

# **Strategic Plan: Corpus Christi School**

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# Strategic Plan: Corpus Christi School

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter II: Steps in the Strategic Planning Process.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Team Composition .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Strategic Planning Team Operation.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter III: Mission Statement .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Belief Statements .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter V: Strategic Planning Goals .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goal 1: Catholic Identity.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goal 2: Curriculum .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Goal 3: Enrollment.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Goal 4: Finance .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Goal 5: Relationship .....</b>	<b>14</b>

## **Chapter I: Introduction**

The development of a long range strategic plan for Corpus Christi School began in the fall of 2006 when the Diocese of Wilmington required all Catholic schools within its jurisdiction to take a serious look at the current state of their individual schools. Committees formed and were asked to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of their schools. They were also charged with developing plans that would help provide direction for their school both short term and in to the near future. And although the process was initially mandated by the diocese, committee members from Corpus Christi School quickly saw value in the process as a means to ask for and receive input from various constituencies who have relationships with the school. The committee gathered data from the parents, students, and faculty and staff of Corpus Christi School as well as from parishioners of both St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes. Ideas and opinions were recorded and data processed. Ultimately, a plan was proposed that included items that could be quickly addressed by the school as well as those that would require more long term development. The process was at times both trying and stressful, but it was always worth the effort. Corpus Christi is a great school that provides a high quality education anchored in Catholic values. This strategic plan builds on all that is good about Corpus Christi School and strives to make it an even better place to educate and nurture the children of St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes.

It is important to note that the strategic plan, as presented here, is just a beginning. It was recognized early on by all involved in the process that it could never be a static document. In order to be successful, the plan needs to be dynamic. It needs to be reviewed and modified on a regular basis; lead agents need to be held accountable. If used correctly, the strategic plan will provide direction from where we are now to where we hope to be in the future. It is, in effect, a blueprint for an even better Corpus Christi School.

The strategic planning document will also help to enhance the viability of Corpus Christi School. If you haven't noticed, things around us are in constant motion. Just look around. Local communities are changing; parishes are changing; schools are changing. A strategic plan will better help us to recognize and adapt to that change. It will serve to keep us on our toes. A well thought out plan with achievable goals will allow us to stay competitive with what's happening in the public and private school settings. It will allow us to keep a watchful eye on changes occurring in parochial schools in the area and to not be surprised. Most of all, it will allow us to continue to provide a high quality education with a focus on Catholic values and Franciscan traditions. It will allow us to keep Corpus Christi School a viable option not only for our children but our children's children.

## Chapter II: Steps in the Strategic Planning Process

### Team Composition

Mrs. Joan Angiullo	Corpus Christi School Administrative Assistant Parent of Corpus Christi Alumni Member of St. Mary of the Assumption parish
Mr. Mike Flanagan	Corpus Christi School parent (4 <sup>th</sup> grade) Corpus Christi School Marketing Committee Corpus Christi Parish Finance Committee Member of Corpus Christi parish
Mrs. Fran Harty	Manager of St. Mary of the Assumption parish Member of St. Mary of the Assumption parish
Mrs. Christine Rankin, Chairperson	Corpus Christi School parent (8 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> grade) Past VP of Corpus Christi Home & School Assoc. Corpus Christi School Marketing Committee Member of St. Mary of the Assumption parish Invited by principal to serve as chairperson
Mr. Stephen Reynolds	Parent of Corpus Christi Alumni Chairperson of Corpus Christi School Board Member of Corpus Christi parish
Mrs. Karen Rombach	St. Mary of the Assumption Preschool Director Corpus Christi School parent (8 <sup>th</sup> grade) Parent of Corpus Christi Alumni Member of St. Mary of the Assumption parish
Mrs. Melissa Sheldon	Corpus Christi School teacher (Grade 4)
Mrs. Marianne Skipski	Corpus Christi School parent (6 <sup>th</sup> grader) Parent of Corpus Christi Alumni Corpus Christi School Board Member of Corpus Christi parish
Mrs. Judy Stives	Manager of Holy Family Parish Corpus Christi parish bookkeeper

Mrs. Rosemary Deery

Corpus Christi School Assistant Principal  
Corpus Christi School Middle States Chairperson  
Former 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in Corpus Christi School  
Parent of Corpus Christi Alumni

### **Strategic Planning Team Operation**

In September 2006, the Diocese of Wilmington embarked upon a strategic planning initiative that included all Catholic schools in the diocese. Under the direction of Education Strategies Consultants, Trudy Sampugno and Larry Callahan, a series of periodic presentations designed to guide each school through this step-by-step process began.

