

# Church and School Strategy

## Church strategy

- Church revival
- Church expansion
- Church plant

## School strategy

- School optimization
- School expansion
- School plants

# Executive summary

**For EDOT to successfully capture these opportunities, it must develop a tailored strategy for churches and schools that address the core needs of the target audience including a growing religiously unaffiliated younger generation and an increasingly diverse, multi-cultural population**

## Findings 2

- ASA can increase by >6,000 by targeting churches that have experienced decline, enabling growth in markets of strength, and accessing new markets (e.g., plants)
  - **Revive:** 24 churches have experienced ASA decline to <70% of 10 yr maximum but have substantive attendance remaining and no macro factors impeding growth, which could increase total ASA by ~5,500 with a targeted effort to restore historic attendance rates
  - **Expand:** 13 churches are well positioned in growing counties, with current ASA at >80% of 10 yr maximum and >150 that could increase total ASA by ~600 by leveraging current members to attract more of the community
  - **Plant:** 18 counties present an opportunity to plant new churches (growing populations, strong EDOT presence but underserved communities, or little-to-no EDOT presence) by directly targeting specific demographics or psychographics - ~50 avg. ASA per established plant; ~900 ASA if 1x church is planted in each county
- School enrollment can increase by >4,000 by optimizing current enrollment, introducing grade levels in markets of strength, and accessing new markets
  - **Optimize:** 15 schools have experienced enrollment decline to <90% of 7 yr maximum but have meaningful remaining volumes and are in growing counties, which could increase total enrollment by ~1,100 with targeted effort to serve more children in the community
  - **Expand:** 12 schools with strong enrollment in growing counties have value chain gaps that, if grade levels are added, could increase enrollment by 3,000+
  - **Plant:** 16 counties present an opportunity to open new schools (growing populations, strong EDOT presence but underserved communities, or little-to-no EDOT presence) by targeting underserved communities- ~50 avg. students enrolled per grade, ~2,400 enrollment if 1x 3-grade level school is opened in each county

## Findings 1

- **EDOT's church market is expected to grow by 1% p.a.; however, there are gaps between the sources of overall growth and EDOT demographics**
  - 57 of EDOT's 80 counties are experiencing positive market growth through 2040 (avg. 1.1% p.a., with 23 experience decline avg. of -0.2% p.a.)
  - EDOT's core congregation, aged 65+, has growth potential (2.6% through 2040); however, the target demographics for diversification, youth and non-whites, also show significant growth potential and make up 27% and 56% of the total future population (yet groups only represent 17% and 25% of EDOT's current ASA)
  - Additionally, there are 12 counties where EDOT has saturation <0.3% (e.g., Fort Bend has 0.14%), far below key markets (e.g., Harris: 0.71%, Travis: 1.04%)
- **EDOT's school portfolio is well positioned in key markets to benefit from these trends; however, there are opportunities to improve its scale and offerings to expand its penetration into both current and target demographics**
  - 11 of EDOT's counties have a penetration of >11% of the overall private school market (e.g., Bastrop, Angelina, Harrison)
  - 9 counties have below average penetration, <11% (e.g., Montgomery, Williamson, Brazoria)
  - Across the portfolio, there are opportunities to expand both upstream and downstream, where schools are not consistently capturing market opportunity (e.g., 6 of 10 convocations have schools with stronger penetration in lower schools relative to their middle school penetration rate)

# Table of contents

## Church strategy

Page 4

- Church revival
- Church expansion
- Church plant

## School strategy














Page 16

- School optimization
- School expansion
- School plants

## Survey results & takeaways

Page 27

# 4 key levers of church growth

				
Strategy	Revival	Expansion	Plant	Rebalance footprint
Description	Reverse the trend of declining attendance and restore congregation population to historical attendance rates	Extend the reach of a Parish to more of the community or to neighboring territories	Open new churches in new territories	<i>Where revival is not possible, find alternative ways to sustain community presence</i>
Criteria	Growing population, declining attendance below historic rates, attendance is still at critical mass	Growing, substantive current enrollment, with strong leadership capabilities	Area with low saturation or area with high saturation but underserved communities	
Rationale	Use established facilities and communities to attract more attendees	Reach underserved groups in communities with strong, effective leaders already in place	Establish presence in undersaturated markets	
Investment required <sup>1</sup>	   Money      People      Time	   Money      People      Time	   Money      People      Time	
Approach	Evaluate gaps in current offerings relative to community needs, and design tailored approach to build ASA to historic levels	Add to existing facilities/church campuses or expand to church community through satellite campuses	Develop a tailored strategy to attract an underserved community with leaders that deeply understand and appeal to the population	
Potenital growth impact	~5,500 ASA if all revival candidates can restore ASA to the 10 yr max	~600 ASA if all expansion candidates can grow current ASA	~50 ASA per church ~3 years after plant	

