**2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SAINTS PETER AND PAUL SCHOOL (“the School”)**

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

*Saints Peter & Paul School educates the mind, strengthens the body and nurtures the spirit in a faith-based environment rich in the Catholic tradition, transforming students into young adults who think critically, creatively and globally.*

**STRATEGIC VISION:**

*Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, the School fulfills its mission in an ever-changing educational landscape by preparing each child intellectually and spiritually to lead lives of courage, achievement and Christian service.*

1. **INTRODUCTION**

For almost three-quarters of a century, the School has successfully achieved its mission by providing outstanding academic, cultural and athletic opportunities to Eastern Shore youth while remaining faithful to intellectual and spiritual growth rooted firmly in Catholic educational traditions and values. The School, however, welcomes students of all faiths whose families desire the inclusive and close-knit, morally-grounded learning that the School represents. As a result, nearly half of the School’s current enrollment embraces students from other faith communities.

The Saints Peter & Paul Elementary School was founded in 1955 and the High School was established in 1958. Both parts of the School have continuously operated since, educating thousands of elementary and high school students and preparing them for success in higher education and leadership roles in Eastern Shore communities and beyond. Fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the School has enjoyed enrollment growth, athletic competitive success, unrivaled graduation rates, admissions to secondary schools of choice, as well as acceptances by leading nationwide colleges and universities – consistently with multi-million dollar scholarship awards. Critically, during the most recent extended period of educational challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the School strikingly demonstrated its commitment to student and family educational welfare. Its leadership responded not only by adopting governmentally-recommended quarantine precautions and full-time remote learning options, but also by continuing to offer in-class instruction to those students of families desiring that opportunity.

From its inception, the School was governed under pastoral and diocesan leadership, most recently administered by Rev. James Nash with the assistance of a School Advisory Board. In October 2019, the Advisory Board was dissolved and replaced by a Board of Specified Jurisdiction of 9-to-12 voting members exercising supervisory oversight of the School’s finances, planning and operational functions, including the employment and performance of the School principals. This was effected to address the need for increased lay involvement in School governance and formalized pursuant to authorization of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wilmington and specified decision-making powers in newly-promulgated bylaws. After its formation, as its first primary initiative, the new School Board organized and led “A Sacred Vision” Capital Campaign. The success of that $22 million fundraising campaign resulted in the construction and opening of a new high school facility and campus in 2022 adjacent to the Saints Peter & Paul Church on S. Washington Street in Easton. As part of its mandate, the Board also assumed responsibility for formulating periodic updated Strategic Plans to identify goals and other proposals to secure the School’s continued record of mission achievement at both the elementary and high school during changing circumstances and growth over subsequent five year periods of time.

The planning effort includes extensive consultations with School administrators, diocesan officials and educators, parent groups, faculty, Board members, alumni, and other community members to gather information, views and suggestions. The result of this most recent groundwork is compiled and presented hereafter and is the outcome of lengthy deliberations involving the Board’s Strategic Planning Committee, the School’s principals, and ultimate endorsement by the full School Board. Progress toward the stated goals is cooperatively directed, monitored and measured by the School Board, its various standing committees with pertinent oversight responsibilities, and School administrators.

1. **KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS FOR THE PERIOD 2024-2029**
* **MISSION AND VISION ACCOMPLISHMENT –** *Assure the School is driven and guided by a clearly communicated mission and vision that embraces its Catholic identity while welcoming students and families of other faiths.*
* Monitor and continuously confirm that the beliefs/philosophy, core values**,** and graduate profile of the School remain aligned with its mission and vision.
* Ensure that classroom instruction focuses on the whole child, imparting spiritual wisdom, physical and emotional well-being, rigorous academics

and virtuous behavior, all of which are practiced in daily life.

* Promote adherence to the mission and vision of the School by offering an exemplary program for religious education and providing regular,

diverse opportunities for Christ-centered student and adult faith formation.

* Make certain that all school educators rely on Catholic values and traditions to assist students in thinking critically and ethically about the world

around them.

* Increaseopportunities for liturgical worship, spiritual formation experiences, and Christian service programs for students, faculty/staff.
* **ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

**Curriculum –** *Provide a rigorous curriculum that integrates spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects and ensures each student successfully completes a coherent sequence of academic courses.*

* Review and revise, as needed, the curriculum to incorporate suitable advancements in educational content that promote the School mission and vision.
* Continue to expand and develop technology-enabled online learning and STEM-related learning.
* Evaluate and adjust the number, nature and scope of high school courses to support optimal class size and maximize the efficient use of classrooms

while continuing to meet the needs of both advanced students and those with learning differences.

