



ST. MONICA CATHOLIC SCHOOL 2019-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Planning Committee

Pastor: Todd Goodson

Principal: Eric Schommer

2018-2019 School Commission Members (Benchmark Assessment; Review and Development)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

St. Monica School's strategic plan occurred in response to the request of the Indianapolis Archdiocese. Per the Archdiocese, this plan focuses on meeting the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, detailed here: <https://www.catholicschoolstandards.org>. The plan will keep future planning vibrant and encourage forward thinking. Stakeholders will annually review the strategic plan and revise accordingly.

St. Monica School aims to provide quality education evidenced by meeting National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools; the standards describe policies, programs, structures, and processes that should be present in mission-driven, program-effective, well-managed, and responsibly-governed Catholic Schools. The standards address four domains: (1) Mission and Catholic Identity; (2) Governance and Leadership; (3) Academic Excellence; and (4) Operational Vitality.

The benchmarks provide observable, measurable descriptors for each standard. The benchmarks also provide a solid basis for future development of more detailed self-assessment and diagnostic instruments, data collection and reporting structures, and accreditation tools, as appropriate at the local, diocesan, regional, and national levels.

The Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of members of the 2018-2019 School Commission, conducted an in-depth review of how St. Monica School implements the standards. The review resulted in the identification of 22 benchmarks that did not fully meet the established quality benchmark of level 3 or above. A summary of the standards and corresponding benchmarks that did not meet level 3 are listed below.

1. Mission and Catholic Identity

- Benchmark 1.3
- Benchmark 1.5
- Benchmark 2.3
- Benchmark 2.7
- Benchmark 3.4
- Benchmark 4.3
- Benchmark 4.4
- Benchmark 4.5

2. Governance and Leadership

- Benchmark 5.1
- Benchmark 5.2
- Benchmark 5.6
- Benchmark 6.4
- Benchmark 6.6

3. Academic Excellence

- Benchmark 7.5
- Benchmark 7.6
- Benchmark 8.2
- Benchmark 9.1

4. Operational Vitality

- Benchmark 10.5
- Benchmark 10.6
- Benchmark 12.2
- Benchmark 13.1
- Benchmark 13.3

After review and discussion of all benchmarks that were identified as not meeting a level 3, the following benchmarks were identified as important for the continued growth and strengthening of the school. The Strategic Planning Committee developed the following action plans for the benchmarks in each area.

MISSION

As a diverse community, St. Monica School will provide the best Catholic education in a disciplined and caring environment, teaching students to invest in lifelong learning and service and inspiring spiritual growth as signs of God's love.

VISION

It is the vision of St. Monica School to aid students in the development of values, academics, self-discipline, and spiritual growth, in order that they might serve as visible signs of God's love.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

All instructional programs meet the requirements of the State of Indiana regarding curriculum, instructional hours, and personnel. Beyond the requirements for accreditation, we meet the needs of the individual student within a Catholic environment and value system. Our primary reason for existence is to provide a sound Catholic education. Emphasis is placed on the instruction of religion, prayer, and worship as well as academic excellence. Grades 1 through 8 attend Mass with their class every other week, while the entire school celebrates Mass together weekly. St. Monica School values diversity and will strive to reach all families where they are—culturally and linguistically—by communicating in the home language of each family when possible.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN SUMMARY AND GOALS

1. Mission and Catholic Identity

The Church's teaching mission includes inviting young people to a relationship with Jesus Christ or deepening an existing relationship with Jesus, inserting young people into the life of the Church, and assisting young people to see and understand the role of faith in one's daily life and in the larger society.

Standard 2: An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.

Benchmark 2.3: Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.

Benchmark 2.7: The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.

Mission and Catholic Identity Goals:

- a. **Improve faculty capabilities and confidence to achieve 75% of faculty members confident in their ability to effectively incorporate Catholic social teachings in their classes.**
- b. **Incorporate pastors, deacons, and members of religious communities into classrooms to assist with instruction as well as be a regular, monthly presence at the school.**

In order to meet these goals, St. Monica School will:

- Provide quarterly staff education that includes instruction on Catholic social teaching and catechism, strategies to incorporate Catholic social teachings in classroom, and tools for assessment of effectiveness of the strategy. It is recommended that one staff education session each year be led by a member of a religious community.
- Reassess faculty confidence using the "Catholic Social Teachings and Social Justice" survey developed by the School Improvement Plan Group #3.
- Ensure that faculty and staff incorporate activities at least monthly, if not weekly, to engage parents in assisting with faith formation of their children. This will incorporate bilingual instructional tools when possible (e.g., worksheets, pamphlets, answers to common questions, etc.) for families to use at home. The material will align with grade and class activities and will be in addition to any school wide religious instructional material, such as the Monthly Virtues.
- Request that pastors, deacons, or other individuals in religious life attend a course in each grade monthly. It is recommended that an individual with a religious vocation be incorporated in both religious instruction and non-religious instruction activities in each grade throughout the year.

2. Governance and Leadership

Central to the mission of the Church is the work of Catholic School education. The success of this mission depends on the key components of effective governance, which provides direction or authority, and leadership, which ensures effective operations. Catholic school governance and leadership can be seen as a ministry that promotes and protects the responsibilities and rights of the school community.

