Strategic Planning Guide for Schools and Boards

Diocese of Grand Rapids Catholic Schools

Strategic Planning is about…

Taking Stock: How have we changed? What are the shifts in our organization that we should note?

Choosing Trajectory: Where are we going? What are we moving away from and toward?

Identifying Strategic Intent: What are the most significant questions we need to be asking and answering to move forward?

Contents

Why Use This Approach?

Developed by the Diocesan School Board Strategic Planning Committee, this approach provides school and board leaders with *one planning process* and *one tool* to integrate:
- Your five-year school improvement plan with annual updates
- Your five-year board strategic plan with annual updates
- The five-year accreditation process tied to the National Catholic School Standards

The reasons for integrating these activities and outputs are many. Doing so streamlines your process and reduces unnecessary anxiety. It takes into account work that you've already completed to date and meets you where you are in the current planning cycle. Once completed, this work becomes a guiding record and resource for everyone involved in the planning and managing of activities on behalf of your school for the entire year ahead.

| Integrated Planning Process with National Catholic School Standards			
Years	**Accreditation Process** **All Domains**	**Board Planning Process** **Domains: Governance/Leadership** **+ Operational Vitality**	**School Improvement Process** **Domains: Mission/Catholic Identity** **+ Academic Excellence**
MNSAA Year 5	Self-study (fall/winter) and site visit (spring)	Prioritize benchmarks Determine strategies Make progress Self-study and site visit	
MNSAA Year 1	Annual report (May)	Reprioritize benchmarks Determine strategies, make progress and report Complete Strategic Planning Map Develop 5-year plan Prioritize and assign strategies/tactics to committees	
MNSAA Year 2	Annual report (May)	Reprioritize benchmarks Determine strategies Make progress and report	
MNSAA Year 3	Annual report (May)	Reprioritize benchmarks Determine strategies Make progress and report	
MNSAA Year 4	Annual report (May)	Reprioritize benchmarks Determine strategies Make progress and report	

Work the Planning Map Together

The best practice Planning Map is a highly recommended, but not mandatory, tool that school and board leaders work together to complete and update. It's a helpful model for strategic planning that results in a one-page, double-sided 11" x 17" document. The Planning Map is helpful because:

- Its limited space encourages the planning team to prioritize and focus on only the most important information
- As a convenient, all-in-one reference point, it provides a constant yardstick for implementing agreed-upon activities and vetting new ideas and decisions as they arise
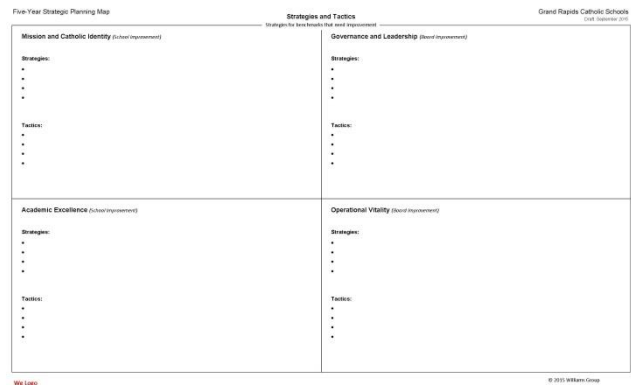
Planning Tool at a Glance

The Planning Map consists of three major sections. The front provides 14 numbered sections intended to capture important strategic planning elements, including mission and vision, strategies and metrics, and much more. The reverse provides four quadrants where you can further document chosen strategies and corresponding tactics. A Standards Reference poster is your one-page guide to the four domains, 13 standards and 70 benchmarks of the National Catholic School Standards. For optimal viewing, print these tools on 11" x 17" paper.
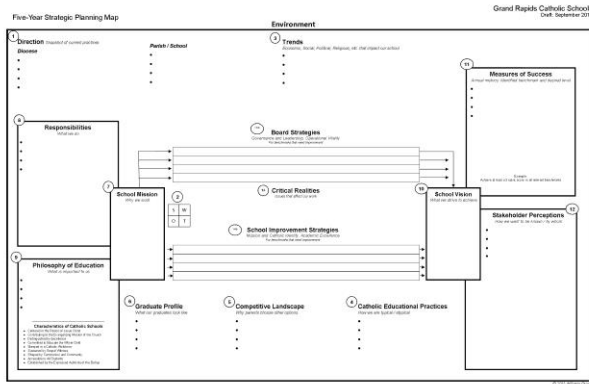
Planning Map front   *Planning Map reverse*

The planning map is created in Publisher software

Standards Reference poster

You can find and download these documents on the Diocesan website.
http://grdiocese.org/schools/office-of-catholic-schools-resources/#boardtraining

Let's Get Started!

