

The Florida Catholic Conference  
Schools Executive Committee & Accreditation Committee  
Organizational Structure, Policies & Procedures and  
Long-Range Planning Report

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## Background & Overview

Catholic schools continue to be an integral part of the Florida Catholic Conference's (FCC) mission since its establishment in 1969. The FCC, in collaboration with Diocesan School Offices, has primarily directed its efforts on behalf of schools within three broad categories: School Accreditation, Education Public Policy and Federal Education Programs.

The FCC, since its beginning, has had both an Accreditation Committee, with an obvious charter, and a Schools Committee, sometimes referred to as a Superintendents Committee, with a charter of identifying goals and procedures for improving Catholic education throughout the province. These committees always have been placed organizationally under the Education Commission of the Conference.

Throughout the years, the work of the Accreditation and Schools Committees had become somewhat enmeshed since all diocesan superintendents of schools were members of both committees. The 1990s brought a marked increase in Catholic school enrollment. In addition, both the quantity and complexity of education-based legislation impacted Catholic schools, particularly in the broad area of School Choice laws and programs. These and other programs such as teacher certification, technology in the classroom, drug free schools, new health issues and standardized testing led to an explosion in education issues as Catholic schools began preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. In order to effectively address burgeoning responsibilities in a new century, diocesan superintendents and FCC staff began to modify their present structures, establish written policies and procedures, and formulate long-range plans for the next three years.

In December of 2001, the FCC retained Mr. John McLaughlin of McLaughlin and Associates of Ponte Vedra Beach, FL to facilitate a strategic planning process. The planning group consisted of seven diocesan superintendents of schools and two FCC staff members.

- Mrs. Rosemary Bratton, Diocese of Venice
- Sr. Mary Caplice, C.N.D., Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee
- Br. John Cummings, F.M.S., Diocese of St. Petersburg
- Sr. Joan Dawson, O.S.F., Diocese of Palm Beach
- Br. Richard DeMaria, C.F.C., Archdiocese of Miami
- Mr. Larry Keough, FCC Associate for Education
- Dr. D. Michael McCarron, FCC Executive Director
- Dr. Harry Purpur, Diocese of Orlando
- Mrs. Patricia Tierney, Diocese of St. Augustine

Two overnight meetings were held in January and May of 2002 and a final half-day session was held in June of that same year. After first reviewing the rich history of both committees and the education leaders who had served so effectively in the early years of the FCC, the present workload, structure and policies were examined and modified. Finally looking toward the future and the needs of Florida Catholic schools, a new and revised set of goals and strategies were established.

The result of this planning is this report which consists of the following sections:

- Part I: Statement of Beliefs, Vision and Mission
- Part II: Organizational Structure
- Part III: Policies & Procedures
- Part IV: Goals & Strategies
- Part V: Summary & Conclusion

## **Part I**

### **The Schools Executive Committee & the Accreditation Committee of the Florida Catholic Conference**

#### **Statement of Beliefs, Vision & Mission**

Because we treasure the tradition and value of Catholic School Education and believe in the collaboration of the seven dioceses throughout the province to present a strong-unified voice and advocate for all Catholic school students to receive equitable services under federal and state law, we hereby state our **Vision** as

*Gospel-based, academically excellent education  
in every Florida Catholic school*

