



IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

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**A Self Study for:
E263 St. Therese School
1106 E Alhambra Road
Alhambra, CA 91801**

Continuous School Improvement Focused On High Achievement Of All Students

2022

Preface

The Saint Therese Carmelite School family welcomes you to our school. The self-study process was both enlightening and rewarding for our community. It is our sincere hope that you will experience the love, dedication, and hard work of our students, parents, and staff. Our community is very proud of our Catholic identity, the Carmelite spirituality, and our classical program. We are blessed with a dedicated pastor, a passionate principal, a hardworking devoted faculty and staff, and an enthusiastic and eager student body. Together, we all work to form our young scholars in faith, academics, and virtue.

The self-study has helped us to examine the areas in which our school is strong and the areas which our school needs to improve. The process involved the collaboration of all of our shareholders – pastor, principal, faculty, staff, students, parents, members of the parish, alumni, and benefactors. Our shareholders gladly give of their time to contribute to the self-improvement of our beloved school.

Welcome to Saint Therese Carmelite School! We thank you for taking the time to come and visit. We look forward to hearing your professional input and constructive feedback. May the Holy Spirit guide your work here at Saint Therese and may the Good Lord reward you. Please count on our prayers for you and your schools during this visit. We welcome your prayers for our school.

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Personnel

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Fr. Thomas Koller, OCD | Pastor |
| Fr. Robert Barcelos, OCD | Art Teacher |
| Br. Jason Parrott, OCD | Vice-Principal, 7 th Grade Teacher |
| Alma Cornejo | Principal |
| Kathleen Malone | Curriculum Advisor |
| Megan Duncan | Administrative Assistant |
| Ana Vallejo | Tk/K Teacher, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Director |
| Darlene Karnis | 1 st /2 nd Grade Teacher |
| Kendall Migliozi | 3 rd /4 th Grade Teacher |
| Melanie Geier | 5 th /6 th Grade Teacher |
| Heidi Tittmann | 8 th Grade Teacher |
| Luz Davidson | Art Teacher |
| Charlotte Lansberg | Music Teacher |
| Marybeth Duncan | PE Teacher, Instructional Aide |
| Jose Angel Ortiz | Athletic Director |
| Maria Reyes | Accountant |
| Vanessa Kachirisky | Instructional Aide |
| Angie Sandoval | Tutor |
| Suzi Faias | Academic enrichment director |
| Jose Ortiz | Plant manager |

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

A. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The Self Study process for St Therese School began in 2019 with the selection of a Leadership Team consisting of the pastor, the principal, the vice-principal, and the self-study coordinator. We began with two full-day meetings in June and August 2019 during our Faculty In-services. Thereafter, meetings took place every other Monday during the school year. The goal was to have our report completed by December 2020 in preparation for the 2021 visit. Unfortunately, the process was interrupted when schools closed down in March 2020. Our meetings switched to an online forum through the end of 2020. In effect, the entire process was delayed a year and our Self Study was completed in 2021.

The Leadership Team together with the staff reviewed and revised the Mission Statement, Philosophy and School Wide Learning Expectations. The staff analyzed qualitative and quantitative data, prior Self Study findings and survey results, as well as formal and informal feedback from stakeholders. The writing of the report was broken up and teachers were assigned different sections. The writings were reviewed and discussed at Faculty Meetings. Critical goals were discussed at several meetings and a Schoolwide Action Plan was adopted. The Self Study coordinator worked on the final draft which was approved by the Leadership Team.

Shareholders were informed at mandatory parent meetings, email blasts, surveys, school newsletter, daily Morning Assemblies, pastor/principal meetings and meetings with our Parent Service Organization president. Additionally, there were telephone and in-person meetings with the president of the Parish Finance Council, the principal, and the pastor.

Parents, students, and alumni contributed to our findings via surveys, campus visits and interviews, as well as informal and unsolicited feedback. Surveys were sent out to parents via email in 2019 and again in 2021. Students gave input via classroom discussions. Alumni gave their input via interviews with members of the Leadership Team. The school also has parishioners who are active in the life of the school and who also contributed to our findings, as well as reading and editing the report. The Parish Finance Council, active in the financial life of the school, offered their input at Parish Finance Meetings.

During the Self Study process, the school ran into several obstacles. The first obstacle was the shutdown of schools during the pandemic. This meant that we were no longer able to meet and discuss in person. Furthermore, the school principal was out on sick leave from April 2020 to June 2020. The vice-principal at the time took over the principal's classes, as well as her own full-time teaching and assisting teachers, parents, and students with online learning. We were not able to meet from April 2020 to July 2020. Our online meetings resumed in August of 2020. In October of 2020, the pastor and the spiritual advisor to the school were reassigned to other parishes and the church welcomed a new pastor. The vice-principal took a leave of absence in October 2020 and then relocated to another state; she remains active remotely as Curriculum Advisor. A new vice-principal was named in August 2021. The School Board dismantled after several members moved out of California due to the pandemic. Currently, the pastor is working to re-establish the school board.

Despite the obstacles, our pastor, principal, faculty, staff, parents, students, and parishioners worked hard and underwent a fruitful Self Study. Just like his predecessor, the current pastor is committed to the success of the school. The school also counts on the support of the Parish Finance Council and parishioners.

Evidence

- Newsletters
- Parent, Teacher and Staff Surveys
- Meeting Agendas/Notes
- Prior Accreditation Findings
- Prior School Wide Action Plan

B. INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION OF SHAREHOLDERS IN COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY

The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.

Over the course of the last two years Saint Therese Carmelite School underwent an in-depth self-study. All shareholders were involved in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning. The shareholders involved in completing the Self Study include the pastor, school principal, vice-principal, curriculum advisor, staff, students, the Parent Service Organization (PSO), some parishioners and the Carmelite Friars. Individual sections of the report were written by the faculty. The Self Study coordinator and the principal put together all the sections and edited the final drafts.

Assessment data was analyzed, disaggregated, and aggregated by the faculty and staff. Trends led to changing the writing curriculum in 2018, and the phonics curriculum in 2019. A different Latin curriculum is being implemented in the beginner's course in middle school to see if it helps to increase scores on the National Latin Exam, as it covers more history than our current program. Assessment data indicates that STAR scores in Reading need improvement. The staff and curriculum advisor are exploring ways to help students improve reading scores, particularly in reading comprehension.

Financial and enrollment data was analyzed by the pastor, principal, Board president and Finance Council president. Low enrollment trends led to a decision to adopt multi-age teaching with differentiated instruction in language arts, math, and Latin. The parish is incredibly supportive of the school and all its fundraising efforts. This has made viability possible for a small school like ours. The Board and Parish Finance Council agree that the school must develop and implement an aggressive Marketing Plan.

To help parents become familiar with the purpose of surveys and the accreditation process, the school principal sent out a few special newsletters dedicated solely to the accreditation process.

In addition, the process was explained at parent meetings. Email blasts and our weekly newsletter were also utilized to keep parents informed. The principal explained the accreditation process to students, staff and parents who attend Morning Assembly at the school's daily Morning Assembly.

The results of the Parent survey were very encouraging. With an 80% response rate, we feel confident that the responses reflect the school community. The survey was open for parents over the course of six weeks in 2021. We learned that Catholic values and classical education are the top reasons parents choose Saint Therese Carmelite School. This is followed by excellence in education and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The survey also reveals our strong Catholic Identity: a full 100% of respondents indicated that the school's religion program is in full fidelity to Roman Catholic Church teachings. Parents also expressed satisfaction with all academic subjects. There is evidence of effective communication between parents and the school. Additionally, 100% of parents expressed that they feel safe sending their children to Saint Therese Carmelite School. This sentiment is echoed by students as expressed in student surveys.

Students were surveyed in their classroom, and they were given class time to complete short paper surveys. Younger students in grades TK-2nd met in small groups with the school's Student Ambassadors to share their feelings and perceptions about the school. Student Ambassadors are the school's leaders, and they provide feedback about the school, student affairs, school service projects and concerns at weekly Ambassador's meetings. Like their parents, students feel safe at school. They express the strength of Catholic Identity for the school as well as strong academics. Students also like the Virtue program and being rewarded weekly on VirTuesdays.

The Staff feels supported by the administration. They would like more in-services on classical pedagogy and on how to implement the new Writing Curriculum. There's great satisfaction with the Faculty Retreats and the spiritual support given by the Carmelite Friars.

The principal and the pastor have weekly meetings. The principal keeps the pastor informed of all pertinent school affairs. The pastor's input is shared with the staff and school community. The principal and the pastor communicate often in person, via email, by telephone communication, and via text messages. The pastor makes all final major decisions. In his absence, the vicar makes decisions.

At the beginning of the Self Study, the faculty reviewed and revised the Mission Statement by making it into one sentence. A few changes were also made to the School Wide Learning Expectations (SLE's). The pastor has a top priority that students develop a personal relationship with God. Therefore, this was incorporated into the SLE's. As part of the Virtue program, students practice Lectio Divina beginning in the 5th grade. Additionally, our pastor reserves a period of silence after communion to allow students time to speak with God. All changes have been publicized on our school website, handbook, and marketing materials.

Goals were created by examining significant accomplishments, goals, input received from parents, students, and staff via surveys. The recommendations by the Board and Finance

Council were also taken into account. The list of significant accomplishments and goals was shared with the pastor. The faculty took into account input from all shareholders and came up with a schoolwide action plan which was presented to the pastor for final approval. The schoolwide action plan took into account the school's limited resources. The school, Finance Council, parents, and Board are confident of the school's ability to implement and monitor the schoolwide action plan.

Saint Therese Carmelite School is mindful that it operates to support parents in their role as primary educators of their children. Therefore, the school has an open-door policy. The pastor, principal, vice-principal, friars, and staff all have an open-door policy and are in frequent communication with parents, students, parishioners, and all shareholders. The Parent Service Organization (PSO) meets monthly, and the Parent Service Organization president communicates with the administration to apprise us of any parental feedback. Students give input at Ambassador's meetings and daily to their teachers. Collaboration is imperative to the school improvement done at Saint Therese Carmelite School. Furthermore, the implementation and monitoring of the school wide action plan will ensure a continuous process of self-improvement.

Evidence

- Mission and Philosophy Statements
- SLEs
- PSO Meeting agenda
- Staff Meeting agenda
- Weekly Staff Bulletins
- Weekly Parent Bulletins
- School website
- Teacher/Parent/Student Survey
- Student work samples
- Church bulletins
- Regular meetings between principal and pastor

CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

A. SCHOOL PROFILE

History

Saint Therese Catholic Church was founded in 1924 when the Order of Discalced Carmelite Friars of the Irish Province came to take charge of the new parish. The parish of Saint Therese was the first parish in the world to be named after Saint Therese of Lisieux, who at that time had just been beatified and was known as Blessed Therese of the Child Jesus. The church was dedicated to Saint Therese just twenty-seven years after her death, before she had been officially canonized.

The Carmelite Friars quickly recognized a need for a school. In February 1926, the plans were authorized for a church-school combination building, designed by Architect Ross Montgomery. Saint Therese School was established in 1926 while the Archdiocese was under the leadership of Archbishop Cantwell. Like the parish, the school was the first school in the world to be named after Saint Therese of Lisieux. Construction was completed at a cost of \$69,000. At that time, the school was on the ground floor, and the church on the upper. In its first school year, September of 1926, the school enrollment was fifty-three students. By 1927, as many of the faithful relocated to Alhambra to take advantage of the new school, enrollment grew to 185, with two grades per class.

The Dominican Sisters were in charge of the school until 1930, and after an extensive search, the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary of the Woods in Indiana consented to staff the school, which they did until the 1980's, when the teacher population shifted to mostly lay teachers.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the parish community erected a new church designed by architect J. Earl Trudeau. The old church then became the Parish Hall; and the former Hall was transformed into two classrooms and a small meeting room. Due to increased school enrollment in 1960, the old school and hall were demolished, and the construction of the present school classrooms and Parish Hall began.

The current classrooms are located in a section of the school which was completed in 1964 along with the Parish Hall. A new building was completed in 2000-2001 which currently houses the front office, library, teacher's lounge, science room, parish meeting room, the Little Flower Atrium, and the Kindergarten classroom.

The Discalced Carmelite Friars, under the direction of Fr. Phillip Sullivan, pastor of the church and school at the time, began a complete transition in 2015 to the classical educational model. Beginning in the academic year 2015-2016, the school adopted a Classical Model of education and has continued since. This was a major change that required an administration and staff with experience in classical education. A new principal and staff with experience in classical education were hired. Other factors that impacted the school include a new curriculum; new uniforms; loss of old families and gain of new families; loss and gain of supporters and revising the Mission, Philosophy and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. In addition, the charism of the Carmelite order was fully incorporated into the religious formation at the school. Each classroom is dedicated to a Carmelite saint. For marketing purposes, the school's name, Saint Therese Carmelite School, also reflects the strong Carmelite spirituality lived in the school and parish.

