



Immaculate Conception Grade School Elmhurst, Illinois

Strategic Plan 2025-2030

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Leadership

Pastor: Very Rev. Thomas Paul V.F., K.H.S.

Parochial Vicar: Rev. Jeremy Leganski

Principal: Mrs. Sharon Meyer

Asst. Principal: Mrs. Mary Koykar

School Board

Mr. James Schrik, Past President

Mr. JT Vanderkamp, President

Mr. Conor Bruen, Vice President

Mr. Alec Block

Mr. Peter Duveneck

Mrs. Michelle Harken

Mrs. Erica Landis

Mrs. Beata Miljanovic

Mrs. Stefanie Tenenbaum



Mission

Embracing our Catholic identity, Immaculate Conception Grade School ("ICGS"), as an educational ministry of Immaculate Conception Parish, forms our students on the foundations of faith, family, and academic excellence. We teach our students to embody these values, to center their life on Christ, and to strive for their greatest academic potential.

Vision

Immaculate Conception Grade School envisions a Catholic community where academic excellence and spiritual growth go hand in hand. We partner with parents to prepare our students for high school and beyond. Our goal is to challenge and to inspire our students to become thoughtful, faithful leaders who will learn, lead, and serve throughout their lives.

Our Values

As Catholics, we believe that the human person is a unity of body, mind, and spirit. Immaculate Conception Grade School seeks to maximize each student's potential through a rigorous academic curriculum, enriching extracurricular activities, and transformative faith formation opportunities. All aspects of our school community are geared towards forming the whole child. While students are challenged to meet high academic expectations, we also recognize and cherish each child as unique and look to serve their individual needs.

As Catholics, we believe in the solid, moral formation of our students rooted in universal moral truths. At ICGS, we believe there is such a thing as right and wrong, and we form our students accordingly. As such, we create an environment of faith, love, and friendship where every member of our community is treated with the dignity of being created in the image and likeness of God.

As Catholics, we believe in solidarity and subsidiarity. We value our community, and our parents are deeply involved in their children's education. It is important that parents feel supported, informed, and equipped as they raise their children. We believe parents are the most important and primary educators of their children. Every home is a "domestic Church," and a Catholic education is meant to supplement everything that parents do to form the hearts, minds, and spirits of their children.

As Catholics, we recognize our call to share our gifts with others. God has given us gifts, and the ways we grow are not meant for building up ourselves but rather for building up God's kingdom. All students are encouraged to share God's love through service. Together with our high school, Immaculate Conception Catholic Prep, we share the vision that Immaculate Conception Grade School students will be prepared to learn, to lead, and to serve throughout their lives.

In summary, at ICGS, students are more than students. They are beloved children of God whom we seek to nurture, challenge, and inspire. ICGS is more than a school: it is a family.

Our Plan

Immaculate Conception Grade School created this strategic plan to reinforce our Mission, to remain steadfastly aligned with our Values, and to propel our school toward its Vision. In 2024-2025, we celebrated our 125th Anniversary. In this strategic plan, we prepare for another 125 years of excellent Catholic education.

The plan addresses seven key Pillars of our school; each with supporting initiatives and metrics. The Pillars are:

- Catholic Identity
- Academic Excellence
- Student Experience
- Leadership and Administration
- Campus Community
- Facilities and Maintenance
- Financial Wellness

Leadership committees, composed of ICGS School Board members, school administration, and our Parish Pastor and Parochial Vicar developed each Pillar.

Our Pillars

The vision set forth in this plan for Immaculate Conception Grade School is fully aligned with our mission and philosophy. We have identified the following fundamental goals to guide us.

Catholic Identity. Uphold our Catholic identity as the foundation of every aspect of our school as we encourage our students and families to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ

Academic Excellence. Recognize the individual needs of our students and challenge them with a rigorous, relevant, and Christ-centered curriculum in order to reach their greatest academic potential

Student Experience. Ensure social, emotional, and extracurricular programs create a well-rounded student experience that fosters personal growth, leadership, and service

Leadership and Administration. Support the faculty and staff who are paramount to the success of our school

Campus Community. Establish an environment in which parents, students, faculty, and staff are welcomed into active participation in school events and functions

Facilities and Maintenance. Develop and maintain the facilities in a way that supports the mission of the school and parish

Financial Wellness. Ensure long-term financial sustainability by maintaining a feasible financial plan that supports both current operational needs and future growth

Catholic Identity

*Uphold our Catholic identity as the foundation of every aspect of our school
as we encourage our students and families to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ*

Objective 1

Strengthen students' spiritual growth and commitment to Catholic values in daily life

