



## Strategic Plan for St. Joseph Catholic School, 2026-2029: A Living Piece of our Community Striving Together for Heaven

Strengthening the School/Parish Relationship  
Deepening the Integration of Faith and Virtue through Character Education  
Expanding School Leadership Capacity  
Maximizing and Communicating Achievement  
Ensuring Enrollment, Staff Satisfaction and Effective Parent Communication

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Respectfully submitted March 5, 2026 to:

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The Archdiocese of Milwaukee Office for Schools  
The Catholic Schools and Parishes Initiative at Marquette University



Strategic Plan 2026-2029  
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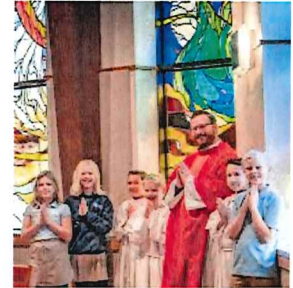
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# About St. Joseph Catholic School

## Big Bend, Wisconsin

St. Joseph Catholic School, located in Big Bend, Wisconsin, was established in 1955 by the School Sisters of St. Francis with the intention of offering a strong, Catholic, faith-based education. That tradition continues to this day. With its continued emphasis on service, the school has been and remains an asset to the Parish and the local community.

Its fully accredited curriculum promotes educational excellence, student diversity, and Catholic identity. These aspirations are accomplished through the school's dedicated teachers who adhere to the standards set forth by *the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation* (WRISA) as well as local, state and national bodies.



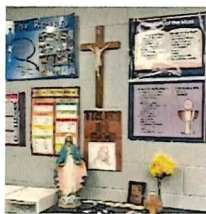
Grade levels range from a three-year-old Kindergarten through 8th grade. The school is staffed by a half-time principal/middle school teacher, a vice principal/4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, an administrative assistant, and teachers for 3K, 4K, 5K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, as well as three other middle school teachers for grades 5 through 8 who instruct in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Faculty members also include special teachers for art, music/sacramental preparation, and physical education, and the school offers Special Needs Scholarship Program as well.

Over the past decade, the school's enrollment has varied from a high of 116 in 2016-17 to a low of 86 in 2023-24. Current student enrollment has since increased to the current number of 104, which translates to a student-to-teacher ratio of approximately 8 to 1. In terms of demographics, roughly 85% of St. Joseph students are White, and females and males are represented about equally.



The school provides comprehensive preschool programming where children grow in all areas of development: health/physical, social/emotional, language/communication, cognition/general knowledge and faith formation. Children build the foundations of school readiness through daily routines enriched with music, art, and gross motor activities.

Core elementary-level classes include Religion, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, English Language Arts, Spelling, and Physical Education, and are augmented by comprehensive Music and Art offerings. A wide range of extracurricular activities are also offered including athletics and clubs that complement students' development in the classroom.



Faith formation is enhanced through Weekly Liturgy, Preparation for the Sacraments, and a Youth Discipleship Ministry that is rooted in faith and service and comprised of students who both actively share their faith to others and serve the school community and beyond. Vacation Bible School is also offered.

St. Joseph School and Parish can be rightly characterized as a caring and welcoming community, highly valued by stakeholders who seek both to preserve its special culture, and address enrollment challenges that may arise.



## Strategic Plan 2026-2029 Executive Summary

In September of 2025, St. Joseph School, Big Bend, embarked on a strategic planning process in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and the Catholic Schools and Parishes Initiative at Marquette University. The purpose centered on helping to ensure the future success of the school.

The effort began with the school principal, Michael Brown, assembling a talented Strategic Planning Steering Committee consisting of parents, a grandparent, school staff members, and a Parish Trustee, 8 in all, to guide the process under the direction of a facilitator, Dr. William Henk. The group met monthly until the plan was considered ready for submission in March of 2026.

The first step in creating the plan involved collecting data related to the school. Beyond demographic information provided by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, parents, faculty and staff, parishioners, and students in grades 5 through 8 completed customized surveys created by the Committee. Then, in October, focus groups were conducted with parents along with faculty and staff. Data from both the surveys and focus groups pointed distinctly to the school being held in very high regard.

Nonetheless, the intent of the strategic planning process was to identify ways to make the school flourish even more so. Those determinations included SWOT analyses (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) that corresponded to the four domains of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools (NSBECS)*, namely: 1) Mission and Catholic identity, 2) School Governance and Leadership, 3) Academic Excellence, and 4) Operational Vitality. In turn, subcommittees were formed for each domain that included select Steering Committee members and a small number of other stakeholders whose expertise contributed to the recommendations for each group.

The four domain subcommittees used the data collected and SWOT Analyses as a foundation for generating SMART goals (that is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) that then fell under 5 strategic priorities as noted on the following page. The Mission and Catholic Identity group formulated 2 goals, and Governance and Leadership produced 2 more. Academic Leadership provided 6 goals, and Operational Vitality developed 4. In turn, those 14 goals were then formatted according to a template that denoted the respective Domain, the Objective/Goals, the Tactics, the estimated Timeline, the Indicators of Progress, the Parties Responsible, and the required Costs and Resources. Implementation of the plan would be expected to occur, within reason, according to each goal's parameters; however, rebalancing of tactics, timelines and personnel should be undertaken according to the monitoring of progress in real time.

These 14 goals serve as the focal point of the strategic plan. In effect, the plan serves as a set of recommendations subject to the approval and available resources of Parish leadership, most notably the Parish's pastor, Father Andrew Kysely, in consultation with the Trustees and the Parish Finance Committee. Ideally all of the goals would be made actionable, although other priorities may take precedence for a range of reasons including competing parish aspirations, aims, and needs as well as fiscal constraints.

