



Janice DeJulio '05



Mary of Nazareth School Strategic Plan **2020-2023**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Mary of Nazareth Board of Directors, I am very pleased to present our 2020-2023 Four-Year Strategic Plan.

This plan outlines five key areas of focus, or themes, for Mary of Nazareth over the next four years. Four of the focus areas come directly from the Archdiocese of Washington's 2009 Policies for Catholic Schools, while the fifth recognizes the role technology plays both within and outside of the classroom.

The five themes in this plan are Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Affordability and Accessibility, Technology, and Governance. Although the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan did not include Governance as one of our areas of focus, much has changed over the four years of the prior plan. The Board of Directors believes that recognizing Governance as an additional area of focus is important to ensure decisions, policies, and processes are transparent and executed within Mary of Nazareth's governance structure.

With these themes in mind, this Strategic Plan capitalizes on the successes we have already achieved under previous plans and helps define the objectives Mary of Nazareth hopes to accomplish over the next four years. We will continue to build on the foundation already established where Catholic identity and academic excellence form the core elements of our school. Although the economy has improved, we are committed to continuing our goal of ensuring Mary of Nazareth is affordable and accessible to our diverse community.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our former Board Chair, Karen Vassallo, for her tireless leadership and guidance in steering this effort. I also would like to thank our Principal, Michael Friel, the faculty and staff of the school, and the countless members of our extended Mary of Nazareth community for generously giving their time and effort to the formation of this plan. This was an inclusive effort bringing together pastors, parents, teachers, Board members, alumni, community leaders, and educators from the seven parishes. The diverse objectives and realistic projects and initiatives identified to support these objectives show the commitment of these individuals and the workgroups tasked with formulating the plan. This truly does show the dedication of this community and the value placed upon service to God and others.

As the Board of Directors and the Principal set forth to implement this plan, I would ask you to take a moment to review the plan. Please consider areas within this plan where you may use your time and talents to help us achieve the objectives within the plan. It is only through the mutual understanding and shared commitment of the Mary of Nazareth community that we will be able to achieve these goals.

Robert J. Antonetti, Jr.
Chair, Board of Directors
Mary of Nazareth Catholic School

PREFACE

On November 11, 2019, the Mary of Nazareth School Board of Directors (Board) approved the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, which identifies and frames opportunities for growth as well as proposing strategies for addressing critical challenges that may impact the school over the next four years. We are continuing the foundation we built with the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, including:

- Incorporating results from a community-wide anonymous survey into the objectives and initiatives for each of the five themes of this Strategic Plan (i.e., Catholic Identity, Academic Excellence, Affordability & Accessibility, Technology, and Governance).
- Developing a comprehensive environmental analysis to validate the themes and measure their influence on potential initiatives.
- Preparing an annual report outlining the progress made toward achievement of the objectives within each of the themes.

Many of the initiatives identified within the plan are budget neutral, while others have associated costs. We will need to consider costs in the context of our fiscal planning process and ensure prioritization within our existing operating resources.

Prior to the publication of this plan, the Principal and the Board directed staff to move ahead on some initiatives that were identified as potential projects during the strategic planning process, including:

- Replacing a significant portion of the sprinkler system
- Purchasing and installing stained glass windows representing the seven parishes in the chapel
- Erecting a permanent sign in the front of the school
- Caulking the entire Katie Fitzgerald Center

For additional information regarding Mary of Nazareth School (the School) and specific policies, please refer to the school's website: www.maryofnazareth.org.

Who We Are: Mission, Philosophy, and History

Mission

Mary of Nazareth School prepares children for lives of service to God and neighbor, through a rigorous academic program rooted in the faith and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church as professed in the Creed, celebrated in the sacraments, lived in Christian virtue and affirmed in prayer.

Philosophy

The School is a Christ-centered environment that nurtures each child through a partnership with parent, parish, and educator. Our students thrive in an environment of regular worship, daily prayer and reference to the Word of God, and devotion to Mary and to the Eucharist. We encourage our diverse and inclusive student body to seek knowledge through the teachings of the Catholic Church and to follow the example of Jesus in all aspects of life, particularly with love, respect, and service to others.

The Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) views the curriculum of the School from a Catholic perspective, with a central love for the wisdom that comes from the Holy Spirit. The faculty is aware that the manner in which we model our love of God and Church encourages our students in their own search for lasting faith. Families of our students and their individual parishes continue to foster a love for Christ and a respect for education. Parents are the primary educators; in partnership, teachers and parents strive for the overall success of each student.

