



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

EXCELLENCE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

# 2013-2018 Strategic Plan

St. Joseph School, Downers Grove, IL

Prepared in partnership with:

USF Solutions

University of St. Francis

May 2012

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*Included under separate cover:*

Implementation Plan

Communications Piece

## Introduction

St. Joseph School in Downers Grove is a welcoming community of active followers of Christ committed to enhancing the lives of the children entrusted to our school. Our teachers and administration are dedicated to our students. Our parents are involved and present with their children. The advisory board is committed to improving the lives of the whole child. The religious leaders and Parish Council are dedicated to our school's mission and the growth of our student body.

St. Joseph School, in response to the Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office announcement of their 2011 strategic plan, has dedicated time, effort and resources to completing a school specific strategic plan to lead our school in a purposeful and focused manner over the next five years. The strategic plan supports the current goals of administration, our school's technology plan, marketing communications plan and development goals. The plan also supports the Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools directive to create a culture that plans continually to "ensure the viability and vitality of Catholic school education in the Diocese of Joliet for many years to come and...motivate all constituents to work together to achieve these goals" ("Lighting the Path to Our Future." Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office Strategic Plan, 2011).

St. Joseph School utilized the expertise of the Solutions Resource Center at the University of St. Francis, to help guide the strategic planning committee through a systematic process to develop goals, objectives and action items. In addition, the dedication and expertise of our school's advisory board and committee chairs, teacher committee, parish leadership and school administration helped provide for a robust and active process.

"Strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson, 2004).

St. Joseph School is proud to present this blueprint as a map for our future.

## Background

In October 2011, the St. Joseph School advisory board, along with Rev. Jerome Kish and Principal Rita Stasi, developed a proposed timeline and process steps for a strategic planning process. The advisory board assigned a strategic planning liaison and a strategic planning steering committee to seek the services of a consultant to help guide the process. In November 2011, the Solutions Resource Center at the University of St. Francis was chosen to help facilitate the development of the plan.

The strategic planning process involved several planning, kick-off and joint session meetings, conference calls and electronic communication with school and parish constituents; a communication process to parents; a parent and parishioner survey; review of local and Diocesan external factors; a series of goal setting meetings with advisory board members and school administration; and a parent input resource meeting. The process also involved the dedication and commitment of the Principal, Pastor, Teacher Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Advisory Board, Committee Chairs, Parish Council, Alumni Chair, and Strategic Planning Steering Committee led by the Strategic Plan Liaison.

Data and scanning included review of the following documents:

- Lighting the Path to Our Future- Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office Strategic Plan
- Strategic Planning Framework - Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools
- Strategic Plan Implementation Checklist for Schools – Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools
- Draft Organization Chart
- Websites – public and private schools in Downers Grove and surrounding areas.
- St. Joseph School Visual Identity & Message Guide
- St. Joseph School Marketing Communications Plan
- St. Joseph School Enrollment Communications Project Plan & Budget
- St. Joseph School Goals – Objectives (presented by administration)
- St. Joseph School Final 2008-2011 Technology Implementation Assessment
- Community High School District 99, Downers Grove North and South, Strategic Planning Process 2012-2011- Summary Report and Executive Summary
- St. Joseph School Development Committee Awareness Survey
- Draft Strategic Planning Outline from Advisory Board
- Saint Joseph Parish Golden Jubilee 1906-1956
- School Update Meeting Notes, April 24, 2012

The goals of the strategic planning process were identified as: confirm mission, identify a five year vision, identify five year strategic commitments supporting mission and vision and identify goals, objectives, and tasks to realize the strategic commitments.

## Early History of the School

St. Joseph School in Downers Grove was opened in 1910. Father Goodwin had been acutely aware of the need for a school, and he had arranged before this time for the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange to come to his little country church on Sundays to give religious instructions to the children. Sister Sacred Heart was among these sisters. When the school opened, three devoted Ursuline Sisters of Springfield, IL undertook the task of teaching the four R's. It was the first year of Catholic education in the town and it was the "first" for the Ursuline Sisters, too who began their first mission in the Chicago archdiocese. Great devotion to duty must have been a trait of these Sisters for their new mission was full of difficulties. Most important of all, there was no school building. A large room in the rear of the church was taken over and a thin partition used to make two classrooms. Mother Michelle was the first principal and she taught grades one through four in the one room behind the church; Mother Borgia was the second half of the faculty and she had grades five through eight. Sister Johanna, the third member of the community, was the house-keeper. The first graduation exercises were held June 13, 1911, for a class of four. They were August Riedy, August Morenz, Florence Pfaff, and Florence Conley, the latter now Mother Mary Columba of the Ursuline Sisters, and the first member of the parish to have a vocation.

