

# PORTLAND ST. PATRICK CATHOLIC SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN



## Direction *Snapshot of current practices*

### Diocese

- Guidance and support for all diocesan schools
- Catholic schools are a priority for our bishop
- Mass attendance rates declining
- Diocesan Catholic school enrollment is stabilizing
- Many pastors called to lead clustered parishes and other diocesan responsibilities

### Parish/School

- Strong Catholic atmosphere/learning environment
- Teachers consider each individual student's abilities
- Easy access to administrators
- Small class sizes
- Pastor and principals are fiscally responsible
- Quick switch to remote learning
- All students are known by name
- Weekday student-led masses

## Trends *Economic, Social, Political, Religious, etc. that impact our school*

- Strong or weak economy impacts choice of PS-12th private schools
- Many two-income families save for college but not for PS-12th private education
- Very limited federal funding for private schools
- Secular society
- Social media / speed of technology
- Increased need for special education services
- Virtual / online learning
- High expectation for modern educational and athletic facilities
- People are working hard to maintain their quality of life

## Measures of Success

*Annual metrics: Identified benchmark and desired level*

- Annual increase in total school enrollment until capacity is reached
- Active engagement by students and families in Sunday liturgy and parish life
- Building renovations and upgrades to address aging infrastructure
- Establish 3-5 year tuition plan
- Evaluate the benefit/need of an on-site all day daycare program within the school
- Annually share financial and academic outcomes with stakeholders, alumni, community, etc.
- Students are academically and socially prepared to be faithful, contributing members of society
- Individuals recognize and pursue their call to greatness and sainthood.

## Responsibilities

*What we do?*

- Educate children to become life-long learners of their faith
- Meet each individual's unique learning needs
- Partner with parents recognizing their role as the primary educators of their children
- Model the faith and encourage its practice in daily living
- Strive to become saints and help others achieve sainthood
- Provide a safe environment that allows for optimum growth and development
- Prepare students for the next level of education
- Encourage community service

## Board Strategies

*Governance and Leadership, Operational Vitality  
For benchmarks that need improvement*

- Set ourselves apart from public education by the way we live our faith, as well as exceptional academic achievements
- Enroll an increased number of families/students who desire a Catholic education through a comprehensive marketing strategy
- Promote active engagement of all students and families in parish life, including participation in the sacraments
- Ensure parish and school facilities are conducive to 21st century learning, including technology and infrastructure needs

## Critical Realities

*Issues that affect our work*

- Rural isolation; covers large geographic area
- Broad economic diversity
- Lack of racial diversity
- Cost of updating technology
- Cost to repair/maintain aging facilities
- Lack of adequate athletic facilities and buses
- Faith formation desired by only certain people
- Decrease in the number of baptisms
- Increasing number of families not interested in living out their faith

## School Mission

**We Pray!**  
**We Learn!**  
**We Achieve!**

## School Vision

**"And whatever we do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."  
Colossians 3:17**

## Characteristics of Catholic Schools

- Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ
- Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church
- Distinguished by Excellence
- Committed to Educate the Whole Child
- Steeped in a Catholic Worldview
- Sustained by Gospel Witness
- Shaped by Communion and Community
- Accessible to All Students
- Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop

## Philosophies of Education

*What is important to us?*

- Catholic faith and identity
- Positive attitude and outlook
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Proactive and positive discipline
- Personal responsibility and accountability

## Graduate Profile

*What our graduates look like?*

- Medical professionals
- Religious vocations
- Teachers/Counselors
- Military/Skilled Trades
- Engineers
- Law Enforcement

## Competitive Landscape

*Why parents choose other options?*

- Free schools vs. tuition-based education (economic conditions/personal finances)
- Society's values of materialism (spend money on vacations/new vehicles/elaborate homes rather than faith and education)
- Some may feel unwelcomed coming from a public school or outside the community (private schools viewed as elite)

## Catholic Educational Practices

*How we are atypical?*

- High parental involvement/support
- Catholic curriculum
- School dress code
- Pre-school thru 12th grade in one building
- High academic expectations and test scores
- Unique relationship with public school
- Long-standing Big Rock/Little Rock Mentoring Program

## Stakeholder Perceptions

*How we want to be known? By whom?*

**Teacher:** "I can't imagine working anywhere else; a very rewarding and humbling experience."

**High school student:** "Our school not only prepares us for the next level of life, but does so by nurturing our daily faith."

**Catholic parent:** "This school always puts faith first. Seeing them grow spiritually and academically is well worth the financial sacrifice."

**Non-Catholic parent:** "St. Patrick's is obviously a Catholic school — the students are respectful, well-behaved and very welcoming."

**Catholic school graduate:** "A great educational experience of which I intend to pass along to my children."

**Prospective parent:** "The facilities are well-maintained, the classes are challenging, and the overall atmosphere is positive."

**Visitor:** "There is a special feeling here. Everyone is happy and friendly."

**Pastor:** "This school is a blessing for our parish and community. It's refreshing to see our youth engaged in their faith."

