

**St. Mary's Catholic School
Longview, Texas**

Diocese of Tyler



STRATEGIC PLAN

DRAFT – June 15, 2008

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MISSION

St. Mary's Catholic School ~~strives to develop faith filled, responsible citizens for our global community by providing a quality Catholic education which emphasizes faith formation, academic success, and self-discipline, in a caring Christian environment~~ is committed to partnering with families in forming children to be disciples of Jesus, who actively participate in the Kingdom of God, by forming faith, scholarship, leadership and service.

B. PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's School is dedicated to assisting students on their faith journey. Our goal is to form a deeper awareness that we are anticipating the second coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is this anticipation that is the catalyst for our joyful hope. It is this promise that helps to protect us from anxiety while giving purpose to our lives here on Earth. We hand this faith to our families in order to help them live a more abundant life, a fullness of human life that is best rooted in the biblical understanding of humanity.

As Christians, we share with students a commitment to the invitation of Jesus Christ to "Love God with their whole heart, mind, and soul and love their neighbor as themselves." (Mark 12:30-31) We strive to provide an environment which fosters an enthusiasm for lifelong learning, an environment where each student can develop to their fullest potential and practice respect for those of faith traditions and cultures other than their own. We want to provide students the tools they need to excel, to teach them to be grateful to God for their accomplishments, to lead others to Christ by their deeds and to be generous in sharing their gifts and talents with others.

C. HISTORY

Catholic schools have provided private Christian education in Longview since 1948. St. Mary's Catholic School, dedicated December 8, 1968, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, is the outgrowth of the former St. Anthony's Catholic School built in 1949 and staffed by The School Sisters of Notre Dame. With the realization that the facilities

were inadequate, in 1958 Monsignor Szapka purchased a 42-acre site for a new school, leading to construction of the campus at its present location in 1968 including eight large classrooms, administrative offices, library, science lab and lecture room, and a large cafeteria. In these new surroundings, the students and the school program grew, prospered, and realized the full measure of Catholic education.

Over the years several additions and improvements have been made to the campus buildings, including an annex of four classrooms, a gym, a band hall, and a Parish Center encompassing new middle school classrooms, a large science lab, and a well-equipped computer lab, along with additional meeting rooms, a full kitchen, and a cafeteria / stage / assembly area. The original building has been remodeled to include new office areas, an additional classroom, a larger library, an art studio, an adult reading room, and a separate computer lab for use by lower elementary students.

St. Mary's School is held in high esteem by the local Catholic population as well as the Longview community. It serves both Catholic and non-Catholic students from Pre-Kindergarten through the eighth grade with a varied curriculum which provides a basis for future educational success. The school has earned its reputation of academic excellence for a variety of reasons, including (1) an exemplary faculty / staff, (2) extra-curricular activities, (3) up-to-date technology, new classrooms and building facilities in upper elementary, (4) a strong curriculum in a Christian environment, and (5) good discipline and a high degree of parental involvement.

D. IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN

This Strategic Plan is to be implemented by staff, faculty, and parents. School Board members shall be responsible for reviewing the plan annually and creating additions and / or modifications as appropriate. Implementation of the plan shall be monitored by the School Board at regular monthly meetings.

II. Faith Formation

A. Households of Faith

The primary goal of the school is to partner with families to form Disciples of Christ in a Christian environment. This is a responsibility to be shared by staff and faculty, in partnership with the family and the community. It is our plan to help families grow spiritually, with a sense of values and a capacity for right judgment, so that each member may go out into the world as a witness to Jesus Christ.

Objective 1: Actively foster formation of Christian character

Strategy 1: Integrate awareness of Christian character and values into the life of the school

Strategy 2: Offer opportunities for personal growth within the school community, with an emphasis on programming to develop parenting skills amongst our families and the community

Strategy 3: Actively promote a living discipleship within the school community

Objective 2: To maintain an environment that is safe for all children and adults

Strategy 1: Monitor and continue following guidelines of the Diocese of Tyler Ethics and Integrity for Church Personnel

Strategy 2: Provide opportunities for families to learn how to protect from abuse, to observe potential abuse, and to respond in case of abuse

Strategy 3: Annually review and update Safety Plan

Strategy 4: Biannually partner with families to implement the Safe Environment Plan approved by the Diocese of Tyler

Objective 3: Develop and enrich the Catholicity of the school faculty, staff, and families

Strategy 1: Provide opportunities and activities for personal faith development in school and at home

Strategy 2: Encourage members of the school community to attend religious enrichment programs offered at the school parish and diocesan levels

B. Student Centered Faith Formation

The school is committed to supporting each child on their faith journey by cultivating an atmosphere where faith in Christ is the center of each educational experience.