In 1918, a classroom was opened in the convent to supplement those in the church and later a second room was used in the convent. By 1919 the student body had grown to 75, taught by the three sisters. As early as 1923, discussion about the need for a school building at St. Joseph started. A meeting was called in the home of Mr. Bender and plans for a fund raising drive were initiated. Men of the parish were assigned to teams and the faithful were asked to donate cash or make pledges for the building. Collections came to \$16,000 in cash and \$4,000 in pledges. A committee made a trip to the Chancery Office where they were promised a loan of \$150,000. Parish organizations took up the matter of financing the school through various programs including the Grand Vaudeville Entertainment program and the Knights of Columbus Glee Club at the Curtiss Theater and a chicken dinner for the parish. The building program received the blessing of Archbishop Mundelein in 1925 and an eight-room school and community hall was erected. The two-story Tudor Gothic structure was described as the best designed school building in the state at the time. The cornerstone was blessed by the Right Reverend Edward A. Kelly on August 2, 1925. The school building opened the next year, in the fall of 1926.

In 1930, the parish school had some 240 students. In 1931, the Ursuline Sisters were recalled by their superior to fill the needs of a new Junior College in Springfield, IL. The Sisters of Providence took over as teachers in the grade school.

*Retrieved in part from: St. Joseph School: The Golden Jubilee (1906-1956)*

## Mission, Vision, Philosophy

Several years ago, the mission for St. Joseph School was evaluated by an interdisciplinary committee. The mission was approved by a committee of teachers, the principal, the president, the pastor and the school board. As a component of the current strategic planning process, the mission was once again reviewed as a central element of the identity of the school.

For purposes of the 2013-2018 strategic planning process, the current mission statement has been adopted and was approved on April 16, 2012 by the school Advisory Board.

### Mission

Seeking to be guided by the Holy Spirit, St. Joseph Catholic School Community nurtures spiritual growth, provides challenging intellectual opportunities and encourages each child to become the follower of Jesus Christ that God calls him or her to be.

### Positioning Statement - Our Vision *Excellence in Catholic Education*

### Philosophy

St. Joseph School is a Catholic, co-educational elementary school that exists to promote education and formation of children into maturing Catholics. As an extension of the Church, the school shares the Church's educational mission to preach the Gospel, to build a community of faith, to foster family spirituality, and to form disciples of Jesus ready to spread God's message and to give themselves in the service of others.

In addition, the school provides opportunities to pursue academic excellence, build meaningful relationships, learn responsible citizenship, foster awareness of cultural diversity, and develop skills for ethical leadership. To create an environment that responds to the whole child, the school strives to work with the unique personality, talents, and needs of each student.

The school, the Church, and society all contribute to the formation of the child. Parents are the primary educators of their children. Parental involvement is a key component of the education program at St. Joseph School.

## Logo



# ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

EXCELLENCE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Cross: The Christian cross is the best-known religious symbol of Christianity. It is generally seen as a representation of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is related to the crucifix and to the general family of cross symbols. The Cross Pattee is a type of cross that has arms which are narrow at the center, and broader at the perimeter. This cross is often associated with Crusades of the Crusades. The heraldic cross pattee was sometimes used by a Crusader order, the Teutonic Knights.

The white color of the cross is meant to represent purity, and cleanliness. White usually has a positive connotation and can represent a successful beginning. In heraldry, white depicts faith and purity.

