

# Notre Dame High School

## FAIRFIELD

# Raising the Bar: ND 2020

## NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2017, Notre Dame High School celebrates its 60th anniversary, a milestone that inspires reflection and gratitude for our past accomplishments and passionate commitment to an even brighter future of excellence going forward.

*Raising the Bar: ND 2020* is our road map to envisioning that future, building on the success of our previous strategic plan (*Aspire & Achieve 2016*) as we endeavor to fulfill a new Vision, supported by our commitment to our Mission, six Core Values, and four essential Strategic Themes.

This document highlights the foundation of the plan (Notre Dame's Mission, Vision, and Values) and provides a brief overview of the plan's four strategic themes and supporting goals and strategies.

Building Character, Faith and Intellect

## NDHS Mission

The mission of Notre Dame High School is to help young men and women grow in character, faith, and intellect. We encourage each student to develop a thirst for knowledge and truth, and we instill in our students the determination to strive for excellence in every endeavor.

In a challenging and collaborative learning environment, we provide students with the academic foundation, confidence, and discipline needed to excel, both in college and in life. As a caring, diverse community grounded in Catholic teaching, we challenge all students to reach their God-given potential, to take their place in our society, and to do service for the good of others.

Through hard work, faith in God, and faith in one's self, we believe every student can achieve excellence.

## NDHS Vision

At Notre Dame, we are energized in our quest for excellence and in our purposeful growth in character, faith, and intellect. As a diverse learning community, we educate to develop the whole person—to provoke the mind, enkindle the heart, and foster the search for truth, goodness, and beauty. We are collaborators and innovators, using our knowledge and wisdom to serve our community, solve problems, and have a positive impact in society.

The fulfillment and joy of a Christ-centered life is encountered in our culture of vibrant Catholic faith. As Imitators of Christ, we are servant leaders—courageous, moral, and engaged, striving through God's grace to be leaven in the world.

### ND VALUES

Leading by Serving  
Striving for Excellence  
Embracing Innovation  
Deepening our Faith  
Living with Integrity  
Building Community

### STRATEGIC THEMES

Inspired Learning  
Christian Leadership  
Transformative Faith  
Responsible Stewardship

## Strategic Theme: Inspired Learning

A Notre Dame education is “intentionally directed to the growth of the whole person.” It will promote learning that fosters a love for wisdom and truth, and prepare students for a fully human life of leadership and service in the world.

As a rigorous, student-centered learning community, Notre Dame will develop active, engaged learners who can think, communicate, collaborate, problem-solve and innovate. The school’s integral education will form every capability of every student, readying them with the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind essential to a life of meaning and consequence.

### GOAL: CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM REVIEW.

Notre Dame High School will undertake an extensive review of its curriculum to ensure that it supports high-level institutional learning goals and fulfills the school’s mission and strategic educative vision.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- We will define essential learning outcomes that drive teaching and learning goals and experiences. These will be used to develop a written portrait of the education outcomes of a Notre Dame graduate.
- We will implement an Active Learning Framework to increase student engagement and active learning in the classroom.
- We will develop new programming for high-level students.
- We will create a new “pre-ND” summer study skills prep program.
- We will research and evaluate implementation of block class scheduling.
- We will identify key goals, metrics, and indicators to guide overall monitoring and measurement of learning and overall academic performance.

### GOAL: PROMOTE A CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE, HIGH STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF ACHIEVEMENT, AND JOYFUL LEARNING.

*“True character education is the hinge upon which academic excellence, personal achievement, and true citizenship depend.”* (CHARACTER EDUCATION MANIFESTO)

Notre Dame High School will foster a transformative, vibrant culture of high standards and expectations of learning, moral character, and achievement. It will call forth the very best of its students, faculty, staff and parents, and invigorate the school to grow joyfully as a learning community of purpose, hard work, integrity, and continuous improvement.

## Strategic Theme: Inspired Learning (continued)

**GOAL: PROVIDE A RICH, INTEGRATED, STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING EXPERIENCE THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS ACROSS ALL LEARNING LEVELS.**

Today's Notre Dame student cannot be defined by a single learning style. In its commitment to student-centered learning that addresses the needs and growth of each person, Notre Dame will evaluate and define necessary improvements and resources needed to meet these varied learning requirements.