The organizational meeting outlined the elements of a good strategic plan, the factors that should be considered when developing a plan, and the responsibilities of committee members. Additionally, an explanation was given on how the committees would move through this process with consideration given on how it would relate to the Middle States accreditation process and how to effectively communicate this effort to the Corpus Christi and St. Mary of the Assumption parish communities. Fr. Gregory Corrigan (Corpus Christi Church pastor), Sr. Donna Desien, OSF (Corpus Christi School Principal), Joan Angiullo (Corpus Christi School Administrative Assistant), Rosemary Deery (Corpus Christi School Assistant Principal), and Christine Rankin (Strategic Planning Committee Chairperson, appointed by principal) were in attendance.

At this time, a committee was also named and charged with the task of defining the strategic plan for Corpus Christi School. To ensure a proper balance and representation from all members of the school and parish community, special care was taken in choosing this committee. Members included parish staff with knowledge of finance, parish board members, school administrators, parents and teachers with representatives from both Corpus Christi and St. Mary of the Assumption parishes.

Corpus Christi School's Strategic Planning Committee immediately set out to redefine the school's mission statement – one that was initially developed by the Corpus Christi staff in 2004. Mission statements from local schools, as well as those from across the country, were collected and reviewed. The mission statement in place was used as a foundation for drafting a 'new', clear, concise statement that would be immediately recognizable and accurately reflect "who we are". The first draft of the mission statement was presented to faculty members for their input and upgrades. The committee was then able to rewrite the mission statement in late October. However, after further consideration of the planning committee, minor revisions continued to be made; the mission statement became finalized in December 2006.

In October 2006, Educational Strategies presented a workshop to define the process of developing belief statements. This was attended by planning team members Fr. Greg Corrigan, Sr. Donna Desien, Joan Angiullo, Rosemary Deery, Chris Rankin, Mike Flanagan, and Fran Harty. Belief statements were to be based on the mission statement and should be expressions of what a school values—what members of the community would be willing to *work hard and sacrifice for*. Following this workshop, the entire planning team met twice to work through the process that developed the belief statements for Corpus Christi School.

With the mission statement and belief statements in place, the strategic planning committee was in the position to begin gathering, reporting and analyzing data necessary to the creation of goals for the school. A November 2006 workshop was attended by Sr. Donna Desien, Joan Angiullo, Chris Rankin, Mike Flanagan and Fran Harty. At this time, a format to gather data by interviewing various focus groups was explained. This data would later be studied to identify Corpus Christi's SWOT—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Following this meeting, the entire planning team met several times to define the procedure that Corpus Christi would use to gather SWOT information. In November, the scheduling and format of the focus group meetings was determined. The five focus groups were identified as follows:

1. School staff
2. School parents
3. Students
4. Non-school parishioners
5. Parish staff

School staff: On December 19, 2006, all staff members received a Strategic Planning Update to inform them of the progress of the committee. It communicated the finalized mission statement, belief statements and served as a vehicle to invite staff to participate in the information gathering focus group session that was scheduled for January 8 at 2:45 p.m. in the faculty room. Melissa Sheldon was the faculty contact person for this focus group session. Mike Flanagan and Chris Rankin served as facilitators of this session; a majority of Corpus Christi's faculty members were present.

School parent: On December 13, 2006, all students brought home a similar Strategic Planning Update with the same purpose in mind. All parents were invited to a meeting on Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. on the lower level of the grade school. This session was led by Mike Flanagan, Chris Rankin, Marianne Skipski, and Steve Reynolds. The group consisted of approximately thirty parents who volunteered to be part of the process.

