



The Howley Foundation Grantee Spotlight: Partnership Schools

Partnership Schools

Mission: Partnership Schools is dedicated to developing outstanding Catholic elementary schools that provide students from underserved communities with the academic preparation, values and skills they need to break the cycle of poverty and lead fulfilling, productive lives.

The Need: Over the last 20 years, more than 3,000 Catholic schools nationwide have closed, many in urban communities where strong schools are needed most. The Cleveland Diocese allowed New York City-based Partnership Schools, a school management organization (SMO), to preserve some of Cleveland’s finest Catholic academic institutions.

“We are working to ensure that Catholic schools can sustain their legacy of being one of the greatest engines of social and economic mobility that the United States has ever seen.”

—Christian Dallavis, Assistant Superintendent at Partnership Schools

Proud Program Moment:
In one year, Partnership Schools grew enrollment at Cleveland’s St. Thomas Aquinas by 50% and Archbishop Lyke by 30%.

What The Howley Foundation Funded:

The Howley Foundation served as the lead funder in bringing Partnership Schools to Cleveland and engaged other community leaders to raise the remainder of the \$3 million needed to implement the Partnership model at Archbishop Lyke and St. Thomas Aquinas.

Why The Howley Foundation Funded This Work:

The Howley Foundation supports initiatives that emphasize character development and the formation of a strong moral compass, as well as those that grow and enhance school networks providing high-quality seats for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

A Bold Vision for Cleveland:

- Cleveland Bishop Nelson Perez led the charge to enter into an historic agreement with Partnership Schools as one of his final acts as Bishop of Cleveland.
- In 2020, The Cleveland Diocese and Partnership Schools signed an agreement to launch Archbishop Lyke and St. Thomas Aquinas into the Partnership Schools network and to eventually include a total of six schools.
- They plan to enroll approximately 2,000 students in their Cleveland schools over the next five years.

Fundamentals of Their Educational Approach:

- Partnership Schools is guided by four core values: Integrity, Humility, Hard Work and Service.
- They provide a rigorous education, grounded in content, character and faith.
- Their schools provide families an opportunity to afford a values-focused education that will prepare disadvantaged children for high school, college and citizenship.
- They consider parents to be the primary educators and themselves as educational partners that emphasize accountability with compassion and support.
- Extending the school day and investing in teachers through professional development and competitive compensation are key strategies used to maximize their resources.