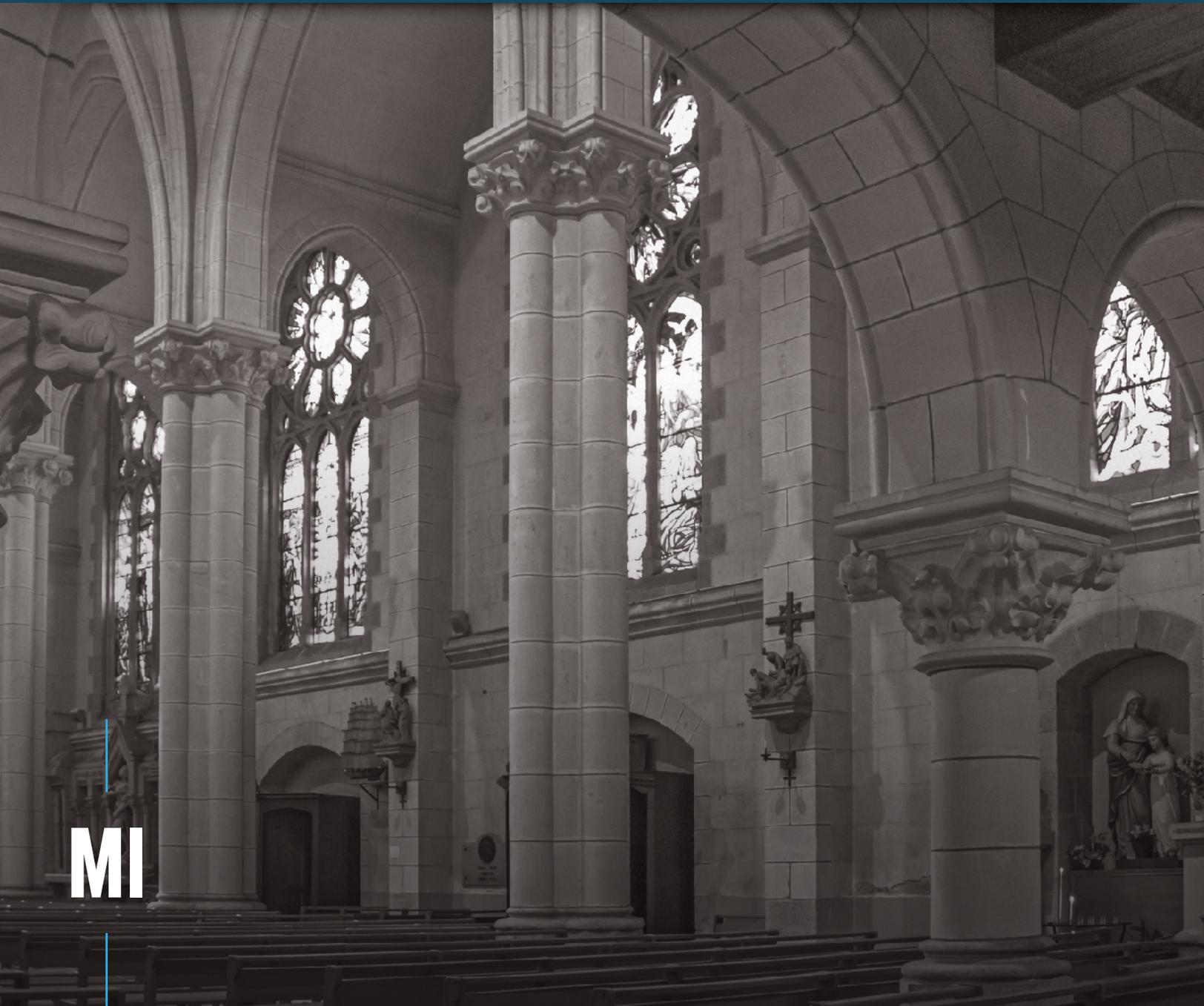


# CATHOLIC ON THE INSIDE: PUTTING VALUES BACK AT THE CENTER OF EDUCATION REFORM

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## About the Author



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# Preface

## Raymond Domanico

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Since the Catholic schools are grounded in a specific theology and religious belief, why would the Manhattan Institute commission a paper on their value system? What can it offer to the discussions about public school reform? These are fair questions, and there are three answers:

- ✔ It is a myth that public (and charter) schools are values-neutral. All schools reflect some underlying value system, and it is useful to consider how these values differ across schools. Catholic schools, still the largest group of private schools in the country, are a logical place to start.