Student Focus Group: The officers and representatives of the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student council provided the input for the student focus group session which was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2007 at 8:15 a.m. on the lower level of the grade school. Karen Rombach, Chris Rankin, and Marianne Skipski served as facilitators at this meeting.

Non-school parishioners: Marianne Skipski (Corpus Christi parish) and Fran Harty (St. Mary of the Assumption parish) each invited several parishioners from their respective parishes to attend a focus group meeting scheduled for Wednesday evening, January 10 at St. Mary's. Fran Harty and Joan Angiullo facilitated this meeting.

Parish Staff: On January 9, 2007 the staff from both parishes met at St. Mary of the Assumption offices. Fr. Steve Lonek, Fr. Greg Corrigan, Shirley Madonna, Betsy Curran, Flora Giacci, Deacon John Giacci and Sharon Heavens were in attendance while Judy Stives, Fran Harty and Karen Rombach acted as facilitators.

Chris Rankin reviewed the results from the five focus group discussion sessions and collated the information. Corpus Christi School's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified.

During a January 2007 meeting, the Educational Consultant team defined the process that would be used to develop goals and formulate action steps using SWOT information. The Corpus Christi planning team met twice in early February to analyze SWOT information and begin the process of identifying topics for preliminary goals for the school.

Later in February 2007, Education Strategies met with all schools to explain how the strategic planning process in each individual school would relate to the planning of the diocesan board of education. Fr. Steve Guliani, a member of the diocesan Board of Education, was the presenter. A brief lesson on developing goals and action steps, along with an explanation of how goal development would fit into the Middle States model, was also given. Those in attendance at this meeting were Chris Rankin, Mike Flanagan, Sr. Donna Desien and Joan Angiullo. Following that meeting, the Corpus Christi team met to further develop goal statements.

Due to the diversity of input and varied points of view, the development of goal statements proved to be a very challenging, time-consuming exercise. Committee members met with Educational Strategies for clarification, and the entire committee met on three separate evenings during the months of March and April until a consensus of opinion was gained on consideration of five goal topics: Catholic Identity, Curriculum, Enrollment, Finances, and Parish/Community/Parent/School Relationship.

Strategic Planning Committee members were then assigned to work in subcommittees to formulate the goals and action steps for each topic. During the months of April and May, subcommittees met both formally and informally as needed, often updating each other and soliciting input through e-mail and small group meetings. The subgroups were as follows:

Catholic Identity: Rosemary Deery, Melissa Sheldon, Marianne Skipski

Curriculum: Melissa Sheldon, Rosemary Deery, Chris Rankin

Enrollment: Mike Flanagan, Joan Angiullo, Karen Rombach

Finances: Joan Angiullo, Mike Flanagan, Judy Stives

Relationship: Chris Rankin, Marianne Skipski, Steve Reynolds, Fran Harty

At a meeting in April 2007, Educational Consultants outlined the elements and format for the finalized strategic planning document. Sr. Donna Desien, Joan Angiullo, Rosemary Deery and Christine Rankin attended this meeting.

During the month of June, Corpus Christi School's Strategic Planning Committee continued to meet as a group to review all goals and to discuss publication of the long range plan. It was decided that the plan should be mailed to Educational Consultants in late June 2007 for review. The committee expects to make modifications to the plan during the month of August prior to its submission in September to the Diocese of Wilmington. It was agreed that Timelines and Lead Agents for each goal would be discussed and assigned by the end of the first trimester 2007-2008. Decisions on these two important issues were not made prior to submission of the plan so as to include input from Corpus Christi's new principal. Once finalized, the plan will be presented to the parents, faculty and staff of Corpus Christi School as well as to the parishioners and staff at both St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes. Details as to presentation of the plan have not been finalized but will include publication on the school's website. Details as to the implementation and periodic evaluation of the plan also still need to be finalized.

### **Chapter III: Mission Statement**

Corpus Christi School, twice designated a National Exemplary School, educates and nurtures the children of Corpus Christi and St. Mary of the Assumption parishes in a challenging academic and spiritual environment. Our students leave prepared and motivated for success while firmly anchored in Roman Catholic values in the Franciscan tradition.

