

State of the School Report

November 2015

Dear St. Joseph School Parents and Parishioners,

Each year the School Commission reflects back on the highlights from the previous year to provide you a report on the general health of the school. We are blessed to be part of a vibrant and faith-filled community that supports Catholic Education and we are happy to report that the state of the school is strong. Since the school's founding in 1994, the school has grown from a preschool to a preschool through eighth grade. We are now in our third year of double graded classes. Looking back at the 2014/2015 school year reveals another successful academic year marked by many accomplishments made possible by the dedication of faculty, staff and the spirited student body. From the varied achievements of our students, to completion of the Snoqualmie Campus building remodel over the summer, we have much to be proud of and grateful for. This report contains information and highlights a variety of different areas. In the end, this report reflects the school's commitment to *Teaching the Whole Child, to Academic Excellence, and to providing a Supportive Community centered on the teachings of Jesus Christ.*

Highlights from 2014/2015

Remodel – Snoqualmie 2014

For those who arrived at the Snoqualmie campus for the first day last year, interior parts of the building look different in significant ways! For those whose students have not yet arrived, this is an opportunity to know what is taking place on your future campus. With the intention to create better learning spaces for students and a comfortable staff room for all, the following remodel took place:

- An additional classroom was added to the east wing;
- The old staff room was remodeled and upgraded into the reading/math specialist's room with colorful paint;
- A significantly undersized classroom was remodeled into a staff lounge with the addition of another restroom, upgrading from one to two!

We are grateful to the parish and a very generous donor for making this project possible.

For those who are newer to SJS, three construction projects have been completed at the Snoqualmie campus in the last six years: (1) addition of the sports court; (2) classroom remodel and upgrade to a middle school science lab; (3) the above remodel.

We look forward to our safety and security upgrades ongoing this year and next summer at both campuses!

Middle School Technology Overview

Technology has become an integral part in today's world. To be able to live, learn, and work successfully in our information-rich society, our students must be able to utilize technology effectively. Their lives today are filled with technology that gives them access to information and resources, enabling them to pursue both educational and personal interests in their own way and at their own pace. To best prepare our students now and in the future a BYOD program began in our middle school this year.

Prior to this year we had two mobile labs for eight classrooms restricted to booked time slots. This especially limited middle school teachers from using the lab due to their fixed instructional schedules. To create learning environments where technology can be integrated in all subject areas, students need ongoing access to technology throughout the school day. With individual devices students can increase their ability to collaborate, work independently, use technology competently, apply higher order thinking skills, express creativity, and act as responsible digital citizens. These skills are all necessary to thrive in the 21st century.

A yearlong professional development program began this year for our middle school teachers. As a part of the Title II federal funds we receive, two technology specialists from the Issaquah School District are working with our middle school staff in the area of technology integration into instructional practice. This promotes innovative teaching practice and access to digital instructional materials that improve learning.

Parent Portal 2015

New for middle school parents this year is the opening of the online student gradebook known as the *Parent Portal*. Access to this system provides parents with the ability to check for missing assignments, student grades, and ensure assignments have been received. This digital program provides parents with an additional tool to serve as full partners in their student's success. This year will be a learning year as we navigate integrating the portal into the middle school experience for students, teachers and parents.

Early Release Wednesday and Accreditation

The 2013 – 2014 school year marked the transition from our monthly “First Friday Half Day” to a weekly “Early Release Wednesday” schedule. This change followed other weekly early

release schedules adopted by both Catholic and public schools and was made in consultation with School Commission. A yearly schedule is in place which outlines the focus for each afternoon: all school staff meetings, campus meetings, grade level /subject matter team planning, curriculum mapping, and professional development (i.e. technology training, outside presenters, book studies, etc.) This year's early release Wednesday will include preparation for the next accreditation visit which will occur in 2016.

