

# St. Mary's Catholic School



## **STRATEGIC PLAN** *developed JUNE 2003*



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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Catholic School strives to develop faith-filled, responsible citizens for our global community by providing a quality Catholic education which emphasizes academic success, value-centered principles, self-discipline and moral training, in a caring, Christian environment.

## B. PHILOSOPHY

Staff members at St. Mary's School are dedicated to the development of each individual student's potential. The student will be taught both the cognitive and the affective skills needed to become effective citizens of the world. The school assumes this responsibility in cooperation with the child's primary educators, the parents.

The school aims to educate students spiritually, morally, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. The student will learn to discover knowledge for himself, to solve problems, to be a critical reader, to develop a healthy curiosity and to be open-minded. The student will be encouraged to give witness to his faith by his own life. Our aim is to form students with a social conscience, a desire for racial justice, compassion for those who suffer, and zeal for the common good. St. Mary's School is committed to quality education to meet the needs of the modern child.

## C. GOALS

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

### **Spiritually/morally**

- ☞ 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

### **Intellectually**

- ☞ Develop intellectual skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and open-mindedness
- ☞ Develop skills, methods of work, interests, and appreciations on which later education and training can be based

### **Socially/emotionally**

- ☞ Form a social conscience with a zeal for the common good
- ☞ Practice the principles of democratic living
- ☞ Learn to work with others

### **Physically**

- ☞ Learn wise use of leisure time
- ☞ Discover and develop imagination, originality, and creative abilities

## **D. HISTORY**

Catholic education has been an important part of the Longview community for over fifty years. 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.

St. Mary's School has earned a reputation for academic excellence for a variety of reasons. These include (1) an exemplary faculty/staff, (2) extra-curricular activities, (3) updated 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.

## **E. ENROLLMENT**

The enrollment of St. Mary's School has varied along with the local economy, peaking at 309 in the 1995/1996 school year, and showing lower enrollments five years earlier and six years later. Overall, in the last fifteen years, there has been an increase in enrollment. Much of this increase could be attributed to the implementation of the Pre-Kindergarten program, with some additional, smaller increases in the middle school grades.

## **F. OPPORTUNITIES**

Opportunities for growth and improvement have been identified and are addressed in this plan. These include: (1) building a stronger financial base to allow for competitive teacher salaries and smaller class sizes, (2) increasing the retention rate for existing students as well as increase the enrollment rate of new students, (3) fostering better communications between parents, teachers, and administration, in order to build a relationship of partnering in the education and development of the whole child, and (4) continuing to develop a program emphasizing Christian character formation.

## **G. EXECUTION OF PLAN**

School Board members are responsible for reviewing and implementing this Strategic Plan on a timely basis. This plan shall be reviewed by the Board annually, with additions and modifications made as appropriate.

Committees shall be established for each of the key areas in the plan, charged with developing action plans and work assignments for each of the items under their responsibility. The School Board is responsible for monitoring the progress of the committees at their regular monthly meetings.

## II. ADMINISTRATION

### A. FAITH FORMATION

#### Background/Assumptions

The primary goal for the school is to assist parents in developing faith-filled citizens in a Christian environment. This is a responsibility to be shared by staff and faculty, in partnership with family and community. It is our plan to help students grow spiritually, with a sense of values and a capacity for right judgment, so that each student 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.*

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

#### **Objective 2: To create an environment that is safe for all children and adults**

*Strategy 1: Implement 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.*

#### **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.*

#### **Objective 4: 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.*

### B. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION

#### Background/Assumptions

Teachers are required to follow the curriculum guidelines set by the Diocese of Tyler. These are supplemented with several enrichment programs such as KUMON and Shurley Grammar, to provide a challenging curriculum which not only meets and exceeds state standards (TEKS), but also 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.*

*Strategy 2: Evaluate student performance and standardized test scores.*

*Strategy 3: Maintain Technology Plan.*

*Strategy 4: Develop focus groups for appropriate curriculum areas.*

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

*Strategy 1: Develop and implement instructional methods to support curriculum and mission.*

## **C. STAFFING**

### **Background/Assumptions**

St. Mary's staff is divided into two groups: faculty and support staff. Faculty, or classroom teachers, are required to meet or exceed diocesan guidelines, or to have a working plan in place toward this goal. Recent salary increases have been implemented with the goal of bringing professional salaries to 85% of state base salary. Support staff requirements vary according to the position; all Texas Catholic Conference Education Department (TCCED) requirements are presently met or exceeded.