1. Based on investment from the Diocese and/or the church body

# Key principles that will apply across all strategic church efforts

While the growth strategy will be customized to each church's unique context, there are **essential principles that apply universally to all church growth efforts**



**Strong leadership team** that connects to congregants

- **Innovative visionary:** identifies opportunities, future oriented thinker
- **Team and development oriented:** builds strong support team, empowers and develops others
- **Strong communicator:** effectively facilitates liturgies and communicates vision for the future
- **Business minded:** manages resource allocation, action-oriented and decisive
- **Intentional & relational:** connects with the members of the community



**Congregant experience** that meets the needs of those served

- **Approachable to guests:** provides transparency and necessary context (i.e., bulletins)
- **Innovative:** integrates technology and other unconventional methods
- **Adaptable:** identifies and addresses shifting needs of congregants
- **Supports and connects community:** tailors offerings on Sunday and during the week to community needs



**Content delivery** that is tailored to the audience

- **Engaging worship:** appeals to lifetime members and new guests
- **Digestible and relatable liturgies:** appeals to feelings and experiences of broad audiences
- **Opportunities:** encourages spiritual development (e.g., Sunday school, educational programs)
- **Online resources:** provides alternative engagement platforms

# Table of contents

## Church strategy

- **Church revival**
- Church expansion
- Church plant

## School strategy

- School optimization
- School expansion
- School plants

## Survey results and takeaways

# Revival: Effort to reverse declining church attendance

## Characteristics of a revival candidate

- Historic success: 2023 ASA < 70% of 10 yr maximum ASA
- Substantive current attendance volumes: 2023 ASA > 100
- Structural macro factors impeding growth don't exist
  - Population is growing (1% CAGR from 2013-2023)
  - <60% of ASA lost during COVID has been recaptured


1. With enhanced offerings to candidates identified as well positioned for active Diocesan engagement

## Playbook steps<sup>1</sup> (to be built out)

For each workstream

- 1 Onboard team dedicated to revival effort including lay and Clergy from Parish and revived parishes
- 2 Assess current state of church to diagnose root cause of decline
- 3 Develop market specific lens on key demographic and psychographic trends to address
- 4 Develop church level mission and vision for the church going forward
- 5 Prioritize gaps and key areas of focus based on #2, 3, and 4 above
- 6 Appoint workstream leads based on prioritized areas of focus
- 7 Perform in depth assessment of key pain points and detailed root cause analysis
- 8 Ideate ways to fill identified gaps through ideation generation sessions
- 9 Prioritize initiatives to address gaps
- 10 Develop integrated roadmap for all initiatives
- 11 Align roadmap with leadership team
- 12 Communicated refined vision with specific actions to church body
- 13 Refine governance structure to manage and oversee
- 14 Implement and report progress

# Revival strategy is broken down into 3 distinct phases with variations for level of Diocesan engagement

 Deep dive to follow

Identify	Develop	Implement
Evaluate church expansion candidates and determine the degree of central support required	Assess opportunities for growth, and design fit for purpose model to execute expansion strategy	Structure governance model to oversee playbook execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report and share knowledge throughout progress</li><li>• Iterate annually</li></ul>
<b>Levels of Diocesan support</b>		
<b>A Passive Diocesan engagement</b> Churches that are equipped to execute standard playbook autonomously without significant engagement from the Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess current state to understand root cause of historic decline</li><li>• Design standard revival playbook on how to effectively re-engage and or expand congregation</li><li>• Design reporting / governance model to provide visibility on performance</li><li>• Identify targeted initiatives to prioritize for resource allocation</li></ul>	
<b>B Active Diocesan engagement</b> Churches that are strategically important to the future of the Diocese and require significant support to recover to historic attendance rate	Revival playbook + <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Programmatic initiatives</li><li>• Governance with EDOT</li></ul>	



