



Strategic Plan

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Macomb Christian Schools is an independent school of about 200 students. Over the last several years, the school has seen its enrollment slowly decline to a point where the school almost closed during the summer of 2009, but God provided in miraculous ways. MCS has spent the last 3 years seeking to change the culture of the school and move forward with God guiding and directing us.

The administration and board recognized the importance of having a strategic plan to clearly communicate the mission, vision, and goals of the school and to provide direction for the future of MCS. Throughout the process of working on this project, the school was able to engage various stakeholder groups in the development of the plan to ensure that it would be a comprehensive strategic plan. The end result is a plan that focuses on continuing to improve the culture of the school and also finding ways to improve our economic stability.

Project Focus – The Need for a Strategic Plan

Macomb Christian Schools has been serving students in the metro Detroit area since 1983. MCS was founded by a group of nine Baptist churches that saw the need for a Christian school in the area. In 1990, the board adopted re-organization plans so that the school would espouse an inter-denominational, evangelical, Christian doctrine without compromising Biblical integrity or truths.

Kristen Nelson was hired as interim administrator during the summer of 2009 when the future of the school was uncertain. The school was struggling financially and with low enrollment. God provided in miraculous ways to keep the school open, but the board and administration knew that in order for MCS to move forward we would need to have a “new vision” for MCS.

A strategic plan was started during the 2010-2011 school year as a result of the preparation for our re-accreditation visit that was scheduled for the spring of 2011. Due to changes within the accrediting agencies, the visit was postponed until November 2012, but MCS still desired to move forward in creating a strategic plan. The administration and board recognized the importance of having a strategic plan to clearly communicate the mission, vision, and goals of the school and to provide direction for the future of MCS.

The strategic plan’s focus is to serve as a guide so that all constituents associated with MCS will know where we are headed and why. Our goal is to make sure that we are using our mission statement as the driving force behind all decisions that are made.

Project Process – Getting It Done

The process began during the 2010-2011 school year as we were preparing for our re-accreditation visit. It became obvious to those of us working on the self-study that we needed to have a strategic plan. The training that Kristen Nelson received at the Van Lunen Fellowship Program in July of 2011 confirmed that a strategic plan needed to be a priority for the 2011-2012 school year. There were many goals that the school had and areas for improvement, but it became obvious that these goals needed to be prioritized and organized. It would not be possible or beneficial to try to make all of these changes and improvements all at the same time, so a formal plan was necessary.

The first task was to pray. We have seen God work and provide in miraculous ways at MCS, so we strive to make sure that we are asking God to guide and direct us. When making decisions, we often ask ourselves, “How does this fit in with what God has called us to do?” We recognize that this is God’s school and desire to make sure that we are being obedient to what He has called us to do.

A Continuous School Improvement Plan team (comprised of various MCS stakeholders) was formed to develop the plan. The team began the process by surveying the

students, parents, employees, and board members to find out what we do well at MCS, what changes need to be made, and what is a problem that no one is willing to talk about. The team looked at the survey results to find common themes. After looking over the feedback, the team along with the board decided to choose 2 main areas of focus for the strategic plan. These areas are school culture and economic stability.

The team attempted to move forward with developing a plan that would focus in these 2 areas, but we faced some challenges and delays with our re-accreditation visit. The strategic plan is also a requirement for our re-accreditation and the template that we would be required to use for our re-accreditation would not be available until March 2012.

The team continued to look at the survey feedback along with the strengths and weaknesses that had been identified in 2010 during the completion of our self-study. The board, administration, and CSIP team prioritized the feedback we had received so that we would be ready to move forward once we were able to access the required template.

Once we gained access to the template in March 2012, the outline of the strategic plan had to change. The accrediting agencies have certain requirements for the plan that are different from the drafts we had been working on, but the basic concepts are the same. Working with the template has been frustrating at times, but we know that in the end we will have a solid strategic plan that will serve as a guide over the next 5 years.

The strategic plan cannot be finalized until we have completed the protocol in preparation for our re-accreditation visit in November 2012. The accrediting agencies have asked us not to finalize it until we have completed their protocol in case we desire to change any of the plan.

Project Results

While the strategic plan is still in draft mode, the work that has been completed is significant. The plan includes 7 goals that we have for MCS over the next 5 years. These goals are:

- Improve the spiritual depth of our students
- Create an environment that is safe, secure, and appealing
- Ensure academic excellence
- Maintain excellent programs
- Assure our long-term fiscal health
- Be seen as a valuable educational resource in our community
- Strengthen our governance/leadership

Each of these goals is broken down into objectives, strategies, and activities in order to provide the more practical details of how we are going to accomplish each goal.

Below is a portion of the strategic planning document to serve as an example:

Goal 1: *Improve the spiritual depth of our students*

Objective: *Collaborate to help the students and staff grow in their relationship with God and want to see others do the same by 06/30/2014 as measured by constituent surveys and feedback.*

Strategy Name: *Leadership Training*

Prepare students to be leaders in a variety of settings by providing training and opportunities for them to practice what they've learned in a monitored setting. After students have been trained in leadership, create opportunities for them to mentor other students that are seeking to be leaders.

Activity

Activity Name: *MCS Leaders*

Activity Type: *academic support program*

Activity Description: *Provide monthly training to student council members and alpha gamma omega members to equip them with leadership skills and strategies so that they will be able to be leaders at MCS and in their life after they leave MCS.*

Begin Date: *August 1, 2012*

End Date: *June 30, 2014*

Funding Amount: *\$0*

Funding Source: *no funding required*

Responsible Staff: *Chaplain, Assistant Principal, and Student Council Advisor*

Analysis and Commentary

I am somewhat disappointed that we were not able to complete the strategic plan, but I am still very pleased with the progress that we were able to make. Taking the time to analyze every aspect of the school and its programs is a big task, but it is necessary. I am looking forward to finalizing the strategic plan and sharing it with our constituents.

I think that a strategic plan is a document that will never be finalized. As we are implementing the plan, I am sure that things will change or go different than we had

initially thought, so we must be willing to adapt as necessary. I think that the basic goals of the plan will stay the same, but the priorities and details will change as the plan is put into practice and other constituents give their input.

We have a lot of work behind us now, but I suspect that writing the strategic plan is just the beginning. The real work of acting on the plans that we have made is going to be challenging and exciting. We don't want this to be a document that sits on a shelf collecting dust. We have added the strategic plan to our board calendar so that it will be reported on quarterly.

We believe that the most important thing is for MCS to be the school that God wants it to be. It is our desire to continue to seek God and to train our students to do the same. We have no idea what that means or what it may look like, but our hope and prayer is that God will continue to use us. We trust in the promises of 2 Corinthians 9:8 which says, "And God is able to make all grace about to you, so that in all things at all time, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."