



“We, the family of St. Mary’s School, are committed to promoting Catholic values to God’s children through faith, Christ-centered worship, service and academic excellence.”

Professional Development Plan at St. Mary’s

The professional development that staff has participated in come in a variety of forms and is augmented by the Diocese of La Crosse. The Diocese provide 12 hours of religious in-service and provides other online possibilities. St. Mary’s is a parish school, as such there is no district-level professional development at St. Mary’s, however, we do collaborate with the public school district and the Diocese serves a similar function as a district. The Diocese of La Crosse gives a lot of discretion to parish schools thus the professional development plan can largely be implemented at the local level.

There were several professional development trainings that were initiated since 2017 at St. Mary’s. They include mental health first aid, affects of trauma, helping digital natives communicate well, cyberbullying, STAR testing, Math Expressions, Symbolon religious training, leadership development, responsive classrooms, ALICE school safety training, continued classroom improvement and a variety of sessions at the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) conference. All were worthwhile to some degree but there is also an emphasis on allowing time during our August in-service days for staff to be able to collaborate and get ready for the school year.

Professional Development offerings since 2017

2022-23

1. Wonders 2023 – Janet Auge, Houghton Mifflin – Online and curriculum help
- all 4K – 5 teachers
2. Financial Advising, David Colby and Sasha Hornung – Northwestern Mutual
- all staff
3. Retirement Advising. Tom Ewig, Mutual of America
- all staff
4. Sacred Scripture, Monsignor Pierce
- all faculty

2021-22

1. Moral Development, Inclusion, Character Development in Our Curriculum – Jake Boll
CESA5
- all teachers
2. Diabetes Presentation – Jennifer Michlig, Aspiris
- all staff

2020-21

1. Reopening – Marathon County Health Department – all staff
2. Mental Health, trauma and resiliency, Madeline Conrad – CESA9 – all staff
3. Technology – internal – Google Classroom emphasis – all faculty
4. CPR and First Aid training - Jennifer Passhel, Marathon City Swim Center – all staff

2019-20

1. Theology Curriculum – various – Diocesan in-service
2. Human Connection – Joe Beckman - Diocesan in-service
3. Technology – internal – Sycamore and Google Suite
4. Debi Traeder, QPR trainer, and Amy Kitsembel, bereavement coordinator – all staff

2018-19

1. Mental Health First Aid, Kristin Jacobson and Danny Powers, Marathon County Special Education
- all staff

2. 403B consultation, Maggie – Mutual of America

- all staff

3. Health/Chiropractic consultation – Dr. Sara Borchardt – Shine Chiropractic

- all staff

4. NCEA Conference – a variety of options

5. Circle of Security part 2 – Diane Hietpas – MACS

- all staff

6. Math Expressions – HMH – teachers in grades 4K - 5

2017-18

1. Circle of Security – Diane Hietpas – MACS

- all staff

2. Symbolon Religious training – all faculty

3. Leadership Development - Paul Wesselman – MSSEC - all faculty

4. Helping Digital Natives Communicate - Michael McGowan – Diocesan in-service – all faculty

Strengths

An area of strength is the variety of offerings. Some of the sessions such as cyberbullying and trauma were made available to parents who could join the staff. Others, such as mental health first aid, digital natives and continued classroom improvement, emphasized parental involvement through a variety of ways including staff engaging parents in and out of school or advice and activities that could be given directly to parents to help their children. Many of the professional development sessions relate to human learning and change. The cyberbullying and native learners' trainings described how children change over time and how the times have changed in relation to the use of technology. The trauma and mental health sessions both discussed child and adolescent psychology and also how people afflicted by both act and change over time.

St. Mary's has updated their technology by purchasing a Student Management System (SIS), Chromebooks, new staff laptops and St. Mary's has become a Google school. With this increase in technology, more trainings were given to teachers, parents and students. We had internal in-services while the effects of screen time were another session that was specifically designed to help address changes in human learning. Likewise, the second part of trauma training, labeled Circle of Security, developed the earlier session.

There is specific money dedicated in the budget and contracts for professional development. A contract line allocation allows for staff to get reimbursed for coursework or religious retreats. Title money allows staff to get reimbursed for some of the internal training they create and attend as well as provide for some of our recent, external CESA training. We are looking to fundraise to be able to attend upcoming regional NCEA conferences.

Weaknesses

The areas of needed growth in the current professional development system are curriculum, classroom management, collaboration in regards to learning communities as well as data-driven and research-based professional development. These areas need to be augmented. Due to St. Mary's small size, the need for formal learning communities is somewhat lessened, but is still necessary and currently inadequate. In 2017, a middle school Professional Learning Committee (PLC) whose main function was to address students' needs but has grown into what could be termed as a learning community. Some of the professional development sessions such as trauma, mental health, STAR testing and Math Expressions had data-driven and research-based components during the in-service but there was little follow-up.

Future

There is much that can be done to improve the areas related to learning communities and research. All three of the current PLCs can be made to be more of a learning community. One concrete example was a book club that had been formed by staff. The first book they will be reading is called *Helping Teens* by Roy Petitfils which is a speaker they saw at a NCEA Conference. This could help create a learning community and due to the nature of the book, speak to curriculum and the data-driven and research-based elements.

There are several possible additional ways to facilitate the necessary areas of improvements. One way to help is through allowing additional time and follow-up. Some professional development sessions that are one day sessions may be ineffective. Thus there has been a move at St. Mary's to allow more time to implement the activities in professional development and adapt the schedule to allow for consultation. Some professional development activities augment previous sessions. Rather than annual rotating school themes, we will take the time to address the ongoing issues we have.

Assessment

The assessment of these initiatives can be done in a variety of ways. One simple way is anecdotal evidence. Staff shares what they liked and would like professional development to involve. Furthermore, a staff survey provided the following feedback: curriculum and mental health in-services were the most helpful while the technology ones were the least. Suggestions for upcoming in-services included:

Classroom Management and Classroom Expectations for All Teachers

Classroom management

How to help students in crisis situations (broken homes, abusive parents, etc.)

Curriculum mapping, balance work and home, service involvement with students

Better relating to parents

Curriculum related

It would be nice to develop some sort of cross-curricular lessons for math, science, and computer.

Technology, ways to reach and teach students

Inspire new ways of teaching to keep our teaching techniques fresh for the whole child

Motivating Students, Character Development

Upcoming in-services

Based off of staff and parent surveys the following timeline for professional development has been created.

2023-24: Curriculum Development (including learning communities and data driven).

2024 – 25: Instruction including differentiated instruction and motivation.

2025 – 26: Classroom Management

2026-27: School – community relations including helping in crisis situations.