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- ✔ The experience and performance of Catholic schools, particularly in urban areas, informed a significant part of what has been called the school reform movement in the United States. It is worth considering what public school reformers, including charter schools, have absorbed from Catholic schooling that is relevant to public education.

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- ✔ Enrollment in Catholic schools has been in a steep decline for more than 50 years. Yet these schools still educate 1.8 million students. Their continued success and more recent innovative efforts, such as the Partnership Schools Network of the Archdiocese of New York, deserve public attention lest these schools, as well as the public benefits they provide, be lost.

In a recent Manhattan Institute report,<sup>1</sup> Ashley Rogers Berner, of Johns Hopkins University, writes: “Education is not a neutral enterprise. Schools instruct children, whether explicitly or implicitly, about meaning, purpose, and the good life.” Many countries, Berner notes, operate pluralistic school systems, reflecting this non-neutrality and offering “a mosaic of schools that differ from one another in significant ways.” With its emphasis on standardization, the American public school system attempts to avoid mentioning the values that underlie all types of schooling.

Much of the public discussion of Catholic schools has focused on their students’ performance but ignores the values that have always supported them. Thirty-five years ago, the experiences and successes of Catholic schools in low-income American communities began to inform a significant part of what came to be called the school reform movement.<sup>2</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, before the onset of this movement and the concurrent development of charter schools, Catholic schools were often the only alternative available to inner-city parents seeking alternatives to what was perceived as low-achieving public schools. The success that Catholic schools were attaining with low-income children of color made clear that success was possible in these communities and that schools could make a difference.

Whether the higher academic outcomes of Catholic school students, on average, were the result of self-selection<sup>3</sup> or an actual school effect,<sup>4</sup> has long been argued. But Catholic schools were never focused solely, or even primarily, on achieving better measurable results than the public schools surrounding them. That role was thrust upon them as the researchers and others concerned with the low performance of traditional public schools looked to Catholic schools as a possible model for larger reform efforts. Of course, test scores and graduation rates mattered then, and they continue to matter today, but Catholic schools have always served a larger purpose. The motivation for the report that follows is to shed light on that larger purpose in the context of school reform today.

# CATHOLIC ON THE INSIDE: PUTTING VALUES BACK AT THE CENTER OF EDUCATION REFORM

## Introduction

For the past two decades, the debate over school reform has largely centered on the expansion of choice and the increase of state-led accountability, grounded in standardized math and reading tests. Values, culture, and beliefs—the *inside* of a school—have largely taken a backseat to these external, structural changes.

Perhaps no charter network has embraced these two structural developments more relentlessly or successfully than New York City’s Success Academy, which has combined aggressive growth under the state charter law with a test-scores-first approach to school culture. This approach has put Success Academy in the spotlight, and its model has come into even greater focus with the recent publication of Robert Pondiscio’s much-discussed book *How the Other Half Learns*.<sup>5</sup>

When Pondiscio released his book, he warned that it would be a Rorschach test for anyone who read it. If you disliked Success Academy, you would find much to support your position that the charter network deserves the criticism that it gets. If you support charters, in general, and Success Academy, in particular, you would likely find much to support your view that choice is important and worth expanding.

For Catholic school supporters, the Rorschach test might be a little different. Rather than coming away with stronger views on charter schools, in general, and school choice, in particular—both of which we vigorously support—this deep dive into what makes Success Academy tick should sharpen our own, as well as the public’s, views on the future of Catholic education.

Like so many in the world of education reform—myself included—Pondiscio wanted to learn more about what policies and practices led to Success Academy’s consistently good results. His book is the culmination of his observations and lessons learned from the opportunity he was given to “embed” in one Success Academy school over the course of the 2016–17 school year.

