



# St. Clare School



## St. Clare School

### Strategic Plan

May 2023

**St. Clare Vision Statement:** To be a Catholic community which invites everyone to share and celebrate the transforming power of God's love through worship, education, and service.

**St. Clare Mission Statement:** St. Clare is a Catholic, parish-school community, rooted in Gospel Values, and dedicated to the spiritual and educational development of the whole child.

#### St. Clare Philosophy

- To teach as Jesus taught is the foundation on which the Catholic identity of St. Clare School is based. We strive to be a community of faith, love, inclusion, and respect for creation, others, and self, where our children learn about God by what is taught and by example.
- We nurture our children's relationship with God through opportunities for liturgy, prayer, celebration, and the expression of Gospel values through community service.
- We collaborate with parents, the primary educators of our children, to ensure that thoroughness of instruction and respect for each child encourages the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and emotional development of the child.
- We challenge our children to use their abilities to achieve academic excellence, to be lifelong learners, and to embrace their futures with hope.

#### Schoolwide Learning Expectations

##### A St. Clare student is

- A Faith-Filled Person
- An Effective Communicator
- A Responsible Citizen
- A Life-Long Learner



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## Introduction

The St. Clare School Advisory Council (SAC) actively monitors the school Strategic Plan. The previous iteration of this plan was created in 2018, in conjunction with the school accreditation cycle. In 2020, the pandemic necessitated schoolwide priorities that were not anticipated when the 2018 plan was created. During the pandemic, the advisory council reviewed our building goals and began work on our revised plan, which was adopted in 2023. The strategic plan is informed by the Archdiocese of Portland's "A Vision for the Future", and aligned with the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) which were published in 2012 to serve as both a guide and assessment tool for PK-12 Catholic school effectiveness and sustainability. They include research-based school effectiveness criteria, as well as criteria unique to Catholic school mission and identity. The NSBECS rests on the conviction that adhering to these standards and benchmarks with fidelity will result in highly effective Catholic schools.

### **Domain 1 Mission and Catholic Identity**

- Standard 1 - An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service
- Standard 2 - An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.
- Standard 3 - An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.
- Standard 4 - An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

### **Our Catholic Identity**

St. Clare School continues to embrace our Catholic Identity and share our faith with all school families, nearly half of whom are new to our school community within the past three years. All students are actively involved in weekly Mass celebrations, including having one class lead Mass each week (student lectors and cantors.) Our Catholic Identity is also a part of everyday classroom teaching seen through daily prayers and intentions, designated prayer areas in each classroom, service projects at every grade level, and retreats. In addition to weekly Masses, St. Clare School has regular prayer services, reconciliation services and school wide faith-based service opportunities (e.g., Sunflower Day). Our teachers receive ongoing Catechetical certification and teach using diocesan approved curriculum, including a schoolwide Virtues program tied to our Student Learning Expectations and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Our goals for fostering a vibrant Catholic community are described below.



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D1 Goals	Strategies	Actions
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Create a welcoming Catholic community for families from all backgrounds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invite parishioners and alumni to school events</li> <li>● Identify underserved populations within Southwest Portland and market to diverse populations</li> <li>● Provide opportunities for events and programs that appeal to and welcome all of the families who make up our St. Clare community, including opportunities for Catholics and Non-Catholics to learn about the faith and our Parish.</li> <li>● Revisit our campus logo to ensure that the branding and logo(s) used contribute to the strength of the school's mission and provide a universally consistent and recognizable association with St. Clare.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthen the Parent Ambassador program</li> <li>● Host buddy family gatherings with a special emphasis on kindergarten/5th grade buddies</li> <li>● Parent representatives reach out to grade level peers to invite and encourage participation at events</li> <li>● Support and encourage new Catholics and families going through RCIA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Foster Each Student's Personal Relationship With God, Development of Conscience, and Sense of Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Strengthen robust service opportunities for each grade</li> <li>● Broaden faith formation, spiritual development, and sacramental experiences for students and families</li> <li>● Continue Parent Education Nights for school parents and community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formalize service opportunities for each grade and create infographic to include on website; share and celebrate with the school and parish community</li> <li>● Schedule 1-3 Parent Nights per year</li> <li>● Seek opportunities to connect Catholic Identity with school and community events, invite families to weekend Masses</li> </ul>



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## Domain 2 Governance and Leadership

- Standard 5 - An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.
- Standard 6 - An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