Strategies and Tactics

Strategies for benchmarks that need improvement

<p><b>Mission and Catholic Identity</b></p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition of the mission statement as the foundation for decision-making, policies, and other actions of school leadership; and that all principals, teachers, staff, parents, and members of the School Board will understand and embrace the school mission.</li> <li>• Pastor will be routinely visible in the school, as well as parish/school-related functions, as available. Pastor will also engage the parish body on the importance of a Catholic education during his Sunday homilies, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Nurture in each student a deeper relationship with Christ.</li> <li>• Effectively convey the difference between Catholic and public education (how do we set ourselves apart?).</li> <li>• Foster religious vocations at St. Patrick School, as well as students attending religious education classes (CCD).</li> <li>• Identify and pursue stewardship and networking opportunities within the community.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mission statement will be prominently displayed in all important areas of the school and church (signage in classrooms, principal's office, parish office, parish hall, gymnasium, bulletin, etc.).</li> <li>• Pastor participation at key parish/school functions including Catholic Schools Week, Summer Fest, Fall Fest, and Shamrock Auction.</li> <li>• Continue to submit Principal newspaper articles outlining the value of Catholic education; also prepare articles/testimonials from alumni showcasing where they're at today as a result of their experience at St. Patrick School.</li> <li>• Continue to pray in the classroom at the start of each day, as well as before each athletic event (practices <u>and</u> games).</li> <li>• Ensure St. Patrick's takes part in community events such as 4th of July parade floats, holiday parade, Christmas Tree Lane, Monday dinners at First Congregational Church, Pay it Forward Day, etc.</li> <li>• Encourage weekly adoration and community service into sacramental preparation, as well as classroom curriculum.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Governance and Leadership</b></p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire and retain a highly talented, dedicated, faith-filled staff who will assure quality education and optimal opportunities for St. Patrick students.</li> <li>• Provide safe and secure buildings and grounds.</li> <li>• Ensure the Crisis Management Plan is kept up-to-date and implemented school and parish-wide.</li> <li>• Provide school transportation for students outside the local community; as well as for athletic events and field trips.</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive St. Patrick School Development Plan to ensure long-term success of the school.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue competitive salaries/benefits for teachers and staff that meet or exceed Catholic school salaries in the diocese.</li> <li>• Establish a budget that enables and encourages teachers/staff to participate in professional development growth opportunities (beyond the mandatory all-staff professional development conferences).</li> <li>• Develop and implement a strategy for long-term resources to address our aging facilities.</li> <li>• Evaluate transportation options (Dean Transportation, public school buses, purchase of passenger van, etc.).</li> <li>• Establish a school endowment in conjunction with West Michigan Catholic Foundation and the Father Flohe Foundation.</li> <li>• Establish other funding mechanisms such as a Planned Giving Program; Major Gifts/Matching Gifts Program; and Grantsmanship Program.</li> <li>• Strengthen traditional fundraising (direct mail, cash donations, special events, development newsletter, etc.) through an aggressive and consistent day-to-day effort coordinated by the school administration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Academic Excellence</b></p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support St. Patrick School's philosophy that all students have the right to learn and achieve their highest level of academic ability.</li> <li>• Ensure those students who have learning disabilities receive appropriate resources to excel emotionally, spiritually and academically.</li> <li>• Achieve and sustain an optimum student to teacher ratio that is reflective of increased enrollment (PS thru Grade 12).</li> <li>• Demonstrate academic growth through statewide assessment, and benchmarking against other local schools.</li> <li>• Ensure the academic success of our students is widely shared with the public, alumni, and prospective families.</li> <li>• Enhance the relationship with Heartlands, Aquinas College, union halls, and other technical and vocational schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish baselines for satisfactory student achievement.</li> <li>• Continue to maintain effective class sizes to enhance student learning (i.e. student to teacher ratio).</li> <li>• Pursue hiring a full time special education or resource specialist to serve the needs of our students requiring additional developmental support and assistance.</li> <li>• Increase the number of students enrolled in advanced placement courses and/or dual enrollment in high school.</li> <li>• Strive for 100% high school graduation rate; as well as ongoing secondary education and/or skilled trades opportunities.</li> <li>• Invite individuals from vocational/skilled trades/other professions at upcoming career fairs to expose students who are interested in pursuing these opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Operational Vitality</b></p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively implement a marketing plan to promote St. Patrick School education that is inclusive to a broad, economic and diverse population. Utilize social media as part of that marketing tool.</li> <li>• Continually update the school website with current information/resources that is appealing to prospective families. Specifically focus on our faith-based curriculum, alumni recognition, parental testimony, and historical academic success of our students.</li> <li>• Acquire appropriate technology (software, hardware, and support systems) to ensure ample learning resources for staff and students.</li> <li>• Evaluate the viability of an on-site daycare program to serve as a feeder into the school.</li> <li>• Increase financial support from alumni, state/federal grants, and foundation sponsorships.</li> <li>• Work cooperatively with the Athletic Association and PTO regarding financial resources, athletic activities, and academic standards for our student-athletes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a tracking system of outreach to prospective families (emails, mailings, personal contact) and maintain an ongoing relationship with those potential families.</li> <li>• Reach out to families who transfer their students elsewhere to identify reasons for leaving.</li> <li>• Develop a technology plan that identifies the anticipated needs of the school.</li> <li>• Research available grants to help off-set initial expenses of an on-site day care facility, as well as ongoing program development opportunities.</li> <li>• Promote <i>A Shamrock Legacy</i>, Father Flohe Foundation, Shamrock Auction, and other fundraising opportunities.</li> </ul>