

WALLA WALLA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. School President’s Letter (to be completed).....	2
2. WWCS Board Chair’s Letter (to be completed).....	2
3. Mission Statement	3
4. History of the School.....	3
5. Preamble	4
6. Strategic Planning Committee and Planning Process.....	5
7. Strategy and Vision Statement.....	6
8. Pillars, Background and Strategies.....	7
• Pillar 1: Faith and Identity	
• Pillar 2: Academic Excellence	
• Pillar 3: Student Life	
• Pillar 4: Enrollment and Community Building	
• Pillar 5: Sustainable Stewardship	
Appendix: Implementing, Monitoring and Evaluating the Plan (to be completed).....	12

Mission Statement

The Walla Walla Catholic Schools are a ministry established by the three Catholic Parishes in Walla Walla to provide a Christian-based education for preschool through high school-aged children regardless of religious affiliation. Providing an Education for Life, by educating the whole person, spiritually, academically, physically, and socially, the Walla Walla Catholic Schools foster the values of faith, hope, charity, and justice.

History of the Walla Walla Catholic Schools

The Walla Walla Catholic School System has operated continuously since 1864. Our schools, the oldest in the state, evolved from the vision and religious conviction of an increasing number of Catholic settlers who wanted to ensure their Catholic heritage, no matter how uncertain the times. Under the guidance first of the Sisters of Providence, then the Christian Brothers, Dominicans, and Holy Name Sisters, both St. Vincent Academy and St. Patrick School became the cornerstones for a distinguished and uninterrupted history of Catholic education that remains unique to this day. Our present lay faculty owes no small debt to the influence of the sisters, brothers, and priests of years past, whose teaching shaped thousands of young lives. Our Catholic Community as a whole has, moreover, demonstrated a strong commitment to our schools' financial and physical needs. Rising to the challenges of the times, change and progress, Walla Walla Catholics have contributed their time and resources to build new schools and update existing facilities. For over 150 years, our Catholic community and schools have been continually dedicated, committed, and responsive to the Catholic generations that followed.

Walla Walla Catholic Schools has operated in a variety of locations and grade configurations. The first Walla Walla Catholic school, Saint Vincent's Academy for Girls, was established by the Sisters of Providence in 1864. A year later Saint Patrick's Academy for Boys was established, then renamed La Salle Institute in 1889 when the Christian Brothers arrived to operate the school. St. Patrick's added a grade school in 1928. The two high schools merged in 1932 as St. Vincent's High School and then were renamed Saint Patrick's School in 1940. In 1955, with the establishment of Assumption parish, Assumption grade school opened under the guidance of the Dominican Sisters of Tacoma. In 1959, St. Francis DeSales Catholic High School opened, replacing St. Patrick's with a modern facility. In 1969, St. Patrick Grade School closed, and in 1970 the Dominican Sisters of Tacoma left and Assumption temporarily closed. But the Catholic community rallied, and Assumption was reopened in 1972 as a tri-parish school through grade 6, with DeSales educating from grade 7-12. In 1987, the Early Learning Center was established at Assumption. In 1991, the sixth grade moved to DeSales, and in 2005, the entire middle school moved back to Assumption creating the current Kindergarten through 8th grade model.

Today over 350 young people are enrolled in the Early Learning Center, Assumption Catholic Grade School, and DeSales High School. Two priests and fifty lay teachers, administrators, and staff provide a Catholic education for today's students. 80% of our students are Catholic, 20% are not; the Walla Walla Catholic Schools' doors have always been open to all who seek to support and benefit from our mission. For a century and a half, as times have shifted, teaching orders have come and gone, populations have changed, and challenges have arisen, Walla Walla Catholic Schools, supported by Assumption, St. Francis, and St. Patrick parishes and the entire Walla Walla community, have continued to provide an excellent Catholic education for life for all who have sought it.

