

**STRATEGIC VISION FOR  
BUILDING ON SUCCESS  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL**

**November 2007**

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# Strategic Planning Committee Members

Reverend Dennis Perkins

Pastor

Mrs. Doris Messina

Principal

Mrs. Kathleen Clancy

Teacher / Assistant Principal

Mrs. Ashley Stevens

Teacher

Mr. Ronald Meneo

Parent/Cross Country Coach/  
Debate Club Advisor

Mr. Steven Basso

Parent

Mr. Terrence Malaghan

Parish Finance Board

Mrs. Maureen Gillick

Parent/ School Advisory Board

Mrs. June Hartford-Alley

Alumna / School Advisory Board  
Retired School Superintendent

Mrs. Judy Campagnari

Parent/School Advisory Board

Mrs. Janet Prevost

Facilitator - Prevost Associates

# Introduction

In January of 2007, the administration and Advisory Board of Saint Michael School, together with a cross-section of parents, faculty, and staff formed a Strategic Planning Committee charged with developing a Strategic Vision and Recommendations for Saint Michael School. The Committee held a series of meetings over an eight month period.

- The task was to examine the challenges, realities, and needs that Saint Michael School and its students will confront in the next five years.
- The purpose was to develop a management tool that would guide Saint Michael School as it responds to the needs of a rapidly changing environment.
- The effort was focused on the future rather than maintaining the status quo.
- The strength of the Strategic Plan is that it was developed with input from the School's stakeholders: administrators, faculty, staff, parents, students, parishioners, and SMS alumni.
- A primary purpose of the process was to develop and articulate a common understanding of Saint Michael School's purpose, priorities, practices and principles among all of the School's stakeholders.

The Committee's discussions revealed points of both pride and frustration with current practices. Additional feedback regarding challenges and opportunities for Saint Michael School was gathered from focus groups comprised of teachers, parents students, and parishioners. Their feedback guided and informed our decisions.

The following questions and concerns were raised and discussed:

- Given increased attention to student outcomes and the effort to assess those outcomes in accurate ways, what changes will be required of our school organization, our programs, our methods of instruction, and our professional staff development to ensure that all Saint Michael students are equipped to meet the challenges of secondary education?
- Given changes in academic programs and methods of instruction, what modifications need to be made with regard to our stewardship of resources to support these changes?
- What model of collaboration and communication will enable all stakeholders to share in decisions that affect the educational outcomes of Saint Michael's students?
- How can we promote community awareness and shared responsibility in accepting the challenging financial and academic needs which are critical to the future of the school?

The Planning Committee's responses to these questions are addressed in the Goals and Recommendations contained in the Strategic Plan. Four Strategic Issues have been identified as focal points:

- Student Achievement and Teacher Performance
- Stewardship of Resources (finances and physical plant)
- Stakeholder Relationships and Public Outreach
- Institutional Advancement: Marketing & Development

The Plan is intended to serve as a blueprint to focus and direct planning and decision-making for the administration, School Advisory Board, faculty, staff and parents. The next step in the Strategic Planning process requires the School Advisory Board, administration, faculty, and staff to utilize this Plan to develop additional strategies, action plans, and budget impact and accountability indicators that will set measurable targets for improvement.

The ultimate goal of the Strategic Plan is to engage all members of the school community as partners in the process of advancing Saint Michael School's "Tradition of Excellence" for all students.

Strategic Planning is as much a mindset as it is a report. It says that the community welcomes the energy and the power that comes from the drive toward a preferred future rather than staying with the status quo. It will help Saint Michael School to move proactively into the next five years.

## **Our Vision**

St. Michael School is the premier K – 8 Catholic school in Southeastern Connecticut dedicated to the formation of well-educated and morally upstanding young individuals.

## **Our Framework**

**We commit ourselves to:**

- Creating a positive Christian environment.
- Promoting high student achievement.
- Exhibiting focused educational leadership.
- Making sound financial choices.

Supported by a long history of excellence, St. Michael School provides a sound spiritual and challenging academic experience to any child who desires to learn in a Christ-centered environment. We are committed to fostering a culture where everyone works together toward the goal of graduating well-educated and morally upstanding young people. Our graduates are able to excel in any high school.

We challenge our students, parents, parishioners and larger community to transform this vision into reality.

## **Our Blueprint for Success**

**St. Michael School is a place ...**

- That puts trust and caring in the forefront of everything we do.

- That has a plan to adapt to the ever-changing world in which we live.
- That students are proud of today and will want to support in the future.
- That recognizes and respects diversity.
- Where people work together to help each and every individual reach his/her potential.
- That welcomes comments and suggestions for improvement and invites its stakeholders to participate in shaping St. Michael School's continued development.
- Where there is a love of all children and a common spirit of pride and commitment.
- That recognizes we are only as strong as our weakest link.
- Where we work to strengthen each link in the chain through thorough monitoring, evaluation and adjustments; making revisions when required, of all that we do in order to ensure the success of our students and the growth and improvement of our School.

## **Core Values**

Individually and collectively, the St. Michael's Community of parents, faculty, staff and parishioners hold these values for themselves and for the children they serve.

### **We care about ...**

- Our children, our community, and the best education we can provide.
- Our children's minds and souls and accept the responsibility we have in shaping their growth and development.
- Values, morals, and ethics and the challenge for all students, faculty members and parents to exemplify, through their behavior, the faith and commitment shown to us by Jesus Christ.
- Making sure our resources are used most effectively to provide opportunities for an excellent education.