Demographics

Saint Therese Carmelite School is located in a residential section of Alhambra, two miles northwest of the San Gabriel Mission. The school borders the community of San Marino and the northern portion of San Gabriel. The neighborhood is comprised of single-family homes and a few apartment complexes. The median home price in the surrounding area is in the high \$900,000; therefore, the neighborhood consists of families with high middle incomes and above.

It is a quiet neighborhood with minimal traffic. The school is close to major freeways giving easy access to commuters.

The parish draws families from a wide geographical radius. Parishioners are attracted to Saint Therese Church because of the Carmelite fathers and because the parish is one of the few parishes that offers the Traditional Latin Mass. Families come from as far as Temecula, Glendora, Torrance, West Los Angeles, Encino, and more. Similarly, school surveys revealed that parents choose Saint Therese Carmelite School for its classical curriculum and strong Catholic identity.

The school has a diverse student body population with 59% identifying as Hispanic, 10% identifying as Asian, 27% identifying as White, 1% identifying as Black, and 3% identifying as other. A full 99% of students are Catholic, with over 90% being members of the parish. This is a demographic change within the last seven years. As a result of the adoption of the Classical Model, which also strengthened the Catholic identity of the school, more parish families enrolled in the school, because the stronger Catholic identity aligned with that of the parish.

There are eight full-time teaching staff members and four part-time staff members. Two staff members are Carmelite friars. Six have advanced degrees and teaching credentials. Three are certified in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a Montessori-based catechesis that requires a two-year training for its first level of certification. Three staff members have Theology degrees, and all members are actively pursuing catechetical certification.

Assessment Data and High School Acceptances

Assessment data from the ACRE exam confirm the strong Catholic identity of the school. Students in 5th and 8th grade consistently score above the 70th percentiles in faith knowledge, profession of faith, liturgy, and sacraments, morality, and prayer. STAR scores in Early Literacy are above the 50th percentile by third grade. Scores in Math and Reading are consistently above the 50th percentile, with one exception in 2015-2016 in the sixth grade reading and two exceptions in 2015-2016 and 2018-2019 in 2nd grade math. In general, Math scores are higher than Reading scores.

Saint Therese Carmelite School is proud of the high acceptance rate of our graduating eighth graders to the Catholic high school of their choosing, many of which have earned honors at entrance and academic scholarships to support their academic pursuits. Their stellar achievements are due, in part, to the dedication of the faculty, staff and parents who have worked hard to support them and encourage them to set high standards of academic excellence, coupled with strong Catholic values and a commitment to their community. More and more students, however, are choosing to attend the only local school that offers classical education at the high school level. This has prompted members of the Saint Therese Carmelite School community to begin a discussion about offering classical education to our own students beyond the eighth grade.

Challenges

Low enrollment is a major challenge for the school. Low enrollment also brings along low income. The school is blessed to have the full support of the parish as well as the generosity of benefactors. Nonetheless, the goal is to increase enrollment and revenue to become autonomous.

The need for Saint Therese School to adopt the Classical Model of education arose because more than half of the school-aged children at the parish were attending the only Catholic classical school in the area. This school offers education for 1st-12th grade. The trend has been that families who wish to continue with classical education send their children to this school. Unfortunately for us, they tend to send, not just the graduating eighth grader, but all of their younger siblings as well. After all, why would families want two commutes, two fundraising commitments, and more, when they could send all their children to just one school? This poses a significant challenge for a small school with low enrollment.

Evidence

- Parent surveys
- STAR data
- ACRE data
- Appendix A
- Census data from School Speak

B. USE OF PRIOR ACCREDITATION FINDINGS TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.

The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement. Saint Therese School completed its last Self Study in February of 2015 just prior to the adoption of the Classical Model in August of 2015. The school received a term of accreditation of six years with a mid-term review. The school identified five critical goals for its Schoolwide Action Plan. The new administration and staff successfully reviewed, amended, and completed the Schoolwide Action Plan. The five critical goals affirmed by the Visiting Committee in 2015 and identified by the school became a guiding tool for the new administration. This is a summary of how completion of the Action Plan resulted in high achievement for all students.

I. Design rigorous curriculum

A classical curriculum follows the natural intellectual formation of the child. Each of the stages of the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) focuses on and takes advantage of the natural strengths of the students at that age. In the Grammar Stage (roughly TK – 5th grade), there is great emphasis on memorization. Students memorize effortlessly at this stage. The Classical Model focuses on memorizing facts, procedures, poems, prayers, and songs. Students at this

stage are best suited for learning concrete facts that answer the questions *who*, *what*, *when* and *where*. Students at this stage are also adept at observation and many of our courses at this stage allow for that. In the Logic Stage (roughly 5th-9th grade), students in their adolescent years begin to make logical deductions, believing they know it all. At this stage, they can take the body of knowledge and facts that they previously memorized and begin to use logic to formulate hypotheses and draw conclusions. Here, we focus on developing critical thinking and disciplined thought. Students at this stage are best suited for debate, discussion, and argument, answering the question *why*. It is at this stage that we can introduce subject matter in which they can use their critical thinking skills. We introduce the scientific method, debates, Socratic dialogue, Latin declensions, Euclidean geometry, and algebra. Our students do not reach the Rhetoric Stage (roughly 9th-12th grade) in which they can fully and clearly articulate concepts in speech and writing to others, specifically their own independent work and original thoughts. The classical approach is very flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of individual students. Implementing a classical curriculum has given our students the tools they need to become lifelong learners who know how to think for themselves using the knowledge base built up beginning in kindergarten. Our goal is to help our students to recognize the good, the true and the beautiful in the world around them, to grow into wise and discerning individuals and, most importantly, to know and love God.

Saint Therese Carmelite School educates students through the Catholic Classical Model of education to equip our students with the logic, critical thinking, and language skills necessary to succeed throughout their lives. We seek to give students the necessary tools of learning and to foster a deep sense of wonder and love for all that is genuinely good, true, and beautiful. We emphasize classical learning, not only because we want our students to read well, speak well and think well, but ultimately because truth, beauty and goodness are desirable in and of themselves and for their own sake. We seek to incorporate within our students the wisdom of two thousand years of Catholic thought, history, culture, and the arts so that they might understand themselves and their world in the light of that Truth and acquire the character to live happy and integrated lives in the service of God and others.

The basic curriculum offered at Saint Therese Carmelite School includes the following:

- Phonics in TK-2nd
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in TK-2nd
- Spanish in TK-2nd
- Religion
- Latin in 3rd-8th grade
- Literature
- Composition
- Vocabulary
- Handwriting
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Poetry
- Social Studies
- Mathematics

- Algebra
- Euclidean geometry
- Science
- Music, including an all-school choir
- Physical Education
- Art

Over the last six years we have replaced all our curricula with materials that support a classical education, including poetry, classic literature, and a systematic writing program. We have implemented a Latin program in grades 3 through 8 and moved towards an emphasis on memorization in grades K through 5 and on logic and analysis in grades 6 through 8. We have also moved away from the use of computers in the classroom, as this is not in line with a classical approach. All our faculty have been trained or educated in classical education, and we have held teacher training sessions each summer to further solidify this. Classes in history, literature, and religion correlate in time periods. Students read literature from the historical period they are studying, and they study Church history and saints from the same period. We have begun to build a science program that focuses on observation and memorization in the lower grades and the scientific method in the upper grades. We have implemented the Saxon Math program in all the classrooms and are able to move students between math classes according to their readiness. We have switched to a phonics-based reading program with great success in grades TK-2. Each curricular change has been carefully monitored, and we continue to evaluate the curriculum annually.

II. Implement intensive math program

To implement this intensive math program, we have adopted the Saxon Math program from beginning math through Pre-Algebra. In the middle school, we offer Houghton-Mifflin Algebra 1 and Geometry. To supplement this, we have incorporated Euclid's *Elements Vol I and II*. After only two years of implementing this program, we noticed that students were exceeding school and district benchmarks and performing well on high school entrance exams.

In the last six years, we have developed our math curriculum to fit classical standards. The Classical Model places an emphasis on the child's ability to memorize and absorb large amounts of information in the formative years from TK through 5th grade. We utilize a multi-sensory approach throughout the math program to better engage all learning styles. Students memorize math facts that prepare them for more advanced math courses beginning in middle school. Beginning in the sixth grade, students are placed in math classes based on their individual abilities. Students can take pre-algebra, algebra, and Euclidean geometry.

STAR scores for our students remain consistently above the 50th percentile. Students taking advanced math courses achieve higher STAR Math scores, frequently in the 70th percentile range. However, even students in lower grades are earning higher STAR Math than Reading scores. We use Saxon math beginning in first grade all the way through 8th grade if needed. We do not accelerate any grade levels until sixth grade. Though students may find Saxon slow, easy, and repetitive, these are precisely the qualities that allow students to memorize facts and procedures and learn math at a deeper level.

III. Create faith formation opportunities for families

Saint Therese Carmelite School has worked toward this goal by implementing the following three strategies listed in the Revised Action Plan, the first of which was tailored to meet the unique needs of the school:

1. Strategy 1: Offer parent learning programs to better assist students in faith formation

Seeking to form students in faith through a classical curriculum, Saint Therese Carmelite School has tailored this strategy by offering the following Family Learning Opportunities:

- a) **Weekly School Mass**—Parents are provided the weekly opportunity of assisting at Mass with their children and of nurturing their faith formation.
- b) **First Communion Retreat**—This opportunity is extended to and required for all communicants and their parents. Through the guidance provided by this retreat, communicants and parents grow in an understanding and appreciation of their Faith.
- c) **School-wide Living Stations**—Led by the 8th grade students, the greater school community (including parents and family members) experiences a reenactment of our Lord's passion.
- d) **All Saints Day Student Presentations**—Parents play an active role in aiding their child's understanding of a saint of their choice. Dressed as their saint, students share key historical facts and accomplishments of their saints.

2. Strategy 2: Strengthen relationship with Carmelite Religious

Rooted in the Carmelite tradition, Saint Therese Carmelite School has strengthened its students' relationship with Carmelite Religious by providing:

- a) **Carmelite Spirituality Days**—Carmelite Sisters and novices visit classrooms and lead students in monthly seminars, engaging students in interactive activities and reflective discussions about the truths of the Catholic Faith.
- b) **Instruction by Carmelite Brothers**—Grades 5 - 8 receive religious instruction by two Carmelite Brothers assigned to Saint Therese Church. Their daily instruction and interaction with the students, both inside the classroom and on the playground, strengthens the bond of student friendship crucial to their spiritual and intellectual development. In addition, visiting Carmelite Friars have also shared about their vocations and presented on Carmelite Saints with students.
- c) **Carmelite Field Trips**—Throughout different times of the year, teachers schedule field trips to the Carmelite Retreat House, the Saint Joseph's Center, and the Convent of Cloistered Carmelite Nuns. Activities include parlor visits with Carmelite Nuns, visiting the chapel, praying the rosary in the Rosary Garden, and studying the beauty of nature as part of life science lessons.

3. Strategy 3: Build student-parent spiritual relationships

To strengthen student-parent spiritual relationships, Saint Therese Carmelite School has implemented the following:

- a) **The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium Program**—This program allows siblings to participate in the same class and provides opportunities for faith discussion in the home.
- b) **Monthly Family Mass**—With their families, students from all grades are invited to attend a monthly Mass at Saint Therese Church, wherein they partake of spiritual communion and fellowship as a community.
- c) **Novena Invitations**—Saint Therese Carmelite School invites families to participate in various novenas and special prayers throughout the year, including novenas to Saint Therese, a novena during Christmastide and a school-wide consecration to Saint Michael the Archangel.
- d) **Saint Joseph’s Baltimore Catechism Instruction**—Within its classical curriculum, Saint Therese Carmelite School seeks to nurture the spiritual formation of its students and parents by providing catechism instruction to all students. Especially within the lower grades, parents help their children learn and understand these truths, thereby fostering and strengthening their spiritual relationship.