## **Chapter IV: Belief Statements**

We must educate and develop the whole child spiritually, academically, socially, physically and emotionally.

Catholic values and beliefs must radiate throughout every aspect of the child's education.

It is imperative that we attract and retain competent, motivated faculty and staff.

Corpus Christi and St. Mary of the Assumption Parishes must promote, embrace and support a Corpus Christi School education.

We must foster behaviors that encourage everyone to be a good person, to do their best, to be kind to others and to respect differences.

Children must be nurtured in a well-maintained, safe environment conducive to good learning.

Family involvement must be encouraged and celebrated.

Academic curriculum must be challenging while considering various learning styles and abilities through the use of the best available educational methods and technologies.

We must sustain a level of enrollment sufficient to enable delivery of a quality education while operating in a fiscally responsible manner.

## **Chapter V: Strategic Planning Goals**

### **Goal #1 – Catholic Identity**

The Corpus Christi School community will teach, model and communicate Catholic beliefs and Franciscan values in every aspect of a child's education.

### **Rationale**

After reviewing the school mission statement, belief statements and information gathered from the five focus group sessions, it is evident that the entire Corpus Christi School/Parish community values educating children in the Catholic traditions and Franciscan values of our faith. These traditions are already infused in the Corpus Christi School curriculum. A Catholic, faith-centered environment is what makes a Corpus Christi education truly unique since it allows for the development of spiritual growth within each student that other educational alternatives may not consider. Opportunities for prayer and worship, an

extensive outreach program, and programs to develop self respect and respect for each other are already in place at Corpus Christi. We now need to continue these practices and extend our faith life to the community by communicating what we do and inviting the extended community to participate.

### **Action Steps**

- 1.1 Lessons that demonstrate the Franciscan values of prayer, respect, joyful presence, social justice and covenant with the earth will be infused in the Corpus Christi curriculum at each grade level.
  - 1.1.1 2006-2007 school year, a scope and sequence of Franciscan topics to be taught at each grade level will be developed in order to keep Franciscan traditions alive.
  - 1.1.2 Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year (and ongoing), teachers will incorporate the age appropriate Franciscan topics in their lesson plans.
  - 1.1.3 Appropriate audio-visual aides and other materials (books, music, videos) to assist in teaching these topics will be gathered.
  - 1.1.4 This emphasis on the teaching of Franciscan values will be communicated to the community through articles in the monthly newsletter, parish bulletins and all other appropriate means of spreading the news.
  
- 1.2 The students and faculty of Corpus Christi School will create an atmosphere where self- respect and reverence for others is emphasized.
  - 1.2.1 In the 2007-2008 school year, a committee of teachers will formulate a code of ethics that promotes respect and tolerance for all members of the Corpus Christi School community.
  - 1.2.2 This code will outline the expectations as well as consequences for not meeting these expectations. Students who make good choices will be acknowledged for their good effort; students who make poor choices will receive the appropriate guidance and consequence defined in the code of ethics.
  - 1.2.3 Once complete, this code will be communicated to all members of the Corpus Christi School community. It will be reviewed periodically throughout the year and redefined as needed.
  - 1.2.4 Our expectation is that this code of respect will be modeled by students and staff at all levels and family support will be encouraged.
  - 1.2.5 Since this is a new initiative, it is recognized that the code will need to be periodically evaluated and changes made in future years.
  
- 1.3 The students and faculty of Corpus Christi School will continue the Franciscan tradition of community outreach in an effort to promote a sense of Catholic identity through social justice.

