



STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2023





MOTHER OF GOD SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

20501 Goshen Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20879 • 301-990-2088 • Fax: 301-947-0574 • www.mogschool.com

May 31, 2018

Dear Families and Friends,

For the past several months many of your fellow school community members have been working hard to develop a strategic plan to move the Mother of God School forward over the next several years. We are pleased to tell you that plan is now complete. We would like to provide a bit of context and background as to how we have arrived at this point.

As you know the Mother of God School is a private Catholic school affiliated with the Archdiocese of Washington. It is a ministry of the Mother of God Community, which is recognized by the Archdiocese of Washington as a private association of the faithful in accord with Canon Law. Founded in 1987, the school formally affiliated with the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of Washington in 1996. As an affiliated school, we follow the educational program and policies of the Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese as they apply to elementary and middle schools. The school seeks to serve the educational mission of the Catholic Church by providing a quality Catholic education for students living in the upper Montgomery County area of the Archdiocese.

In May, 2016, the School successfully completed the re-accreditation process through AdvancEd. That process provided the impetus for the School Board to look more closely at the school's operation and to seek continuing improvements for the school. That was the start of the strategic planning process. Committees, headed by Committee Chairs, were instituted in four areas – Mission and Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality. They met on many occasions for many hours and discussed how to make the school the best it could be in the above areas. We gratefully acknowledge the document which the committees used – the *National Standards and Academic Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (developed jointly by the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness, School of Education, Loyola University, Chicago in partnership with the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College) to guide them in their work.

We would like to thank all those who participated in this process – most especially the Committee Chairs and their Committee Members. Their names are noted in the documents at the end. While the plan will primarily be used as a guide for the Leadership Team of the school in the coming years, it belongs to all of us.

As you review the plan please be aware of its organization. It will first include the **Domain**, then the **Standard** to be achieved and the **Objectives** proposed to meet that Standard. Appendix I is the entire National Standards document which includes Benchmarks. While each and every Benchmark was reviewed, it will not have a specific recommendation unless the Committee deemed it needed/appropriate. Appendix II will list the Committee Chairs and their Committee Members

May Our Lord and His Mother continue to bless this school as it brings greater glory to God.

Sincerely,

Strategic Planning Committee

John Farrell

Bob McCambridge

Tom Singer

DOMAIN 1**Mission and Catholic Identity****STANDARD 1**

An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.

Objectives:

- Align Mission Statement to reflect student body diversity and principles of Catholic Social Teaching
- Promulgate the Mission Statement throughout the school and in official documents
- Ensure that the Mission Statement is presented at school events as appropriate
- Review the Mission Statement periodically
- Teach the Mission Statement annually to all stakeholders

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.

Objectives:

- Research existing virtue/character development programs and adopt/develop one for the school
- Ensure all religion teachers are certified catechists
- Review and observe of all faculty annually to ensure alignment with Church teachings
- Amend the employment contract to include the phrase, "Use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them"
- Ensure all Religion texts adhere to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops standards

STANDARD 3

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.

Objectives:

- Conduct age appropriate retreats for K through 8 at least annually
- Conduct service projects appropriate to each grade level in alignment with Catholic Social Teaching and Gospel values

STANDARD 4

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

Objectives:

- Conduct beginning of school year retreat as well as a Lenten retreat for faculty and staff
- Make available opportunities for adult faith formation to assist the parents as the primary educators of their faith such as Bible studies, parenting support etc.
- Establish a schedule for adult faith formation

DOMAIN 2

Governance and Leadership

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.

Objectives:

- The School Board will:
 - Increase the current membership to nineteen members
 - Establish a review mechanism by which the National Standards and Benchmarks are reviewed on a three year cycle
 - Define the Board's ex-officio roles
- The School Board will structure its standing committees to reflect the National Standards and Benchmarks
 - Each Benchmark will be assessed at least once in a three year cycle
 - Each committee will ensure means for transparent communication and feedback
 - Broad community outreach will include Home School Association, school functions, and community town halls, etc.
 - The Principal will be actively involved with the Archdiocese of Washington Elementary School Principals' Association
 - Teachers and staff will maintain active involvement in the Archdiocese of Washington's professional development opportunities
 - The school will be active in supporting missions, vocations, and pro-life activities of the Archdiocese of Washington
 - The school will communicate our Archdiocesan activities to the school community through website and newsletter
 - The school will be proactive in looking for collaborative activities with the Archdiocese of Washington
 - The Administration will maintain a regular relationship with the Catholic Schools Office and Elementary Schools Principal Association to ensure Catholic Identity
 - All Religion teachers will be certified catechists
- The Board will conduct an annual retreat, will inform new members, debrief former members, review board organization and best practices, and conduct training as needed

STANDARD 6

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

Objectives:

- Ensure Administration meets National Catholic Education Association/Archdiocese of Washington best practices for school leadership by performing baseline review of leadership preparation and licensing status
- Ensure Administration personnel meet Archdiocese of Washington standards
- Develop a communication plan utilizing a high level of repetition and consistency to ensure dissemination of and feedback about the school's mission and vision.
- Develop and maintain personnel procedures for the school utilizing the school's bylaws, Archdiocese of Washington, National Catholic Education Association, and AdvancED guidelines
- Develop school wide and individual Professional Development Plans to include faith formation activities
- Conduct faculty and staff observations and formal assessments
- Develop networks to include outreach and collaboration by and among: faculty, parents, Home School Association, School Board, sports, parish etc.
- The Administration will:
 - Assess school curriculum to ensure that it is in line with the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Washington
 - Utilize test data to review/evalaute teaching practices
 - Develop a Technology Committee to ensure current/proposed technologies provide the best value for the school
- The Administration will:
 - Provide an assessment relative to finances, human resources, facilities, and development
 - Provide a robust suite of extracurricular activities
 - Expand fundraising activities, and the development of grants (especially for capital improvements)
- The Administration will utilize appropriate communication methods to include school newsletters, email, social media, etc. to communicate new initiatives/changes to school programs

DOMAIN 3

Academic Excellence

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 instruction.

Objectives:

- Teach Latin and Greek roots in Grades 3 through 5
- Establish a textbook review committee to periodically evaluate textbooks
- Establish a committee for implementation of 21st Century Learning framework:
<http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>
- Provide professional development in 21st century learning
- Train teachers in the use of technology and digital products
- Establish a Technology Committee
- Use a variety of platforms to teach students to use, create, publish and critique technology/digital products
- Develop and utilize character education programs K through 8
- Develop and implement a needs-based Professional Development plan for staff
- Train staff in such things as differentiated instruction; questioning techniques/higher order thinking skills; and analysis and use of data to drive curricular and instructional practice
- Provide resources to parents about child development, parenting, and learning differences
- Articulate between and among grades concerning curriculum and instruction
- Make certain faculty and support staff meet and maintain existing accreditation standards
- See to it that the school's cultural sensitivity and Gospel values are reflected in book selection, printed displays, staffing, and daily witness
- Ensure religion teachers meet existing certification standards as catechists
- Add ongoing professional development (to include religious formation) as a criteria for hiring
- Provide professional development opportunities (to include financial support)

STANDARD 8

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

Objectives:

- Attain Department of Education Blue Ribbon School status, or similar professional status
- Attain 85% proficiency on End of Year Scantron testing for Reading at all grade levels
- Attain 80% proficiency on end of the year Scantron Testing for Math at all grade levels
- Continue the use of online programs to reinforce learning and for summer review
- Institute a Curriculum Committee to meet regularly to review vertical and horizontal integration of standards and objectives of written curriculum
- Teachers shall submit quarterly and yearly plans at the beginning of the academic school year
- Use the recommendations of the Archdiocese of Washington for periodic (at least annual) teacher observations
- Teachers will receive written feedback regarding classroom performance and areas for improvement
- All new faculty will receive a written assessment within three months in the classroom
- National, state, local and archdiocesan groups will be used to compare and evaluate school test results
- Provide professional development through Archdiocese of Washington and in school programs on the analysis of test data
- Provide information from the test publishers to the parents about testing
- Develop an emphasis on oral speaking and oral presentation at each grade level 1 through 8
- Develop a common rubric in the lower, elementary, and middle school for expected work in Reading responses, Math explanations, Science and Social Studies
- Faculty will create consensus and develop written expectations to cover policies on extra credit, make-up work, late work and homework
- Teachers will meet in grade level groups to develop prompts and exemplar responses in math, reading, social studies, and science for grades 3-8
- Faculty will evaluate student responses by a committee of teachers who are not responsible for the assignment

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.

Objectives:

- Develop and use a system of peer tutoring
- Make student service hours a requirement for graduation
- Create a full time Resource Teacher position to assist students with learning differences
- Develop support groups for students to assist with bullying, divorced/separated parents, wellness, and behavior management

DOMAIN 4

Operational Vitality

STANDARD 10

An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three to five year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.

Objectives:

- Institute a Financial Committee to utilize experts in non-profit funding and management to develop a three to five year financial plan
- Include capital campaigns for current and long term initiatives in budgets and the financial plan
- Ensure financial data includes such areas as cost per child, salaries, health benefits, retirement costs, etc.
- Disseminate financial information to families regarding the financial plan and the budget to explain total cost per child
- Investigate outside sources of revenue (grants, gifts, etc.)

STANDARD 11

An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies developed in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

Objectives:

- Designate a staff member to be tasked with ensuring full compliance with Archdiocese of Washington and school Human Resource policies
- Create position descriptions and develop Human Resource procedures document to include hiring, compensation, and benefits, etc.
- Review staff salaries annually for fairness and competitiveness
- Utilize a salary scale incorporating education, and years of experience, and other factors
- Ensure the Human Resources policies and procedures specifically address opportunities for professional growth, health care, and retirement
- Develop a comprehensive staff/faculty handbook to include information about staff responsibilities, hiring, compensation, accountability, professional development, healthcare, termination and retirement

STANDARD 12

An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.

Objectives:

- Develop an annual budget to include facilities/equipment/capital improvement and technology
- Develop a rolling five year capital improvement plan (to include facilities, equipment and technology)

STANDARD 13

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

Objectives:

- Develop a Marketing Plan to include communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development/fundraising
- Establish, utilize, and increase an alumni database
- Initiate a robust grant application process