ST. SCHOLASTICA ACADEMY

Strategic Plan
2017-2021
Mission:

St. Scholastica Academy is a Catholic, all-girls, college-preparatory high school located in Covington, Louisiana. Founded in 1903, SSA perpetuates the Benedictine tradition of balancing prayer, work, study, and community in developing adolescent girls into Christian women grounded in the Gospel values of the Catholic faith.
THE PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction: The St. Scholastica Academy School Board directed the Academy to develop a strategic plan to identify priority areas for the Academy to address within the next five years. This directive provided an opportunity to assess the current state of the Academy, identify areas of strength, identify those areas needing attention and discover opportunities for growth. With the goal of providing the best Catholic education for girls in the Gulf South region, all stakeholders were invited to take part in the planning process.

Process: SSA School Board President Kenny Lacoste charged Board member Raquel Jumonville Murphy to lead the planning process, which she continues to monitor for completion. Dr. Brett Kemker of the University of New Orleans was engaged as the strategic facilitator and was integral to the success of the process. Strategic areas were identified as Faith Life; Academics; Athletics; Facilities and Grounds; Marketing, Development and Enrollment; Student Activities and Technology.

In August 2016 focus groups were organized to gather input from all stakeholder groups. Invitations to participate were extended to parents, alumnae, past parents, grandparents, board members, faculty, staff and administration. Over the course of the fall semester, data were collected from focus group sessions, as well as student, faculty and alumnae surveys. From the compilation of this data, strategies were developed, action items determined, responsible parties identified, a timeline for completion of each action item created and a cost of implementation for each strategic area assigned. The faculty, administration and School Board reviewed interim drafts of the document. The plan was refined in January, with the School Board granting final approval in February 2017.

This plan is a working document, which will be implemented with fidelity over the next few years. The President and School Board are responsible for monitoring the completion of each action item. With this plan in place and our strategic direction determined, St. Scholastica Academy is poised to move forward as we continue to model the Benedictine traditions of prayer, work, study and community.
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Pictured, left to right standing: Reverend Otis Young, Jr.; Paul Gagliano; Jim Farris; Kenny Lacoste, Chair; Pat Rosenow, Esq. Seated left to right: Lisa Hernandez Pellegrini, DDS ’87, Secretary; Monique O’Brien Weiner, Esq. ’88, Immediate Past Chair; Raquel Jumonville Murphy ’88.

Not pictured: Craig Doyle, Treasurer; Stacy Brown, Esq.; Rob Hewitt; Mary Ellen Jordan, Esq.; Jan Daniel Lancaster, Ed.D., Superintendent of Catholic Schools Archdiocese of New Orleans; Don Trexler
STRATEGIC AREAS

FAITH LIFE

**Goal:** To more fully incorporate our Catholic faith life into the academic program of the Academy.

**Objective 1: Investigate ways to better engage students in the celebration of the Mass.**

- Provide deliberate instruction in the Mass by conducting a weekly Mass formation series for all Theology students each academic year.
- Study methods to better include non-Catholics in all aspects of our faith, as they are integral to our faith community.
- Expand the music ministry by forming a Mass choir.
- Establish a Student Liturgical Council, targeting underclassmen in order to expose them to the Senior Student Ministers program.
Objective 2: Evaluate 4X4 structure in regard to formation of faith community.

- Participate in the Academy-wide evaluation of the current student schedule to ensure effectiveness of Theology and Campus Ministry programs.
- Communicate and encourage confirmation preparation Junior year by coordinating the Academy’s curriculum with church parishes and in supporting our students in their confirmation preparation.

Objective 3: Foster faith formation in our students.

- Provide faith formation opportunities for students through campus ministry opportunities for underclassmen.
- Support and encourage opportunities for living our faith through a robust retreat program, Pillar Nights, mission trips, mentoring programs and life groups.

Objective 4: Continuously integrate faith formation in school life.

- Ensure prayer before each class by requiring a daily prayer in lesson planning and asking Campus ministry to provide daily prayer exemplars for faculty.
- Clearly articulate the relationship between theology, art and science.
- Provide faculty formation opportunities through faculty retreats and adult education classes.

