



# **Nativity of Mary School**

## **Strategic Direction**

**2023-2027**

*Moving Nativity of Mary School forward by focusing on enrollment, fundraising & development, Catholic identity, and the student experience*

**Vision Statement:**

**Nativity of Mary School's vision is to fully develop each student's God-given talent in a respectful, safe, and Christ-centered environment.**

**Mission Statement:**

**Nativity of Mary School's mission is to educate children in the Catholic tradition, placing emphasis upon moral and spiritual formation. A pursuit of academic excellence and a focus on service to others, as Jesus taught, are equal areas of importance.**

**Student Mission/pledge**

**I will be respectful**

**I will be responsible**

**I will be a problem solver**

**I will be an achiever**

**I will be peaceful**

**and I will follow Christ in all that I say and do.**

## **Strategic Priorities**

### **1. Catholic Identity**

- Instilling Catholic values & virtues by integrating the Faith into the school day and school culture.

### **2. Enrollment**

- Enroll 20 Kindergarten students annually
- Increase student retention
- Evaluate teacher compensation opportunities based on enrollment growth

### **3. Fundraising and Development**

- Increase the total amount raised by focusing on development opportunities
- Evaluate teacher compensation opportunities based on the success of fundraising & development

### **4. Student Experience**

- Develop well-rounded students in a safe, Christ-centered environment that is rooted in the Catholic faith.

## **Strategic Priority #1: Catholic Identity**

**Owner:** Nativity Parish Pastor & Principal

**Team Members:** Catholic Identity Subcommittee, Religion Teacher and other teachers at Nativity

**Desired Outcome:** Instilling Catholic values & virtues by integrating the faith into the school day and school culture.

### **Vivid Description:**

Enhance the Catholic identity of our students by integrating the gospel values into every aspect of their school day. Implement best practices and reallocate time/money towards this initiative. Consistently work with FF.

### **Strategies**

- Year 1
  1. Continue the religious formation and education of the faculty and staff so they can carry out new initiatives
    - Participate in Diocesan Initiatives that deepen the faculty's understanding of the Catholic Church
    - A strong expectation from all teachers that their students are active participants in the Mass, in morning prayer, etc.
  2. Follow the liturgical calendar within the curriculum.
  3. Celebration of Saints within the school. Studying the lives of the saints and holy people helps build family faith and inspires Catholic children. We celebrate the feast days of saints, events that mark salvation history, and the dedication of churches - all to commemorate the ways the Lord has been and continues to be at work in the world.
    - Every classroom is identified by a saint. Example: Grade 3 is the *Saint Francis Room*
      - Statue of the saint in each classroom
      - Incorporate the values & virtues of the Saint into class instruction, pep rally presentations etc.
    - Each month a saint is already celebrated in the chapel. Incorporate this into class teachings.
    - 'Saint of the day' incorporated into daily announcements

4. Partner with external organizations to bring additional resources to Nativity
- Years 2-5
    1. Catholic learning opportunities to be identified & implemented in years 2-5
      - Class retreat - many avenues to explore:
        - Differing duration based on grade level - younger grades ½ day, middle school full day, 8th grade off site retreat.
        - Have each teacher/grade plan their annual retreat as part of their curriculum.
          - Identify resources & structure to provide them to assist in planning.
          - Sample schedule
          - Move the students out of the normal setting. Paa center, outside under the tree, grass in front of Mary, etc.
        - Service projects - look for different opportunities to serve the community instead of collecting items. Classes will pair up to make a greater impact. When possible incorporate service projects around the teaching of class Saints
        - Incorporate speakers to talk & teach about different topics. This could be much easier to implement than a ½ day retreat, which requires a lot of planning and execution time. When it's a different voice it is more impactful
      - Experiences - living rosary, stations of the cross
      - Ensuring students know basic prayers, rosary, adoration, etc
      - Ensure all students are comfortable in the church, know everything about it, altar servers, Stations of the cross, baptismal font etc.
      - Identify Diocesan resources & retreat opportunities as they are available.
    2. Buddies - Nativity has built a strong 'Buddy system' where older grades are paired up with younger grades to guide, teach and learn.
      - Look for opportunities to grow this initiative
      - Tutoring
      - Reading to classes
      - Group projects & initiatives (service projects)
    3. Communication with parents - include them in the discussion on what is being taught
      - Parents are the primary educator, school is secondary.
      - Communicate what is being taught this week in religion. Encourage parents to ask their child how Jesus would respond in the situation

- Have a “Cougar news corner” - great opportunity to communicate Saints, Saints days, and important things happening on the religious calendar.
  - Is there a parent/grandparent/parishioner that wants to help?
  - Practical ways your family can mirror these values & virtues at home
- Teacher page / google classroom - Ensure they convey what is being taught at that time.
- Consistent Priest presence in school
- Vacation Bible School