The curriculum at the School is a challenging and rigorous implementation of the academic standards set forth by the Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools Office. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through the eighth grade, the students learn the faith through daily religion classes and through integration into the core academic areas of reading and language arts, math, science, and social studies. In addition to these foundational subjects, the students receive instruction in Spanish; weekly art, music, and computer classes; twice-weekly physical education classes; and scheduled time in the STREAM Lab.



The School also emphasizes and continues to implement small group instruction, especially for reading and language arts in grades K – 5 and in math in grades 4 – 8. These smaller class sizes afford both the students and the teachers the opportunity to delve more deeply into a subject area, address student questions and needs, challenge student thinking, and optimize student learning.

History

During his tenure as Archbishop of Washington, D.C., James Cardinal Hickey recognized a growing need for an elementary school to serve upper Montgomery County, Maryland. He envisioned not just a single parish school, but a regional school attended by children from numerous parishes. The pastors of the seven upper county parishes (Our Lady of the Visitation, Darnestown; St. Mary's, Barnesville; St. Paul's, Damascus; St. Rose of Lima, Gaithersburg; Mother Seton, Germantown; St. John Neumann, Gaithersburg; and Our Lady of the Presentation, Poolesville), unanimously agreed to form a regional school; the first Catholic elementary school in the Archdiocese in 30 years.

The School opened on August 29, 1994, in a converted barn on the old Boyer farm property. There were 87 students in grades K-3. Sr. Frances Stavallo, M.P.F, of the Religious Teachers Filippini was the first principal and led the school for eight

1994



years, supported by teachers from the Sisters of St. Frances of the Martyr St. George and lay teachers. Mr. Michael J. Friel, the current principal, was the first lay principal at the school beginning his tenure with the 2003-2004 school year.

The ADW completed the first phase of construction in August 1996. The building included classrooms for kindergarten through eighth grade, science and computer labs, a multipurpose room, kitchen, health room, teacher's lounge, and administrative offices. Modifications to an existing building provided space for the library, chapel, and before and after care program. The ADW completed the second phase of construction in spring 2004, providing more classrooms. The School purchased the Katie Fitzgerald Center

gymnasium in January 2012. The School uses this building for the physical education program during the school week and receives additional rental income throughout the year.

From its inception, parents and an active Home and School Association (HSA) supported the School. The School offers various academic clubs, such as National Junior Honor Society, Student Government, Lego Robotics, and Coding in addition to extracurricular activities, such as dances, Cotillion, and Band and a thriving sports program. Parents lead many of these after-school programs. They also organize annual fund-raising events, run family/community fun activities, support our field trips, and regularly volunteer in the classrooms.

Although the School has grown from its first days in the barn with 87 students and 8 teachers to its current enrollment of 476 students¹ supported by a professional staff of 54, we have remained true to Cardinal Hickey's vision so many years ago to create a vibrant and thriving regional Catholic School.

2020



GOAL — Catholic Identity

Mary of Nazareth will continue to offer an authentic and inclusive Catholic education that helps to instill life-long virtues in developing each child holistically. School leadership will develop initiatives to increase engagement between the seven sponsoring parishes and Mary of Nazareth and increase opportunities for community service within the School, the seven sponsoring parishes, and the community.

GOAL — Academic Excellence

To maintain and enhance an academic environment that provides teaching excellence as an integral component within the delivery of high-quality academic programs, supports the education of the whole child, and encourages the development of independent learning styles. To provide innovative and rigorous instructional methods that are supported by research-based best practices and balanced by the appropriate integration of technology, STREAM practices, instructional materials, and professional development to support the teachers.

Goal — Affordability and Accessibility

Continue to provide equal education opportunities for all students with a commitment to ensure Mary of Nazareth remains available, accessible, and affordable to all parents and students.

GOAL — Technology

Mary of Nazareth School will implement and support a technology program that enhances its mission and strategic objectives and will further integrate technology into the curriculum to provide a high-quality, safe, learning environment that allows all learners to achieve at their highest potential. Mary of Nazareth School will explore new ways to use technology effectively to engage parents, staff, students, alumni, and the wider community.

GOAL — Governance

To continue to strengthen Mary of Nazareth's Board of Limited Jurisdiction governance structure through the nomination and approval of a diverse and inclusive Board of Directors; the development and implementation of a robust strategic plan; a clear definition of roles, responsibilities, and accountability; the maintenance of fiscal stewardship; and expansion of transparent communications and outreach with parishes, community, and stakeholders.

