

Ave Pastoral Maria Planning Proposal Outline

School

Where we are:

These are the specific aspects/elements of our current experience of worship that we especially value and are grateful for:

1. Growing Student Body & Faith-Based Curriculum
 - a. Culture is against our religious beliefs; we challenge the public-school environment.
 - b. We have a growing PreK-6 school enrollment with small class sizes (K-6 increased enrollment by twenty-two students for the 2024/2025 school year).
 - c. Faith is incorporated into all curriculums.
 - d. Daily religion class is tied to the weekend liturgy (PreK-6).
 - e. We have weekly Adoration, Rosary prayed at least once a week in each classroom.
 - f. Specialty classes K-6: Technology/STREAM Lab, Spanish, Music, PE.
 - g. Student Council (Leadership Opportunities) Grades 3-6.
2. Dedicated Teaching/Support Staff & Administration
 - a. Dedicated school leadership.
 - b. Teachers and classified staff are committed to faith and academic excellence.
 - c. School council.
3. Priestly Guidance and Leadership from all 4 Pastorate Priests
 - a. Opportunities to participate in school Mass and weekend Mass (Lector, serve, choir, greet, gift bearers).
 - b. All school daily devotions and prayer every morning.
 - c. Opportunities for Confession.
4. Financial Resources and Support
 - a. Foundation with endowment and three parishes willing to financially support.
 - b. School and Parishes work as a team - all with the same mission.
 - c. Good support from many individuals and alumni.
 - d. Two facilities (one in need of repair).
5. Parental involvement and support
 - a. Engaged parents and supportive parish members.
 - b. Parents/Grandparents who value Catholic education.

We recognize with gratitude that God has blessed our pastorate with the gifts and resources for our worship:

1. Excellent Academics - Smarter Balanced cores, specials (STREAM Lab, Spanish, music, PE), Religion, Art.
2. More control of curriculum to have a faith-filled education.
3. Excellent leadership from all four priests, principal, and teachers.
4. Excellent reputation within the public system and surrounding community.
5. Active volunteers.

Where We Want to Go

We recognize these opportunities to intentionally invest in and cultivate those gifts:

1. Create an exploratory committee to research the possibility of adding grades.
2. Decide what needs to be done to upgrade/repair our buildings (HVAC, roof, handicap accessible - ADA), need more space.
3. Goal that every graduating student is a lifelong Catholic missionary disciple, more religious and priests.
4. Ask/expect parents to be involved in their parishes - subsidies are being paid by Holy Name of Jesus, Immaculate Conception Church, and Holy Rosary.
 - a. Ensure the school's role in Catholic Education and not just a "private" education
5. Continue to grow student involvement in their parishes - student led Mass, server training, etc.
6. More focus on recruitment - Pastorate wide focus.
7. Continue to grow the curriculum to more reflect our Catholic beliefs/teacher opportunities to grow in faith.
8. Incorporate the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program into the school.
9. Continue priest classroom visits.
10. Continuing efforts to have competitive teacher salaries: State of SD just passed a law in 2024 all public-school teachers starting salaries are \$45k.
11. Maintain and grow the foundation/endowment.
12. Evaluate tuition and parish support.
13. Explore how IC School can better support homeschooled families.
14. Rename the school after the pastorate instead of one church.

As we discussed opportunities to elevate our experience of worship, the following themes emerged in our conversations and consultations:

1. The desire for more faith-based education and control of curriculum is strong. In concert with the Diocesan vision for Catholic education.
2. Current facilities limit our growth and are ageing and need repair.
3. Need a planning process to address both above issues.

These are the specific aspects/elements of our worship experience that we would like to develop/enhance in the future:

1. Would like to add additional grades to our school.

Our Roadmap for Getting There

From the previous list, in the next 12 months, these are the 2-4 priorities we will focus on to enhance our experience of worship:

1. Form a group of stakeholders and planners that can address the desire for more grades and the financial and physical resources necessary to maintain them.
2. Put a short-term plan together to address the building maintenance needs that are required in the next 12-18 months. How does this integrate with the longer-term plan in Priority 1?
3. Assess ways to get parity in teachers salaries compared to the public schools.

For each of these priorities, here are the steps we have brainstormed to accomplish them and groups or individuals we have identified who will take lead and create a timeline (who will do what by when)

1. Form a group of stakeholders and planners that can address the desire for more grades and the financial and physical resources necessary to maintain them.
 - a. Identify 7-8 stakeholders and planners to form a working team.
 - b. Prepare an agenda for the team to work from.
 - c. Survey the Parish membership to identify support, especially financial support.
2. Put a short-term plan together to address the building maintenance needs that are required in the next 12-18 months. How does this integrate with the longer-term plan in Priority 1?
 - a. Facilities Manager to prepare a list and financial estimate of projects that need attention. See Fall 2022 Co-op Facilities Assessment.
 - b. With the help of Facilities assessment determine whether the repairs are a long term or short-term fix.
 - c. How do these repairs blend with or counter the plan from Priority 1.
 - d. Do we need a capital campaign to fund, or do we have sufficient resources?
 - e. How does this plan fit with an overall Watertown one parish strategy if we decide to merge?
3. Assess ways to get parity in teachers' salaries compared to the public schools.
 - a. Collaborate with the School Board and Eastern SD Foundation to develop a strategy.

How We Will Know We are Succeeding

These are quantitative and qualitative measures we will track see if our efforts are succeeding in elevating our experience of worship:

1. Committee has been established.
2. Report from the committee that recommends preferred and alternative approach.
3. Survey from Parishes has been completed and analyzed.
4. Salaries have been raised to adequately compete with the public schools.