**GOAL: INSTITUTE A FOUR-YEAR, DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM.**

Beginning in freshman year, Notre Dame students will participate in a four-year personal and academic guidance program. Excellent advising and counseling support and structures will empower students to actively shape their personal and academic development, charting their pathway and portfolio for college and life.

**GOAL: PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ENSURE HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND BEST LEARNING PRACTICES.**

In its commitment to high standards of learning and personal development, Notre Dame High School will ensure that a talented team of faculty and staff are given the opportunities and tools to develop as educators, mentors, and school leaders. The school will evaluate ways to provide professional development, training, faculty mentoring, and access to workshops and conferences that promote learning, faculty growth, and innovation.

**GOAL: DEEPEN AND EXPAND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE INTEGRATIVE LEARNING.**

Notre Dame High School will explore opportunities to strengthen its relationship and partnership with Sacred Heart University, and explore other partnerships with local institutions, organizations, businesses, and communities. Deeply committed to fostering students' abilities to integrate and connect learning, Notre Dame will seek partnerships that provide opportunities for creative and immersive learning, both in and outside the classroom.

**GOAL: INSTITUTE A SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM.**

Building on our well-established program of community outreach and service, Notre Dame High School will explore the development of a service-learning program. Integrating an academic component to service activities is shown to increase student engagement, deepen students' purposeful participation in service, cultivate reflective learning, and foster close student-faculty relationships.

## Strategic Theme: Christian Leadership

Notre Dame High School calls on its community of students, faculty and staff, parents, alumni and Board members, as Imitators of Christ, to lead by serving others. Central to the school's strategic development will be efforts and programs to cultivate servant leadership and moral excellence, to follow as disciples of Jesus by serving others first.

### GOAL: IMPLEMENT A CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Notre Dame will help its community to exercise their spiritual gifts and realize their God-given potential to be servant leaders in the world. Through this initiative, the school will develop programs and experiences that will foster an understanding of and readiness for active servant leadership, cultivate the attributes of servant leadership, and shape a school culture that inspires all to willingly serve others, at Notre Dame and in the world.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- We will mentor and challenge students to become Christian servant leaders, according to the Four C's: Character, Calling, Competence, and Confidence.
- We will promote and nurture the culture of servant leadership as a defining commitment and strength of Notre Dame, involving all school stakeholders—students, parents, faculty and staff, administration and board, and alumni.
- We will implement a Student Prefect Program, an appointed board of student servant leaders who serve the Notre Dame community across the range of school activities and commitments.
- We will provide ongoing leadership development and training for administration, faculty, staff and board.
- We will expand and improve on existing school service and leadership programs, including service goals and requirements; student-to-student mentoring and peer service; on- and off-campus leadership development programs and conferences; retreats; clubs and organizations; leadership recognition; Senior Experience.
- We will develop a Student Leadership Institute to cultivate the role of leadership development at Notre Dame and to deepen the school's leadership knowledge and expertise, through guest speakers, workshops, and other such experiences.
- We will develop more service-focused partnerships that expand Notre Dame's community presence and opportunities for school service outreach, and cultivate Notre Dame's relationship with community leaders and organizations.

## Strategic Theme: Transformative Faith

“The mission of a Catholic school is to integrate students into a living and joyful experience of the Catholic faith, and to give them a perspective, and the tools and knowledge, to understand and live their entire lives in the context and in the mission of the Catholic faith.” –BISHOP JAMES CONLEY

Notre Dame High School will deepen and expand its program of faith development to give its students “the experience of being caught up in the exhilarating, life-giving, transformative wholeness of life in Jesus Christ.” It will provide an environment where students encounter Jesus Christ—in the pursuit of truth, in the Sacred Liturgy, in support of each other and in service. It will help them come to know the true joy of living the Catholic faith, possess the character to do what is morally and ethically right, and live in courageous witness to their faith throughout their lives.

This program of transformative faith will support Notre Dame’s commitment to develop its students as Imitators of Christ, helping them to grow in holiness, as disciples of the living God, striving to become saints.