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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH TODAY

In 2002, The Boston Globe's Spotlight investigative team revealed an extensive cover-up of sexual abuse by priests in the Archdiocese of Boston. These revelations and others have had an impact on the Catholic Church and Mass attendance. A Gallup poll in March 2019, found that 37 percent of US Catholics are considering leaving the church because of the scandal; an increase from 2002 when 22 percent of US Catholics said they were considering leaving.² Since 2010, the adult Catholic population has declined by 0.9 percent (511,558).³ The share of US adults who identify as Catholic declined from 25.2 percent in 2010 to 23.5 percent in 2016.⁴

While the scandal made headlines, the US Catholic Church also has dealt with a shortage of priests, lack of religion among young people, societal issues, and declining trust. Retaining Catholics when they reach adulthood has become a significant issue. Prior to 1994, 8 in 10 people raised Catholic as children remained Catholic as adults. As of 2016, the rate declined to 63 percent or 6 out of 10. Even more distressing is the decline of retention rates among Hispanics from 77 percent to 69 percent.⁵

Globally, however, the Catholic Church continues to grow with US Catholics representing only 6 percent worldwide. The Catholic Church is growing in Africa and the Americas, plus an additional 2 million Catholics in Asia.⁶

The State of Catholic Education

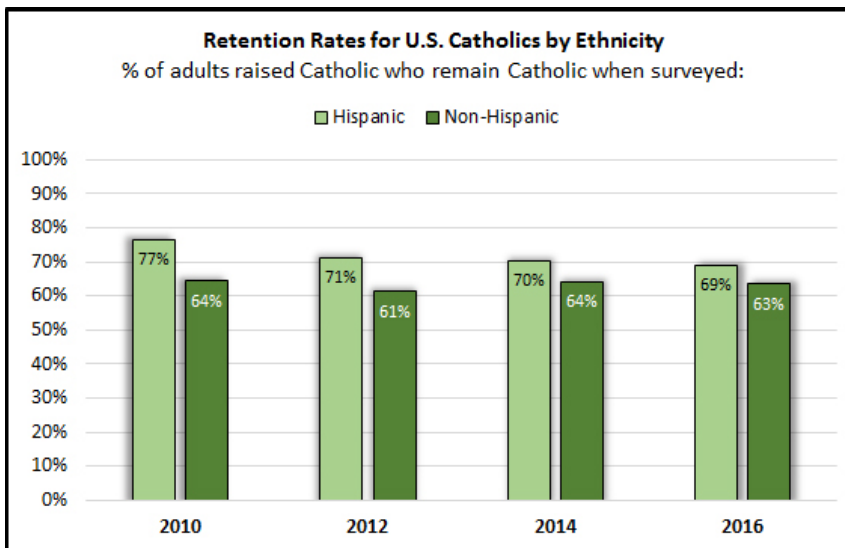
In the years between 2009 and 2018; 1,287 Catholic schools closed and 258 opened. The majority of the school closures were in urban areas.⁷ There are several baseline reasons for this decline, including changing social norms, charter schools, the current scandal, and the economy; however, other reasons are more complex. Historically, Catholic schools provided a private education to middle- and working-class children in an urban environment. As middle- and working-class families moved from the inner city to the suburbs, where the school systems were better, they no longer felt they needed to pay for a Catholic school for their children to receive a good education. Since

**What Could Affect Us?
Current Environmental Issues
In developing the 2020-2023
Strategic Plan, the Board
considered many factors
that influence our ability to
achieve the School's mission.
Based on parent and faculty
survey responses, School
community input, and Board
discussion, several external
environment factors are key
for the next four years.**



Catholic schools rely on donations and tuition to cover their costs, a drop in student enrollment in urban Catholic schools led to necessary tuition increases. Increased tuition often priced out low- and moderate-income families, which then led to lower enrollment and school closures, in some cases.

Initially, Catholic education was affordable and accessible to many families because of the commitment of dedicated nuns, brothers, and priests. Over the years, however, there has been a steady decline in vocations devoted specifically to education. According to the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), between 1970 and 2015, the Jesuit order decreased by 70 percent (7,628 to 2,325) and the Brothers of Christian Schools decreased from 2,212 to 589.⁸ The decline in sisters and nuns is more dramatic—160,931 in 1970 to 48,546 in 2015.⁹ This reduction in vocations means fewer priests and nuns are available to teach in Catholic schools, leaving schools to hire lay teachers at significantly higher pay rates. The increased administrative costs translate into higher tuition and fees.



In January 2018, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Catholic Education convened a meeting to discuss transforming Catholic schools. The bishops focused on four trends during the meeting, including changing relationships of Church and school leadership; changing governance structure; access through choice; and charter schools.¹⁰ They focused on consistent messaging and providing information on financial aid programs such as school choice and voucher programs to help make Catholic school affordable.