### **Our Governance and Leadership**

Throughout the past few years, St. Clare School has increased the focus on communication to all stakeholders at the school. With the COVID pandemic and resulting shift to distance learning, communication has been crucial in keeping families abreast of happenings and plans at the school, preschool and parish. School administration provides communication through multiple channels including principal letters in our school's newsletter, interactive virtual town halls, and principal coffees. Our school, preschool and parish staff meet weekly to ensure all are consistent in messaging and aware of happenings throughout the parish. Staff meetings are held once a week. SAC membership or subcommittee workgroups meet monthly. Our goals for building and sustaining accountable, responsive, and effective governance at St. Clare School, and connection with the Parish and Preschool, are described below.

D2 Goals	Strategies	Actions
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Continue to foster a strong partnership between all parents, teachers, and staff allowing for frequent communication, and mutual support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAC and administration will review the Strategic Plan twice annually to review goals and progress towards them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formalize parent surveys and send on a regular cadence (1-2 times per year)</li> <li>• Formalize exit interview process for each family - work with SAC to ensure families are given the opportunity and forum to meaningfully reflect on their time at St. Clare</li> <li>• Create one campus calendar for school, preschool, and parish. Meet as a group to set dates for the following school year each spring; Continue to update throughout the year (pastor, principal, preschool director.) Highlight this via an easily shared infographic.</li> <li>• Create and utilize Google Drive resources (for various committees) passing on the institutional knowledge</li> </ul>



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D2 Goals	Strategies	Actions
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Build a bridge between parish, elementary, and preschool that strengthens Catholic identity and mission of all three entities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dovetail sacramental preparation and school-led activities</li> <li>• Increase Mass attendance through school tie-ins (service projects with parish, students given ownership of specific parish/Mass tasks)</li> <li>• Actively promote and encourage parish involvement activities to school and preschool children and families (examples include children's and youth choirs, altar servers, readers, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrate milestones and sacraments at school and weekend Masses</li> <li>• School outreach to parishioners celebrating sacramental milestones</li> <li>• School hosted weekend masses (1x/month)</li> <li>• Principal, pastor, and pre-school director to meet regularly to review cohesive messaging</li> <li>• Coordinate when possible announcements and events in the Dragon Post, Parish Bulletin, and Preschool Newsletter</li> </ul>

## Domain 3 Academic Excellence

- Standard 7 - An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills, and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.
- Standard 8 - An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices
- Standard 9 - An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

## **Our Commitment to Academic Excellence**

The administration, faculty, and staff of St. Clare are a group of professionals who are dedicated to the school's mission and philosophy. They are committed to academic excellence and the teaching of our Catholic faith and values. St. Clare is accredited by the WCEA Western Catholic Education Association, and received a full 6 year accreditation in 2019.

- *Goal #1: (from Chapters 3-A and 3-C) Promote social-emotional growth among students.*
- *Goal #2: (from Chapter 3-D, 3-H) To further develop the learning support program in order to increase the school's capacity to support diverse learners.*
- *Goal #3: (From Math In-Depth Study) Provide better support for students who excel in math.*
- *Goal #4: (From Science In-Depth Study) Emphasize student learning activities related to scientific/engineering practices and integration of STEM/STEAM topics that align with the NGSS standards and St. Clare Schoolwide Learning Expectations while designing stage 3 of UbD units.*



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D3 Goals	Strategies	Actions
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Prepare students to thrive in a world changed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Update and improve technology offerings in classrooms</li> <li>● Provide increased spiritual, social and emotional support for students</li> <li>● Engage students in a way that broadens their understanding of diverse experiences and perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize assessment methods (including STAR and grade level assessments) to identify learning needs</li> <li>● Utilize survey data, anecdotal teacher observations, and our PBIS program to identify Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs in students</li> <li>● Utilize federal funding and grants to provide additional academic support through staffing, professional development, technology, and curricular resources to address learning needs</li> <li>● Expand and enhance the PBIS program at St. Clare to identify, support, and respond to social emotional learning needs</li> <li>● Administrators, teachers, and librarian will be intentional about bringing in diverse perspectives and materials to our students, professional development around cultural diversity, and resources to expose students to a larger world view</li> <li>● Intentionally integrate multicultural education to honor and learn about other cultures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide annual professional development for all staff on topics related to Social Emotional Learning</li> <li>● Increase support for Middle School students</li> <li>● Enhance the schoolwide PBIS program for Social Emotional Learning</li> <li>● Align the SLE's, Virtues Program, and PBIS, recognizing students with Stand out and Shine awards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to share information about the LS program with the whole school community (through DP articles, town halls, and back-to-school night)</li> <li>● Continue to monitor caseload capacity and revise mission and program goals to align with needs we can adequately support</li> <li>● Continue to provide triennial testing for students who need it</li> <li>● Expand aide support for middle school</li> <li>● Work with local high schools and our middle school families to best align and advise placement</li> </ul>





