



Tradition & Excellence:

Notre Dame 2025

***A comprehensive Strategic Plan to guide the growth of
Notre Dame High School***

Academics

Primary Goal: As outlined in our school mission statement, Notre Dame strives to provide a comprehensive, college preparatory education while supporting each student to reach his or her God-given potential.

To ensure the school continues to provide a comprehensive academic program, while recognizing the diverse learning needs of students, the school commits to the following goals:

- Teachers and administrators will revise the Portrait of a ND Graduate with input from faculty, staff, and parents to ensure a complete description is developed.
- A rubric will be created based upon the revised Portrait of a ND Graduate that will allow for an assessment of demonstrated student skills.
- Beginning in year 2, all teachers will create and assess two assignments that measure student skills connected to the Portrait of a ND Graduate and submit their findings to the school data team to analyze the work.
- A data team will be formed to chart student progress in all measurable ways. This work will include, but not be limited to, PSAT/SAT, AP testing, and Portrait of a ND Graduate work. The team will meet monthly, chart trends in the building, and create a yearly plan for teachers to help address specific areas of needs.
- Teachers will participate in monthly professional development opportunities focused solely on good teaching practices. At the beginning of each year, the administration and data team members will create an overarching theme for the year and plan PD around this theme. Teachers will lead the work.
- Each academic department will create a 7-year plan to develop or revise current curriculum. The curriculum will include content and skills (developed in the Portrait of a ND Graduate) and include a program review, writing cycle, an initial implementation, and a systemic implementation for at least 4 years.
- Freshmen teachers will create a transition program with an emphasis on how to be a successful high school student. The work will include study skills, social emotional learning, and executive functioning.
- The school will consider the implementation of an International Baccalaureate curriculum to strengthen the academic program.

Catholic Identity

Primary Goal: Notre Dame will provide regular opportunities for all students and staff to grow in faith. Faculty and parents will be invited to regularly participate in faith-centered opportunities.

To strengthen the liturgical and devotional life of the school community, the school will:

- Promote and increase attendance at daily morning Mass.
- Create a ND-specific liturgical calendar to be posted monthly with liturgical and devotional opportunities.
- Regularly host members of the Diocesan Vocational Team. Establish an annual calendar for visits and a plan to integrate members' visits.

To intentionally incorporate the Transcendentals of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in the support of creating a vibrant school culture, the school will:

- Continue to support opportunities for both in-class and extra-curricular exposure to the Transcendentals while promoting conversations within the school community to determine how to most effectively incorporate these themes into the student and staff experience.
- Promote opportunities for prayer throughout the school day including in theology classes, liturgy, and Campus Ministry. Opportunities will include Lectio Divina, sacred music, meditation, Adoration, the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, contemplation, petition, and Liturgy of the Hours.
- Expose faculty to different types of prayers which can be integrated into their classrooms.
- Through collaborative discussions, consider ways to integrate Transcendentals into the arts and theology curricula.
- In recognition of the school's diversity, continue to offer student-led prayers in different languages, and highlight a variety of saints including those from diverse backgrounds.
- Celebrate a nondenominational prayer service before Thanksgiving.
- Support and implement a curriculum overlay promoting the human transcendental of goodness.
- Continue to promote and expand the school's service program providing students with opportunities to reflect upon service experiences while working to tie in service projects to the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy.
- Return to offering overnight service immersion experiences for students and staff.
- Working with the Chaplain, determine ways to best connect with local clergy to support the ministerial program at Notre Dame including as guest lecturers, offering the sacrament of Reconciliation, and concelebrating Mass. The school will also determine ways to best welcome members of the consecrated life to the ND community.
- Provide regular opportunities to manifest and deepen the school community's awareness of and devotion to Notre Dame – "Our Lady".

As the prime witnesses of the Catholic faith to their children, parents and guardians must be afforded effective opportunities for education, formation and support in their work as formators of their children in faith. In order to achieve this goal, the school will:

- Extend regular invitations for parents to participate in service experiences.
- Promote formational experience opportunities for parents and guardians.
- Invite parents to regularly participate in liturgical celebrations at school.
- Consider ways to welcome siblings to faith-based opportunities.
- Consider family faith programming experiences.

