



Executive Summary

Saint Pius X Catholic School

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School.....	2
School's Purpose.....	4
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	6
Additional Information	8

Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

Saint Pius X Catholic School opened in 2008 with a clear mission to provide an opportunity for every student to grow spiritually, intellectually, academically and physically as stewards of the Catholic faith. Upholding a high standard of academic excellence, the school integrates Gospel values and a wide variety of teaching methodologies to facilitate student success. Parents, along with the greater parish community, provide support as partners in the academic and spiritual development of all students at Saint Pius.

Located in suburban Granger, Indiana, Saint Pius X Catholic School is part of the Diocese of Ft. Wayne/South Bend and is the largest parochial school in the South Bend area, educating children in preschool through grade eight. The development of the school was directed by a highly respected administrator with long-term experience in public schools at both the elementary and middle school level. The selection of faculty resulted in an excellent team of highly qualified educators with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to lead the school and its students to meet a high set of standards. The traditionally low turnover among teachers and staff has helped maintain consistency in the educational program.

In its inaugural year, Saint Pius X Catholic School had an enrollment of 439 students in preschool through seventh grade. The school steadily increased its enrollment close to the maximum (640 students), due to the successful integration of best practice in the classroom, a talented faculty and a curriculum with a clear, Christ-centered focus. The school averages an attendance rate between 96.5%-97% each year.

The demographics of the student body reflect the demographics of the surrounding area. In the first year at Saint Pius, ethnicity of students consisted of: 91% white, 4% Asian, 2% Hispanic, 2% multi-cultural and 1% Black. Of the student population, 3% was on free and reduced lunch. The ethnicity rate for the most recent school year (2014-2015) was: 88% White, 3% Asian, 3% Hispanic, 5% Multi-Racial and 1% Black. Free and reduced lunch was offered to 6% of the student population. There are 20 students (3%) that speak a variation of eleven different languages in their home. Special education services are provided to 33 students (5%), with the majority receiving speech services during the school day. A resource teacher, resource assistant, speech teacher, and speech assistant all help serve the students by "pushing in" and "pulling out" of the classroom.

The philosophy at Saint Pius X is that all families who seek a faith based education for their children should have the opportunity to receive one. In our opening year, the parish of Saint Pius provided \$160,000 to families seeking tuition assistance. The amount of financial assistance grew each year, up to \$350,000 from the parish in order to ensure all parishioners who wanted a Catholic education for their children were able to enroll in the school. Starting in the 2012-2013 school year, families needing assistance could also apply for a state voucher. For the 2013-2014 school year, approximately \$275,000 was awarded financial assistance and \$190,000 in state vouchers.

A unique aspect of the school is the close proximity to the University of Notre Dame. The facilities on campus are utilized for a staff retreat in the fall and an outgoing eighth grade retreat each spring. The diocese also partnered with the Alliance for Catholic Education (ACE) department of Notre Dame to create vertically aligned comprehensive units of study.

One challenge is the occasional fluctuation with enrollment as new families (many tied to the university) move to the area. This school isn't able to accommodate some new family inquiries as certain grade levels have a waitlist. The lack of space for future growth is a challenge

Executive Summary

Saint Pius X Catholic School

that the parish community is trying to meet with a capital campaign project.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

Saint Pius X Catholic School partners with the parish community to provide a safe and effective learning environment, anchored in the Gospel Values, fostering spiritual development, academic excellence and stewardship, centered on the Eucharist. Since the opening of the school in 2008, the faculty and families of Saint Pius have created a community where the core Gospel Values are demonstrated each day: respect, responsibility, compassion, teamwork and honesty. The focus upon the Gospel Values cultivates an environment that bonds students through a common value structure.

Along with the overall mission, the school has three belief statements: To promote growth in faith (Catholic Identity); to inspire excellence (educational methods); and to foster mutual support (parental relations). The students' growth in faith is the central purpose of the school. In an environment reflecting peace, mercy, justice, and love, children are challenged to achieve their highest potential. Students are encouraged to live their faith in word and deed in their family, church and larger community.