**Action Steps (Year 1):**

- Establish a team (tie into the subcommittee on the Board)
- Teacher team leaders: Potentially Anne Bodensteiner and Judy Gehring
- Introduce the overall initiative
- Formation of the faculty and staff

**Quick Win:**

- School’s mission is displayed in front hallway and in each classroom
- Encouraging our students and staff to learn and embrace the mission statement
- Simplify and update the mission and vision statement
- Rebeautifying the entrance space with the statues

**Resources Needed:**

- Volunteers
  - Parents to assist in carrying out student retreats
  - Leaders in faith to lead formation for the faculty and staff

## **Strategic Priority #2: Enrollment**

**Owner:** Director of Development & Principal

**Team members:** Director of Development, Principal, Enrollment Committee

### **Desired Outcomes:**

1. 20 students enrolled in Kindergarten for 2023-2024 school year.
2. Retention
  - a. Retain more students from KR to K yearly.
  - b. Review & reduce K-8 enrollment slippage.
3. Evaluate teacher compensation opportunities based on enrollment growth.

### **Vivid Description:**

To be at capacity in grades Kindergarten through eight with at least 23 students per class.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

1. Review grade level enrollment.

### **Strategies:**

1. Enrollment Committee – Create a formal committee with Parents, Students, Teachers, School Board, Secretary, Principal, Advancement Director
  1. Planning for Open House- Ask for parent volunteers
  2. School Ambassador Program - become more active in the community. This includes ‘on campus’ events as well as participating in community events.
    - i. Parades are one simple way to be active in the community. Great way to engage current school families to participate in community events, and also maintain a presence in the community for prospective families to see our name.
2. Track inquiries/ Formalize a process to obtain & track all inquiries to the school. This will help determine how effective our marketing efforts are.
  1. Emails
  2. Phone calls
  3. Tours
  4. Open house
  5. Be intentional and formalize follow up communications for all inquiries.
3. Marketing:
  1. Enhance online marketing efforts to raise awareness of Nativity utilizing the following:
    - i. Geo fencing
    - ii. Google ads

- iii. Capture email addresses, purchase email lists
  - 2. Identify marketing opportunities to ensure families that are considering schools other than Clarence Middle School are aware of Nativity as an option
    - i. In 9 out of the last 10 school years, our incoming 5th grade class has increased by 1-6 students. For public school students in the CCSD, this is when they begin middle school; the students in all the elementary school buildings are pooled into one building.
  - 3. Enhance branding and marketing - leads to a consistent look and message.
  - 4. Differentiate marketing efforts based on the Enrollment funnel.
    - i. Raise awareness of Nativity for prospects.
    - ii. Increase Engagement for inquiries.
    - iii. Create excitement for families who've made deposits & enrolled.
- 4. Welcoming School Environment
  - 1. Customer service mindset- How students & staff treat visitors
  - 2. Improve curb appeal of Nativity- Update & renew landscaping.
  - 3. Consistent furniture within each classroom, moving towards uniform furniture throughout school.
- 5. Increase K-Readiness enrollment
  - 1. Currently have 3 KR classes - (1) 3 year-olds and (2) 4 year-olds
  - 2. Add additional KR classes as demand & space permits. KR is a revenue generator for the school. Increasing the number of KR students gives a larger pool of students to continue for K-8.
  - 3. Add Summer Programming to bridge the gap between summer and fall which will aid in retaining students
- 6. Retention
  - 1. KR to K
    - i. Host in-school events to showcase the "family feel" of Nativity.
    - ii. Communication/marketing efforts
    - iii. Emails to current KR families.
    - iv. Direct outreach to this group by enrollment committee (as appropriate).
  - 2. Be intentional with monitoring and addressing student 'slippage.'
    - i. Every year we gain and lose K-8 students for various reasons. How can we reduce losing students?
    - ii. Strategy – increase social worker position from PT to FT, with an emphasis on bumping into classrooms even more to focus on Social Emotional Learning.

**Year 1**

1. Develop an Enrollment Committee.
2. Direct contact with all KR families. Gauge interest in furthering their child's education at Nativity.
3. Roll out summer programming.

**Year 2-3**

1. Become more active at community events. Planning & participation with the enrollment committee will be critical.

**Quick Win:**

1. Start a Summer Program for Summer 2023

**Resources Needed:**

1. Financial resources for furniture & updating curb appeal.

### **Strategic Priority #3: Fundraising & Development**

**Owner:** Treasurer of the School Board & HSA President

**Team Members:** Parents, Board of Trustees, Administration, Pastor

#### **Desired Outcome:**

1. Increase the total amount raised by focusing on development.
2. Evaluate teacher compensation based on success of fundraising & development efforts.