# Strategic Plan Framework

## St. Joseph School Strategic Plan 2026-2029 at a Glance Domains, Priorities, and Goals

<u>Domain</u>	<u>Strategic Priorities</u>	<u>Goals</u>
Mission and Catholic Identity	Strengthening the School/Parish Relationship	1. <u>Strengthen</u> our Ministry Partnership through shared events
	Deepening the Integration of Faith and Virtue Through Character Education	2. Implement a Character Education program that integrates with the School's religious and academic curricula
Governance and Leadership	Expanding School Leadership Capacity	3. Develop and share specific job descriptions for school leaders
		4. Move to a Full-time Principal model or equivalent
Academic Excellence	Maximizing and Communicating Achievement	5. Increase opportunities for teachers' individual and joint planning time
		6. Schedule publisher-led curriculum workshops to provide in-depth instructional guidance for teachers
		7. Strengthen the induction of teachers new to St. Joseph School
		8. Build deeper understanding of competency-based grading
		9. Communicate standardized test information more effectively
		10. Increase individualized academic support for students in need of assistance through new part-time paraprofessional
		11. <u>Ensure</u> transportation and childcare options for current families
		12. Increase total student enrollment to 125
		13. Prioritize annual increases and salary equity in staff compensation
		14. Create a fully unified system for communication with parents
Operational Vitality	Ensuring Enrollment, Staff Satisfaction, and Effective Parent Communication	



## Education for the Mind, Body, and Soul

### Vision, Mission and Core Beliefs

#### Our Vision:

St. Joseph School will be the choice for families seeking a vibrant, traditional, faith-filled Catholic education driven by academic excellence, spiritual, moral, and social development, and a safe and caring parish community.

#### Our Mission:

St. Joseph Catholic School is committed to developing each student's potential by providing the foundation of the Catholic faith, strong academic achievement, character development, and service to our greater community.

#### Our Core Beliefs:

St. Joseph School community believes that we create an environment which cultivates a positive self-concept enabling the child to grow to his or her fullest spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social potential. We achieve this through a sense of responsibility, critical thinking, Christian interpersonal relationships and daily prayer life.

The goals of St. Joseph School are the following:

To provide for the spiritual and moral growth of each child by:

- Sharing the light of faith through prayer and religious instruction
- Participating in meaningful liturgical experience and service projects for the community.

To provide for the intellectual development of each child by:

- Developing life skills and concepts through a well-defined curriculum
- Teaching the students to think logically, critically and creatively in decision making, problem solving and aesthetic appreciation.

To provide for the social and personal development of each child by:

- Promoting a spirit of respect for self and others
- Stimulating an awareness of social and environmental problems and fostering a Christian attitude of response.

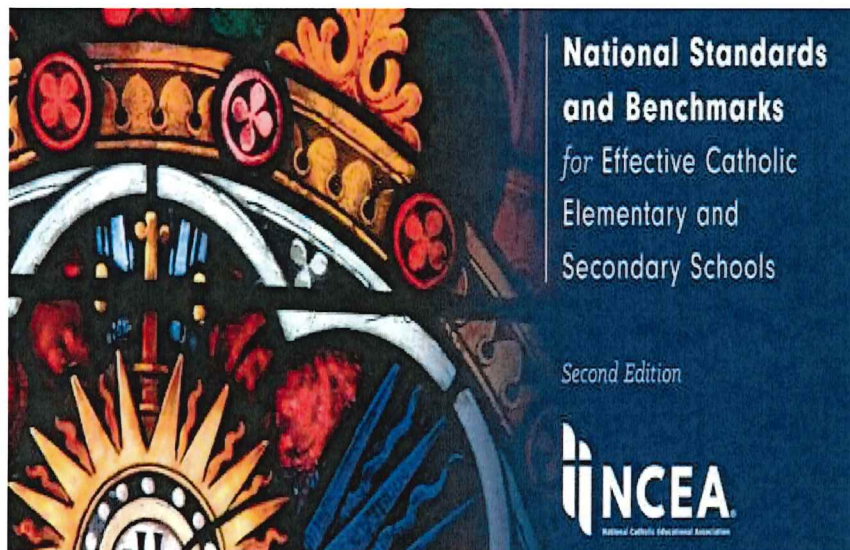
School Motto: Love in Every Word. Respect in Every Action. Confidence in Every Heart.

**St. Joseph Parish: A Community Striving Together for Heaven**

# National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools

The *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools* (NSBECS) provide a framework of 13 standards and 77 benchmarks to define, assess, and improve mission-driven, well-managed Catholic schools. Organized around four domains—Mission and Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality—these standards ensure schools uphold their Catholic identity while providing high-quality, holistic education. More specifically, the four NSBECS domains are:

- **Mission and Catholic Identity (MCI)**: This domain affirms that Catholic schools invite students into a relationship with Jesus Christ and immerse themselves in the life of the Church. The identity of the school should be authentically Catholic, meaning that faith is integrated into all aspects of school life, not just religious education.
- **Governance and Leadership (GL)**: This domain focuses on effective leadership and administrative practices. It requires schools to have sound governance and leadership structures to maintain their Catholic identity, academic rigor, and operational vitality.
- **Academic Excellence (AE)**: This domain ensures that schools provide a rigorous, relevant, and research-based curriculum. Curricular and co-curricular programs should be infused with Catholic faith and traditions while providing an exemplary academic program for all students.
- **Operational Vitality (OV)**: This domain focuses on the effectiveness of a school's infrastructure to ensure its long-term viability and sustainability. This includes strong practices in areas like finances, human resources, facilities, and institutional advancement.



## Action Plan SMART Goals By Domain



In general, SMART goals are a structured framework for setting objectives that are **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant** and **Time-Bound**. This methodology transforms vague intentions into concrete, actionable plans, increasing the likelihood of success by providing clear, trackable milestones and deadlines.

