



ST. ANDREW SCHOOL



Classical Education
Built on Catholic Faith,
Academic Excellence & Community

Mission Fulfillment Document

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Working Document

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Working Document

Introduction

The mission of St. Andrew School is to provide a classical education built on Catholic faith, academic excellence and community. In order to achieve our mission, the educational philosophy, school community, communication, finances, and infrastructure must all align and work

synergistically toward our goal. This Mission Fulfillment Document contains overarching guidance for the success of St. Andrew School and should be used as the basis for subsequent policy directives.

Educational Philosophy

St. Andrew School is both classical and Catholic and incorporates a curriculum emphasizing the importance of teaching students how to think rather than what to think. As students progress through the classical curriculum stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, the goal is to form within students a “sacramental imagination” that leads them to the Truth in wonder, humility, and a deep respect for the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. The school will continue to maintain its Catholic school accreditation in order to provide an excellent, faith-based educational opportunity to the Helena community. St. Andrew School will always provide classical and Catholic core courses such as English/Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies/History, Religion/Theology, Latin, Physical Education, Music, and Art. St. Andrew School is committed to providing high school students with dual-credit opportunities by partnering with Carroll College and/or Helena College University of Montana as well as a wide variety of electives. Other opportunities such as technology, vocational/technical, and advanced music, art, and language courses and extracurricular activities (both athletic and non-athletic) may be provided as staffing and the budget permits. In matters of curriculum, parents are always welcome to request more information about the material itself; however, all curriculum has been carefully chosen for its educational benefit and no student will be exempted from individual course or graduation requirements except in cases where documented learning disabilities dictate that the student is physically incapable of completing the work, in which case parents, faculty and administration will work together to find a suitable replacement and create an individual student plan for success.

School Community

The St. Andrew School community is the heart of the school and consists of families, students, faculty and staff, Board of Directors, volunteers, financial donors, and the Helena community.

St. Andrew School’s goal is to continue to serve primarily Catholic families located within and beyond the immediate city limits of Helena. St. Andrew School currently serves the greater

Helena area, including southern Lewis & Clark, and northern Broadwater and Jefferson counties. Expressed in terms of which Catholic parishes are nearby, St. Andrew currently serves families in four primary parishes (St. Helena Cathedral, St. Mary Faith Community, Our Lady of the Valley, Ss. Cyril & Methodius) along with a non-Catholic student population. St. Andrew School's goal would be to maintain averages close to 75% Catholic and 25% non-Catholic, primarily Christian, students seeking an alternative to public schools.

Although St. Andrew School is a Catholic school, students of all faiths are welcome. All students, regardless of religious denomination, will take Theology classes, learn and participate in Catholic prayers, and attend Mass. If there is a point in time when student growth exceeds facility capacity, Catholic students will receive preference in admission. However, a 100% Catholic student body is not ideal because there is a risk of losing both a richness of experience, a testing of faith, and a connection to social reality and evangelization that is lost in such an environment. All prospective families are asked to provide a response to the St. Andrew Mission Statement in order to assess overall fit with the mission, create open dialogue and ensure that reasonable expectations are realized on all sides.

St. Andrew School is committed to being a pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade, co-ed school and will base all decisions on ensuring that Helena families have a Catholic primary and secondary school option in the community. The St. Andrew School leadership will review all enrollment applications annually and meet with new families to ensure St. Andrew School can provide services appropriate to each student's academic ability.

As a Catholic institution, St. Andrew School respects and encourages the role of parents as primary educators. School leadership decisions reinforce the belief that parents have entrusted their children to the school for education, but have not relinquished their inherent rights as parents. Frequent opportunities for parental formation (in matters pertaining to classical Catholic education) are provided throughout the academic year and parents are encouraged to attend these sessions in order to better understand the educational philosophy employed at St. Andrew School. Question and answer sessions are provided at the end of each presentation. Parents are also encouraged to dive deeper into the educational philosophy by reading some of the many resources provided on the school's website.

St. Andrew School employs a co-ed faculty who embody and are rigorous witnesses to the Catholic faith and the classical mission of the school. Because faculty are regarded as witnesses to the faith, our goal is to have an entirely Catholic faculty, staff, and administration. While this remains the goal of the school, leadership recognizes the need for specific credentials and subject matter expertise that can contribute to the academic quality of the curriculum and, on occasion, non-Catholic individuals may be employed as needed. A high-quality teacher has the highest possible combination of: 1) Subject matter expertise (e.g. a degree or certification in the area they

instruct); 2) Teaching credentials, experience, or training; and 3) A strong witness to the Catholic faith and mission of the school.

