



# EAST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



# Strategic Plan 2022-2025

Spring 2022

# Dear East Catholic High School Families and Friends,

East Catholic High School's *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* coincides with our 60th anniversary and comes at a pivotal time in our history. As we emerge from a global pandemic, we face renewed challenges to enhance enrollment and build our financial strength to ensure our long-term viability. This new strategic plan provides the framework for enhancing the excellence that has characterized our school since its founding in 1961 and the direction for our ongoing success.

With this Strategic Plan, East Catholic renews its commitment as a Catholic high school and to live it more fully. East Catholic is a community in which students can experience the love and goodness of God and the Church, and its program of student formation as an opportunity to help students deepen their relationships with God. We are equally committed to providing the best college preparatory program available. We seek to develop students who think critically and are life-long learners and active citizens in their communities and the world.

The strategic plan identifies priorities in each of the following areas that will guide the school's activities and resource decisions over the next three years:

- Mission and Catholic Identity
- Enrollment
- Academics
- Student Life
- Advancement
- Governance and Administration
- Facilities
- Financial Strength

Highlights of the plan include an initiative to increase Alumni engagement through the development of a mentorship program; establishing pathways to ensure diversity of thought and representation among the student body, faculty, administration and board; and developing a comprehensive technology plan to support 21st Century learning. The implementation of the plan will be guided by numerous key performance indicators against which our administration, board, faculty and families will measure our collective progress over the next three years.

The development of this strategic plan has provided us the opportunity to reflect upon our past and current state. We are committed to building a community that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion. We strive to achieve a culture that is positive, encouraging and respectful of all individuals. We expect our students, faculty and staff to live lives of kindness and compassion.

We remain deeply grateful to the Archdiocese of Hartford and to our school community for their ongoing support. As we focus on the future and fulfilling the objectives of this strategic plan, we are on much more solid financial ground.

We look forward to updating you on our progress as our strategic plan unfolds over the next three years, and we are honored to be of service in fulfilling East Catholic's mission, vision and values.

Sincerely,  
Sean P. Brennan '85, President



## **East Catholic High School Credentials**

We at East Catholic High School are proud to be recognized as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, a national exemplary school award given by the U.S. Department of Education. ECHS is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the State of Connecticut.

## **Our Mission**

East Catholic High School is a regional college-preparatory school of the Archdiocese of Hartford. Building on Catholic tradition and the charism of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, we challenge our students to build strong moral character while pursuing academic excellence, responsible citizenship, active participation in community service, sportsmanship, and an appreciation for the fine arts. Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ, East Catholic is a welcoming place for all students.

## **Our Philosophy**

East Catholic High School, a college-preparatory school of the Archdiocese of Hartford, serves students from more than 35 towns in the Greater Hartford area and eastern Connecticut. At East Catholic, we strive to teach as Jesus did — challenging, loving, and guiding our students, all within a welcoming and nurturing environment. We believe that our success in educating a student is only possible when the faculty and staff of East Catholic, the student, and the parent work in partnership and agree upon the core beliefs expressed in our mission statement. We attempt to create an authentically Catholic yet ecumenically sensitive atmosphere in which each student can grow spiritually and intellectually.

# Profile of an East Catholic Graduate

When speaking with graduates from East Catholic High School, their constant refrain about their college or university experience is that they were well-prepared upon leaving East Catholic. Most students attend East Catholic for a full four years, and in that time they have been taught by excellent teachers in mind, body, and spirit.

During their four years at East Catholic High School, students begin to acquire the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to become responsible adults formed by Catholic tradition and values. An East Catholic graduate:

- Has been taught how to live according to Gospel values, has attained an intellectual grasp of the teachings of the Catholic Faith, and is in the process of developing a personal devotion to prayer, and a commitment to helping those in need. Manifest respect for students and their ability to succeed.
- Has defined success in terms of integrity, self-discipline, and service to others rather than of personal gain.
- Has learned what it means to be a contributing member of society, a good citizen of his or her country and of the world community. He or she has developed an appreciation of cultural differences and respect for all people as children of God.
- Has effectively learned to use communication skills to express themselves articulately through reading, writing, listening and speaking to a variety of audiences, in a number of different situations, and through both print and electronic media.
- Has developed an awareness of how to use technology in an efficient and morally responsible way.
- Has come to value the Earth as part of God's living creation and to realize the necessity of stewardship of natural resources.
- Has recognized and developed his or her talents and appreciate the talents of others.
- Has developed the ability to solve problems effectively analyze problems, examine options, and work toward logical, practical, and ethical solutions.
- Is prepared to engage in life-long learning and critical thinking, has learned the skills for acquiring, assessing, and integrating information, and has come to recognize the way in which he or she learns best and to experience the joys of learning.

## Our Vision

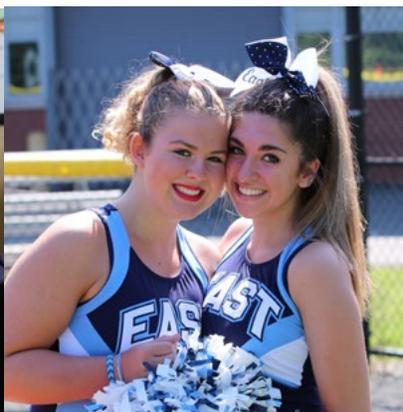
Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford welcome students of all faiths, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The fundamental purpose of Catholic schools is to:

**Provide a safe, nurturing, and secure environment in which students encounter the living God, who in Jesus Christ, reveals His transforming love and truth.**

**Partner with parents to support students in their learning and in their search for knowledge, meaning, and truth.**

## The East Catholic Graduate has:

- Respect and Appreciation for Dignity in ALL People
- Strong Moral Character
- Excellence in Academics
- Engagement in Service to Others
- An Appreciation for the Fine Arts



## Our History

Since its founding by the Archdiocese of Hartford in 1961, East Catholic High School has been associated with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (SNDdeN). Today, East Catholic continues to follow the teachings and traditions of the SNDdeN. In addition, a member of the Connecticut SND leadership team serves on the school board.

## Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

At East Catholic High School, we respect, understand and celebrate God's gift of diversity within our school community. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment based on the teachings of the Catholic Church. We are establishing pathways to ensure diversity of thought and representation at East Catholic. Thus far, we have established a Students of Color Union, a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee of faculty and staff, and a Families for Equity group of parents and guardians. We recognize that all people experience the world through individual lenses and actively strive to advance understanding, justice and belonging for all people. We are called to promote a safe environment for students to have open, respectful conversations about race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, learning style, politics, economic status, current events and social justice. Our school embraces our differences and actively seeks families, faculty and staff who bring a range of experience to our classrooms. By creating an open, honest and inclusive environment, we believe all students will excel and learn to the best of their ability.



## School Administration

**Sean P. Brennan '85**  
President

**Gina Burby P'17, P'20, P'22**  
Dean of Academics

**Heidi Carlson P'14, P'18, P'21**  
Associate Director of Advancement

**Patrick McLaughlin**  
Director of Campus Ministry

**Molly Prospect**  
Director of Marketing Communications

**Jon Dahlquist**  
Dean of Wellness and Athletics

**Rev. Jaime Maldonado-Avilés**  
Chaplain

**Chad Malone '08**  
Director of Admissions

**Janice Reilly**  
Dean of Student Life

**David Shepherd**  
Director of Information Technology

## Advisory Board

**Charles Crocini P'90, P'95**  
**Sr. Mary Rose Crowley, SND**  
**Matthew Hallisey P'21, P'24**  
**Patrick Kennedy P'08, P'18, P'20**  
**David Lanciano, '86 Vice Chair P'14, P'17**  
**Michael Massaro '88 P'19**  
**Fr. Marcin P. Pluciennik**  
**Lisa Steimer '83, Chair**

**Sean P. Brennan '85**  
President, East Catholic High School

## Steering Committee for Strategic Plan

**Sean P. Brennan '85, Co-Chair**  
**Charles Crocini P'90, P'95**  
**Molly Devanney '96**  
**Matthew Hallisey P'21, P'24**  
**Patrick Kennedy P'08, P'18, P'20**  
**Dave Lanciano '86, P'14, P'17, Co-Chair**  
**Michael Massaro '88**  
**Vito Perrone '83**  
**Lisa Steimer '83**  
**James Wehr '75**



- Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ, East Catholic is a welcoming place for all students.