Educating the Whole Child

The 21st century requires a new approach to educating children. We need to move beyond a narrow curriculum and accountability system to a whole child approach to education. We need to ensure that children feel safe and connected when they go to school. The whole child approach focuses on the following five tenets:

- Each student enters school healthy, learns, and practices a healthy lifestyle
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults
- Each student is actively engaged in learning and connected to the school and broader community
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults
- Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment¹¹

The whole child approach to education focuses on the fact that learning depends on a combination of factors that shape the child's development. These factors include the environment and relationships, along with cognitive, social, and emotional processes. Educators must understand how all of these elements interact over time and design environments that support development and learning. Each child is different because of his family and community. As a result, we need to design schools that attend to these unique needs; support patterns of development; and enable optimal growth in competence, confidence, and motivation.¹²

There are several recommendations for creating schools that support the healthy development of students, including:

- **Focus the system on developmental supports for young people.**
This includes measuring school climate and the social-emotional supports within the school's accountability and improvement system. Adopt standards for social, emotional, and cognitive learning and focusing discipline policies on teaching of social-emotional standards instead of zero-tolerance.¹³
- **Design schools to provide settings for healthy development.**
This includes designing small communities within schools and developing norms and supports for safe, culturally responsive classroom communities. Students also should have integrated support to promote health, mental health, and social welfare in conjunction with the parents and community.¹⁴



- Ensure educator learning for developmentally supportive education. This focuses on ensuring the educators have opportunities to learn how to develop these practices. Schools need to invest in educator wellness, including stress reduction and social-emotional programs, and designing preparation programs that provide a strong foundation in child and adolescent development and learning.¹⁵

This is an emerging science, but one that expands current education practice to focus on the entire child. Neuroscience research shows us that effective learning and development depends on a safe and secure environment with affirming relationships and hands-on learning experiences. By engaging the school, families, and the community to work together, we can ensure each student is in a better position to be successful in the future.

Social Media and Teens

Social media is everywhere. It influences what we buy, where we live, who our friends are, and even our elections. Social media presence has grown significantly since Apple introduced the first iPhone in 2007. Nowhere is the presence of social media more prevalent than in the life of a teenager. According to a Pew Research Study, 95 percent of teens either have a Smartphone or have access to one. Out of these teens, 45 percent of them say they are online on a near-constant basis.¹⁶ The majority of today's teens use Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube, instead of Facebook. Although teens are constantly online 'socializing,' they are not connected. According to NEA Today, "Social media has crippled students when it comes to interacting with one another in person. The more time teens spend on social media, the lonelier and more anxious they are."¹⁷ Interaction on social media is not beneficial. The more time spent on these platforms, the higher the level of anxiety, and the worse peer relationships actually get. Teens who spend five or more hours a day online were 71 percent more likely than those who spend less than an hour a day to have at least one suicide risk factor.¹⁸

A study of more than 450 youth aged 11-17 found that:

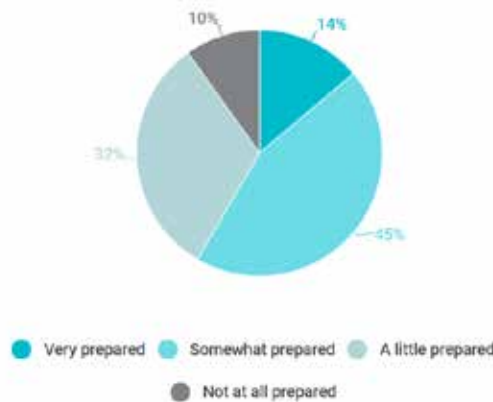
- 97 percent of participants indicated they used social media
- 35 percent of participants were classified as poor sleepers
- 47 percent of participants were classified as anxious
- Higher emotional investment in social media was strongly correlated with higher levels of anxiety.¹⁹

Many students struggle to put down their phones and do not see social media as an issue. Adolescence is a time of rapid development. While using social media, kids are not learning actual social skills. Texting and online communication make the in-person social cues, such as body language and facial expressions, invisible. Teens do most of their speaking with a screen, which creates a barrier to clear communication and affects a teen's ability to make and maintain real friendships. Online friendships remove risk and are much less intimidating. If teens do not get enough face-to-face interaction, it will create a generation of adults that are anxious and unable to communicate effectively in real time.²⁰



EdWeek conducted a survey of US school principals and more than half of them noted they are extremely concerned about student social media usage outside of school, especially among middle school students.²¹ The worry for these principals is not what happens during school, but what happens after school on social media. There is bullying, harassment, fake profiles, mean comments, sexting, and stupid pranks happening on applications such as Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Kik, TikTok, and Line. These new issues present ever-growing problems for school administrators. First, they have to

How prepared are you to implement strategies to help students use social media responsibly?



find the information. Then, they need to ensure they handle each specific situation according to the laws protecting free speech.

