

# St. Elizabeth School

## School Advisory Board

### Strategic Plan for 2015-2020

Approved by the School Advisory Board

July 13, 2015

#### *Prayer for Strategic Planning*

*God of wisdom and love, we gather in Your name to do Your work, confident in Your constant guidance and encouragement.*

*May Your Holy Spirit come upon us and lead us in the path of faith, excellence, achievement and inspiration.*

*Help us to lead St. Elizabeth School in a positive direction so that we may continue to work together in a loving and giving community.*

*We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, the perfect guide and leader.*

*Amen.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

***The Strategic Plan Process:*** The Strategic Planning Process began in 2014 with discussions amongst the School Principal, the Pastor and the School Advisory Council. Additional parents, faculty, students and alumni were engaged in the process. Meetings were held within the framework of existing School Advisory Board committees and focused on identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement. The results of these meetings are summarized in the Draft Strategic Plan for 2015-2019. ***The Strategic Planning Standing Committee of the School Advisory Board is charged by the Archdiocese of Newark, "To create, monitor, and update the long-range (3-5 years) strategic plan including specifics for the coming school year.***

***Foundation Documents:*** The St. Elizabeth School Mission and Vision Statement, the Middle States Association of College and Schools Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools "Designing Our Future," Peer Review Team Accreditation Report, the Application / Assessment for Blue Ribbon Status, and the Archdiocese of Newark Guidelines for Local School Advisory Boards Schools (Lighting the Way: Building a New Era in Catholic Education) were used as guiding documents for this endeavor.

***Goals:*** This plan recognizes that academic excellence at St. Elizabeth School demands that each student acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for them to reach their full potential and for them to be an engaged disciple of Christ. Aspiring for academic excellence demands that students are taught to seek the truth, make moral decisions and integrate their faith into their lives. The Strategic Planning Process developed six draft goals to ensure rigorous instruction, wonderful engagement and a thoughtful plan for the necessary resources to ensure these goals and objectives are met. This Strategic Plan should guide decision making and link budgeting with planning for the next five years. It is an evolving document that will be updated and changed as required.

### ***Guiding Values:***

- 1) Faith development, morality, ethics and good citizenship are core components of a St. Elizabeth student's experience built upon an understanding of Gospel values, Catholic teaching and tradition.
- 2) St. Elizabeth School and its parents value academic excellence and supports a rigorous academic program designed to challenge all students to levels of achievement that build skills, abilities and knowledge; it provides differentiated instruction to accommodate students' wide range of gifts and needs, and it integrates technology throughout the instructional program to enhance teaching and learning.
- 3) St. Elizabeth School faculty, staff and parents value opportunities to expand our Christ centered environment with active student engagement and extracurricular activities and programs that expand our students' social, physical and emotional development.
- 4) The St. Elizabeth School community recognizes that a strong relationship between students, faculty, staff, principal, pastor, parents, parish, and alumni thrives on trust and flourishes when ideas and opinions are shared; the active communication and participation of all constituents is vital.

### ***Next Steps:***

- 1) This draft document is shared with all current registered and incoming parents for their review and input; each family is requested to complete a survey that ranks their agreement with the objectives of this draft (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree.)
- 2) The principal engages faculty for their review, input and study to determine the feasibility of the plan and changes needed to the curriculum to achieve the academic goals. Recommendations are incorporated.

- 3) Focus groups are held with the Parish Community and Alumni to gain their support and endorsement of the Strategic Plan. Recommendations are incorporated.
- 4) The principal and pastor approve the final version of the Strategic Plan and present it to the Archdiocesan Schools Office for acceptance.
- 5) “Achievement Targets” are then set to specifically measure the effectiveness of each objective. (A baseline must be established, targets for each year suggested, responsible person(s) assigned, and the necessary resources requested / allocated.)
- 6) A process is established to monitor and ensure successful progress is made on all goals; periodic reports on the status of goals is shared with the St. Elizabeth School Community and the Archdiocesan Schools Office.

**Goal I                      Academic Excellence**

***GOAL – Aspire for academic excellence and Catholic identity to ensure that each St. Elizabeth School student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to become a disciple of Christ, to seek truth, make moral decisions and integrate their faith into their lives. Ensure that the need of every child is met and that every child is prepared for high school.***

**Objectives:**

**(Additional objectives will be sought from the Faculty Task Force.)**

- 1) Ensure St. Elizabeth School has approved measurable curriculum standards for each subject, including specials. Create an approved schedule for replacements of required textbooks and resources needed for all subjects to meet the curriculum standards, as required by the Archdiocese.
- 2) Assess the need for more academic administration, technology support, or administrative assistance to provide curricular oversight and

