



## Our Lady of Peace Catholic School

Family • *Faith* • Future

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### Our Strategic Plan for Advancing Our Mission 2015-2018



Family, Faith, Future

This Plan was created by the OLP School Board the 2014-2015 school year and finalized May 2015 reviewed August 2015 for final print.

Members of the School Board included:

Father Walter, Dr. Stockhausen, Mrs. Moore, School Board Members, Mr. Cattaneo, Mr. Molfese, Mrs. Sennett, Mr. Cassin, Mr. Abbott, Mrs. Ward, Mrs. Gugora, Mr. DeMaio, Finance Representatives, Michael Murphy and Don Wittmer, HSA Representative, Mr. Lessmeister

## Welcome to Our Lady of Peace Catholic School

### Family Faith Future

Since its opening in 1963, Our Lady of Peace has focused on its traditions of academics, service and character. OLP has a reputation for excellence within the Joliet Catholic Diocese, and it is highly regarded by area high schools — both public and private. Our students score highly on diocesan assessment tests and our graduates are well prepared to meet the challenges of high school and beyond. Lifelong learning is the goal of our entire educational program.

Our Lady of Peace educates approximately 325 students from 215 families. Small class size, a comprehensive curriculum and a community spirit are just some of the benefits of being part of the OLP family. The school is under the direct auspices of the Diocese of Joliet and the direct guidance of the pastor and the principal. A voluntary school board, comprised of parents, serves as a consultative body to the pastor.

One of OLP's greatest strengths is the dedication of its volunteers. School parents generously donate their time and energy to the essential tasks of our daily operation. From patrolling our parking lot before school to serving as room parents, there are many areas where volunteers are vital.

Our Lady of Peace Catholic School – working in unison with Our Lady of Peace Parish and in cooperation with area Catholic parishes – is dedicated to providing a quality Catholic education through the fulfillment of the Gospel message: “To Teach as Jesus Did.”

Administration, faculty and parents support and encourage students to realize their talents and full potential by providing a strong foundation in faith and academics. As followers of Christ, we foster mutual respect and promote a sense of service to others.

#### Our Mission

As partners in education at *Our Lady of Peace Catholic School*, God calls us as Parish, School, and Family to be the light of Christ to our students. By nurturing their Faith, we provide a strong academic foundation anchored in Catholic Spirituality.

#### Our Core Values

Our core values unite us, from the office to the farthest corners of the playground. In the labs, on the playing field, in the lunch line and in the classroom...this is who we are and why we are here. *Faith, Family, Future*

### Incorporating Faith into the Classroom

Joliet Diocese schools incorporate Catholic spirituality into every aspect of their curriculum, reinforcing to students that their personal faith, centered on the Eucharist and the sacraments, remains relevant regardless of the course they might be studying or the situation in which they might find themselves.

### Balancing Challenging Courses with a Nurturing Environment

Our caring teachers balance high expectations for each boy or girl with a genuine respect and love for that student, recognizing always that each child is unique and therefore ever-deserving of individualized attention and one-on-one focus.

### Collaborating with Families

Understanding that many parents work, and some may even work multiple jobs, our teachers and school leadership do their best to maintain proactive, candid and open communication with each student's family because learning doesn't stop at the edge of the schoolyard, nor is it where it begins.

### Holding Each Other to a Higher Standard

Inspired by the Gospel, our teachers, staff and school leadership hold one another to a higher standard of professionalism, morals and ethics both in and out of the classroom, believing one of our primary roles is to provide an example for our school communities of faithful Christian witness.

### Looking Ahead

As tomorrow's innovations promise to leapfrog today's technologies, our local school leaders are continually looking ahead to ensure their schools' learning resources, teaching approaches and classroom tools stay abreast of new ideas and best practices as they plan for the long-term success that will benefit students and teachers alike.

### Our Strategic Plan for the Future

Recognizing the importance of establishing a clear path to the future, a broad-based committee of parents, faculty, staff and parishioners reflected upon the past and shared their common wisdom and insight in envisioning programs, plans and priorities for the next three years designed to strengthen the already highly successful Our Lady of Peace School. Coordinated and led by the Principal and School Board in response to a call for each school in the Diocese of Joliet to develop a Strategic Plan, the volunteers performed their work through six committees over the period of approximately twelve months. A main focus in the next three years will be enrollment to establish a firm future and strengthen our marketing to increase awareness of Our Lady of Peace School to the community.

