



Charting the Course for a Strong Future *A Strategic Plan*



"The Catholic school's proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith."

His Holiness Pope Paul VI



January 2011

Dear Parishioners, Parents, Alumni, Faculty and Friends,

As St. Louise de Marillac Parish continues to observe the 50th anniversary of her foundation, I am pleased to present to you this summary of our parochial school's strategic plan, *Charting the Course for a Strong Future*.

Reflecting upon the rich and successful history of our school, this plan seeks to ensure that for years to come we will have the correct focus, resources and tools to strengthen our Catholic identity and form our children academically, spiritually and socially for a successful transition into High School and young adulthood.

Our strategic plan has taken over a year to develop and is organized around three foundational pillars: 1) Academic Strength; 2) Catholic Formation; and 3) Financial Strength/Stewardship. Literally dozens of teachers, administrators, staff members, parents and parishioners have worked together under each of these categories to develop sound strategies that address just about every aspect of life at St. Louise de Marillac School.

My sincere gratitude goes out everyone who participated and contributed valuable feedback to this worthwhile project. In particular, I want to thank Mr. Chris Alger, a parishioner and school parent, who worked tirelessly to organize and manage the entire process through its completion.

Finally, if anything you read in this report piques your interest and you would like to participate in the realization of our strategic goals, I urge you to reach out to our principal, Mr. Ken Klase, myself or any of the pillar sponsors to get involved where you feel you can contribute.

Grateful for your support of St. Louise de Marillac School, I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. M. Caridi".

Father Michael A. Caridi
Pastor

Charting the Course for a Strong Future STL2020 – The St. Louise de Marillac School Strategic Plan

Growing from a Position of Strength:

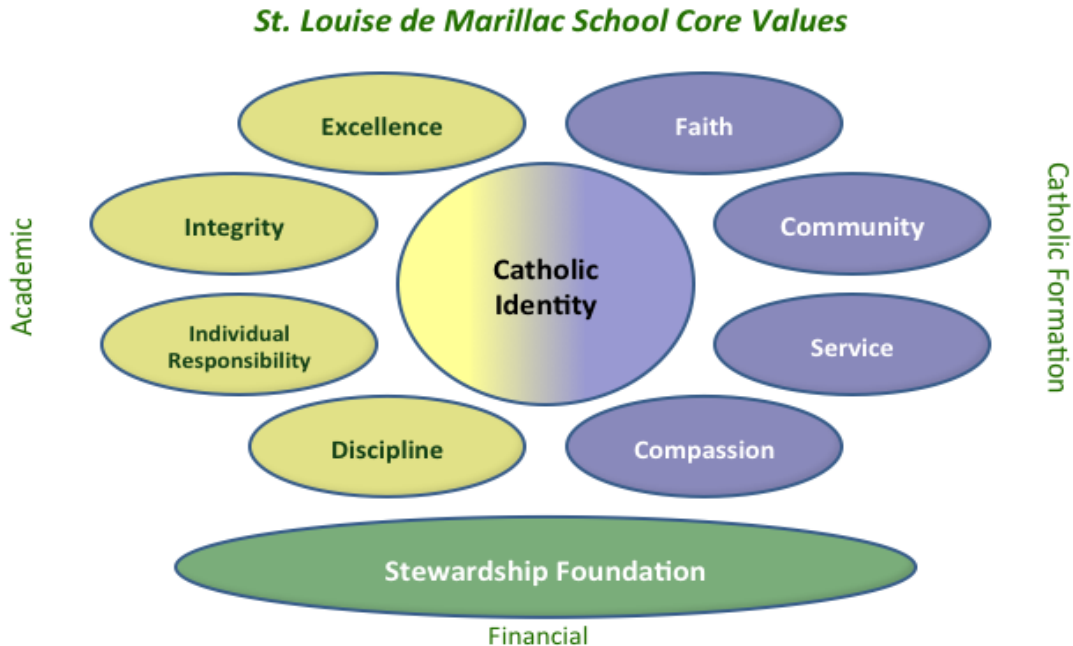
St. Louise de Marillac School is blessed to be experiencing growth, prosperity and the support of a vibrant Catholic community, even as the South Hills area’s demographics are shrinking and many of our neighboring parish schools are losing enrollment or closing their doors. At this moment of strength, we, as stewards of this school, must not sit back, but ask what we can do to become even stronger and serve our families better by helping to create balanced, spiritually strong young people who will be well prepared for the challenges of high school and beyond.