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D3 Goals	Strategies	Actions
<p><b>Goal 3:</b> Foster a culture of academic excellence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Communicate expectations around the course and scope of a St. Clare education</li> <li>● Increase STEM offerings</li> <li>● Invest in staff education and development</li> <li>● Develop a Foreign Language Program</li> <li>● Enhance and articulate field trip experiences across the grade levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Participate in archdiocesan and regionally led professional development to create and implement proficiency scales and communicate mastery of standards to students and parents. Explore a formal adoption of standards referenced learning.</li> <li>● Create a map of STEM, service program, and whole child development across grades (including infographics)</li> <li>● Increase real-world applications in classrooms, parent-led labs/experiences</li> <li>● Explore the inclusion of a foreign language program into the curriculum while being mindful of the content those instructional minutes would replace</li> <li>● Review academic field trips at each grade level to ensure a varied and aligned program throughout the grade levels.</li> </ul>

## Domain 4 Operational Vitality

- Standard 10 - An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three to five year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.
- Standard 11 - An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.
- Standard 12 - An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.
- Standard 13 - An excellent Catholic school enacts a comprehensive plan for institutional advancement based on a compelling mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.

## **Our Facilities and Operations**

St. Clare SAC and Admin councils meet regularly with the principal and pastor respectively to assess and review the needs of the school. Subcommittees of SAC include policy and planning, facilities, development, finance, and health and wellness. In 2022 a vulnerability assessment was commissioned by the parish to review our safety protocols and action items were addressed. In the past 3 years, St. Clare has completed work on the HVAC system to improve airflow and air quality, added airflow to classrooms that did not previously connect to our HVAC system, installed touchless drinking fountains and bathroom faucets, installed keyfob access to several doors to improve safety and access, resurfaced the parking lot and added security lighting to both the Spring Garden lot, the parish lot, and Freeman St.



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## **Our Facilities and Operations (cont.)**

The staff lounge was renovated to provide a more comfortable and accessible space for staff. We installed a brand new playground. We are currently undergoing a major campaign to install a new HVAC system over the next 2 years, with construction to commence this summer. Our Director of Marketing and Enrollment, and our Development Director work with our support teams to further recommendations in the marketing/enrollment and development plans.

D4 Goals	Strategies	Actions
<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Position St. Clare School for a Strong and Stable Future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor the enrollment and adapt budgets to address change</li> <li>● Expand development efforts to identify donors and grant opportunities</li> <li>● Develop donor relationships and a planned giving strategy</li> <li>● Focus on teacher and family retention efforts</li> <li>● Improve the parent-community giving experience with fewer but more targeted asks</li> <li>● Improve alumni engagement</li> <li>● Continue to educate the community about the St Clare Endowment Fund; focus on growing this resource</li> <li>● Align tuition with the cost of education while allocating additional financial aid to families in need.</li> <li>● Set aside funds annually to address depreciation, emergency funding, and Next Generation funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Preschool marketing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Preschool website</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Development/grant writing goals</li> <li>● Make tuition assistance process more transparent and accessible for all families with need</li> <li>● Reduce/eliminate reliance on fundraisers to fund operating expenses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Provide learning spaces required for healthy development and continue to improve facilities to drive strategic goals with targeted investments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Improve Outdoor Facilities</li> <li>● Develop near-term solution to HVAC needs</li> <li>● Ensure Safety and security of St Clare Facilities</li> <li>● Improve Environmental Stewardship of St. Clare Facilities</li> <li>● Assess preschool facilities and expansion capacity</li> <li>● Review safety plans annually and assess vulnerabilities.</li> <li>● Create, maintain, and monitor a 10-20 yr. Facility plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SAC coordinates with parish admin council to discuss facilities/ investments</li> <li>● Create and communicate 10 to 20 year plan for operational budgeting and blueprint for investments</li> <li>● Perform Strategic Investment Assessment with 50-year goalpost</li> </ul>