

May 28, 2016

From: Lisa Simon, Principal

Dear School Parents and St. Vincent de Paul Faith Community,

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic School is a fully accredited school through the Minnesota Non-Public School Accreditation Association (MNSAA). Accreditation makes a public statement that our school is committed to quality education, is willing to be measured against standards, and is willing to engage in school improvement activities.

Each year the faculty, support staff, and school advisory council develop yearly goals within the seven-year school improvement plan to develop the school's mission. The report serves a way of updating you about our accomplishments, which are part of our School Improvement plan.

On behalf of the staff, I submit the following annual report on our strategic plan.

1. Continue to strengthen and cultivate the Catholic Identity standards inherent in our school's mission and philosophy statements.

A parish and school staff retreat was facilitated during the August 2015 back-to-school workshop week. SVDP's Director of Parish Life led a morning of reflection, sharing, and activities focused on the theme of evangelization. Opportunities for staff faith formation related to evangelization continued throughout the year, including sharing my Jamaica mission trip with the staff and 7th and 8th grade students, and informal discussions about teachers' graduate-level theology classes and their relation to religion instruction.

Student faith formation at SVDP develops in many ways: the religion curriculum, participation in the Sacraments, faculty modeled behavior, service opportunities, as well as facilitating relationships among the students all serve as important factors of a comprehensive Catholic education program.

We established *The Blessing Fund* as a central scholarship account to provide tuition support to families who otherwise are unable to afford tuition. Through the generosity of donors throughout our faith community, we are well on our way to opening our doors to more families.

2. Further develop and improve the school's marketing plan to increase public visibility, foster community relations, and maintain necessary revenue and enrollment.

Great work was done this year to extend our marketing reach into our local communities. Efforts to increase public visibility included banners, open houses, information nights, and continued presence on social media. Advertisements were placed in local papers, the *Maple Grove Magazine*, area parish bulletins, and retail POS counters. Press releases

were also sent to local papers highlighting service, academic, and athletic successes of our students. The announcement of the launch of our preschool/pre-kindergarten program provided us with exciting news to share with our existing and prospective parents.

Additional and important support has been provided by CSCOE (Catholic Schools Center of Excellence). Their partnership has helped us launch the PreciouStatus app to connect parents with daily classroom activities, deliver magazine-quality quarterly publications about the benefits of Catholic education, and provide new high-quality marketing collateral materials to incoming new families. Going forward, we look forward to launching our Admissions and Marketing Squad which will engage parents in helping us spread the word about our great school.

3. Provide a successful leadership transition that ensures continuity of shared mission and values.

Stakeholders including staff, parents, and students, were invited to participate in discussions about our school mission, purpose, and values. Rich dialogue illuminated our deep Catholic identity, caring and supportive staff, our connected and supportive community, respectful and kind student body, and the joy of lifelong learning. Staff members proudly display in their classrooms a word cloud summarizing the collective work of the stakeholders. In the fall we plan to unveil “values banners” that will remind us each day of our core values: Faith, Achievement, Community, Respect, Lifelong Learning.

4. Increase use of and develop additional differentiated instructional practices to meet the needs of all students.

Differentiated instruction is an embedded component of a SVDP education and is an important tool in in the learning process. Our teachers regularly strengthen their professional development and this year many continued to take advantage of workshops designed for guided math, webinars for differentiated literacy instruction (Daily 5), participation in a schoolwide *Teach Like a Champion* book club and many others. These professional development opportunities not only promoted effective teaching practices but also provided the structure of information relevant to a standards-based education.

Resource teachers continued to play an important role in supporting the education of learners. Their expertise and focus was applied in small group and individualized instruction, both in and outside of the classrooms. Our middle school provided an after-school science program for students wishing to deepen their knowledge and more fully prepare for high school. We tested single-subject acceleration for students in math. And next year we'll have the benefit of a part-time Enrichment Specialist who will design and implement various strategies to meet the needs of certain students.

5. Enhance classroom instruction by effectively deploying technology to support learning.

Technology plays an important role in delivering instruction to our students. To broaden the impact of technology-aided instruction, SVDP made a significant investment in the 2015-16 school year by providing 2:1 devices to students in grades 5 -8. Teachers received training on the devices during two separate onsite sessions in the fall of 2015; sessions were facilitated by Microsoft representatives.

Our focus is always on education, not the tool. Our goal is to create a modern learning environment using technology as a tool to enhance instruction, deepen learning, and expand student engagement. The technology committee is currently exploring new instructional methods and supports with an eye toward incorporating Google learning tools. This summer we plan to become a Google for Education school that will complement our existing Office 365 environment.

6. SVDP will continue to meet the needs of the individual learner.

Student achievement and growth are measured daily in the classrooms through both formative and summative assessments. Teachers use this data to plan instruction, create student-centered learning groups, ensure proficiency and progress, and communicate with parents and students.

Standardized tests are an important part of our encompassing assessment philosophy. We transitioned this year to the NWEA MAP tests in grades 1 – 8. We assessed proficiency and growth across three content areas: math, reading, and language usage.

I am proud to share our impressive results.

- **77%** of our students scored above national norms in math
- **76%** of our students scored above national norms in reading
- **85%** of our students scored above national norms in language usage

To demonstrate the benefit of a full-cycle K-8 SVDP education:

- **84%** of our **7th/8th grade students** scored above national norms in math
- **86%** of our **7th/8th grade students** scored above national norms in reading
- **89%** of our **7th/8th grade students** scored above national norms in language usage
- Our middle school students in grades 5 – 8 are a remarkable bunch. Students in these grades averaged 10 RIT points above the national average, amounting to at least two full grade levels above the national norms.

This has been a highly successful and rewarding year! We are proud of all that has been accomplished through TEAMWORK and perseverance. Thank you for all you do to make our school a treasure.