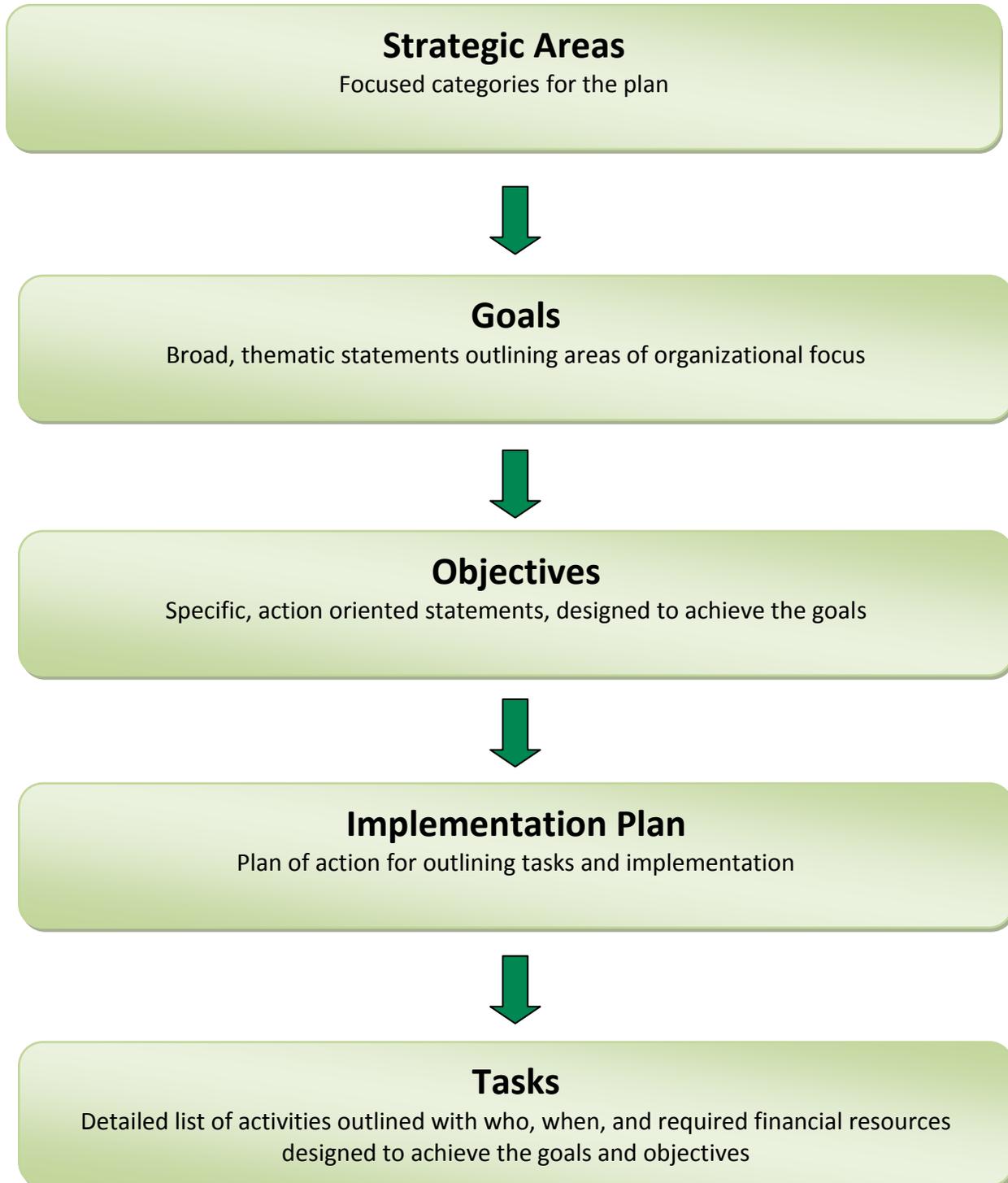
The shield is a warrior's primary piece of defensive equipment. They were first made of leather skins. Later, of tough wood covered with leather or metal, or entirely of metal – even including gold and silver.

Shields were decorated by staining the leather or beating the metal into shapes. They were also inlaid, and studded with nails or precious metal. The insignia of a warrior or knight was painted on his shield, making him easier to identify in battle or contest.

