



AdvancED School Executive Summary

Saint Joseph Catholic School
Catholic Diocese of Jackson

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Introduction

2009 AdvancED School Executive Summary

AdvancED School Executive Summary

Section 1: Introduction

Provide the school's mission statement. What process was used to create the mission statement? Describe how the school engaged its stakeholders to parents and community members in the development and fulfillment of the mission statement. Describe the community in which your school is located. What are the unique features and special challenges of your school community? Briefly provide demographic information with regards to both students and staff and the community at large.

Statement or Question: Provide the school's mission statement. What process was used to create the mission statement? Describe how the school engaged its stakeholders to parents and community members in the development and fulfillment of the mission statement. Describe the community in which your school is located. What are the unique features and special challenges of your school community? Briefly provide demographic information with regards to both students and staff and the community at large.

Response: The vision and mission of St. Joseph Catholic School is the basis for the alignment and allocation of all human, instructional, financial, and physical resources. Data driven decision-making is the basis for all curricular, instructional, and organizational decisions.

THE ST. JOSEPH MISSION and VISION, as reaffirmed by our collaborative planning effort 2010-2012:

Mission

The mission of the St. Joseph Catholic School is to provide a Catholic faith-based education offered in a safe, academically challenging, and creative environment.

Beliefs

St. Joseph Catholic School in Greenville, Mississippi, is founded on a tradition of educational excellence since 1888. It is our belief and conviction that every student entrusted to our care can succeed and deserves all our support:

- All students can learn when actively engaged in the learning process and provided with a meaningful context
- Students learn best when they have appropriate opportunities for success and are challenged to increase their performance
- Each student is a valued individual with unique needs and talents

As an educational institution, St. Joseph Catholic School is committed to cultural diversity and continuous improvement of curriculum and assessment methods:

- Cultural diversity is appreciated and celebrated; it increases a student's understanding and learning experience in the community and in the world
- Diversity in assessment methods provides the students with a variety of opportunities for achievement
- Curriculum reflects a variety of learning activities for the students' unique needs, interests, strengths and weaknesses at various

developmental stages

As a community of faith deeply rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church's tradition, St. Joseph Catholic School strongly believes that each child and adult should be provided with regular opportunities for prayer, sacraments and reading the scriptures:

- Religious education and Christian formation in the doctrines, values, traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church are an integral part of the school curriculum
- Parents are primary educators of their children, and the school assists them in the process while instilling in students an appreciation of others and a commitment to principles of peace and justice
- Teachers, parents and students all share in the responsibility to be witnesses to the Gospel. As such, religious truths and values infuse all the subjects of the curriculum

Finally, St. Joseph Catholic School believes in the dignity of every person and the respect of all. Student learning and growth is a major priority of our school which we achieve through a safe, comfortable environment. Our goal is to produce academic learners and future leaders who analyze complex problems, turn data into information, and information into solutions.

The school's mission statement was amended in 1998, and has been regularly re-affirmed by stakeholders of the school. St. Joseph stakeholders are many and varied, and currently defined as students, parents, teachers, administrators, alumni, parish members, patrons, and community members. Both the mission and vision of the school were re-affirmed spring, 2011, during a year-long strategic planning effort that brought all stakeholders together for intensive sessions.

St. Joseph Catholic School is a coeducational Roman Catholic junior/senior high school that is operated under the auspices of the Diocese of Jackson. St. Joseph is accredited by AdvancED / Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and by the Mississippi Department of Education. The school welcomes students of all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. To date, the administration, faculty, and staff are composed of both lay and religious professionals dedicated to Catholic education.

Catholic education has been a tradition of excellence in Greenville since 1888. This tradition is reflected in our Mission Statement. St. Joseph Catholic School prides itself on the family and faith-based spirit that permeates its academic, cultural, extra-curricular, spiritual, and athletic programs.

St. Joseph School and its administration are blessed with a number of talented and progressive support teams. These include the Irish Family parent association that supports teaching, learning, and student functions and the Principal's Cabinet that advises the administration on various matters. The school also enjoys active participation of patron groups who provide funding for academic enrichment opportunities. The Athletic Association supports the institution by fully funding the sports program of the school. The St. Joseph Capital Campaign supports the school with the funding and occasional emergency maintenance items associated with a new school facility. St. Joseph Catholic Parish is the dominant benefactor of the school through major annual gifts for the operation of the school and scholarships for students in need.