Pondiscio provided an insider’s perspective into the school’s quest for transformational student achievement results. Perhaps predictably, it’s a complicated story that Success Academy CEO Eva Moskowitz once boiled down to a simple talking point: “We’re Catholic school on the outside, Bank Street on the inside.”<sup>6</sup> Her characterization is meant to imply that Success Academy pairs more traditional approaches to school culture, safety, and discipline with the more progressive approaches to teaching and learning that are the hallmark of New York’s Bank Street College of Education.

It is such a memorable turn of phrase that Pondiscio names one chapter of the book “Catholic School on the Outside” and explains that this concept “encompasses the old-school uniforms, routines, and strict classroom management” that people think of when they imagine a Catholic school. And he is right that Success Academy, like many “no excuses” charter schools, has copied the most overt elements of the urban Catholic school playbook.

What if being “Catholic on the inside” is more important to the long-term outcomes that we want for students? What if the secret sauce that makes Catholic schools truly exceptional—and their results enduring—is the way they treat every student as having equal worth before God? Or about how they see test scores or any metric of achievement as having value only in the service of that larger ideal? More simply: What if driving toward a larger, more enduring, “why” is more important to changing long-term life outcomes than just perfecting a more narrowly defined “what”?

Catholic schools have plenty of challenges in an era where fewer Americans draw their sense of identity from institutional church membership and from faith. But Catholic schools have much to contribute at a time when those who are inside education reform want to understand the needs of the “whole child” and grapple with the backlash against the hollowness of an increasingly individualistic culture.

In its early days, the charter movement drew some of its inspiration from traditional Catholic school practices. Now, as education reformers begin to look beyond a narrow focus on academic performance, perhaps it is time to take a deeper look at how modern Catholic schools work to form habits and inspire aspirational values—and to draw a lesson from that work to drive more enduring, holistic results for students.

## American Education Has Always Been About Values

There is no such thing as a values-neutral school. That’s because, every day, decisions need to be made about what children should learn, what books they should read, and how content should be presented.

Moreover, values are imposed not only as a matter of the content taught. They are also part of the culture that is created to teach it. Pondiscio writes:

Schools praise and condemn behaviors and attitudes as a matter of course. We preach the virtues of kindness and sharing to small children; inform middle schoolers of the dangers of smoking, drinking, and drug use; and preach college attendance to their older siblings. Schools are closer to culture-imposing machines than to being neutral and values-free.<sup>7</sup>

It is largely *because* schools are “culture-imposing machines” that there have been, throughout history, heated debates over what students should learn and how school culture should be shaped.

In 19<sup>th</sup>-century Massachusetts, state law required that all public school students read from the King James Bible each day.<sup>8</sup> Beginning in the mid-1800s, the most commonly used textbooks in American public schools were the McGuffey Readers, which taught reading through an explicitly values-driven, Protestant lens.<sup>9</sup> These were not peripheral decisions; they were considered central to the mission of public education.

Catholic schools exist in large part because the values woven into 19<sup>th</sup>-century American public schools were often incompatible with those that Catholic communities and families wanted their children to learn. These matters were hotly contested: one tipping point came to be known as the Eliot School Rebellion. On March 7, 1859, in Boston, 10-year-old Thomas Whall, a Catholic, refused to recite the King James version of the Ten Commandments in class. That weekend, Whall’s pastor urged him and his classmates at the Eliot School not to recite the Protestant Ten Commandments, lest they fall into “infidelity and heresy.”<sup>10</sup>

The following Monday, Whall’s public school teacher again called on him to recite the commandments, and he again refused. This time, he was sent to the office of the assistant principal, who claimed: “I will whip him till he yields if that takes the whole forenoon.” She proceeded to beat his hands with a rattan stick for 30 minutes until he was cut and bleeding. Eventually, she asked him to leave the school. She said that any other student who refused to recite the commandments should leave. A hundred boys left that day; 300 left the next.

Earlier, in Philadelphia, the fight over which translation of the Bible should be read led to violence and disorder. In 1844, clashes between “nativists”—mostly Protestant, native-born Americans—and the mostly Irish Catholic immigrants erupted into violence over the question of, among other things, whose translation of the Bible should be read in public school. Historians credit events such as the Eliot School Rebellion and the Philadelphia “Bible riots” with igniting the explosive growth of Catholic schools in the United States.