As they pertain to Catholic schools, SMART goals represent targets used to deepen mission and Catholic identity, solidify school governance and leadership, improve student performance and teacher professional development, and maximize overall school operations. When fully articulated, these goals provide clear, actionable, and data-driven objectives. In short, SMART goals answer the questions:

- What exactly does the school want to accomplish?
- How will the school know when the goal is accomplished?
- Is the goal realistic and how will it be accomplished?
- Why is this goal important?
- When will the goal be achieved?

Used in conjunction with the four domains of Catholic School Effectiveness within a strategic planning framework, SMART goals become powerful vehicles for helping schools thrive. The combination provides a structured roadmap for school success by defining clear priorities, aligning resources, and enabling progress to be tracked. In effect, strategic plans set the long-term vision, while domain-specific SMART goals translate that vision into actionable, measurable, and time-sensitive targets.

*What follows in the next section of the plan are the 14 SMART goals for St. Joseph Catholic School as determined by its 9-member Strategic Planning Steering committee. They are the direct result of a systematic and extensive data collection, rooted in surveys and focus groups, that included parents, faculty and staff, upper elementary-aged students, and parishioners. Those data were then given the utmost consideration by the Steering Committee as it formed domain subcommittees for Mission and Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality. In turn, the subcommittees each thoughtfully determined the appropriate SMART goals for its domain, fully elaborated them, and captured each one in a template that indicated its domain, goal and objective(s), tactics, timeline, indicators, responsibility, and costs and resources required.*

It is important to note that the plan constitutes a series of recommendations only. Once submitted, its approval rests with St. Joseph Parish Leadership, most notably Father Andrew Kysely in consultation with the Trustees and the Parish Finance Council. It is fully understood that goals of the plan may fall short of endorsement for an array of reasons including priority setting and fiscal constraints.

Strategic Priority: Strengthening the School/Parish Relationship

Relevance: A strong Parish-School connection fosters faith formation, community engagement, and support for students and families.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/Resources
<p>Strengthen our St. Joseph School / Parish Ministry Partnership through shared events.</p>	<p>Parish and School leadership will create a shared calendar of events, with a list of 3 combined events to market to the community throughout each year using existing or new communication channels.</p> <p>A key action will include coordinating calendars to avoid scheduling conflicts with the express goal of bringing parishioners and school families together.</p>	<p>Parish and School leaders will meet monthly to discuss and decide upon joint events. A shared calendar will be completed by summer of 2026, with monthly reviews to take place throughout the school year.</p>	<p>The Parish and School will increase the number of joint parish-school events by at least 3 and also improve communication channels and involve more families in events, with an increased turnout by 20%.</p>	<p>Parish and School leaders will work together to communicate events to the St. Joseph community as a whole.</p>	<p>In-kind contribution of time from Parish and School leaders. The Parish and School will use existing parish and school staff, technology and committees to coordinate and market activities.</p>

Strategic Priority: Deepening the Integration of Faith and Virtue Through Character Education

Relevance: The program aligns with St. Joseph School’s mission of developing students academically, spiritually, and morally. It strengthens the school and parish by reinforcing shared faith values and community service

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/Resources
<p>Implementing a Character Education program that integrates with the School’s religious and academic curricula.</p>	<p>Students will be presented with different opportunities to deepen their faith and understanding through classroom activities, reflections, and teacher observations.</p> <p>Universal values such as empathy, compassion, and justice (that align with both secular and religious frameworks) will be addressed. Equally important, a holistic approach will be taken that connects lay virtues like respect and responsibility with faith-based values like stewardship, compassion, and service. To deepen learning, concepts of faith will be embedded within academic subjects whenever possible.</p> <p>In addition, students will engage in volunteer work or community projects that allow them to put faith-based values into real world action such as helping the poor and demonstrating environmental stewardship.</p>	<p>The school staff will choose a character education program by the end of the 2025-26 school year, with implementation beginning in the 2026-27 school year.</p> <p>Checkpoints will occur at the beginning of the school year for kick-off, as well as at the end of each trimester to track progress.</p>	<p>Each month, students will participate in at least one classroom activity relating to the monthly virtue. A minimum of 85% of students will demonstrate understanding of the virtue through reflections, projects, or teacher observations.</p> <p>Classroom lessons will be designed by teachers and campus ministry members. Lessons will be aligned with the character education program.</p> <p>Assessments will move beyond tests and involve observing students' choices, relationships, and responses to challenges to measure character growth.</p> <p>Surveys and other feedback mechanisms will be used to gauge student, staff, and parent perceptions of the program's success.</p>	<p>The Campus Ministry team (student-led) with teacher/adult leader and school staff will design and implement lessons for the school community.</p>	<p>In-kind contributions of teachers, Principal, Vice Principal, and Campus Ministry Members along with student participation.</p>

Domain: Governance and Leadership GOAL 1 (3 of 14)

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, Big Bend  
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Strategic Priority: Expanding School Leadership Capacity

Relevance: Well-defined and agreed upon position descriptions for all school leadership positions will provide clarity about roles and responsibilities for parents, teachers, and leaders themselves, thereby reducing unintended confusion and attendant frustrations.