# Table of contents

## Church strategy

- Church revival
- **Church expansion**
- Church plant

## School strategy

- School optimization
- School expansion
- School plants

## Survey results and takeaways

# Expansion: Extend reach of healthy Parishes

## Characteristics of an expansion candidate

- Stable ASA: 2023 ASA is 80%+ of 10-year maximum ASA
- Large church attending population: 2023 ASA > 150
- Growing population: county population 1% CAGR over last 10 yrs

1. With enhanced offerings to candidates identified as well positioned for active Diocesan engagement

## Playbook steps<sup>1</sup> (to be built out)

■ For each workstream

- 1 Onboard team dedicated to expansion effort incl. lay and Clergy from Parish and other Parishes that are an example of expansion
- 2 Assess state of church and areas of growth opportunities
- 3 Develop market specific lens on key demographic trends driving population growth in the community
- 4 Develop growth vision going forward by answering questions such as “what does the church look like in 20 years?”
- 5 Prioritize opportunities and key areas of growth
- 6 Appoint workstream leads based on prioritized areas of focus
- 7 Perform in depth assessment of opportunities and potential impact
- 8 Ideate ways to expand current offerings to reach additional populations
- 9 Prioritize initiatives to drive growth
- 10 Develop integrated roadmap
- 11 Align roadmap with leadership team
- 12 Communicated refined vision with specific actions to church body
- 13 Refine governance structure to manage and oversee
- 14 Implement and report progress

# Expansion strategy is broken down into 3 distinct phases with variations for level of Diocesan engagement

Identify	Develop	Implement
Evaluate church expansion candidates and determine the degree of central support required	Assess opportunities for growth, and design fit for purpose model to execute expansion strategy	Structure governance model to oversee playbook execution
<b>Levels of Diocesan support</b>		
<b>A Passive Diocesan engagement</b>		
Churches that are equipped to execute standard playbook autonomously without significant engagement from the Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design standard growth playbook on how to effectively expand congregation reach</li><li>• Design reporting / governance model to provide visibility on progress</li><li>• Identify targeted initiatives to prioritize for resource allocation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report and share knowledge throughout progress</li><li>• Iterate annually</li></ul>
<b>B Active Diocesan engagement</b>		
Churches that are strategically important to the future of the Diocese and growth rate can be greatly enhanced with centralized support	Expansion playbook + <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership and resource support</li><li>• Programmatic initiatives</li></ul>	

# Table of contents

## Church strategy

- Church revival
- Church expansion
- **Church plant**

## School strategy

- School optimization
- School expansion
- School plants

## Survey results and takeaways

# Plant: Reach new territory or population with new churches

## Characteristics of a plant location candidates

- Growing population: Forecasted CAGR 23'-40' > 1%

*Either:*

Undersaturated EDOT presence: EDOT saturation < 0.30%

*or*

Saturated markets with underserved populations: EDOT saturation > 0.30% with homogenous congregations

## Preliminary list of (counties) candidates<sup>1</sup>

### Undersaturated EDOT presence

- Burleson
- Chambers
- Fort Bend
- Hood
- Johnson
- Liberty
- Parker
- Polk
- Somervell
- Waller
- Williamson
- Wise

### Saturated markets with underserved populations

- Bastrop<sup>2</sup>
- Brazos
- Burnet
- Galveston
- Montgomery
- Travis

1. To act as a starting point and be further refined based on assessment  
2. Requires further review of current groups currently served as church demographic data was not recorded in Parochial reports

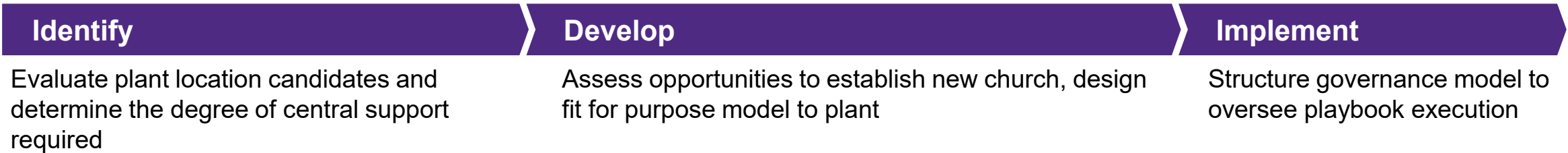
## Playbook steps (to be built out)

- 1 Create central team dedicated to church planting
- 2 Assess communities for potential plants
- 3 Develop market specific lens on key population trends to address
- 4 Develop church level mission and vision for the church going forward
- 5 Appoint workstream leads for common focus areas (i.e., real estate, marketing and comms, leadership, and financial)
- 6 Refine priorities of workstreams based on market assessment