Objective 4: Provide a rigorous Theology curriculum.

- Align theology curriculum with the Archdiocesan curriculum in order to address how our church understands its own history, provide interdisciplinary activities, service learning activities and provide a quality sex education program.

Objective 5: Ensure facilities are adequate for program implementation.

- Assess current facilities to improve aesthetic, operational and spiritual appeal.

Objective 6: Provide a relevant and expanded service program.

- Review service learning program to incorporate service learning in the Theology curriculum, provide service to the local community and incorporate a service component in all clubs.
ACADEMICS

Goal: To provide a quality, faith-based college-preparatory program of studies, which addresses the learning needs of all students.

Objective 1: Ensure a comprehensive, rigorous program of studies.

• Create a STEM elective for eighth grade and consider offering STEM internships for upperclassmen.
• Evaluate the Foreign Language curriculum to address a 5-year program of studies, assigning honors credit to Latin, and consideration of Latin fulfilling the foreign language requirement.
• Align Honors and College Prep classes by expanding electives, dual enrollment and Advanced Placement offerings; open electives to Honors students earlier in program; address perception of teaching quality between the Honors and College-prep programs; map the curriculum for gaps and overlaps; plan an ACT bell ringer in every class; assess the rigor in college prep courses; consider internships for upperclassmen; address the content heavy grades 8-10 schedule; consider offering pre-professional courses, particularly STEM.
• Provide a comprehensive, ongoing, self-directed professional development program for teachers.
• Provide a comprehensive arts program by incentivizing music offerings and evaluating the drama program.
• Monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum through data analysis; monitoring of ACT, PSAT and Aspire test scores and updating the library databases.

Objective 2: Evaluate the master schedule for effectiveness.

• Conduct an assessment of the current 4X4 student schedule by investigating innovative schedules nationwide to ensure consistent class size of 24 or fewer students, preserving extended instructional time and course balance between fall and spring semesters.
Objective 3: Ensure a highly qualified faculty.

- Build teacher capacity in all disciplines by offering competitive salaries; providing a comprehensive professional development program; addressing the retention of math and science teachers; building the technology skills of faculty and providing content specific instructional coaching.

Objective 4: Develop concomitant learnings.

- Develop in students soft skills, character, executive functioning ability, stress management and study skills.
- Reassess extended time procedures.

Objective 5: Ensure a broad based program of personal and college counseling.

- Evaluate the college counseling program for effectiveness in placement, availability of college representatives on campus, parent-student communication and overall communication of college acceptance process.
- Provide a comprehensive personal counseling program to include individual and group counseling, an evaluation of the Family Time program and consideration of national certification.
ATHLETICS

**Goal:** To provide a highly competitive athletic program which provides opportunities for skill development, teamwork and sportsmanship.

**Objective 1: Evaluate gym facilities to ensure they meet the needs for student activities and athletics.**
- Evaluate current gym to prioritize areas in need of renovation to include coaches’ facilities, sound system, expanded internet capability, weight training, improved storage, new bleachers and showers.
- Implement a capital campaign for gym construction by identifying wealth in the community, securing necessary permits and planning for construction to include shared facility use by athletics and school programs, spaces for cheer and dance teams and spaces for drama.

**Objective 2: Evaluate the Athletic Complex to ensure it meets the needs of athletic programs.**
- Expand and maintain facilities by developing a program of field maintenance, preventative facility maintenance and assessing the current locker facilities for all teams.

**Objective 3: Investigate ways to build school spirit.**
- Develop incentives for students to support athletic events by holding pep rallies, encouraging inter-team support, expanding the advertisement of athletic successes, providing transportation for spectators and investigating holding athletic contests at St. Paul’s School.

**Objective 4: Brand the athletic program.**
- Brand the athletic program to reflect the school mission by making a cohesive look for all teams and programs and revising the Athletic Handbook.

**Objective 5: Expand the Athletic Association programs.**
- Provide support to the Athletic program by expanding parental involvement in Athletic Association events, improving the Doves’ Nest Bookstore and reevaluating current fund raising efforts.
Objective 6: Investigate community outreach particularly to feeder schools.