Every Five Years (and a little in between)
The major emphasis of your strategic planning process should take place once every five years—in the year following your accreditation self-study or site visit. During each of the subsequent four years, it is recommended to conduct a brief review of the elements on your Planning Map and refine or create new strategies and tactics as needed. The following instructions are geared toward the core planning that you'll do once every five years.

Engage Your Community
To help ensure that your planning activities are relevant and well supported, it's important to engage the broad parish and school community. You can do this in two, to three important steps:

1. **Conduct a parish/school-wide survey** asking people for their perceptions about the school. You can download a sample survey (9 questions) that can be paper-based or digital (via Survey Monkey). It is available on the Diocesan website. Once personalized, it is ready for use, or you can customize it to meet specific needs and interests. With announcements from the altar, in the bulletin and other typical parish and school communications, you can expect 100 to 150 responses.
   AND, OR
2. **Invite interested parishioners/school stakeholders to a collaborative planning session** to gather content for the "Environment" categories on the planning Map (sections #1-6, 13). Schedule a weeknight or Saturday morning (about three hours). Synthesize the survey feedback and have it available for attendees during this session. Details for planning and conducting this session (agenda and facilitation hints, gathering input, reporting back to the group, etc.) can be found on the Diocesan website. With good promotion, you can reasonably expect a group of 25 to 100 people to attend.
3. **Schedule planning session(s) for faculty and board members** to complete the Planning Map and write strategies and tactics. This group will use the content from the survey results and the parish planning meeting, as well as data generated from the self-study or site visit and their own knowledge and expertise as the basis for their work.

Plan Your Faculty-Board Planning Session
The following recommendations are gathered for a productive planning session described in step 3 above.

Choose participants
The optimum number of people for this session is 12 to 15. It's best to choose a balanced mix of:
- Parish and school pastoral staff (pastor, religious education coordinator, youth chaplain, campus minister and others as appropriate)
- School board members (especially executive committee and other committee chairs)
- Faculty (especially those on the school improvement committee or team)

Prepare your presentation

Prior to this session, the leaders of your planning efforts should review the content generated in the survey and/or parish meeting and populate the PowerPoint planning template with the appropriate information. This content helps to jumpstart the team session and gives everyone a chance to express their support or differing opinions with the points documented. Remember, stimulating group discussion to gain alignment or consensus is an important aim of this session!
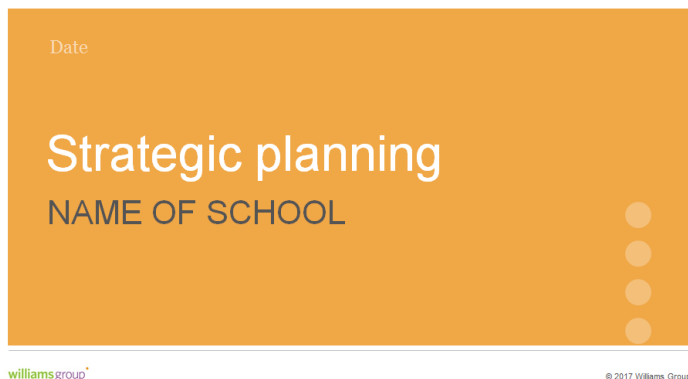
You can find and download this template presentation on the Diocesan website.
http://grdiocese.org/schools/office-of-catholic-schools-resources/#boardtraining

Manage your planning sessions

Appoint someone from your core planning team to play the following roles during each of your planning sessions.