- East Catholic seeks to challenge students to build strong moral character while pursuing academic excellence, responsible citizenship, active participation in community service, sportsmanship and an appreciation for the fine arts.

# Mission & Catholic Identity

East Catholic will renew its **commitment as a Catholic high school and live it more fully**. We seek to enhance engagement among constituencies and further enrich our Catholic identity and presence in the community. Our students will experience the love and goodness of God and develop a commitment to helping those in need.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Expand the spiritual formation program

- Provide more opportunities for parents and guardians to participate in the spiritual life of the school.
- Create additional — and more varied — retreats, prayer services, reflections and faith sharing groups.

### 2. Adopt an impactful service-learning program

- Implement the existing plan to revise the Service that Requires Engaging the Compassionate Heart (STRETCH) Program.

### 3. Foster deeper relationships between students and God through meaningful service-learning

- Foster deeper appreciation for the Eucharist in the spiritual life of East Catholic.
- Transform monthly all-school Masses into an enjoyable experience of God and community.
- Expand the role of Peer Ministers in planning and executing all-school liturgies, especially in creating a welcoming environment.

### 4. Increase collaboration between the Religion Department and other academic departments

- Build opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, reflection and exchange into the professional development program and professional learning communities.



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HIGH SCHOOL



# Admissions, Retention, Marketing

Enrollment trends at East Catholic High School are in keeping with national norms in Catholic school enrollments. A competitive environment for private education, combined with several strong public school districts, compels the need for a **cohesive, data-driven approach** to marketing and strategic enrollment management. Through the adoption of this Strategic Plan and achievement of the following goals, we believe we can increase East Catholic's enrollment by 5% each year over the next three years.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Develop and implement a comprehensive and cohesive Marketing and Communication Plan

- Formalize and communicate roles, responsibilities, expectations, and accountability with respect to the various members of the East Catholic community.
- Create “One Brand” (uniting all visual elements) and “One Voice” (a uniform communication strategy) to ensure our missions, values, and goals are understood, supported, and embodied by the entire East Catholic community.
- Revamp the website for ease of reference and use. Regularly update the website, marketing materials, on-site programs, and other representations to ensure they remain current and relevant.
- Align all East Catholic social media pages with “One Brand, One Voice” messaging to ensure content is current, consistent, appropriate, and deliberate.
- Identify data needs to support enrollment growth and marketing and develop and institute processes to obtain such data.

### 2. Develop and implement a formal community outreach and engagement plan

- Combine or align the various support organizations within East Catholic to remove conflicts and duplicative work and revise and repurpose their use to ensure time, talent, and energy are used to their maximum potential.
- Introduce additional, enhanced service opportunities for students to volunteer and participate in local community programs.
- Strengthen relationships with local business organizations such as the Rotary Club and Chambers of Commerce.
- Engage and establish relationships with superintendents of schools in key communities.
- Explore creative ways to present East Catholic in the various communities.

### **3. Establish pathways to ensure diversity of thought and representation at East Catholic**

- Formalize and implement a Diversity and Inclusion Program to attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff, and student body.
- Explore alternative, creative, and cost-effective ways to introduce support, diversity, and additional offerings into the East Catholic experience.
- Investigate ways to implement formalized academic support to expand the availability of an East Catholic education to certain IEP/504 students.
- Promote tolerance and diversity through curriculum and event planning.

### **4. Reform the financial assistance process**

- Revamp the construct of the various tuition assistance programs and the methodology for awarding such funds to ensure all available funds are being used in the most strategic and effective manner.
- Work with the Advancement Office to increase funding of the tuition assistant program(s).