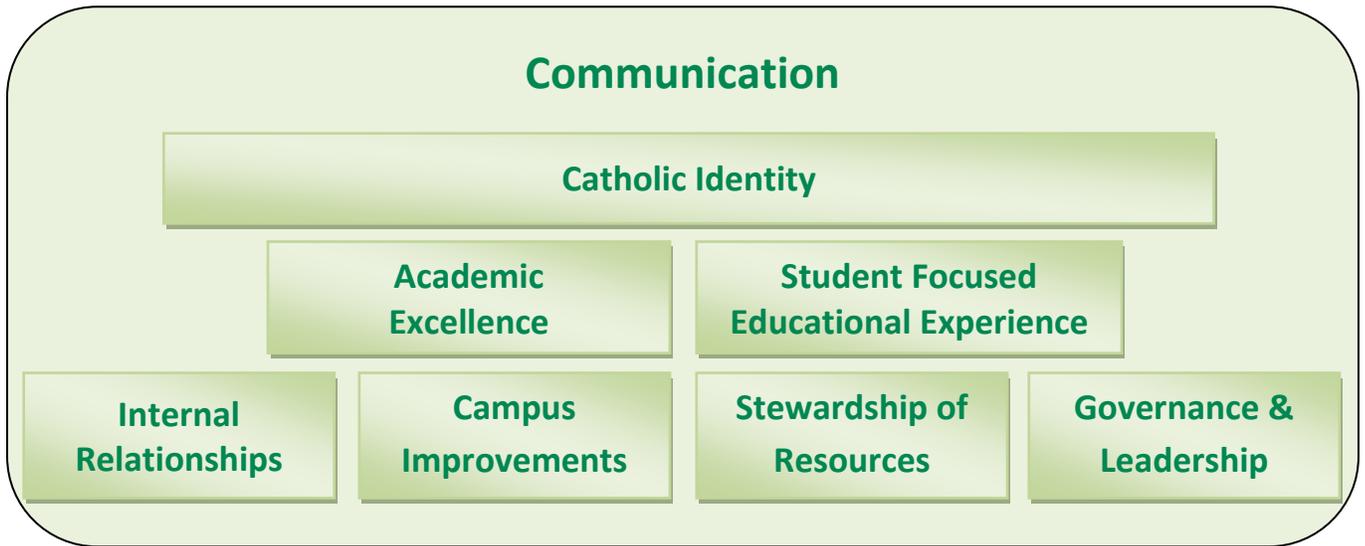
By the thirteenth century, in England, various decorative “devices” appeared on shield eventually becoming systemized into the rules of heraldry that formalized the appearance of the coats of arms, crests or seals.

*Retrieved from: St. Joseph School, Visual and Identity & Message Guide, 2008.*

## St. Joseph School Strategic Plan Structure



## Strategic Areas



## Goals

Enterprise wide communication is incorporated into each goal as a school-wide commitment to improve and foster effective communication.

1. **Catholic Identity**  
St. Joseph School nurtures a faith-based, community environment internally and externally in our spiritual, educational and extracurricular activities, guiding students into maturing Catholics.
2. **Student Focused Educational Experience**  
St. Joseph School offers a multi-disciplinary approach to education which develops all students to be well-rounded contributors to their families and community.
3. **Academic Excellence - Curriculum & Assessment**  
St. Joseph School provides research-based curricula and instructional methods that fosters academic growth for all students as measured through multiple methods of assessment.
4. **Internal Relationships**  
St. Joseph School proactively fosters communication and effective collaboration between students, parents, teachers, administration, advisory board, committee chairs and the parish community.
5. **Campus Improvements**  
St. Joseph School provides students with a safe and accessible environment, an updated campus and relevant technology.
6. **Stewardship of Resources**  
St. Joseph School provides the resources, services and accountability measures necessary to support our school's mission and purpose.
7. **Governance & Leadership**  
St. Joseph School is led by school administration and educators who provide leadership inside and outside the classroom that fosters a Catholic environment of mutual respect and cooperation between the parish leadership and parents.

## Objectives

### 1. Catholic Identity:

*St. Joseph School nurtures a faith-based, community environment internally and externally in our spiritual, educational and extracurricular activities, guiding students into maturing Catholics.*

- 1.1. Integrate faith through visual, verbal and service activities in the school and classroom.
- 1.2. More fully integrate the school environment with the parish environment.
- 1.3. Offer additional resources and activities to enhance students' faith life outside the classroom.
- 1.4. Consider diocesan objectives from the Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office Strategic Plan to create additional opportunities for collaboration with St. Mary of Gostyn School.

