outreach to alumni and parishioners is a major opportunity.
11	Middle School Experience & Discipline Consistency	Area to Improve	Survey comments and interviews point to middle school as the main “refinement zone”: discipline consistency, social dynamics, clarity of expectations, and communication. There is also desire for stronger writing, continued reading alignment, more enrichment, and additional middle school staffing.
12	Athletics & Competitive Positioning	Area to Improve	Athletics are seen as under-resourced relative to competitors (facilities, fields, identity). At the same time, SAS has the potential to be the “destination Catholic school” north of Baton Rouge. Strategic investment in athletics and clear branding could support both enrollment and community pride.

VI. AREAS OF ASSESSMENT

AREA #1: Present Governance Structure

The current governance structure reflects the traditional Catholic parish-school model in which the pastor serves as the canonical authority and supervisor of the principal, with the principal responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the school. Advisory groups such as the School Advisory Board, Finance Committee, and Athletic Committee provide support and counsel. This structure is consistent with many parish schools and appears to provide appropriate oversight and leadership continuity. However, the advisory boards appear to function primarily in an informational or consultative capacity rather than as strategic leadership bodies.

ISPD believes the school would benefit from:

- Clarifying the purpose, expectations, and responsibilities of each advisory group for everyone to understand.
- Ensuring that the advisory board focuses on long-term planning, mission advancement, and school sustainability rather than primarily operational updates.
- Continuing to develop and promote standing committees, particularly in areas such as development, marketing/enrollment, facilities, and finance.

Strengthening governance in this way would allow the school to better support the administration in addressing future growth and development opportunities.

AREA #2: Internal Communication

St. Alphonsus demonstrates a multi-channel communication approach that includes newsletters, emails, meetings, social media, parish bulletins, and announcements. These communication channels appear effective for disseminating routine information to faculty, parents, students, and parishioners.

However, communication regarding Catholic school development and advancement appears limited to a small number of internal stakeholders such as the finance committee and administrative staff.

ISPD recommends that the school broaden understanding of development and advancement concepts among faculty, staff, board members, and parent leaders. Catholic school advancement thrives when the entire community understands that enrollment management, communication, alumni relations, fundraising, and stewardship are interconnected efforts supporting the mission of the school.

Expanding development awareness would help build a stronger culture of support for future advancement initiatives.

AREA #3: Long-Range Planning

St. Alphonsus has a clearly stated mission that emphasizes spiritual formation, academic excellence, and holistic development of students.

However, the school reports that no formal strategic planning process has been used to guide long-term growth.

Given the school's growing enrollment and expanding community, the absence of a formal strategic planning framework represents a significant opportunity.

ISPD recommends that the school continue with ISPD's structured strategic planning process that should address the following areas:

- Enrollment Management
- Facilities planning
- Advancement and fundraising planning
- Marketing and communications strategy
- Financial sustainability planning

This strategic plan would help align the school community around shared priorities and provide a roadmap for future development efforts.

AREA #4: General Demographic Trends

Enrollment at St. Alphonsus has experienced steady and consistent growth, increasing from 367 students in 2021–22 to 464 students in 2025–26.

This trend reflects:

- Population growth
- Increased interest from parish families
- Perceptions of crowding within the local public school system.

These factors suggest that the school is well positioned for continued enrollment strength, provided that facilities and staffing capacity can accommodate future demand.

ISPD believes that demographic growth represents a significant opportunity for the school, but this growth will require intentional planning in the areas of facilities, staffing, and program expansion.

AREA #5: Marketing Research

The school reports that no formal marketing research has been conducted in recent years, although marketing discussions occur within advisory groups.

While informal discussions are helpful, effective enrollment management typically benefits from structured data gathering, including:

- The Ultimate Question Survey
- New family surveys
- Exit interviews
- Community perception studies

ISPD encourages the school to begin incorporating regular feedback mechanisms to better understand family motivations for enrollment, retention, and departure.

These insights can guide future marketing and enrollment strategies.

AREA #6: Communications

The school communicates regularly with families through newsletters, social media, parish bulletins, and other channels. Student service activities and events such as Grandparents Day help foster community engagement. This is seen as highly effective.

ISPD recommends developing a written communications strategy that:

- Clarifies messaging priorities
- Establishes branding consistency
- Coordinates communication between the school and parish
- Expands outreach to the broader community

Such a plan would strengthen the school's visibility and help communicate its value to prospective families and supporters.