Objective 1: Intellectual Development through doctrine and scripture

Strategy 1: Provide systemic age appropriate formation through the use of the 15 goals curriculum adopted by the Diocese of Tyler.

Strategy 2: Enrich other core curriculums with study of age appropriate doctrine and scripture

Strategy 3: Respond to individual needs for enrichment or remediation

Objective 2: To be a community of Christ

Strategy 1: To reveal to students the peace and love of Christ through the sacraments.

Strategy 2: To experience Christian Unity through multigenerational school events.

Strategy 3: To develop characteristic of the human person through following the example of Christ himself and the saints.

Strategy 4: To foster respect for faith diversity and cultural diversity within the community.

Objective 3: Enrich the Christian environment through Catholic tradition

Strategy 1: Enrich the environment through the use of the Liturgical calendar

Strategy 2: Provide exposure to richly diverse styles of celebrating Christian life

Strategy 3: Create an awareness in students of Vocations, Liturgy, and Christian Initiation

Strategy 4: Nurture Sacramental formation

III. Scholarship

A. EDUCATIONAL GOALS

St. Mary's students will be educated in the following key areas. Experiences will be selected to direct the child's learning towards the following specific objectives:

Faith Formation

- Grow in knowledge of and appreciation of spiritual values
- Gain a sense of values and a capacity for right judgment
- Give witness to the faith
- Form a social conscience with a zeal for the common good

Scholarship

- Develop intellectual skills including critical thinking, problem solving, and open-minded understanding-discovery learning
- Develop-Strengthen each student's individual academic potential

Servant Leadership

- ~~Discover and develop imagination, originality, and creative abilities~~
- Practice the principles of democratic living
- Learn to work with others appreciate God's gifts in others by fostering a cooperative and willing spirit
- Develop a strong work ethic that includes responsibility, accountability and trustworthiness in regards to daily routines as well as extraordinary events

B. CURRICULUM / INSTRUCTION

1. Accreditation

St. Mary's Catholic School is accredited by the Texas Catholic Conference Accreditation Commission (TCCAC) which is recognized by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

Objective 1: Investigate the requirements of Accolades

- Strategy 1: Create a committee to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of additional accreditation by SACS*
- Strategy 2: Investigate advantages of PreAP and IB curriculums*
- Strategy 3: Create a committee to investigate Blue Ribbon accreditation*

2. Curriculum / Instruction

Teachers are required to follow the curriculum guidelines set by principal, to provide a challenging curriculum which not only meets and exceeds state standards (TEKS), but also integrates national standards and incorporates the school philosophy and mission.

Objective 1: Provide an innovative, well-balanced curriculum which challenges students and supports the mission of St. Mary's School

- Strategy 1: Review curriculum annually by analyzing data and using teacher input*
- Strategy 2: Provide for successful integration of technology into all curriculums by educating staff and students*
- Strategy 3: Provide for and integrate library services across disciplines*
- Strategy 4: Develop differentiated instruction in the classroom and in after school enrichment programs to ensure successful learning opportunities for all students*
- Strategy 5: Integrate technology into the core content areas*
- Strategy 6: Investigate communications and technology changes and implement wherever feasible and appropriate*

Objective 2: Maintain extracurricular programming to support the mission of the school

- Strategy 1: Develop and implement additional extracurricular clubs and activities that develop leadership and faith.*
- Strategy 2: Provide on-going teacher education to develop skills outside content / core curriculum areas.*
- Strategy 3: Collaborate with Athletic director to enrich and expand competitive sports in our conference.*

Objective 3: Recruit and retain a qualified professional staff

- Strategy 1: Provide a salary and benefits comparable with other Catholic schools in the Diocese*

Objective 4: Develop and maintain a highly trained faculty

- Strategy 1: Continue new teacher orientation*

Strategy 2: Offer workshops on special programs and new teaching techniques and strategies throughout the year

Strategy 3: Encourage ongoing personal faith development

Strategy 4: Provide opportunities to attend outside workshops and in-services

Strategy 5: Continue using teacher evaluation instrument to establish individual instructional goals for the following year. Modify and update as needed.