<b>Objective/Goal</b>	<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Timeline/Milestones</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Costs/Resources</b>
Develop and share specific job descriptions for St. Joseph school leaders	Collect existing and recently developed St. Joseph School leadership position descriptions	1 <sup>st</sup> Week of April 2026	Descriptions available for review	Principal has primary responsibility, and Vice Principal, Learning Support Coordinator and Technology Coordinator assist	
Gather review feedback from those school personnel impacted	Gather review feedback from those school personnel impacted	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weeks	Comments Collected	Principal	
Gather feedback from teachers and staff	Gather feedback from teachers and staff	2 <sup>nd</sup> Week	Comments Collected	Principal	
Gather feedback from Pastor	Gather feedback from Pastor	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	Comments Collected	Principal or 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party	In-kind contributions of Principal, Vice Principal, Learning Support
Gather feedback from School Advisory Committee	Gather feedback from School Advisory Committee	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	Comments Collected	Chair of School Advisory Committee	Coordinator and Technology Coordinator, Chair of School Advisory Committee, and Pastor
Gather feedback from Parish Council	Gather feedback from Parish Council	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week	Comments Collected	Principal	
Optional: Seek Principal position descriptions from other comparable Catholic elementary schools for possible oversights and innovative duties	Optional: Seek Principal position descriptions from other comparable Catholic elementary schools for possible oversights and innovative duties	April as possible	External Principal position description Available for Review	Principal	
Create new or revise existing position descriptions based upon collective feedback received	Create new or revise existing position descriptions based upon collective feedback received	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Weeks of May	Completed Principal, Vice Principal, Learning Support Coordinator and Technology Coordinator position descriptions	Principal, Vice Principal, Learning Support Coordinator and Technology Coordinator	
Seek final approval by Pastor	Seek final approval by Pastor	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Weeks of May	Approved position descriptions shared publicly	Pastor	

Strategic Priority: Expanding School Leadership Capacity

Relevance: Having a full-time principal, or equivalent FTE, will ensure that the duties of providing instructional supervision and coaching, ongoing support for new teachers, facilitation of external community engagement, marketing, readily accessible school tours for prospective families, and student behavior support at all times in the school day would be accomplished.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/Resources
Move to a Full-time Principal model or equivalent	<p>Representatives from the Strategic Planning Steering Committee offer to meet with Pastor and Parish Budget Manager (and Parish Council if appropriate) to understand the full rationale for the possible change</p> <p>Budget Analysis to determine costs of restoring 0.5FTE of the principal position or using it for an additional leadership position in the school</p>	<p>April 2026</p> <p>April 2026</p>	<p>Meeting request is granted and occurs</p> <p>Calculation of proposed position cost (including fringe)</p> <p>Completed analysis of the ability to budget for this recommendation in addition to other priorities</p>	<p>Strategic Planning Steering Committee Facilitator and Committee Member volunteers</p> <p>Parish Budget Manager, Pastor, and Principal</p>	<p>In-kind contributions of all individuals responsible for determining affordability and Steering Committee representatives</p>
	<p>Pastor considers the recommendation in light of the newly proposed position description for the Principal</p>	<p>Mid- May 2026</p>		<p>Pastor</p>	
	<p>Final determination of whether it is feasible to add this expense to subsequent year academic budget</p>	<p>By end of May 2026</p>		<p>Parish Budget Manager, Pastor, Finance Committee and Principal</p>	

Strategic Priority: Maximizing and Communicating Achievement

Relevance: Although both individual and joint planning time have been shown to increase the effectiveness of classroom instruction, Teachers at St. Joseph School have limited opportunities to engage in either practice due to scheduling constraints. Increased planning time will be used to set objectives, develop lesson plans and assessment, monitor progress and adapt instruction to meet the needs of their students.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/Resources
<p>Increase opportunities for St. Joseph School Teachers to deliver more effective classroom instruction through increased planning time.</p> <p>Expand the amount of individual and joint planning time available for Teachers by at least one hour per week to make classroom instruction more purposeful, strategic and intentional.</p>	<p>The St. Joseph School Principal will explore ways to create more planning time per week through creative scheduling.</p> <p>Teachers will volunteer as possible to meet after school.</p>	<p>Preliminary discussions on expanding planning time to begin at the end of the 2025-26 school year and continue during the 2026-27 school year.</p> <p>Original determination of strategies to achieve the goal early in the 2026-27 school year with implementation to occur in the second semester of that year and with checkpoints in subsequent years at the end of each semester.</p>	<p>Following initial implementation of the goal, individual and joint planning time for Teachers will be monitored to ensure the desired increase of time is achieved and maintained.</p> <p>The effectiveness of increased planning time can be evaluated through noting changes in teacher practices (through classroom observations and self-assessments), monitoring student outcomes (using test scores and performance data), and gathering feedback from multiple stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, and administrators.</p>	<p>Principal, Vice Principal, and Teachers</p>	<p>In-kind contributions of time by Principal, Vice Principal, and Teachers</p>

Strategic Priority: Maximizing and Communicating Achievement

Relevance: Professional development serves to improve student outcomes by updating teaching strategies, increasing teacher confidence and job satisfaction, supporting career growth, and helping teachers adapt to diverse classrooms and new technologies. It creates a culture of continuous learning within a school and is essential for meeting the evolving needs of students and educational standards.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Increase opportunities for St. Joseph School Teachers to deliver more effective classroom instruction through targeted professional development.</p> <p>Schedule Publisher-led workshops as needed up to once each quarter to model lessons and to provide in-depth guidance on upcoming units, training on assessment and pacing, and coaching on differentiated instruction.</p>	<p>Teacher professional development will be achieved through some combination of school-provided in-services, seminars and workshops, professional conferences, self-directed learning, on-demand resources like video libraries and online content, modeling and coaching by publisher/vendor representatives, and increased opportunities for supervised observations and feedback.</p> <p>Teachers will have a voice in these activities as determined in bi-weekly or monthly meetings of grade levels, reviewing teacher guides for upcoming modules, and co-planning lessons based on publisher models. In addition, during in-service days, open working sessions can be scheduled with Publisher representatives for hands-on help using their on-line platform and addressing questions about assisting diverse learners.</p> <p>Workshops should be reframed as planning opportunities and publishers asked to design sessions where teachers actively plan rather than listen as well as structured within and across grade levels to ensure a logical, cumulative progression of knowledge and skills. Focus on high-leverage units that prioritize depth over breadth and provide the highest return on instructional time. Require publishers to model differentiation of their materials and explicitly connect lessons to state standards and assessments.</p>	<p>Yearlong implementation of targeted professional development activities as follows:</p> <p>Professional development for teachers will include a defined timeline for specific goals, which can be broken down into weekly, monthly, or quarterly check-ins and milestones.</p> <p>These elements will include a set duration for activities like workshops, peer observations, and coaching, ensuring they happen within a consistent schedule over time rather than a isolated events.</p>	<p>The effectiveness of professional development can be evaluated through noting changes in teacher practices (through classroom observations and self-assessments), monitoring student outcomes (using test scores and performance data), and gathering feedback from multiple stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, and administrators.</p>	<p>Principal, Vice Principal, Teachers and Publisher Representatives responsible for planning and delivery</p> <p>Principal and Vice Principal responsible for implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and rebalancing</p>	<p>Publishers' standard rates for these services which are usually included in materials adoption or negotiated before purchasing.</p> <p>In-kind contributions of time and effort by Principal, Vice Principal and Teachers.</p>