It is important to note that the plans, programs and priorities outlined here are based upon the best information and insights available at the time and are certainly subject to ongoing yearly review, research, assessment and adjustment as circumstances such as enrollment, core curriculum requirements, available resources or other such issues may dictate over

the course of this plan. In other words, the Strategic Plan should be viewed as a living, dynamic document designed to guide or provide a path that may, on occasion, need to be cleared of bumps along the way to assure the most positive outcomes possible for the students being served through our Mission.

### OVERARCHING GOAL – EXCELLENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF FAITH

As the members of the Our Lady of Peace School Strategic Plan committee worked through the six primary areas of its work: namely,

1. Vision and Purpose – Our Catholic Identity
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Facilities, Resources and Finance – Stewardship
4. Student Life
5. Communications – Enrollment and Admissions
6. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The overarching goal for each committee was to seek excellence in every dimension of Our Lady of Peace School. Defining and achieving excellence, the committee believes, will result in an even stronger Our Lady of Peace School positioned well to advance its mission while achieving its specific goals in both the short and long term.

### Vision and Purpose – Our Catholic Identity

Our Lady of Peace School, whose mission as a “Christ-centered Catholic school working in unison with Our Lady of Peace Parish and in cooperation with area Catholic parishes – is dedicated to providing a quality Catholic education through the fulfillment of the Gospel message: “To Teach as Jesus Did.” Critical Thinking, creativity and nurturing guides children to attain their full potential with dignity. We clearly express our Catholic identity throughout the curriculum, student activities, sacramental preparation and participation in the life of the Church, numerous service programs, prominent visual reminders of the Gospel message throughout the school and other practical expressions of our life together as Catholics.

In reviewing the current Mission Statement from the perspective of Vision and Purpose with a focus on Catholic Identity, the committee focused upon three areas: Christ centered and spiritual formation, academic excellence and family involvement.

As such, there is consensus around the following

·It is important to state that we are a CATHOLIC school and not just a “private” one. This is one of the MANY battles that need to be fought regarding secularism.

·Academic excellence is important for a school and our children to succeed.

· Parents are the first educators of their children and are also the ones responsible to continue the Catholic formation in the home by attending Mass and participating in the Sacraments with them. As Bishop Conlon stated in his article in the December, 2011 issue of Christ is Our Hope Magazine, Catholic schools have “served as a partner with parents and parishes to create a consistent environment of faith”.

As a result of discussion among committee members and school leaders a recommended Mission Statement for going forward in the new strategic plan simply states:

Our Lady of Peace is a Christ-centered Catholic School that encourages a cooperative effort between home, school and parish in order to provide an academically excellent education and spiritual foundation in their faith for all students.

With the Mission Statement as the base or foundation, the following are seen as important related strategies that will assure the advancement and implementation of the Mission throughout the life of Our Lady of Peace School.

- Continue to utilize a Catholic-based curriculum, books and resource materials that consistently communicate the message and values of the Catholic Church and educational guidelines provided by the Diocese of Joliet. Continue to have Parish Ministry visit with our students monthly to further their Catholic teachings.
- In the spirit of educational excellence provide and utilize contemporary learning techniques that embrace technology resources and computer skills while continuing to utilize and embrace the more traditional academic disciplines such as memorization, handwriting and spelling.
- More fully integrate Our Lady of Peace School into the parish community. As noted from an article in Christ is Our Hope Magazine in the January/February, 2012 issue, Kim DesLauriers, the Principal at Immaculate Conception School in Morris, Illinois stated in an article titled The Value of a Parish to Its School and Community, “If you’re just a school, that’s meaningless. The school is part of a parish, and the parish is part of a community. The stronger every ministry of your parish is, the stronger everybody becomes. The school has to be part of a whole. And making people realize that is sometimes a difficult thing because parents bring their kids to school and they have to see beyond what the school is. We are a smaller part of a bigger picture.”
- Encourage and design programs for parishioners, particularly more senior members, to become involved with the school and the children. Students would learn and benefit from skills and knowledge that parishioners share in possibly after school sessions or other activities. .