Over time, as public school advocates worked to preserve a single, uniform system, these debates have come to be neutralized by teaching with a more rel-

ativistic lens. Schools have increasingly taken the approach that there are many different perspectives and that public schools should not prefer one over another. But relativism and neutrality are not the same. As Pondiscio notes, it is simply not possible to avoid teaching values.

Nowhere is this more obvious than in discussions over school culture. While opinions vary wildly about what makes a school's culture strong, or about how to build a strong school culture, I have never heard anyone argue that culture is unimportant. And just as questions about what content to present or how to present it are questions about values, discussions about how to build a strong school culture are ultimately about the values that a community wants to model and teach implicitly through the school's culture.

The fierce debate over no-excuses charter schools is, at its core, a debate about the values being implicitly taught in those schools. Pondiscio makes this point in a recent article:

I walked into Success Academy expecting to report and write a book about curriculum and instruction. I surprised myself by writing mostly about school culture, and the discernible effect on children when every adult in their lives—including parents—is pulling in the same direction.<sup>11</sup>

The ability to foster a positive culture may well be one reason that school choice is so important. If ensuring that every adult is “pulling in the same direction” is what schools need to drive lasting change, it stands to reason that schools of choice—whether that choice is the product of a voucher, charter lottery, or neighborhood selection for families that have options—would be more likely to build a strong culture of community. And it would stand to reason that empowering parents with choice would be one way to improve schools.

If culture and values are important, it is equally important to understand and be transparent about the explicit and implicit values that drive different schools.

## No-Excuses Charters and the Value of Individual Achievement

Pondiscio's book makes clear, at least implicitly, that the value at the center of the Success Academy model

is achieving at the highest level on New York State's annual math and English Language Achievement (ELA) tests. Success Academy is not alone—the reform movement writ large has placed state test scores at the center of the discussion about school quality for many years. Test results have been, in many ways, the sun around which just about every discussion about school quality and culture has revolved.

There is good reason for this. For far too long, the public schools that Americans were told would serve as the great equalizer have failed to provide huge numbers of children with equality of opportunity. For too long, you could predict a child's chance of economic success or mobility simply by knowing the zip code into which the child was born. So at a moment when public schools were working their way toward neutrality and relativism—trying to resolve difficult debates about values by acquiescing to a notion that all values and truths are equal—academic achievement emerged as a unifying purpose.

More than 20 years in, some education reformers are beginning to ask whether an unceasing focus on individual academic achievement is enough. The evidence suggests that schools that focus explicitly on raising student achievement can and do improve state test scores. But there is not yet strong evidence that this relentless focus on raising an individual's test score yields the long-term life outcomes that education reformers strive for.

Perhaps no network has faced this reality more directly and honestly than the KIPP (Knowledge Is Power Program) charter schools. In 2011, KIPP released a report that bravely demonstrated that the network had not met the goals that it had set for itself and its students.<sup>12</sup> “As of March 2011,” the paper announced, “33% of students who completed a KIPP middle school ten or more years ago have graduated from a four-year college.... [W]hile the college graduation rate of our earliest students is a significant achievement, it is far short of our goal. We aspire for 75% of our students to earn four-year degrees and all of our students to have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in college if they so choose.”<sup>13</sup>

In response to what KIPP perceived as a failure to achieve the goals that it had set for itself and for its students, the network launched a two-pronged effort. Central to this effort was a program to help match each KIPP graduate to a college where he or she would be most likely to succeed; and a “character counts” program to develop the values and skills that students need to persist in college and beyond.

Since 2011, similar efforts have sprung up in charter networks and traditional public schools around the country. It seems that reform leaders have—rightly—learned that achievement is necessary but insufficient to drive lasting change. In addition, schools need to instill in students the values they need to thrive and succeed.