Goals of Our Strategy:

We are committed to the development and delivery of a strategy that looks beyond the day-to-day, year-to-year needs of our school. Instead, we are taking a long-term perspective to address challenges and seize opportunities that require more effort and attention than a single school year can provide. This will enable families, students and faculty members to rally around a defined picture of the future and dedicate their collective energies to moving the school in that direction.



Our Core Values/Mission/Vision



In initiating the strategic planning process, the team and school leaders collaborated to refine a set of core values anchored by our Catholic identity that will serve as the essential foundation for St. Louise de Marillac School's future growth and success.

Linked to those core values is St. Louise de Marillac School's mission statement.

Our Mission: *St. Louise de Marillac School provides a Catholic educational setting where students and their families integrate Gospel values to live their faith consciously and actively. In order to maximize each student's full potential and ensure his or her success in life, we provide for the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of each child.*

In addition, St. Louise de Marillac School has crafted an aspirational vision that guides our strategy's direction and intent.

Our Vision: *St. Louise de Marillac School is the preferred Catholic educational community where families work together with faculty to provide young people with a solid faith-based foundation and the integrity of future Christian leaders prepared to succeed in life.*

Our Strategic Framework



The strategic planning process led to the development of a comprehensive strategic framework that allows St. Louise de Marillac to address its long-term needs and to chart a course to take advantage of the many opportunities available to our parish school. Our framework is comprised of three distinct, but strongly interrelated elements, or pillars.

Academic Strength Pillar – Focused on enhancing our student’s day-to-day educational and extracurricular academic experience. The primary goal of this pillar is to strengthen our student’s preparation for high school. A secondary outcome is to bolster the reputation of St. Louise de Marillac School as an excellent high school preparatory option.

Catholic Formation Strength Pillar – Focused on providing students superior catechetical formation, contemplative faith enrichment and a disciplined, values-based learning environment where they can grow in their faith and develop as strong Christian leaders, enthusiastic about their faith.

Financial Strength Pillar – Focused on creating a strong tradition of stewardship and financial commitment to St. Louise de Marillac School to ensure viability and growth for decades to come. With financial stability, the school can invest in necessary facility enhancements and provide our faculty with the tools needed to support a wider range of students’ needs.





Strategic Pillar 1 - Academic Strength

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
Nelson Mandela

Academic Strength Pillar Overview

The core values emphasized in our Academic Strength Pillar are “Catholic Identity”, “Excellence”, “Integrity”, “Individual Responsibility” and “Discipline”.

St. Louise de Marillac School has a decades-long reputation of academic strength, but there is always room for growth and improvement. Our size and scale sometimes put St. Louise de Marillac at a disadvantage relative to our local public schools, which offer a more tailored, flexible curriculum that provides enrichment beyond the core curriculum. While the strategic planning team recognizes that our school cannot be “everything to everybody”, we feel that there are many opportunities to enrich our student’s environment through creativity and the use of technology, as well as to offer deeper and more engaging core and non-core learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

To that end, the strategic planning team has established a focused set of recommendations along four key themes:

Academic Excellence is focused on creating a productive learning environment where students are expected to meet high academic standards anchored on the essential skills needed for success in high school and tailored to the distinct needs and/or interests of the individual student.

Learning Environment of the Future is focused on developing a flexible learning environment that leverages all practical capabilities of technology to dramatically enhance the depth and richness of the learning experience and provide tools that make teaching, learning and testing more effective and efficient.