- **Facilitator:** Select someone with demonstrated facilitation skills. The best choice is an individual familiar with your school and planning efforts, but not personally on the team or directly involved on a day-to-day basis. Facilitation will help move the sessions along in a timely manner and enable you to complete the planning within your given schedule. A good facilitator will maintain personal objectivity, help everyone feel "heard" and manage the discussion as well as the clock to complete the session within the designated timeframe. Your facilitator should:
    o Prepare by reading the sample content for each section of the Planning Map (included in the "Explanations, Examples and Prompts" section of this guide) to become familiar with the type of information that is appropriate. Your group should feel free to use some of these bullet points as your own if they express the reality of your own situation. This sample content has also been pre-populated into the PowerPoint presentation and should be customized based on your parish survey or other input data that you have gathered.
    o Work with participants to complete sections of the Planning Map as represented in the PowerPoint; sections of the map are numbered to indicate the recommended order.
    o Capture additional ideas in a "parking lot." It's likely that participants may bring up subjects that are important to them but that don't have a home on the Planning Map. These may be documented elsewhere (on a whiteboard or flipchart during the meeting and later transcribed). In this way, participants feel listened to and input is retained for later use, including potential inclusion in the ultimate Planning Map.

- **Scribe:** Select someone with very good typing skills who knows how to use PowerPoint. Even more important, choose an individual who is a good synthesizer—capable of listening to the discussion and netting out the essence of the thoughts being shared, then adding/editing the content to the PowerPoint presentation during the meeting. This process is very engaging and enables participants to see their ideas/thoughts recorded in real time.

Finalize Your Planning Map Content

After you complete your group planning sessions you will have gathered content for each section of the Planning Map. It is recommended that a small core group (3 to 4 participants, including the facilitator and scribe) take time to vet and refine the content generated. Read and evaluate the content, topic by topic, eliminating unnecessary points or duplication of thought. Be sure that the points being made are exactly what you intend to communicate and that it is appropriate and understandable for any audience. It's important to keep in mind that your planning content will improve each time you go through this process. Referencing or borrowing from the National Catholic Standards poster is helpful to ensure your strategies align with your chosen benchmarks.

Complete the Strategic Intent Map Template

Once review of this information is complete, place your content into the Microsoft Publisher version of the Planning Map. You may need to adjust the layout—including type size and box size—to make all the content fit. Each completed Planning Map is different in size and shape (and somewhat "imperfect" looking). If you have someone on the team who is particularly adept with design and layout, you may want them to handle this activity for you.

Make sure your title and date are accurate, and give the Planning Map a final, thorough proof reading. Remember, you should never proof your own work. Ask someone who is very detail oriented and has good English grammar skills to read it and mark it up. This person should identify any content that is confusing to him or her in addition to punctuation and other technical issues. Make your final edits and save the document accordingly. You should have one 11" x 17" page with your Planning Map on page 1 and your strategies and tactics on page 2.

Explanations, Examples and Prompts

In this section, you will find a definition of each content section of the Planning Map, as well as corresponding thought starters and examples useful to your planning session facilitator and any members of your team who play an active role in vetting and refining the content you gather.

1. DIRECTION

Definition: A snapshot of current status and practices in our diocese and school.

Key questions/thought starters:
What are the important practices and dynamics in our diocese and school that currently influence our behavior?

Tip: Ask and answer the questions for the diocese first, as the activities of the parish and school follow diocesan direction. Once completed, do the same overview for your school.

Examples:
GR Diocesan Direction
- Increasing desire to reach out to economically disadvantaged
- Diocesan leadership very supportive of Catholic education
- Alliance of schools with new common platforms: Canvas (learning management system), common payroll and financial system
- Many pastors handling multiple parishes, including parishes with schools
- Implementation of Theology of the Body across all schools (students/staff)
- All curriculum standards updated
- Catholic school enrollment stabilized over past 5 years; 5% decline with pandemic
- Declining parish membership
- Cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage and gender ideology conflict with Church teaching

(School Name) School Direction
- Strong partnership between parish and school
- Catholic identity/faith first is primary
- Academic excellence
- Disciplined climate
- Parents are empowered (access to greater participation)
- Technology is lagging
- Serving more diverse learners (struggling to accelerated)
- Steadily growing Hispanic population
- Financially challenged

2. SWOT

Definition: An assessment of our school's key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Considerations: Although a very worthwhile exercise, there is not enough room to include the results of the SWOT exercise on the Planning Map. The content your team generates will be recorded in your PowerPoint presentation. You may also want to create a one-page Microsoft Word document for easy reference when completed.