Strategic Priority: Maximizing and Communicating Achievement

Relevance: Currently the orientation of new teachers is reported to be less extensive than desired, even for experienced teachers. They would prefer more in-depth familiarization with the vision and mission of the school, its curriculum, its procedures and practices, attributes of the students, family demographics, and culture of the school and parish.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/Resources
<p>Broaden the range and depth of orientation sessions prior to the school year and assign each new teacher a peer faculty guide as vehicles for enhancing new teacher induction.</p>	<p>A subcommittee of volunteer teachers, both veterans and those hired in recent years, will assist the Principal in planning orientations. In addition, the Principal will recruit current teachers to assist those new to the school in acclimating to their new roles.</p>	<p>Ideally the subcommittee would be formed before the end of the current (2025-26) school year and the first iteration of the new orientation program they devised would launch prior to the beginning of the 2026-27 school year.</p> <p>New teachers will be assigned to faculty guides shortly after the beginning of the official school year.</p>	<p>Final determination of the contents of the orientation sessions, its execution and assessment of its effectiveness.</p> <p>New teachers will complete a survey that assesses the usefulness of the orientation sessions and provide confidential self-reports to the Principal on the professional and personal value of their faculty guide relationships</p>	<p>The subcommittee will be responsible for the design of the orientation experience in concert with the Principal. Its delivery will depend on what the subcommittee and Principal decide, and might include Teachers assisting with the dissemination of information at the sessions. The Principal will be responsible for matching new faculty with current Teachers.</p>	<p>In-kind contribution of time and effort by Principal and Teaching staff.</p>

Strategic Priority: Maximizing and Communicating Achievement

Relevance: Currently many parents are confused by the current system for communicating academic progress, because it differs from the traditional grading practices with which they are familiar. Moreover, neither they nor the larger parish community are currently apprised ideally of how St. Joseph students perform on standardized assessments.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Enhance the communication of student academic achievement to St. Joseph School families and the Parish at large.</p> <p>Create informational materials that clearly explain to parents the relationship between the school's current system for communicating academic progress and traditional grading.</p> <p>Create informational materials that clearly explain to parents and the St. Joseph Parish community how students perform on standardized tests.</p>	<p>A committee of teachers representing early childhood, elementary and middle school teachers will work with the Principal and Vice Principal to create materials aimed at explaining the meaning of the grading system, and they will oversee the creation of, or write the texts, that will be used to communicate this information to parents.</p> <p>Similarly, members of the committee will work with school leaders to create materials that explain standardized tests, report the school's student results, and interpret the data in terms understandable to St. Joseph School families and the Parish community.</p> <p>In addition, in parent conferences, teachers will dispel confusion related to differences between STAR and state test results, and demonstrating how their students compare favorably with other schools and districts.</p>	<p>Meetings to occur for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year and continue until such time as the materials are completed, not later than the first reporting of progress in the 2026-27 school year.</p> <p>Information will be disseminated through regular school communication channels with specific explanations included with report cards.</p>	<p>The effectiveness of the materials can be gauged through surveys of parents, as well as informal praise and concerns that they express in conversations with school personnel. The school needs to be prepared for parents expressing their preference for a return to the traditional grading system</p> <p>School-wide test data will be articulated in various school and parish communication vehicles including newsletters and bulletins.</p>	<p>Monitoring of progress to be done by Principal and Vice Principal.</p> <p>Monitoring of progress to be done by Principal and Vice Principal.</p>	<p>In-kind contribution of time and effort by Principal, Teachers, and Office Personnel.</p> <p>In-kind contribution of time and effort by Principal, Teachers, and School and Parish Office Personnel.</p>

Strategic Priority: Maximizing and Communicating Achievement

Relevance: Individual and small group instruction can help fill learning gaps and serve students who need educational services outside the typical curriculum. which will increase student learning support, reduce teacher workload, and improve access to targeted interventions. This increase in personnel will help teachers meet 90 percent of documented support minutes for students receiving interventions or accommodations, as measured through weekly support schedules.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Increase individualized academic support for struggling students by employing an additional part-time paraprofessional</p> <p>Increase test scores of students in the special needs scholarship program and others who exhibit learning gaps</p>	<p>Detail the specific responsibilities of the position (e.g., supporting instruction, behavioral support, and special duties) include budgeting based on calculation of required percentage of time, and propose the position to Parish leadership.</p> <p>Advertise the position broadly enough to attract the most qualified candidates.</p> <p>Make the hire and onboard the aide by providing a tour, orienting them to the school culture and policies, classroom procedures and role-specific expectations, and pairing the new employee with a mentor if possible for ongoing support.</p> <p>Specifically, the paraprofessional will work with special needs students or those requiring extra help, through one-on-one tutoring, small group instruction, classroom management, and supervision during activities like recess or lunch under the direction of school personnel including the Principal, Vice Principal, Learning Support Coordinator and respective classroom teachers.</p>	<p>No later than mid-June, 2026</p> <p>Mid-July of 2026 at the latest</p> <p>Prior to the beginning of the 2026-27 school Year.</p> <p>Student scores will be tabulated using Star test results three times in a school year</p>	<p>Job description completed and proposal to Parish leadership to approve the position completed.</p> <p>Advertisements disseminated electronically through standard channels and placed in appropriate forums</p> <p>Standardized test scores and competency-based assessments across students served</p>	<p>Job description creation and hiring to be done by Principal in consultation with the Learning Support Coordinator.</p> <p>Calculation of salary and costs to be done by Principal and Parish Business Manager.</p>	<p>Cost of employing new part-time para-professional</p>