Whole Person Development is focused on more tightly integrating athletics and extracurricular activities into the academic environment from the perspective of awareness, communication, logistics and the development of skills necessary to succeed and thrive as well-rounded individuals.

Tightening High School Linkages is focused on collaborating with the Catholic and primary public high schools that we serve to define success and to develop a plan that will strengthen our students' high school preparation. Where possible, we will work to customize the preparation to the distinct needs of each high school to help ensure that our students are as successful as they can be.

Our Academic Strength Agenda:

Over the next several years, our principal and faculty will work with our school's families and other parishioners to advance the strategic themes defined above through the recommendations outlined below.

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Academic Excellence</i>	<i>Learning Environment of the Future</i>	<i>Whole Person Development</i>	<i>Tightening High School Linkages</i>
Strategic Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Enhance Strength of Core Academic Offerings ➢ Enrich Offerings for All Students ➢ Tailor Services for Our Students at the Margins ➢ Improve Performance on Standardized Tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Leverage Technology-enabled Instruction ➢ Establish Technology Strategy, Frameworks & Standards ➢ Enable Administrative and Academic Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish Whole Person Standards ➢ Improve Activity Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Understand High Schools' Expectations ➢ Support High School Preparation Priorities
2012/13 Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Enhance Standards-based Learning ➢ Charter an Academic Advisory Board ➢ Adopt Flexible/Variable Scheduling ➢ Define Electives for 6th thru 8th Grade Students ➢ Enhance Parent/Teacher Collaboration ➢ Enhance Standardized Testing Strategies and Techniques ➢ Adopt Practice for Standardized Testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish Technology Advisory Team (TAT) ➢ Establish Comprehensive Technology Strategy ➢ Establish Classroom Technology Standards ➢ Define Mobile Computing Strategy ➢ Set Up a Virtual Content Library by Level ➢ Establish Computer/Technology Skills Standards ➢ Integrate Technology into All Curricula/All Levels ➢ Enhance Electronic Communication Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Create/Refine Activity Profiles ➢ Establish a Fall Activity Fair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish Alumni Feedback Program ➢ Enhance High School Information Sessions ➢ Leverage Feedback into DLP Refinement ➢ Establish High School Readiness/Placement Testing
2013 and Beyond Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish External Performance Benchmarks ➢ Create Teaching Merit Award Program ➢ Accelerate Start of Year to Reduce Review Time ➢ Design Differentiated Learning Program (DLP) ➢ Establish Differentiated Learning Options ➢ Merge Existing Programs into DLP ➢ Establish Standardized Testing Feedback Loop into DLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Leverage Technology to Enable DLP ➢ Establish Teacher/Administration Dashboard ➢ Establish Parent/Student Dashboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Improve Formal Activity Feedback Channels ➢ Enhance Activity Communications Channels ➢ Establish Development Standards ➢ Create Coach/Lead Performance Reviews and Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish Administrative Feedback Meeting ➢ Research and Design Predictive Performance Models



Strategic Pillar 2 - Catholic Formation

"Just as God commanded light to shine out of darkness, so God himself kindles a light in the hearts of those destined to announce his word to children, so that they may be able to enlighten those children by unveiling for them the glory of God."

St. John Baptist de La Salle

Catholic Formation Strength Pillar Overview

The core values emphasized in our Catholic Formation Pillar are "Catholic Identity", "Faith", "Community", "Service" and "Compassion".

St. Louise de Marillac School is anchored by strong Catholic faith formation through religious education, contemplative faith practices and values-based learning experiences. Religious practices are a core element of our students' everyday lives. While our school's Catholic identity is strong, continuing to differentiate our school from almost all of the alternatives in terms of Catholic formation is a critical aspect of our mission and vision.

To that end, the strategic planning team has established a focused set of recommendations along five key themes:

Religious Education Enrichment – Develop students and graduates who are comfortable demonstrating the conviction of their Catholic faith both reflexively, by defending their

faith to others, and proactively, by evangelizing to those who may be seeking answers or searching for solace.