To intentionally form students, teachers, staff, and parents to serve in the baptismal mandate as evangelizers in the world, the school will:

- Create opportunities for teachers and parents to learn about and embrace this call within the classroom and at home.
- Encourage participation in Leadership Institute events promoting faith sharing groups for parents.
- Encourage faculty to play an active role in the faith formation of students, including, but not limited to, serving as leaders on class retreats.
- Determine ways to integrate elements of Catholic Social Teaching in all courses.
- Promote school and class retreat opportunities specifically to help focus students develop their roles as priests, prophets, and kings.
- Regularly sponsor drives throughout the year in solidarity with the poor - including school supplies, food, clothing, toiletries, infant and new mother-specific drives, and gifts at the holidays.
- Promote student and faculty participation in regular mite box to instill growth in the virtues of charity and generosity.

Advancement and Finance

Primary Goal: Notre Dame will continue to build a vibrant, diverse, and faith-filled student body where young people are readied to become independent, contributing members of society. To support this goal, school leadership will ensure that appropriate resources are available for all core programs and functions. This will be realized through the collaborative commitment of stakeholders including the faculty and staff, the Advisory Board, alumni, parents, institutional partners, and friends of the school.

To support the financial operations of the school, ND will:

- Continue to operate on the basis that ND is responsible for generating 100 percent of its operating income
- Rely on primary revenue sources of tuition and fundraising to consistently operate at or above breakeven.
- Explore expanding the number of staff devoted to advancement, admissions, and marketing to increase revenue and ensure steady enrollment.
- Maintain the school's long-standing commitment to educational access by keeping tuition and fees modest while growing the pool of financial aid dollars available for qualified families.
- Recognize that annual performance assessments strongly indicate the Diocese sees Notre Dame as financially strong and expects it to continue its educational mission for decades to come.

To support the Advancement operations of the school, ND will:

- Continue to mature and strengthen the school's fundraising program using all available resources to maximize results.
- Complete planning components and launch the largest capital campaign fundraising effort in the school's history, for which a plan has already been developed, approved, and supported by the Diocese of Bridgeport. The plan includes numerous facilities' upgrades needed to refresh a 60-year old building.
- Expand the efforts of the Alumni Relations program to further connect students with alumni, foster meaningful engagement with graduates, and provide a vehicle for alumni to support and participate in the life of school.
- Increase the percentage of alumni who contribute financially to the school and parents who contribute financially beyond tuition through expanded outreach and stewardship.
- Promote efforts which will expand the school's donor-base while recognizing the contributions of those from the past and using a forward vision.
- Institute a development program for the Notre Dame Advisory Board to empower its members to drive innovation, mission-focused growth, and institutional sustainability. Through this process, consider expanding the scope of the board's role in leading the school including fiduciary responsibility.

Partnerships and Community Outreach

Primary Goal: Recognizing the many opportunities for partnerships in the local community, both with higher education partners and community programs, Notre Dame will strengthen existing partnerships and seek new opportunities that benefit the school community.

To expand the school's outreach and community connections, ND will:

- Develop workforce partnerships to enhance experiential learning.
- Consider ways to expand student participation and alumni involvement with the Senior Experience Program.
 - Promote opportunities to cultivate corporate sponsorships and incorporate ND alumni as intern supervisors/mentors.
- Expand outreach to Fairfield County financial and philanthropic organizations.
- Expand University Partnerships via Dual Enrollment Programs for College Credit.
 - Strategically select courses in an effort to provide access to enhanced facilities/labs.
 - Investigate additional college partnerships beyond UConn and SHU.
 - Expand UConn ECE course offerings at ND.
- Develop strong elementary and middle school partnerships.
 - Develop opportunities to connect ND admissions personnel with counselors in elementary and middle schools to arrange recruitment presentations and/or articulation agreements.
 - Initiate dialogue with area Catholic schools to determine how Notre Dame can best support their school and students.
 - Develop financial planning sessions for elementary and middle school families to aid in preparation for financing a private high school education.
 - Develop opportunities to support area/middle school athletic programs. Encourage ND student-athletes to adopt teams and attend games to support these athletes.
- Continue to build community support to promote the long-term viability and success of Horizons Notre Dame as the program expands to a K-8 program by 2028.
- Investigate participation in an Adopt a Block program in Bridgeport to build community connections and empower students to fundraise and support this opportunity.

Student Life

Primary Goal: Students will be active participants by promoting positive behavior, demonstrating faith, and building community spirit while attending Notre Dame.