Curriculum Replacement Update: Past and Present

The *Fund An Item* focus for our recent auction and the 2012 – 2014 auction centered on replacing, updating and supplementing curriculum. Due to the amazing generosity of so many of our families, we have been able to purchase an entirely new reading program for grades K -5, updates and supplemental materials for our 6 -8 literature/language arts program and a new writing program for grades 6-8.

This year's funds (2013-2014) are dedicated to new science and social studies curriculum, as well as a new writing curriculum for grades K -5. Thank you to all of the generous donors who contributed to this effort!

Fundraising

The purpose of school fundraising is to enhance and enrich the school learning environment, as well as a means to achieving educational goals. All fundraising dollars earned are directed to the operational budget of the school and serve to supplement the difference between the cost to educate and the tuition charged. Our three main fundraisers are: Auction, Annual Fund, and Walk-A-Thon.

The fundraising results for the 2014 – 2015 school year were:

Auction: \$ 111,000 /Fund An Item \$78,500 **Annual Fund:** \$150,000 **Walk-A-Thon:** \$22,000

Our Scrip program has completed a second full year of Scrip. To date, we have 350 families that participate in the Scrip program. Participating families include school and parishioner families. Scrip has generated close to \$8,000 in rebates so far this school year as a result of over \$200,000 in sales.

We sell Scrip twice a month after the 8:15 & 10:00 am Masses. Parishioners support Scrip during sales which occur during weekend Masses. In addition, this year has entailed a second year of offering tuition credit to families that participate in Scrip. Families are able to donate 100% of their rebate generated for the school year back to the school or apply 30% of their generated rebate towards their next school year tuition. For the 2013-14 school year, Scrip distributed \$800 in tuition credit to 25 families. For the current school year, 34 families have opted to participate in the 30% tuition credit. We project this year's tuition distribution to be \$650 for the 2015-2016 school year.

Scrip purchased two new drinking fountains which have been installed. These special fountains allow for drinking and refilling of water bottles. One will be located in the parish hall and the other at the Snoqualmie campus. The total cost is expected to be \$3000 to \$3500.

Finance

The budget for St. Joseph School is looked at twice each year – once in the fall as part of determining the tuition, and then again in the spring after the registration/enrollment process is completed. The two largest sources of revenue for the school are as follows (shown as percentage of total revenue):

- Tuition/fees 70%
- Fundraisers 20%

No other source of revenue exceeds five percent of total revenues.

Expenses for the school are as follows (shown as percentage of total expenses):

- Salaries and benefits 75%
- Contract services 3%
- Supplies 5%
- Operations and maintenance 3%
- Debt Payments 4%
- Utilities 2%
- Other 8%

As can be seen the expenses for the school are mostly fixed – there are a few discretionary line items in the budget and they account for a very small portion of total dollars.

It is the goal of the budget/tuition process to keep the school at cash flow neutral or positive. In terms of tuition rates - enrollment is the largest driver of the increase that takes place each year. We continue with our marketing efforts to sustain and increase enrollment. We encourage all families to refer friends and families to St. Joseph School.

Students

- **Leadership:** St. Joseph School students have the opportunity to be leaders in all grades, but particularly in third and eighth grade.
 - Third grade students serve as leaders when accompanying Kindergarteners to Mass, as role models to the K – 3 grades when they meet in *Families*, and in their participation in school Masses. Additionally, they serve as ambassadors to touring families highlighting “what makes St. Joe’s special”. The opportunity to lead at a younger age is a significant benefit of the primary campus.
 - Eighth grade students participate in a yearlong leadership program that includes both school assemblies and JAG (St. Joe’s **A**ctivity **G**roups). The purpose of both of these programs is to encourage creativity and teach organization, public speaking, activity planning and execution. Additionally, eighth grade students oversee all outreach efforts and other campus wide activities.
- **8th Grade Graduates:**
 - High School – Our eighth grade students are highly regarded as applicants to our local Catholic high schools. We are regularly told by the principals of the high schools our graduates attend that our students rank extremely high in their academic preparation and readiness for their programs. We have a 98% acceptance rate at our eighth graders high school of choice!