St. Joseph Catholic School includes all stakeholders in a continuous improvement process through the Principal's Cabinet. This team includes students, faculty, alumni, School Advisory Council members, school patrons, and parents in regular meetings designed to improve the product and image of St. Joseph. Through our SACS Faculty Team, work on the School Strategic Plan, and continuous

faculty input on new planning concepts, the school remains engaged in a continuing planning process. A year long strategic planning effort has recently been completed. This work involved the Parish, community, school patrons, and faculty. The Strategic Plan has been passed by the Faculty Committee of the Whole and the St. Joseph School Advisory Council. The Strategic Plan is a working plan that is utilized on a daily basis. School improvement efforts are continually coordinated among the St. Joseph Faculty, between the Greenville principals, with the St. Joseph School Advisory Council, and among all Catholic Diocese of Jackson principals. An AdvancEd / Southern Association of Colleges and Schools review team visits St. Joseph Catholic School once every five years to review progress on the School Improvement Plan. The Mississippi Department of Education likewise has a different five year review visit of the school. The principal is charged with guiding the school in developing plans for continuous improvement, addressing internal and external recommendations for improvement, and immediately taking corrective action on any area of school non-compliance.

To understand the role of this educational institution, one must consider the community as a whole. Reacting to the plight of displaced farm labor, Greenville was one of the New South's first locations for balancing industry with agriculture. Beginning in the nineteen-fifties, Greenville could boast a strong and diverse economy. Mainstays included the river industry, agriculture, value-added agriculture, scientific agricultural research, finance, retail, medical, and manufacturing. The early nineteen-eighties saw a decline in the river and local financial businesses. The late nineteen-eighties to present signaled difficult times for manufacturing. The recession of two-thousand eight has brought pressure on retail services, while medical services are strengthening. Multiple economic issues have injured the community both economically and demographically (T. Hart, personal communication, October 1, 2009). Census data and computer census models continue to show a population decline in the region and in Washington County, Mississippi (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Through the tracking of school immigration and emigration statistics it is evident that the loss of student population is predicated on families moving out of area, and few families moving into the area. Community economic pressures and community population loss are the greatest concerns held by this educational institution. The SACS web system will not support tables and graphs; therefore, student, staff, and community demographic information is available on site.

Section 2: Student Performance

Give a brief description of your school's vision about students and their performance. Provide a brief summary of student performance in your school. What are your goals and how will you know you have achieved them? Describe the variety of your school's student performance assessments. How does your staff engage in meaningful analysis of student work in order to modify instruction? Describe the school's student support programs and services. In what ways does your school ensure community/parent involvement in the life of the school?

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Response: Assessment is on-going process directed at understanding and improving student learning. To be successful, the assessment work of the school must share clear expectations of teaching and learning and stated outcomes of learning. The program must also determine how well the student meets instructional expectations and information as to how the school shall work to improve student learning. St. Joseph Catholic School regards the assessment process as a shared one between student, teacher, and administration.

The St. Joseph assessment program is both formative for improvement purposes and summative for purposes of measuring progress. Summative assessment measures progress at the conclusion of the program of study. Examples include term papers, examinations, laboratory writings, and journals at the program's conclusion. The formative assessment includes pre-tests, homework, scholarly discussions, and journal entries. The formative assessment is utilized at the beginning of the program of work, and is designed to enhance quality of instruction. St. Joseph instructors attempt to bolster critical thinking and learning coursework with authentic assessment that will prove productive in the future as the student moves to college and eventually the workplace.

There are three categories of assessment in the St. Joseph learning community: Classroom, Program, and General. General Assessments focus on student learning of life skills and moral values as espoused by the Roman Catholic Church. Program Assessments measure the two programs of work within the school: College Preparatory or Certificate Program that is occasionally used as an option within the Resource Program. Classroom Assessments are used to enhance student learning.

The St. Joseph assessment program is based on these principles:

1. Stated student outcomes shall be consistent with the school's mission.
2. Evidence of outcomes shall be measured and recorded.
3. Assessments shall be utilized for analysis of student learning.
4. The assessment process shall be a consistent effort to improve student learning.
5. Assessments shall be multi and varied in nature in each class.