While many educators feel unprepared to handle these challenges, the need to develop programs to address them is critical. Several automated tools for monitoring student social media accounts are available to schools; however, these services are not effective.²² New York and Virginia now require mental health education as part of the normal curriculum. This is a first step in helping teens recognize these issues and seek help.

Parents need to play a larger role in helping teens with social media, as well. They can start by changing their own habits and giving children their full attention. Technology can provide information; but parents need to provide advice, guidance, and values.

Parents can delay the introduction of Smartphones until the child is old enough and create ground rules for usage, such as having shared accounts and technology-free times at home. It also is important for parents to start helping their kids develop self-esteem early through involvement in an extracurricular activity, such as a sport or music, so that they are better equipped to handle device usage and social media as teens.



WHAT WILL WE DO? STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

AS THE SCHOOL EXECUTES ITS MISSION AND FOCUSES ON ITS CORE PURPOSE OF EDUCATING ITS STUDENTS, IT MUST ALSO ADDRESS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY THE EVER-EVOLVING EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT.

In addition to investing in ongoing operations, the School will prioritize investments and dedicate sufficient resources to the five themes of this Strategic Plan over the 2020-2023 period. These five key focus areas will allow the School to advance its mission and respond to challenges that exist both internally and externally.

Catholic Identity: Catholic identity is intrinsic to our School and the reason for its success. Our mission is to educate all students in a Christian environment, welcoming children of all faiths. We promote the value of the individual while encouraging mutual respect through our Catholic faith and traditions.

Academic Excellence: With a strong educational foundation and rigorous academic programs, our students are prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing multicultural society in the light of Christ's teachings.

Affordability and Accessibility: The School is strategically located to allow the reasonable hope that most children in the Upper Montgomery County vicinity will consider the campus accessible. We have undertaken careful planning to keep

the cost of Catholic education within the reach of families. The tuition assistance program is one of the ways the School and the ADW help many children realize the dream of a Catholic education.

Technology: Technology has significantly changed the way we interact over the past ten years. Smartphones and the easy access to social media apps has created many challenges for students, parents, and educators. Being able to address these challenges and foster a safe environment that allows our teens to become productive well-adjusted adults is a challenge we must meet.

Governance: The governance structures for Catholic schools vary depending on the sponsoring organization that has overall responsibility for the school. The School is organized under the laws of the State of Maryland as a not-for-profit corporation and is led, in part, by the Board. The Board's membership consists of the pastors of the seven sponsoring parishes, as well as individuals selected from the greater School community. The ADW, through the Board and the Principal/CEO, has direct responsibility for all aspects of the School.



GOAL — Catholic Identity

Mary of Nazareth will continue to offer an authentic and inclusive Catholic education that helps to instill life-long virtues in developing each child holistically. School leadership will develop initiatives to increase engagement between the seven sponsoring parishes and Mary of Nazareth and increase opportunities for community service within the School, the seven sponsoring parishes, and the community.

The School prepares children for lives of service to God and neighbor, through a rigorous academic program rooted in the faith and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church as professed in the Creed, celebrated in the sacraments, lived in Christian virtue, and affirmed in prayer.

Objective I

Continue to explore ways to further engage School families within the parishes, to promote Mass attendance, and to increase exposure of the School within the parishes

Initiatives

- Explore opportunities to organize bi-annual or quarterly Masses, highlight service projects and organize social events for school families in each of the seven sponsoring parishes
- To the extent possible, ensure sports and club schedules do not conflict with Mass schedules
- Review and update Spiritual Life links on the School website to ensure relevance and working order
- Continue to discuss Sunday readings in classrooms and positively promote Mass attendance to students
- Promote greater participation at school Masses by including Mass hymns and songs in music lessons
- Select easily sung Liturgical music at school Masses
- Include parish feast days on the school calendar and highlight parish saints
- Promote awareness of the ADW's requirements for the students' receipt of Sacraments

Objective II

Continue to explore opportunities to instill the virtue of service within the students and families

Initiatives

- Explore, identify, and advertise appropriate service opportunities for students and parents throughout the School community to increase awareness and centralize communication
- Develop a program to identify supported charities that includes selection criteria, charity information, and communication to the School community regarding selection
- Focus on service projects that directly involve students without including rewards or raising money as part of the activity
- Explore opportunities to recognize and promote student service through various communication vehicles, including social media and on-site

Objective III

Continue to explore ways of engaging the seven sponsoring parishes in the life and work of the School and to further strengthen parish outreach programs

Initiatives

- Encourage more frequent visits from parish priests and deacons beyond monthly Masses,



Chapel Masses, and reconciliation. Incorporate priests and deacons into lessons through various classroom opportunities