Many analysts have begun talking about the link between family and long-term life outcomes. In 2017, an American Enterprise Institute study by Wendy Wang and W. Bradford Wilcox found that among millennials, only 3% lived in poverty who had followed a “success sequence”—first college degree, then marriage, then babies.<sup>14</sup> Young adults who follow this path, according to the authors, “are more likely to find themselves in the middle or upper third of the income distribution, compared to their peers who have not formed a family and especially compared to their peers who have children before marrying.” They noted that “even though transitions to adulthood have become much more complex in recent decades, the most financially successful young adults today continue to be those who put marriage before the baby carriage.”<sup>15</sup>

This isn’t news: educators and policymakers have long made the connection between family and student outcomes. Ian Rowe, founder and CEO of Public Prep, a network of single-sex urban elementary and middle schools in New York, has urged reform leaders “to mobilize educators to teach the next generation the sequence of life decisions most likely to result in individual success, strengthen future families, and avoid [the devastating consequences of family instability] in the first place.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Michael Petrilli, president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, has argued that “if we really want to make a dent in intergenerational poverty, we have to find a way to encourage young people, regardless of background, to delay parenthood until they are financially and emotionally ready.”<sup>17</sup>

These are all important messages. But as one looks at the themes—the push to teach values, to delay parenthood, and to earn a degree—it’s easy to wonder whether reform leaders are beginning to realize that “being Catholic school on the outside” isn’t enough. And it’s easy to wonder whether, in the quest to scale the long-term life outcomes that urban Catholic schools have long achieved, reformers should have looked beyond the “discipline, uniforms, and structure” and unpacked how values in Catholic schools drive achievement.

## Catholic on the Inside: The Values and Purpose of Catholic Education

Catholic schools, in general, and urban Catholic schools, in particular, have a strong track record of success in driving the long-term life outcomes that reformers seek to replicate. Even looking narrowly at the “success sequence,” recent research found that students in religious schools were less likely to participate in risky behavior, including sexual activity, arrests, and more.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, a 2009 report found that girls who attended Catholic schools were more likely to avoid early pregnancy and boys were less likely to face incarceration.<sup>19</sup> Research has also shown that Catholic school graduates are more likely to be civically engaged, to vote, to volunteer, and to give to charitable causes than their public school peers and, in many cases, even their Christian school peers.<sup>20</sup>

So as reformers seek to draw lessons from the success of urban Catholic schools, it is important that they understand elements of Catholic education that may be important drivers of our model but are not so visible from the outside. These elements include:

*The objectivity of truth.* In the modern world, there is an increasing belief in the subjectivity of truth. That’s why we hear people saying that they are speaking “their truth,” or even sometimes dismissing others’ beliefs by proclaiming that those things are “your truth.” But Catholics believe that truth is objective—things are or they are not. Saying the earth is round is true, no matter who says it or who denies it. It doesn’t matter what you feel about the shape of the earth, or about what your perspective is. The earth is round, and no subjective feeling or perspective can change that.

As important, Catholic school students are also taught that there is such a thing as objectivity of truth beyond provable fact. Saying that God is divine is true or it is false—there is no subjectivity to this statement. (Obviously, as Catholics, we believe that this statement reflects the truth of the world—and not just because we believe it but because it is so.)

Catholic education is grounded in values that go well beyond today’s zeitgeist. It aims not necessarily to teach values that are popular in the mainstream but rather to anchor the curriculum in the core tenets of our faith. More specifically, the focus on academic rigor is grounded in the belief that truth is objective and that one goal of education is the search for objective truth. We study and learn about the world because knowing

and understanding the world is part of our desire to know and serve God. The more we know of this world, the more we can know God and can work to make His will a reality here on earth.

Pursuing knowledge, in other words, is not a means to a narrowly defined end: getting a good job or keeping out of trouble. Catholic educators have a deeper motivation that has to do with what we believe about objective truth, including the deepest truth of who our students are.

*In His image.* To understand how and why Catholic schools teach values involves understanding first who we believe we are teaching them to. Because Catholics believe that God made humans in His own image, we believe that each of our students is a gift from God, and his and her individual gifts are divinely granted. This simultaneously demands that we honor our students for who they are and that we strive to bring out the best in them.

Catholics believe that we have been created to know, love, and serve God in this world so that we may be happy with Him in the next. For Catholic educators, helping students act according to aspirational values is about more than behavior; we are helping students become who they are meant to be. By serving students and drawing out the best in them, Catholic educators also embrace the love and service that make us fully ourselves. Acquiring knowledge and ethical habits aren't just prudent goals in Catholic schools; they are crucial for, as educator Basil Moreau stated, "bringing young people to completeness."<sup>21</sup>

*The habits of virtue and the happiness of choosing to do good.* For more than two decades, charter schools have become, as Moskowitz put it, "Catholic school on the outside." The adoption of their discipline, structure, and uniforms was a means for raising student achievement. But in Catholic schools, those practices and policies are not about driving academic achievement. Rather, achievement and personal success are by-products of our focus on developing the habits of virtue. The goal is forming students who use their free will to choose to do good. The difference between those two ends is important. In a culture where the formation of virtue is the end goal, mistakes and poor choices are essential to learning.