Preamble

Our Walla Walla Catholic Schools exist to carry out the teaching mission of the Church. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states, "We must respond to challenging times with faith, vision, and the will to succeed, because the Catholic school's mission is vital to the future of our young people, our nation, and most especially our Church". Sponsored by the parishes of Assumption, St. Francis, and St. Patrick, and in partnership with parents, Walla Walla Catholic Schools make available a Catholic education to all who desire it and strive to educate, evangelize, and form globally responsive servant leaders in light of Gospel values.

Christ is the center of our schools and as such, the education of our students begins with helping them understand and grow in the knowledge of who they are and what they are each destined for as children of God. Educating our students for life in mind, body and spirit, takes its fullest meaning in forming students to find an abundant life in Jesus Christ. Taking into account the dignity, freedom, and the unique needs of each student, we provide a rigorous curriculum and extracurricular offerings enlivened by faith, love and support that helps students discover who they are and how best to use their talents for God to achieve success both in this world and salvation in the next.

We recognize that parents have the primary responsibility for the Christian faith formation of their children so we dedicate ourselves to partnering with parents and with the parishes to form our students to be Christian citizens in a society of changing values. Walla Walla Catholic Schools responds to the calling to educate for life by incorporating excellence, innovation, service, future-mindedness, community-building, and loving inclusion of all who join in our mission. We take inspiration from our patrons: Mary Assumed into Heaven, *"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord"* and St. Francis DeSales, *"Be who you are, and be that well, to do honor to the Master Craftsman whose handiwork you are."*

We are excited and challenged by the opportunities that lie ahead for our Walla Walla Catholic Schools as delineated in the vision and pillars of this Strategic Plan. This body of work reflects the discernment of many stakeholders and the resulting vision of what our schools can and need to be in our community -- not only in the next five years but in 2030 and beyond. It is by faith in God's providence that we now step into our future.

Strategic Planning Committee and Process

The Strategic Planning Committee was established by the Chair of the WWCS Board and consisted of the following Board Members, Parents, and Faculty and Staff of the WWCS:

Barry Balof, Assumption Parent

John Lesko, Assumption and DeSales Principal

Tim Neely, DeSales Parent and past chair of the Marketing Committee

Reverend Matthew Nicks, Pastor and WWCS President

Andrea Renholds, WWCS Board Member

Sherry Rizzuti, DeSales Parent and member of DeSales Home and School

Brenda Shields, Assumption Faculty and WWCS Board Faculty Representative

Melissa Thiessen, WWCS Director of Communications and Marketing

Claire Valente, WWCS Board Chair and Assumption Parent

Kay White, WWCS Board Member

Committee members met monthly, with various subcommittees meeting in between larger group meetings, either alone or with various WWCS constituencies. The committee sought to organize the planning around 'pillars,' with the initial discussions trying to identify major areas around which to plan over the next 3 to 5 years. The following areas resulted as organizational pillars for our discussions:

- I. Faith and Identity
- II. Academic Excellence
- III. Student Life
- IV. Enrollment and Community Building
- V. Sustainable Stewardship

Each of the pillars was tasked to a subcommittee to draft language around principles, priorities, and commitments, working from the previous Strategic Plan, accreditation documents, board discussions, and parent surveys. We then sought feedback from several targeted groups within the WWCS community (including a visioning exercise with the Faculty), with the idea of iteratively refining and improving the language in the document that follows here. In these discussions, we asked groups to talk about what the WWCS is already doing to work towards these commitments and priorities. We also sought ideas for specific action items that might be accomplished over the next 3-5 years, and how these will set the WWCS up for success as we move towards 2030.

What follows is the result of these discussions: a Strategy and Vision Statement for the WWCS in 2030, and the five aforementioned pillars which will help us to build towards that vision in the short-term future. Each pillar begins with commitments and guiding principles, then outlines tactics to be implemented. Objectives, timelines, and potential measures of success can be found in an appendix at the end of the plan.