*One time effort to develop playbook specific to prescribed workstreams*

- 7 Refine and tailor tactical execution plan for plant playbook
  - Marketing and comms playbook
  - Real estate playbook
  - Leadership playbook
  - Financial playbook
- 8 Develop integrated roadmap
- 9 Align roadmap with leadership team
- 10 Refine governance structure to manage and oversee
- 11 Implement and report progress

# Plant strategy is broken down into 3 distinct phases led by the community, guided by the Diocese



## Community led, guided by Diocese

Geographies, demographics, and/or psychographics that are strategically important to the future of the Diocese and require planting a new church rather than expanding an existing church

- Assess local and macro trends to understand high potential locations
- Design church plant playbook on how to effectively establish, grow, and sustain a new church
- Design reporting / governance model to provide visibility on progress
- Identify targeted initiatives to prioritize for resource allocation
- Programmatic initiatives
- Governance with EDOT

- Report and share knowledge throughout progress
- Iterate annually

# Table of contents














Church strategy

## School strategy

- School optimization
- School expansion
- School plants

Survey results and takeaways

# 4 key levers of school growth

				
Strategy	Optimization	Expansion	Plant	Rebalance footprint
Description	Reach optimal enrollment in existing grades, typically to reach or exceed historic maximum attendance	Introduce new grade levels across the educational value chain	Establish new schools in areas with low saturation of EDOT schools or high mission need	If revival is not possible, explore alternative strategies to maintain community presence in areas where resource utilization is low
Criteria	Growing school aged population, enrollment below historic levels, enrollment is still at critical mass	Growing, substantive current enrollment, with gap in education levels	Low saturation or no EDOT school presence in community	
Rationale	Leverage current infrastructure, resources, and staff to increase impact and efficiency	Leverage school’s brand to attract and retain students by offering a continuous educational pathway	Meet demand and extend the Diocese's educational reach, fostering new communities	
Investment required <sup>1</sup>	   Money      People      Time	   Money      People      Time	   Money      People      Time	
Approach	Evaluate current school offerings, target key areas of opportunity by leveraging best-in-class practices from the Diocese	Assess potential gaps in the value chain where EDOT could improve its saturation rate in areas where it already has a strong presence in schools; scale programs	Identify market gaps where EDOT lacks a strong presence in school; establish school’s purpose, value proposition, and tuition level	
Potenital growth impact	1,100+ unutilized student enrollment capacity	3,000+ students if all expansion candidates maintain average grade size for new tangential grade levels	~50 students enrolled per grade per school ~4 years after opening	

1. Based on investment from both the Diocese, the school, and the local Parish



# Key principles that will apply across all strategic school efforts

While the growth strategy will be customized to each school's unique context, there are **essential principles that apply universally to all school growth efforts**



**Strong leadership team** that connects to students, parents, the board, and the Parish

- **Innovative visionary:** identifies opportunities, future oriented thinker
- **Team and development oriented:** builds strong support team, empowers and develops teachers/staff
- **Strong communicator:** effectively engages with stakeholders and communicates vision for the future
- **Business minded:** manages resource allocation, action-oriented, and decisive
- **Intentional and relational:** builds trust with and incites excitement in students, parents, and community partners



**Student and parent experience** that meets the needs of those served

- **Welcoming to new families:** ensures transparency in admissions and enrollment processes
- **Adaptable:** continuously assesses and responds to the evolving needs of students and families
- **Supports and connects community:** organizes events and activities that foster a sense of community among staff, students, and families



**Content delivery** that is tailored to the students' learning

- **Engaging and relevant curriculum:** develops a curriculum that is challenging, relevant, and aligned with student interests and academic needs
- **Opportunities for enrichment:** enhances student development by providing a variety of extracurricular activities (e.g., clubs, sports, arts, afterschool programs, community service, leadership programs)

# Table of contents

Church strategy

School strategy

- **School optimization**

- School expansion
- School plants

Survey results and takeaways

# Optimization: Increase enrollment at current schools

## Characteristics of an optimization candidate

- Current enrollment below historic levels: 2024 enrollment is <90% of historic maximum since 2017
- Meaningful remaining enrollment volumes: 2024 enrollment >50 students
- Growing school aged population: county population growth from 2024-40 for ages 5-19 is > 0%