Goals

- Learning in an age-appropriate manner to make judgements based on religion and moral truths
- Increase opportunities for students to gather in "faith families" to increase faith sharing and community among grades
- Use modern faith-based curricula that connects Catholic teachings with real-life applications
- Foster strong partnerships between ICGS, IC Catholic Prep, and IC Parish to enhance students' spiritual experiences and sense of belonging in the Church

Objective 2

Collaborate with Immaculate Conception parish community and its families to model the Catholic faith and foster family and parish connections

Goals

- Promote weekly Mass attendance (both Friday and Sunday Mass) and involvement
- Encourage parish-sponsored service activities and faith formation
- Provide families with tools to continue spiritual development at home by leveraging digital platforms such as faith-based discussions via podcasts, social media, YouTube, and FORMED.
- Faculty, staff, teachers, and parents lead by exemplifying strong, virtuous Catholic values

Evaluation

- Mass attendance of families at Friday school Mass and Sunday Mass
- Number of grade school families who register for a free FORMED subscription
- Grade school parent attendance in church-related initiatives

Objective 3

Provide religion teachers with both catechetical and prayer resources to ensure they are helping students not only learn things about Jesus but also to help them know Jesus personally

Goals

- Display prominently a variety of visual symbols representing core Catholic values in academic environments
- Supplement lessons in religion class with prayer experiences
- Incorporate faith into every classroom (e.g. Church history, faith & science, Catholic literature)
- Help students recognize that faith is a journey and something to be constantly invested in (especially beyond grade school and Confirmation)

Academic Excellence

Recognize the individual needs of our students and challenge them with a rigorous, relevant, and Christ-centered curriculum in order to reach their greatest academic potential

Objective 1

Establish and sustain a comprehensive, rigorous, and engaging academic curriculum that spans from early childhood through middle school

Goals

- Focused professional development on best practices related to curriculum alignment, differentiation, and rigor
- Re-evaluation of curriculum through feedback and intentional curricular updates
- Regular assessment of instructional materials
- Comprehensive articulation between junior high curriculum and high school curriculum

Objective 2

Measurable increase in reading and writing proficiency as demonstrated by formative assessments, standardized tests, and teacher observations

Goals

- 80% students will meet their I-Ready targeted reading goal, with continued evaluation based on I-Ready target goals
- Regularly monitor student progress through assessments (one each quarter) to identify areas of need and adjust instruction accordingly
- Targeted reading and writing skills instruction aligned by scope and sequence
- Provide ongoing training for educators on effective strategies for teaching literacy

Objective 3

Continue to support grade-level proficiency as well as advanced learners in mathematical and English coursework. Struggling learners and advanced learners supported through differentiated instruction and targeted interventions.

Goals

- Utilize research-proven instructional practices for mathematical problem-solving
- Provide ongoing training for educators on effective strategies for teaching math to diverse learners
- Regularly monitor student progress through assessments (one each chapter) to identify areas of need and adjust skills instruction accordingly
- Offer targeted support to struggling students through differentiated instruction and small group interventions via interventionist
- Develop a research plan surrounding the addition of a high school English offering to eighth grade students

Academic Excellence

Objective 4

Continue supporting STEM curriculum

Goals

- Integrate technology and digital literacy purposefully and seamlessly into the classroom
- Focus STEM curriculum on scope and sequence of specific skills by grade
- Design interdisciplinary STEM units that incorporate real-world applications and problem-based learning
- Provide ongoing training for teachers to enhance their STEM teaching skills and knowledge
- Continue to survey new technology options and incorporate to curriculum where appropriate

Objective 5

Purposely maintain a Social Emotional Wellness (“SEW”) Curriculum rooted in the Catholic faith (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making)

Goals

- Equip students with necessary skills to thrive within and beyond school
- Adopt a recognized SEW framework and align with school values
- Directly teach SEW skills by purposely embedding developmentally appropriate SEW skills into existing academic content areas through classroom activities, discussions, and project-based learning
- Provide ongoing professional development for teachers on effective SEW strategies and classroom management techniques
- Collaborate with families by providing resources to support their children’s social-emotional development at home

Student Experience

Ensure social, emotional, and extracurricular programs create a well-rounded student experience that fosters personal growth, leadership, and service

Objective 1

Enable students to discover and develop their strengths and interests through a broad range of extracurricular activities

Goals

- Offer a diverse mix of extracurricular programs, including athletics, fine arts, STEM, and leadership clubs to engage students of all interests and abilities
- Track student involvement to identify gaps and expand offerings where interest and need exist
- Promote inclusivity by ensuring opportunities for all students regardless of financial need, logistical barriers, or skill level