- alignment as well as provide project management; find new resources or shift current resources to fund.
- 3) Create an Annual Staff Development Plan to provide on-site and off-site professional and spiritual development opportunities for all faculty and staff.
  - 4) Develop a Resource Room for differentiated learning and provide the resources necessary to provide faculty development for this purpose. Establish a systematic effort to continually assess how these students are served and are progressing.
  - 5) Distinguish St. Elizabeth School by securing National Academy Status as appropriate to further recognize and promote the School's excellence.
  - 6) Enhance the Middle School Math Program with additional minutes dedicated to Math on a daily basis.
  - 7) Ensure that the curriculum is coordinated both vertically and horizontally. Provide additional communication to parents on curricular enhancements.
  - 8) Recruit student teachers to augment and enrich the School learning environment, as well as produce interest in Catholic education careers.
  - 9) Construct teaching practices that advance STEM education in K-8 classes.
  - 10) Research and evaluate Early Education Center accreditation.

**Goal II                      Facilities and Capital Improvements**

***GOAL – St. Elizabeth School will have facilities and grounds that reflect our Catholic identity, which are visually appealing and are competitive with the best schools in the Archdiocese of Newark and Bergen County. We will complete a full facilities review and develop an annual improvement plan to ensure that St.***

***Elizabeth School maintains high quality facilities that accommodate superior programs and that maintains building code compliance. Identify and take actions to correct areas of security vulnerability whenever possible.***

**Objectives:**

- 1) Evaluate opportunities to renovate the existing Library and Computer Science Lab to develop a state-of-the-art Media Information Commons/Library in that location or another location. Professionally examine that space as an opportunity for additional well-designed classroom space.
- 2) Request a full Space Utilization Study of the Parish Campus to determine opportunities for better utilization and to seek innovative ways to make best use of the existing buildings and grounds. Explore and identify the creation of additional usable space.
- 3) Identify the best Early Childhood Education Center concepts / practices and if needed and feasible design a separate, nurturing learning environment for the Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4 in accordance with State and Archdiocesan guidelines.
- 4) Evaluate and reassign 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade class room space if appropriate and possible to apply a Junior High concept to enhance learning and socializing for the students.
- 5) Plan for necessary repair, replacement and refurbishment needs of the physical plant and develop a Master Plan with a Capital Improvement priority schedule. Specifically evaluate common space needs such as the Gym and Cafeteria.
- 6) Conduct an Energy Audit and determine ways for the school to be more sustainable, cost effective and energy efficient. Engage the students in projects to be a “greener” school.

- 7) Form a Safety Task Force to meet as needed to ensure all documents and procedures are current and reflect best practices, as well as review opportunities for continued enhancement to school safety. Develop and evaluate annually a Safety Plan for St. Elizabeth School.

### **Goal III                      Enhanced Student Engagement**

***GOAL - St. Elizabeth School will seek opportunities to expand a Christ-centered environment to extracurricular activities, programs and events that broaden the students' social, physical and emotional development. The school will enhance collaborative efforts with the parish to foster more active participation in the parish.***

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Develop an extracurricular Distinguished Speakers Series for students to introduce them to alumni achievements, to innovative successful professionals, and STREAM professionals to celebrate themes, Catholic values and engage more fully in experiential learning.
- 2) Infuse available media technology into student publications such as the yearbook and Crusader newsletters
- 3) Provide age appropriate volunteer opportunities for all ages / grades to reinforce our belief in lifelong service inspired by Jesus Christ and our patron Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. Integrate a Social Concerns outreach component of our School to better support the Parish, and to work together to nurture the faith and service of our middle school students.
- 4) Review all current student activities and clubs and select new programs that further advance the mission and academic goals of the school and better serve the interests of the students.

- 5) Develop and offer an Art Club which provides students additional exposure to different forms and media (Drafting, painting, photography, digital design, etc.)
- 6) Build new programming to continually ensure a positive culture and address issues related to any behavior that could be categorized as bullying or harassment.
- 7) Assess new family orientation to ensure a welcoming and supportive environment.
- 8) Develop opportunities for the school to support the sacramental program at the Parish, i.e. have the little brother or sister continue the relationship thru letters for the Confirmation retreat and the 9<sup>th</sup> grader support Jesus Day or a similar program. (Allows alumni to have an immediate role back with the school.
- 9) Create a Homework Academy to reinforce daily lessons and assist in a tutorial manner for students seeking consistent extra help.

**Goal IV                      Enriched Technology**

***GOAL – St. Elizabeth School will enable all students to utilize technology to enhance their education, communities and lives with an understanding of the moral and social ramifications of their technology use.***

**Objectives:**

- 1) Ensure a standard process is in place to monitor Power School and Google Calendar to ensure its effectiveness for students, faculty and parents. Solve any training issues for faculty.
- 2) Fully empower faculty to utilize technology in all aspects of the teaching and communicating with parents and students. Annually assess and evaluate technology needs – link this to budget and planning.

