Saint Joseph Catholic School

Strategic Plan



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**Introduction**

Founded in 1953, Saint Joseph School has evolved and prospered over time into the school of excellence that is so well known in our community today. Throughout our history, Saint Joseph School has been blessed with the leadership and inspiration of the Franciscan Sisters, generous financial support from parents and parishioners, and the selfless dedication of the men and women who serve on the faculty and staff. In turn, Saint Joseph School has blessed our community through its formation of young men and women steeped in Gospel values and educational competence, who have used their many talents and faith in Christ to enrich the lives of others.

As is the case with any great Catholic school, Saint Joseph School could not be what it is today without the hard work and sacrifice of those who have gone before us. We have engaged in this strategic planning process not to negate the contributions of previous generations, but with the confident conviction that Saint Joseph School can do even more and be even a greater blessing to its students and the local community in the years ahead, while faced with challenging demographic and cultural changes. In order to remain truly faithful to our Catholic mission, Saint Joseph School needs to adapt in response to these contemporary circumstances and challenges, as an ongoing call to evangelization and enriching the kingdom of God within our communities.

The following pages outline the Saint Joseph School Strategic Plan developed by the Core Team Members (as listed on page 15) along with other parishioners and business leaders within the community. We believe that a successful strategic plan requires broad input from within and even outside of the school community. We therefore invite you to share your reactions and suggestions regarding the strategies we have identified in the plan so that we can further refine and improve our school in the months and years ahead.

**Mission**

*Mission is at the core of why Catholic schools exist. A school mission statement reflects its faith-based purpose and drives the entire strategic planning process. Your school should already have a mission statement that can guide the plan’s goals and strategies. If the mission statement is not specific and/or clear enough, the steering committee and/or education commission should draft a revised statement.*

**The mission of St Joseph School is to follow the mission of Christ, where we learn our faith, live our faith, and prepare for the future.**

Note: To see tangible examples of how this Mission is being accomplished, please refer to the **Catholic** **Identity** SWOT Analysis below (page 5).

**Vision**

*Vision is a long range picture of what the school will look like if it is successful in its planning work. By developing a vision statement, the school makes its hopes and dreams clear to the greater community (as well as to its parents, staff, and volunteers).*

*The school may already have a vision statement with which the strategic plan can be aligned. If there isn’t such a vision statement, or if the vision is not specific and/or clear enough, the planning team can begin the strategic planning process with the development of a vision statement.*

**The Vision of Saint Joseph School is to have students, staff and family joining together, serving Jesus and one another.**

St. Joseph School will become the school of choice for Catholic families in the area, as well as be open to Christian families of other faith traditions. In keeping with our mission, our school will be known as a Christ-centered community that is committed to the Catholic formation of children and the nurturing of their gifts and potential in partnership with families and the larger parish community. Saint Joseph School will continue to be acknowledged throughout the area for its academic and spiritual excellence. We will be well resourced, responsive to demographic changes, and a catalyst in the development of Christian leadership for future generations. We will be recognized as an indispensable part of the evangelizing mission of the Church, playing an integral role in the transformation of the community into the Kingdom of God.

SWOT Analysis

*SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis guides the planning team with identifying the positives and negatives of your school’s current reality. Developing a full awareness of your situation can help with both strategic planning and future decision-making. A SWOT analysis provides additional context for planning decisions. The SWOT analysis will help you plan for the future by articulating how the school operates right now. It will reveal trends, irregularities, limitations, and opportunities. To perform a SWOT analysis, gather information about the school's strengths and weaknesses, services, programs, activities, staffing, and finances. This can be done via self-assessment by the planning team and/or by gathering input from other stakeholders through a survey or focus groups.*

*Replace the following with your own text.*

**Catholic Identity**:

At St. Joseph School, we see strength in our overall religion and faith formation curriculum. Students consistently exit St. Joseph School knowing their faith, as evidenced on the ACRE test. We offer many varied opportunities for students to live out their faith. Service is encouraged and practiced as a school, by the staff, and in individual classes. Prayer is consistently a part of our days, starting with the staff gathering for prayer before school, to whole school prayer over the intercom, and prayer in classrooms during the school day. Our weekly all-school Masses are also a source of strength for our students and school. We also work to share our faith and encourage evangelization in all we say and do. **We are truly working to live out our school mission of “following the mission of Christ, where we learn our faith, live our faith, and prepare for the future.”**

Some areas of weakness or possible threats we see are a knowledge and understanding of Church history as well as religious practices in the grades K-5, as shown in the weak scores on the ACRE test. We want to work to balance and align our curriculum in all grade levels to provide instruction in those areas. We also are concerned about declining family attendance at Sunday Mass.