Strategy and Vision Statement

Strategy 1: Magnify the Lord: WE ARE REVERENT

Vision: In 2030, we will celebrate our identity as a mission of the Church; provide inspirational and welcoming faith experiences (including peer disciple groups and pilgrimages) for staff, students, and families; have an increased priest/religious presence at both schools; be closely integrated with the parishes; and be a center for Catholic culture broadly understood.

Strategy 2: Be Who We Are and Be That Well: WE ARE FAITHFUL

Vision: In 2030, we will exemplify an engaged, close-knit, welcoming, and authentically Christian community; focus on our strengths and use the talents of our parents, parishes, and alumni to set us apart; ensure every element of our schools is mission-driven through a rigorous review process; have sufficient support staff for our faculty, including technology consultants, paraprofessionals, counselors, and volunteer coordinators at both schools; and have opportunities for connection for alumni of all ages.

Strategy 3: Educate for Vocation: WE ARE SCHOLARLY

Vision: In 2030, we will provide rigorous academics in small class settings; engage in long-term academic and career planning for all students; have an established alumni mentorship and internship program; and offer student-centered experiences and student-designed service projects which provide leadership opportunities.

Strategy 4: Creatively Enrich: WE ARE IMAGINATIVE

Vision: In 2030, we will be innovative in expanding beyond the academic core, including technology electives at multiple grade levels, a robust K-12 language program, after school clubs and mini-courses showcasing the talents of community members, and continued excellence in athletics and the fine arts.

Strategy 5: Embrace a Growth Mentality: WE ARE HOPEFUL

Vision: In 2030, we will have a \$10 million dedicated scholarship fund; enroll at least 450 students, the diversity of which reflects our parish communities and the greater Walla Walla valley ; benefit from a vibrant international student program; and maintain an active in-house development office, legacy club, and alumni outreach program.

Strategy 6: Unify the campus: WE ARE ONE COMMUNITY

Vision: In 2030, we will be located on one pre-K or K to 12 campus that is a destination for the entire Catholic community. This campus will include a chapel, performance space, community library and alumni space, modernized locker rooms and a community fitness center, updated cafeteria for parish and community events, and modern educational technology.

Pillar 1: Faith and Identity

Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others. (St. John Paul II)

Catholic education is a vital part of the teaching mission of the Church. In every aspect of its academic and extracurricular programs, school life, and activities, Walla Walla Catholic Schools exist to foster and strengthen personal relationships with Jesus Christ and to be a communal witness to the Gospel message of love of God and neighbor. We develop the whole person by engaging in prayer and devotion, teaching wisdom and truth, fostering leadership, instilling discipline and responsibility, prioritizing ethical and moral behavior, promoting family interactions, and seeking opportunities for compassionate service.

The schools are committed to the following principles:

- Being intentional about cultivating and improving the Christian formation of our students and school community
- Providing thorough Catholic teaching AND encouraging the development of strong personal faith, virtue, and a Christian worldview that informs students' scholarly pursuits, social interactions, extracurricular participation, and community involvement.
- Providing opportunities, as a ministry of the Church, for all associated with the schools to be inspired to deepen their relationship with Christ, particularly through involvement with our parishes and local community, with the aim of impacting the culture at large.
- Encouraging every person associated with Walla Walla Catholic Schools whether student, teacher, staff, parent, or friend, to show and feel Christ's love in school relationships and activities.

We will focus our efforts in the next three to five years in the following tactical areas:

- Parish Integration. Bring director of religious education and youth ministries into the schools, increase coordination with adult religious education and social concerns committees.
- Personal engagement and vocation. Increase presence of priests and religious during the school day and at evening events. Offer programs on current key faith issues for faculty, parents, and older students, including peer faith groups.
- Cultivation of virtue. Creation or enhancement of programs (such as the Virtues program) at both schools which emphasize application of the faith to real world situations and also enhance and reward Christian behavior within the schools by staff and students alike.
- Service learning. Revise service opportunities to increase student leadership and engagement; develop the senior service project as a capstone course to integrate theological and academic study with sharing Christ's love with community members.