Faith Formation Achievement

According to the School-wide Learning Expectations, Saint Therese Carmelite School students will be responsible students who *use their God-given talents for the greater glory of God*. After six years of implementing a classical curriculum, numerous alumni have returned to Saint Therese Carmelite School and volunteered their time and talent by:

- a) Assisting teachers in the classroom
- b) Monitoring yard duty
- c) Serving as Group Leaders in Saint Therese’s newly formed Carmelite Youth Ministry
- d) Altar serving during Sunday Masses and Benediction
- e) Participating in Cor Jesu

Strengthened Relationships with Carmelite Religious Achievement

According to the School-wide Learning Expectations, Saint Therese Carmelite School students will be life-long learners who *appreciate the Fine Arts*. Within its curriculum and culture, Saint Therese Carmelite School has nurtured student relationships with Carmelite Religious by providing:

- a) Art Class with a focus on Iconography taught by Saint Therese Church’s pastor, Fr. Phillip, and currently taught by Fr. Robert Barcelos.
- b) Music Class taught by Deacon Brother Matthias, currently assisted by Fr. David

- c) A Student-Cantor Ministry with instruction by Deacon Brother Matthias, and then led by a lay teacher
- d) A Student-Altar Serving Ministry with training by Brother Jason

Strengthened Student-Parent Spiritual Relationships Achievement

According to the School-wide Learning Expectations, Saint Therese Carmelite School students will be faithful Catholics who *know and practice the basic truths of the Catholic faith*. Saint Therese Carmelite School strengthens student-parent spiritual relationships through:

- a) The Catechesis of the Good Shepard Atrium Program, which parents have noted is effective in imparting the truths of the Catholic Faith to their children through the Montessori method
- b) Feast Day Celebrations, including the Posadas and a special procession and festival in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- c) Virtue of the Month Acknowledgements, through which parents affirm their children’s growth in virtues
- d) Monthly all-school Sunday Masses
- e) All-school rosaries, Stations of the Cross and benediction

Our students in 5th and 8th grade take the ACRE exam annually. Scores across all testing domains are consistently above the 70th percentile. It is common for our students to score above the 90th percentile in some domains of faith, catechism of the church and morality. We have also noticed that even on Affective Statements, which can sometimes confuse students, our students can tell the difference between dogmatic beliefs and mere affective statements.

IV. Improve use of school technology

Seven years ago, we removed all computers from the classrooms. Students coined the phrase, “We traded laptops for Latin.” While it is true that our students do not use iPads or computers as part of the school day, we have worked at improving technology for our teachers. Teachers use Gradelink, the Google suite, PowerPoint presentations, and any necessary internet for their classes. Appropriate uses of technology in our school, in accord with our classical education, are teacher-led presentations, approved historical and religious movies and administration of the STAR test. We believe that it is important for students, especially at the elementary-school level, to focus their energies on foundational skills proper to their developmental stages. Students in the Grammar Stage naturally absorb facts, they are avid observers, and they memorize effortlessly. We capitalize on this and teach them to write in cursive and print, to memorize poems and facts, to collect and categorize, to read and to love learning. In the logical stage, we teach the older middle-school students to use their critical thinking skills to make logical deductions, to debate and to seek understanding of the deeper questions in history and theology. The time we have with our students is limited and we have chosen that our students will not use technology in the classroom because it takes time away from the basic, because anything we teach them will become obsolete and because even the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends limits on screen time for young developing minds. We have seen our students strengthen basic skills and develop a love of learning.

Our non-technology was tested in March of 2020 when all our schools were forced to shut down due to the pandemic. For an entire ten months, we printed paper packets for our families. In addition, we immediately began to deliver instruction via Zoom. We did not have any devices to hand to our students or to our staff. Our families relied on old phones and borrowed devices to facilitate learning for their students. Nonetheless, all our students made it. Our staff taught using Zoom. We all learned from one another. In August of 2020, we implemented Google Classroom for assigning and receiving all assignments. Additionally, teachers submitted lesson plans online and held faculty meetings over zoom for ten months.

Eventually the school obtained some devices through the archdiocese and our own parents raised \$10,000 to buy a school set of laptops. The devices came late because the affordable devices were on back order. We continue to explore the appropriate use of technology. Anecdotal evidence from our alumni tells us that none of our graduates have suffered any setbacks because of the lack of technology in our curricular programs. Even students who have gone on to matriculate in high schools with iPad programs fare well technologically. The school has plans to teach typewriting and basic word processing to our students beginning in the seventh grade. We are currently exploring how to fit this class into the existing program.

V. Improve student writing

The Classical Model of education has a strong language arts component. Great emphasis is placed on reading, writing, and analyzing. Improved writing inevitably results in improved vocabulary and comprehension. Our students' writing assignments are based on what they are reading in history, literature, and religion. Students can analyze and reach logical conclusions, and they are able to organize and express their thoughts effectively.

Our students do not read any Common Core literature, nor are they familiar with Common Core terminology. This is one factor that contributes to lower scores in STAR Reading. Additionally, STAR Reading requires students to make deductions at earlier stages than our students are naturally prepared to do so. We are exploring ways to help our students reach higher scores without having to compromise on the Classical Model of education. Though our STAR Reading scores are lower than our STAR Math, scores are consistently above the 50th percentile.

Another area affecting our students in reading is that some of our transfer students did not learn to read with phonics. A challenge for us is how to incorporate phonetic awareness in third grade and above.

The main challenge in STAR Reading, as revealed by our disaggregated and aggregated data, is in reading comprehension. We believe that exposing our students to great literature will help this. As part of the classical curriculum, we adopted the Progymnasmata exercises. These have laid a solid foundation on rhetoric. In the 2018-2019 school year, we began to implement a new writing program from the Institute for Excellence in Writing as a direct result of assessment data. Furthermore, in our curriculum there is a strong correlation among literature, history, and religion. Students read literary works from the historical periods they are studying, and they learn about saints and church history from the same era.

One of the predominant topics of discussion between the pastor and principal, between the principal and the president of the Finance Council, between the administration and the Parent Service Organization, and between faculty members at meetings is how to improve the school. Even in years when we do not have a full Self Study or a mid-term review, we engage in dialogue surrounding this topic. The Critical Goals identified by the previous administration and ratified by the Visiting Committee continue to be topics of current discussion because they directly affect student performance and the Catholic identity of the school. The current Self Study helped to engage in deeper analysis and discussion. However, as part of the continual process of self-improvement, we will continue to explore ways to best serve our school community.

Evidence

- Previous Action Plan
- Revised Action Plan
- STAR scores
- Mission, philosophy and SLE's
- Previous Report of Findings
- ACRE scores

CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM

A. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S CATHOLIC IDENTITY

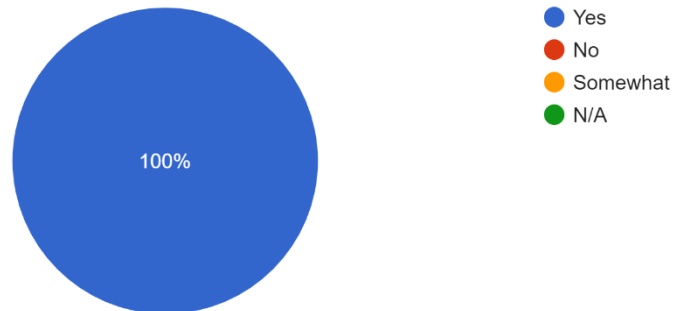
The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), provides authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the sacraments, and promotes evangelization and service to the community.

Saint Therese Carmelite School is a Roman Catholic school located in Alhambra, California. The school is the parish school of Saint Therese Church. Saint Therese School is approved by the Local Ordinary, provides authentic Catholic teaching, provides opportunities for community worship and participation in the sacraments and promotes evangelization and service to the community. Since its founding in 1926, fostering authentic Catholic teaching and values with the goal of forming souls for Christ has been at the center of the school's mission.

The school has a mission statement and philosophy which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life. The Mission Statement asserts that the school is deeply rooted in Roman Catholic tradition while the Philosophy states that Saint Therese Carmelite School is first and foremost a Catholic school where Catholic values are cultivated throughout the school. Catholic values are infused into every aspect of school life – from the classrooms being dedicated to a Carmelite saint to prayer and the curriculum. It is noteworthy that 100% of parent surveyed indicate that the school has a mission and philosophy statement which indicate the integrations of Catholic faith into all aspects of school life.

The school has a mission and philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life

44 responses



While reviewing the Mission, Philosophy and SLE's, the Faith SLE's were revised to include, "foster a personal relationship with God and have frequent recourse to the intercession of the saints," in lieu of "Imitate the virtues of the saints," which was incorporated into the Virtue SLE. This change was prompted by input from the current pastor who wants to foster an intimate relationship with Christ in all students. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd does that for students in TK-2nd grade with its contemplative aspect. To foster a personal relationship with Christ in all students, students in fifth grade began to practice Lectio Divina with Fr. Matthias. He left a year ago and our current pastor has continued this with students in 7th and 8th grade. The addition of the SLE to include fostering a personal relationship with God best reflects the efforts of the Carmelite friars, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, and teaching staff in this regard. This new objective will help to further strengthen and solidify the Catholic Identity of the school. Additionally, the Virtue SLE changed from, "Practice charity, respect and human virtues," to "Imitate the virtues of the saints, especially charity and respect." The title of the SLE was changed from "Responsible" to "Virtue-Driven" citizens as this best aligns with our mission.

As expressed by our philosophy statement, the main purpose of Saint Therese Carmelite School is to bring people the great fulfillment that comes from accepting the Lord's Revelation in the Catholic Faith. As such, the Catholic Faith is integrated into every subject and into every aspect of our school life. Yet, this should not be seen as if the Faith is something from the outside being forced into our academics. Rather, as is historical, it is the dedication to Catholic values that inspires every academic and social goal we have at the school. Indeed, as most Catholic schools can say, if it were not for the Catholic encouragement of education, this school would never have been founded. As a school, therefore, we not only fulfill the requirements of the Archdiocese, the USCCB and canon law, but we strive, with the grace of God, to fulfill the ideals from which the above-mentioned requirements are founded. The whole faculty and staff are involved in this mission along with the parish community and the Carmelite friar who serves as chaplain.

Although academics are built upon and encouraged by Catholic ideals, Catholic education never sees these academics as a complete end in themselves. This point has been made clear by numerous well-educated Catholics, including Saint Paul in I Corinthians: even having all

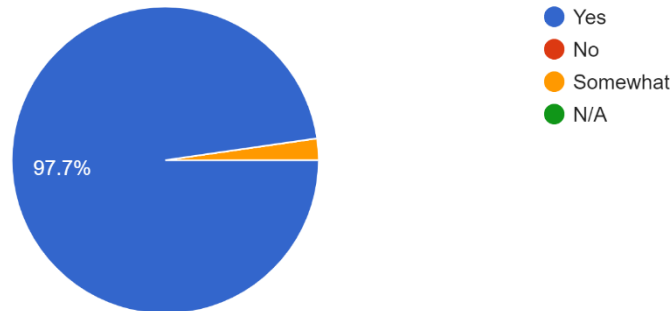
knowledge is worthless compared to a relationship of love with God. As such, the faculty and staff at Saint Therese Carmelite school recognize the supreme importance of offering the students as many opportunities as possible to encounter Christ. Since the sacraments are such powerful encounters, we make sure the students have access and preparation to receive them. As a school we attend Mass every Friday and on special feast days. We also designate one Sunday parish Mass every month for the students and families to attend together. For all these Masses, the students usually fulfill the ministries of cantor, lector, and servers. This was sadly impacted by the covid pandemic, and we will work to rebuild these ministries as soon as conditions allow. Four to five priests make themselves available for the sacrament of Reconciliation for students which is scheduled at least monthly. This is in addition to the normal three days of weekly confession at the parish. The priests usually try to make themselves available to celebrate this sacrament with the students whenever they ask for it. In the classroom, the school prepares the students for First Confession and First Communion in second grade, but we also provide special classes per grade level for those students who may not have been initiated into these sacraments at that age. During the special year of 2019-2020, when in-person catechetical instruction was shut down, we prepared the older students to receive properly the sacrament of Confirmation via on-line classes.

The school provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments. Saint Therese Carmelite School continuously provides for the spiritual formation of students, staff, and parents, especially through daily opportunities for community worship. Morning Assembly encourages students, teachers, and parents to gather as a community of faith and worship in prayer together. These experiences of prayer and the Sacraments were deeply impacted during the pandemic. We intend to be very deliberate in offering more and seeking parental involvement so that we can rebuild to pre-covid level and above. Parent surveys revealed that 97.7% of parents agree that the school offers opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the sacraments. Outside the seven sacraments, the school does its part in fostering the devotional life of the students through community prayer and encouraging the development of their personal prayer lives. We begin every school day with the student council members leading prayer at the start of our Morning Assembly. At Morning Assembly either the principal or one of the Carmelite friars will also teach the students about the saint of the day and the virtue of the month. At the conclusion of Morning Assembly, the principal or vice principal dismiss students by telling them, "Go and do the little things well." The students reply, "with love and confidence in God's love for me." This was added at the request of the pastor who wants students to know that God loves us all profoundly. The entire school body, except the very youngest (TK/K), regularly join in the church to meditate upon the rosary, and classes will take time to practice meditational and quiet prayer together to foster personal prayer. The TK/K students attend the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium once a week where there is a meditative component to every lesson. On Fridays of Lent, we participate in solemnly praying the Stations of the Cross, and every Advent, except the Covid year, we participate in a joyful Posadas procession traveling through each of the classrooms to prepare for welcoming Jesus at Christmas and as a reminder to always welcome Him into our hearts. All Saints' Day is filled with special events, including dressing up like saints and providing hints to see if their classmates can guess who they are, to honor the saints and learn more about various saints. The day ends with games and activities and culminates in the "parade of the saints" when all may see each other's costumes. Our Thanksgiving luncheon is filled with the spirit of

gratitude and unity as the students read out what they are thankful for on decorated cards. Throughout the year, we also designate days for discernment with spiritual bouquets and other signs of recognition offered to parents and the consecrated at the school and at home.