In an effort to consistently promote positive student behavior, Notre Dame will:

- Ensure students actively serve on a student-handbook committee to provide feedback and direction on school uniforms and the ND Honor Code.
- Consider opportunities for students to participate in small groups (varied age-groups) with a faculty mentor to discuss current school topics, culture, activities and work on building positive student to student and student to faculty relationships.
- Incorporate Mindfulness Monday opportunities which designate a set block of time at the start of day be devoted to prayer, meditation, and silence.
- Provide strategic breaks to offer students an opportunity to listen to inspirational speakers, participate in team-building experiences, and plan service projects to promote social emotional learning and spiritual growth opportunities.

In an effort to promote the growth of student faith, Notre Dame will:

- Provide regular class and school wide masses.
- Promote student-lead prayer each morning and consider streaming student-led prayer opportunities monthly.
- Ensure student-led service projects occur throughout the year in support of our neighboring parishes and the local community. Students will be provided with opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and utilize social media to celebrate community involvement.
- Sponsor an annual faith-based overnight retreat open to all students. Retreats should allow each grade to visit various entities where ND students will perform community service and team-build.

In an effort to promote the growth of community spirit, Notre Dame will:

- Offer a diverse array of clubs and activities to all students on a variety of times and dates.
- Consider ways to grow Passion Day. The school should consider opportunities to connect students to other members of the community in the fall semester.
- Display club and community activities by decorating bulletin boards, posting on social media, and celebrating student accomplishments during morning announcements and assemblies.
- Provide opportunities to promote student mental health and a sense of well-being through various activities and/or time to reflect and recharge. A committee of students and faculty will consider opportunities which may include an activity day that will be offered with yoga/guided meditation and other relaxation techniques.

Notre Dame High School will be a safe, engaging community for students, parents, faculty and staff alike. The goal is to ensure that ND students learn in a secure, supportive environment that fosters growth and opportunity. Initiatives include:

- Create student-centered mental health initiatives to promote connectedness, build resiliency, and prevent bullying behavior. This effort will focus on utilizing evidence-based mental health and behavioral risk programs and make them available to students and families in need.
- Cultivate relationships with local and national mental health organizations that support students of diverse backgrounds.
- Provide ongoing mental health professional development for students, families, staff, and community.
- Coordinate educational training and workshops for community members by partnering with local enforcement agencies, notably, the Fairfield Police Department.
- Consider the creation of a reporting page/portal on our website to allow concerned students, parents, faculty and staff to report mental health concerns to the appropriate personnel.
- Focus on facility security initiatives, to include safety audits, infrastructure upgrades, and relationship-building with the Fairfield Police Department.

Enrollment and Marketing

Primary Goal: Maintain a positive relationship with prospective students and their families, the Diocese, and other community members while monitoring key developments in schools that might also attract potential ND students. In addition, the school will work to expand ND's brand awareness and strengthen its reputation.

To advance enrollment and marketing efforts, the school will:

- Strive to maintain enrollment between 480 and 500 students, which is appropriate for the facilities, staffing level, and current and projected programs.
 - The Admissions staff, in consultation with the Administration, will annually revise a recruitment plan targeting prospective students and families beginning in the sixth grade.
 - Develop an annual marketing and communication plan targeting prospective families.
 - Expand outreach efforts to all prospective students.
- Work to clarify, establish, and promote brand awareness in the local community.
- Work to effectively articulate all aspects of an ND education to prospective families.
- Expand the social media presence to promote the school to all stakeholders.
- Establish a multi-year marketing plan to align with brand identity and efforts to reach all prospective students and to increase donor interest in the school.
- Refresh the website.
- Work to effectively promote the college placement records of recent graduates.
- Work to provide annual Financial Aid workshops for families, while also ensuring the continuing availability of financial aid dollars for prospective families.
- Create a Director of Marketing position to expand the school's viability in the educational market with an aim of increasing admissions prospects and donors.
- Consider a partnership with *Making Caring Common* from the Harvard Graduate School of Education to promote values in alignment with the mission of the school.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness

Primary Goal: Notre Dame will work to continuously celebrate and maintain its diversity while working to ensure all students and staff fully identify as valued members of the community.