Strategic Priority: Ensuring Enrollment, Staff Satisfaction, and Effective Parent Communication

Relevance: Approximately one-third of current St. Joseph families rely on busing for access. Modifications to bus routes or schedules will necessitate alternative arrangements to support continued enrollment.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Ensure childcare and transportation options that allow the greatest number of St. Joseph school families to continue attending the school</p> <p>Monitor any potential changes to transportation options that would require alternatives (such as before school care options) to ensure families face minimal barriers to attendance</p>	<p>Transportation options will be reviewed annually</p> <p>Family surveys will be conducted to identify childcare start and end time needs based on projected transportation options</p> <p>There will be a clear communication plan to inform families of childcare availability if any changes occur to transportation</p>	<p>Confirm bus routes as determined by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in April of each academic year</p> <p>Budgeting for alternatives needs to be considered during each annual budget cycle</p>	<p>Ensure the availability of bus routes, carpool options, or before- and after-school care to accommodate families with fixed work schedules in getting their children to school with minimal disruption</p>	<p>Pastor, Principal, and Parish Business Manager</p>	<p>Personnel wages/salary to support any additional driving or childcare responsibilities; as determined by Pastor, Principal, and Parish Business Manager</p>

Strategic Priority: Ensuring Enrollment, Staff Satisfaction, and Effective Parent Communication

Relevance: Prioritizing annual increases and salary equity supports the school’s mission, honors Catholic values, sustains high-quality education, and promotes long-term stability—for staff, students, and families alike.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Prioritize annual increases and salary equity in staff compensation</p> <p>Allocate budget for ongoing staff compensation increases and equity adjustments, supported in part by tuition adjustments</p>	<p>Yearly salary increases and equity adjustments will be prioritized as part of the annual budgeting process.</p> <p>Clear pay structures will be developed and utilized</p> <p>Ensure transparency and communication in decision making processes related to staff compensation</p> <p>Provide pathways for growth by clarifying how staff can qualify for increased compensation</p> <p>Annual review of budget changes and communication to school families</p>	<p>Business Manager and Principal determine appropriate increase in tuition to fund compensation adjustments, in addition to other inflationary pressures</p> <p>Annual review of budget changes will be completed in January, with communication of finalized tuition rate to school families by March of the following academic year. This communication will include information regarding the Angel Fund</p>	<p>The Parish Business Manager and Principal will project the annual tuition adjustments needed to achieve these increases, subject to review and approval by Pastor and Parish Finance Council</p>	<p>Pastor, Principal, Parish Business Manager, and Parish Finance Council</p>	<p>Varies as determined by Pastor, Principal and Parish Business Manager</p>

Domain: Operational Vitality GOAL 3 (13 of 14)

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, Big Bend  
Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Strategic Priority: Ensuring Enrollment, Staff Satisfaction, and Effective Parent Communication

Relevance: Healthy enrollment is essential for the school’s sustainability, and preserving our Catholic identity ensures mission alignment and distinctiveness, reinforcing why families choose our school.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Grow enrollment while preserving our small, faith-based Catholic school identity</p> <p>Increase total student enrollment to 125 students</p>	<p>Develop and distribute one new marketing packet/pamphlet/flyer annually that emphasizes our Catholic identity, small-school community, and academic strengths</p> <p>Encourage all teachers to integrate at least two Catholic identity activities per month and feature these on the school’s Facebook/social media pages</p> <p>Review and complete facility improvements/refreshments/updates annually to continue attracting new families</p> <p>Plan and host mission-centered enrollment events to strengthen family engagement and attract new families</p> <p>Consistently highlight the school’s small, faith-based Catholic identity as a core value</p> <p>Maintain current faith-formation practices and expand them where needed to ensure the school’s Catholic character and enrollment remains strong</p>	<p>Reach the 125 student target by August 2027, with progress reviewed at the end of each academic year.</p> <p>Review of Catholic identity activities during staff training days during the summer months</p> <p>Review marketing materials annually.</p> <p>Review suggestions/options for facility updates annually in the summer months</p> <p>Plan one to two annual mission-centered enrollment events</p>	<p>Monitor annual student enrollment numbers</p> <p>Monitor family engagement and participation in school/enrollment events</p>	<p>Principal, Teachers, Marketing Coordinator, Parish Finance Council</p>	<p>In-kind contribution of time and effort by Principal, Teachers, Marketing Coordinator, Parish Finance Council</p> <p>Potential cost of marketing material if not solely distributed digitally</p> <p>Potential costs for various facility updates</p>

Strategic Priority: Ensuring Enrollment, Staff Satisfaction, and Effective Parent Communication

Relevance: Clear, consistent communication supports family engagement, strengthens trust, and reflects our school’s values of community-enhancing the mission of our Catholic school.