The school provide regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the sacraments (Family Masses, monthly confessions, prayer at Morning Assembly, all-school Rosary, etc)

44 responses



The eighth-grade class has an annual retreat on the feast of Saint Teresa of Avila, their class patron saint. The retreat at the beginning of the school year helps to bond the students spiritually as they journey through their final year at Saint Therese Carmelite School. Students attend Mass, recite the Rosary, pray the Stations of the Cross, receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, attend two meditations, and even play sports with the friars during the retreat. Similarly, the second-grade class has a full one-day Catechesis of the Good Shepherd retreat in which they also have an opportunity to attend Mass, meditate on God’s True Presence in the Eucharist and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation just prior to their First Holy Communion. For the few students in other classes who have not received the Sacraments of Baptism or First Holy Communion, preparation is available if they wish to receive the sacraments.

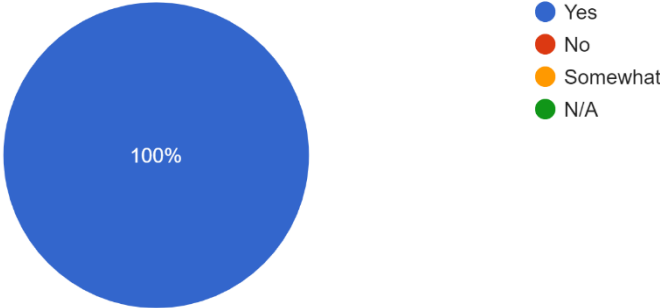
Additional opportunities for student faith formation include processions and praying the rosary in October and in May. When we pray the Rosary inside the Church, there is also Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. The 2nd and 8th grade students participate in the May Crowning. During Morning Assembly students will also pray for the Holy Souls in purgatory during the month of November, for the needs of the school and the school community daily, as well as any special intentions which may arise. We also join as a community in several novenas throughout the school year.

Saint Therese Carmelite School continues to seek new ways to teach religion to our students. On Carmelite Spirituality Days, the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus come to our campus and teach our students about Carmelite saints. They do skits, present arts and crafts, and utilize Socratic dialogue to teach our students. Our students have also taken field trips to the cloistered Carmel of Saint Teresa, the Carmel of the Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Los Angeles, the Saint Joseph Campus, and the house of the Sisters of Charity. The school has also invited guest speakers from the Culture Project, Norbertine priests, the parish Director of Religious Education, speakers on Our Lady of Guadalupe, and seminarians to come and teach

our students. During “Religious Day” in Catholic schools’ week, students learn directly from religious from various religious communities about religious life.

Our parents, who are very involved in the education of their children, stated that religious formation and the presence of the Carmelites is a major reason they choose Saint Therese Carmelite School. It is very reassuring to the Carmelite friars, the administration, and the staff to see that 100% of surveyed parents agree that the Religion curriculum is faithful to Roman Catholic teachings. The school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children. This partnership is expressed in our Mission and Philosophy Statements. Data from parent surveys indicates that 88.6% of parents acknowledged this active partnership.

The school's Religion curriculum is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings
44 responses



The faculty and staff of Saint Therese Carmelite School recognize the Catholic awareness of parents being the primary educators of their children. As such, we collaborate with the parents closely, maintaining good and regular communication to tailor as much as possible each student’s education according to each one’s needs. This will include the standard academic communication of grades and conferences and semi-yearly “narratives” that show each student’s patterns of action. Above this, though, each teacher is made aware of the responsibility to be available for even more interaction with parents for academic, spiritual, and behavioral issues when they come up and to be prepared to discuss with any parent any questions they may have concerning the class or student. In fact, parental participation and presence is very common in and after school. In the classroom we practice this parent/student/teacher communication when we carefully avoid topics more properly handled by the parents, such as sex education. We do this to allow the internal family structure and culture to guide that process in the timing that parents see most appropriate for their own child. Outside of the classroom, in conjunction with the parish, we also provide a wide array of classes, devotions, ministries and activities to the parents so that they may deepen their own faith as well as help encourage their student’s prayer life and charitable activities. Some of these programs are designed for the whole family such as our Lenten soup nights and our monthly Cor Jesu ministries. Other events for teenagers like Vox Vitae have an attached adult-track in the evening and some family events during the week.

Saint Therese Carmelite School provides opportunities for the staff to grow spiritually. The

pastor usually joins the staff in praying at 7:30am before school starts. He will often take this time to speak about current Catholic affairs and to teach about the faith. Furthermore, Brother Jason leads us in prayer at every faculty meeting. The personnel of Saint Therese Carmelite School are aware that cultivating their own relationship with Christ is a requirement for fulfilling their calling in education. Three of our teachers have certification in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, four of our teachers have degrees in Theology and we have the Carmelite friars teaching or assisting us in teaching religion. Furthermore, all our teachers are currently undergoing their Basic Catechetical Certification, which was interrupted by the shutdown of schools in March of 2020. The school has made Catechetical certification mandatory for our teachers, and we intend to complete as soon as possible. The school invested in Bishop Barron's Catholicism series, Symbolon, the Didache series, Catechisms of the Catholic Church, and bibles as resources for our teachers. Yet to grow deeper, we have an annual retreat for the staff at the Carmelite Retreat Center, El Carmelo, in Redlands. The silent retreat is led by the Carmelite friars. The parish offers numerous charitable and spiritual opportunities to learn and to serve outside of school. Some of these like family nights, youth ministry, sacramental preparation, or the various ministries that support the Mass may also be attended by many of the staff and school families. Many of these ministries have been a solid force in the parish for decades, but there are always new ministries that are called for a particular season or purpose, the great diversity of which allow the school and parish to address the varied needs of all who participate. Such offerings support the knowledge base and interior growth of our faculty and staff. Brother Jason has an advanced degree in Theology and the faculty can seek him out at any time if they have any questions about the faith. Similarly, the other friars are available to answer questions or to teach religion as needed.

Saint Therese Carmelite School provides a Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB. Students in TK-2nd grade receive religious instruction through the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This catechesis is a Montessori-based form of religious instruction. The school received a private donation and was able to pay for the classroom furniture and materials, as well as the two-year certification for four of its staff members. Beginning in second grade, students use the old Loyola Press religion books which are now marketed by Lepanto Press and are based on the Baltimore Catechism. The textbooks are 100% faithful to the teachings of the Magisterium. Furthermore, students in the middle school study using original sources such as the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, saint stories and encyclicals. The prayers and course material fully align with the ACRE testing and current Archdiocesan standards. Religious formation is further emphasized in the Lepanto grammar textbooks, Catholic spellers, Church history, saint of the day at Morning Assembly, virtue of the month, Latin studies, and Catholic handwriting books. Teachers reviewed the new Archdiocesan standards and verified that the Saint Therese Carmelite School meets and exceeds the standards. ACRE scores in 5th and 8th grade verify the efficacy of our religion program. Scores for both 5th and 8th students remain above the 70th percentile across all domains in faith knowledge, profession of faith, liturgy, and sacraments, morality, and prayer. Parental surveys also revealed that parents agree with the strength of our religion curriculum with 100% rating it as effective (11.4%) or highly effective (88.6%). Students use a Hymns and Prayers booklet for Morning Assembly, class prayers, confession and as needed. This booklet contains the prayers prescribed in the new archdiocesan standards. Students practice and recite the prayers in English and in Latin that are

found in the Saint Therese Carmelite School Hymns and Prayers. This booklet features all the Carmelite classroom saints as well as other saints to further teach students about saints, their feast day, and their virtues.

Saint Therese Carmelite School has a service-oriented outreach to Church and the civic community after the example of Jesus Christ who said, “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do” (John 13:15). Student Council leads the school in two major service-oriented outreach service projects. During Advent, the school participates in a service project in which every classroom is designated to procure items to give to those in need. The school has participated in Adopt-a-Family, care packages for the homeless and giving to a cloister convent. During Lent, the students participate in Penny Wars and other fundraisers where all the proceeds are sent to our “sister school” in Uganda. Students also participate in the parish Soup Kitchen during Lent, canned food drive for the poor before Thanksgiving and diaper drives for the local pregnancy center throughout the year. The entire school participates in a virtue-driven behavioral program called Education in Virtue. Through this program, teachers engage students in discussions of what different virtues look like and sound like and how they can be lived out at school and at home. Students are recognized for their virtuous behavior each week on VirTuesdays, where virtue slips are read aloud and presented at Morning Assembly. These virtue slips are a way to acknowledge virtuous behavior and encourage that it be repeated in the future.

The school has and makes frequent use of signs, sacramentals, traditions and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. The classrooms themselves are clear reminders to all who enter of the enduring mercy of God. Each class is supplied with a crucifix and images of Our Lady, the Carmelite patron of the class and our school patroness Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. The crucifix is usually above one of the whiteboards and is often referred to regularly in prayer, class lessons, and discussions. The other items are often placed within each class prayer corner, where students may choose to take some time for private prayer in class. Being that the prayer station is designed primarily for the students, it will have images, inspirational quotes, prayers, holy water, and books according to the spiritual and intellectual maturity range found in the classroom. One will also find mementos in the classroom that remind all who enter of the special school-wide ceremonies and events, for example the yearly blessing of the classes and the times when the school was entrusted and consecrated to Saint Joseph, Saint Michael, and Saint Therese. The school office is entrusted to the family of Saint Therese. There is a beautiful portrait of the Martin Family painted by one of our parishioners. The painting depicts Louie and Zelig Martin and all the Martin children. One corner of the school has a grotto dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe and another corner of the campus has a grotto dedicated to Saint Therese of the Child Jesus. On the top of tall church tower, one can see our patroness Saint Therese of Lisieux. There is a beautiful painting of Saint Therese and Saint Joseph leading Saint Therese Carmelite School children to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This portrait was commissioned for one of the classrooms dedicated to Saint Joseph. However, the painting is too large for a classroom, and it hangs in the stairway.

All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience. From the front office staff to the janitorial crew, all form a crucial team in the formation of our students. The school day, classes, sports activities, lunch, and most

school activities begin with prayer. Students pray the Angelus with whomever is on duty, even if that person does not know the Angelus. Sometimes, the Yard Duty Monitor will simply stand and learn from the students. All our staff is active in bringing and joyfully proclaiming the Good News to our students and parents. Students experience it daily. Parents witness the beauty of the Good News at mandatory meetings, Back to School night, Morning Assembly and student concerts and poetry recitals. Altogether, we see the faculty and staff working their hardest to maintain an environment conducive to the students' relationship with God. We will continue to remain vigilant on new ways in which we may do this.

Significant Accomplishments

- Integration of Catholic teaching and values in all aspects of school life
- Mission and Philosophy Statements that state partnership with parents
- The Faith is naturally incorporated into the atmosphere and academics of the school
- Daily, weekly, monthly, and special celebrations which are designed to help the students build their relationship with Jesus Christ
- Meeting new Archdiocesan Religion Standards
- Faith formation opportunities for students and staff

Significant Goals

- Provide more opportunities for the spiritual growth of the parents after school hours.
- To rebuild the student presence and ministry in our school Masses to the pre-Covid levels

Evidence

- Mission and Philosophy Statements – found on the website, handbook
- Mission and SLE's – posted in every classroom and found on the website and handbook
- Mass every Friday, holy days of obligation, and on major Carmelite Solemnities
- Confessions monthly – announced at Morning Assembly
- Prayers and Hymns booklet for Morning Assembly
- Sacramentals in every classroom and school office
- Catholic Identity survey

B. DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, classical education, and expectations from our pastor and diocesan officials. The Mission, Philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations clearly explain our Catholic mission which is both expected and supported by the Discalced Carmelites

of the California-Arizona Province. Furthermore, they are approved and supported by the Saint Therese Church community. We are proud that they also serve as a means for high achievement of Archdiocesan religious and academic standards as evidenced by ACRE and STAR data. These are the Saint Therese Carmelite School Mission Statement, Philosophy and Schoolwide Learning Expectations:

MISSION STATEMENT

Founded in 1926 and deeply rooted in **Carmelite** spirituality and Roman **Catholic** Tradition, Saint Therese Carmelite School, **united with parents who are the primary educators of their children**, seeks to form students in **faith, academics, and virtue** through a **Classical** education.