### **5. Institute a formal retention program**

- Establish a formal retention team that will be tasked with developing policies and procedures to identify at-risk students and improve retention.
- Identify and explore similar programs currently being used by feeder schools to ensure alignment and consistency from pre- to post-enrollment at East Catholic.
- Engage with Peer Ministry and other groups to introduce programs to address areas of vulnerability for at-risk students.



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# Academic: Curriculum, Technology and Professional Development

East Catholic provides the **best college preparatory program available**. We develop students who think critically and cultivate life-long learning. We are committed to producing graduates who act with integrity and self-discipline as good citizens of their country and Christian leaders for the Church and the world. East Catholic seeks to challenge students to build strong moral character while pursuing academic excellence, responsible citizenship, active participation in community service, sportsmanship and an appreciation for the fine arts.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Revise the curricula to ensure inclusivity and equitability

- Provide opportunities to explore project-based learning, collaborative tasks, problem solving, differentiated learning, and blended learning in the classroom.
- Integrate social and emotional learning into all content areas.
- Expand course offerings in business, computer science, technology and digital design.

### 2. Develop a Sophomore/Junior Project to explore a career, academic or service area of interest

- Create a self-study learning experience for students over summer break.

### 3. Plan and create an Integrated Technology Center

- Renovate the former library to accommodate the creation of a Technology Center.

### 4. Upgrade the technology platform and infrastructure

- Purchase laptops for students and both web-based and instructional software.
- Purchase desktop computers compatible for use in the new computer-aided design (CAD) lab.
- Enhance technology integration across the curriculum.

### 5. Create a professional development plan that meets teachers' needs

- Ongoing professional development should be relevant, applicable, unified and integrated into the yearly performance improvement process.

# Profile of Excellence in Teaching and Advisory

East Catholic has been blessed with excellent teachers over its 60-year history. We seek out teachers who embrace our Mission Statement and serve as models and mentors for our students. East Catholic teachers go far and above simply covering their subject matter. They are committed to inspiring the mind, body, and spirit of each student they encounter.

Our advisory program, united with the school counseling office, promotes meaningful relationships between teachers and/or staff, students, and parents while providing support to students. Through weekly meetings with their advisor, students experience a personalized environment to observe and encourage academic and social progress throughout high school. Each student, along with his/her counselor and advisor, develops a student success plan that focuses on his/her educational path as well as academic and personal goals.

## **When it comes to working with their students, East Catholic teachers:**

- Teach with passion
- Manifest respect for students and their ability to succeed
- Foster an effective, motivating, and safe learning environment
- Set high academic standards while providing appropriate support
- Promote the development of higher learning skills
- Promote a mutual trust with their students
- Act as the primary contact for parents and guardians
- Facilitate discussion of relevant topics
- Discuss current issues in students' lives

## **When it comes to their subject matter, East Catholic teachers:**

- Ensure course coherence
- Design for learning
- Integrate and incorporate up-to-date knowledge and best practices
- Utilize creative instruction strategies for meaningful learning

## **When it comes to focusing on themselves, East Catholic teachers:**

- Demonstrate consistent self-reflection
- Exhibit openness for change
- Show continuous improvement when needed
- Participate in local, regional, and national organizations and associations

## **When it comes to working with their colleagues and the community, East Catholic teachers:**

- Share educational research with their peers
- Mentor new teachers
- Collaborate and encourage community engagement with their peers
- Show respect to all
- Demonstrate appropriate judgement and integrity
- Develop responsibility



"A Tale of Two Cities"  
That's Not How I Read



# Student Life

East Catholic is a **welcoming place for all students** and the atmosphere of the school is guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ. The culture among students is positive, encouraging and respectful. A large percentage of students is involved in extracurricular activities and there is significant involvement with outreach to the surrounding community. Over the next three years we hope to grow in the area of student life. The three areas of focus will be to strengthen the Advisory Program, to increase student engagement within the community, and develop effective advocates and communicators while living the school's mission.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Strengthen and Grow the Advisory Program

- Provide students with trusted advisors to support and inspire academic, social and personal success both inside and outside of the classroom. These advisors will act as mentors, coaches and advocates and encourage advisees to participate in the life of East Catholic and achieve their academic potential.
- Engage parents in the Advisory Program through active communication throughout the year.

