

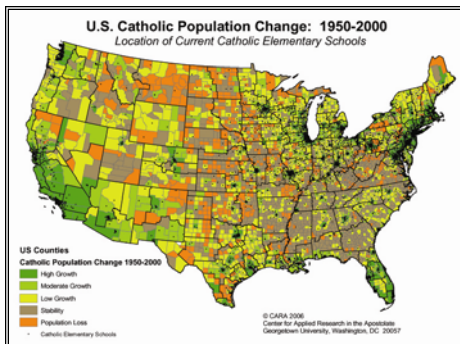
## U.S. Catholic Schools

In the last decade the number of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States has declined by more than 7 percent. However, in many areas of the country there are schools with long waiting lists and growing demand for seats in Catholic school classrooms.

To help Church and school leaders understand the demographic changes and parent school preference realities affecting Catholic schools, CARA conducts demographic research, surveys and focus groups for school feasibility studies and school planning efforts.

This research provides projections for student population and evaluations of schools by parishioners and parents. Comparisons can be made to schools nationally as well as regionally.

CARA's research reports include full color maps, charts, graphs and detailed tables.



CARA is a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. Founded in 1964, CARA has three major dimensions to its mission: to increase the Church's self understanding, to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers, and to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism.

CARA has more than 40 years of experience in social science research. We offer a range of custom designed research and consulting services to meet the needs and budgets of Catholic schools, dioceses, parishes, religious communities and institutes, and other Catholic organizations.

CARA's longstanding policy is to let research findings stand on their own and never take an advocacy position or go into areas outside its social science competence. All CARA researchers have advanced degrees in relevant academic disciplines. CARA researchers are Georgetown faculty members and are active in the academic community publishing and presenting research about the Catholic Church.

## Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate

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Center for Applied  
Research  
in the Apostolate

## Research and Planning Tools for Catholic Schools



Putting social science research  
at the service of the  
Catholic Church since 1964.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



## Research and Planning Tools for Catholic Schools



Throughout its more than four decades of research the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate has conducted surveys, focus groups and demographic studies to support Catholic education. Research has ranged from studies conducted for individual schools to broader studies for the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

For example, CARA recently completed a national study for NCEA including surveys of school principals, pastors of parishes with schools, diocesan superintendents and Catholic parents as well as a demographic trends analysis that provide a baseline understanding of changes occurring in Catholic primary schools in the United States.

CARA offers clients a variety of research options and planning tools for schools. We work with each client to custom design these options to meet their research and planning needs as well as their budget. Call us for a price quote.

### Demographic Research

Understanding current and future enrollments is an integral part of school planning. CARA research has shown that many Catholic schools facing fiscal problems are in areas where the Catholic population has been in decline. Long-term demographic changes including the migration of Catholics out of urban areas and away from the Rust Belt (Midwest and Northeast) to suburban areas in the Sun Belt (South West and South East) has shifted many potential students away from schools built in the early 20th century.

CARA demographic research provides valuable insight into how these demographic changes affect a school or diocesan school system in the future. CARA utilizes data from the U.S. Census Bureau as well as other Church data and statistical sources to provide a comprehensive portrait and set of predictions about the demography within the school attendance areas studied.



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### Surveys and Focus Groups

Schools are not only affected by changing demographics. The schooling preferences among parents and parishioners are also key aspects of school planning. CARA can design and conduct surveys and focus groups to help school and parish leaders understand school preferences among parents and attitudes about schools among parishioners. Surveys can also be an important data gathering tool for demographic research.

CARA designs each research project to fit the needs of the school or diocese, using its large bank of tested survey questions and existing data for comparisons. CARA conducts in-pew surveys, although mailed surveys and telephone surveys are also popular options. CARA utilizes focus groups to understand the attitudes and concerns of smaller subgroups within a parish or school such as school leaders, parents, or parish leaders.

**Contact Dr. Mark Gray at 202-687-0885 or [mmg34@georgetown.edu](mailto:mmg34@georgetown.edu) to create a research plan that meets your specific planning needs.**