

St. Mary's Catholic School
1101 E. 5th Street
Natchitoches, LA 71457
November 19, 2021

Saint Mary's Strategic Plan **2021-2026**



Dear Parents and Members of the St. Mary's Community,

This year, we begin a new chapter in the long and proud history of St. Mary's Catholic School. However, even though it is a new year, we must always acknowledge the hard work of those who came before us and helped lay the foundation of where we are today. Mission and tradition are two of our key ingredients. This five year plan was

**“A man content
to go to heaven
alone will never
go to heaven.”**

-Boethius



begun by the last administration under the leadership of Mrs. Andrea Harrell and has been in development for the better part of a year. It has now been handed on to me as the new principal of St. Mary's Catholic School. I would first of all like to thank Mrs. Harrell, as well as all of the teachers and parents who contributed their time and input in order to make this possible. I would also like to let all of you know how grateful I am to be part of our tiger family. I promise to do my best to represent this community of faith and to lead it forward as we strive to fulfill our mission.

On a final note, I would like to add that this five year plan will continue to be a work in progress. As I become more accustomed to my new role as your principal, and as I become more familiar with the needs of the school, some adjustments may be necessary. I am grateful to the new school advisory council for their willingness to help in this endeavor. Please be assured that my door is always open, and I believe that together we can accomplish great things for St. Mary's and for our children.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jason Lachica in blue ink.

Mr. Jason Lachica
Principal
St. Mary's Catholic School

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

"That in all things, Christ may be glorified." –1 Peter 4:11

Goals:

Teacher Formation

- + Explore advanced formation of religion teachers through Augustine Institute and other programs
- + Improve faculty formation in Catholic/Christian identity and teaching methods

Heritage

- + Continue to improve Catholic identity and devotion in campus life
- + Emphasize common threads shared by all denominations, rooted in traditional morality and Christian anthropology
- + Instill a deep understanding and appreciation of the Judeo-Christian roots of Western Civilization in our student body

Service

- + Integrate a deeper calling to service for students and staff alike by developing more opportunities for service both on and off campus



Forming the whole child...

There is a Jesuit motto that states, "Give me the child until seven, and I will give you the man." This saying highlights the importance of laying an adequate foundation at an early age that will echo throughout a person's entire life. It is the cornerstone of our mission and vision that we are a Catholic School, forming missionary disciples for Jesus Christ. Our primary function therefore is first and foremost to build Christian character. Only then can the accumulation of learned skills and talents reach their greatest potential in each of our students. Furthermore, this cannot be accomplished by the school alone, but rather must be supported and nourished by a home life that actively lives and supports an authentically Christian way of life.



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

"Be transformed by the renewal of your mind." –Romans 12:2

Goals:

Faculty Enrichment

- + Provide time for collaborative planning by faculty
- + Ensure every core subject area has an aligned curriculum which include rigorous assessments
- + Find innovative ways to hire/ attract the most qualified teachers for our school in an increasingly competitive field

Unified Learning

- + Establish more robust cross-curriculum assessments that reflect the Catholic understanding of reality as holistic and integrated
- + Achieve National Blue Ribbon Status

Variety

- + Explore the expansion of better college preparation and elective opportunities for students, including greater possibility of clubs, music, drama, fine arts, etc.



Faith and Reason...

Pope St. John Paul II once said, "truth cannot contradict truth." The Catholic Church has always cherished the importance of intellectual development, a rich heritage that gave rise to the university system itself. In the Catholic worldview, faith and reason are not contradictory, but rather complimentary—founded upon the idea that faith is in fact reasonable, the world has an order and harmony to it, and the different fields of knowledge are not self-enclosed, but rather build upon one another and form a unified whole. This is because, ultimately, the disciple of Jesus Christ understands that reality does not bend to one's subjective viewpoint, nor is it disjointed, but rather it is ordered according to objective truths that are ordained by God Himself.



STEWARDSHIP

"Behold, Master, here is the talent you have given me. It has yielded more."

