

Principal's Letter February 26, 2010

Dear Families,

The teaching staff and the School Commission make decisions and policies based on the Five Year Plan for the school.

The plan is divided into six categories. They are listed below, along with the steps we have taken this year to meet the goals outlined in the Five Year Plan:

Family and Spiritual Life: The goals in this section call us to encourage families to participate more actively in their faith community, build a stronger parish community, work with the parish to form a youth ministry, and encourage the students to live the Gospel values through faith and service to others.

Progress: We have a youth minister and an active youth program, started this year. The service activities continue, most recently with a drive for Haiti. The school notifies parents of upcoming programs in the parish that might be of interest to them. The curriculum focuses strongly on the need to be **active** Christians in the global community.

Faculty and Staff: We want to attract and retain quality teachers and staff, have teachers work together on curriculum in Professional Learning Communities, provide ongoing teacher training that is global in scope, and continue on our technology journey.

Progress: The School Commission continues to work toward parity in terms of teacher salaries. The teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities at each grade level, and we report results on a blog. We are working on the Reading Curriculum, and have brought in outside consultants for both reading and math to work with the staff. In terms of technology, we have devoted one faculty meeting per month for training, bought laptops for the teachers, and installed interactive white boards in grades 3-8.

Curriculum and Instruction: We have a goal to continue to offer a challenging curriculum that exceeds state standards, and to use multiple assessments to measure progress and to direct our course. We promise to work to teach to the whole child, and to teach the children at his/her own achievement level.

Progress: In working on the Reading Curriculum, we have taken the state standards and compared them to the practices we are using to teach reading, making adjustments when necessary. We have a consultant from the Institute for Educational Research at the University of Washington who has come in to observe the reading practices currently in place and model strategies that have been proven through research to improve reading skills. Using this information, we are in the process of selecting a reading series for grades K-5 which will emphasize the skills that will be our primary focus. We have also realigned the math standards to the new state math standards. In terms of teaching to the whole child, we continue to offer counseling services and conflict resolution strategies through the Second Step Program. We are also bringing in more presenters that bear witness to the need for a global education.

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Continuation of Sheila's Bulletin

Development: The goals in terms of development focus on alumni relationships, setting higher goals for the School Campaign, increasing the endowment with a goal of \$1,000,000 and better communicating the accomplishments of the school.

Progress: We have set a goal of increasing the alumni newsletter mailings to three times a year, and have contacted several alumni so that we can better focus on the accomplishments of our graduates. The endowment is now at \$635,000, a jump of \$200,000 from last year! We also are working on ways to increase the communication of school accomplishments, especially to parish members.

Financial Planning: The goals for financial planning are that St. Francis of Assisi School will continue to be financially sustainable and financially accessible. Also, a tuition structure should be developed and maintained that is more closely in alignment with the cost of educating each child. A formula for subsidy will be established to allow for more long-term planning, and there would be a greater focus on grants.

Progress: St. Francis of Assisi School continues to maintain a healthy balance of revenue-producing activities that include tuition, fundraising, development, endowment, grants and parish support. In addition, we have a reserve fund for operations which is maintained at a minimum of 10% of the school budget. There is an increasing budget each year for financial aid; when the endowment reaches \$1,000,000, we will use the interest from the fund for additional financial aid. The School Commission has in place a five-year change toward the tuition structure, and is working with the parish on a subsidy plan. The grant-writing team has explored new options for obtaining grants at workshops that focus on successful grant-writing.

Facilities: The Five Year Plan states that we will continue to support a safe, secure and healthy environment, embracing globally-sustainable standards. We will also maintain its facilities so that the environment is modern and attractive. Finally a plan will be developed to explore the possibility of building a library media center.

Progress: We go through an annual check to make sure that the building is safe and secure. The school is subject to outside inspections by the fire department. One request that they have made is that we add a gate on the stage of the school auditorium (The Wiegand Resource Center), so that there is no danger of students falling off the stage. We are currently exploring options for the gate. The school continues to participate in the Green Schools Program, monitoring procedures for creating an environmentally-efficient building. To this end, we are looking at the cost of replacing the school's single-paned windows that date back to the opening of the school in 1953. The school is working with Puget Sound Energy to see if we can tap into stimulus money to help us with this expensive goal. Additionally, there is a study that has just begun to look at the carbon emissions from the building. The grounds have been newly landscaped, and the building is well-maintained by the cleaning company we have in place.

We're busy!

Have a Great Weekend,

Sheila