AREA #7: Publications

The school produces a weekly newsletter, maintains a yearbook, and distributes materials for admissions and parish communications, along with Administrator's communication.

These publications provide valuable communication channels; however, the absence of an Annual Report represents a missed opportunity.

Annual Reports are one of the most effective ways for schools to:

- Communicate accomplishments
- Share financial transparency
- Recognize donors and volunteers
- Reinforce the mission of the school.

ISPD recommends developing a simple annual report to share with families, parishioners, and benefactors.

AREA #8: Website

The school's website functions as both a communication hub and marketing tool, with active management and integration with social media platforms. This is a strong foundation for digital engagement.

ISPD believes the school can continue strengthening its website by:

- Expanding academic program information
- Highlighting student achievements
- Providing clearer admissions information
- Integrating online giving opportunities beyond fundraising events.

A strong website can play a critical role in enrollment marketing and donor engagement.

AREA #9: Enrollment Management

The school demonstrates a thoughtful enrollment approach that includes Open House events, student-led tours, parent involvement, and parish promotion.

Retention efforts appear to rely primarily on strong relationships and responsive communication, which are important strengths in Catholic school communities.

ISPD believes the school is benefiting from positive word-of-mouth and community reputation. Moving forward, the school may benefit from developing a more formal enrollment management plan that includes:

- Enrollment targets
- Marketing strategies
- Retention tracking
- Long-term enrollment forecasting.

AREA #10: Alumni

Currently, St. Alphonsus does not maintain a formal alumni program, database, or communication strategy. Given the school's long history and the presence of multi-generational alumni families, this represents a significant opportunity.

ISPD recommends beginning to:

- Develop an alumni database
- Establish alumni communication channels
- Invite alumni participation in school events
- Explore alumni giving opportunities.

Alumni engagement can become an important component of long-term advancement. This can be addressed in the upcoming ISPD Strategic Growth Plan process.

AREA #11: Volunteers

Volunteer involvement appears strong, particularly through Home and School, athletics, fundraising events, and school activities.

However, the school reports that many of the same volunteers serve repeatedly, and a minimum volunteer requirement was implemented to increase participation.

ISPD suggests exploring ways to:

- Broaden the volunteer base
- Identify parent talents and interests
- Provide additional recognition opportunities.

A well-organized volunteer program can strengthen community engagement and support school initiatives. This upcoming planning process can serve as a major vehicle in inviting and engaging the school's volunteer base – Steering Committee, Planning Teams, Convocation, and Implementation Teams.

AREA #12: Business / Corporate Community

Limited information was provided regarding business community engagement. ISPD believes this area represents a potential growth opportunity, particularly given the school's expanding enrollment and community visibility.

Developing relationships with local businesses could support:

- Sponsorship opportunities (some in place)
- Internship programs
- Community partnerships
- Advancement initiatives.

AREA #13: Database Management

The school utilizes FACTS for student information and tuition management, which provides a solid operational database.

However, donor tracking and analytics appear limited, and the school does not currently conduct donor analysis.

ISPD recommends exploring ways to expand database functionality to include:

- Donor management
- Alumni records
- Volunteer engagement tracking.

Effective database use is essential for long-term advancement efforts.

AREA #14–17: Fundraising, Annual Fund, Major Gifts, Grants

St. Alphonsus currently relies heavily on event-based fundraising, particularly the Hornet Fun Run and Booster Club sponsorships. These efforts have generated meaningful support and strong participation.

However, the school's advancement program appears event-driven rather than strategy-driven.

ISPD recommends gradually expanding advancement efforts to include:

- A structured Annual Fund
- Major gift cultivation
- Grant opportunities
- Donor stewardship strategies.

This approach would diversify revenue sources and strengthen financial sustainability.

AREA #18–20: Endowment, Planned Giving, Capital Campaign

The school currently does not maintain a formal endowment, planned giving program, or history of capital campaigns. While this is not uncommon for parish schools, these areas represent important opportunities for future development.

ISPD encourages the school to begin long-term conversations about:

- Establishing an endowment
- Encouraging planned gifts
- Preparing for future capital improvements.

AREA #21: Advancement / Development Office

St. Alphonsus currently does not have a dedicated advancement or development office, and development activities are handled informally by school leadership. Given the school's growth and future facility needs, ISPD believes this will become an increasingly important area of focus.