We see some opportunities that we would like to work to take advantage of to strengthen our Catholic Identity at St. Joseph School. We know that next year we will start using a new version of the ACRE test, and want to use this opportunity to make sure that our curriculum is aligned to NCEA and CDOP standards. We are glad for the opportunity of having a parochial vicar here, which is not something that all parish schools are able to have. The number of our deacons and their willingness to be involved in the school is also a strength of St. Joseph’s that we would like to use more often. We also want to expand on opportunities provided through the support of our parish, including becoming more involved with parish wide organizations such as RCIA, Respect Life, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

**Academics**: St. Joseph Catholic School is a Pre-K through Eighth grade school. Our Kindergarten through Eighth grade students are offered all core subjects with instructional objectives that meet or most often exceed state and national standards. Our school standard is reflected in our test scores rising above the national average by twenty to twenty-nine points on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

We enrich our students within Religion, Spanish, Technology, Music, and Physical Education classes. Bi-yearly we offer two-whole school musical/theatrical performances.

Our staff continues to develop through conferences, classes, books and in-services to provide quality instructional methods and techniques. We continually evaluate and improve our curriculum with research-based and best practice methods. We assess our results using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Measures of Academic Progress Assessment (MAP) tests. We are in the process of aligning our core curriculum to the Common Core Standards.

Based on analysis of ITBS test results over the past three years, math is an area that will be improved upon. We are not consistently performing at our school standard. Our median average is eight over the national average unlike the twenty to twenty-nine points over the national average in the other subject areas. We have performed in a range from negative thirteen points below the national average to our usual twenty-eight points above the national average. The specific math topic of weakness over all grade levels is computations, and a whole school goal with action steps has been developed. Adjusted instruction will begin, and we will monitor progress through ITBS test results.

**Enrollment**: Even with the economic and demographic challenges within our community (below average incomes, zero population growth rates, and decreasing infant baptism rates), St. Joseph’s School has been able to retain a relatively flat student body enrollment rate over the last 5 years for K-8th grades. The peak enrollment was 207 in 2011-12, while the enrollment has now dropped to a low of 189 in the current school year. St. Joseph’s also provides Pre-K for 3 & 4 year olds (on a half-day basis, 2 sessions per day) to over 60 students. These Pre-K classes were recently integrated into the current building resulting in increased space constraints for the aging facility.

Parish families (especially within Pekin) are the primary source for student enrollment. However, parish demographics indicate a declining trend in infant baptisms and overall CCD enrollment over the last 3 years, which highlights the challenges for future growth and retention. Challenges to increasing enrollment at the entry point level have become a concern since the current K grade has 16 students (lowest enrollment over the last 5 years) and this is also the 1st year that the school has offered only 1 classroom for grade K. While all other grades continue to have 1 classroom per grade, class sizes remain at or near capacity for most classes with the exception of 7th and 8th grades, which highlights the greatest challenge for retaining students after 6th grade.

**Marketing**:

St. Joseph’s does not have a “formal” Marketing plan or structure. The primary marketing efforts consist of church bulletin announcements and “word of mouth” advertising. With this Faith in Our Future initiative, a more formal Marketing approach will be developed. It is expected that the initial Marketing efforts will be derived by “tapping” parish talent or by investigating the opportunity to use professional marketing services pro bono.

**Development**:

As with Marketing, St. Joseph’s does not have a “formal” Development plan or structure. Over the last years, various school sub-committees have conducted fund raising events to offset tuition costs with varying degrees of success. Other than tuitions, the primary funding for the school comes from the parish (see Finance subsidizing comments below). Therefore, basically the same people are subsidizing the school via parish collections and / or via special school fund raising events. A more sustainable source for additional revenue is required and should be integrated / coordinated with the overall parish development plans.

**Facilities**: The school was built in 1953 and overall has been well maintained in housing grades K through 8 throughout most of those 60+ years. . It should also be noted that the school facility is used for various parish activities in addition to traditional school activities. Even with the ongoing maintenance, the building does require immediate attention to the roof, security related upgrades, and other general maintenance, such as plumbing. While more extensive maintenance to the exterior windows and gym floor are needed in the near future, a central air conditioning system to replace the existing window units would be most welcome to improve the classroom environment. A state of the art sound system will be installed in the gymnasium in April 2014, for athletic events and other extracurricular activities.

