



May 21, 2013

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 Goals 2012-2013**

- 1. Review the parish mission statement and the school philosophy statement by the end of October 2012 and make changes if necessary.**

During the faculty in-service in August of 2012, 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. By May 2013 identify and list all considerations needed to implement a preschool program at St. Vincent's.**

St. Vincent's began exploring the possibility of opening a preschool in January of 2012, researching the various components involved in adding a prekindergarten program: 1.) We investigated state laws and preschool licensing requirements, including additional safety, fire, and health inspections; 2.) we evaluated the location and physical space available to us for the program; 3.) we surveyed potential families to gauge interest and assess schedule needs ; 4.) we calculated the cost of classroom and curriculum materials, furniture, equipment and staffing needs; and 5.) we deliberated how the greater K-8 school community would be affected by adding such a program.

Weighing all options and examining them carefully we found that lack of space most hampers the viability of opening a preschool, though other considerations also indicated that expanding such a program is not in the best interest of the school at this time.

**3. Ensure 100% of the St. Vincent families can access their financial statements, their children's academic progress, and other resources online.**

As directed by the Archdiocese, all St. Paul/Minneapolis diocesan schools including St. Vincent de Paul School now use Cornerstone™ as its school management database. All parents and their students are registered in the database and have a username and password to access student information. The system allows parents to look at assignments and grades, report cards and attendance for student(s), as well as viewing student profiles, schedules, course information and financial statements.

All email communication also comes through Cornerstone; teachers are able to send emails and messages to all classroom families and parents and students can contact teachers through email when necessary.

A link to this Cornerstone database is located on the school's main website page, as well as an instructional link for parents to use as they navigate the new database. Parents have found this to be a valuable resource for tracking academic progress and accessing other school materials.

**4. Establish an incremental schedule for faculty salaries, by 2017, to match at least 75% of what their public school counterparts are earning.**

Earlier in the year, our School Advisory Committee began to research and compare the salary discrepancies between our St. Vincent de Paul teachers and the local public school teachers. We were pleased to discover that most of our teachers are already earning 75% of what their public school counterparts are earning. For the few St. Vincent's teachers not yet at this 75% match, their salaries have been adjusted accordingly.

**5. During the 2012-2013 school year, all teachers will observe other teachers' best teaching practices in differentiated learning.**

St. Vincent's is committed to providing professional development opportunities for faculty members to ensure their instructional practices accommodate the learning needs of all our students. By observing their peers during instruction time, teachers can note different strategies, ideas, and approaches used by other faculty members. Throughout the year, each teacher arranged time to observe another teacher during classroom instruction; dates and notes of this activity have been recorded in faculty personnel files.

Through this practice of peer observation, teachers noted the continuity and consistency built across the grades. Teachers were able to witness management skills and a variety of forms of assessments. Teachers kept students engaged with positive reinforcement and their classrooms



facilitated peer mentoring. When teachers observed a grade ahead of their own, it reinforced the need for a strong reading and math curriculum within their own grade level in preparation towards the next grade. Observing teaching strategies helped reinforce what teachers are currently doing and where they could improve. This activity was met positively by all teachers as a good learning experience. They were able to incorporate some of the methods used by other teachers by adjusting the degree of complexity to fit within their grade level expectations.

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*Know* and celebrate our Catholic Faith, *Love* God and our neighbor, *Serve* as disciples of Jesus Christ.

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