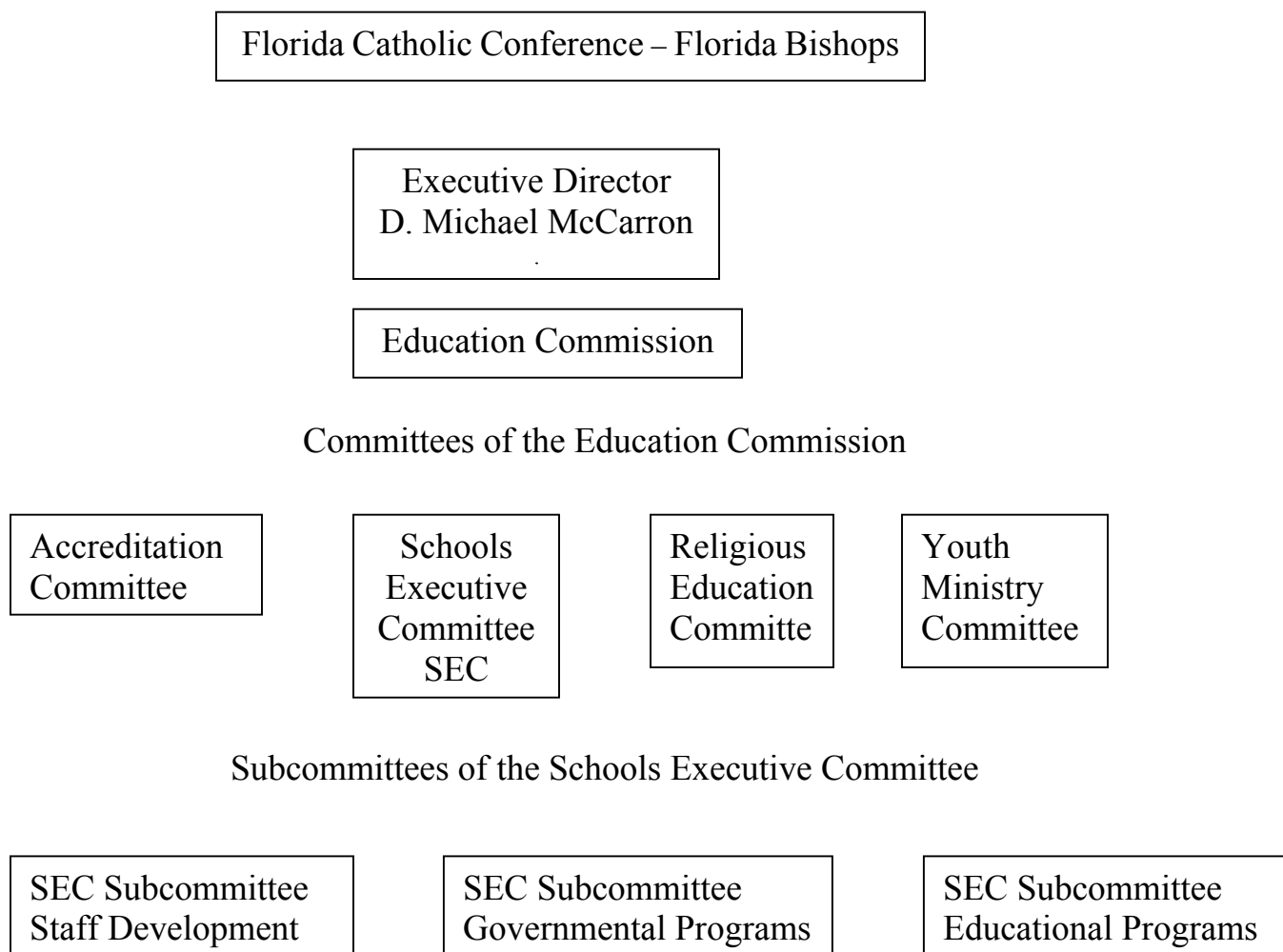
and our **Mission** as

*Serving Catholic school communities by establishing and upholding  
accreditation standards, educational programs and advocating for education-  
related public policies based on Catholic Social Teaching.*

## Part II

### Organizational Structure of the Schools Executive Committee & The Accreditation Committee of the Florida Catholic Conference

These two committees are parallel committees, along with the Religious Education and Youth Ministry Committees, of the FCC Education Commission. As a result of the Strategic Planning process, the name of the Schools Committee was changed to the Schools Executive Committee (SEC) and three standing subcommittees were formed and placed under this Committee. Other standing or ad hoc subcommittees may be added in the future as need arises. The present organizational chart:



## Committee & Subcommittee Descriptions

The Accreditation Committee shall be responsible for all issues relevant to the accreditation of Catholic elementary schools in Florida and the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia. The Committee establishes accreditation principles and standards, policies and procedures, and a self study and evaluation process, which are subject to the approval of the Florida Catholic Bishops. It grants accreditation to schools and monitors their compliance with the accreditation standards. Further, it determines the accreditation status of members' schools, annually reviews the schools' Annual Reports, provides training for principals and visiting team chairs and team members, and maintains consistency between the criteria used for evaluation and the Catholic philosophy of education.

