

St. Dunstan Elementary School Strategic Plan (2019)

St. Dunstan Catholic School is a Catholic Parish School located in Millbrae, California, that has been committed to carrying out the ministry of Jesus Christ in the education of youth for the past 60 years. Under the direction of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the faculty educates students to be active Christians, lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and problem solvers.

As a Catholic school, St. Dunstan's has an obligation to support the educational needs of young Catholics and young non-Catholics who desire a Catholic learning environment. This work is conducted under the supervision and in collaboration with the Archdiocese of San Francisco and St. Dunstan Parish. As a ministry of both the local parish and the greater Church, the school is called by its Catholic values to provide excellent educational opportunities for its students both inside and outside the classroom. As the future of the Church, our students should be prepared for future participation and leadership in all aspects of their personal and social lives. In partnership with parents, our students are loved and cared for as they grow spiritually and intellectually. It is in this sense that the school's mission emphasizes our, "ministry of Jesus Christ in the education of youth."

To better serve this mission, increase the ongoing sustainability of the school, and to amplify the learning opportunities for all students, this strategic plan has been developed by the St. Dunstan School Advisory Board - comprised of several parents from most grade levels as well as representatives of the Parish and school administration. By increasing fundraising, enlarging marketing efforts, enhancing the school's facilities, building institutional technology platforms and tools, and improving business planning and operations, the Advisory Board hopes to ensure effective and long-lasting achievement of the school's mission for both current and future students.

The overall goals of this plan are as follows.

- Increase the financial stability of the school through high-quality fundraising and enrollment management
- Maintain a safe and up-to-date physical plant that fully supports students in their personal and academic developments.
- Improve the integration of technology into the classroom and the everyday learning experience of students
- Administer effectively the school's physical and financial resources

Focus Area #1 - Fundraising

The school's mission calls the school to foster "responsible citizenship" among its students. To model this, the school's leadership must demonstrate effective stewardship of its own resources

to provide for the fulfilment of all aspects of the school's mission. This trust placed in the haof the principal, faculty, staff, Board members, and Parish representatives who support the school in its work is essential to providing the personal and educational opportunities required for students to reach their fullest potential. Like all families, St. Dunstan's school must ensure that it has the financial means necessary to support existing operations and to develop new programming.

In considering how the school can best maximize its fundraising efforts, five tenets have been identified to guide the school's efforts in the area of fundraising.

1. Fundraisers pursued by the school should always work to promote community spirit and foster the positive climate and culture of the school.
2. It should be clear to the school's primary stakeholders (faculty and families) exactly which school program(s) each fundraiser is meant to support. Also, stakeholders should be given formal opportunities to provide feedback on completed fundraisers and have this feedback accessible to the school community.
3. The maximization of financial return should be a significant factor in selecting and evaluating fundraisers that the school pursues.
4. The minimization of work and effort required by school staff, parents, and students should be a significant factor in selecting and evaluating fundraisers that the school pursues.
5. Fundraisers pursued by the school should always be planned well in advance of the event and make use of effective financial planning, collaboration, and communication.

With these ideas in mind and after a full review of the school's existing fundraising efforts, the school has revised its fundraising event calendar (including both additions and deletions to the list of approved fundraisers).

In May 2018, the Fun Run fundraiser was introduced. This event replaced the Turkey Trot, but it was moved to later in the school year and re-imagined in an effort to maximize the financial return on the event and minimize the amount of work required to administer the event. An off-site company was contracted to manage this event. Given this, the school was still able to realize a return greater than most of its other fundraising efforts. Due to the success of the Fun Run, the school decided to continue scheduling this event in the spring.

In April 2019, the school will "pilot" a new fundraiser selling raffle tickets for gift-cards. The expected financial return in exchange for rather minimal effort is projected to be large. If successful, this fundraiser will be scheduled for the fall beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.