**Instruction –** *Offer a variety of instructional strategies that actively engages and motivates students to learn, provides students with the knowledge, experience, understanding, and skills to communicate, collaborate, and think critically, and which integrates principles of Catholic virtue and morality.*

* Ensure that the needs of diverse learners are effectively addressed by utilizing current research in interventions and student accommodations.
* Further promote student-centered learning opportunities that encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem solving.

**Assessment –** *Employ a variety of assessment tools and methods to record and document student learning progress and determine program effectiveness, inform continuous review of curriculum, and improve instructional practices.*

* Expand the analysis and use of Renaissance data as well as classroom performance to attain and maximize individual student growth.
* Conduct periodic review**s** of summative assessments to confirm alignment with learning targets.
* Review AP curriculum and best instructional practices to achieveincreased success on AP exams.

**Professional Development –** *Support a high performance core of administrators and teachers who are life-long learners committed to continually grow and improve as educators.*

* Provide high quality, research-based professional development opportunities.
* Monitor faculty implementation of professional development experiences, certifications, and advanced studies that support student learning.

**School Distinctions –** *Continue to attain widely-recognized distinctions that acknowledge the School’s institutional success.*

* Secure the Service-Learning Program of Distinction recognition from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Elementary

and Secondary Schools.

* Research and aspire to other distinctions demonstrating the School’s educational program excellence.

**Student Activities –** *Regularly evaluate the sufficiency, functioning, and quality of extra-curricular offerings available to students and their role in providing a fully integrated educational experience.*

* Investigate the feasibility of additional extra-curricular programs and school activities based on student interest.
* Further support student interest in the fine and performing arts through increased exposure and opportunities for student participation.
* **OPERATIONAL VITALITY**

**Financial Sustainability –** *Develop and monitor a long-term financial planning process and model that include both current and projected budgets emphasizing stewardship and sustainability.*

* Continue an ongoing analysis of optimal class size and enrollment targets consistent with the practical physical limit of existing facilities and cost-effective options for maintenance, improvement, expansion or re-configuration of existing facilities.
* Study the feasibility and timeline for establishing a practicable endowment plan for the School, including its funding, investment criteria, prospective initial size, and the scope and nature of its potential use in supporting the cost of attendance and otherwise supplementing the future financing of the School.
* Determine and monitor the School’s relative standing on tuition rates in order to adjust or modify as may be appropriate or necessary to develop a competitive model closer to parity with similarly situated educational entities.

**Facilities and Preventive Maintenance –** *Develop and oversee a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan which supports educational sustainability*.

* Create a plan for regularly maintaining and updating existing facilities and systems.
* Complete, by June 30, 2025, a feasibility study of available options for separating the middle school from the remainder of the elementary school, including within re-configured existing space or newly established space.

**Institutional Advancement –** *Implement a comprehensive program for institutional advancement through communication, marketing, enrollment management, and development.*

* Strengthen faculty recruitment, retention and development through regular assessment of faculty workload, certification levels, and the School’s competitive standing on staff compensation, benefits, and professional qualifications.
* Review and consolidate the number and nature of financial appeals to the School community of supporters.
* Earmark the level of funds available for tuition assistance, multiple student family discounts, and scholarship aid in order to address needed adjustments to those programs to attain enrollment targets, consistent with operating costs, existing tuition rates, optimal enrollment levels, and fairness to student families.
* Devise and implement ways to improve overall communications with parents and the community about the School, its challenges, fundraising needs, and successes.
* Recruit and engage an Advancement Director with adequate resources and talents to develop and implement programs to assist in expanding enrollment and executing promising steps for increasing donor support.
* Identify and promote the School’s distinctive cultural, spiritual, and educational strengths to achieve a better community understanding of those attributes and the value of the School’s culture, average class size, academic curricula, and athletic and community service programs to optimum student success.
* Promote continued enrollment growth by establishing achievable elementary, middle, and high school enrollment targets that will, in conjunction with expected fundraising sources, secure a self-sustaining operational surplus with the physical capacity to accommodate optimized enrollment objectives.
* Evaluate whether investment in a high school admissions officer for recruiting assistance and initiatives would likely enhance the success and achievement of meeting advancement objectives.
* **GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

**Governance Oversight –** *Maximize governance and oversight effectiveness through informed and responsible School Board decision-making in collaboration with the School’s principals and other administrative personnel and diocesan educational authorities.*

* Identify and recruit interested and informed accomplished individuals to assure continually effective and qualified School Board membership and leadership succession.
* Assure structural and organizational practices and systems are always in place sufficient to recognize, prioritize, and successfully implement governance oversight to effectively accomplish the School’s mission and strategic vision.
* Periodically conduct assessments of governance oversight effectiveness in successfully promoting the School’s mission, vision and strategic goals.

**October 2024**