- Include a 'Meet the Pastors' series in the newsletter each year with information about each pastor
- Continue to monitor parish websites to ensure prominent identification of the School as the parish school and ensure up-to-date information
- Evaluate existing parish outreach programs and implement necessary changes to ensure consistency of the program, appropriateness of written materials, ongoing dissemination of information, and regular volunteer interactions with each parish
- Provide appropriate training to volunteers within the various outreach programs to ensure awareness of duties and communication of responsibilities
- Maximize opportunities to thank the seven sponsoring parishes for contributions to the School

Objective IV

Continue to build an inclusive community among parents and families within the School to increase engagement and to foster a greater sense of Catholic identity

Initiatives

- Develop an inclusive volunteer program that engages a broader range of the School community in an effort to encourage greater volunteerism within the classroom and overall community
- Explore outreach opportunities to include various cultures in spiritual events
- Identify opportunities to increase community utilization of Our Lady's Chapel
- Continue to explore ways to incorporate and highlight the 'R' in the STREAM program

Objective V

Continue to promote the School's Catholic identity through online resources such as the School's website and other social media platforms

Initiatives and Measures

- Increase the prominence of 'Spiritual Life' on the School website, ensure functionality of links, and include more family-friendly resources
- Explore communication opportunities to promote awareness of faith curriculum
- Highlight religious resources in the School newsletter and/or with descriptive phrases on the School website instead of only links
- Provide links to download appropriate applications, such as 'Capital Catholic' app
- Continue to highlight the School's Catholic identity through social media

GOAL — Academic Excellence

To maintain and enhance an academic environment that provides teaching excellence as an integral component within the delivery of high-quality academic programs, supports the education of the whole child, and encourages the development of independent learning styles. To provide innovative and rigorous instructional methods that are supported by research-based best practices and balanced by the appropriate integration of technology, STREAM practices, instructional materials, and professional development to support the teachers.

The School's students are prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing world in the light of Christ's teachings through a strong educational foundation and rigorous academic program. The School is committed to the entirety of academic excellence as reflected in a dynamic approach to instruction, learning, and assessment through a variety of measures.

Objective I

Continue to advance excellence in teaching by delivering high-quality academic programs to the students of the School, thereby providing students with the framework needed to succeed at each subsequent level of education

Initiatives

- Ensure core learning skills are taught consistently across all content areas through implementation of various age-appropriate strategies
- Explore additional opportunities for parents to provide confidential and anonymous feedback to School staff to assist professional development and foster academic excellence
- Provide additional professional development opportunities for teachers to ensure consistency with core skills, creation of a supportive environment, and empowerment of students
- Emphasize small group instruction with the focus on student participation and development of note-taking skills to enhance the learning experience
- Collect data regarding student performance outcomes to identify and address learning gaps

Objective II

Continue to prioritize effective use of technology to reinforce dynamic instruction and student engagement

Initiatives

- Evaluate and determine appropriate new technologies to utilize within the classroom
- Continue to educate children, faculty, and parents regarding the appropriate role of technology through various outreach programs
- Continue to ensure full integration of the STREAM initiative into the School curriculum utilizing multiple communication vehicles
- Advertise the School's technology projects on the website





Objective III

Promote students' excitement and love of learning by fostering new opportunities for creative expression within a supportive academic environment

Initiatives and Measures

- Develop a program to teach social/emotional learning (SEL) to School staff and encourage this learning as part of classroom management and instruction
- Address the wellness and mental health of students through the introduction of teaching and reinforcement of coping skills
- Encourage students to identify and enhance their learning styles and embrace independence in learning concepts
- Continue to encourage parents to partner with School staff in their student's educational and emotional well-being
- Continue to develop the fine arts program, such as drama, and enhance the club offerings at the School to provide opportunities for students to explore various interests outside the regular academic curriculum

Objective IV

Effectively promote the School as a Catholic school of academic excellence, informed by Christ-centered values, and enhanced by an unrivaled whole-child approach to education

Initiatives and Measures

- Identify and promote the School's academic strategies and benefits to stakeholders (including parents, prospective students, and educators) through various outreach programs, methods, and educational materials
- Continue to communicate and educate stakeholders regarding the School's STREAM program
- Promote the School as a school of choice academically utilizing testimonials and promoting specialized program offerings

GOAL — Affordability and Accessibility

Continue to provide equal education opportunities for all students with a commitment to ensure Mary of Nazareth remains available, accessible, and affordable to all parents and students.

The School provides an affordable and accessible Roman Catholic education. Within our school, the programs we offer meet the needs of a wide variety of students. Our students are able to learn in a nurtured and safe environment. Through careful planning, the School is committed to ensuring that a faith-based Catholic education is within reach of every family.