Contemplative Faith Enrichment – Provide a comprehensive faith enrichment program that enables our students and their families to encounter Jesus in ways that will form meaningful lifetime relationships.

Apostolic Service Enrichment – Build a culture of apostolic service that encompasses direct and indirect service to the local, national and global communities. Focus our students’ energy on understanding, selecting and owning the service needs in which they work to make a difference.

Moral and Disciplined Environment – Develop graduates who, through external discipline and morality scripting to set examples of moral people, demonstrate our Catholic values, integrity, modesty, compassion and respect for self and others.

Growth of Our Families’ Faith – Foster, encourage and support well-formed Catholic families in a deliberate, well-planned and engaging manner with a goal of school families living and growing in their faith together.

Our Catholic Formation Strength Agenda:

Over the next several years, our pastor will work with our school’s teachers, families and other parishioners to advance the strategic themes defined above through the recommendations outlined below.

Themes	Religious Education Enrichment	Contemplative Faith Enrichment	Apostolic Service Enrichment	Moral and Disciplined Environment	Growth of Our Families’ Faith
Strategic Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Prepare Graduates with Apologetics ➢ Prepare Graduates to Evangelize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Enhance Our Students’ Relationships with Jesus Christ ➢ Increase the Accessibility of Faith Enrichment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Improve Ownership and Accountability for Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Strengthen Values, Integrity, Morality and Respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Foster Growth of Well-formed Catholic Families
2012/13 Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Assess Current Situation and Craft Recommended Apologetics Changes to Religion Curriculum ➢ Assess Current Situation and Craft Recommended Evangelization Changes to Religion Curriculum ➢ Adopt Short-term Changes to Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish Faith Enrichment Council for the School ➢ Create New Opportunities for Faith Enrichment in Today’s Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Expose Students to the Needs of Others Much Less Fortunate (age-appropriate) ➢ Annual Class Commitment to Group in Need (self-selected) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Emphasize Individual Responsibility and Self Examination in All Academic Pursuits ➢ Emphasizes the Role of the Teacher in Nurturing a Moral and Self-disciplined Constitution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Enhance Family-oriented Celebration Programs (with expectation of attendance)
2013 and Beyond Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Adopt Long-term Changes to Curriculum ➢ Design and Implement Panel Review as Preparation for Graduation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Integrate Junior High Students with Elementary School Students as Role Models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Design and Implement Junior High Mission Program Defined by Each Class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Involve Junior High Students as Role Models or Examples for Our Younger Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish More Family-oriented Learning Programs ➢ Establish Issue-based Education Opportunities ➢ Organize and Coordinate Family Retreats for Key Themes and Years (Father/Son, Mother/Daughter, etc.)



Strategic Pillar 3 - Financial Strength/Stewardship

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.”

1 Peter 4:10 (English Standard Version)

Financial Strength Pillar Overview

The primary core value emphasized in our Financial Strength Pillar is a “Foundation of Stewardship”.

We are fortunate that, given St. Louise de Marillac School’s location in the relatively affluent community of Upper St. Clair Township in the South Hills of Pittsburgh, most families have the financial means to send their children to our school and to contribute to the financial strength of our parish. However, with great gifts come great responsibility, and we must be mindful that a core element of our Catholic identity is to make Catholic education available to all who desire to take advantage of the opportunities that it provides.

From a pure stewardship perspective, our responsibility as parish and school families is to honor our school’s Mission and Vision. We must leave St. Louise de Marillac School financially stronger, more viable and more available as a Catholic educational institution that can provide Catholic education to families in the South Hills of Pittsburgh for many generations to come.

To that end, the strategic planning team has established a focused set of recommendations along four key themes:

Financial Excellence is focused on creating a comprehensive and integrated five-year capital investment and operating plan, establishing tight linkages between short-term operational needs and long-term decision-making, planning and reporting. Proactively, we aim to manage against “one” budget/plan for the entire school, resulting in greater transparency and accountability.

