

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pope St. John XXIII STEM Academy Enrollment Potential Study

CONCLUSIONS

1. Community demographics show fairly significant overall growth for the long term while the child and school-age population has been experiencing lower birth rates, declining public school enrollment (though some loss due to leaving for homeschool, private schools), and low to modest school-age census projections in identified city and zip code areas indicates a potential challenge for enrollment in the future.
2. The Catholic mission and identity of the Academy is clearly evident with a strong sense of “family” and a community of faith.
3. Continuing to expand and integrate the STEM approach throughout the curriculum will be essential for ongoing success.
4. The mission of Pope St. John XXIII STEM Academy is clear - to serve Pope St. John XXIII Parish Family and local communities with their diverse populations with high quality Catholic education based on a STEM foundation.
5. Administrative leadership is committed and effective in moving the Academy forward.
6. In general, parents and parishioners understand the value of Catholic school education and their Academy as a parish ministry. There is a mixed message in parishioner perceptions that while they view it as a parish school, fewer see it as an important ministry that the parish should do more in terms of support.
7. Given the potential for new students within the “new” parish, the current enrollment capacity of 60% (89 empty seats at the time of the data request) could be increased given some very intentional, creative, and aggressive marketing and recruitment initiatives internally.
8. A full-time Development and Marketing Director on the Academy’s staff is a significant and vital element for current and future progress and success.
9. Building enrollment through effective marketing needs to focus on why families are not enrolling: cost/affordability, lack of information about the Academy, quality of facilities, distance, location, transportation.
10. Families perceive the tuition for the Academy as high, even though it is less costly than other schools in the area. The Academy’s value proposition may not be communicated well and promoted clearly and persistently, and/or, “affordability” perceived by families is based solely on the tuition rate.
11. Finances are an issue and maintaining a balanced annual operating budget is an essential and necessary priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Objective: Initiate a comprehensive strategic growth planning process for Pope St. John XXIII STEM Academy.**
 - a. Align the strategic growth plan with mission and vision of the parish as well as the Academy.
 - b. Engage Academy, parish, and community leaders in the planning process to leverage their experience and expertise.

2. **Objective: Develop and implement a plan to build, enhance, expand Pope St. John XXIII STEM Academy's place as an essential ministry of Pope St. John XXIII Parish community.**
 - a. Create ways to make the Academy known within the parish and its various "communities."
 - b. Identify ways to invite and incorporate parish members to share their culture, events, activities with the children at the Academy. In return, identify how the Academy can engage with the parish when it has unique celebrations and events.
3. **Objective: Ensure the excellence and rigor of Pope St. John XXIII STEM Academy's academic program through appropriate metrics and data-based information.**
 - a. Ensure the academic program is strong, challenging, and rigorous, and meeting the needs of its students and "Catholic" in all that the Academy does.
 - b. Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each grade to measure and improve student outcomes and teacher effectiveness.
 - c. Use the "*National Standards and Benchmarks of Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*" as the foundation for the strategic growth plan.
4. **Objective: Create an enrollment management plan to build enrollment to a minimum of 80-85% of the Academy's enrollment capacity.**
 - a. Use the enrollment potential data and demographics as the pathway to focus recruitment efforts in targeted neighborhoods.
 - b. Craft a compelling value proposition that clarifies the Academy's mission and benefits.
 - c. Initiate effective and segmented marketing and recruitment initiatives: Parent Partner program, use of Marketing/Development Director time for recruitment, internal marketing team, an Academy graduate profile, highlighting graduate/alumni success.
5. **Objective: In collaboration with parish leadership, develop a master facility plan for the Academy.**
 - a. Initiate the creation of a short and long-term master facility plan.
 - b. Develop the plan in collaboration with parish leadership as part of the overall parish pastoral planning process.
6. **Objective: Operate Pope St. John XXIII STEM Academy on a balanced annual budget.**
 - a. Develop a balanced annual operating budget based on a multi-year financial projection process.
 - b. Use the financial analysis of this study to review and adjust the Academy's funding model: increase development funding; increase tuition to better reflect the cost per pupil as assistance/scholarship funding increases; create the case for ongoing parish investment.
 - c. Utilize the financial projection planning tool as the metric to assess the financial status and progress as the Academy moves to balanced annual budgets.
7. **Objective: Explore and initiate a major capital campaign to build a financial foundation for the future of the Academy.**
 - a. Continue to expand development initiatives and efforts creating the donor base necessary to support a campaign.
 - b. Develop a strong case statement as the foundation for a successful campaign.
8. **Objective: Consider and explore the potential of transitioning to a different governance structure and leadership model.**
 - a. If the need arises, initiate a dialogue with parish and archdiocesan leadership to consider a different ownership/governance model.