The Schools Executive Committee shall serve as the leadership group responsible for Catholic schools in Florida, consistently applying the vision of gospel-based, academically excellent education as the primary guiding principle for its schools. In partnership with the Accreditation Committee, this committee shall be responsible for implementing the mission of Florida Catholic Schools by establishing and monitoring educational programs and advocating for unified Catholic perspective on legislation concerning educational issues.

The three subcommittees of the Schools Executive Committee include:

- 1) The Staff Development Subcommittee which is responsible for all statewide programs relating to the staff of Catholic schools, including, but not limited to, Principals Institute, Certification and Master In-service Programs.
- 2) The Governmental Programs Subcommittee which is responsible to formulate positions on all state and federal education-related legislation for approval by the Schools Executive Committee. It shall proactively identify the most salient legislative initiatives impacting Catholic schools, and communicate in a timely manner the relevant issues and options to Schools Executive Committee members and other appropriate parties. It shall recruit members who can assist in furthering a unified Catholic position in the legislative arena.
- 3) The Educational Programs Subcommittee which is responsible for all province-wide programs that address education in Catholic schools. These include standardized testing, curriculum, technology, religious education and any other program that requires statewide coordination or implementation.

## **Part III**

### **Policies & Procedures**

#### Committee & Subcommittee Membership and Leadership

- Accreditation Committee Membership
  - Episcopal Moderator of FCC Education Commission
  - FCC Executive Director
  - One representative from each Florida diocese, either the superintendent or superintendent's designee
  - Representative of the Diocese of Savannah, GA as long as there remains a Letter of Agreement between the Diocese of Savannah and the Accreditation Committee of the FCC
  - Associate for Education of the FCC
  - Administrator of Accreditation
  - Two representatives from educational organizations such as Florida Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
  
- Accreditation Committee Leadership
  - Committee Chair must be currently serving as a superintendent of schools in a Florida diocese.
  - Committee chair is selected every two years. The Chair's term shall run from July 1<sup>st</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup> two years hence.
  - One member may serve as Committee chair a maximum of two terms or five years, whichever occurs first.
  - Vice Chair shall always succeed Chair when Chair's term expires.
  - Mrs. Patricia Tierney will begin a two-year term as chair July 1, 2002. Sr. Joan Dawson, O.S.F. will serve as Vice Chair for the same period.
  
- Schools Executive Committee (SEC) Membership
  - All Florida Superintendents of Catholic Schools
  - FCC Associate for Education
  
- Schools Executive Committee (SEC) Leadership
  - Chair and Vice Chair selected for one-year terms for the 2002-2003 school year only (July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003) Sr.

Mary Caplice, C.N.D. and Br. John Cummings, F.M.S. are to serve as Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, for that period.

- Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, the Chair and Vice Chair are to serve two-year terms. Br. John Cummings, F.M.S. is to serve as Chair beginning July 1, 2003.
  - One member may serve as Committee chair a maximum of two terms or five years, whichever occurs first.
  - Vice Chair shall always succeed Chair when Chair's term expires
- SEC Standing Subcommittees Membership
- Chairs must always be members of SEC and currently serving as superintendent of schools in a Florida diocese.
  - Other subcommittee members may be other educators or individuals who bring the desired background or skills to enhance the work of the subcommittee.
  - All Florida dioceses shall have a representative on the Governmental Programs subcommittee.
  - It is desirable but not mandatory that all dioceses have a representative on the Staff Development and the Educational Programs subcommittees.
  - The FCC will staff the Governmental Programs subcommittee.
- SEC Standing Subcommittees Leadership
- Subcommittee Chairs shall serve two-year terms beginning with the 2002-2003 school year.
  - Subcommittee Chairs may be reselected an infinite number of times.
  - If a subcommittee Chair resigns, a replacement will be selected to finish the term.
  - Initial subcommittee Chairs:
    - Staff Development – Br. Richard DeMaria, C.F.C.
    - Governmental Programs – Sr. Mary Caplice, C.N.D.
    - Educational Programs – Br. John Cummings, F.M.S.