If you conduct a parish survey, you will also have SWOT input from parishioners. Consider integrating this information into your team's SWOT or creating another Word document to keep separate record of both SWOT exercises. It may be interesting and informative to compare the input from both groups. Significant disagreement between the two sets of content indicates a perception gap that should be addressed.

Issues may be raised during the SWOT session that do not fit into the category being discussed. Again, use the "parking lot" technique to record the thought for later/different use. Sometimes issues are considered Weaknesses and they are actually Critical Realities (another section discussed later in this guide). The easy way to test where the information belongs is that Weaknesses can be fixed or improved by the team and Critical Realities cannot be fixed by this planning team (or, it is extremely difficult to fix them).

Key questions/thought starters:
- What are the current strengths of our school (what we have and want)?
- What are the current weaknesses (what we have and don't want)?
- What are the current opportunities (what we don't have but want)? *Tip: Many times, opportunities are the opposite of weaknesses.*
- What are the current threats (what we don't have and don't want)?

Examples:

Strengths (have and want)
- Mission driven
- Academically strong
- Technology is optimized and utilized for instruction
- Strong, dedicated faculty (many diverse gifts)
- Stable pastoral leadership
- Supportive parish population; parent involvement
- Strong reputation within the diocese

Weaknesses (have and don't want)
- Insufficient opportunities for accelerated learners
- Less than one-to-one digital tools-to-students
- Perceived as unaffordable
- Limited opportunities for struggling students

Opportunities (don't have and want)

- Stronger collaboration with surrounding Catholic schools
- Part-time teacher/consultant for enrichment, accelerated learners
- Bilingual education (conversational Spanish by 8th)
- Better digital tools for teachers and students
- Electronic whiteboards in classrooms
- Broader awareness/perception of the school's distinct reputation of excellence

Threats (don't have and don't want)
- Declining enrollment
- Outdated facilities
- Unsafe or insecure surroundings
- Financial instability
- Loss of trust and respect from the community

3. TRENDS

Definition: Any societal/community trends we believe will impact our school. *Tip: these are general and not specific only to the school or parish.*

Key questions/thought starters:

- What are the key economic, social, political, religious and demographic trends that may impact our school?
- Rear view: What has been the biggest change in the last three years?
- Looking forward: What kinds of looming changes would substantially modify the school's direction (something that would "rock our world")?

Examples:
- Families moving to suburban areas
- Declining enrollment in GRPS
- Rising cost of private school tuitions
- Parental attitude that saving for college is more important
- Nationally, parents are more demanding and less loyal
- Parents shop for schools and teachers
- Increase in non-traditional families
- Growing Hispanic population in Grand Rapids

4. CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Definition: Typical and atypical practices of our Catholic school compared with others within the diocese.

Key questions/thought starters:
- How is our geographic draw different from/similar to other local Catholic schools?
- How is our tuition/funding different from/similar to other local Catholic schools?
- How is our approach to Catholic education different from/similar to other local Catholic schools?

Examples:

Ways we are typical of other Catholic schools
- More students commute to school
- Parents shop for the best (academics, athletics, arts)
- Three decision points: preschool/kindergarten, middle school, high school

Ways we are atypical from other Catholic schools
- Excellent attendance at Sunday Mass by school families
- Excellent children's choirs
- Abundance of lay leaders among school families
- Vibrant youth ministry
- School families very active throughout various ministries

5. COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Definition: Identifying other educational options parents and student have to choose from, and other aspects of schools that may be perceived as advantages over our school.

Key questions/thought starters:
- Who are our toughest competitors?
- To which schools do we lose the most students?
- What are the most common objections we hear from potential parents about enrolling their children?

Examples:
- Schools of choice (Forest Hills/East Grand Rapids/Northview/Rockford/Coopersville/Jenison/Byron Center/West Michigan Aviation Academy/etc.)
- Suburban public schools
- City Middle-High School
- Community preschools
- Young Fives programs
- Zoo/Blandford/Museum Schools
- Home schooling
- Other Catholic schools with more diverse populations
- Charter schools
- Parents' financial quality of life choices
- Better athletic programs

6. GRADUATE PROFILE

Definition: Description of the characteristics of a graduate who represents our school well.

