

Forward in Faith

Strategic Plan 2019-2023



St. Francis of Assisi School

3617 Harford Road | Baltimore, MD 21218 | 410-467-1683 | www.sfa-school.org

AREA OF FOCUS #1 - CATHOLIC IDENTITY

It is the cornerstone of our Mission & Vision that we are a Catholic School, forming missionary disciples for Jesus Christ. We must honor and grow our Catholic Identity.

Initiative 1.1 - Improve student knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Benchmark - SFA's ACRE test scores will meet or exceed the national average by 2023.

Baseline - National average is 69.4 and 77.8 for 5th/8th; SFA is currently 67.8 and 62.7

Strategies:

- Assess results, identify areas for growth, and map results to the curriculum.
- Share data in practical and useful ways with families.
- Add more signs and symbols of the Catholic faith throughout the building.
- Develop a comprehensive retreat program for grades 4-8.
- Develop a comprehensive community service & social justice program for all grades

Initiative 1.2 - Improve outreach and education to families on matters of faith.

Benchmark - SFA will increase by 2% of Catholics and 4% of active parishioners by 2023.

Baseline - SFA is currently 53% Catholic and 46% parishioners.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with parish ministries (e.g. youth ministry, social justice) to create events and opportunities for school and family participation.
- Increase posting of faith-based events on social media.
- Marketing to Northeast parishes without schools (bulletins, mass visits).
- Add elements reflecting our patron and his values/charism throughout the building.
- Develop opportunities for family engagement in service activities, parent education, and providing personal testimonials, including at parish masses.

Initiative 1.3 - Improve integration of Catholic values in student peer relationships.

Benchmark - SFA will achieve Gold PBIS recognition level from MSDE by 2023.

Baseline - SFA is currently Bronze level.

Strategies:

- Establish National Junior Honor Society that includes peer mentoring/tutoring.
- Increase opportunities for prayer partner events.
- Revise disciplinary referrals vocabulary to reflect a Christian context.
- Build new rewards for PBIS through a school spirit initiative (spirit wear, new prizes).
- Faculty training and professional development, including visiting other schools.

AREA OF FOCUS #2 - ACADEMICS

As an institution of learning, our primary focus is on the academic growth and intellectual development of our students. We must serve as a standard of academic excellence in the community and beyond.

Initiative 2.1 - Achieve National Blue Ribbon status as a school.

Benchmark - USDE invites application at 70th percentile in both Reading and Math on Iowa.

Baseline - SFA currently averages 67th percentile in Reading and 57th in Math.

Strategies:

- Hire a Learning Specialist for push-in co-teaching and special needs administration.
- Revise inclusion policies and approach for accommodations.
- Increase cultural and ethnic diversity among the faculty and staff.
- Institute a new math textbook series, expanding on previous updates in other areas.
- Implement benchmarked formative assessments for longitudinal data review, and conduct vertical planning for core math skills in areas for needed growth.
- Provide more faculty training and professional development in strategies, including differentiation, cultural support, inclusion, and STEM programming.
- Invest time in the academic schedule for collaborative planning by faculty.
- Implement the Danielson Framework for Teaching for staff professional growth.
- Provide new tools for parent-teacher communication and collaboration.

Initiative 2.2 - Renew authorization of the IB Middle Years Program (MYP).

Benchmark - Process is ongoing every 5 years, due for renewal in 2019-2020 at SFA.

Baseline - SFA's initial authorization for the IB MYP was granted in 2015.

Strategies:

- Complete self-study in December 2019 and site visitation in March 2020.
- Implement recommendations of renewal process.
- Implement more faculty training and professional development in IB topics.
- Explore the desirability and feasibility of Primary Years Program (PYP) for elementary.

Initiative 2.3 - Maintain Level 5 Maryland EXCELS recognition for Preschool.

Benchmark - Process is ongoing annually, and SFA must resubmit each year.

Baseline - SFA was first recognized at Level 5 in 2018.

Strategies:

- Increase all staff credentialing to Level IV or higher.
- Establish a pay scale for PK teachers to retain and recruit quality staff.
- Investigate and support ongoing professional development for PK staff.

AREA OF FOCUS #3 - FACILITIES

It is essential to the success of each student that the physical plant and campus grounds support a robust and dynamic learning environment. Our school must be a safe place that enhances and maximizes each child's potential.

Initiative 3.1 - Improve building security and efficiency.