- 1.3.1 In the 2007-2008 school year, teachers at each grade level will design a program that encourages students and families to respond to community needs through age-appropriate independent service projects. Clear-cut expectations concerning the number and kind of projects, as well as follow-up activities will be outlined by homeroom teachers.
  - 1.3.2 Corpus Christi School will continue to investigate opportunities for outreach projects, especially those which students can relate to on a personal level that can continue into their adult lives. Religion coordinator, with input from faculty will be responsible for implementing this.
- 1.4 The Corpus Christi School staff will continue to form the minds, hearts and souls of students in the likeness of Christ by reflecting the Catholic traditions and practices of our faith and encourage that these be modeled in the home.
- 1.4.1 Opportunities for prayer and other forms of worship will continue with a renewed interest in welcoming Corpus Christi School families and the extended community to participate.
  - 1.4.2 Time will be designated each day for students to pray together as a total school. We will attempt to pray together over the PA system each morning and at the close of the school day. During the school day, each teacher will provide an opportunity for their homeroom to pray for special intentions.
  - 1.4.3 The Rosary and Stations of the Cross will continue to be prayed by the whole school.
  - 1.4.4 Students will have the opportunity to attend the celebration of the Eucharist as a class at the teacher's discretion using a sign-up sheet.
  - 1.4.5 To further the development of Catholic traditions, teachers will be given an opportunity at quarterly Religion curriculum meetings to share various prayer forms that have occurred in their classrooms.

## **Goal #2 – Curriculum**

In a renewed effort to enhance student learning Corpus Christi will differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.

### **Rationale**

Corpus Christi School has a strong academic curriculum. This is evidenced by consistent above average scores on annual standardized achievement tests and by outstanding student performance in a variety of extracurricular competitions and activities that span all of the curriculum areas. Corpus Christi students excel in diocesan, local, state and even national competitions. Furthermore, they leave well-prepared for a rigorous high school experience, most often accepted into the high school of their first choice.

In an effort to continue meeting the needs of students at various ability levels, with various learning styles, it is necessary to continue to provide a challenging curriculum that addresses the needs of students who have advanced capability as well as those who need additional basic skill development.

### **Action Steps**

- 2.1 Opportunities that challenge all students to work at their Mathematical ability level will be explored.
  - 2.1.1 In the 2007-2008 school year, fourth grade students will be grouped for Math class according to their ability and skill base.
  - 2.1.2 Math grouping for Grades K – 3 will be considered in subsequent school years.
  - 2.1.3 Ensure that Corpus Christi’s middle school math program meets or exceeds local standards.
  - 2.1.4 Determine necessity, feasibility and benefits associated with an accelerated math program at the middle school level.
  - 2.1.5 Math projects will be made available periodically through the academic year for middle school students to research and explore challenging concepts.
  - 2.1.6 Enrichment components of Scott Foresman/ Addison Wesley Math series will be incorporated in the curriculum. “Problem of the Day”, Spiral Review Test Prep and “On- line Tool Kit” will also be available.
  - 2.1.7 Students in grades 3-8 will continue to participate in Continental Math League, Math League Press and Math Olympiad activities.
  - 2.1.8 A ‘Math Night’ evening program will be scheduled (Winter ’08) to provide an opportunity for students and their families to experience hands-on activities that reinforce concepts learned in the classroom.
  - 2.1.9 These Mathematics activities will be monitored by the designated math coordinator and math teachers at scheduled meetings throughout the year.
  
- 2.2 The MacMillan McGraw-Hill Reading Series will be implemented in the Language Arts program for grades K-6.
  - 2.2.1 In an effort to address individual student’s needs ‘Leveled Readers’ that are written on the three instructional levels (approaching, on, and beyond level) will be the basis of instruction.
  - 2.2.2 Comprehension checks for skills and strategies, as well as literacy activities that are defined for each level will be used to monitor / assess progress.
  - 2.2.3 Students will be given the opportunity to work in small groups for additional instruction and to complete cross curricular activities that relate to reading topics.

