

**ST. JAMES EPISCOPOL SCHOOL
FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2020**



ST. JAMES MISSION STATEMENT

Our vision at St. James Episcopal School is to develop each child to his or her fullest potential, spiritually, intellectually, and physically, that each may grow in grace, enjoy freedom through knowledge, and lead a healthy, productive, and meaningful life.

EPISCOPAL IDENTITY

Goal: To ensure the collaborative, beneficial relationship between the Church of the Good Shepherd and St. James Episcopal School now and for future generations of South Texans.

Rationale:

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd has been a center for ministry in Corpus Christi. Good Shepherd serves the Kingdom of God through the love of Jesus Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Sharing a common mission, both the Church and the School are inseparable and each is vital to the success of the other. Together, we foster an environment of respect, kindness, and love for all people that is inclusive and authentic. Sharing common space, serving a diverse community, and working to transform the lives of children and adults, the Church and the School commit to deepening this valuable relationship for the benefit of the community.

Action Steps:

- Communicate directly, consistently and on a formal, on-going basis through the *Administrative Liaison Committee* and in daily interactions of staff and members of both institutions.
- Partner in all events and activities where appropriate, offering all families the opportunity to experience Episcopal traditions.
- Provide a curriculum for Spiritual Formation and Chapel for all scholars that is vertically aligned, consistent, comprehensive, and in keeping with our Episcopal identity.
- Cultivate the relationship between Church and School leadership.

GOVERNANCE

Goal: To move to a new level of governance that will include the most able trustees from South Texas and ensure the excellence of St. James Episcopal School for the benefit of our scholars and our community.

Rationale:

The successes of St. James Episcopal School today are the work of yesterday's Board of Trustees. As the entity that holds the School in trust, it is essential that each Board Member and the Board as a corporate entity continuously strive to grow for the benefit of the School. The School commits itself to being a model of excellence, and the Board must continue to evolve corporately as an ever-improving governing body, with the goal of functioning at the highest level of service to the school.

Action Steps:

- Communicate the roles and responsibilities of each Board member, including expectations of service, financial efforts, and commitment.
- Conduct a yearly Board Orientation to train, develop, and mentor all Board members, ensuring confidence throughout the body of governance.
- Implement a yearly gathering for the Board of Trustees and the Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd, allowing for consistent communication, partnership, and celebration.
- Review and update Board of Trustee By-laws, Policy Manuals, and operational procedures based on best practices as proposed by the Southwestern Association of Episcopal Schools.
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the Headmaster and the Board Of Trustees, according to the NAIS Standards.
- Provide consistent succession plans for Board of Trustee Committee and Executive leadership.
- Communicate the role and the work of the Board of Trustees to the greater St. James community via a Welcome Letter for the Admissions packet.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Goal: To ensure that St. James hires and retains the most qualified and committed faculty, staff, and administration and provides opportunities for ongoing professional development.

Rationale:

St. James Episcopal School is committed to supporting the most qualified faculty, staff, and administration who support the mission of the School. We are intentional in our efforts to seek excellence, diversity of talents, and commitment from those who will deliver the highest quality of education to our scholars.

Action Steps:

- Attract, support, and retain faculty, staff, and administrators of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and talents.
- Ensure that faculty, staff, and administration compensation and benefits are competitive, reaching or exceeding 85% in comparable tracking with public schools.
- Promote an environment in which lifelong learning is expected and supported through professional development opportunities.
- Review, update, and maintain clear job descriptions, standards of expectations, and formal observation and evaluation procedures for all staff.
- Establish a process to formalize and individualize professional development.
- Review and update the Administrative/Staff Handbook to include roles and responsibilities, operational procedures, financial management systems, admission policies, and other administrative functions.
- Continue to provide training in differentiated instruction for current and new teachers.

PROGRAM

Goal: To facilitate learning through the utilization of high level thinking strategies and questions, requiring all scholars to prove their answers with evidence.

Rationale:

St. James Episcopal school is committed to fostering and providing a learning environment that emphasizes Christian values, positive self-esteem, rigorous academic standards, and civic service and responsibilities. Using the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, teachers are trained in the use of Interdisciplinary instructional strategies, multiple intelligence teaching, positive discipline management, and utilization of the elements of Depth and Complexity, making connections to encourage high levels of cognitive development and foster actual brain growth. This research based method develops a life-long love of learning. The school environment will cultivate an appreciation for learning, which will enable scholars to function as creative, intrinsically motivated, responsible citizens to the maximum extent of their abilities and ambitions.