### **Objective 1: Recruit and retain a qualified professional staff.**

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

### **Objective 2: 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 3: Foster a commitment to the mission of Catholic education.**

## **D. FINANCES**

### **Background/Assumptions**

In order to maintain and enrich professional, high-quality teaching staff, the administration must strive to pay teachers a salary in reasonable proportion to the 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: Secure agreement with all local parishes to provide tuition assistance.*

*Strategy 6: Cultivate on-going support from Alumni.*

*Strategy 7: Investigate establishing a tuition assistance fund.*

**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 earned revenue on a monthly basis through an aged receivables report provided to the designated board liaison.*

*Strategy 2: Investigate automatic draft as an optional payment method for tuition.*

# III. DEVELOPMENT

## A. PUBLIC RELATIONS/MARKETING

### Background/Assumptions

A perceived area of opportunity is the development and implementation of public relations and marketing strategies to: (1) increase enrollment and improve student retention rates in the short term, (2) undertake long-range growth projects that will expand educational facilities, (3) increase total student population, and (4) raise capital and generate grant money.

For the school to effectively draw new students, it would greatly benefit from a consistent plan to publicize and market St. Mary's School in the local community. It is also believed that the same marketing effort will encourage and foster financial support for the school. Additionally, a strong effort must be made to maintain and increase the retention rate of existing student enrollment.

### **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.*

*Strategy 2: Develop an alumni program.*

### **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.*

## B. EXPANSION

### Background Data/Assumptions

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 their lives and love God and neighbor.

### **Objective 1: Expand facilities and educational opportunities**

*Strategy 1: Develop and implement a survey of the local Catholic community to determine the level of commitment to a Catholic high school.*

*Strategy 2: Investigate the viability of a Catholic high school in Longview within the next five to seven years.*

*Strategy 3: Actively cooperate with those parishes in the deanery seeking to expand Catholic school opportunities.*

*Strategy 4: Explore summer, after-school programs, and other educational opportunities that can be provided outside school hours.*

*Strategy 5: Investigate viability of carpooling to Tyler for high school.*

## **C. GRANTS**

### **Background Data/Assumptions**

With rising expenses and more sophisticated equipment and training essential to offering a quality education, grants are vital to the enrichment and enhancement of the facilities and curriculum. An aggressive pursuit of grant opportunities, correlated with our needs and philosophy, can develop our school into a competitive, enriching experience for our students and families.

### **Objective 1: Aggressively pursue grant money as a means of support and growth in our facilities and/or curriculum.**

*Strategy 1: Establish and train a team to research and follow through on available, appropriate grants.*

*Strategy 2: Develop a plan of action, with a budget, for grant-writing activities.*

## IV. SUPPORT SERVICES

### A. FACILITIES

#### Background Data/Assumptions

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

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

*Strategy 1: Implement a three-year preventative maintenance plan.*

*Strategy 2: Establish a central maintenance and equipment record system.*

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

#### **Objective 2: Provide on-going development of campus needs.**

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

### B. TECHNOLOGY

#### Background Data/Assumptions

St. Mary's School is envisioned as a school where technology is used to maximize educational opportunities for students of all abilities and interests. The internet is a communications network to provide resource sharing and communication, so that the students have the opportunity to become self-initiated learners, to grow into productive, Christian members of a global society.

#### **Objective 1: Provide technical support for new and existing curriculum.**

*Strategy 1: Develop network of teacher user groups and do training that will allow teachers to serve as resource people doing first-line support.*

*Strategy 2: Enhance the curriculum of various subject areas by integration of technology as a tool to facilitate and enrich the learning experience.*

*Strategy 3: Investigate the potential of Virtual Schools and Distance Learning.*

**Objective 2: Maintain appropriate technology that is curriculum-driven.**

*Strategy 1: Maintain an ongoing review and assessment of new technologies and opportunities.*

*Strategy 2: Keep existing equipment and network up-to-date and in good functional condition.*

*Strategy 3: Continue to review and modify the Three Year Technology Plan on an annual basis or as curriculum needs change.*

*Strategy 4: Continue to replace legacy equipment through local funding, donations, and grants.*

## **C. LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER**

### **Background Data/Assumptions**

The library is has a fully computerized inventory and management system. Computers are available for Accelerated Reader tests and card catalog searches.

**Objective 1: Maintain adequate library resources.**

*Strategy 1: Implement collection policy.*

*Strategy 2: Develop long-range plan for library.*

## **D. HEALTH SERVICES**

### **Background Data/Assumptions**

St. Mary's seeks to provide appropriate guidance, counseling, and health care programs. This is a support to the parents and families as well as to the individual student, and includes state reporting of immunization, and basic health screening (eyes, ears, scoliosis).

**Objective 1: Provide adequate guidance/counseling program.**

*Strategy 1: Review current program in light of guidelines and student needs.*

*Strategy 2: Identify resources in community to be used to provide services.*

**Objective 2: Provide adequate health care program.**

*Strategy 1: Maintain policies and update procedures.*

## **E. FOOD SERVICES**

### **Background Data/Assumptions**

The school is committed to a nutritious hot lunch program at a reasonable cost. Facilities, equipment,

and competent kitchen management make this possible.

**Objective 1: Continue providing nutritious food service.**

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

*Strategy 2: Monitor kitchen equipment for necessary repairs and replacement.*