Saint Pius starts the day with all-school announcements, including acknowledgements of birthdays, athletic results, music performances, awards and upcoming opportunities. Student-led prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance follow. This daily ritual helps to establish the school community by acknowledging special events, individual and school success, democratic values and the community as one body in prayer. Students participate in Mass twice a week as a school community. The school follows the liturgical calendar and celebrates feast days together, as well as Exposition, Benediction, Living Rosary, Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation. Beginning in fourth grade, there are many additional ways to participate in Mass, such as handbells, instrumentalists, choir, lectors and altar servers.

We hold high standards of academic excellence in which Gospel values are integrated in everyday activities. School personnel consider each child's spiritual, academic, social, emotional, and physical well being. Many different types of teaching methods and materials are used to aid in the students' success. Some of the specific programs that help attribute to academic excellence include: Wilson Foundations (Phonics/Reading), Lucy Calkins Units of Study (Writing), Words Their Way (Vocabulary), Everyday Mathematics and Compass Learning Odyssey. The comprehensive assessment system in place allows teachers to triangulate data for each student, tracking their academic growth and making informed decisions on their individual learning needs.

The faculty of Saint Pius is highly qualified and respected in the community. They work diligently to create a learning environment that produces test scores in the top percentages in the state and nationally. They are known for providing extra time and attention to their students through tutoring, enrichment and extra-curricular clubs.

We recognize parents as having the primary responsibility for the formation and education of their children. Following the teaching of the Catholic Church, we will support, but are unable to assume, the role of parents. We expect parents to maintain communication with the school and support the school community. To encourage family formation, the school sponsors evening presentations on topics such as cyber-bullying and social media to provide an opportunity for the larger community to explore modern issues and promote safety and awareness.

Students enrolled at Saint Pius X Catholic School have the unique opportunity to excel individually while remaining grounded in a community-based school environment. Painted on the wall of the school hallway are the words, "...so we though many, are one body in Christ, and

Executive Summary

Saint Pius X Catholic School

individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them"-Romans 12:5-6. The school embraces the individuality of every member of the community, to break barriers, open doors, and discover new gifts in one-self and one another, keeping Saint Pius at the forefront of Catholic education.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

Saint Pius has a reputation of high academic standards and student success. The rigor of the curriculum and humanities program requires the faculty to be completely committed to maintaining a student-centered focus. Evidence of this priority can be found in the consistently high rankings from the State of Indiana (consecutive grades of "A") along with multiple consecutive four-star ratings. This ranking is based on student attendance and achievement on ISTEP+, the standardized state assessment.

The ISTEP+ results place the school firmly in the top 15% of schools in Indiana. Saint Pius averaged a 98% passing rate in Math and a 96% passing rate in English/Language Arts in 2013-2014. More noteworthy is the overall high percentage of students who achieved a "Pass+" score (62% in Math; 41% in Reading). In five years, there has been a significant increase in the number of students who achieved a "Pass+" in math (grade three: 41% to 75%; grade five: 52% to 92%). A focus on academic vocabulary for the subject areas helped increase assessment scores. In addition, 100% of third graders have passed the required IREAD3 assessment. The results from the 2014-2015 school year are not yet available.

Students are also assessed biannually through the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. Mean RIT scores in math and reading have steadily increased in all grade levels except seventh grade, where there was no significant gain or loss. The 2013-2014 NWEA assessment results place the school in the top 15% of schools in the nation. Saint Pius ranks at the 99th percentile nationally in math and 98-99th percentile in reading.

A comprehensive five-year strategic plan was presented and approved by the diocese in the spring of 2012. Each year, the objectives are reviewed and tasks implemented. In the 2013-2014 school year, the position of Director of School Marketing and Communications was created and many beneficial tasks were accomplished, including: launch of new school website, design an updated school brochure, design a preschool logo, creation of a preschool brochure, addition of new spirit items, as well as an increased variety of newsletter publications that are sent regularly to parents.

In the 2014-2015 school year, a part-time counselor was hired to assist in providing social and emotional support to students. This enhanced the schools ability to serve the varying needs of the students and families.

To enhance the visibility of Catholic character in the Parish Education Center, increased sacred artwork and crosses were hung throughout the building. Key scripture passages were chosen and painted on the walls for additional visual messaging.