In time, the school may wish to consider developing a more formal advancement structure, even if initially part-time or shared with the parish.

AREA #22: School–Parish Relationship

The relationship between St. Alphonsus School and the parish appears strong and collaborative, with shared mission alignment and overlapping community participation. Continuing to strengthen the identity of the school as a ministry of the parish can further enhance parish support for the school's mission.

AREA #23: Board Effectiveness and Focus

School leadership acknowledges that the advisory board has not yet been fully utilized for strategic leadership.

ISPD recommends expanding the board's role in:

- Strategic planning
- Enrollment and marketing
- Development and advancement
- Facilities planning.

A well-engaged board can be an important partner in guiding the school's future. All members of the advisory board should be involved in the upcoming ISPD planning process – either as an Executive Committee member, a Steering Committee member, or a member of one of the Planning Teams.

AREA #24: School Leadership

School leadership has identified several key challenges, including:

- Facilities limitations
- Space constraints
- Development infrastructure
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Staffing for specialized programs.

The school's growing enrollment is a significant strength, but continued growth will require thoughtful planning in facilities, advancement, and strategic leadership.

Overall ISPD Observation

St. Alphonsus Catholic School demonstrates many positive foundational strengths, including:

- Strong enrollment growth
- Dedicated leadership
- Active parent involvement
- Positive parish-school relationship

At the same time, the school is entering a stage where more structured advancement planning, governance development, and long-range strategic planning will be important to sustain future growth and mission impact.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into account these major observations in comparison to ISPD's knowledge and experience of Catholic schools and parishes across the country, we offer a set of recommendations for St. Alphonsus Catholic School to consider as we move forward with the ISPD processes. Some of these recommendations have already been mentioned, and they are mentioned again for emphasis.

Recommendation # 1: Continue to Move forward with Proposed Steps in the ISPD processes.

- Continued work with an Executive Committee
- Implementation of the Ultimate Question Survey each year
- Integration of a planning process prayer and theme
- Formation and education of the Steering Committee
- Development Education and In-Service
- Formation and education of the Planning Teams
- Creating the St. Alphonsus Strategic Growth Plan
- Implementation of the Plan
- Possible Financial Feasibility Study and Capital Campaign in the future

Recommendation # 2: Conduct the Ultimate Question Survey Each Year.

Recommendation # 3: Educate All Key Publics of St. Alphonsus Catholic School on Their Role in Serving as Ambassadors of the School.

Recommendation # 4: Continue to Build a Collaborative Spirit between the Parish and School.

St. Alphonsus needs to continue building on the following:

- Include parish leaders in the school's planning efforts such as being members of the Steering Committee and Planning Teams.
- Create opportunities to develop synergy between the school faculty and the parish's religious education/faith formation program. Points of collaboration could include sharing instructional practices, aligning the religion curricula, and providing faith formation for teachers.
- Continue regular presence of the clergy at the school.
- Continue principal's message in parish bulletins.
- Articulate how the school is a vital ministry of the parish -- regularly from the pulpit. Be sure to include prayers for the success of the school in the Mass intercessions and news about the school in Mass announcements.
- Considering hosting an Open House at the school exclusively for St. Alphonsus parishioners.

Recommendation # 5: Continue to Build the St. Alphonsus Catholic School Brand.

ISPD believes that every year Catholic schools should always ask the following questions of their leaders:

- Is our mission clear and can we articulate it to all?
- Is our vision clear and can we articulate to all?
- What are our Top 10 selling points?
- What is our WOW?

Recommendation # 6: Continue to Build the St. Alphonsus Alumni Efforts.

It will be important to continue to build the alumni database. St. Alphonsus should consider purchasing database software to manage alumni relationships. Other schools use programs such as Bloomarang, Little Green Light, e-Tapestry, etc. The focus is to have software that has CRM (Customer Relationship Management) capabilities. Alumni leaders can continue to promote alumni connections via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, website postings, and their monthly newsletter.

An Alumni Homecoming event every year is important to the advancement efforts. Alumni best mobilize around milestones, seminal projects, and memorials. Anniversary years of the school are important to people. As mentioned earlier, for Catholic elementary schools some of the alumni activities that work are:

- Homecoming
- Sports tournaments (volleyball, softball, etc.)
- Socials
- Anniversary celebrations
- Events tied into school activities.