Most modern Catholic schools, therefore, cannot simply demand discipline. Rather, they must cultivate it through practice. That is partly because Catholics believe that each person is possessed of free will—that we are not simply fated by God or circumstances to behave in a certain way, but rather we must choose

to act in a particular way. While God *could* compel or force us to choose good over evil, it is incumbent upon us to make that choice. Or, as Pope John Paul II said, "freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."<sup>22</sup>

This emphasis on freedom is critical. It is not enough for students to know the difference between right and wrong; they must freely choose to act on that knowledge. To do so, students should not be tightly controlled throughout their schooling but rather should have age-appropriate opportunities to make choices—to choose to do right, even if no one is watching.

The consequences for student misbehavior should not simply be about maintaining order or asserting control. Rather, they are about helping students understand that, in choosing to do wrong, we accept the consequences of our actions.

Franciscan Richard Rohr sums up a modern Catholic school understanding of values instruction: "We do not think ourselves into new ways of living; we live ourselves into new ways of thinking."<sup>23</sup> Because Catholic schools seek to form the free wills of students so that they not only avoid vice but also act virtuously, they concentrate on forming positive habits even as they correct misbehaviors.

If you walk into a modern Catholic school, you might observe something different from the harsh, ruler-wielding discipline of Hollywood movies or the no-excuses approach of punishing students: you would see a safe and orderly learning environment. We seek safety and learning, of course, but we aim for something more: that our students become good people who know, love, and serve God partly by knowing, loving, and serving others.

Catholic schools cannot punish or preach students into achieving that lofty goal, nor can they assume the same baseline of behavior preparation of all students outside of school. As any good teacher knows, we cannot simply tell students how to act and expect them to do it. That's why teaching values at Catholic schools happens best with a steady, sometimes mundane, flow of habit formation—from how students line up in the morning to what they call their teachers—and yes, even some kneeling in silence from time to time.

To make good on the promise to form students in virtue and to develop the habits of virtue, Catholic educators cannot judge school culture merely by the outward behavior of students. They must also focus squarely on how those results are achieved; in Catholic schools, the ends do not justify the means.

This may be a critical difference between the culture described in *How the Other Half Learns* and the culture that Catholic educators strive to create. A *New York Post* review of Pondiscio's book summarizes it: "His book is filled with secrets and surprises as it explores myths surrounding the controversial charter-school network, where test-prep is intense. Pondiscio saw one student vomit all over his desk during the last practice exam. *But when the results come in, kids' self-confidence soars*" (emphasis added).<sup>24</sup>

Pondiscio does not suggest or advocate for an "ends justifies the means" approach to school reform, but it is easy to worry whether that is where education reform is headed. Many—philanthropists, education reformers, charter school advocates, even parents—believe that as long as you get to the "right" place, the path you take doesn't matter. But if educators hope to form students who become good citizens and who choose to do the right thing for themselves, for their families, and for their communities, how they do it matters a great deal.

## ICS: A Uniquely Catholic Success Story

To understand how the "why" can drive educational practices and decisions, it is useful to look at Immaculate Conception School (ICS), located a few blocks from the Success Academy Bronx 1, the school highlighted in *How the Other Half Learns*. ICS is the oldest Catholic school in the Bronx. It was founded in 1854, about a decade after John Hughes, the first archbishop of New York, tried and failed to get public funding for Catholic schools. Hughes compelled parishes to build schools, arguing that, because Protestantism was being unapologetically taught in public schools, the "question of schools [was] the question of the church." ICS is now one of the seven schools in the Partnership Schools network, of which I am superintendent.

Six years ago, barely 20% of Partnership students passed the state tests. Today, student achievement averages routinely beat state, city, and charter averages.<sup>25</sup> In addition, over the past three years, Partnership Schools' graduates have received over \$2.5 million annually in scholarship support to go to top high schools around New York City.