- 2.2.4 The Language Arts coordinator and Language Arts teachers will be responsible for implementing this program in each classroom. It will be assessed at scheduled Language Arts Curriculum meetings throughout the school year.
- 2.3 Investigate the viability of providing opportunities for computer research technology in the curriculum.
  - 2.3.1 In the 2007-2008 school year, the Technology teacher and classroom teachers will investigate the possibility of making the computer lab and the current library space more available to students for research and projects. This would begin on a 'sign-up' basis.
  - 2.3.2 2008-2009 and ongoing, the Principal, technology coordinator and financial manager will consider funding and enrollment to determine feasibility of creating a school media center in the current library space that would allow for computerized research capability.
- 2.4 The Step Up to Writing Program, a collection of strategies designed to help students of all ages and abilities master story, paragraph, essay, report, and creative writing, will continue to be a component of the Language Arts program.
  - 2.4.1 In Fall 2007, teachers will participate in a follow-up Step Up to Writing Workshop designed to provide them with additional strategies and information to continue successful implementation of the program with students.
  - 2.4.2 During the 2007-2008 school year, samples of students' writing will be displayed.
  - 2.4.3 Ongoing, the staff will investigate the possibility of publishing students' writings.
  - 2.4.4 The Language Arts coordinators and Language Arts teachers will evaluate the program at the scheduled Language Arts Curriculum meetings.
- 2.5 Investigate opportunities to develop resource sharing agreements with other Catholic schools in order to augment Corpus Christi's ability to deliver programs necessary to enhance our curriculum.

### **Goal #3 – Enrollment**

Corpus Christi School will continue to develop and implement a recruitment & retention program aimed at maintaining current enrollment levels, while positioning the school for future growth.

## **Rationale**

Corpus Christi School has been affected by the recent years' decline in enrollment in Catholic schools in the Wilmington diocese. With this said, Corpus Christi remains an extremely viable entity because of the quality of its administration, staff, curriculum (intra & extra), physical plant, and parent involvement. Nonetheless, enrollment has become a concern and was established as a strategic goal as a way to significantly focus the efforts of the Strategic Planning Team on those things essential to retaining our current student base, while also creating substantial interest for new students/families to commit to attend Corpus Christi School. It is the intent of the Strategic Planning Team to develop a plan that will highlight the many positive aspects of the school in a way that will appeal to the desires and interests of the various constituencies we are able to serve, so that they will clearly see that Corpus Christi is the best choice for a solid faith-based Catholic School education that will prepare their children to shape the future.

## **Action Steps**

- 3.1 Proactively recruit at St. Mary of the Assumption Preschool. The following ideas should be considered:
  - 3.1.1 September presentation at the preschool with an invitation to an Open House or private tours of Corpus Christi School
  - 3.1.2 Organize a field trip to Corpus Christi School for the parents and students of St. Mary of the Assumption's preschool
  - 3.1.3 Invite Corpus Christi School students to attend special events at the preschool
  - 3.1.4 Have Corpus Christi School staff available at the preschool on a monthly basis to greet parents and students and to answer questions
- 3.2 Actively recruit at Corpus Christi and St. Mary of the Assumption parishes as well as at parishes that do not currently have their own parish school. The following ideas should be considered:
  - 3.2.1 New Principal introduction and presentation at Sunday Masses
  - 3.2.2 Develop marketing tool for Corpus Christi School that can be provided to new parishioners as they enroll in a parish - have the parish help "sell" the value of a Corpus Christi School education
- 3.3 Corpus Christi School will take a proactive position by being receptive and responsive to serving other schools that may be in need of consolidation thus seeking to create an environment that is mutually beneficial to all.
- 3.4 Develop a program to showcase Corpus Christi's middle school to 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade parents and students so that parents can make an informed decision regarding middle school attendance.

- 3.5 Develop and execute a survey to determine student/family opinions, ideas, etc. regarding what Corpus Christi School can do to retain current and attract new students/families. In developing the survey, consider issues like transportation, tuition, before & after care, extra-curricular activities, etc. Additionally, develop a way to determine why those choosing to leave Corpus Christi School have done so. The aim should be to determine strengths that we can enhance and highlight and to identify those things we can do differently or better.
- 3.6 Evaluate current marketing/promotional efforts to determine what's worked well, what can be improved, and what we should be doing differently. The following ideas should be considered:
  - 3.6.1 Develop a positive differentiator/value proposition statement of those things that differentiate Corpus Christi School in a positive way from public schools, as well as a summary of the value that a Corpus Christi School education provides

#### **Goal #4 – Finance**

Corpus Christi School will explore, identify, and implement ways to sustain financial stability.