To ensure diversity, equity, and inclusiveness are key components of Notre Dame's mission, the school will:

- Maintain a welcoming environment by continuing a commitment to diversity in word and deed.
- Work to attract and support diversity in both faculty and the student body.
 - Provide diversity training for faculty selection and hiring committees.
 - Work to support staff and students as they identify implicit bias.
- Consider ways to prepare all students to think on a global level and to work with persons of differing backgrounds and cultures.
- Consider opportunities for staff and students to foster varied thoughts and ideas which will lead to expanded learning opportunities, smarter solutions, and enhanced team work.
- Consider the addition of a Director of Diversity position to provide support and direction to the community.
- Ensure promotional materials reflect the diversity the school seeks.
- Develop relationships with HBCUs, LatinX serving colleges, and university educator preparation programs.
- Work to integrate culturally responsive teaching practices into the classroom.
- Create support or affinity groups while promoting professional development for all faculty members.
- Form networking opportunities that meet socially throughout the year, collaborate on research, and strive to fully engage and connect to broader academic life at ND.
- Consider partnering with an international service program (like BuildOn) which complements the mission of ND while allowing students to expand global cultural perspectives and opportunities.
- Identify opportunities to expand service partnership programs (specifically for Notre Dame's athletic teams) in the local community (ex: Park City Initiative Corporation)
- Consider the addition of a Gospel Choir
- Consider the addition of academic course work which intentionally covers the history of marginalized groups in society.

Social and Emotional Learning

Primary Goal: Recognizing that social emotional learning is a driving factor for improving student performance and to prepare students to be caring, thoughtful, and collaborative citizens in a more diverse world, Notre Dame will work to integrate SEL into all aspects of the student experience. Further, SEL efforts will be developed to also support teacher and parent well-being.

To infuse SEL into the student experience, the school will:

- Commit to regular school-wide SEL opportunities.
- Ensure regular school-wide data collection to assess student connectedness, as well as other data points tied to the school's culture and climate.
- Form a SEL Implementation Team with faculty, staff, parent, and student representation to expand SEL offerings. This Team will be empowered to guide the SEL process with genuine authority and responsibility.
- Ensure a SEL vision is developed by the SEL Implementation Team and communicated to the community.
- Develop a SEL Action Plan to guide the school's SEL implementation.
- Provide professional development opportunities for staff centered on student-teacher relationship building and the growth of student SEL competencies.
- Provide on-going support for staff while encouraging the expanded use of lesson plans promoting the growth of SEL competencies in the classroom.
- Offer consistent opportunities for students to participate in mindfulness activities.
- Require teachers to implement at least one service learning project per year in all classes.
- Consider creative and engaging school-wide opportunities to celebrate all forms of student success.
 - Include student voice in discussions of new ways to promote & celebrate successes.
 - Identify opportunities to infuse equity and social justice into SEL activities.
- Create formal opportunities to display student work throughout the building. Additional display cases and bulletin boards should be considered.
- Consider the introduction of a formal SEL program.
 - Consider the logistics required to provide a regular opportunity to deliver SEL lessons and concepts to the students (ie: an Advisory period).
- Encourage teachers to engage in regular positive outreach to parents and include students on the emails.
- Consider meaningful self-care opportunities for faculty/staff, which can then be taught to students.
- Encourage teachers to integrate activities centered around gratitude into their classroom lessons.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for students to identify and build personal strengths.
- Celebrate "Strength Week" annually.

- Identify ways to ensure coaches and parents participate in SEL opportunities, including SEL classes and SEL mini-conferences for parents.
 - Develop an SEL Parent Toolkit to share with families
 - Develop a Parent Engagement Team to support SEL outreach to families
- Utilize effective and proven SEL assessment tools while adjusting for continuous improvement.

Facilities

Primary Goal: Notre Dame strives to provide a safe and healthy learning environment to meet the educational needs of students and faculty. A long-term goal includes the modernization of all facilities to keep pace with educational requirements and student learning styles.

To accomplish its long-term facility goals, the school must:

- Develop a long-term campus master plan to guide planned growth and expansion along with both routine and deferred maintenance projects.
- Replace the aging boilers and hot water tanks.
- Upgrade all lighting to LED to maximize energy efficiencies.
- As part of a capital campaign, consider the following campus improvements:
 - Window and blind replacement
 - Re-designed front entrance to the school, creating a Student Commons
 - Update Chemistry and Physics labs
 - Create a Guidance suite and location for larger meetings
 - Repave student and faculty parking lots
 - Update classroom and office furniture
 - Renovate all bathrooms
 - Install an irrigation system throughout campus
 - Resign and update campus landscaping, trees, sidewalks, and fencing
 - Replace football scoreboard and bleachers
- Update Technology Plan to address regular IT upgrades throughout the building (including interactive whiteboards and wireless technology)

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

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