### 2. Student Focused Educational Experience:

*St. Joseph School offers a multi-disciplinary approach to education which develops all students to be well-rounded contributors to their families and community.*

- 2.1. Research and make recommendations for expanding foreign language and cultures and additional resources and services to enhance education inside and outside of the classroom.
- 2.2. Directly address student relationships/differences/tolerance and bullying.

### 3. Academic Excellence - Curriculum & Assessment:

*St. Joseph School provides research-based curricula and instructional methods that fosters academic growth for all students as measured through multiple methods of assessment.*

- 3.1. Identify student specific-methods to enhance and access individual learning in the classroom.
- 3.2. More fully integrate technology into classroom instruction.
- 3.3. Ensure faculty and staff qualifications and training meets the current needs of the school.
- 3.4. Review and identify areas to modify the academic schedule for the enhancement of student learning.

**4. Internal Relationships:**

*St. Joseph School proactively fosters communication and effective collaboration between students, parents, teachers, administration, advisory board, committee chairs and the parish community.*

- 4.1. Establish positive communication channels between the parish, school and parents guided by "Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity" pledge.
- 4.2. More fully integrate regular, consistent online communication between constituents.

**5. Campus Improvements:**

*St. Joseph School provides students with a safe and accessible environment, an updated campus and relevant technology.*

- 5.1. Determine future of school building (major upgrades or new building).
- 5.2. Determine technology improvements (hardware and software) needed to remain competitive and relevant.

**6. Stewardship of Resources:**

*St. Joseph School provides the resources, services and accountability measures necessary to support our school's mission and purpose.*

- 6.1. Enhance channels for parents, alumni and parish to contribute time, talent and treasure to the school.
- 6.2. Continue to implement Marketing and Communications plan, goals and objectives.
- 6.3. Continue to implement Enrollment Communications Project & Plan.

**7. Governance & Leadership:**

*St. Joseph School is led by school administration and educators who provide leadership inside and outside the classroom that fosters a Catholic environment of mutual respect and cooperation between the parish leadership and parents.*

- 7.1. Match school faculty and administrative positions and evaluation with the Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office recommendations.
- 7.2. Provide leadership structures that enhance teachers' access to resources.
- 7.3. Review advisory board leadership positions and succession.

## Implementation Plan

The responsibility for implementation will be assigned to a sub-committee of the Board: the **Strategic Planning Implementation Team** will be responsible for over-seeing the implementation process and assigning additional committee responsibilities.

Implementation Strategic Area	Temporarily Assigned to Board Committee	Recommended Committee Assignment
Catholic Identity	Implementation Team	Implementation Team
Student Focused Educational Experience	Implementation Team	Multi-disciplinary committee (board, teachers, administration)
Academic Excellence	Implementation Team	Multi-disciplinary committee (board, teachers, administration)
Internal Relationships	Implementation Team	Marketing
Campus Improvement	Implementation Team	Finance
Stewardship of Resources	Implementation Team	Development
Governance & Leadership	Implementation Team	Implementation Team

The Strategic Plan is a “living document” and the implementation plan allows for committees to take ownership of the plan. Each committee assigned to a strategic area will be responsible for continuing to: outline tasks, prioritize tasks, assign responsibility for completion of tasks, and monitor progress of tasks.

Please note, a “living” strategic plan means there may be changes over the five years of the plan’s life. Objectives may be modified. New tasks may evolve. Change in the plan is acceptable. The “progress” notations help us understand this change and prepare for the future.

## Tasks

A supplemental worksheet has been provided outlining a model for implementation of tasks and tactics to achieve each goal and objective. The worksheet has been populated with tasks outlined during the planning process. A sample table is provided below as illustration.

Strategic Area	Goal	Task	Deadline	Who is Responsible	Progress Notes	Funding Resources
Catholic Identity	1.1	Prominently display our mission statement in the school and on our parish website.	8/25/12	Principal/ Pastor	In process	\$0
Catholic Identity	1.1	Brainstorm ideas to develop an understanding and appreciation of Catholic devotions (i.e. the Sacred Heart, rosary, scapular) through education efforts.	12/31/12	School Chaplin	Need to develop specific task items	\$0
Catholic Identity	1.1	Continue to provide opportunities to participate in Liturgical and Prayer activities throughout the year.	12/31/12	School Chaplin	Review annually	\$0