Evaluation

- Use enhanced tracking of participation (by grade level and program type)
- Increase participation rates across extracurricular activities
- Conduct student interest survey annually to assess engagement and identify new activity opportunities
- Add new extracurricular opportunities based on student demand and participation trends

Objective 2

Support high-quality programs that encourage skill development, teamwork, and personal growth

Goals

- Invest in high-quality coaching, mentorship, and training to help students develop skills in sports, academics, and arts
- Establish structured feedback (e.g., surveys, evaluations) to continuously improve extracurricular offerings
- Recognize and celebrate individual and team achievements across activities to encourage participation and excellence

Evaluation

- Conduct regular coach/leader evaluations to assess program quality and effectiveness
- Annually survey student and parent feedback on extracurricular experiences and implementing an action plan based on results
- Implement recognition programs for students excelling in extracurricular activities

Student Experience

Objective 3

Instill a commitment to faith-based service within the school and broader community

Goals

- Expand service-based learning opportunities, such as the Day of Service, parish involvement, and community service programs
- Integrate service expectations into student organizations/teams and leadership roles to reinforce Catholic values
- Partner with local organizations and church ministries to provide meaningful service opportunities for students

Evaluation

- Increase student participation in service activities (measured annually)
- Establish new partnerships with local charities and ministries to expand service opportunities
- Incorporate service-learning reflections into student leadership programs to assess impact and engagement

Leadership and Administration

Support the faculty and staff who are paramount to the success of our school

Objective 1

Facilitate the alignment of our faculty and staff with our Mission, Vision, and Values.

Goals

- Provide orientation for new employees and ongoing updates for existing employees to ensure active participation and alignment of ICGS goals
- Acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of faculty and staff who exemplify the ICGS Mission and Values
- Encourage teacher coaching and team building by assigning mentors

Evaluation

- Maintain stable employee participation rates in orientation and professional development sessions
- Observe team-building and coaching initiatives to measure their impact on collaboration and growth

Objective 2

Enhance teacher retention to maintain stability and consistency in teaching excellence

Goals

- Use retention bonuses to invest in teachers through increased take-home compensation
- Increase teacher salary to a more competitive base as compared to other area schools
- Maintain records detailing teacher turnover rates and retention data to analyze for trends

Evaluation

- Maintain stable teacher turnover and retention rates

Objective 3

Provide professional development opportunities to ensure teachers have the appropriate tools for academic excellence

Goals

- Supply financial resources for the long-term professional development of faculty
- Design an annual professional development plan

Evaluation

- Assess professional plan effectiveness and oversee their implementation

Leadership and Administration

Objective 4

Encourage opportunities for faith growth and development

Goals

- Provide a retreat day with faith-based development goals at the beginning of each school year
- Promote participation in diocesan and parish missions, studies, and days of reflection
- Promote participation in diocesan ongoing formation programs

Campus Community

Establish an environment in which parents, students, faculty and staff are welcomed into active participation in school events and functions

Objective 1

Strengthen the partnership between parents and the school community by fostering a supportive environment that promotes student well-being and success

Goals

- Drive connection through communication and coordination of parent-specific activities and/or events
- Continue to collaborate with the Parents' Club to create engagement opportunities for parents
- Increase awareness and encourage parents and students to attend weekly mass
- Engage parents in support roles at school events
- Support student participation and attendance at sporting events

Evaluation

- One parent education event organized per school year which aligns with school goals

Objective 2

Grow the engagement with the ICGS alumni network and create a connected environment which inspires current students and supports graduates

Goals

- Encourage alumni to remain invested in support roles at school events
- Continue to actively recognize accomplishments, accolades, and successes of ICGS graduates
- Create opportunities to acknowledge graduates who attend ICGS weekly mass
- Invite an ICGS alumnus to visit junior high classrooms annually

Evaluation

- Including section in Knightly News for alumni recognition on bi-monthly cadence
- Develop "ICGS Alumni in the News" communication to be shared via email distribution list and social media

Campus Community

Objective 3

Support and partner with campus security for a healthy campus environment

Goals

- Continue to meet the diocesan requirements for safe environment standards and practices
- Ensure ongoing alignment with guidelines for faculty and staff
- Evaluate appropriate resources to support faculty and staff preparedness
- Support campus security as needed

Evaluation

- Conduct annual reviews of support resources for faculty and staff preparedness
- Review diocesan safe environment standards and practices to ensure ICGS alignment prior to start of each school year
- Facilitate bi-monthly meeting with campus security to discuss potential updates or changes necessary

Facilities and Maintenance

Develop and maintain the facilities in a way that supports the mission of our school and parish

