

The St. Michael's Lakeside School Stewardship Plan

Submitted to St. Michael's Parish

December 14, 2012

By the Members of The St. Michael's Lakeside School Stewardship Task Force
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Executive Summary

St. Michael's Lakeside School began operation in 1923 with an initial enrollment of 72. At its peak, 175 students were enrolled in grades pre-K through 8. However, after 90 years of operation, enrollment at SMLS has dropped to 65 students in grades pre-K through 5. This low enrollment was perceived as a crisis and the Pastor initiated discussions regarding the future of the school and established a task force of parish volunteers to make recommendations. The task force has met regularly from September through December, 2012 and has developed a plan that will, after five years, increase enrollment to at least 100 students, provide annually for an additional \$98,000 of operating capital (assuming no adjustment to the parish subsidy), and significantly improve the visibility of both the school and the parish, allowing them to meet additional community needs. Consequently, we offer the following five major recommendations that address the most significant issues before us:

I. Create an Early Childhood Program

II. Create a Summer Program Beginning Summer 2014

III. Enhance the Current Educational Program

IV. Develop a Sustained and Comprehensive Marketing Campaign

V. Commit to 5 year Timetable and Appoint an Implementation Agent

The St. Michael's Lakeside School Stewardship Plan

As each one of us has received a gift,

use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10

Background and Charge

In response to a St. Michael's parishioner and SMLS parents meeting on August 28, 2012, with over 100 in attendance, this committee was charged by Father Tom Radaich with developing a plan "regarding the placement of our school within the context of total parish stewardship and the essential values of Catholic education."

In the 1992 U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter, "Stewardship . . . A Disciple's Response", a steward is defined as a disciple of Jesus who "receives God's gifts gratefully, cultivates them responsibly, shares them lovingly in justice with others and returns them with increase to the Lord." This may be interpreted to mean that we have gifts from God and that God, in turn, asks us to be good stewards of these gifts. We, as individuals and together as a parish community, are accountable for nurturing these gifts, while generously sharing them with others—family, friends and our neighborhood community and the world.

This report provides a solid blueprint to move St. Michael's Lakeside School forward in accordance with this charge and also in accordance with the educational mission of the parish regarding Catholic education as expressed by the school mission statement:

The mission of St. Michael's Lakeside School (SMLS) is to offer children a Catholic vision of the world that is guided by reason, shaped by justice, enriched by beauty and devoted to inquiry. SMLS will provide students educational and faith opportunities that will permeate their lives -- with God, family, school, parish and the world. 3

The relationship between church and the school is symbiotic. Looking out at the St. Michael's parish it is clear that many of the parishioners are parents of SMLS alumni. The church brings students to the school and the school brings families to the church. Across the country, parishes that have lost their schools have seen precipitous losses in parishioners as well as a certain loss of energy and vitality. For many, the loss of the parish school is the first step to the loss of the parish itself. A thriving school, which helps retain parishioners as well as drawing new ones, can serve as the lifeblood of the parish, imbuing it with energy and purpose, allowing St. Michael's to continue its mission both within the parish and to greater community as well.

This plan allows SMLS to serve as the heart of the parish, bringing children together from birth in a Catholic environment that will foster a lifelong journey of faith.

The following five major recommendations address the most significant issues before us.

I. Create an Early Childhood Program

II. Create a Summer Program Beginning Summer 2014

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V. Commit to 5 year Timetable and Appoint an Implementation Agent

Recommendation I: Begin Early Childhood Programming at SMLS

The need for fulltime childcare for the Parish continues to grow. Many parents have expressed their need for full day childcare to Father Tom, Mrs. Flaig, and to many on this committee. There is also neighborhood need as well. Licensed facilities near the Parish are full, with waiting lists, and currently a number of parish families send their children elsewhere, but would prefer to have their children at St. Michael's.

There are multiple benefits to this Early Childhood program:

- It fulfills a need of both the parish and the community, providing a safe, Catholic environment for the youngest of our community.
- It provides a feeder system to SMLS, and builds a sense of community with the school, which we believe for many would equate to enrollment in K-6.
- It provides a significant financial incentive for enrollment in SMLS.
- Finally, in keeping with the mission of the parish, it allows us to help the children of the parish to begin their Catholic journey of faith supported by the parish, further strengthening our ties both to these children and their families. This is consistent with the parish's goal of providing coordinated Catholic education to parishioners throughout their life.