### Job Descriptions – Committee & Subcommittee Chairs

- Accreditation Committee Chair
  - Chair all Accreditation Committee Meetings
  - Set agendas
  - Keep meetings on topic and time

- Call unscheduled meetings as necessary
  - Create subcommittees as necessary
  - Recruit and orient two committee members from non-Catholic educational institutions
  - Communicate regularly with Accreditation Administrator and FCC staff regarding accreditation work
  - When necessary furnish written report for SEC biannual meetings
  - Ensure that minutes of all meetings are taken, sent to all members of the Committee and all Superintendents of School, and forwarded to the appropriate FCC staff member for archiving.
- Accreditation Committee Vice Chair
    - Assume the chair's position in his or her absence
    - Assume the chair at the end of the current chair's term
- SEC Chair
    - Chair all SEC meetings
    - Set agendas
    - Keep meetings on topic and time
    - Call unscheduled meetings as necessary
    - Communicate regularly with the FCC Associate for Education
    - Represent the SEC at other meetings
    - Keep the SEC focused on Mission and Goals
    - Welcome new superintendents and offer effective orientation to their work at the state level
    - Make sure minutes of all meetings are taken, sent to all committee members and all members of the SEC and forwarded to the appropriate FCC staff member for archiving.
- SEC Vice Chair
    - Assume the chair's position in his or her absence
    - Assume the chair at the end of the current chair's term

- SEC Standing Subcommittee Chairs
  - Form task forces and assign tasks as needed
  - Delegate subcommittee work among task force members
  - Coordinate the work among task force members
  - Serve as communication link between subcommittee and SEC
  - Furnish written subcommittee report before SEC biannual meetings
  - Make sure minutes of all meetings are taken and sent to all subcommittee members and all members of the SEC, and forwarded to the appropriate FCC staff member for archiving.

## Meetings

- Biannual Meetings
  - The Accreditation Committee and SEC will hold two meetings each year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring.
  - Meetings will run consecutively from noon of day one through noon of day three, with day one devoted to the Accreditation Committee meeting and days two and three to the SEC meeting
  - Associate/Assistant Superintendents may attend SEC meetings
  - All meeting dates shall be set at the conclusion of the June meeting
  
- Biannual Conference Call Meetings
  - SEC members will meet via conference call as necessary, but no less than twice per year. Timing to be approximately the midpoint between the Biannual Meetings
  - Conference call meeting dates shall be set at the conclusion of the June meeting
  
- SEC Meetings – Agenda: The Committee System
  - Accreditation Committee Report – if appropriate
  - Educational Programs subcommittee report
  - Governmental Programs subcommittee report
  - Staff Development subcommittee report
  - FCC Associate for Education report
  - Future Business & Visioning
    - Any future business agenda items to be submitted to SEC chair fourteen days prior to meeting

- SEC Meetings – Format: Written Committee Reports
  - All subcommittee chairs shall distribute written reports to SEC members no later than seven days prior to meeting. Reports to have three sections.
    - Report of activities and information update
    - Items requiring decisions
    - Future business and assignments for the subcommittee
      - Future business agenda items to be submitted to appropriate subcommittee chair fourteen days prior to meeting.
  
- SEC Standing Subcommittee Meetings
  - Meetings as often as necessary to conduct business of subcommittees
  - Meetings conducted via chat room or conference call whenever possible
  
- Minutes from Meetings
  - All meetings of committees, subcommittees and task forces shall be recorded in minutes, which shall be sent to all members of that committee as well as to all Superintendents of Schools. All minutes shall also be forwarded to the appropriate FCC staff member for archiving.
  - The FCC Associate for Education shall be responsible for the minutes of the SEC meetings.
  - The FCC Administrator for Accreditation shall be responsible for the minutes of the Accreditation meetings.
  - Minutes of all other meetings shall be the responsibility of any chair to make sure minutes are recorded, distributed and preserved.