Objective 1

Design, develop, and/or remodel facilities of the school to ensure the safety of everyone on campus

Goals

- Continued review of ICGS's educational space in order to ensure most efficient use
- Establish regular maintenance and refurbishment cycle for classrooms
- Initiate regular maintenance and refurbishment cycle for technology items with rapid deterioration in useful life

Objective 2

Evaluate school facilities for continual growth and expansion

Goals

- Review current use of facilities for Preschool programs to better understand how to support program growth
- Evaluate current use of facilities for extended care program and how to support program growth
- Continual assessment of useful life of facilities for maintaining and expanding educational opportunities

Objective 3

Develop plan for regular evaluation of facilities' ability to serve the campus and maintain efficient energy

Goals

- Use cost estimates for window replacement to develop fundraising efforts
- Identify opportunities to increase sustainability efforts within school campus facilities

Financial Wellness

Ensure long-term financial sustainability by maintaining a feasible financial plan that supports both current operational needs and future growth

Objective 1

Generate and allocate the financial resources necessary to sustain and improve the school's operational, facilities, and programs

Goals

- Annual identification of financial resource requirements and capital improvement needs that can be aligned with fundraising targets
- Establish a formal communication process between the School Board and Parents Club to enhance transparency and alignment of financial resources and requirements
- Increase the ICGS endowment by 50% over the next five years to strengthen long-term financial stability
- Develop and implement user-friendly electronic donation tools to make online giving more accessible

Evaluation

- Endowment reaches 50% growth by May 2030 (compared to May 1, 2025)
- Regular meetings between School Board and Parents Club leadership to align on financial priorities
- Establish clear reporting process to track and communicate how Annual Appeal and Parents Club donations meet funding needs
- Completion of research and feasibility reporting for the creation of a second endowment focused on supplementing teacher salaries

Objective 2

Ensure consistent, balanced enrollment across all grade levels to support financial sustainability while maintaining an optimal student experience

Goals

- Maintain stable enrollment levels that prevent decreased enrollment while avoiding overcrowding
- Develop a board-led exit interview process to understand reasons for student departures and identify opportunities to enhance retention
- Allocate additional resources to marketing to further enable strong demand and a well-managed admissions pipeline

Financial Wellness

Evaluation

- Enrollment remains stable and full across all grade levels, aligning to ICGS' capacity and class size goals in (i.e., 2029-2030 enrollment comparable to 2024-2025 school year at 540 to 580 students)
- Implemented structured process for student and family interviews to track trends in enrollment and retention
- Support marketing efforts with additional budget or fundraising allocations to sustain strong enrollment demand

Objective 3

Assess the feasibility of a dedicated endowment to supplement teacher salaries and support faculty retention

Goals

- Conduct research on salary disparities between ICGS, the Diocese of Joliet, and D205 public schools to inform long-term plan
- Develop a five-year plan to grow a new endowment that can begin supplementing teacher salaries to close gap between ICGS and local public/private schools
- Build a network of peer Catholic schools to share best practices and collaborative strategies for teacher compensation

Evaluation

- Completion of salary disparity research to establish benchmarks and define a long-term funding goal
- Develop a structured growth plan for the new endowment and complete review by the School Board within five years
- Establish connections with other diocesan schools to benchmark teacher salary strategies and best practices

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- **Catholic Identity and Faith Formation** - strong emphasis on values-based education and spiritual development
- **Academic Excellence** - high test scores (top 15% in nation) and strong curriculum across core subjects
- **Robust Extracurricular Programs** - competitive athletics, clubs, Destination Imagination, leadership, and service opportunities
- **Safe and Secure Campus** - on-campus security measures, including an armed security professional, provide a safe learning environment

Weaknesses (areas to watch)

- **Limited special education resources** - lacks the same level of support as District 205 for students with special needs; may limit students and families from choosing ICGS
- **Cost of tuition** - affordability remains a barrier for some families considering private education

Opportunities

- **Religious Education (RE) pipeline** - strong potential to transition RE students into full-time IC enrollment
- **Personalized learning experiences** - families seeking more personalized learning experience, and increased teacher-parent engagement may find ICGS attractive
- **Strong early education program** - high-quality pre-K and full-day kindergarten offerings can create entry point for long-term enrollment
- **Collaboration with IC Catholic Prep and Visitation Grade School** - opportunities for shared programs, resource alignment, and enhanced student experiences

Threats

- **Strong competition from District D205** - high-performing public schools offer a compelling, tuition-free alternative
- **Declining Mass attendance & Catholic school enrollment** - fewer families prioritizing Catholic education or regularly attending Mass could impact long-term enrollment