Specific Recommendations:

- 1. Hire a fulltime educator for the Early Childhood program-** A fulltime educator with necessary credentials is required for licensing compliance, and would provide for quality programming. The educator would work 7:30 am – 3:30 pm; with prep time from 7:30 am to 8 am and cleanup from 3p to 3:30 pm.
- 2. Hire an Aide-** 35 hours a week from 8 am to 3 pm.
- 3. Utilize current music and physical education specialists.**
- 4. Hours of operation-** 6:45 am- 5:45 pm, with our current latchkey program providing service between 6:45 am and 8 am and 3 pm to 5:45 pm. Latchkey coverage is necessary to accommodate the hours of the fulltime educator as outlined above.

5. **Provide hot lunch-** with the additional benefit of allowing for a daily hot lunch option for children attending SMLS.

6. **Create an incentive program for continued enrollment at SMLS-** allow families to “bank” some of the tuition paid for early childhood education for continuing enrollment in K-6 along the following lines;

a. One full year of Early Childhood tuition= ½ tuition for kindergarten.

b. Additional years of childcare=1/2 tuition for first grade.

c. If families choose not to use the incentive, the school retains all funds. The “bank” would only apply to enrollment in SMLS.

7. Allocate 3 spots for families in need

Performance measures and Budget:

1. 2012-2013- 13 children enrolled beginning of new school year, ages 3-5 (must be 3 by September 1, 2013), with 3 slots being held for low income families.

2. 2013-2014- maintain enrollment at 13 children,

3. 2014-2015- increase enrollment to 26, adding one preschool classroom and hire a director (.5 FTE) (who would also be responsible for the summer program)

4. 2015-2016- add a toddler classroom

5. 2016-2017- add one infant classroom

6. Retention of half of all our preschool age children into kindergarten at SMLS. With two early childhood classrooms and the current Montessori program, 15 children a year should advance into kindergarten.

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13-1414-1515-1616-1717-18IncomeAssumptionsOrdinary

tuition6600066000132000198000231000tuition@ \$660 montly for 10

monthsenrollment doubles 2015toddler room added 2016infant room

added 2017County Subsisized

Tuition1705017050341005115051150county assisted @ \$568.44

monthlyenrollment doubles 2015Total

Revenue8305083050166100249150282150toddler room added

2016infant room added 2017ExpensesDirector350003500035000\$26000

salary/\$9000 benefitsEducator3300033000330003300033000\$24000

salary/\$9000 benefitsAide163801638016380163801638035 hrs per

week@\$9 per hour2nd Aide16380163801638035 hrs per week@\$9 per

hourToddler Aides32760327602 @ 35 hrs per week@\$9 per hourInfant

Aide1638035 hrs per week@\$9 per hourLearning

Specialists40004000400040004000Lunchroom

Manager/Cook90009000900090009000220 hours per week @\$9 per

hourClassroom Supplies50005000100001500020000\$5000 per

classroom per yearClassroom Renovations15000would need to construct

abathroom prior to startupTotal

Expenses8238067380123760161520182900Difference67015670432308
76301000007

Recommendation II: Institute Summer Programs beginning in the Summer of 2014

Among parishioners and the community at large there has been a call for daylong summer programming. Summer programming can achieve a number of objectives:

- develop a stronger relationship between the parish and the school
- summer programs can be a gateway, for students both inside and outside of the parish, to the school and the early childhood program
- Summer programs can help to retain students currently enrolled.

As currently envisioned, summer programs would be creative and filled with activities, but not thematically based. We would rely heavily on the program director to design the day-to-day activities of the program

We believe the 2014 date will allow us to get our other recommendations up and running, giving us a better opportunity to manage change. Moreover, once in place, many of the changes outlined in this report will come to feed our summer programs.

Specific Recommendations:

1. **Hours of Operation-** 7 am - 5:45 pm. summer programs would be offered 5 days a week.