Another objective of the strategic plan was to expand the extra-curricular offering to students at Saint Pius X. The new activities included: Lego Club for kindergarten through grade two, Book Clubs at all grade levels, Girls on the Run for grades three to five, developmental basketball and tennis for younger students, and Craft Club for all students. This was in addition to the numerous athletic and academic opportunities already in place for students in grades five through eight. A notable achievement for the fine arts program is the success of the band program. The fifth grade and middle school band both received gold ratings at the Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) competition.

The strategic plan has afforded the administration and staff the opportunity to further enhance the already successful curricular program at

Executive Summary

Saint Pius X Catholic School

Saint Pius X Catholic School. The document will keep the school on track with future objectives. Looking at the next three years, the main focus is to enhance the integration of technology into the curriculum. The administration has a professional development plan outlined to include: Blended Learning, Google Education, Canvas (new student learning management system) and various ways to enhance learning by using the available technology. Starting in the 2015-2016 school year, each eighth grade student will receive an individual Chromebook to carry with them and utilize in each class. Students in sixth and seventh grade will have access to two Chromebook carts that are shared throughout the day. It is not the technology tools, but rather the learning initiatives that take place utilizing these tools that will enhance student learning.

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Saint Pius X Catholic School applied for National Blue Ribbon through the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) in 2015. Saint Pius was recognized as one of the top 50 private/parochial schools throughout the country to have their application move forward to the National Blue Ribbon committee in Washington D.C. The final award-winning schools will be announced in September 2015.

The core curriculum at Saint Pius is enhanced by a comprehensive humanities program providing regular instruction for all students in kindergarten through grade eight in religion, technology, Spanish, art, physical education and music/band. There is positive support from research that inclusion of the arts positively correlates to the overall development of children. All elementary students, kindergarten-grade five, have one music class and one art class per week under the instruction of a certified music and art teacher.

The core objectives in music include music appreciation, reading, composing and performance. A variety of ORFF Schulwerk instruments are implemented to attain these goals in the elementary grades. Middle school students attend music twice per week. In eighth grade, music technology is taught using the program Music First. Starting in fourth grade, students have the option to participate in an elective band program. Students perform in three concerts each year and participate in the Indiana State Music Association (ISSMA) competition. Multiple awards have been received each year. Students in grades six through eight have the opportunity to participate in the annual school musical. The students most recently performed two evenings on stage at a college auditorium to accommodate the growth of the program and large audience.

The visual arts program focuses on art appreciation, art criticism and art production. Students in kindergarten through grade five attend art classes once per week and middle school students attend three times per week for a semester. Projects are produced using the media of paint, drawing, print making, ceramics, sculpture and textiles. An art fair occurs annually to display over 3,000 pieces of artwork completed by the students.

The curriculum of each grade level emphasizes 21st Century Skills. A dedicated computer lab, two sets of mobile laptops, library computer stations and individual Chromebooks for use at school and home speak to the emphasis placed upon integrated technology. All classrooms are equipped with SMARTboard technology and a voice-amplification system to enhance instruction. Technology software provides an individual learning path at each student's academic level. Programs such as Compass Learning Odyssey, My Virtual Reading Coach, Ascend Math and Number Worlds allow for students to progress at their abilities. Students use mobile labs and Chromebooks to access additional practice or enrichment materials in various content areas.

Saint Pius embraces the fact that Spanish is the second most spoken language in the United States. Language study helps children develop cognitive skills and enhances problem-solving and critical thinking skills. For these reasons, Spanish instruction is provided in grades kindergarten through eight. An optional two-week Spanish language immersion experience in Costa Rica is offered to middle school students and alumni.

Saint Pius offers a large range of co-curricular/extra-curricular choices including a comprehensive athletic program, fine arts program and a variety of musical opportunities. Additionally, several special interest clubs are available such as Lego Club, Young Hoosier Book Club, Zometool Club, Quiz Bowl, Chess Club, Student Council and Spanish Club. This comprehensive approach and dedication to an environment

Executive Summary

Saint Pius X Catholic School

that is safe, stimulating and challenging to all students is what leads to great success for students as they progress through their academic career.