- Allow middle schools to use SSA athletic facilities, particularly area Catholic schools who lack facilities.

Objective 7: Expand student participation in the athletic program.

- Evaluate current athletic offerings by surveying student interests yearly, evaluating teams at the culmination of each season, encouraging mutual support among teams and coaches, encouraging and supporting multi-sport participation and monitoring coaches’ interactions to ensure cooperation.
FACILITIES and GROUNDS

Goal: To provide quality, aesthetically pleasing facilities and grounds needed to support the spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional growth of our students.

Objective 1: Develop a program of proactive maintenance.

- Conduct a facility assessment to assess long and short term needs, determine priorities with completion timelines and appropriate funds.
- Hire a facilities director and develop an accountability system for maintenance staff.
- Ensure campus is energy efficient by conducting ongoing energy assessments and systematically implement improvements as needed.
- Conduct a housekeeping assessment to develop a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly plan for housekeeping activities; develop an evaluation tool for housekeeping accountability and determine the feasibility of contract housekeeping services.
- Develop capital budget for maintenance and improvements within the yearly budget, while encouraging the Advancement Office to access funds for capital improvements.
- Establishing a Dads’ Club to assist with campus projects.
Objective 2: Develop a master plan for the campus to provide for improvements and growth.

- Engage an architect to develop a campus master plan with consideration for utilizing existing data to assist in determining needs, ordinance restrictions and local political landscape.
- Prioritize current needs and create a timeline with regard to new construction of a gymnasium, classrooms, spaces for the arts, dining facilities and meeting spaces for large and small groups.

Objective 3: Develop a program of campus beautification.

- Conduct a needs assessment for campus beautification; develop a master plan for landscaping; determine daily, weekly, monthly and yearly landscaping needs; evaluate interior and exterior designs for consistency; determine lighting needs; determine seasonal needs and plan for regular implementation.

Objective 4: Conduct a technology assessment.

- Upgrade the current communication system.
- Upgrade the campus Wi-Fi by allocating funds for short and long term projects and systematically upgrading the technology infrastructure.

Objective 5: Conduct a safety assessment.

- Determine campus safety needs and prioritize needs, particularly with regard to perimeter security, crosswalks and campus signage.

Objective 6: Work with the City of Covington to improve the campus perimeter and future construction.

- Position SSA for implementation of campus improvements by working with the City for capital improvement approval within existing ordinances, working collaboratively with neighboring businesses, communicating the economic impact of SSA on the City of Covington, and improve and expand student parking.
MARKETING, DEVELOPMENT and ENROLLMENT

Goal: To effectively market SSA to ensure sustainability through a comprehensive program of development and enrollment management.

Objective 1: Market SSA to all communities.

- Improve social media presence by regular posts to Instagram, Facebook and the SSA website, involving students in public relations efforts and systematically promoting school accomplishments.

- Advertise campus improvements, particularly STEM, the Athletic Complex, advertising at the Athletic Complex and creating wider visibility in local print media.

- Continue to market to current parents by engaging parents in promoting SSA in community, regularly updating
the SSA website creating an “elevator speech,” ensuring all personnel embrace and promote mission, systematically promoting SSA accomplishments and participating in interscholastic opportunities.

• Cultivate relationships with elementary schools by involving SSA students with feeder schools through service opportunities, hosting activities for elementary students on our campus, opening our facilities to elementary schools and advertising in feeder school publications.

Objective 2: Brand SSA and market consistently.

• Identify clearly focused marketing targets, develop SSA brand and use with fidelity, make marketing materials accessible throughout campus, market successes (particularly liberal arts) and advertise our niche (all girl, Catholic, Northshore).

Objective 3: Promote a positive image in the community.

• Strengthen community relations by increasing religious outreach in community, participate in interscholastic opportunities, developing corporate relationships, identifying SSA students in the community, maintaining connections with alumnæ and their parents and sharing business affiliations with the learning community.

Objective 4: Increase enrollment with qualified students.