#### **Vivid Description:**

Continue to fundraise the required 15% of the school operating budget, while also cultivating long term development opportunities.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

1. Financial review

#### **Strategies:**

1. Alumni Association
  - a. Year 1 - Develop an alumni database and begin outreach. Goals:
    - i. Create dialogue with alumni and their parents.
    - ii. Where are our alumni, what are they up to? Accomplishments?
    - iii. Alumni newsletter.
    - iv. Social media – use alumni update content to recognize and applaud accomplishments.
  - b. Alumni golf tournament – focus on developing our alumni association and asking for their support for this event.
  - c. Year 2 - Begin to cultivate our alumni association for development opportunities.
    - i. Include donation ‘coupons’ in each newsletter
  - d. Year 2 & 3 - Work to have the alumni association run by its members. Identify a mission.
2. Raise our kids up – look for every opportunity to recognize and applaud the accomplishments of our current and former students. Look for every opportunity to show our supporters what they are supporting
  - a. Church bulletin
  - b. Cougar news
  - c. Alumni newsletter
  - d. Social media
3. Donor list database – create a database for every individual that supports Nativity school. These are all individuals/companies that have supported Nativity in the past.
  - a. Utilize this database for future fundraising or development efforts

- b. Research and identify database manager software for increased usability and capability.
      - i. Who will administer and maintain this? Need to identify.
  4. Capital campaign - potential for the future. Will revisit in year 2 or year 3 for viability

**Quick Win:**

1. Add 'donate now' button to the school website
2. Giving day - do this annually in November. Do not include this as part of the fundraising budget, but use it for development or specific needs identified by school administration.
  - a. Create buckets for people to give - Arts, Athletics, Science, Teacher wish list
3. Do periodic 'wish lists' for functions (i.e. teacher items, music, arts, science, theater, sports etc)
4. Ask our community when we need help (Ex.Put in the bulletin that we need help with marketing)
5. "Pass the hat" at concerts

**Resources Needed:**

1. Database software
2. Alumni committee

## **Strategic Priority #4: Student Experience**

**Owner:** Administration

**Team Members:** Administration, The Board of Trustees and certain subcommittees, Art Teacher, Music Teacher, Physical Education Teacher, Social Worker

### **Desired Outcomes:**

Nativity aims to develop well-rounded students in a safe, Christ-centered environment that is rooted in the Catholic faith.

### **Vivid Description:**

It is our goal to create a safe and nurturing environment for Nativity students, while providing a wide array of opportunities for students to explore their God-given talents through academics, the arts, sports, and other extra-curriculars. In order to develop well-rounded students, we will continue to develop a rigorous curriculum along with robust CSEL programming.

### **Key Performance Indicators: ?**

### **Strategies:**

1. Academics
  - a. Curriculum
    - i. Adopting a new ELA series in K-5 (Years 1-3)
    - ii. Continued work on vertical alignment for KR-8 (Years 1-3)
      1. Make sure that topics build on each other year - year
      2. PK - 5th - vertical alignment by grade
      3. vertical alignment by subject for middle school
    - iii. Vertical alignment revisited in Math/K-8 (Years 2-5) (began 3 years ago)
  - b. Standards Plus Initiative:
    - i. Standards Plus curriculum: key ideas need to be clearly stated and communicated to current parents and potential new students (i.e. How is the program utilized? What are student outcomes? What tools are being used to measure and monitor on-going individual student performance?)

- ii. Create vivid descriptions of what the initiative is and where it is going.
        - 1. Put on website
        - 2. Put detail into it - how are we going to achieve this. What is the plan? How does it help the students both short term as well as long term?
    - c. STREAM
      - i. Enrich student learning & experiences with STREAM academies. Continue the important focus on STREAM, while looking for opportunities to grow & expand.
    - d. Professional Development:
      - i. Enhance instructors' skills, instructional practices, and improve their use of assessment tools to identify learning gaps in student academic areas; use student data to drive lesson planning for the purpose of on-going student academic improvement.
      - ii. Professional Learning Communities: (on-going) implement teacher best practices for collaborative, meaningful discussions for the purpose of improving student academic success. Utilize data to discover learning gaps. Seek evidence of student growth which ultimately demonstrates that the Standards Plus Initiative is effective
      - iii. Training for all instructional staff on data driven instruction.
        - 1. using student data to drive classroom instruction (including differentiation and modifications for different-abled students);
        - 2. learn to extrapolate data from NYS assessments and school assessment tools (STAR) and use this data effectively to drive instruction forward (Shift in responsibility from Admin. and AIS staff to all teachers).
      - iv. Differentiated Instruction: Striving to get our students to the next level, in order to teach beyond the New York Standards which aligns with our Standards Plus Initiative
        - 1. Are there extra challenges for the kids that grasp the topic quickly, so they're not bored waiting for the rest of the class to catch up.
2. **CSEL (Catholic Social Emotional Learning): Social Emotional Competencies Integrated with Catholic Identity**
  - a. Continue to teach and promote CSEL