Key questions/thought starters:
- What do our strongest graduates look like?
- What will enable them to succeed in high school and beyond?

Examples:
- Curious and active interest in learning
- Evidence of faith commitment
- Solid academic foundation

7. SCHOOL MISSION

Definition: A single declarative sentence that describes "why we exist."

Key questions/thought starters:
What is our purpose?

Example:
(School Name) Catholic School provides an education where Christ illuminates learning and life.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Definition: A description of the major activities that combine to create the core of our mission.

Key questions/thought starters:
What are the five to 10 key tasks that we perform in our daily operations that help deliver on our mission?

Examples:
- Educate children for life and eternity
- Support, respect, encourage and foster the unique gifts of each individual
- Partner with parents recognizing their role as the primary educators of their children
- Model the faith and encourage its practice in daily living
- Provide a safe environment that allows for optimum growth and development
- Meet each individual's unique learning needs
- Prepare students for the next level of education

9. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Definition: A description of the values that anchor who we are and drive the ways we execute our mission.

Key questions/thought starters:
What are the five to 10 key values that are important in our daily transactions that help deliver on our mission?

Examples:
- Catholic faith and identity
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Dignity of each individual
- Positive attitude and outlook
- Proactive and positive discipline
- Personal responsibility and accountability

10. SCHOOL VISION

Definition: One aspirational sentence that describes what we aspire to be.

Tip: It's often best to start this sentence with the word "Be…"
See examples below.

Key questions/thought starters:
- What do we constantly strive to be?
- What would be the ideal description of our achievements?

Examples:
- Be a leading, innovative Catholic school that invites students to love and serve Christ and engage culture with a saintly passion.
- Be a growing and innovative Catholic school, which is affordable and accessible to all interested families.

11. MEASURES OF SUCCESS *update these annually!*

Definition: The quantitative indicators that tell us we are living/achieving our vision. Identify specific Benchmarks and the desired rubric level to be achieved (based on the National Catholic School Standards).

Key questions/thought starters:
- In what benchmark areas do we need to improve to achieve our vision?
- What are our annual measures of success?

Examples:
- Achieve at least "3" on all relevant rubrics (reference each by number)
- Program effectiveness survey results will improve annually among parents, students and staff
- Measurable growth in student performance
- Enrollment is stable and growing

12. STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS

Definition: How we want to be known and by whom.

Key questions/thought starters:
Who are our key audiences and what are the ideal statements we would like them to make about our school?

Examples:
- **Catholic parent:** "This school always puts faith first."
- **Non-Catholic parent:** "School name is obviously a Catholic school, while welcoming all."
- **High school student:** "Other kids think if you're from school name you must be a good student."
- **Visitor:** "There is a special feeling when you first walk in. Everyone is happy and friendly."
- **New parent volunteer:** "It's so easy to get involved. I was asked to help out right away."
- **High school teacher:** "I can pick a school name student out of the crowd because of the quality of their character."
- **Educator:** "School name works hard to continuously improve."
- **Pastor:** "This school is one of the most powerful accomplishments of my life's work. I can see the students and families growing in faith."
- **Minority parent:** "This school actively promotes multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion."
- **Prospective parent:** "They have exceptional technology and well-maintained facilities."
- **Teacher:** "I can't imagine working anywhere else."

13. CRITICAL REALITIES

Definition: The "givens" that we have to manage as we work toward our vision. These are issues that are not changeable by our team but impact our work and merit recognition and thoughtfulness.

Key questions/thought starters:
What are the major facility, enrollment, economic, demographic, etc., truths that we will have to navigate as we move toward our vision? These are NOT strengths or weaknesses, simply issues that EXIST that cannot be ignored.