Primary School Action Steps:

Global Theme - Order

- Fully implement the phonics based language arts program with an explicit, sequential, multisensory, diagnostic, and comprehensive curriculum for spelling, writing, and reading in Pre-Primary through Fourth Grades.
- Administer a diagnostic developmental assessment to all scholars entering kindergarten in order to facilitate effective curriculum application, create a developmentally appropriate environment, and promote realistic expectations of child behavior/performance.
- Comply fully with the requirements of the *Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers* to ensure the protection, safety, and well-being of all children in the licensed child-care center (Pre-Primary and Primary) of St. James Episcopal School.

Instructional Program: Math

- Provide scholars with a rigorous, sequential mathematics program, using problem solving methods, six elements of Depth and Complexity, and *Core Knowledge Sequence*. (K-5th)
- Provide Honors and Advanced class options to prepare scholars for High School mathematics and ensure they are Algebra ready. (6th-8th)

Instructional Program: Language Arts

- Teach the writing process to ensure scholars progress from basic sentence structure to multi paragraph compositions of various types (narrative, informative, persuasive, descriptive).
- Develop technical writing skills and follow organizational guidelines to study a specific topic and write a relevant, focused research paper.

Instructional Program: Social Studies

- Use an interdisciplinary study approach to coordinate the Social Studies program with the Language Arts program, supporting the curriculum through research, literature selections, and compositions.
- Continually integrate and provide a historical basis for current events.

Instructional Program: Science

- Organize and equip both Lower and Middle School science labs to provide and schedule weekly lab opportunities for all scholars, K-8.

Instructional Program: Foreign Language

- Provide bi-weekly Spanish classes for scholars in Pre-Primary-3rd grade.
- Provide Spanish classes daily (4th-8th) dividing into Honors and Advanced classes starting in 7th grade to ensure scholars enter High School with at least one Spanish credit.

Action Steps:

Over-Arching Structure of Program

- Align the SJES Curriculum using the *Core Knowledge Sequence* to provide a foundation in all subject areas, for all grade levels, that is sequential, cumulative, and content specific, promotes academic growth, and provides consistency and continuity in instruction.
- Incorporate multiple intelligence, Interdisciplinary instructional strategies, utilizing the elements of Depth and Complexity to improve lesson design and increase higher level thinking skills.
- Apply a global theme concept at each grade level to ensure scholars are taught to look at the world through a global lens, identifying essential, conceptual truths and generalizations.
- Schedule biannual core curricular cross grade level meetings to ensure quality of instruction and sequence of content and skills.
- Implement the use of Marzano's nine instructional strategies for effective teaching and learning.
- Require memorization and presentation opportunities on regular basis (at least monthly).

Lower School Action Steps:

Global Themes - K/Patterns, 1/Systems, 2/Change, 3/Interdependence, 4/Structures

- Fully implement the phonics based language arts program with an explicit, sequential, multisensory, diagnostic, and comprehensive curriculum for spelling, writing, and reading in Pre-Primary through Fourth Grades.
- Administer a diagnostic developmental assessment to all scholars entering kindergarten in order to facilitate effective curriculum application, create a developmentally appropriate environment, and promote realistic expectations of child behavior/performance.
- Administer a nationally researched and recognized standardized assessment to all scholars, 2nd-8th Grades.

Middle School Action Steps:

Global Themes - 5/Relationships, 6/Order, 7/Systems, 8/Change

- Embed applicable curriculum into the content of the Outdoor Education Programs offered at each specific grade level. 5th/Environmental Science, 6th/Science and Ecology, 7th/Texas History and Team Building, 8th/American History.
- Administer a nationally researched and recognized standardized assessment to all scholars, 2nd-8th Grades.

Instructional Program: Fine Arts

- Provide fine arts enrichment opportunities through weekly classes in the following subjects: art, drama, music, speech.

Instructional Program: Library

- Train scholars in the use of an informational service database to provide library resources, K-12, public library, and opportunities to research across the disciplines.