Objective 5: Foster a commitment to the mission of Catholic education

Strategy 1: Provide opportunities to live out the mission for parents and students.

Strategy 2: Decisions for the campus needs will be mission driven.

3. Assessment

Assessment is critical to make adjustments in the curriculum and instruction methodology.

Objective 1: Assess the curriculum through standardized test

Strategy 1: Administer the TAKS release test twice yearly and track student's educational growth.

Strategy 2: Administer the SAT10 once yearly and disaggregate to determine individual student needs

Objective 2: Assess educator's instructional strategies

Strategy 1: Principal will make frequent walk-thru observations in each classroom

Strategy 2: Stanford (SAT10) test will be disaggregated for instructional review

Strategy 3: All teacher's and instructional assistants will be evaluated formally annually

Strategy 4: Develop and implement plan to educate faculty on existing software and hardware.

4. Campus Initiatives

After careful disaggregation of the 2007-2008 Stanford 10 test and the release TAKS tests for grades 3-8, faculty and staff have made a data driven decision to:

Increase Reading Fluency and Comprehension Campus Wide

- Use word walls
- Use book boxes

- Assess fluency often
- Offer Accelerated Reader incentives
- Use Reading Workshop as an instructional method

Increase Writing Skills across the Curriculum

- Use journal writing daily
- Use Writer's Workshop as an instructional method
- Use correct grammar, usage, and mechanics in all content areas

Develop Critical Thinking / Listening Skills

- Use word problems / applications in mathematics
- Adopt "MAPS" for classroom management

IV. Service

A. Love in Action for School Community

We as a community joyfully respond to God's love in thought, word, and deed.

1. Schoolwide service projects

Objective 1: Foster a Christian environment of service

Strategy 1: Develop awareness to and a systemic response for community needs.

Strategy 2: Be a warm and welcoming community of Christ.

Strategy 3: Implement a plan to increase awareness and responses to World needs.

Objective 2: Nurture Prayer as a response to God's love

Strategy 1: To offer personal intentions during classroom prayer

Strategy 2: To encourage praying for one another daily

Strategy 3: To deeply reflect on the Morning Offering and Our Holy Father's Intentions.

Strategy 4: To teach and expect full participation in the Liturgy

2. Community Awareness/Public Relations / Marketing

Objective 1: Improve public awareness and reinforce reputation of St. Mary's School.

Strategy 1: Implement an annual public relations plan directed toward the general local community, the Catholic community, and the Alumni

Objective 2: Increase retention rate of students

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a plan for the retention of students

Objective 3: Achieve a steady increase of new enrollment of students

Strategy 1: Implement a plan specifically targeting the recruitment of new students for St. Mary's School among the local parishes and the non-Catholic community, including Hudson PEP

B. Service to the Mission of Catholic Education

St. Mary's Catholic School ~~strives to develop faith-filled, responsible citizens for our global community by providing a quality Catholic education which emphasizes faith formation, academic success, and self-discipline, in a caring Christian environment~~ is committed to partnering with families in forming children to be disciples of Jesus who actively participate in the Kingdom of God by forming faith, scholarship, leadership and service.

1. VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

Families that dedicate their gifts, time, and talents to the mission are critical to the continued success of St. Mary's School.

Objective 1: Decrease facilities and staffing monetary expenditures through volunteer resources

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a plan for a direct correlation between financial assistance and service requirements.

Strategy 2: Develop a deeper understanding of money saved (thus tuition saved) in services done by volunteers.

Strategy 3: Foster by-in to all families

2. FACILITIES

a. Infrastructure

The physical plant includes the main school building, the four-classroom annex, the gymnasium, the band room, the Parish Center, the parking lots west of the school and gym, the school playground, and other grounds of St. Mary's Parish complex. The major facilities were constructed or renovated on the following dates:

School building: 1968
Gymnasium: 1981
Annex: 1987
Parking resurfaced: 1991
Band Room: 1994
Parking sealed: 1994
Parish Center: 1998

Library renovation: 1999
Covered walkway: 1999
Abatement of gym: 2001
Parking sealed: 2004 **VERIFY**

Objective 1: Maintain the school campus to effectively support a quality education