• Target market to prospective students by reaching out to parishes without elementary schools, vigorously marketing SSA between September and December and advertising the STEM program to prospective students.
• Use data to identify qualified candidates, including establishing a profile of a successful applicant, establishing an admissions committee and addressing the ability of the organization to support learning differences in applicants.
• Continuously assess the admissions program by conducting Exit Interviews for continuous improvement, establishing enrollment capacity, collecting data on retention and evaluating the Shadow Program.

Objective 5: Involve Alumnae in marketing, development and admissions.

• Meaningfully involve Alumnae in the learning community by inviting parents of alumnæ back to campus, connecting the Alumnae Board members to the school community and highlighting our graduates on social media.
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Goal: To provide a comprehensive program of activities to develop the spiritual, intellectual, social and leadership interests of our students.

Objective 1: Provide a comprehensive program of activities for students.

• Conduct a needs assessment and evaluation of all activities and clubs using survey data to keep offerings current and to ensure effectiveness.
• Create a Club handbook to include all required expenses, time commitments and include a service component to each club.
• Ensure involvement of all students in student activities to assist students in creating balance in school and home life.
• Publicize club events in the weekly newsletter.

Objective 2: Evaluate and expand curricular activities.

• Evaluate all curricular activities using survey data to ensure offerings remain current with student interests.
• Provide more opportunities for STEM clubs and internships.
• Restructure help sessions and club meetings during lunch by developing a master schedule by departments and clubs.

Objective 3: Conduct a needs assessment of co-curricular activities.

• Evaluate co-curricular offerings to ensure offerings remain current with student interests, research offerings at other girls’ schools nationwide, establish content teams for competition, such as Quiz Bowl and develop interests in women’s issues.

Objective 4: Encourage healthy student programs and practices.

• Address student life issues, including proper use of social media, drug education and healthy living through diet and exercise.
• Evaluate student life programs, including support of athletics, the Archdiocesan lunch program, Grandparents’ Day and other assemblies.
TECHNOLOGY

**Goal:** To ensure students have the necessary technology support to accelerate their learning, develop their interests and challenge their thinking, and faculty have the necessary technology to deliver a rigorous, comprehensive program of studies.

**Objective 1: Develop a comprehensive technology plan.**

- Create a Technology Committee composed of teachers, students, parents, and community members to develop a master plan and guide its implementation.

- Conduct an assessment of current technology and a technology needs assessment by developing surveys to be administered yearly, which are used to determine priority areas.

- Investigate current technology practices in grades 8-12 and college nationwide, with the goal of maintaining 1 to 1 technology.
• Reevaluate the iPad program by reviewing the literature on 1 to 1 devices, particularly Chrome Books and laptops, conduct action research on Chrome Books, investigate Google Classroom and conduct site visits to determine a course of action.
• Conduct student needs assessment to determine short and long term needs, priority areas and a plan of implementation.
• Conduct faculty and staff needs assessment to determine short and long term needs, priority areas and a plan of implementation.

Objective 2: Provide continuous training on the Student Information System.

• Evaluate the implementation of Blackbaud programs, provide continuous, tiered training and create faculty and parent committees to report on Blackbaud challenges.

Objective 3: Improve technology infrastructure.

• Expand Internet capability and provide more robust technology campus-wide by conducting an assessment of wireless systems, prioritize wiring, hardware and software needs, develop a plan to replace equipment and establish a funding source for infrastructure maintenance and upgrades.
• Continuously evaluate and upgrade equipment by assessing the current equipment and developing a plan to systematically replace outdated equipment.
• Continuously evaluate software by creating a faculty committee to recommend software and provide ongoing tiered training after purchase through the technology department.

Objective 4: Improve technology delivery by building teacher and student capacity.

• Evaluate the technology department and use the survey data to align personnel and determine areas of need.
• Provide ongoing teacher training at multiple levels by conducting a needs assessment yearly, developing parameters for technology use in classrooms, developing a program of regular professional development, identifying internal experts and securing an instructional technology coach.
• Improve student support by creating email work tickets for students ensuring efficiency, clearly communicating parameters for student technology use by reviewing the existing rules and implement those with fidelity and surveying students to determine their instructional technology needs.
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