Charting Our Course

The Siena Catholic Academy Strategic Plan 2015-2020
Introduction

Siena Catholic Academy has been a part of the Rochester community since 1993. In its relatively short history, it has prepared a generation of students for the challenges of high school and beyond. It has nurtured the intellect and faith of 3,000 alumni.

As those of us charged with carrying on its mission, we are conscious of our obligation to ensure that a new generation of students will enjoy its blessings, that a new generation of students will participate in changing the world. Over the course of the past year, many people have contributed their time and talent to developing a strategic plan that will guide us as we fulfill our obligation. Charting our Course: The Siena Catholic Academy Strategic Plan 2015-2020 is an overview of our objectives and the initiatives we will take to meet them. This document contains these objectives and initiatives and lays out the principles and processes that led to them. We have charted a course and we have set sail.
The Process

A strategic plan lays out our course. It summarizes our purpose, identifies our objectives, and provides us with the steps to accomplish them. A strategic plan answers the following questions:

- Where are we now?
- What resources do we have?
- Where do we want to go?
- How do we get there?

The plan is informed by data, inspired by a vision, and be supported by the community. We adopted a process that took into account these guidelines. In the Fall of 2014, the Planning Committee laid out our general approach and gathered and analyzed data that gave us a picture of the state of the school then. We also formulated a plan for our January Summit. Concurrently, we developed a revised mission statement.

On January 16, 2015 we convened a full-day, community-wide Summit to develop a shared vision, digest the results of the data analysis, and identify objectives for our six focus areas. Over sixty stakeholders attended, including students, parents, teachers and staff, and parish and Diocesan representatives.

Throughout the Winter and Spring of 2015, subcommittees refined these objectives and developed action steps to accomplish them.
This Wordle, populated by the most frequently used words in our school communications, served as a starting point for developing our revised mission statement.
Our Mission

Siena Catholic Academy nurtures the faith and intellect of students in grades six through eight in the Greater Rochester area. Recognizing that every child is a gift from God, Siena provides academic, spiritual, emotional, and athletic programs that enhance students' lives so that they might reach their full potential. It fosters growth in the theological and cardinal virtues and Christian and civic values. In doing so, Siena Catholic Academy transforms the lives of its students, its families, its community, and, ultimately, the world.
Our Vision

Siena Catholic Academy’s reputation has been built on our success at meeting the needs and stoking the aspirations of the middle school student. By focusing solely on the middle school student, we are able to offer programming geared to their cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and social needs. We aim to develop leaders whose faith and intellect transform the world. This is our sustaining vision.

When we gathered as a community in January 2015 for our Strategic Planning Summit, we began with a visioning exercise. Where will we be in five years? Some clear themes emerged, ones that might have been evident to the careful observer, but when shared by numerous parties became a clear call to action.

It should come as no surprise that a community that seeks to nurture the faith and intellect of its members would place high priority on the Catholic identity of the school and the academic rigor of its curriculum and instruction.

And there were nuances to these and other items that also became essential parts of our final plan.

Academically, our community wants to be challenged with more advanced courses and to consistently exceed the New York State standards and the scores of our public school neighbors. Instructional technology, interdisciplinary studies, and collaborative thinking are approaches that prepare students for the challenges of modern society. Embracing these will help us meet our academic objective.

We also want to enhance our arts and language program. A vibrant arts program enriches students’ lives and echoes the creative attributes of God. Diverse language offerings prepare our students to engage in an increasingly integrated global community.

Our educational mission extends beyond the classroom. By building athletic fields and offering more sports and other extracurricular programs, we contribute to our sense of community and provide students with more opportunities to reach their full human potential.

Other themes arose that relate to our broader mission: We want to ensure our financial sustainability. We want to become better known in the Rochester community. We want to make our facilities more appealing. We want to revisit our uniform. We want to improve our lunch offerings.

To address these themes and implement our vision, we identified six broad objectives and corresponding initiatives. These are laid out in the remaining pages.
Objective 1: Spirituality

Our growth in Faith and toward understanding of God and the wonders of God’s creation is never ending, but it should not be taken for granted. Without guidance and pious practice, our Faith is likely to be weak and of little worth. We are called to be disciples of Christ and our actions in the world must be a manifestation of God’s love. We seek to develop a more robust spiritual program that introduces our students to an increasingly mature understanding of our Faith.
Strategic Initiatives—Spirituality and Service

In the next five years, we aim to enhance our liturgical and service offerings and thereby enrich the spiritual lives of our students both in terms of their relationship with God, the Church, and their relation to their neighbors.

We will improve student engagement in prayer and liturgical life, enhance the retreat program by establishing an annual overnight service and reflection trip, and develop further opportunities to practice Catholic piety.

We will begin an annual Siena Day of Caring and explore the feasibility of establishing a position of Service Coordinator/ Campus Minister.

We aim to involve whole families in our programming. The Mass Mob which we coordinated with the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis and held at St. Michael’s Church in the early Spring of 2015 was one such example.
Objective 2: Academics

While we serve as a ministry of the Church in bringing our children closer to God, we are also fully aware that we are an academic institution, and one that has a proud history of preparing students for success in high school and college. In order to maintain and further advance that tradition, we need to ensure that we continue to offer a rigorous education that meets the needs of contemporary society while preserving and furthering the intellectual heritage that has been passed down from our forbearers.
Strategic Initiatives—Academics

We will increase the number of course offerings to enhance students’ overall academic experience and to better compete with other middle schools. We will offer distance learning courses within a revised student schedule. We will offer French and possibly German to supplement our existing Latin and Spanish courses.