- Engage the family more fully in the Catholic education process and community service projects while providing information and encouragement for children to consider being Disciples of Christ through the exploration of religious vocations.
- Encourage and design programs for Our Lady of Peace alumni to serve as role models for the students. Many are leaders in our community and they can mentor and support current students helping them to become our future leaders in the Church, our parish and community.
- Encourage and design programs for faculty, staff, parents and parishioners to spend time with their faith needs to come from both the school and parish. This may include extended Bible Study programs, small faith formation groups or other such programs that help us spend more time forming and promoting our faith as members of the school and parish community.

We believe that through each of these recommended strategies individually and collectively people will come to know, understand and believe in our mission and see us as an exemplary and excellent Catholic School Community.

### Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning at Our Lady of Peace School is at the heart of the school's commitment to Academic Excellence. The committee focused on this area recognized that while Our Lady of Peace School is considered to be excellent by most parents, faculty and staff, there are areas for improvement or strengthening that need to be addressed within the strategic plan. After considerable discussion, the focus for improvement in the area of Teaching and Learning over the next three years are as follows:

#### 1. Personnel: Faculty/Staff Related Needs and Issues

While Our Lady of Peace School provides an excellent academic experience for the majority of its students, there is an identified need to address the specific and special needs of the academically gifted as well as those in need of special assistance to succeed. The committee offered the following for consideration among other potential strategies:

- Utilize devices and resources like iPad and internet to accommodate the various levels for gifted and special needs through the use of reading software, challenging apps etc.
- Share resource personnel with 2 or more schools (speech, social worker, reading specialist) or creating a consultant type group for those accommodations headed up by the diocese.

## 2 Technology Training, Development and Staffing

Recognizing that Our Lady of Peace School has prepared for and is positioned as a leader in the rapidly developing area of technology based instruction with students in the PreK – 8<sup>th</sup> grade having access to lap tops, I-Pads and other technology. The ongoing training and support of everyone involved is critical for the short and long term success of this innovative approach to learning. The committee identified the following as important to plan for and continue to implement over the coming months and years.

- Professional development for staff on use of technology hardware and software, participation in online courses, training webinars, workshops etc.  
Directly relate opportunities to necessary curriculum needs such as incorporating more technology in the classroom. Also, find/attend seminars that help curriculum be more interactive using other modes of assessment.
- Ongoing training for parents to keep them current with their children's technology based instruction and learning, internet safety, home internet security etc.
- Utilize talented and trained students as technology support resources for assisting other students with the operation of technology as well as utilization of the various instructional applications.

Smartboards or other Interactive White Board

Classroom sets of ITouch or tablets

Classroom sets of laptops on a cart for check out availability

Basic Computer skill instruction (i.e. improving typing proficiency)

Training on connecting curriculum to the use of Smartboards and tablets

Use of digital cameras/animation

Going forward we need to enhance our technology by adding an additional lap top/IPad cart one for upstairs and one for downstairs, a smart table for preschool. In the future a five year plan will be created for replacement and purchasing of new technology. Another Long term goal is to have one device per student.

## 1. Other Teaching and Learning Program Considerations

The following reflect programs or issues that the committee viewed as important for the strengthening the teaching and learning experience for the students. The committee recommends that each of these be reviewed and considered for implementation during the three year course of the Strategic Plan.

Add a benchmark assessment such as MAP, IOWA, or

AIMS Web for a baseline score to compare. MAP offers not only the benchmarking

capability but also a plan for student further development from where they first tested.

Take tests in both the fall and the spring

Build resources such as additional vocabulary programs (Based on Latin/Greek word stems) and literary resources (Junior Great Books), online text books.

Provide additional support staff for the Primary Grades. This staff could be for reading and math support, study skill support, organizational support and classroom teacher support.

Enhance the Pre School program to a 5 day a week program for both 3 and 4 year olds.

Enhance Spanish program to include Kindergarten.

Continue to offer and improve upon current after school programs to compliment student non-classroom learning opportunities

Social Worker– Expand dedicated OLP Social Work services for two days a week to provide for student needs.

Enhance Foreign Language Program – Expand our Language program to include Latin to enhance student vocabulary development and language acquisition skills.

#### Facilities, Resources and Finances - Stewardship

Noting that the work of the Mission, Vision and Purpose Committee as well as the Teaching and Learning Committee are fundamental to the life of Our Lady of Peace School, the task assigned to the Facilities, Resources and Finances – Stewardship Committee is complex and vital to the ongoing and future ability of the school to operate, provide critical resources and assure an appropriate environment for excellence.