Benchmark - SFA will support best practices recommended by cooperating institutions, including federal, state, and local governments, and the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Baseline - Recent security investments were made in each of the last several years, but aging building concerns and today's school security landscape require an ongoing focus.

Strategies:

- Grow and develop partnerships with local authorities.
- Review feasibility of a consultant for support.
- Continue to review crisis response plan annually, with regular emergency drills.
- Develop a security vestibule at a single main entrance.
- Rekey all door locks in line with new state laws.
- Improve lighting around the building perimeter, especially at entrances.
- Maintain and grow recently implemented practices regarding security cameras, visitor management, and emergency channels (walkies, public address, phones).
- Hire Facilities Manager.
- Review administrative procedures relative to environmental concerns.
- Establish a Parent Volunteer Corps to support maintenance efforts.

Initiative 3.2 - Improve size and quality of learning spaces.

Benchmark - SFA will support best practices recommended by research in the field of Catholic education, and as guided by the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Baseline - Recent academic and aesthetic investments were made in each of the last several years, but aging building concerns and changing populations require an ongoing focus.

Strategies:

- Establish flexible seating in every classroom.
- Phase out older generation classroom furniture reaching end of lifespan.
- Convert remaining cloakrooms into student learning spaces.
- Develop a Facilities Master Plan to guide campus improvements going forward.
- Implement central air-conditioning on the 1st and 2nd floors.
- Continue recent investments in digital network bandwidth, speed, and security.
- Increase size of Preschool classrooms in order to grow enrollment targets authorized under MSDE Child Care regulations.

AREA OF FOCUS #4 - FINANCE

Strong schools demonstrate fiscal responsibility and excellent stewardship of their resources. Our school must be financially healthy in order to successfully support students, staff members, and families.

Initiative 4.1 - Increase teacher salaries in order to retain and recruit quality staff.

Benchmark - SFA will provide teacher salaries equal to 80% of Baltimore County Public Schools by 2023.

Baseline - SFA 2018-19 teacher salaries averaged equal to 72% of BCPS.

Strategies:

- Develop pay scales based on 75%, 78%, and 80% using BCPS scales and projected rates of increase.
- Maintain relationship with Operation TEACH to keep 1-2 on staff at all times.
- Require all teachers to be certified by MSDE in compliance with AOB policy.

Initiative 4.2 - Maintain a budget that provides for a net operating surplus.

Benchmark - By 2023, SFA will budget a surplus representing 2% of the operating expenses.

Baseline - SFA currently runs a balanced budget, but without a defined surplus goal to account for extraordinary repairs or unplanned expenses.

Strategies:

- Standardize tuition increases based on a common metric from year to year, which is transparent and communicated to all school families.
- Grow the Catholic Community Foundation (CCF) endowment corpus to provide improved opportunity for annual drawdown on the interest earned.
- Identify means and method for investment of funds beyond the CCF endowment.
- Build a capital reserve fund that represents at least 3% of the total operating budget (currently 2.5%). Establish an annual percentage to set aside into capital reserve.

AREA OF FOCUS #5 - ADVANCEMENT

Institutional advancement requires a commitment to long-term vision and ongoing planning for the school's future. Making our Mission sustainable and viable for the next generation of families must be a priority for the school.

Initiative 5.1 - Increase total school enrollment.

Benchmark - SFA's total enrollment will be 275 by 2023.

Baseline - SFA's 2018-19 enrollment was 253, with 62 in PK and 191 in K-8.

Strategies:

- Hire Marketing Director.
- Revise admissions procedures for improved support of student needs and diverse family backgrounds.
- Establish a defined annual budget for internal financial aid.
- Develop a marketing plan with targeted advertisement in selected demographics.
- Engage volunteers in the marketing of the school, including incentives for recruitment.
- Improve communication and retention from PK to Kindergarten.
- Provide increased preparation and communication from 5th grade to 6th grade.

Initiative 5.2 - Improve Development funding, including Annual Fund, gifts, and grants, reducing exclusive reliance on traditional parent fundraising support.

Benchmark - SFA will generate development funds equal to 5% of operating income by 2023.

Baseline - SFA's current development efforts represent 3.5% of operating income.

Strategies:

- Develop a strategy for public and private grants.
- Investigate feasibility of state bond grants.
- Hire Development Director.
- Explore sponsorships for major events (e.g. Turkey Dinner).
- Launch a public Capital Campaign in support of the school's Strategic Plan.