



**St. Mary
Catholic School**

Hagerstown, MD

**Strategic Planning
2012-2017**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of the Strategic Plan began with a meeting of members of St. Mary Catholic School community: principal, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and parishioners.

The results of surveys completed by parents, staff, and the Strategic Planning Committee were reviewed and categorized into various elements from the responses. These areas included: Catholic Identity, Campus Life, Curriculum/Academics, Faculty and Staff, Administration, Governance, Finance, Enrollment, and Marketing and Development.

St. Mary Catholic School places a strong emphasis on its Catholic Identity. As the Committee reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, traditions, and critical issues facing the school, four focus areas surfaced:

1. Ensure Academic Excellence
2. Facilities Improvement
3. Marketing
4. Increase Enrollment.

The Strategic Planning Committee developed Action Plans in each of the areas listed to provide for the continued growth and strengthening of the school. What follows are the plans developed by the Strategic Planning Committee.

Strategic Planning Committee

Pastor: Father Collin Poston

Principal: Patricia McDermott

School Board President: Patricia Jones

Home & School Association Co-Presidents: Teri Schmitt & Mo Tedeschi

Faculty: Mary K. Barger, Dana Hilmoie, & Jen Karn

Parents: Frankie Corsi, Rob Judge, Todd & Carrie McMahon, Jeff Ortiz, Joseph Rafter, & Stacey Stine

Parishioners: Deb Bockrath, Linda Field, & Judy Kline

Alumni: Kerri Corderman

SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

St. Mary Catholic School will continue to be a school of excellence with a strong focus on its Catholic identity and academic distinction. A dedicated and caring faculty will be the hallmark of its academic excellence.

St. Mary Catholic School will actively work to build a sense of rapport with the faith-based communities and to encourage support from all local parishes for the school's future needs. It will be a strong spiritually-centered community, living the Catholic faith as expressed through worship and service.

St. Mary Catholic School will create a campus environment which ensures the best use of all its facilities in a positive atmosphere which reflects and supports family values. It will endeavor to create a modern facility in order to offer the best educational experience for its students.

St. Mary Catholic School will encourage support of the alumni who value the school's strong commitment to academic excellence and spiritual formation.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Catholic School empowers children in their faith journey, promotes academic excellence and life-long service inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a nurturing community

LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

St. Mary Catholic School is dedicated to nurturing spiritual growth, strengthening moral values, and developing academic excellence.

The benchmark of our success as a school is not measured in grades or percentages, but in the development of individuals ready to explore possibilities, meet the challenges of life, extend themselves to others in order to do the work of Christ, and to always rise to their potentials. Students are encouraged to participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities that offer different avenues for personal development. Independent learning is fostered in and out of the classroom, thus preparing the students intellectually, spiritually, and socially for their futures. All of these activities strengthen the sense of community at St. Mary Catholic School while helping to develop and foster lifelong friendships. These activities have also helped to form support networks for families new to the area and new to the school.

Each student at St. Mary Catholic School will:

- Gain knowledge of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church
- Participate in daily religion classes, prayer, and school liturgies
- Demonstrate Christian choices for self and others
- Work toward the harmony of St. Mary Catholic School community
- Be respectful of the diversity within the community
- Show respect to our country
- Demonstrate effective use of the Internet and other sources
- Strive to develop strong study skills
- Develop good oral and written communication skills
- Strive to always work up to one's potential
- Desire academic excellence.

Focus Area 1:

Ensure Academic Excellence at St. Mary Catholic School

Aim:

St. Mary Catholic School will:

- Integrate a Christ-centered educational experience based on the school's Mission
- Provide an excellent academic opportunity
- Provide an up-to-date, relevant, and dynamic curriculum by ensuring curriculum alignment
- Effectively meet the diverse academic needs of students
- Provide for on-going professional development for faculty and staff
- Support and encourage the use of technology throughout the school
- Use the Accreditation findings as a basis for academic improvement.

Summary of All Action Plans for Focus Area 1: Ensure Academic Excellence

Goal A: Achieve and market academic excellence

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal A:

- 1A1 Acquire and utilize state-of-the-art resources and tools
- 1A2 Align textbooks and resources with the Archdiocesan curriculum
- 1A3 Provide meaningful professional and spiritual development for faculty and staff
- 1A4 Communicate the academic strengths of the school
- 1A5 Expand resources for student academic enrichment

Goal B: Cultivate community resources

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal B:

- 1B1 Develop partnerships with local educational institutions to provide learning opportunities

for students and faculty

- 1B2 Develop partnerships with civic and business communities to provide support for the students' educational experiences

Goal C: Provide a complete, challenging, and up-to-date curriculum

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal C:

- 1C1 Develop differentiated teaching strategies to address the learning needs of our students
- 1C2 Identify and implement opportunities for cross-curricular projects
- 1C3 Utilize assessment data to make instructional decisions
- 1C4 Incorporate a variety of valid and reliable assessments

Goal D: Continue integrating the religious, moral, and spiritual dimension of learning in all subjects (*Benchmarks 7.2)

(* From: National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 7.2)

Summary of the Action Plan for Goal D:

- 1D1 Integrate the Gospel message into daily lessons through explicit references in teachers' lessons

Focus Area 2:

Facility Improvements at St. Mary Catholic School

Aim:

St. Mary Catholic School will:

- Enhance the learning environment for faculty and students
- Develop a Master Plan for the development of facilities
- Study the feasibility of starting a capital campaign to meet the needs of the facilities and the improvement of facilities
- Find creative opportunities for funding facility updates

- Evaluate ways to endow the future of the school.