Goals:

—Luke 19:16

Teacher Pay

- + Improve upon teacher bonus program to retain and recruit quality staff
- + Improve enrollment by creating an atmosphere and legacy that attracts more students
- + Continue to improve advertising to create greater awareness of SMS in untapped, neighboring areas, thus increasing enrollment and hiring potential

Innovation

- + Explore non-monetary incentives such as time off, scheduling, decreased paperwork, community support, and smaller classes to attract teachers

Investment

- + Maintain a budget that provides for a net operating surplus
- + Establish school endowment that will allow for alternative means of salary support



Faith and planning...

In St. Mary's long and storied history, there have been times of both feast and of famine. However, one of the strengths of our community is its remarkable resilience—the St. Mary's family has a way of coming together in difficult times and supporting one another. However, we would be mistaken to attribute our survival as a school solely to ourselves. Ultimately, God in His Divine Providence is the ultimate reason behind our continuance and our achievements. Therefore, without falling into the illusion of self-reliance, we must nevertheless prayerfully utilize our resources in the best way possible in order to ensure that St. Mary's will continue to fulfill its mission for generations to come.



ADVANCEMENT

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies...” –John 12:24

Goals:

Atmosphere

- + Create an exciting and energizing school atmosphere that people want to be part of, through excellent student/teacher experience and community-building events
- + Respond effectively to areas of needed improvement

Accessibility

- + Explore new and improved ways to make tuition more affordable and accessible through scholarships and Good Steward programs

Community

- + Strengthen alumni outreach, communication, and support
- + Create effective fundraising that also builds community and camaraderie
- + Strengthen the connection between St. Mary's and the Minor Basilica, as well as other Catholic Churches in area to garner a wider base of ownership and support of Catholic education



Remembering who we are...

How do we continually make our school better without forgetting who we are? This is one of the most important questions we can ask in any development plan. In the increasing competition that we face from other schools with better funding and better pay, as well as the advancing secularization of our culture, it can be an enormous temptation to become something that we are not. While resisting the allure of finding security in worldly solutions, the St. Mary's community must cling to Christ—to remember that first and foremost we offer a refuge where the faith can be taught and lived out. Our history is one of accomplishing more with less, often with the most meager of resources, yet continually striving to “renew all things in Christ.”



DEVELOPMENT

“You are fellow citizens with the saints, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone.”

Goals:

—Ephesians 2:20

Facilities

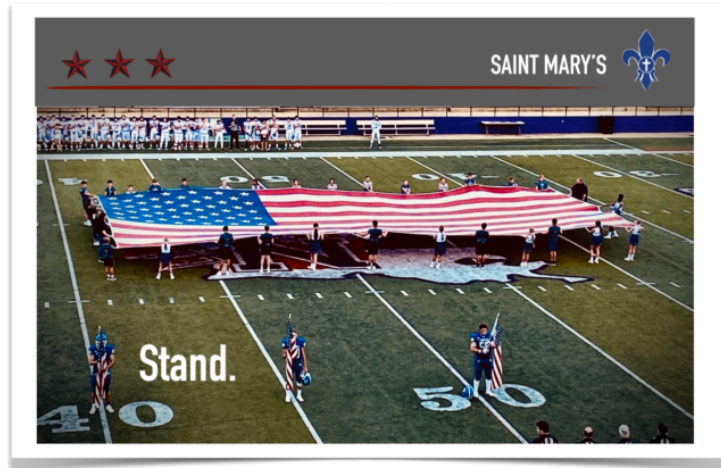
- + Complete campus master plan for facility improvements and beautification
- + Explore ways to possibly increase campus size

Campus Improvement

- + Continue to find ways to beautify campus, with special attention given to symbols of faith so as to always keep the school mission in mind
- + Improve safety of facilities while increasing accommodations

Endowment

- + Establish endowment with a projected timeline, giving plan, and a clear list of student/teacher benefits
- + Align major and minor projects with fundraising schedule and hierarchy so as to create clear and realistic objectives



Building a future of hope...

It has been a few years since St. Mary's has engaged in major capital improvements. That being said, a number of additions have recently been made, from improvements to the elementary school—including a new playground—as well as improvements to our sporting facilities. At this time, we feel it is essential to draw up a new campus master plan, based on drawings made in the past as well as new adaptations that will consider renovations to our school chapel, new classrooms, campus expansion, parking, and additions to the football field. Furthermore, the establishment of a school endowment is well underway, with hopes of creating long-term investment opportunities that will give St. Mary's alumni more ways of giving back.