## Part IV

### Goals & Strategies

The Accreditation and Schools Executive Committee will set goals and develop short (one year) and long term (three years and beyond) strategies as a result of a clear statement of Beliefs, Vision and Mission, a revised and more workable organizational structure, and the establishment of clear policies and procedures.

These goals shall be addressed at every biannual meeting to measure progress. When the group decides a goal has been reached, it can be replaced by another. As part of the June SEC committee each year, the previous year's goals shall be reviewed and a listing of the subsequent year's goals shall be established.

The owner of each goal is listed after the goal. The owner of a goal is the lead individual or group assigned with the accountability to attain the goal. The owner should involve others whose experience and skills will enhance attaining the stated goal (s). The Accreditation and Schools Executive Committees must ensure that the owners are accountable for the tasks with which they have been charged.

In some cases, strategies have been listed for achieving a goal. These strategies are in some cases goals themselves, but are also means to accomplishing larger, more significant goals.

#### One-Year Goals (2002-2003 School Year)

- Execute the new organizational structure and policies & procedures articulated in this report. Adjust as necessary.
  - Owner – SEC Vice Chair, Br. John Cummings, F.M.S.
    - Strategy – Biannual paradigm evaluation
- Use the new FCC staff for accreditation well to allow the Associate for Education to spend more time working with the SEC and its three standing subcommittees.
  - Owner – FCC Executive Director, Dr. D. Michael McCarron
- Implement the new accreditation standards.
  - Owner – Accreditation Committee
- Governmental Programs subcommittee will focus first on School Choice Programs (Opportunity Scholarships, McKay Scholarships, Corporate Tax Scholarships and Universal Pre-K Vouchers) and related issues (accountability), and then move on to the next legislative priority.

- Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee and FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
      - Strategy – Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
- Become more knowledgeable about School Choice issues in order to make wise decisions.
  - Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee and FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
      - Strategy – Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
- Become more unified in our response to and participation in Public Policy issues.
  - Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee, FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
      - Strategies
        - Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
        - Become more involved in FFCP (Florida Federation of Catholic Parents)
        - Become more involved in FAANS (Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools)
        - Become more involved in FHSAA (Florida High Schools Activities Association)
- Make the Schools Executive Committee stronger through effective committees and subcommittees that wisely and efficiently utilize the available talent.
  - Owners – all SEC committee members

### Three –Year Goals (2002 through 2005)

- Implement the new process for accreditation of schools.
  - Owner – Accreditation Committee and FCC Administrator of Accreditation, Ms. Mary E. Ballard
- Effectively respond to legislative issues in additional areas.
  - Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee and FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
      - Strategy – Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
- Promote alternatives to state-mandated systems of accountability.

- Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee and FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
      - Strategy – Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
- Continue to improve in developing unified responses to Public Policy Issues that affect Florida Catholic schools.
  - Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee, FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
    - Strategies
      - Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
      - Become more involved in FFCP (Florida Federation of Catholic Parents)
      - Become more involved in FAANS (Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools)
- Collaborate with similar nonpublic school organizations.
  - Owners – Governmental Programs Subcommittee, FCC Associate for Education, Mr. Larry Keough
    - Strategies
      - Strengthen and expand the Governmental Programs Subcommittee
      - Become more involved in FFCP (Florida Federation of Catholic Parents)
      - Become more involved in FAANS (Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools)
- More efficient communication within the committees and subcommittees by the use of technology.
  - Owner – FCC Executive Director, Dr. D. Michael McCarron
    - Strategies
      - More conference calls
      - E-group type meetings
      - Equitable cost sharing
- Identify and recruit perspective Catholic school administrators.
  - Owner – Staff Development Subcommittee
    - Strategies
      - Use the NCEA Job Bank
      - Advertise on the FCC website
- Continue to train new Catholic school administrators.
  - Owner – Staff Development Subcommittee