Recommendation # 7: Take St. Alphonsus Catholic School Branding and Marketing to the Next Level.

ISPD recommends that St. Alphonsus leaders view the latest information from NCEA. The Report Card from National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) notes Catholic schools outperforming public school counterparts in almost all categories. It is clear that formation in the faith has become less of a priority in our culture. In addition, the educational market has become more competitive especially where there are quality public schools and charter schools available to families. In many areas, Catholic schools no longer have the top standings that they used to. Thus, parents need to be convinced of the added value of Catholic education. (Please review *The Catholic School Choice: Understanding the Perspectives of Parents and Opportunities for More Engagement* published by NCEA and funded by FADICA, 2018. This publication is still relevant in 2026). To ensure stable and growing enrollment into the future, St. Alphonsus will need a professional grade, comprehensive set of marketing strategies to attract prospective parents and families. Everything from the messaging to the various forms of media must “wow” parents and children. The good news is that there are excellent messages already in place; however, the school needs more messengers. Parents have high expectations for print and digital communication. Thus, the quality of recruitment materials and on-line media presence plays a major role as to whether a

parent will give a school a second look. Marketing materials must visually draw the attention of students and parents by providing a powerful affective and cognitive glimpse into what it would be like to be part of such a wonderful school community. As mentioned earlier, the St. Alphonsus website can be an excellent vehicle for this. A written marketing plan begins with designing a clear set of messages for each of the areas of a Catholic school – messages that capture the essence of the school and the benefits of a St. Alphonsus education.

The school should emphasize the benefits (“selling points”) of a Catholic school education, a message of welcome from the principal inviting a call or visit to the school, and testimonial quotes from students, parents, faculty, and alumni. In addition, St. Alphonsus leadership is strongly encouraged to consider developing a professional promotional video presenting student life, parent involvement, basic facts about the school, and many testimonials. This video could be prominently displayed on the website and given out at all feeder source possibilities. In addition, a compelling virtual tour of the school should be explored in the future.

As stated earlier, other Catholic schools have had great success in developing the Top 10 Selling Points and WOW by engaging the boards and councils, faculty and staff, student leaders, and parent leaders. That way, all the messengers share the same message, and they have had a role in creating those messages.

Lastly, regular and consistent 1–2-minute video links in St. Alphonsus e-mail communications can do wonders for image and prominence in the marketplace. These can also be put on the website and can be created using smart phones.

Recommendation #8: Over the next 2-3 years, St. Alphonsus Catholic School should create and organize a comprehensive Annual Fund structure that will seek to engage all constituents of the school.

As articulated earlier in this Assessment Report, the comprehensive Annual Fund approach is effective in Catholic schools. That structure is as follows:

- Two Operational Chair Couples
- Major Gift Division (Gifts between \$1,000 -- \$5,000)
 - Two chairs
- Leadership Gift Division (Faculty/Staff and Board)
 - Two chairs
- Parent Gift Division
 - Two chairs
 - Grade Level Chairs
- Alumni Gift Division
 - Two chairs
- Friends Gift Division
 - Past parents and grandparents
 - Two chairs
- Business Community Gift Division
 - Two chairs

- Captains
- Parishioner Gift Division (if applicable)
 - Two chairs

Recommendation # 9: Clearly Articulate the Specific Outcomes of a St. Alphonsus Catholic School Education.

ISPD recommends that growing out of the planning process, school leaders work on a new document that will clearly articulate what a graduate of St. Alphonsus will look like when he/she graduates.

“A St. Alphonsus Catholic School graduate will be able to . . .” can go a long way in not only convincing but also educating what your “end game” is all about. This document should list 10+ attributes and/or outcomes that clearly show the value of an St. Alphonsus education.

Recommendation # 10: Build on the Momentum of Your Success.

While St. Alphonsus does face some challenges, as all Catholic schools do, ISPD believes that now is the time to continue to build momentum with this planning process. Much of this will be greatly reinforced with the ISPD processes:

- Formation of Steering Committee
- Formation of Planning Teams
- Invitation for school and parish leaders to serve on implementation teams
- Invitation for school and parish leadership groups to input into Top 10 Selling Points and WOW

It seems that now is the ideal time for St. Alphonsus to move this people engagement process forward.

Recommendation # 11: Share the Contents of this Assessment Report with the Executive Committee and the Steering Committee.