Objective I

Define the School's brand and communicate it effectively to the seven sponsoring parishes and to the community at large

Initiatives

- Utilize data to define qualities and characteristics that differentiate the School from the educational opportunities offered by competitors
- Develop and publicize a slogan or tagline to represent the School utilizing feedback from the School community
- Conduct a review to ensure the School brand is consistently represented across a variety of outlets
- Define the School's target audience(s) and determine methods for reaching targeted audience utilizing various data sources and a data collection standard
- Develop materials for increasing the School's visibility within various stakeholder communities, including parishes, prospective families, and the community at large
- Identify drivers regarding school choice by community through the utilization of various qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including interviews, social media statistics, and market penetration

- Ensure inclusion of the School's student success stories in parish bulletins and include parish news on the School's website

Objective II

Ensure the School provides a supportive community environment for prospective and current families

Initiatives

- Review current enrollment process and implement changes as needed to ensure the process is efficient, effective, and includes well-communicated feedback
- Implement a survey for prospective families regarding priorities for school selection and develop materials utilizing data
- Develop a comprehensive media outreach program to promote School highlights and events
- Continue to enhance the current welcome program for new families, utilizing specific new family feedback, to highlight important School events, class-specific activities, and school-wide activities
- Develop a process to collect data regarding School experience and participation opportunities from new and long-term families to provide communication direction, focus, and insight



Objective III

Continue to ensure competitive tuition rates through the enhancement of fund raising and giving opportunities and through the utilization of appropriate resource campaigns and avenues

Initiatives

- Research and identify additional revenue streams beyond regular tuition to supplement the tuition cost gap
- Identify and pursue funding programs available that target specific resource needs, such as school grant programs
- Develop an education program to foster transparency regarding total education costs
- Continue to develop a comprehensive alumni and alumni family program to expand potential donor pool
- Develop materials targeting specific resource needs and opportunities for specific bequests

Objective IV

Differentiate the School from other schools by delivering a high return on investment for families and the community

Initiatives

- Highlight middle school and alumni success stories in promotional materials for prospective School families and ensure materials are accessible to a wide variety of audiences
- Enhance the overall School website to include more information on various student specific topics, such as alumni stories, and increase visibility of specific communities
- Develop comparison documentation of the School versus other local schools (including cost/benefit analysis) and understand what drives school choice

GOAL — Technology

Mary of Nazareth School will implement and support a technology program that enhances its mission and strategic objectives and will further integrate technology into the curriculum to provide a high-quality, safe, learning environment that allows all learners to achieve at their highest potential. Mary of Nazareth School will explore new ways to use technology effectively to engage parents, staff, students, alumni, and the wider community.

Technology is at the core of virtually every aspect of our daily lives and work. We must leverage it effectively to provide engaging and powerful learning experiences as well as resources and assessments that measure student achievement in more complete, authentic, and meaningful ways, while adhering to the School’s mission and values.

The School will make technology decisions that foster an inclusive environment and promote ease of access to all members of the School community with an understanding of the total costs to own, operate, and maintain such technology. The School will commit to educating all members of the School community in its usage, benefits, and potential risks.

Objective I

Develop and promote a comprehensive and integrated technology education plan for the School

Initiatives

- Evaluate a technology integration approach to supplement the School’s current Computer Application Experience curriculum, including developing a formal decision-making process and creating a standards plan for technological devices
- Further assist teachers in integrating technology into the curriculum, including additional training and incorporating technology into performance plans, art and sports programs
- Evaluate the types of computer programming that could be introduced in the STREAM program, clubs, or within the curriculum that would continue current learning as well as introduce advanced concepts
- Investigate opportunities for additional technology-related club offerings and incorporate lessons learned into future plans
- Expand digital citizenship curriculum for students and emphasize parental responsibilities
- Evaluate educational software as a potential alternative to paper textbooks as appropriate for the age group, including cost/benefit analysis
- Explore additional options for parent-led technology opportunities through clubs and in-class presentations





Objective II

Collaboratively continue to improve communication between the School and the School families, utilizing technology, with an understanding of the moral and social ramifications of the use of technology

Initiatives

- Develop a consistent review process for the School's external website to ensure full integration with ADW policies and provide a centralized place for communication, information, feedback, and scheduling
- Implement and audit a security and permission program that provides differing levels of access to address separation of duties
- Continue to refine the formal policy and procedures regarding utilization of social media
- Identify free tools and grant opportunities to improve stakeholder engagement and meet technology goals