Middle School Enrichment Opportunities

Our middle school Enrichment Program extends the opportunity for music and art through the middle school years. In addition to music and art, students are presented with choices to participate in advanced band, drama, speech and robotics. Performance and competition opportunities accompany these programs. Our newest enrichment opportunity is Robotics and Robotics Club.

Robotics Enrichment Course

The Robotics Enrichment course is modeled off the LEGO Mindstorms STEM curriculum and provides the students with exposure to robotics, basic programming using a graphical interface, and problem solving. Working in small teams, students program their robots to respond to sensor input, overcome obstacles and achieve specified goals. During the course the students will research and present a current robotics innovation or technology.

Robotics Club

Our middle school offers a year round afterschool Robotics Club to complement the Robotics Enrichment Course. Club members are able to expand their knowledge of sensors, programming and technical building with the LEGO Mindstorms robots. Working together in small groups, students develop robots to compete in the annual FIRST LEGO League

competition (fall) focusing on teamwork and problem solving and the Seattle Archdiocese Robotics Extravaganza (spring), which emphasizes creativity and advanced programming.

Service and Outreach at St. Joseph's School

Involving students in Service and Outreach is a big part of fulfilling our mission as a Catholic School. We are committed to engaging students in real life experiences that deepen their understanding of helping others. We have found these experiences to be memorable and priceless in their moral development.

We have several school wide outreach programs throughout the year. They include: A pet food drive for the Humane Society, Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Issaquah Food Bank and Encompass in the Snoqualmie Valley, supporting the St. Joseph parish Jesse Tree, providing gift cards for holiday baskets for Encompass, collecting used coats for the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank, raising funds for the Friends of the Orphans with the Lenten coin drive, collection of personal hygiene items for St. Martin de Porres Shelter, and monthly sandwich making for the homeless at Seattle Lazarus House.

Each class participates in a service experience that is appropriate for their age group. Class community service projects include: collecting trash on the Issaquah campus, participating in activities with residents at the University House, a senior living facility, service to the St. Joseph Friends Seniors Luncheon, making rosaries for church groups, cooking and serving at the Issaquah Meals Program, clean up and maintenance of the Snoqualmie Campus, and distributing food at the Snoqualmie Valley Food Bank.

We believe that the world is a better place due to the many efforts of the St. Joseph students and their supportive families.

Catholic Identity and Father's Hour

It is our intention that we are more than a private school, but instead a vehicle for the parish to live out its Mission, drawing people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and building God's Kingdom.

We've strengthened our Catholic identity by use of specific language in our school Mission Statement and Statement of Philosophy, language that articulates our faith as the foundation of all that we do. We've also done this by shifting toward celebrations and activities in the school which are reflective of our faith, such as an All Saints celebration instead of Halloween. Jill Foglesong, is teaching a portion of the religion curriculum to the sixth, seventh and eighth

graders. While we have excellent teachers at St. Joseph School, Jill's advanced knowledge of the Catholic faith has strengthened our religious teaching. Lastly, we have established the tradition of our eighth graders attending the annual March for Life, along with thousands of other Catholics, which is preceded by a Mass with the Archbishop.

Another way we've strengthened our Catholic identity is by Fr. Todd's participation in the school. Between six and eight times a year Fr. Todd meets with the students of grades four through eight to engage directly with them as their priest, spiritual leader and teacher. This is known as Father's Hour. Sometimes this involves father meeting with the students in the school gym to present a teaching on our faith, such as vocational discernment, the role and importance of the Blessed Virgin Mary, liturgy, etc. Other times father meets with the students at Our Lady of Sorrows parish where we spend our time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. During these occasions, the students have the opportunity to learn the value of silence, stillness, prayer, and the importance of being close to our Lord, present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Fr. Todd's involvement with the students has also included his time spent directly with the students by walking with them from and back to the school when we have activities at Our Lady of Sorrows parish.