We will improve our fine arts program. In the visual arts we will install a kiln so that our students can work with clay. In the performing arts we will strengthen our choral program and re-introduce instrumental music lessons.

We are establishing a unique and rigorous exploratory program in the sixth grade that engages students in project-based learning in the Humanities and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

We will strengthen our Academic Intervention Program to support all students.

In three years every student will have a Chromebook. In order to better equip our students with the skills necessary for their future, we must not only teach them to be technologically proficient with these and other tools, but must also teach them to become knowledgeable in finding and using reliable informational resources. We will initiate a comprehensive program focusing on the safe, proper and effective use of technology.

Our world is constantly changing, therefore, any effective and successful academic program must include professional development opportunities for its faculty and staff. We will devote significant resources and time to training in instructional technology.
Objective 3: Community

We do not live as individuals pursuing faith and knowledge in isolation; we are a community that finds joy and support in our relationships. Our community is strengthened when we collaborate on common tasks and celebrate our accomplishments. We will strengthen our sense of family and community by offering more extracurricular activities and events and enhancing those we already offer.
Strategic Initiatives—Community

Our students come from all across Monroe County and beyond. This has allowed us to build a close-knit community that represents regional and socio-economic diversity. Though we have been tremendously successful at accomplishing this over the years, we want to be even more proactive in our efforts.

We will build class identity through a variety of experiences and opportunities, including overnight service and team-building retreats.

We will increase opportunities for clubs and activities and explore the possibility of establishing an after school and summer program.

We will improve the daily experience of our students by exploring options for transportation for school related activities and we will review and make changes to the lunch program.

And, as already identified in the spiritual focus area, we will develop a more robust Christian service program.
Objective 4: Facilities

While our school is more than bricks and mortar, we can not ignore the reality that we have space and usage needs that support the academic and extracurricular programs we offer. We also are aware that we are at a competitive disadvantage if our facilities are not inviting. Fortunately, we are blessed with a beautiful campus here on the grounds of St. Thomas More Parish. We want to exert our physical presence in a way that draws attention to our location and to offer the amenities that will meet our programmatic needs.
Strategic Initiatives—Facilities

We will build athletic fields for games and practice that can serve our overall program as well.

We will explore further storage options.

We will improve our IT infrastructure to accommodate our 1:1 Chromebook program.

We will develop a STEM classroom and Engineering lab for our new sixth grade.

We will move and improve our music room and create a library/media center. We will improve and enhance our capacity to make large-group presentations by installing state-of-the-art a/v equipment in the gymnasium, dining hall, and library.

In addressing aesthetics, we will focus on exterior and interior improvements:

We will install a uniform signage system inside and out that will be pleasing to the eye and informative to our guests, including on East Avenue.

We will design and build a more inviting and prominent entrance to the school building.

We will improve the foyer of the school and the flooring in various rooms.
Objective 5: Marketing

We need to improve our name recognition in the community. We can no longer expect the numbers of Catholic elementary school students that we once did. Our appeal must begin to broaden. Word of mouth continues to be our best marketing tool, but we need to develop an overall strategy that will bring attention to the school and encourage families and prospective students to explore our offerings. We are convinced that when people see what we offer, they will choose Siena.
Strategic Initiatives—Marketing

A unified Marketing strategy will bring more attention to our school and will encourage new families and prospective students to explore our offerings.

We will develop and implement a Marketing platform, so that our efforts to broaden our appeal are uniform, coordinated, and professional.

We will explore the possibility of hiring a Director of Admissions, Development, and Marketing to oversee our efforts to promote the school, increase enrollment, and raise money to support our mission.

We will improve and refine our admissions process, so that we identify prospective families and ensure that we follow-up with them as they go through the decision-making process.
Objective 6: Finances

While much of what we seek to accomplish over the next five years will cost little more than extra effort and creativity on the part of all members of the Siena community, there are a number of items on our list that will require financial investment. Furthermore, our long-term sustainability is dependent on seeking out the support of generous benefactors whose ongoing commitment to quality Catholic education makes our work possible.

Above: Past and Present Principals: Mr. Timothy Leahy, Mr. Martin Kilbridge, Fr. Joseph Grasso, CPPS
Strategic Initiatives—Sustainability

We will pursue a three-pronged strategy to ensure our financial sustainability:

In order to meet the ongoing operational needs of the school, we will institute an Annual Fund Appeal beginning in the 2015-2016 school year.

We will establish a Fund Raising Committee that will strategize a fundraising plan and organize fund-raising events to support our programs.

We will develop a Capital Campaign that will meet the fiscal needs of the Charting Our Course strategic plan.
With Appreciation

The success of our ongoing programs and our current efforts to enhance them through the development of this strategic plan are the result of the tireless work of so many individuals. Thank you to all who contributed their time and talent to this process.
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A Coeducational Middle School
Nurturing Faith and Intellect

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