**Catholic Identity**

**Catholic Identity (SWOT)**:

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.

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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 | **Complete** | 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) |

JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:

**St. Joseph School has aligned our religious and prayer curriculums. Each classroom teacher continues to teach and model our faith every day. Each grade level introduces, practices, and reviews the teaching/learning key Catholic biblical texts, practices and prayers. See the continuum below.**

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| Kindergarten | 1st Grade | 2nd Grade | 3rd Grade | 4th Grade | 5th Grade | 6th Grade | 7th – 8th Grade |
| Sign of the Cross  Grace before Meal  Hail Mary (Recite)  Glory Be  Lord’s Prayer (Recite)  Stations of the Cross | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Stations of the Cross | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Apostles’ Creed  Praise Prayer  Stations of the Cross | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Apostles’ Creed  Praise Prayer  Stations of the Cross | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Apostles’ Creed  Praise Prayer  Stations of the Cross | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Apostles’ Creed  Praise Prayer  Stations of the Cross  Pray to Holy Spirit  Act of Love  Act of Faith  Act of Hope  Memorare | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Apostles’ Creed  Praise Prayer  Stations of the Cross  Pray to Holy Spirit  Act of Love  Act of Faith  Act of Hope  Memorare | Spontaneous Prayer  Sign of the Cross  Lord’s Prayer  Hail Mary  Glory Be  Angel of God  Meal Prayers  Morning Prayer  Evening Prayer  Rosary  Apostles’ Creed  Praise Prayer  Stations of the Cross  Pray to Holy Spirit  Act of Love  Act of Faith  Act of Hope  Memorare |

**Academic Excellence**

**Academics (SWOT)**: 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.

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| **Goal #1:**  **By 2018, 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.** | | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** | **Completed Date** |
| Track data by following individual classes of students as well as looking at grade level trends. | **Fall 2015-Spring 2018** | Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Administration | Spring **2018** | $0.00 | None | On-going |
| Ensure that best teaching methods are aligned to **match the revised version of the ITBS tests through curriculum mapping.** | Fall **2015**-Spring 2016 | Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Administration | Spring 2016 | $1,000 | School Budget | On-going |
| Use MAP testing as benchmarks to gauge growth in Math understanding for individual students as well as class averages. | **Fall 2015-Spring 2018** | Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Administration | Spring **2018** | $3,000 | School Budget | On-going |
| Each class will focus on Math computation a minimum of 5% of required instructional time per week. | Fall **2015**-Spring **2018** | Classroom Teachers | Spring **2018** | $0.00 | None | On-going |

**JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:**

**As planned, teachers reviewed the second set of ITBS test scores to evaluate our results. As we evaluated at our benchmark grades (3, 5, and 7), we noticed our 3rd and 7th grade math computation scores were above the Diocesan and National average. Our 5th grade was significantly below the Diocesan and National average. For the 2015-2016 school year, each teacher has implemented “Mathletics” to help students who are either struggling or to facilitate acceleration. They have also added to their curriculum timed fact tests and “problems of the day” to practice accuracy, problem solving skills and fact skills.**

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

**Enrollment (SWOT)**:

**Economic and demographic challenges have impacted enrollment at St. Joseph School in recent years. The peak enrollment was 207 in 2011-12; however enrollment has now dropped to a low of 147 in the current school year. St. Joseph’s also provides Pre-K for 3 and 4 year olds on a half day basis to over 40 students. The Pre-K classes were recently integrated into the current building enabling them to become more involved in school activities as well as being a part of the school environment but also 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 decline in infant baptisms and overall CCD enrollment over the last three years, which highlights the challenges for future growth and retention. Challenges to increase enrollment at the entry point level have become a concern since the current K grade has only eight students (lowest enrollment over the last five years). Retaining students after 6th grade is an additional challenge as some students exit to attend the public junior high schools.**

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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 | Complete | 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 | **Complete - Fall 2015** | 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 | **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 | **SPRING - 2016** | 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 | **ONGOING** | N/A | N/A |
| **Develop and implement an internal marketing plan** | **6 months** | **Principal, Teachers, and Parent Ambassadors** | **ONGOING** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

**JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:**

**For 2015-2016 school year St. Joseph School has again experienced a decline in overall enrollment and another exceptionally small kindergarten class despite a tuition freeze. Recognizing that marketing efforts by a few individuals is insufficient, a marketing/enrollment management committee composed of faculty, parent volunteers, and education commission members was formed at the beginning of the school year. This committee is in the process of developing and implementing a formal marketing plan. Also, there is an ongoing effort by the principal and faculty to involve preschool students in school activities with the intent of those students continuing into SJS kindergarten.**

**Marketing**

**Marketing (SWOT)**:

**St. Joseph School is in the process of developing a formal structured marketing plan. As a result of the Faith in Our Future initiative, St. Joseph’s created an Education Commission Sub-Committee which will identify, direct and oversee the Marketing objectives. Several specific marketing efforts have been implemented to target the Pre-K and K age groups and St. Joseph School is no longer relying entirely on church bulletin announcements and “word of mouth” advertising. A targeted and streamlined marketing plan that supports the school’s developmental and enrollment objectives will be developed and be ready for launch in Summer 2016.**

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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 | **SUMMER 2016** | N/A | N/A |
| Working with the Enrollment team, finalize the Value Prop Statements and Marketing messages. | 2 – 3 months | Enrollment & Marketing Teams | **Complete FALL 2015** | 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 | **Complete SPRING 2015** | 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 | **Summer 2015** | N/A | N/A |
| Continue to refine and upgrade the Marketing plan. | Ongoing | Marketing Team | Ongoing | **$1,000** | N/A |
| Seek “testimonials” from alumni to be published. | 3 - 6 months | Enrollment team | **Ongoing** | N/A | N/A |

**JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:**

**After years of passive school marketing, i.e. “word of mouth” advertising and announcements in the church bulletin, several steps were taken to market the school to parishioners and to the general public. The following are activities faculty, staff, education commission members, and volunteers participated in to formalize marketing at St. Joseph School:**

* **St. Joseph School participated in a pilot project with the diocese and Converse Marketing.**
* **Postcards developed by Converse Marketing were mailed to parents of preschool children and CCD students to increase awareness of what SJS has to offer.**
* **Preschool hosted a “Bring a Buddy” day in which a current SJS preschool student was encouraged to bring another preschool age friend to the preschool to promote the school.**
* **Preschool age children and their parents were invited to a kindergarten open house.**
* **Parishioners were invited to attend an open house during Catholic Schools Week.**
* **A Marketing/Enrollment Management Committee was formed composed of faculty, education commission members, and parent volunteers.**
* **A value proposition was formalized and will be incorporated into the marketing plan.**
* **SJS hosted an informational booth/activities for younger children at the local “Night Out Against Crime” to advertise the school to the general public.**
* **St. Joseph School alums and their achievements are recognized by brief biographies in the church bulletin.**
* **The SJS informational brochure was updated.**
* **The principal established a Parent Ambassadors group.**
* **Family testimonials emphasizing the advantages of attending St. Joseph School have been included in the church bulletin.**

**Development**

**Development (SWOT)**:

As with Marketing, St. Joseph’s has created an Education Sub-Committee to address the school’s development needs. Over the last years, various school sub-committees have conducted fundraising 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, the same people are subsidizing the school via parish collections and / or via special school fundraising events. With that in mind, **St. Joseph’s has made a concerted effort to consolidate its annual “parish-wide” fundraising and community building events**.

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| **Goal #1: Establish and initiate a Development Plan for St. Joseph’s parish, which includes but is not limited to financial development activities.** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Establish an alumni data base to target alumni for future one-time-only and ongoing financial support. | 6 – 8 months | **School Staff Members and parents (Volunteers)** | **Setup Complete with ONGOING Maintenance** | N/A | N/A |
| **Continue current fundraising events with special focus on the Spring Festival.** | **Ongoing** | **Parish Volunteers** | **Ongoing** | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **Begin to establish a “general” understanding of DEVELOPMENT for various parish leaders and leadership councils to determine which primary organization is appropriate for parish-wide DEVELOPMENT efforts.** | **6 months** | **Pastor, principal, Parish Council, Education Commission, and Finance Committee** | **Completed Sept 2015 – Jan 2016** | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **Establish / educate a “core” Development team for future planning and implementation.** | **2-4 months** | **Development Team** | **Spring 2016** | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **Work with various leadership councils, parishioners, etc. to gather information and understand “current” status of St. Joseph’s parish, relative to characteristics of DEVELOPMENT.** | **3 – 6 months** | **Development Team** | **End-May 2016** | **N/A** | **N/A** |
| **Prepare proposal for parish leadership as to approach to address DEVELOPMENT.** | **2-4 months** | **Development Team** | **Fall 2016** | **N/A** | **N/A** |

**JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:**

**St. Joseph’s has made a concerted effort to consolidate its annual “parish-wide” fundraising and community building events (e.g. annual bazaar, carnivals, golf outings, etc.) by establishing the St. Joseph’s Festival. In February - April 2015, St. Joseph’s parish held its inaugural Parish Spring Festival. This event was developed to create a cohesive fundraising event that would unite current parishioners, streamline fundraising opportunities, and increase awareness of the St. Joseph community (i.e. Church and School).**

**Weekly Parish Bulletin announcements continue to be a primary ongoing source for appeals, including:**

* **appeal for local school scholarship contributions**
* **appeal for donations related to 401K Minimum Requirement Distributions (MRD).**

**An alumni database has been developed and continues to be maintained for future communication, marketing, and potential solicitation opportunities.**

**During the Fall of 2015, parish representatives attended diocesan sponsored conferences and webinars to better understand the concepts of DEVELOPMENT. In December and January, presentations were made to various parish leaders and leadership councils to begin and initiative to address DEVELOPMENT, from a parish-wide perspective.**

**Facilities**

**Facilities (SWOT)**: 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.

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| **Goal #1: In 2016 complete general maintenance repairs and safety upgrades to building.** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Roof repairs | **2016** | **Finance council** | **Ongoing** | **$1000** | School budget |
| Plumbing general maintenance | **Ongoing** | Outside contractor | **Ongoing** | $1500 | School budget |
| Power wash exterior window trim | **6/16 – 8/16** | Outside contractor | Summer **2016** | $**1000** | School budget |

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| **Goal #2: In 2017 begin capital improvements** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| Install new windows | **2017 - 21** | Outside contractor | **2021** | $250,000 | ? TBD |
| **Roof replacement** | **2017** | **Outside contractor** | **2017** | **$70,000** | **? TBD** |
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**JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:**

**Although many of the planned general maintenance repairs were completed during 2015, some items were only partially completed, while others were postponed due to budget constraints. Focus is to maintain a safe learning environment at all times.**

**Due to low enrollment and budget issues any capital improvements are being delayed until such time parish/school feel a capital campaign would be supported by its families.**

**Finances**

**Finances (SWOT)**: We need approximately $1,500,000 a year to continue school operations. An average of the last two years shows the school provides about 55% 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 and improvements. 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 in Pekin.

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| **Goal #1: Maintain a school budget that is 55% school funded and 45% parish funded.** | | | | | |
| **Action Steps** | **Timeframe** | **Person(s) or Group Responsible** | **Projected Completion Date** | **Estimated Cost** | **Funding Source** |
| **Maintain school budget each year to ensure 55/45 funding** | **Annual** | **Principal, Pastor, Education Commission** | **On-going** | **0** | **NA** |
| **Tuition increases will take into account 55/45 split and financial issues our community.** | **Annual** | **Principal, Pastor, Education Commission** | **On-going** | **0** | **NA** |
| **Tuition rates for non-Catholic families will be decreased. Beginning in 2016-17 school year tuition will be $500 higher than that for Catholic families with one and two students.** | **Annual** | **Principal, Pastor, Education Commission** | **On-going** | **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. | Ongoing | Principal, Pastor, Education Commission | **On-going** | 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 |
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**JANUARY 2016 UPDATE:**

**Tuition rates were frozen for 2015-16 school year in response to unexpected decline in enrollment due to tuition increase for 2014-15 school year. Tuition rates for 2016-17 school year have been proposed to parish finance council to increase by 3%. Also proposed two rate levels for Catholic families: $3,300 one student family and $4,250 two+ students. Tuition rates for non-Catholic families will be $500 higher per level than that for Catholic families. This change is being made so that our tuition rates will be competitive with the other private Christian schools in Pekin. At this time scholarships from the parish will only be given to Catholic families.**

**5-year plan revisions to finance and facility SWOT are adjusted in response to other areas of the Faith in Our Future SWOT. Our focus is to be fiscally responsible to ensure our school maintains its academic excellence in order to attract new families and keep current families until graduation from 8th grade.**