PHILOSOPHY

Saint Therese Carmelite School is first and foremost a Catholic school. We cultivate Catholic values and spiritual formation of the school community through daily prayer, weekly school Masses, recitation of the Rosary, praying the Stations of the Cross, May Crowning, and the sacraments. Carmelite spirituality is fostered through the teaching and example of the Carmelite friars and sisters. Every classroom has a Carmelite patron saint. We entrust our school to our Loving Savior, His Blessed Mother, our patroness Saint Therese of Lisieux and all Carmelite saints. By teaching our students to imitate the virtues and lives of the saints, we aim to form students who fulfill their destiny of becoming saints.

Saint Therese Carmelite School educates students through the Catholic Classical Model of education to equip our students with the logic, critical thinking, and language skills necessary to succeed throughout their lives. We seek to give students the necessary tools of learning and to foster a deep sense of wonder and love for all that is genuinely true, good, and beautiful. We emphasize classical learning, not only because we want our students to read well, speak well, and think well, but ultimately because truth, beauty and goodness are desirable in themselves and for their own sake.

We seek to incorporate within our students the wisdom of two thousand years of Catholic thought, history, culture, and the arts so that they might understand themselves and their world in the light of that Truth and acquire the character to live happy and integrated lives in the service of God and others.

Education in this deep and comprehensive sense extends beyond the classroom and is more than just the acquisition of skills. It encompasses the whole of one's life. Because parents are the primary educators of their children, Saint Therese Carmelite School seeks to involve families ever more deeply in the life of the school and in the education of their children.

The success of students at Saint Therese Carmelite School depends on the active cooperation of the Discalced Carmelite Friars, lay teachers, staff, students, parents, and benefactors in working toward the common good of this unique community. All adults work for the glory of God and the benefit of the students entrusted to their care.

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS (SLEs)

Saint Therese Carmelite School students will become:

Faithful Catholics who

1. Know and practice the basic truths of the Catholic faith;
2. Foster a personal relationship with God and have frequent recourse to the intercessions of the saints; and
3. Are familiar with the lives of the saints, especially Saint Therese and the Carmelite saints.

Academic achievers who

4. Read, write, and speak effectively;
5. Think critically and solve problems logically;
6. Appreciate the Fine Arts; and
7. Have a strong sense of wonder and depth of inquiry.

Virtue-driven citizens who

8. Seek the good, the true, and the beautiful;
9. Imitate the virtues of the saints, especially charity and respect towards all; and
10. Use their God-given talents for the greater glory of God.

The process of reviewing and revising the mission, philosophy, and schoolwide learning expectations began in June of 2015 as the school was preparing to transition to the Classical Model of education. The pastor, principal and newly formed board reviewed and revised the mission, philosophy and SLEs with input from the faculty and parents from the Parent Guild.

The process was completed over two weeks during mandatory in-service meetings. The first goal was to clearly define the mission of the school keeping in mind the Catholic identity of the school, partnership with parents as primary educators of their children, and Carmelite spirituality. Then, the pastor, principal and board defined a philosophy that further explained the mission of the school. It was important to include the importance of Catholicism, classical education, and Carmelite spirituality in the formation of students in faith, academics, and virtue. These three pillars form the basis for the SLEs. Finally, came the task of revising the SLEs to ensure that they were a clear extension of and flowed out of the mission and philosophy. In addition, they had to be measurable and apply to all students.

Once the Mission, Philosophy and SLEs were reviewed, revised, and approved by the pastor, principal, teachers and parents, the updated Mission Statement, Philosophy and SLEs were published on the website, in the Parent Handbook and on marketing literature. Posters were made and displayed in every classroom.

In 2019, the staff reviewed and revised the Mission, Philosophy and SLEs with input from the new pastor. The Mission Statement was summarized into one sentence. The SLEs were revised

to include fostering a personal relationship with God under the Faith SLE and it clarified imitating the virtues of the saints, especially charity and respect, under the Virtue SLE.

The Mission and Schoolwide Learning Expectations are posted in every classroom of the school. They are also posted on our website, in the Parent Handbook, and in marketing literature. The staff use the SLEs in their class yearlong plans and they reference back to them when lesson planning.

Teachers measure how well students are achieving the Faith SLEs by observing how well students are mastering the basic truths of the faith through their performance in religion class. ACRE scores where our 5th and 8th grade students score above the 70th percentile also demonstrate that our students are achieving the Faith SLEs. Students read two to three saint stories every year as part of every religion class. They also learn about saints in history class. Additionally, for All Saint's Day, students dress up as saints and they present a riddle to their classmates. The saint of the day is discussed at Morning Assembly, and we all ask for the intercession of the saint of the day as well as the intercessions of Saint Therese, the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph. Lastly, every classroom is dedicated to a Carmelite saint and students learn about their class saint. Effectively students can become familiar with at least half a dozen saints or more every year.

Fostering a personal relationship with God and having frequent recourse to the intercession of the saints is the new SLE which resulted when the SLEs were being reviewed. Every day we pray as a school and ask for the intercession of many saints. Students also make Spiritual Bouquets for teachers, students who are ill, their parents, priests and other people as needed. Frequently, they will offer Rosaries (intercession of the Blessed Mother), novenas to Saint Therese and prayers to specific saints. Anecdotal evidence has also shown us that students are developing deep and personal relationships with God. A young student lost her father recently and she asked to go into the Atrium (where students study the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd) and do a "work." This was her way of speaking with God about what happened. We have had other students who ask to go to the Adoration Chapel or to church to pray. During the time when the churches were closed due to COVID restrictions, we saw many of our students come on their own and pray in the outdoor church where Our Lord was exposed daily. Though this is not an SLE that can be graded or empirically measured, it is an important goal for the school.

The Academic SLEs can be measured by student's performance on their reading, writing, math, science, religion, Latin, and history classes. STAR scores above the 50th percentile in early literacy, reading and math also serve as a measure of how well our students are achieving the SLEs. Speaking well is demonstrated in public speaking during presentations and class discussions. Thinking critically and solving problems logically can be demonstrated and measured in math, Latin, and science. Appreciating the fine arts can be seen in music and art classes. Finally, having a strong sense of wonder and depth of inquiry is something displayed in every academic subject. To assess this, students receive a Narrative report at the end of the 2nd Quarter. This detailed narrative informs parents of student's depth of inquiry and sense of wonder, basic understanding of subject matter, participation, attitude, and behavior.

The mission of the school includes forming students in faith, academics, and virtue. In a

Catholic school, forming students in faith and academics is a given. However, at Saint Therese Carmelite School, character formation is paramount. Therefore, the school has a virtue component. Saint Therese Carmelite students learn about virtues through the Education in Virtue series, which also has a Lectio Divina component. As a school, we learn one virtue per month. On VirTuesDay, at Morning assembly students are awarded Virtue Slips for exemplifying the virtue of the month or any other virtue. At the Quarterly Awards Assembly students also receive Virtue Awards. We can also see virtue in action by observing how students treat each other and other people. Their charity shines forth in our school service projects. Student ambassadors, altar servers, lectors and cantors gladly give up their free time for higher pursuits. The Virtue SLEs are palpable in the life of the school. Even when students misbehave, we appeal to them by asking them what virtue they could have practiced. Perceptive metrics from the ACRE exam also show us how our students are growing in virtue. Our students score well on this section of the exam with many scores above the 90th percentile.

Parishioners have come up to me to thank me for the way students behave at Mass. They want to know what we are doing. The answer is simple: we have a mission, and we follow it. Students respond with joy. One of our Art teachers is in a wheelchair and students run to help her unprompted. Our students volunteer to serve at the parish Mass on Friday, on Sundays, at funeral Masses, wedding Masses and First Communion Masses.

Our pastor, together with the Carmelite Friars, expects the school to deliver excellence in education, authentic Catholic teachings, and virtue formation through a Classical Catholic education. The pastor also expects Carmelite spirituality to be infused into our school life. The pastor, board, principal, curriculum advisor and parents who initially worked on the Mission, Philosophy, and SLEs for the transition into classical education used *The Educational Plan of Saint Jerome*, support materials from the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education, and *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum* as guides to set the educational goals and standards for Saint Therese Carmelite School. Furthermore, they consulted with the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education leaders, publishers of classical textbooks and educators and curriculum advisors with experience in classical education. The school is a member of the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education and receives training and support from them. *The Educational Plan of Saint Jerome* and *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum*, as well as literature and guides from classical publishers, continue to serve as the standards which the pastor has set for Saint Therese Carmelite School. Though the school does not follow Common Core Standards, the students do take the STAR exam like all other students in Los Angeles Archdiocese. Our staff disaggregates STAR reports to know how our students are performing with regards to common core standards. The trend for our students is that they perform better on reading as they advance in grade level. Math results tend to be directly related to which math class (regular math, pre-algebra, algebra, or geometry) they are enrolled in. Students in more advanced math classes tend to have higher scores and a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. There is also a correlation between STAR scores and how long a student has been studying Latin. Students in advanced Latin classes have better logical skills and have better scores than their peers. Scores for students in advanced Latin and advanced math are often in the high 80th to high 90th percentiles. The school continues to explore how to help our students achieve their highest potential without compromising on the classical education we offer.

Significant Accomplishments

- School purpose is clearly defined through the Mission and Philosophy Statements
- SLEs fully integrated into the life of the school
- School Mission, Philosophy, and SLEs published on website, handbook, marketing materials so that parents, teachers, students, and shareholders have access to them

Significant Goals

- Continue to include SLEs in Yearlong Plans and Lesson Plans
- Continue to work on rubrics and criteria to measure all SLEs

Evidence

- Mission, Philosophy and SLE's posted on website
- Parent Handbook
- Marketing materials
- School newsletter
- Yearlong plans
- Faculty agendas
- Classroom Mission and SLEs poster
- The Educational Plan of Saint Jerome
- Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum
- Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence books

C. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

The organizational structures of Saint Therese Carmelite School focus on high achievement of all students and communicate student progress to all shareholders. The pastor, who is the governing authority of our parochial school, is highly supportive of the faith formation and academic achievement of all students.

Saint Therese Carmelite School is a parochial school in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. As such, the pastor is the governing authority in all matters. He is the spiritual leader and the final authority in curriculum choices for the school within his parish. Fr. Philip Sullivan was the pastor and leader of Saint Therese Carmelite School up until 2020. In 2020, Fr. Thomas Koller was assigned as pastor of Saint Therese Church. Both pastors have been active in the life of the school. They lead prayer for the staff, celebrate Mass for the school, hear confessions, attend school concerts, attend mandatory parent meetings, and are present at fundraising events. Both pastors have been active in the classrooms teaching our students art, theology, and hockey, and even substituting when needed. The community welcomes the presence of the pastor.

The organizational structure of the school receives input from shareholders regarding policies and procedures that affect student achievement and communicates student progress to those shareholders as well. The pastor established a board in 2015. The pastor, board, principal, and staff establish and maintain the Catholic Identity of the school, which is communicated to the Carmelite Friars, parishioners, the Parish Finance Council, benefactors, parents, students, and shareholders. Since the adoption of classical education, the pastor and the principal have worked hard to build good relationships with the parish. Today the school and parish have an excellent working and ministerial relationship. Parishioners are supportive of the school, both spiritually and financially, because of the strong Catholic Identity and the classical education. The board makes marketing, budgeting and fundraising recommendations to the pastor and the principal.

The archdiocese plays a big role in supporting the principal's work toward high achievement of all students. The Archdiocese provided the school with iPads during the COVID shutdown so that all students had equal access to resources. The superintendents lend valuable resources and time to mentor the principal in all matters affecting student learning and the health of the school.

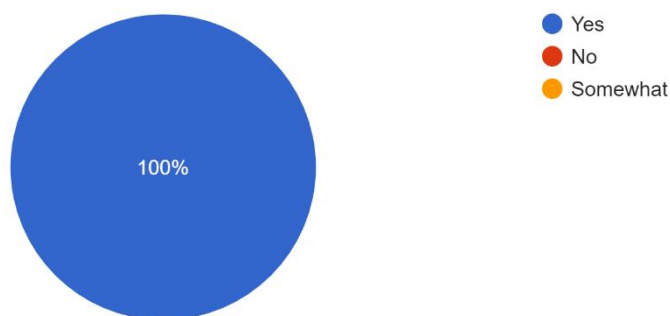
The current principal, who was hired to facilitate the adoption of classical education since 2015, is a vibrant leader. She has established clear policies and procedures for effective operational practices. Staff follow the policies in the Archdiocesan Administrative Manual. These policies are communicated to the staff during annual summer teacher in-services and as needed throughout the year. The principal and the board worked on the current Parent-Student Handbook which delineates school policies and procedures for parents.