- 3) Better utilize existing technology and create better marketing opportunities to enhance external communications and marketing.
- 4) Research and complete the next generation of web design for St. Elizabeth School. Increase as needed the School's connectivity. Complete the next generation of the Website design as determined necessary.
- 5) Keep a current inventory and up to date analysis of the School's technology (asset management) to plan and budget for future needs.
- 6) Annually survey faculty to determine their technology needs. Create a task force of faculty and others to examine "industry" best standards. Seek creative partnerships to develop opportunities for cutting edge technology.
- 7) Create a strong social media presence for the School and create a structure to maintain it.
- 8) Integrate the Archdiocese Technology curriculum map across all grades and all subjects.

**Goal V                      Development / Marketing Opportunities**

***GOAL – Recognize that Catholic schools exist in a competitive marketplace and families have an array of choices, recognize that UC Census charts show a decline in the over-all school-aged populations, and recognize that the number of infant baptisms has declined. These obvious trends point to a shrinking pool of prospective students. Develop an important and an aggressive school marketing campaign that fosters a strong public image, promotes the value and benefits of a Catholic school education, stabilizes enrollment, and supports long-term fund raising utilizing a variety of media.***

**Objectives:**

- 1) Streamline all special event fund raising efforts to increase by 20% net revenues by 2020. Strengthen the outreach of the Annual Fund and

Guardian Angel Society to increase net revenue and potential for St. Elizabeth School. Increase annually for a 25% increase by 2020.

- 2) Evaluate opportunities for broadening the base of volunteers and use of volunteer hours. Create a document that celebrates and focuses on volunteer management and the impact volunteers have on the school.
- 3) Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of school wide communication – conduct an inventory of current communication practices to determine areas for improvement.
- 4) Produce an Annual Report each year to market the accomplishments of the students, faculty, and school; as well as express appreciation to all donors through donor recognition.
- 5) Through the use of Class Parents or Class Agents enlist assistance to specifically promote two unique opportunities or projects that each class accomplished for 22 submissions in the media; also have a Marketing Committee promote overall school projects such as the Social Concerns efforts, the Christmas gift drive, the Sacred Heart Field Day, academic accomplishments, special scouting projects, class trips, author visits, athletic successes, the school play, etc.
- 6) Through the Archdiocese of Newark, construct a St. Elizabeth Alumni Data Base for marketing, fund raising, and social networking opportunities. Protect the integrity of the database. Create profiles for the School Website which can assist with recruitment efforts.
- 7) Restate the purpose, oversight and goals of the St. Elizabeth Endowment Fund. Appoint an Investment Sub-Committee to advise the principal.
- 8) Conduct an annual Board Appraisal to ensure leadership is fulfilling its responsibility. Set annual goals for each Committee. Select future Board Members in alignment with priorities identify in the Strategic Plan.
- 9) Develop and implement a marketing plan that supports families when transitioning from milestone target grades: from Pre-Kindergarten -

develop channels for publicizing the strength of the K through 5 lower school program to prospective parents; from 5<sup>th</sup> grade – demonstrate the success of the middle school; and for 8<sup>th</sup> grader – discover additional ways with high school advisors and alumni that assist transitioning to high school.

- 10) Provide a communication channel between non-school related parishioners and the school; make school information and school accomplishments more prominent in Parish Bulletin, encourage Parish to visit Website, create a parish email list to receive Crusader Chronicle and other flyers, increase the presence of St. Elizabeth students' at all appropriate parish events.

#### **Goal VI Finance and Enrollment Management**

***GOAL – Research, develop and implement an enrollment management plan that promotes the values and benefits of a Catholic school education, which fosters a strong public image to increase enrollment and secures long term funding. Ensure a balanced budget that will provide financial support for the schools' short and long term operations. Control tuition increases while continuing to provide a quality Blue Ribbon Education.***

#### **Objectives:**

- 1) Construct a financial plan for St. Elizabeth School to ensure it is 85% self-sustaining by 2018 and 100% self-sustaining by 2020.
- 2) Recognize the fiduciary responsibility of all School Advisory Board members as defined by the Archdiocese and ensure members have timely and accurate financial reports. Draft and approve annual budget to be presented to pastor and principal with appropriate tuition rates and meets the guidelines of Lighting the Way, as identified by the Archdiocese.
- 3) While honoring capped classes, actively and creatively market the classes that have additional capacity. Keep a waiting list at all times.

- 4) Continue to fund need-based scholarships through a planned fair and thoughtful approach. Approve budget annually for these awards and track all awards through the FACTS Program.
- 5) Reassess our growth and space utilization plan for the School after the Parish Center is renovated and / or expanded.
- 6) Increase sources of operational auxiliary income through facilities rentals and explore additional options for providing summer programming activities or enrichment courses.