### 2. Increase student engagement within the community

- Provide flex-time for students to meet with teachers, clubs, etc., and to decompress.
- Provide extra-curricular activities including art, music, sports and robotics.

### 3. Develop effective advocates and communicators while living the school's mission

- Provide opportunities for peer ministers to plan retreats and participate in Masses.
- Provide opportunities for National Honor Society members to tutor students with academic challenges.
- Provide opportunities for Admission Ambassadors to visit schools and speak with students who may be interested in attending East Catholic, as well as assisting in the planning of Open House.
- Continue our commitment to vibrant and successful extracurricular programs in the Arts and Athletics.



# Advancement (Alumni and Communications)

East Catholic will **awaken, engage and activate our multigenerational alumni network**. Through various communications platforms and events, we will seek to renew school pride and sense of community to inspire greater alumni involvement and contribution. Events should be prioritized for maximum impact. Execution will rely on developing a large group of volunteers.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Increase alumni involvement

- Identify and engage class agents for each graduating class.
- Enlist more alumni participation in events including, but not limited to, mentorship programs, fundraisers and reunions.
- Increase relevant alumni communication and outreach through mail, social media and electronic connection.
- Invite alumni back to the school as mentors to speak and contribute to classes.
- Develop High School level internship programs with various alumni.
- Identify alumni who could assist in an East Catholic related professional network.

### 2. Create more alumni engagement opportunities

- Emphasize social interaction between alumni groups.
- Create opportunities for alumni with common interests to unite.

### 3. Increase alumni donations

- Solicit more monetary contributions in the form of donations, sponsorships and scholarships through advancement initiatives, including the launch of a capital campaign.

### 4. Maintain and further develop external communications efforts

- Increase communication efforts directed at alumni and the general public, showcasing what makes East Catholic a premier educational institution.
- Reinforce and market the school through positive storytelling.



# Governance and Administration

East Catholic will **strengthen and support governance and leadership** in its pursuit of our mission, vision and values. The achievement of this strategic plan is dependent upon effective governance and leadership. We seek to bolster our Advisory Board and administration through increased diversity and professional development opportunities and by enhancing communication across stakeholders.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Strengthen Advisory Board leadership through policies and procedures

- Recruit diverse Advisory Board members as spots open up to reflect the community we serve.
- Be purposeful and seek meaningful professional development opportunities to develop and retain Advisory Board members.
- Define role of individual Advisory Board members and the collective board.
- Create and implement a revised self-evaluation for Advisory Board members.
- Review of adjust committee structure to serve current needs.
- Review appropriate Advisory Board documents and statements annually.
- Focus on strategic priorities on an ongoing basis.

### 2. Strengthen the administrative team

- Assign staff liaisons to each Advisory Board committee.
- Recruit diverse administrators as openings occur to reflect the community we serve.
- Be purposeful and seek opportunities to develop and retain administrators on a yearly basis.
- Strengthen involvement of all administrators in Advisory Board meetings. Each administrator will present to the Advisory Board at least once a year.
- Define each role of the administrative team as an individual and define a collective role of the team.
- Institute a yearly evaluation process of the administrative team by the academic council.

### 3. Strengthen the Advisory Board-community relationship

- Include upcoming East Catholic events on Advisory Board agendas.
- Ensure school communication channels reflect up-to-date information regarding Advisory Board membership.
- Require board members to attend a minimum of two East Catholic events each school year and be actively involved in at least one Advisory Board committee.
- Support the President in an annual State of the School presentation to the East Catholic family.

### 4. Strengthen communication among all constituents of the East Catholic community

- Provide a clear path for faculty, staff and families to communicate with Advisory Board.



# Facilities

East Catholic is developing a thoughtful, comprehensive, long-term capital spending plan to maintain, update and improve its 60-year-old school buildings, athletic fields, facilities and technology. Well-maintained, modern and equipped facilities are an important recruitment tool and critical to supporting East Catholic’s mission.