### GOAL: ENKINDLE THE KNOWLEDGE, LOVE, AND PRACTICE OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH

Notre Dame will provide an integrated Catholic faith experience for students, and faculty and staff, and enhance opportunities for faith practice that deepen one’s relationship with God.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- We will guide students to develop an active prayer life that deepens their awareness of God’s loving presence in their lives. This will include a more active use of prayers before school activities and events.
- We will cultivate regular student participation in the Liturgy and Reconciliation.
- We will develop student understanding of the sacredness of Holy Mass and the attendant personal behavior and respect for others appropriate to that place.
- We will support faculty and staff in their personal faith development while supporting Catholic values and modeling Catholic virtues in day-to-day life.
- As part of Notre Dame’s overall curriculum review, we will seek ways to strengthen the impact and efficacy of the religion curriculum and its integration into the broader school curriculum.
- We will expand the use of appropriate religious icons and imagery on campus, most notably requiring that all rooms have a crucifix prominently displayed as a reminder of the school’s Catholic identity and “the sign of God” in our lives.
- We will provide more opportunities to manifest and deepen the school community’s awareness of and devotion to Notre Dame — “Our Lady.”

## Strategic Theme: Transformative Faith (continued)

### GOAL: ENRICH AND DEEPEN NOTRE DAME AS A CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY

Notre Dame will engage and encourage all students, faculty, staff, and parents to come together in building, celebrating, and sustaining an active Catholic faith community.

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- We will establish a Catholic Identity advisory committee that will report to the School's Advisory Board concerning issues related to fostering and preserving the Catholic identity of Notre Dame High School.
- We will provide professional development to administration, faculty, and staff on topics pertaining to the Catholic faith.
- We will engage parents in an understanding of their essential role in supporting this program of transformative faith development.
- We will establish new student organizations to help students meet the challenge of living one's faith within the world.
- We will strengthen and consistently enforce standards of personal behavior, conduct, dress, responsibility, morality, etc., and ensure that these standards and expectations are clearly conveyed to students and parents in the student handbook.
- We will expand the school retreat program.
- We will establish a series of programs (speakers, workshops, conferences) on faith-related topics, to also help showcase real examples of successful faith practices.

### GOAL: FOSTER THE CONNECTION OF FAITH AND SERVICE

#### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- We will create regular opportunities for reflection on the role and true spirit of Christ-centered servant leadership to others.
- We will enhance and expand our partnership with local churches, Catholic schools, and other Catholic service organizations to deepen ND's relationship with the Diocese and larger faith community.
- We will use the cultivation of virtues as a framework for the development of student faith, character, and leadership.
- We will identify ways to connect service activities and retreats to the religion curriculum and reinforce regular practice of Catholic philosophy and values.

# Strategic Theme: Responsible Stewardship

## GOAL: BUILD A GROWTH-ORIENTED, SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONAL PLAN

Notre Dame will ensure that the goals of this strategic plan are aligned with necessary fiscal, resource, governance and staffing needs to ensure their successful implementation and achievement. The school will identify and prioritize the financial requirements of this plan, and pursue other key initiatives to strengthen the school's overall financial, management, and operational performance.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Create a robust, sustainable, advancement model informed by current best practices of advancement organizational structures, staffing, training and resources. This model will support Notre Dame's strategic growth, stress overall financial health and the expansion of revenue sources, build Notre Dame's strategic partnerships, and help increase overall net revenue growth.
- Optimize Notre Dame's enrollment (admissions and retention) to maximize revenue while strengthening the overall quality of the Notre Dame learning experience.
- Engender a strong culture of performance and development aligned with Notre Dame's vision and strategic direction.
- Strengthen performance of the Notre Dame annual fund and increase giving participation of alumni, parents, partners, and others.
- Evaluate and prioritize physical and other major resource needs and create a long-term campus master plan.
- Develop a technology master plan, to identify, fund, and implement technologies that will enhance teaching and student learning at Notre Dame.
- Institute a program of formal Board development to ensure that the Notre Dame Advisory Board is empowered to fulfill its goals of institutional sustainability, positive change and innovation, and mission-driven leadership.
- Begin the groundwork toward readying Notre Dame and its constituencies for a major capital campaign in the future.