- b. Increase hours/pay for the social worker position at Nativity of Mary School
  - c. Prioritize mental health and self-care for the faculty & staff
  - d. Continued professional development in CSEL
  - e. What opportunities are there for our kids to get excited about being involved at school.
3. Art & Music
- a. Continue to secure instruments and integrate instruments into the music program.
  - b. Securing more resources to grow the arts at Nativity; a possible Arts fund.
    - i. Find a way to create an Arts Fund
  - c. Building up opportunities in the Arts: drama club, in-house band programming, art club, etc.
  - d. Maintain high quality faculty in the arts programming at Nativity. Provide new resources to grow these programs.
  - e. Professional development opportunities
4. Sports
- a. Continue to provide an assortment of athletics for students to participate in
5. School Safety
- a. Secure Entrance with a set of double doors that are both locked (possible capital project?)
  - b. Safety film on all the windows on the first floor and on the school office window
  - c. Update security camera and additional cameras throughout the building
  - d. Continued Faculty & Staff Training in school safety
  - e. Continue to seek building assessments from local law enforcement

**Quick Win:** Teachers can create Amazon Wish Lists and post them on their teacher pages in order to obtain additional supplies for special projects.

**Resources Needed:** funding, continued teacher training and professional development

## **Implementation**

Implementing a strategic plan is more difficult than developing one. To successfully implement a plan, we need the following:

1. Ownership: A team will be assembled to implement each priority. The team has an owner who is responsible for scheduling meetings, coordinating efforts of the team, and providing progress updates to the management and team.
2. Regular updates: Each team owner will provide an update at The Board of Trustees' meetings that includes accomplishments, progress, goals for the upcoming month(s)/quarter(s), barriers, and other relevant information. On a quarterly basis, the board will have a deep dive into the strategic plan progress and to determine next steps.
3. Focus: To ensure success, teams need to identify those areas that will make the most positive impact for the school. Teams are charged with creating return on investment for the time and resources spent on these initiatives.
4. Digestible Information: The Strategic Plan will be rolled out slowly in order to get the buy-in from all stakeholders. One strategic priority will be shared each week in a "blast" from School Messenger beginning in September 2023.
5. The Message: Different messages will be developed for different groups (faculty, students, and parents).
6. Timeline: The Strategic Plan will be rolled out in the start of the new school year of 2023/2024
  - August 2023: Teachers are introduced to the Strategic Plan
  - September: Possible recorded meeting with all stakeholders that is then shared with the entire community.
  - September: Sections of the Strategic Plan are shared each week with the school community via School Messenger
  - Through Flock Notes the parish will disburse information as well. Coordination between the rectory and school will be critical.

**Strategic Priority #1: Catholic Identity**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

Strategy	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Ongoing religious formation & education of Faculty & Staff								
Follow liturgical calendar								
Celebration of Saints within the school								
Partner with external organizations to bring additional resources to Nativity								

**Strategy: Celebration of Saints**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Not started</b>	<b>Revise</b>	<b>Remove</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Each classroom is identified by a Saint								
Roll initiative out to the teachers								
Incorporate values & virtues of the Saint into class instruction, pep rally presentation etc.								
Statue for each classroom								
Incorporate 'Saint of the day' into daily announcements								

**Strategic Priority #2: Enrollment**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

Strategy	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Create enrollment committee								
Marketing								
Welcoming school environment								
Student retention								
Increase K-Readiness enrollment								

**Strategy: Enrollment committee**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

Initiative	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Create committee								
Planning for open house								
School ambassador program								

**Strategic Priority #3: Fundraising & development**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

<b>Strategy</b>	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Launch alumni association								
Raise our kids up								
Donor list database								

**Strategy: Alumni association**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

<b>Initiative</b>	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Create committee								
Develop database & begin outreach								
Alumni newsletter								

**Strategic Focus Area #4: Student experience**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

<b>Strategy</b>	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Academics								
CSEL								
Art & Music								
Sports								
School Safety								

**Strategy: Art & Music**

**Owner:**

**Team:**

<b>Initiative</b>	Owner	Timeline	Complete	Progress	Not started	Revise	Remove	Notes
Grow the number of instruments within the music program								
Look for opportunities to create art & music funding								
Increase & develop further opportunities for students to participate in the Arts								