We have a supportive staff who truly practice and model what we are trying to impart to our students. Our students can see staff members at Mass, confession, and church community events. More than that, the same virtue program, modeled after the three theological virtues and the four cardinal virtues, also serves as a tool and a reminder for the staff to follow. Practicing the virtues helps us to work better and to have good working relationships. Staff also show great dedication to supporting the academic growth of students. Faculty spend time researching and organizing relevant field trips, offering extra tutoring during and after school and working with individual and small groups of students. The after-school care director, together with Brother Jason, supervise the completion of homework and offer tutoring when necessary. Classroom rules and procedures have been established using Harry Wong's *Classroom Management* and *The First Days of School* video series.

The virtue principles and the teachings of our faith help students to become the best men and women they can be. Bullying and other major disciplinary problems seldom occur at Saint Therese Carmelite School. We credit the example set forth at home and reinforced by the friars, the administration, and staff for this. The Education in Virtue program together with the rules and procedures set forth in the Handbook help to ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is best conducive to learning. A full 100% of our parents state that they feel safe sending their children to our school. Student surveys also reveal that they feel safe attending Saint Therese Carmelite School.

My children are safe at school

44 responses



The pastor and the principal meet weekly, and they communicate via text message, email and by telephone as needed. Topics of discussion for the meetings include current school affairs, financial matters, liturgical events for the students, student matters, personnel matters, student progress and any other relevant issues. The principal informs the pastor about student scores, grades, presentations, virtue awards and behavior. The principal and the president of the board meet with the Parish Finance Council and give a school report about student progress and the finances of the school. The pastor informs other ministries and parishioners about student progress from the pulpit, via the church bulletin and at meetings with various ministries.

The principal meets with the faculty every Monday from 3:15pm – 4:45pm. Topics on the agenda include matters that directly impact high achievement of students. Teachers discuss student progress and collaborate with one another. Upcoming events (field trips, student presentations, student-led service projects) are discussed to see how they will impact student progress and to make sure they fit with our mission. Teachers also discuss STAR data, ACRE data, student achievements on individual classes, curricular challenges, and student behavioral issues. We also discuss students on STEP plans and how to best support them. Teacher meetings address issues that impact student learning so that we can best support our students to achieve their highest potential. Teachers also support each other, and they work collaboratively to ensure that our students receive the best education and that they reach their highest potential.

There is also a component of professional development at faculty meetings. For example, under the guidance of our pastor, the staff is studying Bishop Barron's *Catholicism*, which has helped us be better instructors of the faith. We have also learned about Don Bosco's Preventive Method which focuses on a very gentle and friendly manner of preventing disciplinary problems with children while guiding them in the right path. The virtue of the month is also discussed. The product of these discussions is that we all go and support high achievement of all students.

The principal, vice-principal and curriculum advisor also encourage student learning by analyzing the curriculum and procuring necessary resources for teachers. In April, teachers are asked to review what they have accomplished thus far in the year. They look at the course pace, student progress and challenges and analyze any trends. We also begin to look at where students

are headed in math and Latin for next year's placements. Additionally, we look at the ACRE and STAR scores as well as student progress. Based on these factors, teachers make recommendations with regards to curricular needs. Three years ago, the phonics program was changed due to teacher discussions. We are now examining to see whether that change was beneficial to our students. Last year teachers noticed that students were progressing at a much slower pace in Latin. Since we determined that it was not in the student's best interest to repeat the course, the curriculum advisor recommended a different Latin series for those students who did not make enough progress to move up to the next level. The interruption to in-person learning and the lack of direct instruction for three fourths of the school year were the cause of this. Nonetheless, this new series serves the needs of the students best. They are demonstrating a deeper understanding of Latin as a language and of Roman history. A continuous topic of discussion is how to help our students achieve higher scores in Reading, particularly in reading comprehension and inferences. We have implemented the Institute for Excellence in Writing program with hopes that it will help bridge the gap. Teachers have requested more professional development in the implementation of this writing program. Lastly, the Self Study was a major topic of discussion over the past two years.

To save money, the principal has taken on partial bookkeeping duties; she writes checks, inputs deposits and submits payroll. The president of the board reconciles and balances the bank accounts. The principal also oversees the FACTS accounts. In April, the principal puts together a preliminary budget. The president of the board together with the Parish Finance Council president examine the preliminary budget presented by the principal and make recommendations to the pastor, who gives his final approval. Once approved, the president of the board oversees the budget and gives monthly reports to the pastor and the president of the Parish Finance Council. The pastor, board president, Parish Finance Council president and the principal are in regular communication about the budget and financial matters. The overriding question in financial matters is: "How will this expenditure help our students? Will it impact student learning?"

The Saint Therese Carmelite School faculty and staff often carry out multiple duties. The office administrator handles the front office and oversees ordering office supplies, sports uniforms and classroom supplies as needed; the curriculum advisor makes textbook purchases. The office administrator is also the school "nurse," and teaches a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd class. She also receives payments and deposits in the office. She also helps with data entry and money collecting for fundraisers. Additionally, she answers the phone, enters attendance into Gradelink, logs in parent service hours, updates student cumulative records and helps coordinate VIRTUS certification and fingerprinting for parents and staff. She is also the school photographer. The daycare director serves as a substitute for the office and the classroom as needed.

Similarly, the staff carry out multiple roles. The TK/K teacher is also the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd director, and she prepares students for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. She also administers the Gesell GDO-R test to incoming TK, K, and 1st grade students. She is also in charge of publications and *The Little Way*. She helps with admissions, coordinates fundraising, creates the yearbook, is the COVID compliance officer, and she is a member of the WCEA Leadership Team and the Self Study coordinator. The 1st/2nd teacher is in charge of

STAR data, and she is the STEP coordinator. The 3rd/4th grade teacher has chaired the auction and helps with fundraising. The 5th/6th teacher also teaches music to the 3rd/4th grade students. The 7th grade teacher is also our vice-principal, member of the WCEA Leadership Team, altar server trainer, 7th/8th grade religion teacher, after-school tutor, and boys' PE teacher. The 8th grade teacher teaches the 7th/8th grade science, directs the reenactment of the Battle of Lepanto, directs the Living Stations, and teaches Euclidean geometry.

Saint Therese Carmelite School communicates expectations for high student achievement and student progress to its community through written expectations, presentations, awards, and articles. The Parent-Student Handbook outlines academic and behavioral expectations for all students. The Handbook is available on our website for parents, parishioners, prospective parents, and others to view. Back-to-School night is hosted each September, at which standards and rubrics are presented to parents in oral presentations, as well as in printed syllabi. Open House is held each January and communicates the same standards and expectations to prospective families, parishioners and benefactors who stop by. We also have articles published several times a year in the local newspaper *Around Alhambra*. These keep parishioners and neighbors informed of large events, such as our annual gala or open house, and highlight some of the projects and accomplishments of our students.

Saint Therese Carmelite School communicates student progress to parents through Gradelink, quarterly report cards, progress reports as needed, parent-teacher conferences, awards assemblies, emails, and teacher meetings as needed. Formal parent-teacher conferences are held each year in November at the conclusion of the 1st Quarter so that parents and teachers can analyze individual students progress and plan accordingly how to best support each student at school and at home. Parents and teachers also communicate before and after school as needed. Awards Assemblies are held after the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters. These assemblies are open to parents and families and show the high level of achievement among our student body. At Parent Service Organization meetings, parents discuss ways to support the school in its fundraising and educational efforts. Student progress is discussed at these meetings and the PSO president voices any concerns and suggestions to the principal.

The COVID pandemic impacted the Saint Therese Carmelite School deeply. Like all schools, we lost several families who lost jobs and were forced to relocate to other states. We had a small board and the president of the board relocated to a different state and the board effectively dismantled. The pastor is in the process of forming a new board whose functions will be to act as consultants to him, to help with marketing and recruitment of students, to help with fundraising and to put together a Strategic Plan. This is all part of the continuous process of self-improvement for Saint Therese Carmelite School.

Significant Accomplishments

- Strong involvement and support from the pastor and the Carmelite friars
- Dedicated staff who collaborate to support high achievement of all students
- Support from Parish Finance Council
- Regular faculty meetings to support high achievement of all students
- Good working relationship among principal, pastor, and parish

Significant Goals

- Recreate the Board
- Develop a Strategic Plan
- Continue to offer Professional Development to teachers to support high achievement of all students, particularly in classical pedagogies, language arts, and math

Evidence

- Faculty meeting agendas
- PSO meeting agendas
- Newsletter *The Little Way*
- Parent-Teacher Conference Sign ups
- Annual School Budgets
- Gradelink
- Parent Surveys

D. DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTION TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.

Saint Therese Carmelite School uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement. The staff collects, disaggregates, aggregates, and analyzes standardized ACRE and STAR test scores. Both the ACRE and STAR are the exams which students in parish schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles take. The school sends written reports to the parents. Additionally, the school reports to the school community at mandatory parent meetings. The data is collected and analyzed by our faculty to adjust teaching strategies and the pace of the curriculum as needed, to ensure high achievement of all students. In our faculty meetings, decisions are made on the strategies that will best suit the needs of our students, regardless of whether they are below, at, or above grade level.

Saint Therese Carmelite School educates students through the Catholic Classical Model of education to equip our students with the logical, critical thinking and language skills necessary to succeed throughout their lives. We seek to give students the necessary tools of learning and to foster a deep sense of wonder and love for all that is genuinely true, good, and beautiful. We emphasize classical learning, not only because we want our students to read well, speak well, and think well, but ultimately because truth, beauty and goodness are desirable in themselves and for their own sake. Our teachers use Student Learning Expectations to construct their lessons and year-long plans.

Saint Therese Carmelite school administers the following standardized tests: STAR test in Reading, Math and Early Literacy (K-3); the ACRE test in religion in grades five and eight, as

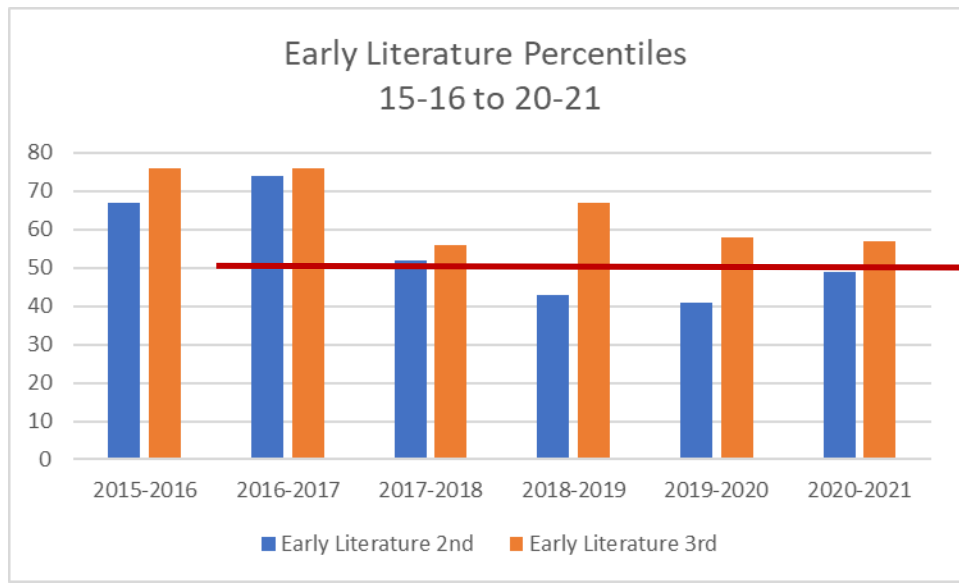
well as National Latin Exam (8th grade). The faculty believes these are valuable diagnostic tools to improve student learning. Classroom teachers employ the standard test results and results of teacher created/publisher provided tests, as well as informal observations. Teachers vary assessments using oral, written, formal, informal, and diagnostic to aid them in curricular planning, methodology and the acquisition of new teaching materials.

Based on faculty meeting discussions, the teachers are implementing small group instruction, direct instruction, hands-on-learning, centers, Socratic dialogue, memory work, reading aloud, and a variety of pedagogies to meet the needs of all learners. In K-2nd grades, the teachers are teaching several different phonics groups to address all students' needs. We have also aligned the spelling words to be taught in conjunction with the phonics lessons, using All About Reading (Orton Gillingham Based). Researchers have found that a systematic approach to teaching phonics is more effective than non-systematic approaches. St Therese uses a math placement exam in grades 6th through 8th grade to place students in the appropriate math class (Pre-Algebra, Algebra or Euclidean Geometry). Lower grades use small group mini lessons and academic centers to meet our students' academic needs.