Objective/Goal	Tactics	Timeline/ Milestones	Indicators	Responsibility	Costs/ Resources
<p>Streamline communication for parents</p> <p>Create a unified system for school communication by consolidating announcements, updates, and reminders from teachers and administrators into one primary communication platform and one weekly message for families</p>	<p>Post all relevant materials and updates under the “Current Families” tab on the school’s website so families can easily find relevant and time-pertinent materials such as sign-ups, documents, etc.</p> <p>Continue with weekly email updates from Principal</p> <p>Continue with bi-weekly <i>Knighly News</i> newsletters</p>	<p>Initiate by August 2027 with staff training completed by July 2027</p> <p>Administrative Assistant and Principal can meet and discuss during summer 2027 to help combat any problems</p>	<p>Achieve a family satisfaction rating of 85% or higher regarding communication clarity and consistency via an annual survey</p>	<p>Principal, Administrative Assistant</p>	<p>In-kind contribution of time and effort by Principal and Administrative Assistant</p>

# St. Joseph School Strategic Plan, 2026-2029

## Cost Implications

Most of the goals for this plan can be achieved without incurring direct costs, but rather are expedited by in-kind contributions of time and effort by those identified as responsible for each goal, largely in the course of conducting regular business.

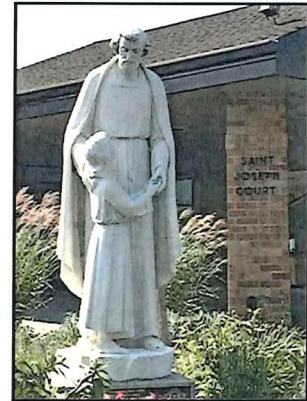
However, those requiring expenditures, or are likely to, include the following:

- Increasing the Principal position from half-time (.5 FTE) to full-time (1.0 FTE) or achieving the full range of responsibilities by distributing duties to other school personnel for additional compensation.
- Achieving equity in compensation for teachers and staff in relation to other comparable schools and in relation to disparities that exist among current employees will require Parish and School leadership to determine the severity of the differences and devise a multi-year plan to offset them.
- Deploying a second paraprofessional primarily to provide additional learning support to students in need figures to amount to .2 FTE of the standard rate for this grade of employee.
- If existing bus routes are dispossessed, providing before school care and devising new transportation options to help in the retention of students will result in additional expenditures. Childcare costs would mirror those of after-school care services, typically hourly personnel costs of one staff member. And costs will vary depending on whatever effective and affordable transportation options are agreed upon. Costs to the School would range from zero for expanded volunteer carpooling to possibly providing alternative vehicular options with owned or rented vehicles and driver compensation.
- Targeted professional development may require an infusion of funds to pay publishers for services that go beyond those that are standard if not included at the time of the purchase of materials.
- There may also need to be an outlay related to expanding Character Education programming. Grant funding is being sought to cover the expense, and if successful, it will be net zero. However, if unsuccessful, efforts must be made to determine the actual cost so that decisions can be made about the viability of doing so.

## Conclusion

St. Joseph Catholic School in Big Bend describes itself as a “faith-centered community dedicated to forming the whole child—academically, spiritually, and socially.” The analyses involved in the framing of this strategic plan indicate that the school is indeed “Rooted in strong Catholic values,” and “fosters a supportive environment where students are known, challenged, and encouraged to grow.” The school enjoys a dedicated, skilled and passionate staff, engaged families, and valued partnerships with its parish and community. As a result, St. Joseph School continues to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and faith.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to serve as a 3-year road map for the future of St. Joseph School by defining its vision, mission, and core beliefs and aligning itself with the four domains of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools* (NSBECS). The plan promotes the school’s Mission and Catholic Identity, provides a living document for its Governance and Leadership to track progress and ensure goal attainment, builds carefully upon its existing Academic Excellence, and ensures financial stewardship and long-term Operational Vitality. In effect, the plan endeavors to facilitate all aspects of the school, so that it thrives rather than merely survives. As a blueprint for advancing the prosperity of the school, it strives to be both aspirational and inspirational.



In general, the plan sets forth clear, measurable goals, objectives and tactics, as well as timelines, progress indicators, personnel responsibilities and costs and resources to guide the school moving forward, while involving parents, faculty, staff, parishioners and students as stakeholders with a voice in the process and as shared owners of the school’s success.

Specifically, this plan identifies a set of 14 strategic goals within the four NSBECS domains as recommendations to St. Joseph Parish Leadership for its consideration. It aims to enhance mission by strengthening the relationship of the school to the parish and further marrying character and religious education in the curriculum. It calls for specificity in the expectations for school leaders and urges consideration of a full-time principal or equivalent. It advocates for increased planning time for teachers, targeted professional development, an intensified new teacher induction process, and additional paraprofessional support as means to increase student achievement, and for clear communication of grading practices and standardized test performance. Finally, it seeks to add stability by retaining and building enrollment, and harmony by centralizing school communication and achieving equity in staff compensation.

Implementation of the plan is not expected to occur in a prescribed lockstep fashion, but rather require flexibility. What the plan offers are relevant, substantive goals and objectives that are amenable to rebalancing, presumed best practices for tactics, estimated timelines, reasonably applicable indicators, and approximate cost projections that those responsible for its execution will need to consider and adjust accordingly as required for success.

**St. Joseph School Strategic Plan, 2026-2029**  
**List of Recommended Actions and National Standard and Benchmark Best Fits**

		<b>NSBECS</b>	
	<b>Domain</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>
<b>Mission and Catholic Identity (I)</b>			
1. Strengthen School/Parish relationship	I	4	4
2. Enrich Character Education programming	I	2	1, 4, 5
	I	7	2
	III	7	6
<b>Governance and Leadership (II)</b>			
3. Create new school leader position descriptions	II	6	4, 9
	IV	11	2
4. Increase Principal position to full- time or equivalent	II	6	2-9
<b>Academic Excellence (III)</b>			
5. Increase teachers' planning time	111	7	8
6. Provide targeted professional development	111	8	5
7. Broaden new teacher induction	111	7	1-11
8. Build deeper understanding of competency-based grading	111	8	4
9. Communicate standardized test information more effectively	111	8	4
10. Add part-time paraprofessional for learning support	111	7	8, 9
<b>Operational Vitality (IV)</b>			
11. Solidify transportation and childcare options to retain families	IV	12	1
12. Build student enrollment	IV	13	2
13. Centralize school communication	IV	13	1
14. Achieve equity in staff compensation	IV	10	4
	IV	11	2, 3