#### **Rationale**

Corpus Christi School has long maintained a healthy financial status, while maintaining tuition fees below the average parochial school within the Wilmington diocese. With a larger than normal decline in enrollment over the past two years, consistent with that of other schools in the Wilmington diocese, Corpus Christi's school board (CCSAC) evaluated the school's financial position in 2006 and raised tuition at a rate higher than its normal annual increase. In setting tuition rates, CCSAC has always kept in mind the financial position of all Corpus Christi School families; this tuition increase brought Corpus Christi School tuition fees to about the average of that of all other Catholic elementary schools in the diocese. It allowed the school to continue to operate in a fiscally responsible manner while still providing a high-value Catholic school education, without cutting any of its programs.

In serving the parishes of St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi, the school has been fortunate to receive subsidies from both parishes, for many years, to augment the revenue derived from tuition fees and other sources of revenue. Recognizing the changing dynamics in both parishes, it is imperative that we begin to reflect on how the school can become less reliant on these subsidies, while remaining financially healthy. This will be accomplished by exploring ways to maintain and grow enrollment, further developing current sources of revenue, exploring new sources of revenue, maximizing the school's investment portfolio, and managing costs effectively.

## **Action Steps**

- 4.1 Corpus Christi School needs to identify short term opportunities to grow revenue. The following ideas should be considered:
  - 4.1.1 Continue to assess tuition environment within the diocese to understand whether or not Corpus Christi School tuition is competitive (high, low, appropriate); use data when setting tuition rate
  - 4.1.2 Parishes should monitor offertory donations to ensure in-Parish tuition rates are appropriately applied and should adjust tuition rates when necessary
  - 4.1.3 Evaluate multiple child discount and modify as deemed appropriate
  - 4.1.4 Consider charging for 4<sup>th</sup> child
  - 4.1.5 Investigate possibility of a sliding scale tuition rate
  - 4.1.6 Sign on with organizations like “iGive.com” and “Good Search” (search engine) to generate revenue for Corpus Christi School through purchases and participation
  - 4.1.7 Continue/expand the “Annual Giving Fund” campaign
  - 4.1.8 Benchmark other schools in the diocese to determine if there are additional opportunities to explore for short term revenue growth
- 4.2 Explore means for fund development, i.e. Grants, donations, legacy giving, cooperative educational research programs with academic & government entities, etc.
- 4.3 Evaluate investment portfolio and modify for maximum growth potential.
- 4.4 Actively recruit at Corpus Christi and St. Mary of the Assumption parishes, St. Mary of the Assumption Preschool, and at parishes that do not currently have their own parish school.

## **Goal #5 – Relationship**

Corpus Christi School will improve, solidify and enhance the relationship it shares with St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes, the families of Corpus Christi School and the community at large.

## **Rationale**

In order to be successful, a parochial school must develop, nurture and continually reassess the relationship that it shares with three key constituencies: the school’s affiliated parish(es), the students and their families and the school community. So, it was not too surprising that during the course of the last several months that Corpus Christi School’s Strategic Planning Committee heard from these groups and learned first hand what they felt the school was doing right and what they felt needed to be improved, solidified and/or enhanced.

The priests and members of the affiliated parish(es), the students and their parents and the community at large universally agreed on the strengths of Corpus Christi School. All three acknowledged that the school was academically strong and supported by highly-qualified, dedicated teachers. They praised the school for its commitment to teaching and modeling Catholic faith and values and for its devotion to the community through support of local outreach projects. Corpus Christi was also recognized for its families and their high-level of involvement in the school.

No matter what or how frequent the accolade, however, each group was looking for something more in regard to improving or enhancing its relationship with the school. The priests, parish staffs and parish communities acknowledged a more obvious connection between Corpus Christi School and Corpus Christi parish due in part to its proximity to the school. All believed that the school would ultimately benefit if it was a more visible part of both parishes and if parishioners would take more ownership of and interest in the school. The parents and students of Corpus Christi, on the other hand, would like to work with the school in order to take their relationship to the next level. While opportunities exist for parent and student involvement both in and outside of school on a social level, parents would like to be more involved in classroom learning; students would like to have an influence on school spirit. It is our belief that the relationship between Corpus Christi School and the local community need only to be enhanced. The school excels in its commitment to community service but somehow needs to find a way to make it have more of an impact in the Elsmere/Hockessin communities.