**Finances**: We need approximately $1,500,000 a year to continue school operations. An average of the last two years shows the school provides about 57% of this cost. The school foundation managed through the Diocese has approximately $700,000. The interest from that foundation is sent to the school on a quarterly basis to help with expenses. Historically the parish has been supportive of the school. The school building, while well-maintained, is an aging facility. There is a need to be proactive in creating a five year plan for ongoing building maintenance. Areas of concern moving forward are; declining birthrate, unemployment rate higher than state and national averages, high number of single parent households, and average household income almost 20% below national average

**Catholic Identity**

*At this point in the process, strategic planning begins to produce lots of ideas and possible action steps. Often the scope of this activity can be managed by delegating different topics to different committees.*

*Each topic area (Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Enrollment Management, etc.) of the strategic plan will have one or more goals. Goals are a clear statement of the mission, specifying the accomplishments to be achieved if the mission of the school is to be realized. Goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound). For example, a goal might state: “By 2016, the enrollment in the school will increase by 10 percent.” Action steps are even clearer statements of the specific activities required to achieve the goals, starting from the current status and moving toward the preferred future.*

*Complete the following table(s). Add more goals if needed.*

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| **Goal #1:**  By 2019, 5th and 8th graders at St. Joseph School tested using the ACRE assessment will show a class average of 85% or higher in all eight domains tested. | | | | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | | **Timeframe** | | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Focus on content areas of Church History and Prayer and Religious Practices, specifically in Grades K-5 by supplementing our current text book series with additional curriculum. | | 2014-2019 | | classroom teachers | | Fall 2016 | none | none |
| Provide spiritual development for the staff- retreats, spiritual direction, prayer circle, etc. | | 2014-2019 | | all staff | | Yearly | $300.00 | Professional Development (School Budget) |
| Do a crosswalk of religion curriculum at all grade levels and align to NCEA and Diocesan standards. | | 2014 | | classroom teachers | | Fall 2014 | none | none |
| Ensure that all staff that teaches religion has completed their religion Certification by 2019. | | 2014-2019 | | principal, classroom teachers | | 2019 | $300.00 per class | Professional Development (School Budget) |
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**Academic Excellence**

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| **Goal #1:**  By 2019, St. Joseph School class averages will show a 3% yearly growth in math computation at all grade levels of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, using the 2012-13 results as a baseline. | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Track data by following individual classes of students as well as looking at grade level trends. | Fall 2014-Spring 2019 | Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Administration | Spring 2019 | $0.00 | None |
| Ensure that teaching methods are aligned to Common Core, matching the revised version of the ITBS tests through curriculum mapping. | Fall 2014-Spring 2016 | Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Administration | Spring 2016 | $1,000 | School Budget |
| Use MAP testing as benchmarks to gauge growth in Math understanding for individual students as well as class averages. | Fall 2014-Spring 2019 | Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Administration | Spring 2019 | $3,000 | School Budget |
| Each class will focus on Math computation a minimum of 5% of required instructional time per week. | Fall 2014-Spring 2019 | Classroom Teachers | Spring 2019 | $0.00 | None |
| School will provide resources and support to parents to assist in the math practices at home. | Fall 2014-Spring 2019 | Classroom Teachers and Parents | Spring 2019 | $0.00 | None |

**Enrollment Management (Student Recruitment & Retention)**

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| **Goal #1: Increase enrollment:** Over the next 5 years, SJS will strive to maintain or increase the school enrollment where possible to achieve max capacity (25-30 students) per class, in grades K-8. | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Develop an Enrollment management team to work with and provide input to the Marketing team. **Note: It is highly recommended by the Diocesan Faith in Our Future leadership that one person be assigned responsibility for enrollment management.** | 3-6 months | Pastor, Principal, EDUCATION COMMISSION | Nov 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Develop / finalize a “fact sheet” regarding St. Joseph’s school accomplishments (academic, religious, and social) to serve as a foundation for finalizing and communicating the Value Propositions in attending St. Joseph’s. | 3-6 months | Enrollment team | Summer - Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Develop and maintain an Enrollment data base to further analyze SWOT and benefits of St. Joseph. | 3 - 6 months | Enrollment team | Nov 2014 and ongoing | N/A | N/A |
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| **Goal #2: Improve retention:** Over the next 5 years, SJS will strive to improve the retention rate by 50%, from an average decrease of 8 per year to 4 per year (assumed primarily to occur between 6th and 7th grades). *Note: this implies a net change of zero for all other classes.* | | | | | |
| **Action Steps**  ***(in addition to steps above)*** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Establish standard process and documents to assess the reasons for exiting St. Joseph’s school (e.g. “exit surveys”) at all grade levels, includes collecting historical data for future analysis. | 1 -2 months | Principal, and EDUCATION COMMISSION | Oct 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| **Develop plan and potential “incentives” (non-financial) to off-set the attrition occurring, with a primary focus in Grades 6th to 7th.** | 3-6 months | Principal and EDUCATION COMMISSION | Feb 2015 | N/A | N/A |
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**Marketing**