Throughout its discussions on facilities and finance the committee diligently examined each area of the school for both current issues that need to be addressed as well as how best to meet projected programmatic and staffing facility/space needs. There is a clear recognition that the school's space is currently utilized to near capacity. The committee recommended some creative solutions and also noted that considerable more work needs to be done in terms of determining the actual space needs for each program and how they can be met or considered for incorporation into an expansion plan for the school facility.

It is also important to note that the committee is keenly aware of the financial constraints and mortgage payments that remain to be paid over the next several years. Yet, the planning is based upon the



commitment to provide excellence for every area of the school and work toward resource solutions, over time, to meet the fiscal requirements for excellence.

Note: Each area noted in this section needs to be detailed, cost-identified, and prioritized during the first six-twelve months of the Strategic Plan implementation.

#### 1. Maintain, Enhance and Expand Facilities

a. Interior and Exterior Aesthetics – Recommend an upgrade to the monument and informational digital sign. Immediate need for landscaping at entrance and signage at various entrances, preferably with lighting. Possible outdoor sitting area near the flag pole, and enhancement of the Marian Shrine in the Atrium.

b. Parking – Parking lot replacement project scheduled to for summer 2015.

c. Infrastructure – Currently everything is up to code; develop a review plan to ensure items are reviewed on a regular basis (timing to be determined by committees).

- A professional facility assessment is now scheduled for end of April, 2015.
- Prioritize the infrastructure needs, obtain cost estimates from qualified contractors, and develop a five year plan to address these needs. This would be the basis of an infrastructure master plan.
- Current issues to be considered as higher priority include the school roof (including green roof), boiler burner upgrades, domestic hot water piping riser replacement (to address the corrosion/occlusion problem), and any ACBM issues to be noted during DOJ triennial re-inspection (Summer 2015).
- Additional areas of concern, based on age and anticipated useful life, are the classroom a/c units and roof-top HVAC units. To be included in the professional facility assessment, late April 2015.
- Future consideration must be given to splitting the HVAC system for the science room and library for better control, comfort, and maintenance considerations.
- Assess all lighting and mechanicals for potential upgrades that would provide for energy efficiencies and energy cost reductions, with emphasis on those that would qualify for rebates under the ComEd and Nicor incentive programs. Consideration should be given to using an outside qualified consultant to drive this effort. Any advantages of group purchasing, potentially through Diocese of Joliet, should be used to provide for lower materials costs and shorter payback. It is estimated that the school alone could see energy (cost) savings of 20%-30% with upgrades to lighting and boiler burners alone. NOTE: Lighting and energy upgrades are NOT the focus of the professional facility assessment in 2015, but a follow-up lighting/energy assessment is strongly recommended.

d. Food Services/Lunchroom Area – Review space allotment for future expansion to be used as a lunch room and could be used as larger meeting space.

e. Administrative Office Space – Review lobby spacing for entrance and exit ease and space for ill students. Recommend a committee to work with Architect to review options.

- f. Pre-School Program Space Adjustment – Look for options to expand Pre School Center and outdoor play area for students.
- g. Facility Management Processes/Standards – Establish mechanical equipment asset nomenclature, preventive maintenance tasks and intervals, and apply to a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) to track equipment repair, maintenance, and parts history. This will necessitate purchase of a CMMS with a module for work order generation and close-out.

#### Strengthen Financial Resources, Policies and Processes

- a. Endowment & Annual Funds – Establish an on-going enhancement of endowments for need based tuition assistance; faculty/staff compensation and an unrestricted fund balance. Understand how to set up an endowment fund and an annual fund; understand what the rules are with regards to pulling from each of the funds; establish a committee to manage funds and provide significant financial aid to the materially poor by enhancing current financial aid options.
- b. Keep the school Accessible to Families that Desire Catholic Education & Ensure No Student Withdraws or is Denied Admission Solely Due to Financial Need – Need to set up an education process for families to understand how they can apply for aid money; look at work-study programs to ease tuition burden; determine if option for more parish support; look at matching programs for fundraising activities; investigate tax-savings opportunities for families by reducing tuition and increasing mandatory church tax-deductible contribution.
- c. Enhancement of Alumni Program – Effectively increase the percentage of participation of alumni and parents in annual giving. Immediate need to identify all Our Lady of Peace Alumni; initiate communication to Alumni, create annual Alumni events; be prepared to discuss the needs and the process for contributions. Investigate the development of memorial scholarships.
- d. Prioritization of Alumni Efforts – Use Alumni to support the school’s goals, need to make the establishment of communication with the Alumni a number one priority and include Alumni representative on the Advancement committee.
- e. Service Opportunities – Develop a culture of giving among current students and nurture that through the peak earning years of their future careers ; creation of Alumni days to get current graduates to come back annually (similar to Grandparents’ Day).
- f. Structure of the Advancement Office – Immediate priority is the need to develop an Advancement Office; possibly to begin as a part-time volunteer position and develop into a full-time paid position with a volunteer committee. Need to