- Strategy – Principals Institute
- Research ways to recruit and retain qualified teachers.
  - Owner – Educational Programs Subcommittee
    - Strategies
      - Use the NCEA Job Bank
      - Advertise on the FCC website
      - Investigate teacher incentives
- Research the possibility of a statewide curriculum.
  - Owner – Educational Programs Subcommittee
- Welcome any new superintendent of schools to the committees and offer effective orientation.
  - Owner – Current SEC Chair
    - Strategy – Contact Local Diocesan Search Committee
- Strengthen relationships with other committees of FCC Education Commission.
  - Owner – Current SEC Chair
    - Strategy – Initiate Contact with Chairs of FCC Religious Education and Youth Ministry Committees
- Prepare a written history of the Accreditation and Schools Committees.
  - Owner – FCC Executive Director, Dr. D. Michael McCarron
    - Strategy – Find Graduate Student interested in writing paper

## **Part V**

### **Summary & Conclusion**

Any 30 plus year-old organization should assess where it has been, how current it is, and where it needs to be in order to effectively assess how to best conduct business. Often this can be difficult because individuals can become comfortable with a paradigm or system or be so busy in day-to-day business that they do not have sufficient time for reflection and meaningful discussion. Often, too, when a group does set aside the time to update, modify and plan, it is not always easy to know what to keep and what to change. In addition, members may have widely differing years of experience with the way things were done in the past, and thus, speak from significantly different perspectives.

The planning process of the Schools Executive and Accreditation Committees of the Florida Catholic Conference was no exception to these typical group dynamics. Be that as it may, the group has done an admirable job of letting go of the old paradigm to make room for the new one. To be sure, the new paradigm includes much of the old that was not broken, but in fact working very well. It includes a statement of Mission, Vision and Beliefs that while not necessarily new, was not so clearly stated and thus easily misplaced from time to time. It also includes some brand new approaches – three standing subcommittees, more division of the work and delegation to others, and more advanced and technologically efficient methods of communication.

Hopefully all these changes will produce many significant benefits:

- Superintendents, freed of some day-to-day tasks, able to focus more on the big picture of Florida Catholic schools
- Better utilization of more talented Catholic educators at the state level
- A sharper focus on the many critical legislative issues, both federal and state, that affect Catholic schools
- Better communication with each other and those we serve

As with all new plans, this one must be an organic plan, one that changes and grows with time, and most especially with the needs of Florida Catholic schools. With never failing trust in the Holy Spirit to guide us, we confidently go forth.

Plan Endorsement and Commitment to Implementation

We, the current leaders of Catholic schools in the Province of Florida, hereby endorse this plan and commit to doing our part to pursue the Mission, implement the policies and procedures and achieve the goals.

We further leave this plan as a working guide for those who are called to follow us in leadership positions in the ministry of Catholic schools. We trust you will both listen to our collective wisdom and improve upon it.

Finally, in the collaborative spirit in which this plan was developed, we pledge our cooperation and support to one another as we work together for ***Gospel-based, academically excellent education in every Florida Catholic School.***

Mrs. Rosemary Bratton  
Mrs. Rosemary Bratton  
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Venice

6/05/02  
Date

Sister Mary Caplice, C.N.D.  
Sr. Mary Caplice, C.N.D.  
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

6/05/02  
Date

Br. John Cummings, F.M.S.  
Br. John Cummings, F.M.S.  
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of St. Petersburg

6-05-02  
Date

Sister Joan Dawson, O.S.F.  
Sr. Joan Dawson, O.S.F.  
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Palm Beach

6/5/02  
Date

*Richard DeMaria*

Br. Richard DeMaria, C.F.C.  
Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Miami

*June 5, 2002*  
Date

*Larry D. Keough*

Mr. Larry Keough  
Associate for Education, Florida Catholic Conference

*6/5/02*  
Date

*Dr. Michael McCarron*

Dr. D. Michael McCarron  
Executive Director, Florida Catholic Conference

*6/7/2002*  
Date

*Harry V. Purpur*

Dr. Harry Purpur  
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Orlando

*6/5/02*  
Date

*Patricia Tierney*

Mrs. Patricia Tierney  
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of St. Augustine

*6/5/02*  
Date