Summary of All Action Plans for Focus Area 2: Facility Improvements

Goal A: Attract Financial Support for Capital Needs at St. Mary Catholic School

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal A:

- 2A1 Form a development committee to address Action Plans 2A2-2A6
- 2A2 Collaborate with experts in non-profit management and funding to attract support (*Benchmarks 10.1) (* Adapted from: National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 10.1)
- 2A3 Explain the need and develop a plan to secure financial support from the Catholic community of Washington County
- 2A4 Develop strategies to approach benefactors to endow the school
- 2A5 Recruit, train, and provide support for grant writing
- 2A6 Develop strategies to create donor recognition opportunities throughout the school

Goal B: Create a plan that will identify facility and program needs and establish the means of funding improvements and renovations

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal B:

- 2B1 Make improvements to the permanent signage for the school
- 2B2 Create standard procedures for maintenance and upkeep of facilities in light of the present budget

Goal C: Ensure a safe environment for students and faculty

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal C:

- 2C1 Form a committee of school and parish stakeholders with an expertise in safety and security to

evaluate facilities and develop a safety plan

2C2 Establish system for tracking safety incidents to enable better analysis for improvement

2C3 Publicize safety and security updates to the school through school and parish bulletins

Goal D: Create a plan to study the feasibility of constructing a new gymnasium and multi-purpose playground space

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal D:

2D1 Review previous feasibility study and develop a committee and timeline for new construction

2D2 Identify space or location of existing property that would be suitable for use as a gymnasium/playground

2D3 Develop and implement a public relations/capital campaign to find and cultivate donors

2D4 Coordinate with other churches and organizations in the immediate area for joint initiative/ownership/use of playground in downtown Hagerstown

Focus Area 3:

Marketing for St. Mary Catholic School

Aim:

St. Mary Catholic School will:

- Create a case for the importance and the need to sacrifice for Catholic education
- Educate the parishes and the public about the strengths of the academic program
- Emphasize the benefits of a safe and nurturing school environment
- Showcase graduates, both recent and successful alumni, in order to encourage support for the school
- Develop a business partnership outreach program and enhance the visibility of the school to the local community
- Create opportunities for an active involvement with and for alumni.

Summary of All Action Plans for Focus Area 3: Marketing

Goal A: Increase awareness and importance about Catholic education at St. Mary Catholic School to parishioners and the broader public sector

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal A:

- 3A1 Continue and enhance the Marketing Committee which, among other areas, emphasizes and markets the school's Catholic identity within the context of faith and community
- 3A2 Continue to develop promotional materials; such as, brochures, DVDs, etc. about the school
- 3A3 Recognize and market achievements of St. Mary Catholic School through the parish bulletins, from the pulpit, and the school web site
- 3A4 Market the dedication and expertise of the faculty and staff through biographies in the parish bulletins and the web site
- 3A5 Provide a sufficient formal budget to market the school

Goal B: Create a business partnership outreach program

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal B:

- 3B1 Identify and develop a relationship with various businesses to assist in marketing the school
- 3B Develop a plan for community outreach for local realtors and businesses

Goal C: Expand Alumni Involvement

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal C:

- 3C1 Create an Alumni Association
- 3C2 Develop a plan for ensuring support and awareness of the school through the Alumni Association

- 3C3 Identify and publicize the positive aspects of the education that the alumni have received from an education at St. Mary Catholic School
- 3C4 Create a plan to continue alumni relationships (for example, weddings, births, and important events)

Focus Area 4:

Increasing Enrollment at St. Mary Catholic School

Aim:

St. Mary Catholic School will:

- Increase enrollment
- Develop a strategy for pupil retention
- Appeal to a broader student population
- Connect enrollment to marketing.

Summary of All Action Plans for Focus Area 4: Increasing Enrollment

Goal A: Begin to double each grade level by increasing awareness of St Mary Catholic School as a leader in quality Catholic education

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal A:

- 4A1 Promote the existing academic strengths of St. Mary Catholic School
- 4A2 Promote the Catholic identity and faith formation aspects of the school

Goal B: Develop an understanding of retention issues in order to retain students

Summary of the Action Plans for Goal B:

- 4B1 Develop and implement an exit survey (for example, SurveyMonkey.com) with families/students in order to address concerns and issues

Goal C: Create a campus culture that encourages recruitment by parents

Summary of the Action Plans For Goal C:

- 4C1 Create an HSA Parent Program to help orient and welcome parents to the school and respond to parent questions
- 4C2 Create an opportunity to work with parents at surrounding parishes and other churches to encourage enrollment
- 4C3 Continue contacting young families in the parish, especially after Baptism, to inform them about the school
- 4C4 Identify other communities within Washington County who would benefit and appreciate Catholic education at St. Mary Catholic School