

State of the School

Given by Paula Smith

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Why do we do a State of the School Address? I don't know too many schools that do them. However, I believe it is important. Our State of the School Address is used to *assess* our school and how it is doing at this present time. Each year we have evaluated our school in a variety of ways. This is important as well. **How do we assess our school?** We ask our community. We ask our students in our student voice surveys. We ask our parents in parent surveys. We ask our teachers and staff through surveys, meetings, reflections, goal setting and committee work.

Assessing or evaluating our school is just like assessing anything else. Previously, we have reviewed our school by how we stack up to a variety of standards:

- One, **our mission: to develop character, knowledge and spirit** in our students and community by living the Catholic faith through sharing the sacraments, promoting academic excellence, and engaging in service.
- We also compare our school to the **National standards and benchmarks for effective Catholic schools from NCEA**,
- We have gone through the **National Blue Ribbon expectations**,
- We also examine our school through **the accreditation process with AdvancED, our accrediting agency**, which is now called Cognia,
- **Financial analysis** is also an ongoing evaluation process with our Business Manager, Finance Council, School Council, our Director of Finance for Catholic Schools, and the Diocesan Business Office. They all regularly review our finances.
- In addition, we review our own **strategic plan and CSIP** (which is our Continuous School Improvement Plan), or our yearly goals.

Hopefully you have seen a **graphic** this year of our **CSIP**, listing our five main goals for the year.

NCEA (National Catholic Education Association) provides us with **the National standards and benchmarks for effective Catholic schools** that we use as a basis for our strategic plan and CSIP. Just as many of your businesses have set standards and requirements to follow, NCEA standards are our starting point.

From the many standards NCEA has for Catholic schools, our strategic planning sub-committee chose to focus on particular ones in our **strategic plan**. They choose those goals with the help of faculty and parents. From accreditation surveys to more recent surveys we have always used parent and faculty input in combination with best educational practices and the standards to steer our direction for school improvement.

The **parent survey** that you took in the fall has been reviewed by our marketing sub-committee and they have recently presented the results to our School Council. They will also share those results with our faculty and staff and of course, with you, our parents. Those areas that they feel need to be addressed will be taken to our strategic planning sub-committee, which is made up of faculty, staff, and parents and they will take that information and incorporate it into next year's CSIP.

The NCEA standards also include operational vitality. The number of Catholic Schools in our nation are greatly decreasing so the importance of being fiscally responsible is more necessary than ever.

At Christ the King School, we have made cuts of over \$20,000 annually in the past several years just in areas of internet, telephone, and copiers, and we have added over \$320,000 in additional revenue by expanding our preschool and extra-curricular programs.

It costs approximately \$8,800 a year to educate each child at CKS and our tuition next year will be approximately \$6,200, increasing \$20 a month. Almost 30% of the cost to educate your child is covered by programs (such as preschool, EDP, and Faith 1st), and fundraising (such as Oktoberfest, Sip and Shop, and BBF) and a subsidy of over \$350,000 given to the school by the church.

Our **four sub-committees** of the School Council have grown and each one of the four sub-committees presents to the School Council annually. Creating the sub-committees started from our parent survey during our last accreditation. The survey results recognized a stronger desire for shared leadership. And establishing more roles of leadership for our parents, has allowed for more participation and help in accomplishing our goals at CKS.

- Our **Strategic Planning Sub-committee** uses input from all stakeholders to analyze and put together our annual plans or CSIP.
- The **Finance Sub-committee** has analyzed our fundraising numbers, particularly Oktoberfest and PTO fundraising. This year they have reviewed supply fees, and EDP costs are on our next agenda.
- The **Marketing Sub-committee** has made improvements in our website, our Google Search results, and worked on our current parent survey to help establish a clear marketing plan. The **Policies & Procedures Sub-committee** has worked to clarify several topics in our handbook, including E-days, discipline, student devices, student support plans, and uniforms.

We have accomplished a great deal and appreciate everyone's hard work on all our sub-committees.

From the surveys, we review input to see what we do well, but we also focus on where we can grow. From our survey we learned that our families love lots of things about CKS as displayed in the **word cloud**: our community, our faith, our teachers, and much more. There are also things

we can improve upon: sharing how bullying is addressed at our school, how we are working to help our cafeteria serve more variety and healthier options, and how we can communicate better.

Q13 What do you love about CKS?



Surveys from students allow our children to have a voice in the direction of their school and their learning. This has provided teachers with great feedback and helps them to understand that the classroom is a team effort where relationships are built. Conducting student voice surveys show students that our teachers listen, care how they learn, and what they are interested in. It allows the teachers to understand that the efforts put forth in creating those relationships and connections builds a sense of caring with their students, and students, in turn, will want to live up to their teachers' expectations.

A teacher culture and climate survey was also conducted this year with our faculty. We started focusing on culture and climate last year with our Servant Leader book study. We had a great experience engaging in a faculty-wide reading of Ken Blanchard's book, *Servant Leader*. Dr. Rocky Wallace, a professor at the University of the Cumberlands, helped us to start our journey in servant leadership, emphasizing that we all have an equally important role at Christ the King to lead by example, with the goal of serving our mission, not ourselves. Jesus said, "The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve (Matthew 20:28)." What did Christ come to

serve? He came to serve the vision of our Father. We desire to develop a culture where we can all work together to help one another live according to the vision.

Climate and culture are the responsibility of each and every one of us in our school community. Climate is defined as how people feel, and culture is how people behave. As I said, we desire to develop a culture where we can all work together to help one another succeed in serving our mission. The mission is bigger than any one of us.

What are our goals for the year?

1. **Servant Leadership** is teaching not only our faculty and staff to be servant leaders, but our students and parents.
2. **Empathy & Tolerance**; a servant leader requires empathy, tolerance and understanding of others; recognizing that those around us may be struggling, but we are not just focusing on our own needs but setting them aside to serve others.
3. **Culture & Climate** is where we work to be Christ-like servants and create a culture that acts on our mission and thinks of others first.
4. **Curricular Development** is providing our students strong academics in a caring environment that focuses on their individual needs. Supporting and working to see strong MAP scores and providing opportunities for our students to show success.
5. **Stewardship**, giving to others in need. This year we have continued to teach our students to serve our community through service days, donating items, and serving our church and school through the capital campaign by raising funds for the safer school entrance and preschool rooms.

Our theme of being a servant may sound opposite of being a leader. However, it is a characteristic of a good leader. We want this philosophy carried to our students, we want them to see it in their teachers and the staff. We want them to be the caring, servant leader of Christ, our King.

How are we doing? What do we still need to work on for the remainder of the year?

- We want our students and parents to understand the importance of servant leadership.
- We want to continue to teach our children that Everybody Counts.
- We want to focus on the ten principles of servant leadership with our teachers.
- We want to continue the hard work of curriculum development and work with our other diocesan schools,
- and we want to be good stewards of our school and our church, especially our church.

Remember that is our ultimate goal, to grow our church, our Father's vision. Our parish community has come together to accomplish the needs of our church and school through the Capital Campaign, and it has been an incredible blessing to witness. Thank you for your support and for coming together as a community to help grow and improve our school.

Thank you.