Instructional Program: Technology

- Provide weekly computer instruction (K-5th) in the Lower School Computer Lab, beginning with basic skills of keyboarding, educational games, advanced computer applications, and computer presentations.
- Provide opportunities for all scholars to utilize Smart Boards and offer "bring your own device" opportunities for 5th-8th grades.
- Maintain the Middle School computer lab to provide opportunities for research, group projects, and technology access for 5th-8th grades.

Instructional Program: Physical Education/Health/Sports

- Provide PE classes daily for all scholars (PP-8th), focusing on agility training, gross motor development, class and team cooperation, and physical health.
- Provide competitive sports opportunities to develop specific skills, leadership opportunities, and positive sportsmanship ethics in volleyball, track, tennis, basketball, and golf (4th-8th).
- Coordinate and reinforce Core Knowledge Sequence health content taught in grade level classes through the PE curriculum.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Goal: To strengthen the St. James community by fostering inclusiveness and trust through consistent communication to all constituents.

Rationale:

St. James Episcopal School is committed to providing the most nurturing and challenging educational environment for its scholars, preparing them to be servant leaders in an ever-changing global community. We expect each member of the School community to support the values and the Mission of the School, exhibiting kindness, compassion, responsibility, and respect. St. James Episcopal School is an inclusive, open, and nurturing environment for all persons, supporting shared values, moral development, and ethical behavior.

Action Steps:

- Use multiple avenues of communication to strengthen connections to current and past parents, grandparents, St. James alumni, and Church members.
- Clarify and communicate the shared values and commitment of the School clearly and consistently among all constituencies.
- Require a signed statement (contract) by each St. James family, ensuring commitment to the values and the Mission of St. James.
- Develop a formalized admissions and enrollment program, providing personalized attention to current and potential families, legacies, and siblings who are mission appropriate.
- Create additional opportunities to encourage the involvement of Alumni and grandparents constituencies in the life of the school.

FINANCE

Goal: To build revenue streams that enhance cash reserves and endowments, and fund tuition assistance and professional development in order to ensure the long-term future of the School.

Rationale:

St. James Episcopal School is committed to strengthening its current financial stability and ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the School. As a tuition-driven school relying on enrollment as the primary source of income, St. James must broaden its financial foundation, secure alternative sources of revenue, and develop a long-term, strategic financial plan to maximize financial stability and prepare for potential growth.

Action Steps:

- Develop and implement a five-year financial plan that sets specific goals for faculty salary scale, tuition, annual fund, professional development, and major gifts.
- Cultivate increased opportunities for planned giving.
- Continue to build the Annual Fund to increase overall participation of giving from the parent community to 90% or better, and increase the total amount of dollars raised to a goal of 10% of the annual budget.
- Grow the current Endowment through gifts and sound investment policy to \$6 million.
- Develop an Acceptance/Spend Policy for gifts and endowments.
- Review and update the current Cost Sharing Agreement between the Church of the Good Shepherd and the School.

FACILITIES AND SAFETY

Goal: To use the master plan as developed through the Living Our Legacy Campaign to ensure the campus meets the educational and worship needs of the Church and the School and to ensure the safety of all scholars.

Rationale:

St. James Episcopal School and the Church of the Good Shepherd share a common campus, being blessed with a beautiful and functional environment for worship, fellowship, study, and play. With its unique urban location, St. James must be properly equipped to meet the needs of a changing population and be prepared to serve scholars expected to be leaders in the global community. The current space and overall facilities are continually evaluated to meet the needs of the Community. Through intentional stewardship, the Building and Grounds Committee and the Church and School administration will monitor and evaluate the improvements required through the Living Our Legacy campaign and any additional facility/safety improvements.

Action Steps:

- Review and assess all technology needs on an ongoing basis, ensuring that the School anticipates and provides for the future needs and program offerings.
- Collaborate in the stewardship of common spaces and facilities, maintaining the grounds and learning spaces to the highest health, safety, and efficiency standards.
- Inspect all fire extinguishers and safety equipment yearly.
- Update *Material Safety Data Sheets* (MSDS) sheets in Science Lab and office to reflect current information.
- Review and update emergency Crisis Plan yearly and provide each classroom, with Safety Supply Bags.
- Maintain files for student custody papers in a secure location (office).
- Evaluate storage challenges for all grades and provide reasonable space for all teachers.
- Organize and maintain staff files documenting that all employees have had background checks and *Safeguarding God's Children* Training.