Strategy 1: Implement a three-year preventive maintenance plan

Strategy 2: Establish a central maintenance and equipment record system

Strategy 3: Establish a written schedule for safety-related inspections

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Objective 2: Provide on-going development of campus needs

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a Capital and Enhancement Plan for St. Mary's campus

Strategy 2: Investigate the benefits of a "Green" facility

Objective 3: Maintain physical safety and security throughout campus

Strategy 1: Review and update Safety Management Plan annually

Strategy 2: Assess physical environment regularly, with a systematic plan for maintaining the safety and visual environment of the campus

Objective 4: Execute the technology maintenance plan, in collaboration with the technology coordinator, for existing labs

Strategy 1: Maintain a stable internet platform to be shared by students, faculty, and volunteers

3. Finances

a. TUITION ASSISTANCE

It is important the school be available to all children from a wide range of families and economic backgrounds. Therefore tuition assistance must be considered a critical component of the school, available to all on an equitable basis.

Objective 1: Continue maintaining an equitable distribution of tuition assistance through the parish

Strategy 1: Develop and implement a plan to establish policy and procedures for equitable consideration of financial aid applications

Strategy 2: Investigate outsourcing of tuition assistance applications to provide a third-party opinion

Objective 2: Develop a Deanery-wide tuition assistance program

b. Grants

Grants are vital to enrich and enhance the facilities and curriculum. An organized, methodical pursuit of grant opportunities aligned with our needs, can secure much-needed funding for facility improvements and curriculum enhancements.

Objective 1: Pursue grant funding as a means of growth and improvements of our facilities and / or curriculum

Strategy 1: Research and apply for available, appropriate grants

Strategy 2: Develop a plan of action, updated annually, for grant proposal preparation, submittal, and follow-through activities

c. Operating Budget

In order to carry out the mission of Catholic School education, the administration must strive to pay teachers a salary in reasonable proportion to state base. In order to meet this need, as well as the need for a continued improvement in curriculum, materials, and facilities, student enrollment must grow to levels which will sustain growth in these areas. In addition, local parish support and fundraising are recognized as essential subsidies to tuition.

Objective 1: Maintain a stable financial framework to support long-term growth and development

Strategy 1: Create and monitor a realistic and attainable budget

Strategy 2: Continue to devote school-wide time and talent to Wunderfall as a major school fundraiser

Strategy 3: Support and encourage the endowment group's efforts

Strategy 4: Investigate establishing a maintenance fund to cover major repairs on the school buildings

Strategy 5: Cultivate on-going support from Alumni

Objective 2: Support implementation of financial policies and procedures of St. Mary's School assuring collection of tuition and other revenue

Strategy 1: Closely monitor the collection of tuition and follow contract obligations

4. Wellness Plan

The school is committed to a nutritious hot lunch program at a reasonable cost. Facilities, equipment, and competent kitchen management make this possible. The school has a Wellness Plan in place which includes Nutritional Food Guidelines.

Objective 1: Continue providing nutritious food service

Strategy 1: Foster an environment for teaching and reinforcing manners and etiquette

Strategy 2: Continue to implement the Wellness Plan. Review and make modifications at least every two years

V. GROWTH

A. OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for growth and improvement include the following:

- Building a stronger financial base to allow for increased individualized instruction through smaller class sizes
- Increasing the retention rate for existing students as well as increase the enrollment rate of new students
- Fostering working relationships between parents, teachers, and administration, in order to be true partners in the education and development of the whole child, and
- Working closely with the East Central Deanery cluster, when established, to work in cooperation with others towards the support of Catholic school education.

B. EXPANSION

Catholic school education is a vital component of Christian family life, allowing families to educate the whole child, developing disciples who are witnesses to the Christian person. It is necessary to encourage on-going Catholic education opportunities in order to cultivate and form adults who are witnesses to the Faith by the way they live and love God and neighbor.

Objective 1: Expand facilities and educational opportunities

Strategy 1: Work with Deanery cluster to expand to a high school

Strategy 2: Work with community to consider day care

Objective 2: Investigate the potential of virtual schools and distance learning

C. SCHOOL CLUSTER

The Bishop of the Diocese has authorized a study into a cluster concept, where parishes would be grouped in geographical proximity and contribute in some fashion to the operation of the school.

Objective 1: Continue attending and participating in cluster formation meetings at the Diocesan level

Strategy 1: Have a School Board representative attend the meetings and communicate between the Board and the Cluster formation committee

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