develop resources to effectively communicate the school's mission and progress toward achieving goals. Utilize the recruitment and admissions efforts of DOJ Catholic Schools to support the schools missions; continually communicate the school's needs and goals and utilize the DOJ Catholic Schools office to promote school mission and goals.

g. Personnel Compensation – Provide reasonable and just compensation for personnel to ensure recruiting and retention of the best staff; determine what the school has authority over (believe the diocese sets the pays scale); possible free tuition for children of current personnel; possible special fund for classroom supplies that teachers currently use their own money for; holiday gifts; etc.

h. “Best Financial Practices” - Adoption and/or modification of “best financial practices” to ensure a more faithful stewardship of the financial resources entrusted to the school. Establish the role of the School's Finance Representative along with the Principal, Parish Finance Representative and Parish Business Manager in all of the below items:

- Inventory of fixed assets – Need to understand remaining life; replacement value and keep current list for planning for replacement. Five year master plan, with annual review/adjustment, is needed for capital replacement purposes. Consider establishment of capital reserve fund for infrastructure upgrades and energy efficiency upgrades.
- Annual funding for replacement of depreciated assets/funding of capital improvements
- Separation of financial responsibilities within the Finance Department
- Networked access to financial records for DOJ Catholic School President, Principal, Treasurer and Director of Finance
- Improving the school's procedures for internal control of finances

i. Ensure the Allocation of the School's Financial Resources and Procedures Properly Reflect the DOJ Catholic School Ministry – This would become part of school's Finance representative's responsibilities.

Note: At this point the Facilities, Resources and Finances – Stewardship Committee has clearly identified a number of key issues and offered potential solutions for the continued strengthening of Our Lady of Peace School. As noted earlier, an immediate next step over the coming six-twelve months will be to review each issue and solution more closely,

establish cost implications, identify resources or sources for meeting related costs, and establishing priorities for implementation within the strategic plan.

### Student Life:

The committee on Student Life recognized that, overall; Our Lady of Peace School provides an extensive program of athletics, activities and community service programs. While recognizing the need to continually evaluate and improve each existing activity or program, rather than focus on additional activities and programs, the following were set out as the priorities to be addressed to further strengthen Student Life as experienced outside of the classroom.

1. Highlight and grow the warm and welcoming atmosphere for students and families at Our Lady of Peace School by:
  - Recognizing student accomplishments & achievements
  - Acknowledging family news and events
  - Connecting the mission and important work of the school regularly with the ministries and people of the parish at all levels
  - Promoting social events and encourage attendance at those events
  - Creating opportunities for positive interactions between faculty, students and families
  - Aligning school anti-bullying program with Diocesan plan
2. Emphasize the Gospel message of service throughout Our Lady of Peace School
  - Provide opportunities for students of all ages to interact as they explore their faith and how they live it out every day at school and at home
  - Emphasize value and importance of Faith-Family program
  - Encourage age and grade appropriate service projects
  - Connect the lessons of our faith to good sportsmanship in athletics and other competitive activities as well as through student behavior in the community.
3. Help students develop an appreciation and respect for cultural diversity
  - Provide opportunities for students to explore and learn about new cultures
  - Expose students to different cultures and communities

- Design curriculum projects that promote an understanding of cultural diversity
- Utilize technology to communicate with and gain understanding of other cultures

### Communications – Enrollment/Admissions:

Our Lady of Peace School's highest enrollment was near 600 students. Today OLP finds itself a medium sized Catholic School by Diocesan standards having an enrollment over 320 students, Pre K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, much less than in previous years. We recognize we cannot become complacent and need to seize every opportunity to grow demand for an Our Lady of Peace education in the local and regional marketplace. The committee recognized two key areas of focus: First, the importance of a strong and growing preschool as well as kindergarten as the path to a strong first grade and subsequent year enrollment. Second, we see the need to aggressively market the school through both traditional strategies and new opportunities offered by today's technology and social networking.