Objective III

Continue to enhance the technology infrastructure within the School

Initiatives

- Develop a technology strategy, including identifying the lifecycle of assets and standardization plans, to ensure technology is relevant and current
- Develop a Technology Information Security and Privacy Plan (TISPP) for establishing baseline expectations for evaluation and prioritization and identify resources required to implement
- Update the telephone system and ensure staff are trained
- Evaluate the use of external hosting services for infrastructure, platform, and software services as the School explores new technology options
- Evaluate the infrastructure, service impact, and resources required to offer a personal e-device to each student

GOAL — Governance

: Continue to strengthen Mary of Nazareth’s Board of Limited Jurisdiction governance structure through the nomination and approval of a diverse and inclusive Board of Directors; the development and implementation of a robust strategic plan; a clear definition of roles, responsibilities, and accountability; the maintenance of fiscal stewardship; and expansion of transparent communications and outreach with parishes, community, and stakeholders.

The School is governed, in part, by a Board of limited jurisdiction pursuant to its organizational documents and ADW policy. As a Board of limited jurisdiction, members of the Board provide leadership and oversight to the School. The Board is responsible for implementing the mission of the School in collaboration with the principal, along with assisting in the governance of the School..

Objective I

Ensure members of the Board have the diverse background, talent, experience and geographical differentiation needed for the Board at the time of selection

Initiatives

- Develop an annual or semi-annual review process of the current Board members to determine experience, talent, and geographical gaps. Provide a gap analysis to the Board identifying gaps and options for resolution to ensure equitable representation from each of the seven sponsoring parishes
- Continue to strengthen the nomination process as determined by the ADW’s Policies for Archdiocesan Corporations, including timely Board selection, review, and approval of candidates and timely submission of approved resolutions to the Corporate Members as evidenced by regular follow-up communication and milestones

Objective II

Continue to refine the strategic planning and annual reporting processes to ensure the process remains diverse and inclusive and the plan and annual reports effectively communicate the School’s strategic direction and accomplishments toward meeting objectives

Initiatives

- Enhance the current strategic planning process to gain greater efficiency and effectiveness through the development of milestones and targets
- Identify Board member(s) to chair the Strategic Planning Committee and to lead the planning efforts every four years. Identify Board member(s) to develop the annual report within 90 days of year’s end, working in conjunction with other Board committee chairs and the principal
- Develop a communication plan to ensure transparent and timely communication of the accomplishment of strategic objectives and projects

Objective III

Document and refine the roles and responsibilities of the Board, the principal, and the Corporate Members to confirm compliance with the School's Bylaws, the Policies for Archdiocesan Corporations, and the Regional Agreement to capture the Board's responsibilities

Initiatives

- Work with ADW staff to document the appropriate, responsible, and accountable party for school decisions directly and indirectly stated within the School's Bylaws, Regional Agreement, and Archdiocesan Policies documents
- Update the current Regional Agreement and develop a review process to ensure the Regional Agreement is up to date
- Develop a communication document for current and future Board members outlining roles and responsibilities of each lay member, parish pastors, ex-officio members, and at-large members

Objective IV

Provide responsible fiscal stewardship through the sound management of financial resources to meet the School's identified strategic objectives and priorities

Initiatives

- Document the responsibilities of the Financial Committee Chair, including monthly review of financial statements, budget preparation, and annual tuition recommendations
- Develop a communication plan to transparently communicate financial targets, deadlines, budget, and decisions to the school community
- Develop communication guidelines that outline communication requirements to the school community regarding emergency financial expenditures and impact on the current year budget

Objective V

Create an environment promoting multi-way transparent communications and outreach to the School's stakeholders, including the seven sponsoring parishes, parents, faculty, and community

Initiatives

- Continue to strengthen outreach and communication with the seven sponsoring parishes to ensure consistent participation of the parish pastors within the school community, including regular attendance at meetings and presence at school events. (see Catholic Identity section)
- Schedule a dinner at the beginning of each school year with the pastors, principal, and Board Chair
- Explore opportunities regarding scheduling to ensure maximum attendance at Board meetings
- Develop a process for formal invitations to school events and birthday cards to the pastors
- Develop a communication plan that is responsive to questions, requests, and suggestions from the School community, parish community, and community at large
- Formalize a commitment to represent each of the seven sponsoring parishes equally and consistently
- Ensure parents can easily access current ADW policies and corporate Board organizational documents through the School's website



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our gratitude to the countless volunteers, parents, alumni parents, alumni, and community members who participated in the formation of Mary of Nazareth's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

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Archdiocese of Washington

Mr. Michael J. Friel, Principal and CEO

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The Rev. Kevin O'Reilly, St. Mary's Parish and Shrine

The Rev. Joseph Pierce, St. Paul Catholic Church

The Rev. Agustin Mateo Ayala, St. Rose of Lima Parish

The Rev. Lee Fangmeyer, Mother Seton Parish

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