### **We believe all children deserve to ...**

- Be encouraged to reach their highest potential.
- Be treated with respect and dignity.
- Be treated fairly and receive consistent feedback regarding their progress.
- Have a well-rounded, researched-based curriculum and first class resources.
- Have supportive adults who share the responsibility for their achievement and well-being.

### **We believe all children are entitled to ...**

- Equal opportunities to experience a high quality educational program that prepares them to succeed at the next level.

- An education that is supportive, challenging, stimulating, and rewarding.
- A learning environment that is safe and provides an opportunity for children to excel, while living and learning the word of Christ.
- The best efforts of the entire community.

**We believe all children shall have the benefit of ...**

- Challenges that stretch them as individuals.
- Quality programs that will prepare them for life after graduation.
- An informed, caring administration, faculty and staff who will provide them with a motivating, enriching curriculum.
- A caring community of parents, parish priest, and parishioners who generously give their time, energy and experience to support them as they learn.

**Mission**

St. Michael School, a ministry of St. Michael Church, is committed to engaging students in a program of Christian formation characterized by a challenging and enriching curriculum, in a nurturing environment.

**What We Do**

We provide a rigorous and relevant academic program of studies in

- Religion
- Language Arts and Literature
- Social Sciences and History
- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- World Languages
- Art and Music

**How We Do It**

- Our curriculum and programs are challenging, current, and aligned with State, Diocesan and National Standards and reflect research-based, best practices.
- Our classes are implemented by skillful and qualified teachers using state of the art teaching materials and technology.
- Our programs are continuously assessed through a variety of measures that set clear standards and effective monitoring, review and recognition for excellence and continuous improvement.
- Our classrooms are clean, safe environments with sufficient equipment, technology and supplies for all educational activities.

## **Why We Do It**

- To respond to the Gospel command, “Go and teach all nations”.
- To provide a truly caring and supportive environment, in which every young person in the school community will reach his/her potential and is valued and encouraged to grow in Christ.
- To develop students who are able to think and solve problems on their own with the tools learned in school.
- To expose students to a variety of experiences and to provide opportunities for enrichment as a means of encouraging them to become lifelong learners with a thirst for knowledge.
- To prepare students to be productive, responsible citizens, who are aware of how they can enrich the world and how the world can enrich them.
- To encourage students to be self-reliant and to take responsibility for their choices.

# Focusing the Agenda

## Student Achievement and Teacher Performance

*Rationale: A common desire expressed during Committee discussions and focus groups centered on providing programs that will improve students' proficiency at every grade level. Given the increased attention to student achievement and the effort to assess those outcomes accurately, SMS must accept the challenge that requires the systematic and data driven review of programs, faculty, staff, and methods of instruction to produce the expected results of high student achievement and excellence in teaching.*

### Goals

1. Provide all students with a challenging and enriching educational experience that is aligned with the Mission of St. Michael School, the Diocese of Norwich and other applicable standards.
2. Assess teaching and learning on systematic and planned bases that focuses on accountability, standards, and improvement.
3. Recruit, support, and retain a highly qualified and diverse faculty & staff.

## Stewardship of Resources

*Rationale: As with any educational organization, it is important to manage financial resources and to provide facilities that meet the educational needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To ensure that St. Michael School is equipped to meet current and future challenges, prudent allocations of resources that are aligned with the Strategic Plan are necessary.*

### Goals

1. Develop transparent and comprehensive planning, budgeting, and evaluative processes that align tuition, total expenses, funding sources, and new financial initiatives and include all stakeholders.
2. Identify and implement immediate cosmetic needs, requirements and/or enhancements to the school properties.
3. Identify, prioritize, and implement technological, mechanical and/or more complex/long-term facility requirements and/or enhancements.
4. Develop a plan for the efficient and best educational use of the school facilities over the short term.
5. Identify future facility enhancements and requirements that are consistent with Parish growth and needs.

## **Stakeholder Relationships and Community Outreach**

*Rationale: Central to the success of any school is its ability to foster the support of the constituencies that it serves. Attention to their concerns is essential for formulating and implementing the St. Michael School's goals. Critical to the attaining the goal is an interactive communication process that imparts an understanding of the school to a broad range of stakeholders who are impacted by those decisions.*

### **Goals**

1. Define roles and expand collaborative opportunities for existing internal relationships with students, parents, faculty, staff, administration, parishioners, and alumni using a defined plan of interactive communication.
2. Design and implement an interactive and proactive process aimed at forging external constituencies such as other schools, corporate alliances, partnerships and informal networks that better integrate the greater community with St. Michael School.

## **Institutional Advancement**

*Rationale: St Michael School's future vitality relies on expanding the financial base of the school. Achieving a stable student enrollment and growing the income base are critical to sustaining the school from year to year, and for ensuring future growth and expansion. Thus, it is critical that the school establish a proactive and strategic Marketing and Development Plan that will help share the message that SMS embraces and continues its "Tradition of Excellence".*

### **Goals**

1. Create, implement and evaluate a Development Plan that enables St. Michael School to expand its financial base.
2. Develop, implement and measure a comprehensive Student Recruitment and Retention plan.
3. Increase student enrollment to achieve a stable student population at an optimal level over 9 grades (K – 8).