In addition to classroom assessments, St. Joseph attempts to enhance and measure its curriculum on nationally-normed standardized assessment tools. One requirement for admission to the school is a successful predictor score on both the Scholastic Testing Service QUIC Mathematics and Communicative Arts standardized tests. The school's standardized testing effort continues at the seventh and eighth grade levels through the administration of SAT-10 and Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT). This test battery compliments the age appropriate equivalent also given at St. Joseph's predominate feeder school, Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School. In efforts to follow student learning progress on a more consistent level, St. Joseph uses the American College Test line of standardized products beginning in the eighth grade and subsequently tracks students through graduation. This is accomplished through testing all

students with the EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT Tests. St. Joseph is also a National Test Site for ACT testing.

Other standardized products used by the school include the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the United States Military's ASVAB vocational battery, and the National Merit Program's PSAT/NMSQT. The SACS web system does not support tables and graphs; therefore, assessment data is available on site.

St. Joseph School supports its students with a Guidance services and a Resource Department. The faculty, in turn, supports these departments through a referral process and implementation of classroom services and accommodations as suggested to best benefit individual students. The Resource Room has one full-time certified and one part-time certified teacher assisting 17 total students. Resource services operate through the entire school day and serves students through inclusive classroom services, hourly individual tutoring work, and testing services. The Resource Room also serves as a clearinghouse for parent requests regarding students who may benefit from assessments, placement in the program, and outside referrals. The Guidance Department is staffed by a certified guidance and vocational counselor and a Counselor Intern staffed annually by either Delta State University or the University of Mississippi. Full service guidance and counseling services include academic, career/military, college, and testing provisions. Both personal and group counseling is offered from the department.

Section 3: Challenges and Opportunities

What are the major challenges your school has faced in the last 3 years and how have you addressed those challenges?

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Response:Currently, St. Joseph Catholic School has a consistent student census in the range of two-hundred and twenty in grades seven through twelve. Likewise, the primary feeder elementary school, Our Lady of Lourdes, has a similar student census serving three-year-old Pre-Kindergarten through sixth grade. While the finances of the school are sound, there are a number of teacher pay, curriculum, and enhancement issues that could be positively addressed with an improved cash flow stemming from more students. It is through the sheer talent of the teaching staff and the utilization of innovation in curriculum alignment that a school this size can offer the coursework it does.

The St. Joseph School Continuous School Improvement Effort has yielded a comprehensive list of opportunities through which the learning community can engage to become an even better agent of educational change:

- Develop additional student performance measures, capture data, and utilize data in demonstrating verifiable growth in learning performances
- Identify more outside professional development opportunities for staff and afford staff the platform to instruct the faculty in these learned advancements
- Provide a formalized and regularized system of peer mentoring for teachers, especially new teachers
- Formulate and document within discipline departments vertical curriculum alignment so as to ensure grade level benchmarks are met
- Establish an empowered student peer conflict resolution group

Despite the many Mississippi Delta studies that have focused, to no avail, on the racial, educational, motivational, and social divides, St. Joseph Catholic School continues to teach the region valuable lessons as to how a community can work in unison in order to thrive and achieve together. There is no doubt that Greenville St. Joseph Catholic School has built a strong community legacy since 1888, and will continue to serve well.

Section 4: Conclusion

What is your school most proud of and why? Is there any other information you would like to share with the public and the school community?

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Response:The history of St. Joseph Catholic School begins with St. Rose of Lima Academy, founded by the Sisters of Mercy. Located next to the St. Joseph Parish Church, St. Rose was the standard for Catholic education in the Delta for sixty-two years. By 1949 the enrollment had exceeded the space of the building, and St. Joseph Elementary and High School was opened in 1950. In 1964, once again the enrollment and needs of the school family called for another facility. A new elementary school, Our Lady of Lourdes, was constructed on Reed Road. St. Joseph became the combined middle school and high school. St. Joseph High School continued to meet the needs of students by adding six classrooms for the Middle School in 1965 and an additional four classrooms in 1994.