# SWOT ANALYSES

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to assess a school’s organizational Strengths and Weaknesses (that is, internal factors) and its Opportunities and Threats (that is, external factors) to help make better decisions, leverage advantages, mitigate risks, and plan for the future, identifying what the school does well, where it falls short, favorable external conditions, and potential dangers. It provides a comprehensive view of internal capabilities versus external market realities

The following questions were used to frame the SWOT analyses for St. Joseph School:



In the best interest of St. Joseph’s future:

- What Strengths or Advantages of the school can and should be capitalized upon?
- What Weaknesses must, or ought to, be addressed in order for the school to thrive?
- What Opportunities exist for the school to enhance its appeal, reach, and viability?
- What Threats exist that the school must confront and offset to be sustainable?

Those data were then sorted into the matrix below which cross-referenced the SWOT categories with the four domains of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Schools*.

## Model for St. Joseph School SWOT Analysis Using the 4 NSBECS Domains of Catholic School Effectiveness

		Catholic Mission & Identity	Governance & Leadership	Academic Excellence	Operational Vitality
Internal	<b>Strengths</b> Positive Attributes & Advantages				
	<b>Weaknesses</b> Limitations & Disadvantages				
External	<b>Opportunities</b> Conditions that can be Exploited				
	<b>Threats</b> Challenges to Performance or Sustainability				

Those four SWOT analyses appear in the pages that follow.

## Mission and Catholic Identity

### Strengths

- Strong Catholic identity
- Active faith integration
- Weekly Mass involvement
- Positive student character and moral development
- Older students mentor younger peers
- Visible pastoral presence (Father Andy) connecting parish and school life
- Community pride in producing students who excel spiritually and academically

### Opportunities

- Re-instate Big Buddy system
- Quarterly faith retreats
- Expand parish-school collaboration
- Promote greater student participation in parish Masses and community service

### Weaknesses

- Limited structured collaboration between Youth Ministry and school
- Loss of pre-COVID faith traditions like Big Buddy System
- Faith formation could be more intentionally embedded in daily curriculum
- Need for more faith enrichment activities like retreats and virtue programs

### Threats

- Potential loss of Catholic identity if focus shifts too heavily to academics or special programs
- Decline in faith engagement if youth programs and school remain disconnected

## Governance and Leadership

### Strengths

- Competent, approachable principal who demonstrates overall rapport with parents, faculty and staff
- Consistent weekly communication and visible leadership
- Positive staff morale generally and community trust in leadership

### Opportunities

- Create a parent portal or mobile app for unified communication and payments
- Either create full-time principal position, increase administrative staff or redistribute roles to support principal

### Weaknesses

- Principal's dual role in teaching and administration leads to overload
- Parent communication often fragmented across emails or specific messages lost among numerous items
- Limited administrative support structure that depends on too few individuals
- All staff overextended

### Threats

- Leadership burnout due to workload
- Risk of Staff attrition
- Potential confusion and frustration if communication gaps exist

## Academic Excellence

### Strengths

- Small class size enables individualized learning and support
- Strong preparation for high school; students perform well academically
- High quality instruction
- Integration of creative projects like plays and oral reports
- Special Needs Scholarship Program

### Opportunities

- Refine grading and achievement communication systems
- Align assessments to state or Archdiocesan benchmarks
- Expand enrichment and sports offerings in middle school to engage and retain students

### Weaknesses

- Lack of traditional letter grades confuse some parents
- Some inconsistency in homework and accountability expectations
- Limited social opportunities if class sizes drop too low
- Some concerns about writing standards and readiness for advanced coursework
- Tight scheduling is exhausting for all

### Threats

- Potential enrollment decline in middle school if academic clarity isn't improved
- Risk of losing academic competitiveness to public or different private schools

## Operational Vitality

### Strengths

- Commendable parent involvement overall with dedicated volunteers
- Diverse fundraising activities and community events
- Positive relationship with parish and visibility at community events
- Safe environment generally

### Opportunities

- Develop alumni network and newsletter
- Expand social media and other forms of marketing
- Partner with local athletic programs
- Explore grant funding and 4K reinstatement

### Weaknesses

- Volunteer burnout; uneven participation among parents
- Need for greater outreach and advertising to attract new families
- Some degree of limited K3/K4 enrollment opportunities compromises early entry pipeline
- Facility limitations (e.g., AC and gym) and technology infrastructure gaps

### Threats

- Volunteer fatigue
- Possible leadership succession
- Competition from nearby schools with expanded early childhood or athletic programs
- Some safety concerns

# NSEBCS Domain Subcommittee Members

## **Mission and Catholic Identity**

Karin Peterson, Vice Principal/Teacher (lead)  
Kelly Rebro, Parent  
Debbie Schaefer, Administrative Assistant  
Erika Evans, Youth Discipleship Director

## **Governance and Leadership**

Matthew Vick (lead), Parent  
Michael Brown, Principal  
School Advisory Committee Members  
    Marlaena Barber (Chair)  
    Katherine Cook (Secretary)  
    Michael Williams (Parish Council Representative)  
    Tom Molosky

## **Academic Excellence**

William Henk, Facilitator (co-lead)  
Robert Radomski, Former Principal (co-lead)  
Shannon Elsner, Teacher  
Jade Hrdi, Teacher  
Carrie Marcoux, Teacher

## **Operational Vitality**

Dayken Underdahl, Parent (lead)  
Doug Duley, Parish Trustee  
Patty Bollis, Business Manager  
William Henk, ex officio

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