



May 20, 2014

Dear School Parents and St. Vincent de Paul Faith Community

From: Kathleen O'Hara, Principal

St. Vincent de Paul 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 education advisory committee develop yearly goals within the seven-year school improvement plan to improve the school. This report serves as a way of updating you about our accomplishments, which are part of our School Improvement Plan.

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

School and School Advisory Committee Goals 2013-2014

1. Review the parish mission statement and the school philosophy statement by the end of October 2013 and make changes if necessary.

During the faculty in-service in August of 2013, teachers and staff reviewed both the parish mission statement and school philosophy statement. At an October faculty meeting all staff members concurred that both statements are accurate reflections of the school's goals and teaching philosophy.

2. Establish an alumni committee consisting of school administration, a school staff member, and at least two St. Vincent de Paul alumni willing to help promote the alumni association.

With this committee established, Assistant Principal Becky Weber contacted other local elementary and secondary Catholic schools inquiring about their alumni communications. We discovered that most of these schools use the same practices as St. Vincent's: continue to collect addresses from visiting alumni, especially during the parish's annual Harvest Festival in August, and use the school's Facebook and Twitter accounts to engage and inform alumni.

In effort to further activate our connections among former St. Vincent students, the school alumni committee recommends submitting an annual nomination for the NCEA Distinguished Graduate Award. This would provide our school with a yearly opportunity to honor and recognize the good work St. Vincent de Paul adult graduates are doing for their community, as well as promote the values instilled through a Catholic education.

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3. Develop a strategic plan for Catholic Identity, identifying 1-3 goals that will help the school strengthen its commitment to spiritual growth.

Remaining committed to our Catholic faith, St. Vincent's developed a strategic plan to continue strengthening and cultivating the Catholic Identity standards inherent in our school's mission and philosophy statements. Strategies to accomplish this objective include: 1.) staff and student participating in the NCEA ACRE assessment tool; 2.) engaging staff members, students, and parents to actively consider Catholic Identity standards and how they are observed throughout the school year; 3.) maintaining an environment that visibly offers glory to God; and 4.) addressing the personal and social development of students through a guidance and counseling program, emphasizing the Catholic Social Teaching of Life and Dignity of the Human Person.

4. Prepare students in grades 3, 5, and 7 for the administration of the MCAs (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments) scheduled for March 2015.

We administered the OLPA—practice tests for the MCA—in both October 2013 and February 2014. This has been a significant tool for St. Vincent's students and faculty, both for practicality (familiarizing students with computer test-taking and directions, "showing their work" by creating lines and drawings using computer software) and assessment (teachers can further evaluate in which skills their students need additional instruction). Other strategies to prepare for the MCAs include teachers "taking" their grade level's Math component test of the MCAs, an analysis of other school's scores, and small and large group discussion of test preparation and teaching ideas.

5. Create a school improvement committee to assess current classroom needs and storage limitations.

The school's improvement committee, headed by physical education teacher Bob Smith, has surveyed both the physical space the school occupies and the various educational and athletic materials needing storage. After consultation with parish administration, the committee has determined that new construction of any storage additions is not an option due to city/county land regulations. The committee recommends diligent inventory and reassessment of storage materials throughout the school. It has been determined that teachers, in preparation for the summer break, must evaluate their materials needing storage; any materials older than 5 years and not recently used must be recycled or given away. Classrooms should be cleared of any boxes, crates, or containers that do not necessitate daily use during the school year. Additionally, the parish basement has been reorganized and a labeling system is in use to identify the designated spaces/materials belonging in that space.

6. Establish and train a committee of teachers who will become professional leaders at St. Vincent's in standards-based reporting.

Throughout the 2013-14 school year, five St. Vincent's teachers engaged in professional learning around standards-based reporting practices. These professional leaders, now proficient in Minnesota's Mathematics and English Language Arts State Standards, will guide the greater faculty members as they apply these Standards to their specific grade level learning goals. In fact, 4th grade

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teacher Diane Morri will be teaching a graduate-level class to help teachers transition to standards-based reporting. We are proud our faculty leaders work to ensure St. Vincent's instructional and assessment practices are used to constructively inform students of their progress and offer various opportunities for students to reach their full potential.

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