2. **Hire a Summer Programs Director-** (.5 FTE) professionalizing the program along the lines outlined above for the early childhood educator will create quality and standards that cannot be achieved through voluntary management. It also allows for stability. The program director would be responsible for design and supervision of all summer programs, direct contact time, and continue to work with the school latchkey program. They would also direct the Early Childhood program as outlined above.

3. **Hire Summer Counselors-** summer counselors provide the direct supervision of children during the time they are participating in the program. Recommended counselor/student ratio of 1 to 15.

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13-1414-1515-1616-1717-18IncomeAssumptions3yrs to 5
yrs01560015600156001560013 students@\$600 per month6yrs to 10
yrs01800018000180001800015 students@\$600 per
month0Total03360033600336003360000Expenses0Director0120001200
01200012000.5 FTE @\$1200 per yearCounselors057605760576057602
@\$9 per hour for 2
monthsTransportation/Admissions06000600060006000excursionsSuppl
ies02000200020002000per
list0Total025760257602576025760Difference07840784078407840

Performance Measures and Budget:

13 students ages 3 to pre-k...Tuition set at \$600 per month

15 students 6 to 10 years old...Tuition set at \$600 per month. 9

Recommendation III: Enhance the Current Educational Programs at the School

The most notable feature of the current educational program at St. Michael's is its overall excellence.

□ Class sizes of fifteen or fewer have fostered a learning environment where teachers can give each student individualized attention and create a classroom where children flourish. Education quality has remained high. SMLS is consistently among the top performing schools in the Duluth area. This is demonstrated not only by standardized test scores well above the district and national norm, but also by the success that St. Michael's students enjoy when they matriculate.

□ Moreover, the school enjoys a stable and dedicated faculty who are committed to the mission of SMLS. Overall, this stability has led to a close-knit learning environment where teachers, parents, and students work together to create a vibrant educational opportunity.

□ The school mission is to address the spiritual as well as the educational development of our students. St. Michael's Lakeside School strives to teach to the whole child, addressing academic, social and spiritual growth.

□ Faith is put into action through service-learning projects.

□ The school provides a high quality, faith-based alternative to the public school. Despite the fact that we have a brand new public grade school in our neighborhood, large class size and other aspects of that school's operation have led to some dissatisfaction among neighborhood families. SMLS has already gained two new students as a result.

Typically, religious education meets for a limited amount of time per week, putting some natural limits on how much information can be covered in that setting. In a parochial school, discussion of religious topics can be integrated with the academic work. The atmosphere is based on our Catholic faith, and therefore religious formation is more holistic, a basic part of the child's

education. To help continue the education of each generation in the faith, it is important to offer a comprehensive educational approach like one that is offered in a Catholic school. Currently, SMLS has some combined grades, which has allowed for creative interaction between grades. This has meant more individualized instructional and community building opportunities among the students using SMLS's small size as an asset, which has built a sense of family among the student body – and by extension, among the families involved with the school. Ultimately, this builds a sense of community in the parish (the hands and feet that work on parish projects) and the sense of community that develops with families working side by side for a common purpose.

- We will continue to develop this model of inter-grade interaction. This allows high-performing students to move ahead at their level and pace, and develop leadership and character development while assisting and mentoring younger students. These flexible opportunities will help students develop necessary life skills in problem solving, self-regulation, empathy, and communication.
- We have multi-age activities as well as multi-age classes for PE and Music.
- The school continues to strive to upgrade technology with the use of interactive SMART boards and a student computer lab.
- We have a comprehensive character-building program in place. It promotes the development of confidence and responsibility in our students. This program is designed to be anti-bullying as well.
- SMLS welcomes families of all faiths. We are a Catholic school, true to our mission and values. This position is attractive to many people who hold similar values, even if they do not share our Catholic faith.
- We communicate with all our families by print and by e-mail weekly through Tiger Pause, the SMLS newsletter.
- All classroom teachers send home Friday Folders with student work. Teachers are also in weekly e-mail communication with families. This allows parents the opportunity to be up to date with what their children are experiencing.

Teachers have a vision of additional outreach to the Parish. This would involve the teachers and students in a variety of activities that would raise the visibility of the school to parishioners and others in the community.