Standard 5: An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

Benchmark 5.6: Governing body engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.

Governance and Leadership Goals:

- a. **Update School Commission bylaws to include a comprehensive onboarding process for new School Commission members by existing School Commission members; to be approved by the principal and pastor.**

In order to meet this goal, St. Monica School will:

- Mandate that all new (and current, if no past training) School Commission members attend one of the archdiocesan School Commission training meetings in fall 2019.
- Create a School Commission sub-committee to draft updated bylaws and develop a proposal for new member onboarding process (using resources such as school website and link to Office of Catholic Education).

- b. **Conduct bi-annual self-evaluation of the School Commission's performance with respect to the adherence of the responsibilities set forth in the bylaws.**

In order to meet this goal, St. Monica School will:

- Via newly created sub-committee for onboarding, create a short internal evaluation rubric for School Commission members to use.
- Ensure a fall and spring School Commission agenda item for self-evaluation.

3. Academic Excellence

We must provide young people with an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program of education. The essential elements of “an academically rigorous and doctrinally sound program” mandate curricular experiences—including co-curricular activities—which are rigorous, relevant, research-based, and infused with Catholic faith and traditions.

Standard 7: An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills, and Gospel values, implemented through effective instructions.

Benchmark 7.5: Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind.

Academic Excellence Goals:

- a. Improve classroom relationships between teachers, administrators, families, and students such that 75% of each group rate communication and positive interactions as a 4 or greater on a 5-point Likert Scale (i.e., 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree) in reference to relationships with another one of other named entities (i.e., teachers to families; families to teachers; teachers to students; students to teachers; etc.).

In order to meet this goal, St. Monica School will:

- Results from ongoing assessment strategies and surveys that capture the needs of St. Monica School families will be used to improve instruction.
- Build communication with parents in multiple ways such as face to face, phone calls, email, physical notices, and text messages.
- Incorporate programs that develop relationship building, understanding of virtues, and mindfulness into all grade levels regularly.

Standard 9: An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

Benchmark 7.6: Classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student, and accommodating students with special needs as fully as possible.

Benchmark 9.1: School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents/guardians to enhance the educational experiences for the school community.

- b. Create parent involvement strategies that support student development.

In order to meet this goal, St. Monica School will:

- Via the principal, oversee creation and implementation of a parent involvement plan to incorporate needs and support student development.
- Ensure improvement of parent/teacher meetings and develop teacher strategy for parent involvement.

4. Operational Vitality

Catholic schools must adopt and maintain standards for operational vitality in these areas and define the norms and expectations for fundamental procedures to support and ensure viability and sustainability. When a school does not maintain standards for operational vitality, the continuation of academic excellence is in grave jeopardy. Over time, even an academically rigorous school with strong Catholic identity will not survive without operational vitality. Standards for operational vitality must focus on the "operation" of the school—how it works and how it is supported—in four key areas: finances; human resources/personnel; facilities; and institutional advancement.

Standard 13: An excellent Catholic school enacts a comprehensive plan for institutional advancement based on a compelling mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.

Benchmark 13.1: The communications/marketing plan requires school leader/leadership team and staff person(s) to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences, and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.

Operational Vitality Goal:

St. Monica School will undertake the development of a comprehensive marketing plan to encompass enrollment, fundraising, communication both inside and outside of the school, and redesign of the school website to ensure institutional advancement in the short and long term. Plan to be developed during the 2019- 2020 school year, to be fully adopted for the 2020-2021 school year.

In order to meet this goal, St. Monica School will:

- Via School Commission executive committee, convene a marketing plan task force consisting of St. Monica School stakeholders—including but not limited to school parents, parish members, school/parish staff, and community members. Task force to be formed by September 1, 2019.
- Marketing task force will complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of St. Monica School by November 1, 2019. SWOT analysis should include feedback from various school families, parish families, school and parish leadership, leadership of school activities (i.e., PTO president, athletic director, extracurricular clubs, etc.) and the local community via online surveys and/or listening sessions. Utilizing the SWOT analysis, the marketing plan task force will recommend three main objectives for marketing plan development to School Commission at the December 2019 meeting. School Commission will provide feedback to the task force so that specific plans may be developed.
- The agreed-upon objectives of the marketing plan should then be used to develop specific, actionable, and measurable marketing tactics, budgets, and timelines. The marketing plan should be completed by April 2020, to be instituted before the 2020-2021 school year. The marketing plan should include planning and goals for enrollment, student/family participation rates in activities, website design, social media, and fundraising goals and activities.
- Website redesign to include titles of those who comprise the governing body, leadership team and stakeholders of St. Monica School (i.e., leadership structure and organizational chart of the church and school).
- The marketing plan should be reviewed by School Commission at least annually and assessed for achievement of SMART goals included for each objective and make any necessary revisions to plan. A review and edit of the SWOT analysis should be completed annually and the marketing task force should complete a full marketing review every three years. These changes will be based on enrollment, fundraising, changes in the SWOT analysis, or feedback from school/parish families and staff.