1. Increase student enrollment per year.

Create a database to track potential families

Gather more information and follow up with families who come to the open house

Add all babies baptized at Our Lady of Peace and contact parents frequently (e-mails, letters, etc.)

Make sure to have sign in sheets at any event

Have Buddy families for potential families; invite these families to certain events and act as their host for the event (School Mass/Hospitality)

Host an Our Lady of Peace School table after Mass (Donut Sunday)

- Preschools

Grow our Pre School programs to 30 four year old Monday – Friday and 20 three year old students three days a week.

Invite preschool staff to attend our open house or a private breakfast/tour

Pass out information to preschoolers at age 3 asking for their e-mail to be placed on a contact list for more information about Our Lady of Peace School. Then add them to the database of potential families.

Actively promote personal tours before/after/during school hours with administration

2. Aggressively market the school through both traditional strategies and new opportunities offered by today's technology and social networking.

In today's media-savvy world, our Website is the "window to the world" and often a prospective family's first impression of our school. Just as technology changes rapidly, so does how we perceive the images and messages conveyed by the school website as well as its practical applications and usefulness for visitors and current families. The images, message and timely delivery of information and responsiveness via the website today reflects the overall strength and excellence of the school – especially one who plans to stand out as a leader in technology based teaching and learning. As a primary marketing and communication tool for strengthening and retaining enrollment, the committee recommends that Our Lady of Peace School

- Improve usability, function and marketing of our existing school website and to use a multi-media approach to attract and maintain enrollment. More specifically:
  - Visits to the Website (primarily by prospective families) needs to elicit a more impactful, emotional response that causes user to view or imagine themselves and their children as part of Our Lady of Peace School.

This can be achieved by:

- Incorporating impactful pictures of students
- Visual description / communication of school mission
- A link titled "Welcome Future Families" with information about open houses, tuition, events they are invited to attend, etc.
- A video message telling about and showing the school, interviews with parents, staff and students.
- Further developed pages for each area of the school that shows a picture of the room (art, library, computers, music, gym), tells about the curriculum, teacher, etc.

- Provide demonstrable outcomes of Our Lady of Peace students including graduate's success in high school and college, chosen career paths, etc.
- Explore and initiate the use of technology based tools such as Constant Contact e-newsletters, Survey Monkey for gathering information and opinion among constituents and social media such as Facebook and Twitter to provide smart and immediate communications and marketing opportunities among parents, faculty, staff, parishioners, alumni and friends.

Implementing this strategy requires the design and development of an approved Social Media plan, policy and procedures for the school to assure appropriate oversight, messaging, usage and distribution.

### Commitment to Continuous Improvement

## **COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT**

### **I. GOALS**

OLP is committed to improvement of students' educational experience so that we provide an excellent educational product. This involves a conscious effort by the parish, pastor, principal, teachers, students and their families. It requires the understanding of all stakeholders that improvement is not just something to be hoped for or wished for, but is the culmination of devising a set of processes to ensure improvement occurs.

### **II. RESPECTIVE ROLES IN THE PLAN**

#### **A. Role of Principal**

OLP realizes that the principal needs to play an active role in fostering teacher improvement. This includes the fundamental step of ensuring that teachers understand the need and wisdom of a constant commitment to improve. The principal should be a resource for teachers, and help them find opportunities for professional growth, including partnering with other parochial schools for opportunities for teachers to connect and share their experiences so that they can learn from one another.

Lastly, the principal is to ensure that teachers understand the importance and necessity of being committed to improvement. The principal is responsible for holding teachers accountable to the common plan for improvement.

## **B. Role of Teacher**

Teacher improvement begins with the realization that no teacher is perfect and every teacher can improve. The school is committed to giving the teachers continuing education in both formal and informal settings. This includes utilizing peer review/consultation among current OLP teachers so that teachers can draw upon the wisdom and experience of other teachers.

This component should also include seeking opportunities for teachers to meet with peers at other grade schools and share their common experiences.