## Playbook steps<sup>1</sup> (to be built out)

■ For each workstream

- 1 Onboard team dedicated to optimization effort including leadership from selected and other growing schools
- 2 Assess current state of school to diagnose root cause of decline
- 3 Develop market-specific lens on key population trends to address
- 4 Develop school's mission and vision going forward
- 5 Prioritize gaps and key areas of focus based on #2, 3, and 4 above
- 6 Appoint workstream leads based on prioritized areas of focus
- 7 Perform in-depth assessment of key pain points and detailed root cause analysis
- 8 Ideate ways to fill identified gaps through ideation generation sessions
- 9 Prioritize initiatives to address gaps
- 10 Develop integrated roadmap for all initiatives
- 11 Align roadmap with school's leadership team (and Parish's rector)
- 12 Communicate refined vision with specific actions to families and staff
- 13 Refine governance structure to manage and oversee
- 14 Implement and report progress

1. With enhanced offerings to candidates identified as well positioned for active Diocesan engagement

# Optimization strategy is broken down into 3 distinct phases with variations for level of Diocesan engagement

Identify	Develop	Implement
Evaluate school optimization candidates and determine the degree of central Diocesan support required	Design fit for purpose model to execute optimization strategy	Structure governance model to oversee playbook execution
<b>Levels of Diocesan support</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report and share knowledge throughout progress</li><li>• Iterate annually</li></ul>
<b>A Passive Diocesan engagement</b>  Schools that are equipped to execute standard playbook autonomously without significant engagement from the Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design standard optimization playbook on how to effectively reengage and/or expand student population</li><li>• Design reporting / governance model to provide visibility on performance</li><li>• Identify targeted initiatives to prioritize for resource allocation</li></ul>	
<b>B Active Diocesan engagement</b>  Schools that are strategically important to the future of the Diocese and require significant support to recover to or grow beyond historic enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Programmatic initiatives</li><li>• Governance with EDOT</li></ul>	

# Table of contents

Church strategy

School strategy

- School optimization
- **School expansion**
- School plants

Survey results and takeaways

# Expansion: Increasing enrollment through added grades

## Characteristics of an expansion candidate

- No Diocesan presence in at least 1 of the 4 grade level groupings (e.g., infant to pre-K, K-5, 6-8, 9-12)
- Meaningful, growing current enrollment: 2024 enrollment > 50, +1.5% p.a. enrollment growth from 2017 to 2024
- Growing school aged population: positive school aged county population growth

1. With enhanced offerings to candidates identified as well positioned for active Diocesan engagement

## Playbook steps<sup>1</sup> (to be built out)

■ For each workstream

- 1 Onboard team dedicated to expansion effort
- 2 Assess school's current state
- 3 Develop market-specific lens on key population trends to address
- 4 Develop school's mission, vision, and model going forward
- 5 Prioritize gaps in grade level offerings and key areas of focus
- 6 Appoint workstream leads based on prioritized areas of focus
- 7 Perform in-depth assessment of the school's value proposition and key barriers to adding the tangential grades
- 8 Ideate ways to approach expansion (e.g., one grade per year, several at once)
- 9 Prioritize initiatives to make expansion possible
- 10 Develop integrated roadmap
- 11 Align roadmap with school's leadership team
- 12 Communicate refined vision with specific actions to families and school staff
- 13 Refine governance structure to manage and oversee implementation
- 14 Implement and report progress

# Expansion strategy is broken down into 3 distinct phases with variations for level of Diocesan engagement

Identify	Develop	Implement
Evaluate school expansion candidates and determine the degree of central Diocesan support required	Design fit for purpose model to execute expansion strategy	Structure governance model to oversee playbook execution
<b>Levels of Diocesan support</b>		
<b>A Passive Diocesan engagement</b>		
Schools that are equipped to execute standard playbook autonomously without significant engagement from the Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design standard expansion playbook on how to effectively re-engage and/ or expand student population</li><li>• Design reporting / governance model to provide visibility on performance</li><li>• Identify targeted initiatives to prioritize for resource allocation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report and share knowledge throughout progress</li><li>• Iterate annually</li></ul>
<b>B Active Diocesan engagement</b>		
Schools that are strategically important to the future of the Diocese and require significant support to expand grade level offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Programmatic initiatives</li><li>• Governance with EDOT</li></ul>	