Responding to the mandates of our mission statement and the needs of our diverse community, St. Joseph Catholic High School embarked on an ambitious building project with the construction of our new 61,000 square foot St. Joseph Middle/Senior High School located on VFW Road. Our present facility is equipped with the following:

- 14 classrooms
- 3 science labs
- 1 computer lab
- 1 math lab
- Media/library center
- Chapel
- Gymnasium
- Cafeteria/auditorium
- Football / soccer, baseball, and softball fields
- Athletic Field House
- Up-to-date computers in each classroom with internet access
- 48 laptop computers, with internet access, for classroom use
- Interactive Mimio Boards in classrooms
- Ceiling-mounted projectors for multimedia presentations in classrooms

Initially, the Greenville Catholic School followed the established mission of other Catholic schools in the eighteen-hundred blossoming era of immigrant-dominated America. The concept was to train children of Catholic immigrants in the nurturing confines of the parochial school. Backed by the dedicated teaching and dogged discipline of the Sisters of Mercy, the school's reputation spread through the community. With this came students from Protestant and Jewish faith traditions. Consequently the mission and scope of the institution grew.

Into the early nineteen-sixties, St. Joseph was first to extend educational opportunities to the African-American population. Thus, a new avenue of diversity was introduced in the school and to the community as well. With the advent of Greenville's aggressive and somewhat voluntary public school desegregation, a new wave of patrons discovered Catholic education. Conversely, two private schools were established in Greenville strictly as an alternative to the change witnessed within the Greenville Public Schools.

From that point in history St. Joseph has operated in an educational marketplace environment. This market offers varied characteristics in the realm of education offerings, socialization aspects, and the overall culture of the school. St. Joseph prides itself in offering a _____

strong, balanced college preparatory and actual in-house college dual instruction. This viable and guaranteed curriculum is backed by a safe, orderly school and welcoming student environment.

The parochial school is a strong force in the delta community.

The St. Joseph Catholic School operates under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi. The Bishop designates a superintendent to serve as his representative to supervise and work with the educational institutions of the Diocese. The Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church provides local canonical and pastoral leadership to schools and the Principal provides instructional, spiritual, and managerial leadership. The Pastor is the governing authority of the school. The governing authority has the responsibility of hiring only the administrator. The administrator, in turn, is responsible for all personnel and management issues at the school. The administrator is responsible for day-to-day operations of the school.

St. Joseph Catholic School has a School Advisory Council which sets goals, approves and monitors budgets, initiates development and public relations efforts, advises in the hiring of new administrators, and reviews its own performance and the relationship of the administrator to the Advisory Council. Advisory Councils are governed by a Constitution, developed and written at the local level with Diocesan approval, as well as Diocesan policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are established for the initial and continued training of School Advisory Council members.

The administration is well-versed in the moral and ethical considerations in the management of a parochial facility very much in the public arena. These principles guide every business decision. The principal is committed to the creation of collaborative community networks including the hosting of community leadership at the school, active work within the Economic Development Center of the Delta, the Education Committee of Greenville, and the Greenville Higher Education Center, as well as active outreach into the community. All work supports the mission of student service and learning.

The St. Joseph learning environment includes exemplary technology, outstanding student guidance and support services, and a rigorous curriculum grounded in critical thought. Course offerings range from resource to an honors program and traditional coursework to advanced placement curriculum. Few schools the size of St. Joseph can boast of such impressive curricula offerings. St. Joseph faculty members maintain a strong community reputation for the caring of students and travelling the extra mile in educating our children. The school bases its testing standards on nationally normed instruments. Each grade level is administered a standardized test battery annually. The average ACT for the school is 20.7 inclusive of the entire range of student capability. The school's graduation rate is 99.4%, with 99% of those graduates are college bound.

St. Joseph Catholic School encourages citizenship with the Community Service Program in which all students are required to participate. The guidance department also facilitates small group activities that focus on character education. Instructors promote decision-making skills through varied programs, projects and classroom curriculum. The administration and staff select and encourage students to participate in co-curricular activities such as Student Government, Governor's School, youth leadership programs, and Mayor's Youth Council. The school offers leadership, responsibility, and character-building opportunities with the above activities as well as a variety of sports and clubs. Students are required to complete 100 community service hours in order to meet graduation requirements. Also, students attend Mass/Prayer Service weekly and participate in class retreats. Each class is responsible for a major school function or project.

St. Joseph's community accolades include the Economic Center's "Clean & Green" Award, Mississippi High School Activities Association's Sportsmanship Award, and the Mississippi Governor's Award for the Outstanding School-Community Partnership. This award was earned for the community's Reading Buddies Program where St. Joseph students serve as mentors for public school elementary children. Since 1888, St. Joseph Catholic School has led Greenville and the Mississippi Delta in an education rooted in

faith, academics, and service.