Lastly, faculty should be encouraged to advance their education through seminars, classes, etc.

## **C. Role of Parents**

Parents play a critical role in OLP's commitment to improvement. Parental involvement is necessary in ensuring that students take their studies seriously and come to school prepared to learn. It is important that OLP create multiple opportunities to receive parental feedback on their satisfaction with the school. It is also important that parents bring any concerns to the attention of the school as soon as feasible.

## **III. FOCAL POINTS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### **A. Catholic identity.**

First and foremost, OLP is a Catholic school. In that vein, OLP should always be looking for new and creative ways to inculcate and strengthen the Catholic values of its students. The teaching of the faith should be integrated into the daily life of the school, with all stakeholders looking for an opportunity for improvement. As a school family we know that just as our faith plays out in our daily lives, so too must our commitment to strengthening our faith community.

### **B. Curriculum/Technology**

It is critical that our curriculum remain up to date, and that textbooks and materials be current. Furthermore, due to the never ending changes in technology, it is imperative that every teacher in every subject be cognizant of how new technologies can be integrated into the classroom. Due to the ever changing world of technology, it is desirable that one or two teachers/administrators be given the task of keeping abreast of current technologies and providing ideas of how to integrate the technology into the classrooms.



### **C. Extra-curricular activities**

Extra-curricular activities play a vital role in the overall education of our students. To that end, involvement in extra-curricular activities should be encouraged. The school should look for opportunities to expand extra-curricular options, seeking input from students and parents.

### **D. Student behavior.**

It is critical that OLP provide a safe learning environment for its students. It is imperative that we integrate our Catholic faith into the expectations for our students' behavior. Respect for one another should be the cornerstone of all interactions.

## **IV. ENSURING IMPROVEMENT**

All stakeholders play a role in ensuring OLP's commitment to improvement. The principal has the primary responsibility to ensure that the mission for improvement is embraced by the faculty, and acted upon.

The principal also has a primary role in reviewing progress in our mutual goal of being committed to improvement. This includes reviewing what efforts are being made in improving our school. This will necessitate regular review and interaction with faculty, students and parents to assess our progress, and explore the need for changes. This can be done with parents through questionnaires, phone calls, parental groups and interaction with HSA. The principal should have ongoing meetings with faculty to assess progress which is critical in helping staff appreciate the importance of constantly improving, and then help provide specific training on ways to improve.

### Implementation and Next Steps:

The Our Lady of Peace School Board and Principal, with the support of the Pastor and Parish Council, has wisely shared, encouraged and engaged the community in examining its vision for the future. At the same time, the planning committee recognized the challenges ahead and has outlined smart strategies throughout this plan to meet and overcome the challenges in order to realize the vision for Our Lady of Peace School. Driven by our mission of **"preparing children for the future through spiritual and academic excellence"**, we now commit ourselves to implementing our Strategic Plan 2012 -2015.

As noted in our Commitment to Continuous Improvement the Our Lady of Peace School Board has been re-organized to align with the six Strategic Plan sub-committees to assure continuity of planning, implementation and evaluation. With the overall Strategic Plan now approved by the School Board, the next steps call for implementation guided and assisted through the six sub-committee areas of the School Board. This will take place through

ongoing discussion with the Principal and administrative team to clearly assign responsibility, timelines, anticipated outcomes and adjustments for each priority and strategy outlined in the plan.

### SUMMARY

Our Lady of Peace School, through this Strategic Plan, seeks to strengthen and further develop its excellent reputation as a leader among Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Joliet and beyond. The process and work of dozens of volunteers in examining each area of the school identifying key issues and offering prioritized strategies for improvement reflect untold hours of research, discussion and presentation of results. The document provided here is considered the base Strategic Planning document that will be viewed, reviewed and adjusted as the School Board, Administration and others dutifully digest its meaning and implications. In doing so, each area and recommendation will need to be further detailed in terms of the person or committee responsible for implementation, revenue opportunities and expenses related to implementation, a timeline for implementation and a process evaluation the level of success achieved through the recommendation.

The good news is that Our Lady of Peace School sets out to implement this Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 from a position of strength with the opportunity to grow stronger. The even better news is that Our Lady of Peace School is led by and supported by talented, dedicated and caring people at all levels determined to provide nothing less than an excellent educational, spiritual and growth experience for the children served through the mission of this school.....