# Table of contents

Church strategy

School strategy

- School optimization
- School expansion
- **School plants**

Survey results and takeaways



# Plant: Reach new territory or population with new schools

## Characteristics of plant location candidates

### Attractive counties are:

- Above-average median household income
- Undersaturated relative to private: < 10% EDOT to private school
- Fast population growth: projected population of age 5-19 is 1%+

### Underserved counties are:

- Below-average median household income
- No Diocesan presence
- Fast population growth: projected population of age 5-19 is 0%+

## Preliminary list of (counties) candidates<sup>1</sup>

### Undersaturated, growing area with high income:

- Brazoria
- Chambers
- Fort Bend
- Hood
- Johnson
- Montgomery
- Parker
- Waller
- Williamson
- Wise

### Growing area with underserved communities:

- Grimes
- Hamilton
- Leon
- Liberty
- Montague
- Polk

1. To act as a starting point and be further refined based on assessment

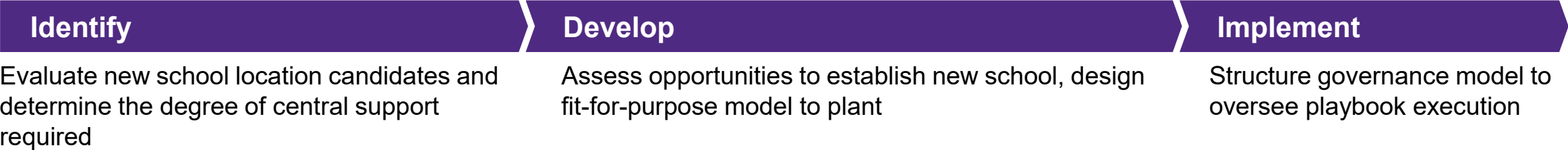
## Playbook steps (to be built out)

- 1 Create central team dedicated to school planting
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- 4 Develop school's mission, vision, and model
- 5 Appoint workstream leads for common focus areas (i.e., real estate, marketing and comms, leadership, and financial)
- 6 Refine priorities of workstreams based on market assessment

*One-time effort to develop playbook specific to prescribed workstreams*

- 7 Refine and tailor tactical execution plan for plant playbook
  - Marketing and comms playbook
  - Real estate playbook
  - Leadership playbook
  - Financial playbook
- 8 Develop integrated roadmap
- 9 Align roadmap with leadership team
- 10 Refine governance structure to manage and oversee
- 11 Implement and report progress

# Plant strategy is broken down into 3 distinct phases led by community demand and needs, guided by the Diocese



## Community-led, guided by Diocese

Geographies, population trends, and/or income levels that are strategically important to the future of the Diocese and require planting a new school rather than expanding an existing school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess local and macro trends to understand high-potential locations</li><li>• Design school plant playbook on how to effectively establish, grow, and sustain a new school</li><li>• Design reporting / governance model to provide visibility on progress</li><li>• Identify targeted initiatives to prioritize for resource allocation</li><li>• Programmatic initiatives</li><li>• Governance with EDOT</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report and share knowledge throughout progress</li><li>• Iterate annually</li></ul>
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# Table of contents

Church strategy

School strategy

**Survey results and takeaways**

# Key takeaways from survey responses highlight lack of consistent trends and need for increased communication of strategy and resources

# Deep dives to follow

Survey section	Takeaway
1 Diocesan strategy	Respondents largely agreed on the strategic priorities, but would like enhanced communication from Diocesan leadership
2 Leadership development	Diocese can increase its awareness of its leadership development offerings and clarify its leadership development / transition strategies
3 Diocesan foundations	Many agree the foundations have a clear strategy and opportunity for grants; however, they could be more proactive & communicative
4 Congregation attendance	While many claim their local church is growing, there is limited consensus as to the causes and the suggested path forward
5 Intergenerational ministry	Despite Diocesan insight into generational trends, the strategy and resources needed for building an intergenerational community remain unclear
6 Multicultural ministry	Increased diversity is expected, but many lack clear strategies; those with plans succeed, revealing a gap in resource awareness
7 Church plants	Resources are valued, but communication can be improved; prioritize growing, underserved areas with a tailored, long-term strategy
8 Community outreach	Community outreach has success in utilizing congregation's gifts and community connections, but mixed reviews in outreach's purpose
9 Schools	Neutral to slightly negative views on school strategy and resources suggest a need for improved support, despite optimism about demographics
10 Areas of excitement and opportunity	Financial resources and leadership can drive membership growth, but improved communication and resource allocation are needed