Parish Appreciation Weekend

Parish Appreciation Weekend was held at St. Joseph Church the weekend of May 2nd and 3rd. We wanted to say 'Thank You' to our parish for all of their support and prayers over the course of the year. It also gave us a chance to share with those who may not have the opportunity to interact with the school and understand what it means to the students. Each year our goal is to have as much student participation as possible. This year we once again had strong student representation at all masses.

The students, dressed in full dress uniform, participated in many different aspects of the Mass. They greeted the parishioners as they arrived at Mass and brought up the gifts before Communion. They passed out treats after Mass and volunteered their time to assist with the Knights of Columbus breakfast. One of the most anticipated moments came at the beginning of each mass. Several seventh and eighth graders spoke to the congregation giving a 'Thank You' talk where they enumerated all of the reasons they were thankful to the parish for being able to attend St. Joseph School. Each talk was different and gave a personal touch to our message of thanks to the community.

In preparation for this Mass, each student in the school (K – 8) made a St. Joseph prayer card to be handed out at the end of Mass. On one side was a prayer and on the other side was a picture created by the student of something related to St. Joseph, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit or to the

church in general. The student greeters handed them out at the end of each Mass. As the parishioners received them, they had many positive comments on the cards and how special and unique they were.

We hope to continue this tradition of thanking our parish for supporting their Parish School so overwhelmingly.

Parents Club

The mission of Parents' Club is to support our students and staff by coordinating events through parent volunteers. This is a key component to help support St. Joseph School and increasing the feeling of community within the school. Parents' Club continues to support SJS through the following events: Carnival event, Fundraising Support, Movie Night, the Art/ Author Fair, and providing pizza Fridays.

This year Parents' Club supported the staff by providing funding for several teachers to participate in continuing educational classes and sponsored the annual staff appreciation luncheon.

In December 2014, Parents Club was blessed to support our community and helped two single mothers and their children with donations, giving them a very Merry Christmas. Additionally, Parents' Club contributed a significant donation to the Gilmartin Memorial at the Snoqualmie campus.

Parents' Club has made a large donation for security updates at both campuses which will take place over the course of the next year. Additionally, we are coordinating and funding an expansion of the lower student playground at the Issaquah campus in the 2015/2016 school year.

It is our desire to strive to find new and different ways of building community through parent participation in both school and church activities.

Parents Club Officers for School Year 2015/2016 are:

President – Michele Simmons - wdwminnie1@msn.com

VP – Sam Haugen – shaugen@costco.com

Treasury – Melanie Hess

Secretary – Dana Armstrong & Brenda Barry

Volunteer Coordinator – Kelly Kenn - thekenns@yahoo.com

Volunteer Coordinator – Gina Briles

5 Year Plan

St. Joseph School and the School Commission are implementing the new SJS 5 Year Plan, 2014-2019. The plan was approved by Fr. Todd and Peg Johnston this past September 2014, and includes the following focus areas: growth, curriculum, Catholic identity, teacher retention, facilities, parish/school community relationship, and financial future.

Throughout 2014/2015, School Commission members worked to develop four supporting plans to enhance technology, improve facility infrastructure, improve marketing and develop options to lay the groundwork for a strong financial future. If you have a particular interest or expertise in these areas and would like to volunteer to help us develop these plans further, please contact Greg Mahoney (borderman6@outlook.com).

St. Joseph School Survey Results

In an effort to help guide our work on the new St. Joseph School 5-Year Plan, 2014-2019, the School Commission's Development Chair, Chona Dominguez, spearheaded a Survey initiative to obtain a sense of the school and parish families on the State of the School in the parish. The feedback was positive and reflected a general sense of the strengths and growth areas of the school.

Overall, school parents are very satisfied with their experience at St. Joseph School. Of the 104 school family respondents, 93% are extremely or moderately satisfied, and 96% would recommend St. Joseph School to other families. The top three attributes parents liked the most about our school include academics/curriculum, Catholic values and small class sizes. These attributes combined with the close-knit community atmosphere contribute to a very positive and unique learning experience at St. Joseph School.