Pillar 2: Academic Excellence

Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold. (Proverbs 3:12-14)

The Walla Walla Catholic Schools are committed to providing a strong, well-rounded Catholic education that motivates students to realize and achieve their full academic potential. Through close relationships with faculty, staff and parents, students will have the resources necessary to build a foundation for lifelong learning, productive community engagement, and a fulfilling vocation after graduation.

The schools are committed to the following principles:

- Providing a rigorous, innovative, and Catholic-centered curriculum in the academic core subjects (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Theology) that works with students at all academic levels
- Providing students with the support and counsel of faculty and staff as they discern possible paths of life after their time in the WWCS, and ensuring that students are competitively situated for their post-graduation choices
- Providing faculty and staff with the necessary resources to excel as educators and mentors
- Providing parents with consistent, timely, and transparent communications regarding student progress and expectations
- Providing students with the technological resources and acumen to succeed both in and out of the classroom

We will focus our efforts in the next three to five years in the following tactical areas:

- Curricular review. Carry out a thorough examination (involving faculty, staff, and parents) of one core area per year, including current trends and innovations in pedagogy
- Post-Graduation planning. Implement a 'Post-Graduation Plan' that intentionally scaffolds and develops over all four years at DeSales, with input from counselors, teachers, and parents. Develop alumni mentorship and internship program which provides career exposure and helps students discern their vocation.
- Support staff. Prioritize and provide support staff as necessary to allow for differentiated instruction where feasible; possibilities include a math specialist, technology consultant, Special Education coordinator, paraprofessionals for larger classes.
- Language study. Develop a robust language program, initially beginning in sixth grade, with the goal of beginning earlier eventually, and continuing with in-person instruction throughout high school.

Pillar 3: Student Life

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. (1 Cor. 12:4-6)

In keeping with the mission of Catholic education, the Walla Walla Catholic Schools are committed to growing the whole student, mind, body, and spirit, throughout their education, and to providing a firm foundation for lifelong interests, use of God-given talents, and productive engagement. By providing a breadth of electives and extracurricular activities, we seek to foster a rich and diverse involvement across the student body that reflects our shared Catholic values. Students will be encouraged to participate broadly, to take personal risks, and to support the contributions of their peers. Faculty, staff, coaches, and parents will be encouraged to support the students in these endeavors through flexibility that does not compromise academic integrity. All organized social interaction, extracurricular activities, and athletics should reinforce and demonstrate inclusivity, personal growth, and Christian ethics, within the school and to the public at large.

The schools are committed to the following principles:

- Offering a dynamic and robust slate of electives that allow students to discover and develop their God-given talents beyond the academic core.
- Establishing student clubs and activities that capitalize on the talents of our parish and community members and broader parish and community offerings.
- Maintaining a vital, inclusive, and competitive athletics program which exemplifies Christian values and provides a variety of accessible opportunities to the whole student body.
- Providing opportunities for students to live out their faith by making meaningful contributions to their schools and the greater community through ongoing and intentional service.

We will focus our efforts in the next three to five years in the following tactical areas:

- Electives. Assess current and aspirational elective classroom offerings and extracurricular activities via surveys of students, parents, and faculty, in order to determine demand, rotation, overall contribution to the WWCS mission, and feasibility and sustainability.
- Student clubs. Develop mechanisms, such as stipends for faculty and parent volunteers, outreach to the parish community, and engagement opportunities for high school students, to encourage broader creation of and participation in student clubs at Assumption, initially at the middle-school level.
- Athletics and Physical Health. Conduct a review of student, parent, and faculty satisfaction with current athletics and physical education programs, with the aim of identifying possible new sports or electives and any needed updates to current practices
- Social integration. Employ a counselor assigned specifically to Assumption to work on social issues, integration, and additional counseling matters.