It is, therefore, the belief of Corpus Christi's Strategic Planning Committee that the development of a goal and its associated action steps promoting relationship improvement and enhancement will be key to the long term success of the school.

### **Action Steps**

- 5.1 Corpus Christi School needs to identify and implement ways to make the school more visible at both St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes. The following ideas should be considered:
  - 5.1.1 Locate a special place at St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes to show off/market Corpus Christi School. This may include pictures of school, copies of the CCS Family Spotlight and the Communiqué, samples of student art work, teacher bios, etc. It is imperative that the information be kept current.
  - 5.1.2 Look for opportunities to associate St. Mary of the Assumption's name with Corpus Christi School via the web site, letterhead or school logo.
  - 5.1.3 Provide Corpus Christi School students with more liturgical opportunities at St. Mary of the Assumption parish. In addition to the Annual Giving

Mass, consider letting students participate in a bi-monthly CCS mass, reading of the Stations of the Cross during Lent, etc.

5.2 Corpus Christi School needs to identify and implement ways to get the priests and parishioners of St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes to take greater ownership of and interest in the school. The following ideas should be considered:

- 5.2.1 Increase the presence of clergy and other religious in school and classrooms. Ask to have the visits promoted/discussed in the bulletin or at mass.
- 5.2.2 Combine activities of St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi parishes and Corpus Christi School. This may include collaboration on outreach projects such as cookie bakes, sub sales, “Souper Bowl” can drive, etc.
- 5.2.3 Strengthen the relationship between St. Mary of the Assumption’s preschool and Corpus Christi School by creating opportunities for Corpus Christi students to visit and interact with preschool students and by synchronizing calendars so that events can be shared. Some things to consider include: organizing a field trip to CCS for the parents and students of St. Mary’s preschool, inviting CCS students to attend special events at the preschool, having CCS staff available at the preschool on a monthly basis to greet parents and students and to answer questions.

5.3 In order to enhance the relationship that parents of Corpus Christi students share with the school, it is suggested that the school identify additional opportunities for parent involvement in classroom learning above and beyond participation as home room moms/dads. The following ideas should be considered:

- 5.3.1 Survey parents and teachers to identify classrooms needs and skill sets of parents; match needs and skills to enhance classroom learning.
- 5.3.2 Invite parents into the classroom when appropriate to view plays, reading of reports, display of art projects, etc.
- 5.3.3 Provide parents with the opportunity to provide annual feedback on their child’s CCS experience. Questions should be specific and target those things that the parent’s liked and would like to see more of. It should allow them to comment on programs available at other Catholic schools in the diocese that they would like to see explored at CCS. The results should be communicated.
- 5.3.4 Develop and publish a process for considering/acknowledging parent ideas/concerns in an effort to make sure that all items are addressed.

- 5.4 In an effort to strengthen the relationship between Corpus Christi school and its students, the administration should regularly meet with members of the Student Council and other invited participants to identify ways that the students can have an impact on school activities/procedures. The following ideas should be considered:
  - 5.4.1 Allow students to have a say in the number and type of Spirit Days (mismatch, hat, pj) to be planned during the school year; make sure the dates are added to the school calendar.
  - 5.4.2 Allow students to plan pep rallies in support of St. Mary of the Assumption and Corpus Christi sport and academic teams.
  - 5.4.3 Identify opportunities for students to contribute to the development of procedures that directly impact their CCS experience.
- 5.5 Corpus Christi school needs to identify, organize and participate in service projects that are visible and directly impact the Elsmere/Hockessin communities.
- 5.6 Communication is crucial to a successful relationship, and it is, therefore, imperative that Corpus Christi School determine what needs to be communicated, when it should be communicated and how it should be communicated to best satisfy the needs of the school parishes, families and communities.