The St. Andrew School's current staffing model provides for at least one teacher per grade in lower school (K-5) plus additional middle and high school teachers for specific subject areas, who may also serve as homeroom teachers. Additionally, the school retains adjunct and/or full-time faculty for Latin, PE, Art, and Music. To assist all teachers, the school provides at least one resource teacher. Administration currently includes a Head of School and Assistant Head of School, while additional staffing is provided by office personnel (i.e. a secretary, assistant secretary, bookkeeper), recess monitors, and janitorial staff. Through detailed analysis, the Board of Directors works with academic credentialing and curriculum leaders locally and nationally to consider when it may be appropriate to create or remove positions to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the school.

The Head of School is in charge of all day-to-day school matters and facility operations, and the Board should not intervene in these actions unless the Head of School requests help or the Board is made aware that a clear need is not being addressed. The Head of School will have an active and visible presence on the school campus throughout the school day and frequently check in with students/classes (even when not teaching). The Head of School will also remain visible and accessible to parents and all faculty/staff (e.g., being outside during drop-off and/or pick-up, talking with students frequently, entering classrooms to observe (without notice), as well as during scheduled observation periods. The Head of School is the visible spokesperson for the school at all events and with all forms of media representatives and must always maintain a central and positive relationship with all stakeholders in the school community, and the greater Helena population

The Board establishes the strategic plan, policies, and organizational structure for the school with stakeholder input and is accountable for the financial status of the school. The Board is responsible for hiring a qualified Head of School, informally assessing the performance of the Head of School throughout the year, and providing a formal written performance evaluation to the Head of School prior to the end of each academic year. Board members will attend school functions as feasible and be actively involved in furthering the mission of St. Andrew School.

The Head of School will attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings, help to prepare the agenda and prepare an update for the key areas (to be presented at the meeting). Ideally, the update should also go out by email in advance of the meeting. The Head of School should regularly consult the President/Vice President of the Board when major concerns arise or if clarification is needed in order to perform his/her duties.

Volunteers provide much needed assistance to the school in all areas of operation from the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to helping in classrooms. Because of this, families are required to complete a specified number of Parental Involvement Program (PIP) points as outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook.

All faculty, staff, administration, and volunteers must be trained and maintain a current understanding of the St. Andrew School Safe Environment curriculum to ensure the safety of all students.

Communication

Communication is key to uniting the school community and providing important information. St. Andrew School communication methods include (but are not limited to): written policy (e.g. Parent and Student, Faculty and Staff and Administration and Board Handbooks); academic year calendar; class schedules; website and social media platforms; newsletters; classroom communication; learning management systems; parent-teacher correspondence; new family orientation; emergency notifications. All communication must be timely, consistent, and accurate to be effective. Regular communications will be sent to all stakeholders regarding the St. Andrew School financial position, faculty needs/wants, etc.

In the spirit of Matthew 18:15-16, all concerns should be brought forth to the school in accordance with the Conflict Resolution Policy (as included in all handbooks) and with consideration for the dignity of each person involved. Parents who are consistently confrontational in their interactions with St. Andrew School staff and faculty or who are unwilling to adhere to the guidelines described in the Parent Student Handbook, may be asked to consider looking for other educational opportunities more suited to their family's needs and temperament.

All school leadership and families are tasked with willingly and actively building and continuously working to foster and improve the overall sense of the St. Andrew School community, much as we are all called to be a part of and build the body of Christ. Each person, whether a student, parent, faculty, staff, administrator, or Board member, must commit to ensuring the success of St. Andrew School. As needed, the Board and Administration must work to provide appropriate opportunities for all stakeholders to voice their concerns through surveys, town hall conversations, presentations at board meetings, etc., and then commit to respond appropriately and punctually to raised concerns. Additionally, certain one-time or recurring community events will be scheduled to provide an opportunity for families, faculty and staff,

donors, and volunteers to interact and showcase the fellowship and social benefits of the school and the academic advantages of a classical Catholic education.