Pillar 4: Enrollment & Community Building

The future is, most of all, in the hands of those people who recognize the other as a 'you' and themselves as part of an 'us.' We all need each other. (Pope Francis)

Walla Walla Catholic Schools' strategic plan for enrollment is driven by our vision to become the first choice for Catholic families and other families in our community looking for a Christ-centered education in the Walla Walla Valley. We strive to provide a high quality Catholic education to all families who are committed to both our vision of education and support of our school communities. We recognize that healthy, growing enrollment ensures sustainability of our schools. Our ideal enrollment composition will reflect the diversity of our parishes and community; our ideal enrollment level will maximize course offerings and extracurricular activities, while maintaining the benefits of small class size and strong community.

The schools are committed to the following principles:

- Ensuring our programs, policies, practices, marketing communication efforts, and school culture authentically represent our core principles of being inspired, reverent, imaginative, scholarly, humble, charitable, faithful and hopeful.
- Focusing in every interaction on building loyalty through thoughtful, proven, community-centered actions, including enhancing understanding of changing family needs and educational desires, in order to retain our current students and families.
- Creatively strengthening our relationships with our school families, parishes, alumni, and the greater Walla Walla community to engage them in the life and mission of our schools, so that WWCS is viewed as the best place to invest in the future of life's greatest gifts, our children.
- Enhancing development efforts to ensure the affordability of our schools.

We will focus our efforts in the next three to five years in the following tactical areas:

- Communication. Actively and continually engage in creative development and recruitment of additional students and treasures by communicating the strategic direction and value proposition of the schools to our parents, parishes, alumni, friends, and the broader Walla Walla community.
- Goal-setting and performance reviews. Revise and implement goal-oriented annual review process for president, principal, faculty, and staff that align with our values, mission, vision, and strategic plan.
- Parish relations. Improve the schools' visibility in the parishes, by establishing a physical presence in parish halls with school news and events information, coordinating calendars, and raising visibility of student service at parish and other community events.
- Alumni and Friend Relations. Prioritize our relationship with alumni and friends so as to dramatically impact their viewpoint of WWCS; first line efforts will include providing a quarterly newsletter, hosting alumni events twice per year, and regularly recognizing outstanding alumni at the schools.
- Affordability. Initiate an ongoing review of tuition rates and plans, looking for innovative ways to aid all families, with special attention to multiple-child families, break-even points, and alternative models used at successful private and diocesan schools.

Pillar 5: Sustainable Stewardship

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. (1 Peter 4:10)

WWCS must have vital infrastructure in place to fulfill our mission, to operate with excellence, and to resource the expectations established in this Strategic plan. Our schools have been blessed by the generosity and stewardship of previous and current generations as evidenced by our facilities, grounds, technology, and financial viability. We will continue to manage and steward these areas with vision in order to successfully and sustainably position Walla Walla Catholic Schools for the future.

The schools are committed to the following principles:

- Ensuring school facilities are safe, resourced to support academic and student life programs, and provide a comfortable, welcoming environment.
- Using responsible life cycle management for our school facilities and educational equipment.
- Maintaining and enhancing our grounds and athletic fields to ensure a safe, serviceable, and enjoyable experience for participants and spectators.
- Providing appropriate and current technology to enhance and support learning across all grades and to improve operations and efficiencies within our schools.
- Ensuring sufficient funding streams are in place so that tuition is affordable, financial aid needs for qualified students are met, and teacher compensation is competitive.

We will focus our efforts in the next three to five years in the following tactical areas:

- Facilities study. Evaluate our current facilities for prioritization of immediate needs and to determine feasibility of move to one campus.
- Building vision. Once feasibility study has been completed, commission drawings for the overall campus including desired additions and remodels, such as a chapel at DeSales, a performance space, locker rooms and a fitness center, and a re-envisioning of DeSales library.
- Endowment. Bring Director of Advancement in-house and task him or her with the creation of a new development plan involving up-to-date development strategies, with a focus on hard scholarship dollars.
- Technology plan. Carry out a collaborative review of our current and aspirational technological resources, and develop a plan and cost estimate for updated infrastructure, including smart classrooms.
- Capital campaign. Carry out a capital campaign, led by the new Director of Advancement, to fund improvements and new building(s).