Regarding the school's two major annual fundraisers, the Fall Festival and the Lobster Feed, a number of improvements are recommended each year following an evaluation of each event. These evaluations are based on the above-noted guiding tenets. Generally speaking, both events benefit from continued advanced planning coupled with improvements to supplemental fundraising efforts such as silent auctions, maximizing attendance at each event, and minimizing expenses.

Pursuant to an overall review of the school's fundraising efforts, two fundraisers that have been promoted by the school in past years will no longer be scheduled. The World's Finest Chocolate sales fundraiser will no longer be scheduled following the 2017-2018 school year, and the Charleston Wrap fundraiser will no longer be scheduled following the 2018-2019 school year. The School Advisory Board determined that both fundraisers would no longer be scheduled due to the low return of each fundraiser compared with the amount of effort needed to administer each fundraiser.

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, the school will sponsor the following fundraisers.

- "Fall Festival" in October (planning begins in preceding spring)
- "Dunstan's Daily Draw" Gift-card Raffle in November (planning begins in September) - 40% of proceeds to supplement the school's textbook budget
- "Lobster Feed" in March (planning begins in preceding fall)
- "Fun Run" in May (planning begins in January) - 40% of proceeds to support technology improvements on campus

Focus Area #2 - Marketing/Enrollment Management*

Although the school embraces and celebrates its history of educating students for over sixty years, the spirit of the mission directs the school to look forward to the future. As a school dependent on a tuition-driven model of funding, the trust of financial stewardship that has been placed in the hands of the school's leadership mandates that increasing the school's current enrollment be a central focus. Increased numbers of students would enable the school to improve its financial situation as well as increase the numbers of students and families served by the school community. The mission calls the school to promote the development of "active Christians" within its student body. As a religion grounded in community expression and notions of family, the Christian life of the school is well-served by supporting a robust and vibrant student population.

Fully aware of the significance of increasing student enrollment for the mission and long-term viability of the school, there are a number of marketing and promotional initiatives the school plans in the area of enrollment management. Although many of these ideas will require implementation on the part of school administration and staff, the school's parent community should be utilized as frequently as is possible to increase the effectiveness of these ideas.

A number of administrative changes are desired in the area of enrollment management. In particular, the school seeks to achieve the following.

- Create an Admissions Calendar that includes the significant dates for promotion, communication, and application review; this calendar should be synchronized with the school's Marketing Plan (see below)

- Re-structure school tours to include more time for parents to visit classrooms and speak with teachers
- Reach out to and develop relationships with local preschools; this includes the school principal visiting preschools and inviting preschool directors to visit St. Dunstan's
- Use information about where current students attended preschool to identify schools where existing relationships can be enhanced and where there are new opportunities to establish relationships where none exist, as yet

In the specific area of marketing and promoting the school to outside interests, the school seeks to achieve the following.

- Create a Marketing Plan that includes logos, slogans, swag, signage, social media, and locations for promoting the school (e.g. street banner, brochures for display/distribution, library and local businesses); one potential tagline might be "Christ-centered, Family-focused" to take advantage of the school's new learning outcomes
- Structure the Open House in such a way that it is experienced both as a celebration of the current school community and the St Dunstan parish community while providing prospective parents with an opportunity to experience and be encouraged to further consider an application on their child's behalf
- Track school graduates and include success stories in marketing efforts

Focus Area #3 - Facilities/Security*

Caring for our students and providing for their safety is a basic expectation placed upon the stewards entrusted with the leadership of St. Dunstan's Elementary School. One of the most important conditions for a successful learning environment is a student's sense of being at "home" in the classroom and on school grounds. Like the "problem solvers" we encourage our students to become, the school must also be creative in how it maintains and develops its aging infrastructure and physical campus.

To increase both the safety and appeal of the school's facilities, the school plans to complete the following maintenance and upgrades to the physical plant. To more effectively manage these plans, especially in terms of securing and allocating sufficient funding, they have been divided into short-term and longer-term projects.

In the short-term, the school plans to take advantage of student initiative and Parent Work Days at the school, coordinated in conjunction with the school's Student Green Team and Men's Club, to improve the overall appearance of the school. The school will also access its own Facility Budget to offset the cost of improvement. These efforts will enhance the educational experience of current students as well as aid the school's promotional efforts. Those areas in need of attention in this regard include the following.