## Action Steps:

### 1. Maintain and enhance facilities to ensure the best educational experience for students

- Develop a master plan for the development of facilities to keep facilities safe and up-to-date.
- Develop a comprehensive capital spending plan that is funded through a combination of operating surplus, reserves and contributions. This fund will cover major facility enhancements including new buildings, athletic fields and classrooms.

### 2. Develop a comprehensive technology plan to support 21st Century learning

- Ensure sufficient Internet access throughout the campus.
- Explore options for technology-assisted teaching.

Facilities Priority Items	Current Projected
<b>Costs</b>	
• Replace auditorium roof_____	Completed 2022
• Build integrated technology center_____	\$150,000
• Renovate fitness center_____	\$50,000
• Replace original school building roof_____	\$250,000
• Replace emergency generator_____	\$124,000
• Replace HVAC-Lighting system with Direct Digital Control system____	\$175,000 <i>(estimated 5-year payback)</i>
• Renovate gym, including new bleachers and flooring_____	\$140,000
• Replace fire alarm panel main building_____	\$130,000
• Replace old gym roof_____	\$75,000



# Financial Strength

Financial strength is essential for East Catholic's **long-term sustainability**. Enrollment is the most important strategic and financial priority for East Catholic, as tuition is the primary source of operating revenue. However, it's important that East Catholic's annual tradition strikes a balance between affordability and providing sufficient revenue to fund operating expenses. At its current enrollment level – approximately 432 students – the school will be sustainable in the future.

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## Action Steps:

### 1. Increase enrollment

- Balance staffing levels with class size to attract and retain high quality, dedicated educators.
- Monitor the tuition assistance provided to strike a balance between affordability and fiscal responsibility. Ensure the process is objective, fair and needs based.
- Conduct periodic tuition assessments comparing tuition rates with other area private schools.

### 2. Recruit and retain talented teachers

- Offer a competitive compensation plan and benefits package.
- Ensure a competitive teacher-to-student ratio.

### 3. Create a professional development plan that meets teachers' needs

- Develop a long-term strategy to create an operating environment that balances annual revenues and expenses to generate a breakeven result. Budgeting for a modest surplus is desirable to provide flexibility for unplanned expenses.
- Indebtedness should be closely monitored and limited to funding long-term capital projects.

### 4. Appropriate financial staffing and adequate financial controls

- Ensure the financial team is adequately staffed and has the necessary skill sets to ensure East Catholic's long-term financial viability.
- Adopt best practices and approval checks and balances to ensure prudent financial oversight.

### 5. Enhance fundraising activities

- Expand the network of primary contributors.
- Earmark endowment contributions for long-term needs.

# Financial Sustainability Statement

Financial strength is essential for East Catholic's long term financial stability. While our school does a great job teaching students in mind, body, and spirit, it must do so with a financial model that equates to balanced budgets and responsible forecasting. The two main drivers for revenue are Enrollment and Advancement. Tuition contributes over 85% of our revenue and the remaining 15% comes from philanthropic donations. The following areas of focus must be front and center at all times as we work toward financial stability:

## **Enrollment**

- Primary source of revenue
- Tuition increases must yield what the market will bear
- Tuition assistance and financial aid is crucial to yield students, but it must be kept within a reasonable percentage of revenue

## **Staffing Levels**

- Must be commensurate with enrollment numbers
- Salary pool cannot surpass the amount designated from budget

## **Healthy Operating Financials**

- Monthly income and cash flow statements
- Staying current with accounts payable
- Healthy balance sheet
- Adequate financial controls
- Clean annual audits

## **Advancement**

- Maximize annual fund goals
- Organize for a capital campaign
- Regularly update Campus Master Plan

# Contact Us

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Manchester, CT 06042

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Admissions Office: 860-649-5336 ext. 6238

Advancement Office: 860-649-5336 ext. 6234

Athletics Office: 860-649-5336 ext. 6228

School Counseling Office: 860-647-8628



[www.echs.com](http://www.echs.com)

 [East Catholic High School](https://www.linkedin.com/school/eastcatholichighschool)

 [@eastcatholichighschool](https://www.instagram.com/eastcatholichighschool)

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