Examples:
- School is located in… is landlocked, has room to expand, etc.
- School governance is parish-owned, Inter-parochial, diocesan-owned
- Disparity between public and Catholic teacher compensation

14. BOARD AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES *update these annually!*

Definition: The high-level approaches required for achieving our vision. These should be directly associated with the Governance and Leadership and Operational Vitality Standards for Boards and the Mission and Catholic Identity and Academic Excellence Standards for School Improvement standards that have been identified as priorities through the National Catholic Schools accreditation (self-study/visit) process as well as the corresponding Benchmarks identified as your Measures of Success. Also, be sure to review the Bridging Faith and Future Strategic Planning Map (on the Diocesan website) to ensure consistency and alignment with the diocese.

Based on team input into other categories of the Planning Map, your chosen Measures of Success, and a review of the areas needing improvement within your recent Accreditation Report, *highlight* the Standards that best align with these areas for improvement. Then write your strategies to address these issues based on the Benchmarks you want to achieve (remember that level 3 fully meets the Benchmark). In most cases, you can simply place an action word in front of the standard you want to focus on, and customize it to fit your organization.

Key questions/thought starters:
- **Board:** What are the Benchmarks, related to Governance and Leadership and Operational Vitality Standards we have identified as critical to moving us toward our vision and toward improving our scores on the rubrics?*
- **School Improvement Team:** What are the Benchmarks related to Academic Excellence and Mission and Catholic Identity Standards we have identified as critical to positively moving us toward our vision and improving our scores on the rubrics?*

National Standards and Benchmark Rubrics: These rubrics should be consulted when writing your tactics. The rubrics provide very specific information for achieving improved scores.

Examples:

Reference both the Measures of Success and the specific Benchmark rubrics related to the Standards being addressed as you write your strategies.

Mission and Catholic Identity
- **Standard #1:** An excellent Catholic School is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.
- **Strategy for #1:** Develop and clearly communicate a school mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.

Governance and Leadership
- **Standard #6:** An excellent Catholic School has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.
- **Strategy for #6:** Continue to evolve our school's leadership team that is empowered by the governing body to realize and implement our school's mission and vision.

15. BOARD AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TACTICS *reverse side of Planning Map*

Definition: The specific actions that will be taken to accomplish the identified strategies/Standards. These tactics should be written while referencing both the Planning Map and the specific Benchmark rubrics related to the Standards being addressed.

Key questions/thought starters:
- **Board:** What is our score on the specific benchmark rubric* and what actions do we need to take to improve, related to the Governance and Leadership and Operational Vitality strategies we have identified?
- **School Improvement Team:** What is our score on the specific benchmark rubric* and what actions do we need to take to improve, related to the Academic Excellence and Mission and Catholic Identity strategies we have identified as critical?

National Standards and Benchmark Rubrics: These rubrics should be consulted when writing your tactics. The rubrics provide very specific tactical information for achieving improved scores.

Examples:

Mission and Identity
- **Standard #1:** An excellent Catholic School is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.
- **Strategy for #1:** Develop and clearly communicate a school mission that embraces a Catholic identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.
- **Tactic to meet Benchmark #1.3:** Develop a mission statement.
- **Tactic to meet Benchmark #1.4:** Make the mission statement visible in public places and included in official documents.

Governance and Leadership
- **Standard #6:** An excellent Catholic School has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.
- **Strategy for #6:** Continue to evolve our school's leadership team that is empowered by the governing body to realize and implement our school's mission and vision.
- **Tactic to meet Benchmark #6.4:** Establish and support networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community (boosters, home and school association, board, finance council, student council, etc.) to advance excellence.

Planning in Years 2-5

Once you've completed the entire planning process in year one, revisit your Planning Map and take these three simple planning steps in each of the following four years:

1. Review the entire **Environment** section and update it as necessary
2. Evaluate your progress against your **Measures of Success**
3. Evaluate, refine or redefine your **Strategies** and **Tactics** as needed based on your progress

Finally, update your Planning Map accordingly and share this new information with all appropriate audiences.

Engaging Your Parish and School Community

Sample Planning Session Agendas

The following three pages are examples of planning sessions for engaging your parish community in your school planning efforts. They follow the topics on the Strategic Intent Map and the same facilitation approach of small group discussions with large group sharing is suggested for most topics. Refer to specific sections in the strategic planning guide for explanations and examples of each topic to be discussed.

Feel free to use any or all topics on the map to engage your communities. The most important aspect of these sessions is for parishioners to feel "listened to." However, you will also glean important information to be used in the planning process.

