

To: Elementary Principals and Strategic Planning Chairs and Facilitators  
From: JoAnn Tier, Associate Director  
Date: March 27, 2008  
Re: *Strategic Planning Jottings – SPRING*

---

It takes vision to make positive changes in our lives. Nothing really big, bold, or beautiful has been created without an idea of what it would look like.

When Walt Disney created the Magic Kingdom in Florida, he told the planning executives to build the castle first – that’s where the magic would be. Disney seemed to think that if the workers had the castle to look at for inspiration, they could do all the hard work it would take to bring the Magic Kingdom to life.

As you immerse your stakeholders and committees in designing your strategic plan, visualize what you want to become a reality.

1. Find your vision. Answer the question: “If anything were possible, what would our school be like? Visualize the ideal in instruction. What does the environment look like? What materials would you acquire to make the dream real?”
2. Build the castle. Brainstorm. Then, write down the many details of your ideal learning environment. No idea is insignificant nor silly nor unworthy – get them all out there.
3. Set the date. Write down the exact day, month and year when you will have brought your vision to life – e.g. September 12, 2009.
4. Commit. Identify the planning that is involved. What are the steps that have to be taken to realize your vision? Who has to be involved? What resources are needed? Is your timeline realistic?

Work as a team to design your preferred future. Invite and listen to the ideas of the strategic planning committee, the administration and pastor, the faculty, the parents, the parish and civic community.

For consideration as you move forward, the attachment to this e-mail contains guidelines for involving the faculty in the planning process.

Keep the momentum going! Review the timeline and make adjustments. Stay focused and enjoy the creative experience.

*“In an ever-renewing society, what matures is a system or a framework within which continuous innovation, renewal, and re-birth can occur.”*

John W. Gardner

## **Role of Faculty in Strategic Planning**

It is important that all members of the faculty are involved in contributing to the development of the strategic plan for the school. The faculty will focus specifically on the mission, philosophy, curriculum and instruction and other areas as deemed advantageous.

### **Mission**

One of the major tasks of the faculty is to develop the mission of the school. Before the work of planning can go forth, the mission has to be agreed upon. Once the faculty has proposed the mission, the faculty and administration can evaluate the ideas and share opinions regarding the proposed mission statements. The proposed mission can then be reviewed by the strategic planning committee for input and acceptance.

### **Small Group Work**

The faculty will further support the strategic planning process by separating into small groups and focusing on specific areas of the plan – Catholic identity, climate, culture, curriculum, instruction, professional development and facilities. It is beneficial to have that the faculty have regularly scheduled meetings to develop the designated sections. The faculty may choose to invite members of the broader community to serve on these committees and may include board members, parents and members of the civic community.

The functions of the small faculty committee groups will be to provide an update of the previous meeting, a review of the work completed to date and specific tasks for that group meeting. Periodically, the faculty will come together as a whole to learn of the progress of each committee. This will serve to keep the planning connected and lead to a final cohesive plan for the school's future.

It is advisable that an individual serve as the facilitator to guide the discussion to allow for the free flowing of ideas that will eventually help to develop the final document.

This process is beneficial as the faculty will discover fresh ideas, will learn the opinions of other faculty members relating to a particular concept or instructional strategy, and will increase collaboration in the development of a unified plan. The end product will consist of a plan in which faculty members have buy-in because they were instrumental in contributing to the action plan.

A faculty representative may be assigned to the strategic planning sub-committee to update the planning committee on areas of faculty work.