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| **Goal #1:** Develop and execute a Marketing Plan with corresponding oversight to support the St. Joseph’s enrollment increase over the next 5 years. | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Establish a Marketing structure for St. Joseph’s school**. Note: It is recommended by the Diocesan Faith in Our Future Leadership team that a professional marketing consultant be obtained (pro bono, if possible) to assist in the Marketing plan design and implementation.** | 2 - 4 months | Pastor, principal and Education Commission | Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Working with the Enrollment team, finalize the Value Prop Statements and Marketing messages. | 2 – 3 months | Enrollment & Marketing Teams | Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Establish “target” parents, grandparents, and God-parents of potential student candidate groups for communicating Value Prop and marketing messages, (e.g. infant baptisms, Pre-K 3 & 4, CCD, etc.) | 2 – 3 months | Marketing Team | Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Establish and launch marketing media plan for communicating Value Prop and marketing information, (e.g. internet website, search engines, social networks, Catholic Post, local news media, Chamber of Commerce, etc.). This is in addition to the current use of the Sunday bulletins. | 3 – 4 months | Marketing Team | Spring 2015 | N/A | N/A |
| Continue to refine and upgrade the Marketing plan. | Ongoing | Marketing Team | Ongoing | N/A | N/A |
| Seek “testimonials” from alumni to be published. | 3 - 6 months | Enrollment team | Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
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**Development**

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| **Goal #1:** Establish and initiate a Development Plan with corresponding oversight to provide incremental financial resources required to maintain and enhance St. Joseph’s School where possible, over the next 5 years. | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Establish a Development Planning structure for St. Joseph’s school to be integrated with parish Development plans. | 3 - 5 months | Pastor, principal, Education Commission, parish Finance Committee | Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Establish an alumni data base to target alumni for future one-time-only and ongoing financial support. | 2 – 3 months | Development Team | Fall 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Work with parish Finance Planning committee to establish ad-hoc fund raising events for specific capital investments, e.g. replacing windows. Also coordinate a potential financial “appeal” program with the parish. | 3 – 6 months | Development Team and parish Finance Committee | Dec. 2014 | N/A | N/A |
| Continue to develop alternative fund raising events to offset tuition costs. | Ongoing | Development Team | Ongoing | N/A | N/A |
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**Facilities**

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| **Goal #1: In 2014 complete general maintenance repairs and safety upgrades to building.** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Sound system for gymnasium. | April 2014 | Outside contractor | 4-1-2014 | $ 0 |  |
| Roof repairs. | 6/14 – 8/14 2014 | Custodial staff | 8-16-2014 | $1000 | School budget |
| Metal gate installed on main floor for security | 6/14 – 8/14  2014 | Outside contractor | 8-16-14 | $750 | School budget |
| Plumbing general maintenance | 6/14 -8/14  2014 | Outside contractor | 8-16-14 | $1500 | School budget |
| Replace ceiling tiles and paint | 6/14 – 8/14 | Custodial staff | 8-16-14 | $750 | School budget |
| Power wash exterior window trim | 6/14 – 8/14 | Outside contractor | 8-16-14 | $500 | School budget |

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| Goal #2: In 2016 install new windows. | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Install new windows | 2015 - 19 | Outside contractor | 2019 | $250,000 | ? TBD |
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**Finances**

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| **Goal #1: By 2019, the school budget will be 62% school funded and 38% parish funded. (Currently, 57% and 43% respectively.)** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Increase tuition rate for the first child by no less than the percentage increase in expenses, in the projected budget. | Annual | Principal, Pastor, Education Commission | On-going | 0 | NA |
| Decrease the tuition discount given to the second child so that the second child rate is no less than 47% of the first child. | Annual | Principal, Pastor, Education Commission | June, 2019 | 0 | NA |
| Decrease the tuition discount given to the third child so that the third child rate is no less than 47% of the first child. | Annual | Principal, Pastor, Education Commission | June, 2019 | 0 | NA |
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| **Goal #2: Create an on-going five year financial plan.** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Use information obtained from Faith In Our Future project to develop a more precise annual budget. | December, 2014 | Principal, Pastor, Education Commission | December, 2014 | 0 | NA |
| Annually review and prioritize the goals from Faith In Our Future to guide the budget process. | Annual | Principal, Pastor, Education Commission | On-going | 0 | NA |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**CORE TEAM MEMBERS**