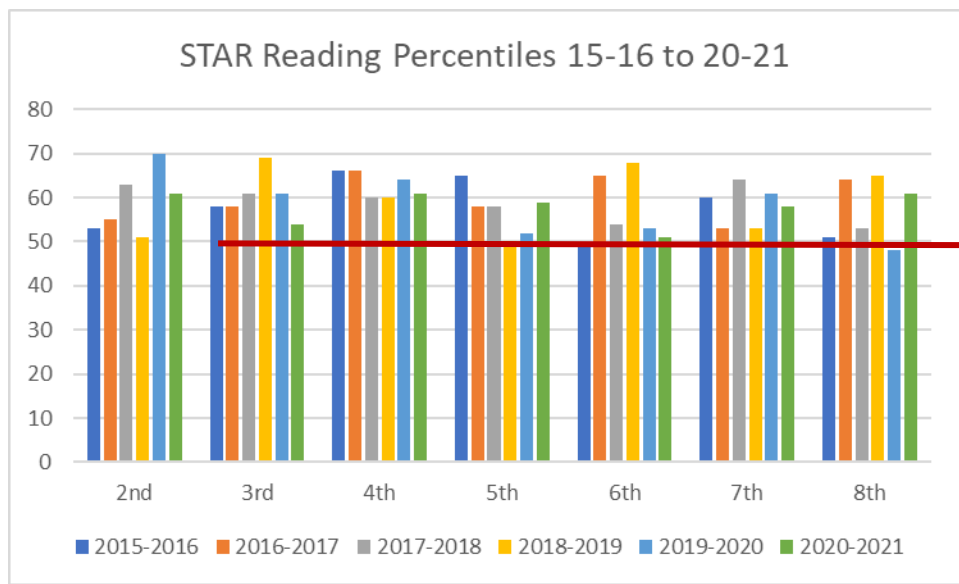
The STAR reading and math tests are administered in September, January, and May. After each assessment, the data is analyzed by the teachers, both individually and within faculty meetings. Reports are generated to give the teachers a breakdown of the skills that individuals and the class as a whole need to work on. Small groups and lessons are planned using this data. The data collected over the past six years indicates that 70 % of the school is performing above the 50th percentile in Early Literature, 61% of the school is performing above the 50th percentile in Reading and 78 % are scoring above the 50th percentile in Math. Those falling below the 50th percentile are given additional practice and small group instruction, as needed. Seventy percent of our school has been performing above the 50th percentile over the past six years

The school disaggregated the data by number of years that a student had studied under the classical education model. Those students who began their education in TK, K or 1st grade at our school tend to have higher scores in Early Literacy. When comparing scores with students who did not attend our school in early grades, we notice that Instructional Planning reports inevitably point to more phonics for students scoring lower. Since our students begin phonics in TK, we believe this accounts for higher Early Literacy scores for our students. We found that in early grades, scores tend to be lower and by middle school, they are above benchmark. The analysis leads us to think that advanced math and Latin courses where students utilize critical thinking skills accounts for this jump. The school did not exclude any outliers nor do any of our students have extended testing times. The scores reflect average scores for the entire student body.

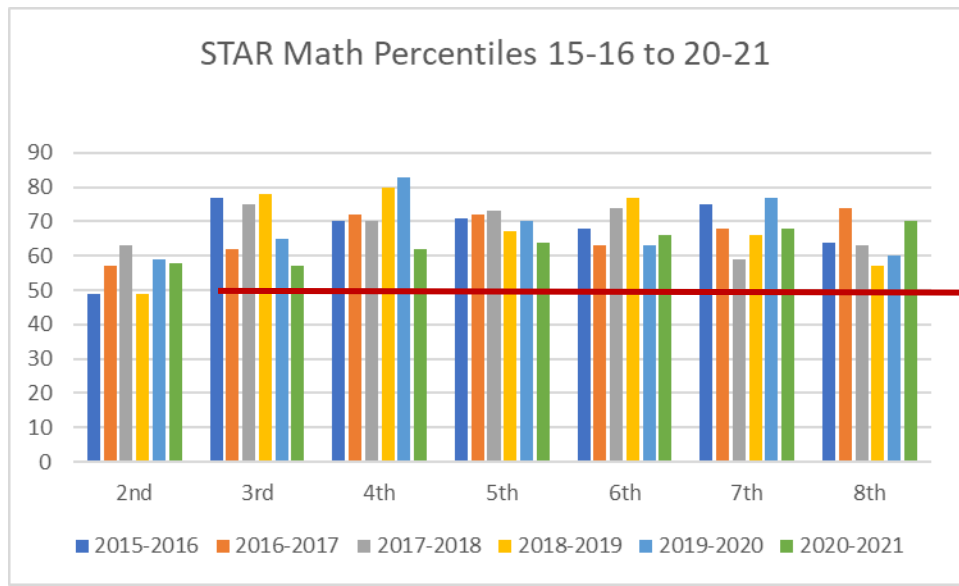
It is important to note that some classes are small (3 students-8 students). This means that even one outlier in either direction can pull averages down or up. Notwithstanding the small class sizes, meaningful and helpful trends have been established.



Deeper analysis of STAR Reading scores has revealed that our students can make improvements in reading comprehension, inferences, and in reading technical literature. This is one reason why the staff would like to receive more professional development in the area of language arts. The staff together with the principal and curriculum advisor continue to explore ways to bridge the gap without teaching to the test and without compromising on classical pedagogies.



When analyzing math STAR scores, the staff noticed that our math scores are higher than our reading scores. Disaggregating by sub-groups, our students can improve in the area of algebraic equations, geometry and solving word problems. We found a direct correlation between math scores and which math class students were taking. Students taking geometry scored higher overall. Since math scores are strong in our school, the staff would like to continue to strengthen this by receiving more professional development in mathematical pedagogies.

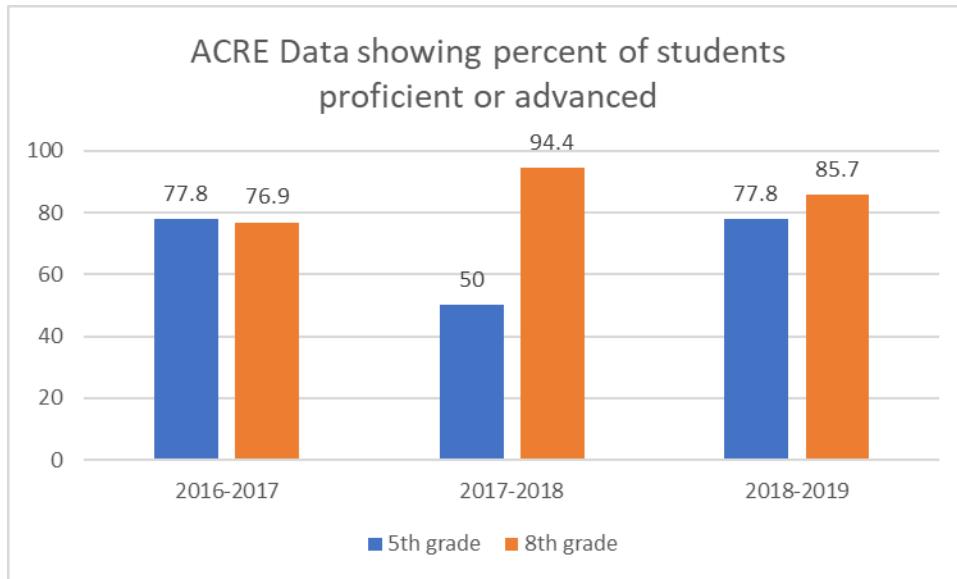


After analyzing the test scores, we realize that our students are performing well. However, as a school, we need to continue to differentiate instruction so that our high performing and low performing students can achieve higher learning and be challenged appropriately. Our goal as a school is to have all the students performing at or above level. In addition to measuring academic growth, the faculty is establishing a rubric that directly measures the mastery of SLE’s. Daily reading of quality literature at home, in addition to school is highly recommended to all our students.

The school began to administer the National Latin Exam in 2017-2018. This exam is given annually to students in 8th grade who are in level II Latin courses. Students must have completed Level I and Level II instruction to complete this exam. The first year two of the six students taking the exam received the National Latin Exam Outstanding Achievement Award for missing less than 2 questions. The following year in 2018-2019, one of two students received the award. We did not take the exam in 2019-2020 due to the covid shutdown. The trend with the few students that have taken the exam is that they do well in grammar but need improvement in Roman history. This is one reason why the school is exploring and testing out a different Latin course. We will resume taking this exam in 2022-2023.

The ACRE test is administered in both fifth and eighth grades every year. The results of our ACRE test demonstrate the success of our religious curriculum and our strong Catholic identity here at Saint Therese. Teachers use the results of the ACRE test to inform their instruction, to ensure that students have a solid Catholic faith foundation. Saint Therese School has consistently scored above the national average in faith knowledge, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, communal life, and missionary spirit. In 2016-2017, 77.8 % of 5th grader and 76.9% of 8th grade students were proficient across all Faith domains. In 2017-2018, 50% of 5th grade and 94.4% of 8th grade students were proficient across all Faith domains. The 5th grade in 2017-2018 was composed of only six students, four of which were new to the school. Furthermore, the ACRE exam that year was administered in the first week of December which means the four new students had only had three months of religious instruction at our school. The 8th class, on the other hand, had eighteen students with fourteen returning and four new

students. The fourteen returning students had received religious instruction at Saint Therese Carmelite School for a solid 2 years and 3 months. In 2018-2019, 77.88% of the 5th grader and 85.7% of 8th grade students were proficient and higher across all domains and 86% of the 8th graders scored proficient or higher. 100% of our returning students scored proficient or higher. The school wishes to concentrate its efforts on maintaining and strengthening Catholic Identity, particularly by providing more faith formation opportunities for parents.



Areas of weakness identified are information about the covenant, and the term “God becoming man.” Our goal as a school is to continue to work on all students becoming proficient or higher. Religion is taught in the classrooms at a set time. In additions students learn about the faith at Morning Assembly where we learn about the Saint of the Day and virtue, short read aloud stories, through class literature, during class discussions, through language art, through writing, through history, during peer conversations, and at Friday Mass (and feast days). Faith is lived here at Saint Therese, not just learned about.

Our students in grade 5 tend to identify bullying and drug use at the school; neither of these two problems exist at our school. We believe that confusion may be arising from lack of knowledge of terminology or a simple theological confusion. That is, they may identify bullying and drug use as a problem because morally both are a problem. There is less confusion on the matter with 8th grade students.

Professional Development has been provided in classical curriculum, Harry Wong Series, Saxon Math, Catholic Textbook project, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, I.E.W., STAR data days, Effective Teaching practices and Google Classroom and Zoom to assist with teaching online during Covid. The purpose of each of these training sessions is to help the staff be the most effective teacher possible. Nonetheless, our dedicated staff indicated on teacher surveys that they would like more professional development in classical pedagogies to become more efficient. This is evidence that we have a faculty dedicated to our students and committed to their own professional development and growth to best serve our students.

Communication to the parents comes in many forms throughout the year. Report cards are sent home each quarter, with progress reports as needed. Twice a year after the 2nd and 4th quarters parents receive narrative reports along with their report cards. During Morning Assembly on “VirTuesday” students are presented with Virtue awards to celebrate virtues in action. Teachers also communicate with parents about their child by email, during pick up, and via phone calls. Short written notes and Gradelink reports are also generated for parents as needed. Parents are encouraged to ask questions to better assist their child in their learning progress.

Writing has been identified as an area the whole school needs to work on. In recent years we have adopted the Institute for Excellence in Writing program, to systematically instruct students on how to form well developed sentences, paragraphs, and complete compositions. Teachers have attended in-service training on this program. Writing is embedded into our literature, history, and religion programs as well as separately taught. More instructional time and practice is needed for all our students.

Data collected from national exams is just a piece of the information used by the teachers and staff at Saint Therese to structure our planning and identify areas of concerns. Parent feedback and teacher observations all contribute to the learning process. The last quarter of 2019-2020 and the first three quarters of 2020-201 were grossly disrupted by COVID-19 and affected the learning of all students. Our school was able to continue to teach online (although we do not regularly use technology in our classrooms), and the students were able to adapt. Several families withdrew from school to move, due to financial hardships. We have been able to identify some learning gaps that occurred during the last year. In-class instruction is ideal for maximum instruction and learning time. The school will be hypervigilant in its collection, disaggregation, aggregation, and analysis of research-based assessments, ACRE, STAR, and class assessments to continue to make improvements to our instructional pedagogies and curricular programs.