The role of the Parish is important to note here. The Parish's financial support throughout time has been unwavering, and while this committee was not specifically charged with reducing this subsidy, we believe that this plan helps provide for prudent fiscal management - clearly a stewardship charge. Of equal importance is the spiritual support that parishioners continue to provide to the school. Indeed, at a public meeting called in mid-August to discuss the school's future, members were almost universally positive about the school. The clear message seemed to be, "we love the school, but need to increase enrollment!"

Finally, one of the recommendations of the committee is to create an early childhood program that will feed students into the K-6 program. We envision that once the program is up and running approximately 15 students will transition from early childhood and Montessori programs to Kindergarten yearly.

Specific Recommendation:

Create a task force to review the SMLS Administrative Structure/Environment

In order to ensure and support the optimal competitiveness and efficiency of SMLS, a review team should be appointed by the pastor in consultation with the Diocese. We are recommending a review of all administrative, staff and structural policies and decision-making procedures. A top to bottom review of management structure and decision-making is a necessary tool and, as with many businesses, the operating model is periodically re-focused so that efforts and goals best reflect, as in the case of our school, the new emphasis on community and a restructuring of how education is delivered. When the leadership team consists of so few people, it is critical that they are mutually supportive, and that they continue to work closely for the benefit of the parish and the school.

The taskforce should enlist "experts" in education, such as former principals, experienced educators, and organizational management professionals. In order to ensure a critical and objective review, we strongly recommend the task force be comprised of members with no 12

strong affiliation to the parish or school. At least one member of each of the faculties of UMD, UWS, and St. Scholastica should be appointed.

This team should be formed early in 2013 and submit their recommendations to the pastor by May 30, 2013.

Specific Recommendation:

Better Utilization of Non-Traditional Resources

An area that has been under-utilized is a regular rotation of student teachers, particularly from local universities. We also have not utilized AmeriCorps volunteers – young educators who often have teaching credentials, but who also have heavy school debt and limited job prospects. Other area schools recognize this value and bring in many such volunteers. People in that capacity could serve as aides in split grade classrooms and provide additional individualized assistance to students, particularly if they are challenged in some way.

We have a large number of retired parish members. We should seek to identify good candidates who have rich and varied professional experience that could be of benefit to SMLS and to the parish. Many schools have volunteer “grandparent” aides who essentially serve as teacher’s aides at no real cost to the school.

Specific Recommendation:

Create a 6th Grade Class

Many members of the community, as well as Father Radaich, have suggested the addition of a sixth grade class when the growth of enrollment warrants its addition.

Specific Recommendation:

Hire a Parish Development Director

It is clear that a Director of Development would benefit the parish at large as well as the school, raising the profile of the parish in the community as well as enhancing fundraising, an especially 13

important matter of the parish in the next few years. A Development Director position that was split between the parish and the school would not only benefit the parish but would benefit the school by continuing to broaden support and locate funding streams for the school.

If the parish determines not to hire a Development Director, one should be hired on a .5 FTE basis for the school alone. The expectation is that the Development Director would raise \$50,000 in additional funding per year, at least 50% of which could be applicable to operating costs.

Performance Measures and Budget:

Enrollment-

2013-2014 enrollment Pre-K through Grade 5- 65

2014-2015 enrollment-72

2015-2016 enrollment- 79

2016-2017 enrollment- 87

2017-2018 enrollment- 100

Development- at least \$50,000 in new revenues per year.

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	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	
Income				Assumptions		
Additional Tuition	0	6811	27622	43406	69055	65 students@1973 actual
72 students@1973 actual						
79 students@1973 actual						
87 students@1973 actual						
100 students@1973 actual						
Additional Development Income	25000	25000	25000	25000	25000	assumes operating revenue raised
Total	25000	31811	52622	68406	94055	
Expenses						
Add ed costs	0	2100	4200	6600	10500	assumes an additional
education cost of \$300 per student per year						
Development Director	17000	17000	17000	17000	17000	assumes .5FTE @ 17000 per year
Additional Teachers	33000		3300	66000		24000 salary/9000 benefits per
add one in 2015						
add one in 2017						
Marketing	9500	9500	9500	9500	9500	raise budget from current \$3500
Total	26500	28600	63700	36400	103000	

Difference	(1500)	3211	(11078)	32006	(8945)
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