

State of the School Report

St. John Paul II Catholic School
January 25, 2019

Dear St. John Paul II Catholic School Community,

Thank you for your welcome and assistance since I stepped in as Principal this past July. It has been an incredibly rewarding year so far, and I look forward to serving you for years to come.

Framework for Success

The most exciting part of this year has been working with the Ascension Catholic Academy and our school community on our Framework for Success, the strategic planning process that names how well our schools are doing today and dreaming of what our schools will look like in the next 5-7 years. The process of creating the Framework for Success aligned perfectly with our accreditation process through the Minnesota Nonpublic Schools Accrediting Association (MNSAA). Accreditation is the recognition non-public schools receive when they demonstrate to other quality nonpublic schools a commitment to excellence and improvement. It is a voluntary association and designation that we have held for many years.

MNSAA Accreditation

Last year and this year, we have been going through the self study part of the accreditation process as an academy of schools with St. Peter Claver and Ascension. The staff at all three schools have been busy capturing how we are working to meet MNSAA's seven principles for successful schools (Mission and Philosophy, Teaching and Learning, Climate for Learning, Communication and Community Relations, Personnel, Leadership and Governance, and Strategic Plan for Improvement), and how we will work to improve in the future. Parents at JP II became part of this process last Spring when they were invited to parent focus groups that helped us articulate our strengths and challenges. Parents will also have an opportunity to talk openly about their school experience when a MNSAA Visiting Team of principals and teachers of accredited schools conducts a site visit at JP II on March 6th. This process is not merely a formality, it is an outside acknowledgement of the strengths a school has and their commitment to work on the challenges it faces. I will be reminding our community of the MNSAA process in school newsletters and folders from now until our visit in March. I wholeheartedly thank our St. John Paul and Ascension Catholic Academy staff and parents for their contributions to the self study and strategic plan.

Strategic Plan Goals

The Framework for Success, our strategic plan, has four main goals:

1. Scholars will be rooted in their Christian faith, prepared for high school academic success and possess the necessary social-emotional tools to thrive.

2. Academic leaders inspire scholars, faculty, staff, families and community partners to achieve our mission and enliven our Guiding Principles.
3. Faith-driven and culturally responsive educators will facilitate high-quality learning experiences that prepare scholars for high school academic success and equip them with the necessary social-emotional tools to thrive.
4. We will ensure the viability and stability of the Academy through effective financial planning, development, marketing initiatives, and human resources.

Serving Our Scholars

This year we have already been committed to living these goals in the school. Our curriculum is tied to MN State Standards and measured annually through the NWEA MAP test, ACCESS for English Language Learners test, the MCAs, report cards four times a year, and conferences twice a year. We live our Christian mission through daily religion classes, daily prayer, weekly Mass, monthly rosary, and celebrations of the Liturgical Year. Individual learner profiles, goal setting, and blended learning methods personalize education for each scholar. The Top 20 social emotional learning program and onsite counselors through Catholic Charities and City Connects support scholar success. Onsite Title I reading services, our partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools for special education services, onsite English Language Coordinator, and individual learning and behavior plans help us accommodate scholars' special needs. Teachers and administrative staff keep in direct communication with families through the weekly newsletter and family folders, our redesigned website, the Class Dojo application, student support meetings, and parent fellowship gatherings.

Academic Excellence

Our teachers have been engaged in professional development in the area of designing more effective reading experiences so that our scholars engage in grade level materials. Teachers in grades 5-8 have been piloting Blended Learning, a more focused approach toward differentiation utilizing robust technology programs in math and language arts. As a whole staff, we engaged with an English Language Learning consultant who is helping us forge a path forward to better serve our scholars who speak languages other than English in their homes. We are also trying to better establish teacher coaching models to help all our educators feel supported and grow to meet their professional goals.

Robust Leadership

My role has been to engage an incredible administrative team--our Dean of Students, Brigid McClelland, and our School Secretary, Norys Figuera--to better serve our scholars and teachers each day. This team serves as a strong JPll advocate--to the Ascension Catholic Academy network for resources and initiatives that best fit our mission. I also could not do my job without teacher leaders who have stepped forward to help foster a positive school climate, support individual scholar needs, create meaningful faith opportunities, and sustain continued academic

excellence. And, with you, our JP II parents, I have found the opportunities to hear your wisdom and feedback to be incredibly helpful. I look forward to continued partnership with you.

Ascension Catholic Academy Association

The Ascension Catholic Academy (ACA) is an incredible community of visionary leaders and committed ministers. Together, our three schools have created a new and improving governance team whose support is invaluable to our vitality and viability. The ACA continues to make the commitment and emerge successful in its efforts to fundraise and provide needed financial aid. They are committed to best practices including a new movement to gravitate to a more robust educational software program, PowerSchool, which you will hear more about in the months to come. The ACA Admissions and Communications Team is a talented group of people who are energetic to share the good news of our school and work tirelessly to find families like yours who are searching for a school community like St. John Paul II Catholic School.

Re-Enrollment for 2019-20

This brings us to Catholic Schools Week, the beginning of a new semester, and the kick off of the re-enrollment process for 2019-20. We invite all families to begin making their plans and commitment to our school beginning at Winter Conferences next week. Following this verification of your contact information to re-enroll, we will be setting up individual family meetings to walk you through the process of enrolling, applying for financial aid, and creating your annual plans and tuition agreement. We are just as committed to helping families access financial aid next year as we have been the past two years. For this reason, we would love to fill our school with scholars who have the desire to succeed in school and have parents and guardians willing to partner with us to make this happen. Do you know some of these families? Will you help us connect with them? Please see the referral form that accompanies this letter for more information about how you can help us grow our school!

I hope you see what an exceptional community we have. We could not live our mission without our involved families, dedicated staff, and committed leaders. I look forward to living the annual actions of our Framework for Success in our efforts to serve each one of our beloved scholars as they strive to reach their academic and personal goals. Please re-enroll at conferences, identify families who you think would be a good fit with our school, and share the good news that is St. John Paul II Catholic School!

Gratefully,

Tricia Menzhuber
Principal