Fundraising and Enrollment Transformation has a dual focus: 1. adjusting the selection, planning and execution of fundraising opportunities to achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency and professionalism, and 2. enhancing our enrollment and retention.

Investment Engine Development is focused on identifying and prioritizing the overall St. Louise de Marillac School capital investment requirements for facilities, academics, technology and athletics over a rolling 10 years. An additional area of focus is communicating these requirements through a comprehensive investment strategy in order to expand the network of potential investors and sources of funding.

Endowment Planning and Development is focused on defining and establishing a St. Louise de Marillac School endowment to meet three critical needs linked to our Values and Mission. This endowment will be designed to ensure financial stability in support of academic and spiritual growth into the next decade and beyond.

Our Financial Strength Agenda:

Over the next several years, our Office of Advancement will work with our school’s families and other parishioners to advance the strategic themes defined above through the recommendations outlined below.

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Financial Excellence</i>	<i>Fundraising & Enrollment Transformation</i>	<i>Investment Engine Development</i>	<i>Endowment Planning and Development</i>
Strategic Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish a Long-term, Holistic Financial Approach ➢ Strengthen Fiscal Discipline and Accountability ➢ Streamline Financial Processes ➢ Enhance Effectiveness of Financial Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish a More Professionally Managed Fundraising/Volunteering Organization ➢ Achieve Excellence in Both Enrollment and Retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish and Proactively Manage a Single, Holistic School Investment Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish a Targeted Endowment Program
2012/13 Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Create One Comprehensive Financial Model (5-year rolling plan) ➢ Compile a Single Asset Inventory ➢ Compile a Single Vendor Contract Inventory ➢ Simplify and Align Master Cash Account Structure ➢ Create Logical Chart of Accounts for Simplification ➢ Enforce the One Organization/One Budget Principle ➢ Establish School Finance Committee ➢ Review and Standardize Control Processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish and Fill PT Advancement Director Role ➢ Compile and Leverage Fundraising Best Practices ➢ Create Single Holistic Fundraising Plan Across All Organizations ➢ Establish the Role of STL Ambassadors to Drive Tiered Fundraising ➢ Develop and Implement a Single, Holistic Recruiting Marketing Plan ➢ Establish and Roll Out a Strong Retention and Internal Marketing Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Create/Refine One Comprehensive School-wide Investment Plan (including Facilities, Academics, Technology and Extracurriculars) ➢ Establish One Process for the Identification and Prioritization of Investment Needs ➢ Establish Investment Management Team to Drive and Monitor 	
2013 and Beyond Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Further Leverage Technology in Finance Process ➢ Integrate Dependent and Interdependent Systems and Tools ➢ Establish/Refine Finance Policies and Procedures Documentation ➢ Develop e-payment System for Family Share Program ➢ Provide Timely Reporting & Transparency of Family Financial Commitments/ Status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Select and Implement a Comprehensive Donor Management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Establish Investment Process Standards Documentation for Future Team Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Define Guidelines and Target Programs of Endowment Design ➢ Design Endowment Operations and Investment Principles ➢ Develop Professional Marketing Program ➢ Initiate Endowment Kickoff ➢ Establish “Founding Members Group” ➢ Establish Endowment “Stewardship Team”



In Conclusion

Using the inspired direction outlined in this document, St. Louise de Marillac School will focus on continuing the journey begun over 50 years ago to create a “Beacon of God’s Light” through building a stronger academic and spiritual future for families in the South Hills.

We need your help to achieve our goals. We encourage you to get involved and work with us to drive our strategy forward. If any of the areas outlined here resonate with you and you feel that you could contribute your time, resources, and talents, please reach out directly to our principal, Mr. Ken Klase, at (412) 835-0600 or our pastor, Father Michael Caridi, at (412) 833-1010.