Sample #1: Strategic Planning Session Agenda *Saturday morning*

8:15 AM	Hospitality and room set up (flip chart paper, markers at tables)
8:30 AM	Event begins with open hospitality (sign in, name tags)
9:00 AM	**Welcome** from _____ (Thank you, brief introduction and importance of the Strategic Plan to the parish and school)
9:10 AM	**Opening prayer** and remarks by (principal, pastor)
9:20 AM	**Overview** of the strategic planning process/map, goals, vocabulary, exercises (facilitator)
9:45 AM	**SWOT analysis.** Small group discussion. Assign table captains to lightly facilitate. Also assign a scribe to capture content. Ask each table to identify Strengths (things we have and want), Weaknesses (things we have and don't want), Opportunities (things we don't have and want), Threats (things we don't have and don't want). Depending on number of participants/tables, you may need to ask more than one table to cover each of the four topics.
10:15 AM	15 minute break for refreshments
10:30 AM	**SWOT large group reporting**. Ask each table captain to come to the front of the room and share the results of their table discussion.
11:00 AM	Table discussion on the **Environment** sections of the planning map (5 areas of discussion, 1 table per topic area, table topics pre-assigned), Current Direction, Trends affecting our school, Catholic Education Practices—how are we typical of others, atypical?, Competitive Landscape, Desired Graduate Profile. Follow the same small group process as described for the SWOT discussion.
11:30 AM	**Large group reports** from each table (table captains)
NOON	Additional questions or comments (facilitator)
	Final prayer and closing (pastor, principal)

Sample #2: Strategic Planning Session Agenda *Weekday evening*

5:30 PM	Hospitality and room **set up** (flip chart paper, markers at tables)
6:00 PM	Event begins with open hospitality (sign in, name tags)
6:00 PM	**Welcome** from _____ (Thank you, brief introduction and importance of the Strategic Plan to the parish and school)
6:10 PM	**Opening prayer** and remarks by (principal, pastor)
6:20 PM	**Overview** of the strategic planning process/map, goals, vocabulary, exercises – depending if new people are attending; brief review of any previous activities (principal, facilitator)
6:30 PM	**Mission, Responsibilities, Values.** Small group discussion. Assign table captains to lightly facilitate. Also assign a scribe to capture content. Ask each table to address one of these topics. Depending on number of participants/tables, you may need to ask more than one table to cover each of the three topics.
7:15 PM	**Large group reports** from each table (table captains)
8:00 PM	**Vision, Vision Metrics.** Small group discussion. Repeat the same process to discuss these two topics.
8:30 PM	**Large group reports** from each table (table captains)
9:00 PM	Additional questions or comments (facilitator) Final prayer and closing (pastor, principal)

Sample #3: Strategic Planning Session Agenda *Weekday evening*

5:30 PM	Hospitality and room set up (flip chart paper, markers at tables)
6:00 PM	Event begins with open hospitality (sign in, name tags)
6:00 PM	Welcome from _____ (Thank you, brief introduction and importance of the Strategic Plan to the parish and school)
6:10 PM	Opening prayer and remarks by (principal, pastor)
6:20 PM	Overview of the strategic planning process/map, goals, vocabulary, exercises – depending if new people are attending; brief review of previous activities (principal, facilitator)
6:30 PM	**Stakeholder Perceptions**. In a large group session, identify the 5-6 most important audiences to the school (i.e., students, parents, parishioners, etc.). Then, in small group sessions ask each table to write one sentence that expresses the very best thing a member of each audience could say about the school (which demonstrates that you are accomplishing your mission and vision).
7:15 PM	**Large group reports** from each table (table captains)
8:00 PM	**Critical Realities.** Small group discussion. Ask each table to identify things that affect our school (not strengths or weaknesses, simply things that *are* – and must be recognized for us to be success). These are things like: our school is landlocked, no space to grow.
8:30 PM	**Large group reports** from each table (table captains)
9:00 PM	Overview of next steps by the school planning team to develop common themes, strategies and tactics (principal, facilitator) Final prayer and thank you (principal, pastor) ***If time permits, ask group to consider major themes of the school that need to be addressed based on what was expressed during the 3 planning sessions.***