Areas of improvement include select curriculum upgrades, more transparent and consistent communications and more parent involvement in marketing the school.

Of the 82 parish family respondents not having a child enrolled at the school, the number one reason for not choosing St. Joseph School was cost. Opportunities for larger enrichment options was another reason cited.

Looking Ahead to 2015/2016

The 2015/2016 school year promises to be a year of new opportunities, continued growth and progress for St. Joseph School. Since the school's founding in 1994, much has been accomplished in fulfilling the Church's mission to educate youth in the Catholic tradition. All of us have a role in this mission. Members of the School Commission are committed to pursuing their unique role in assisting Pastor, Father Todd, Principal, Peg Johnston, and the school

administration in actions to sustain and advance the progress already achieved. Our goal is to continue to foster growth, academic excellence and outreach in light of our Catholic faith, centered on Jesus Christ.

To that end, School Commission will work to implement the St. Joseph School Five-Year Plan, 2014-2019, with the sole purpose of educating the whole person. The Commission will also assist in setting the stage for Accreditation renewal in 2016. We will do this within the context of the Seattle Archdiocese's Office for Catholic School's Strategic Plan for all Catholic Schools in the State of Washington. St Joseph School Commission meetings are open to visitors who are affiliated with St. Joseph School; St. Joseph Parish; Mary, Queen of Peace Parish and Our Lady of Sorrows Parish. Visitors are welcome in a non-participatory role without prior communication. Any visitor who would like to speak or comment on an agenda item needs to communicate their desire to speak before the meeting begins. Any visitor who would like to suggest an item to be added to the meeting agenda must do so in writing seven days in advance of the meeting. School Commission Meeting agendas and the minutes to previous meetings can be found on the school website.

School Commission meetings are conducted once a month, usually the second Wednesday starting at 7pm at the Issaquah campus. Regularly scheduled meetings begin in September and continue through June. Please contact Greg Mahoney at borderman6@outlook.com if you wish to attend a School Commission meeting and want to propose an agenda item.

Alumni Homepage

The St. Joseph School Alumni website is being established to re-connect with past graduates in order to follow their progress as they advance through life. It will endeavor to highlight and celebrate each triumph and new life goal reached by them and will offer them a chance to share their insights on the world beyond the doors of St. Joseph School and inspire current students with their successes. The goal of the website is to draw St. Joseph alumni back to the school to communicate life experiences and to facilitate stewardship of the school through their "time, talent and treasure." The St. Joseph School Commission in collaboration with parent volunteers will be leading this effort. All questions should be directed to Grant Kenn, School Commission Co-Chair at: grant@kellykennlaw.com, or Stacey Kelley, Parent Volunteer Co-Chair at: staceykelley@comcast.net.

School Commission 2014/2015 (last school year)

Gregory Mahoney, President

Connie Bechtol, Finance Committee Chair

Chona Dominguez, Development Committee Chair

Vince Lombardi, Discernment Committee

Joe Yellig, Plans Committee Chair
Tom Farrell, Discernment Committee Chair
Jeff Kelley, Plans Committee
Grant Kenn, Development Committee
Tom Knollmann, Finance Committee
Sharon Roehm, Discernment Committee
Steve Sancewich, Plans Committee
Daver Teriyakioglu, Finance Committee

School Commission 2015/2016 (current school year)

Gregory Mahoney, President
Vince Lombardi, Marketing/Development Committee
Joe Yellig, Plans Committee Chair
Tom Farrell, Marketing/Development Committee Chair
Jeff Kelley, Plans Committee
Grant Kenn, Marketing/Development Committee
Tom Knollmann, Finance Committee Chair
Steve Sancewich, Plans Committee
Daver Tiryakioglu, Finance Committee
Chris Martin, Finance Committee
Kristin Jamer, Marketing/Development Committee
Joaquim Rosario, Plans Committee