- Internal and external paint, as needed
- Exterior landscaping

- Repairing student desks
- Refurbishing the school's play area
- New lunch tables for the school yard
- Sunshades for the lunch tables
- Availability of water to students in the school yard

In addition to the above-mentioned activities that can be addressed with the assistance of the parent community, the following short-term issues need to be addressed through careful management of the school's Facility Budget.

- Repairs to the roof of the school - TOP PRIORITY
- Addressing the gopher issue on campus
- Replacing student desks, as needed
- Addressing the sprinkler issue on campus
- Reviewing the school's electrical infrastructure to ensure safe and effective interior lighting

Facility projects that are longer-term will require advanced planning and budgeting to complete. Nevertheless, they are necessary for the sustainable viability of the school. These include the following:

- Ensuring that the school's lawn is safe for student use
- Improving the school's perimeter fencing to increase student safety on campus
- Adding a gate to the east driveway so that the south yard can be available for student use.

Focus Area #4 - Technology Upgrades

As education methods advance, no aspect of promoting "lifelong learning" among young people is as essential as effective integration of technology into the educational experience of our students. Although the needs of the future are difficult to foresee, a strong understanding of technology and the ability to use it appropriately will be one aspect of successful academic and professional careers. As such, it is imperative that the students at St. Dunstan's be provided with the technology and technology instruction sufficient to prepare them for future achievement.

As part of the school's Technology Plan (2018), the school is committing to acquiring the following items in the next few years to further develop the school's technology program and to increase support for student use of technology in the classroom.

- Class sets of iPads for Kindergarten through 3rd grade (including towers for docking and recharging)
- Class sets of Chromebooks for 6th grade through 8th grade (including power strips for classroom recharging)
- Document Cameras for each classroom

- Full complement of desktops for the computer lab
- Networked, high-volume copier for centralized and lower-cost printing from classrooms
- New classroom speakers to replace those that no longer function properly

Although cost estimates for these items remain to be identified, the school has already established a Technology Fund as part of the school's operating budget to purchase these items. To supplement the Technology Fund, the school will be instituting an annual technology fee (initially set at \$50 per student), when appropriate given other costs incurred by families. Paired with the eventual Technology Fee will be a detailed description for parents as to what infrastructure and services the Technology Fee supports. Additionally, parents will be notified when major technology purchases and upgrades take place so that everyone is aware of what is taking place, for which classes and programs, and the timeline for implementation. A portion of the proceeds of one of the school's four yearly fundraisers will also be set aside to provide financial resources needed for technology support and development. The school plans to take advantage of grants, corporate sponsorships, and family donations to provide financial support for technology not otherwise provided for with the school's Technology Fund.

Focus Area #5 - Business Planning and Operations

The mission of the school calls upon the direction of the Holy Ghost Fathers and the faculty of the school to ensure the quality education of the St. Dunstan's students. This trust is best fulfilled through effective planning and stewardship on the part of the school's leadership and all those who support the school's leadership in this mission.

To effectively manage the existing and future resources of the school, the school will endeavor to create two "living" documents that can be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure proper management and oversight of this strategic plan as well as the school's finances and physical resources, generally.

- First, the school will work with experts in the area of budget and finance to create a process by which the school can effectively budget for present and future expenses in ways that do not overly strain the school's dependence on tuition and anticipate future expenditures in advance of funding being required to meet these needs.
- Second, the school will work with experts in the areas of budget, finance, technology, and physical plant management to review the school's current infrastructure (including technology) to create a maintenance, repair, and replacement schedule to ensure that the school's facility needs are consistently attended to and funded adequately.

Additionally, the school will maintain information about the type of industry and the various locations where school parents work so that these connections can be more adequately developed and leveraged to benefit the school.

* Many ideas generated for the focus areas concerning enrollment and school safety were direct results of the Parent Survey conducted by the school in 2016-2017.