Finances

The Head of School (with assistance from the bookkeeper and Board Executives as necessary) is responsible to propose an annual budget to the Board each year for approval, which must occur prior to the beginning of the fiscal year beginning on July 1st of each year. The Head of School is responsible for executing the budget during the school year and updating the Board monthly on budget adjustments that may be a cause for concern.

Tuition is the main source of income for the school. Tuition costs will be reviewed annually to ensure it reflects the quality of education provided, accounts for budgetary requirements such as pay, supplies, facility costs, professional development, etc., and takes into consideration additional factors, including but not limited to cost of living, inflation, and similar private school tuition models.

The school will accept public assistance in the form of grants only insofar as the terms of such grants do not interfere with the St. Andrew School mission, or in other ways create conflict with the ability of school leadership to ensure the school maintains a strict Catholic identity. Consequently, the school will not plan on public assistance, especially if that assistance comes with restrictions on religion. Government control should not be feared, as long as proper discernment/reading is done on all grant documents to ensure any such potential conflict verbiage is not present.

Fundraising is an integral part of the annual St. Andrew School revenue formula and must be performed constantly, diligently and via multiple approaches to incorporate various types of fundraising strategies such as hosting small and large events, seeking endowment and capital campaign support, sponsoring scholarships for students, funding non-recurring special projects, etc. Donor invitations will be extended in advance by school leadership to major annual events: Christmas programs, music programs, art shows, special Masses, etc. to deepen donor and benefactor connections with the school, students, families, faculty, administrators, and Board.

Longer range financial planning documents (five-year) will be created and updated collaboratively with input from the Head of School and Board in order to provide guidance. However, the annual budget is not required to exactly match projections created for any particular version(s) of this long-range document. Additionally, the faculty pay matrix will be

examined at least every two years and appropriately adjusted for inflation and cost of living increases.

Infrastructure

St. Andrew School intends to grow its student population commensurate with infrastructure capacity (facility, staff, funding) while staying true to its mission and prioritizing faith and educational opportunities. St. Andrew School intends to continue emphasizing its small student to teacher ratio strengths and will maintain an effective ratio as it continues to grow so as not to diminish the learning experience.

The Board will determine how frequently to conduct market studies to determine strategies for attracting additional families and students. The Board will also leverage study results to further define a set of family and student profile demographic characteristics (including background, economic status, etc) to further aid St. Andrew School outreach and marketing initiatives.

As the school population grows, the Board will proactively seek additional infrastructure to include facilities, staff, leadership, and funding and maintain a written growth plan.

Currently St. Andrew School does not provide transportation to and from school and relies solely on parents to transport their students. The St. Andrew bus and van are available for off-campus Mass, field trips, and approved special events. The school administration will work to attract more volunteer certified bus drivers (soft goal: retain at least five Commercial Driver License [CDL] bus drivers by the start of each academic year) to support an ideal goal of transporting all students to attend Mass at least one day per week.

The St. Andrew School academic year typically begins the third or fourth Wednesday of August and concludes on the Friday before Memorial Day. Breaks include Thanksgiving, two weeks at Christmas, a week-long Spring Break, and Good Friday/Easter Monday. The school utilizes a five-day school week with a seven-hour academic day.

Discipline

At St. Andrew School, the development of and committed adherence to the virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude are a key aspect of our mission and school life. As such, the Head of School retains the right to suspend or dismiss any student or employee who does not uphold these virtues. A demerit system (outlined in the Parent Student Handbook) has been instituted for middle and high school students to help all students grow in virtue. For every five

demerits, students will be given the opportunity to improve with a structured detention, which focuses on the virtue(s) that the student is most struggling with.

Dress Code

The St. Andrew School maintains a student dress code (as detailed in the Parent Student Handbook) which serves three main functions:

1. Ensuring that all students dress in a manner consistent with the virtues; particularly chastity and prudence;
2. Putting all students on an equal footing; and
3. Having students be a witness in the community

Furthermore, all employees are expected to dress professionally for the position they hold and in a manner consistent with Catholic virtues. Details are provided in the Faculty, Staff, and Administration handbooks.

Conclusion

In order for St. Andrew School to successfully fulfill its mission, the entire school community must do its part. By adhering to the foundations in this Mission Fulfillment Document, creating detailed subordinate policy documents, and routinely assessing and updating the guidance in this document as St. Andrew School progresses through its long term strategic plan, St. Andrew School will continue to grow disciples of Christ in a classical educational environment built on Catholic faith, academic excellence, and community.