At ICS, as in many Catholic schools, discipline and order are important. At the same time, the goal is not to create a culture of command and control but rather to form students who choose to do the right thing. Said differently: the goal is the formation of students

who have the tools of self-management that they will need to make even tougher decisions later in life. This culture and purpose set ICS apart from nearby Success Academy Bronx 1.

ICS's new principal, Alexandra Benjamin, is the first nonreligious head of school at ICS in 165 years. She is concerned about her school's culture at ICS but not because students are out of hand. On the contrary, Benjamin worries that students are too compliant; that they don't take real ownership over their decisions, their behavior, and their academic growth. "There are a number of things happening that don't align with my vision," she says. "There seems to be fear among the teachers that if we let up, students will be out of control." Conventional wisdom suggests that students from neighborhoods like Mott Haven, from which ICS students mostly hail, need "structure and discipline." This fosters the unfortunate belief that students like the ones whom ICS serves are challenges to be solved—they are problems waiting to happen.

But this kind of thinking is damaging. Trabian Shorters, founder and CEO of the BME Community, recently explained: "You can't lift people up by putting them down. For at least 50 years, governments, nonprofits, and foundations have collaborated to wage the War on Poverty, as well as wars on drugs and crime, by making black people the poster children for these menaces to society."<sup>26</sup>

Catholic educators agree. The goal is not to create order as a talisman against expected chaos but rather to form students who choose to serve, who choose right over wrong, and who contribute to their communities. That's why, in her first week as principal of ICS, Benjamin focused her attention—and worked with her leadership team—to evaluate the school's discipline policies and procedures, asking whether they serve to form students or to control them. The goal of Catholic schools is not discipline and structure merely for the sake of order but for the sake of building the habits of self-management that will lead to virtuous lives. Some might call this a "success sequence." We merely call it faith in action.

Chief among the lessons of Catholic schools "on the inside" is the idea that purpose needs to be anchored to something larger and more enduring than simply individual-level achievement, and that no single metric can capture what the right education provides. This is the lesson of Catholic schools that all educational reformers should take to heart. By refocusing attention on values, culture, and beliefs, the education reform movement can ensure that the work that we do today will serve students long after they graduate.

# Endnotes

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- <sup>10</sup> John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), pp. 7–8.
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- <sup>12</sup> “The Promise of College Completion: KIPP’s Early Successes and Challenges,” KIPP Foundation, Apr. 27, 2011.
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- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.
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- <sup>20</sup> Jonathan Schwarz and David Sikkink, “The Lasting Impact of High School on Giving and Volunteering in the U.S.,” Cardus Religious Schools Initiative, University of Notre Dame, February 2017. See also Michael T. Owyang and E. Katarina Vermann, “Measuring the Effect of School Choice on Economic Outcomes,” Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, *The Regional Economist: A Quarterly Review of Business and Economic Conditions* 20, no. 4 (October 2012): 4–9 (eight years after graduation, students who attended Catholic high schools experienced average earnings that were 13.9% higher than public school graduates); Caroline Minter Hoxby, “Do Private Schools Provide Competition for Public Schools?” National Bureau of Economic Research, working paper 4978, December 1994; Derek Neal, “The Effects of Catholic Secondary Schooling on Educational Achievement,” *Journal of Labor Economics* 15, no. 1 (January 1997): 98–123 (graduates of Catholic schools are likely to earn higher wages than public school graduates).
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- <sup>23</sup> Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Crossroad, 2003), p. 19.
- <sup>24</sup> Susan Edelman, “New Book Tells Secrets and Surprises of Success Academy’s Winning Academics,” *New York Post*, Sept. 7, 2019.
- <sup>25</sup> Partnership Schools’ average academic achievement has beaten the New York State and New York City public school averages in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 in both ELA and math. In ELA, the average number of Partnership students passing New York State’s ambitious proficiency bar increased from 22% in 2014 to 48% in 2019. In math, it increased from 17% to 52% in the same period.
- <sup>26</sup> Trabian Shorters, “‘You Can’t Lift People Up by Putting Them Down’: How to Talk About Tough Issues of Race, Poverty, and More,” *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 26, 2019.



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