Significant Accomplishments

- Analysis of STAR testing indicates that our students are largely achieving at or above benchmark in both reading and math
- Students that are identified with limited growth are receiving additional support through small group instruction and when needed the STEP program
- Students have strong faith knowledge, which we hope to grow through literature studies on saints, following the Classical Model.
- 8th Grade students have 100% acceptance rate to local Catholic High schools

Significant Goals

- Provide faith formation opportunities for parents
- Continuing professional development for all staff members to become better at classical pedagogies

Evidence

- Appendix A
- Test data collected
- Faculty meeting minutes/notes
- ACRE data
- STAR charts
- High School acceptance data

E. HIGH ACHIEVEMENT BY ALL STUDENTS TOWARD CLEARLY DEFINED SLES AND CURRICULUM STANDARDS

All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

As a Catholic school, Saint Therese Carmelite School adheres to the Magisterium of the Church. The Schoolwide Learning Expectations seek to help students become faithful Catholics, life-long learners, and virtue-driven citizens. All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward the school's clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS (SLEs)

Saint Therese Carmelite School students will become:

Faithful Catholics who

1. Know and practice the basic truths of the Catholic faith;
2. Foster a personal relationship with God and have frequent recourse to the intercessions of the saints; and
3. Are familiar with the lives of the saints, especially Saint Therese and the Carmelite saints.

Academic achievers who

4. Read, write, and speak effectively;
5. Think critically and solve problems logically;
6. Appreciate the Fine Arts; and
7. Have a strong sense of wonder and depth of inquiry.

Virtue-driven citizens who

8. Seek the good, the true, and the beautiful;
9. Imitate the virtues of the saints, especially charity and respect towards all; and
10. Use their God-given talents for the greater glory of God.

Saint Therese Carmelite School provides a challenging, comprehensive, and classical curriculum based on classical education, which has been tried and tested for hundreds of years. Through the challenging, comprehensive, and classical curriculum, students make acceptable progress toward

the Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs), Common Core Standards and Los Angeles Archdiocesan standards. Acceptable progress is defined by their scores on standardized tests (ACRE and STAR), individual class assessments, grades, virtue awards, and anecdotal evidence. In terms of standardized tests, we look to see if students are at grade level or above and if they are improving from one assessment to the next. The Catholic Identity of the school and the spiritual formation are basic to the mission of Saint Therese Carmelite School. In 2015, the school reformed its entire curriculum, and the classical curriculum being used today is infused with Catholic values. Students and staff attend Mass weekly on Friday; we have monthly Sunday family Masses; we offer confessions on the Tuesday before First Friday with five Carmelite priests; the students participate in processions for special feast days and occasions such the May Crowning of Mary; and we have all-school rosaries and daily prayer at Morning Assembly. In addition, students lead the school as cantors, altar servers and lectors during school Masses. Students of their own volition walk to the church to attend Mass on regular Sundays if their parents cannot provide transportation for them. Students spearhead school events such as the Lenten and Advent service projects to raise money for missions in Uganda and for homeless families within the Archdiocese.

The school has been consecrated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Saint Michael, and Saint Therese. Every classroom is dedicated to a saint. Our teachers attend a yearly retreat to be able to better impart what they have received. The staff celebrates liturgies with the students. At All Saint's Day the students dress up as saints to honor the saints.

Courses in history, literature, and religion correlate in time periods. As students are studying history, they are also studying what was happening in Church history at the time. They examine saints from the time periods they are studying. For example, students in fourth grade study about California history and the founding of the missions. They learn about the Franciscan friars and their role in spreading the Good News in the new world. In religion class, they read about Saint Junipero Serra, his trips to California, his role in founding the missions, and his role in evangelization. In literature, they read books from the same era. Students craft well-researched and well-written essays for special class projects across content areas. Students also learn and present to the school classic works of poetry which develop their memory and public speaking skills. This cycle of correlation is repeated across all grades. The younger students have Catholic spellers, and Catholic handwriting and penmanship books.

The school uses the Catholic science program from the Behold and See series. This series is deeply scientific, and it makes frequent reference to God and His designs. It brings about the wonder of God's creation. It helps students to see that faith and reason are not contradictory. Students also come to understand and marvel at the works of God in nature by studying life science, physical science and earth science in 7th and 8th grade. In the middle school, where the science books are not Catholic, the teachers point out to students the position of the Church and continue to teach from a Catholic perspective. Students observe, collect, and categorize objects from nature, furthering their sense of wonder and curiosity by recognizing the order and beauty found in creation and in all God's creatures. Since science classes are good conduits for fostering a sense of wonder in students, the staff would like to strengthen our science program. Though Saint Therese Carmelite School has a Science Lab for student use, it is not being utilized to its highest potential due to lack of materials. In order to best the needs of our school, the

school purchased some basic materials for experiments, and we would like to fully furnish it so that students can properly complete scientific labs. The school is exploring ways to bring in funds or apply for grants to make this happen.

Math courses are straightforward mathematics. However, all classes begin with prayer. And even in math courses, it is easy to reference that God is a God of order and how mathematics is orderly and follows God's design. The Latin courses that the school uses reference several Catholic prayers and sayings. For example, students learn a famous Latin phrase per week. One week they learn, "Ora et labora," and another week, "Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam." As a school we learn at least ten prayers in Latin (Signum Crucis; Pater Noster; Ave Maria; Gloria Patris; Gloria in Excelsis Deo; Flos Carmeli; Agnus Dei; Regina Caeli; Salve Regina and Benedic, Domine, Nos). We learn these prayers at Morning Assembly, at Mass and as part of our Latin program. Some students even recite the Angelus in Latin. Latin is the official language of the Church and several families from our school community attend the Traditional Latin Mass. The religion curriculum is a reprint of an out-of-print Loyola Press series. The current publisher, Lepanto Press, also reprinted the out-of-print Voyages in English series. These two series also correlate with each other, further reinforcing Catholic values in both religion and language arts. The Lepanto series is based on the Baltimore Catechism, and it includes bible stories and passages to further explain the Baltimore Catechism questions and topics being studied. In addition, students use the bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church as needed. The priest celebrating Mass on Friday tailors the homily to children allowing for further understanding of scripture and our faith. The religion curriculum that we have aligns with the new Archdiocesan standards. Prayers in the Archdiocesan standards are found in our Hymns and Prayers booklet. ACRE data reveals that our students are meeting the religious standards because our students consistently score above the 70th percentile across all domains.

Students in 5th and 8th grade religion take the ACRE Test to help Saint Therese Carmelite School ensure they achieve the SLEs and the religion Archdiocesan standards. Students in 7th-8th grade who are in advanced Latin classes take the National Latin Exam to help measure the scholastic achievement of students and to provide a means for teachers to ensure students meet curriculum standards. Saint Therese Carmelite School uses data from the STAR and ACRE exam to measure how well its students are achieving national standards, to ensure high achievement for its students and to make curricular adjustments as needed.

Saint Therese Carmelite School's standards meet the common core curriculum standards since the content students master parallels the content covered in the common core curriculum. Not only are students meeting these standards, but evidence from STAR Testing results also indicates that students are meeting their grade level requirements and exceeding these requirements in certain content areas. STAR Testing results since 2015 show a pattern of high performance in math. Though Reading scores are lower, deeper analysis reveals that students are achieving high scores in most content areas. They struggle in reading comprehension, deduction, and in reading technical literature. The school is aware and continues to seek ways to help students bridge the gap.

The results of STAR Testing, taken at least three times per year, are communicated to students, parents, faculty, the pastor, and shareholders. The principal reports to the pastor at their regular

meetings. The pastor, in turn, reports overall progress to the Parish Finance Council. He also tells parishioners about how our students are doing at Sunday Masses. Parents receive the STAR report for their children after the third window. Parents can also request their students' reports after the first and second quarters and the school gladly provides them. Further, all teachers have access to these results so that their teaching is catered and molded to the continued growth and learning needs of the students. These results also provide teachers with individual learning plans for students who score below grade level. If the class scores below grade level in any content area, teachers have access to a class action plan to help ensure the class advances to grade level mastery of the content. The faculty reviews the results after every window to disaggregate and aggregate data, and to analyze trends.

To ensure continuity of learning for all students, the school has secured a comprehensive, challenging curriculum that is provided to teachers. Teachers are responsible for putting together, updating, and turning in Year-long Plans for all the classes they teach. These plans include how the course will be evaluated, a course description, learning objectives, a list of texts and supplemental materials, a course outline broken down by week, instructional activities, and methodologies and the SLE's covered. The principal, the vice-principal and the curriculum advisor review the Year-long Plans. Each teacher meets with the principal individually for an hour to discuss each course and its corresponding Year-long Plan. The principal checks the Year-long Plan against teacher's lesson plans to ensure progress.

By design, the classical curriculum at Saint Therese Carmelite School does not include the use of technology. In fact, students seven years ago coined the phrase, "We traded laptops for Latin." The school considers that as a classical school for elementary school-aged children, proper use of technology is to train teachers to use technology to serve the needs of the students. Teachers employ technology as a tool to serve the mission and classical curriculum of the school and to help ensure students achieve core standards. Teachers make occasional use of instructional videos, and they have access to projectors in the classroom. To help students research specific projects such as the mission project in 4th grade and the Battle of Lepanto history presentation in 8th grade, teachers encourage students to make use of resources outside of the classroom, such as internet research guided and supervised by teachers and parents, the school and public library visits and first-hand experiences through field trips to historical monuments and localities. The school plans to teach typewriting and word processing beginning in the 7th grade and we are exploring where this will fit into the curriculum and schedule.

Catholic Identity is visible all throughout the school. Not only do students receive authentic Catholic teaching from direct religious instruction, but they can also see it daily in the sacramentals displayed and used throughout the school. Every classroom has a prayer corner, a crucifix, a statue of the Blessed Mother, a statue of Saint Therese, a picture or statue of their class saint, and an SLE poster. The day begins with all-school prayer at Morning Assembly; all classes begin with prayer; students pray the Prayer Before Meals and the Angelus before lunch.

To assess student progress and understanding, teachers make frequent use of formative and summative assessments. Teachers use assessments provided by the textbook publishers as well as teacher-created assessments. In addition, teachers will spot check often, use exit tickets and even games to evaluate student knowledge. If teachers observe low test average scores for the

class, they must re-teach the concept. As a way of communicating with parents, tests are sent home and must be returned signed by a parent. This allows parents and teachers to make appropriate interventions in cases of struggling students. Teachers will adjust lesson plans to fit the students' needs and they vary teaching methodologies to be able to reach students with different learning modalities. STAR and ACRE data further help to assess acceptable student progress. When there is a pattern of below average scores or students are struggling, a teacher can make a request or recommendation that that student receive tutoring paid by the parents and/or be put on a Support Team Education Program (STEP) Plan. This intervention ensures close monitoring of student progress. Students can also attend the after-school academic enrichment program where there is tutoring and homework help provided by Br. Jason and Miss Suzi. Furthermore, teachers make themselves available to tutor students after school, and as needed. We also have volunteers from the parish who help with reading groups for students and tutoring.

The school communicates progress toward curriculum standards to parents via Gradelink, report cards, progress reports, standardized testing results, emails, test packets sent home for parents to sign and conversations with parents before and after school. The principal communicates STAR results to parents at mandatory parent meetings.

Saint Therese Carmelite School has clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations which are measurable and achievable by all students. Although the progress is measured by student grades, formative and summative assessments, ACRE and STAR scores, the school is aware and recognizes the need to develop a rubric for each grade level. The school feels confident that all students are making acceptable progress toward the SLEs, religion standards and common core standards. We know this from ACRE, STAR, high school entrance exams and alumni returning to us and telling us how well prepared they were for high school. This is how we can verify that our students are faithful Catholics, academic achievers, and virtue-driven citizens. Our alumni are a huge testament of how well our students achieved the SLEs. It is rewarding to hear of their academic success, to see them at Mass, and to witness them come back to volunteer. - faith, academics and virtue at work!

Significant Accomplishments

- Comprehensive challenging curriculum infused with Catholic values and teachings
- Clearly defined SLEs
- ACRE results showing high achievement of religious standards
- Comprehensive yearlong planning by all teachers

Significant Goals

- Develop SLE rubrics by grade level
- Continue to explore ways to help students increase reading scores
- Explore use of technology and how it fits within the model of classical education at our school
- Fully furnish the Science Lab with proper science materials to conduct labs

Evidence

- STAR Testing Data
- ACRE Testing Data
- Yearlong Plans
- Schoolwide Learning Expectations
- Curriculum
- Classroom Prayer Corners
- STEP plans
- SLE Posters in every classroom

F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.

The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning. The classical curriculum has been around for hundreds of years and employs the same research-based methodologies as other teaching modalities. The difference lies in the timing of these methodologies. The classical stages – grammar, logic and rhetoric – each use deliberate methodologies according to student’s natural stages of development.

All teaching staff utilize a wide variety of classroom teaching methodologies leading toward a high degree of faith formation, academic achievement, and student growth. The staff implements a number of methodologies that, when combined, create a highly effective method of teaching, assessing, and creating life-long learners who are strong in their faith. These methods include implementing a classical curriculum, incorporating the three stages of learning, and using a multi-sensory approach. While using these methodologies across all subject areas, the staff weaves in the Catholic faith and virtues throughout, and the results are impressive. The students not only grow in knowledge of particular subject matters, but they become enthusiastic learners and strengthen their understanding and sense of wonder about the world around them. They develop a strong logical mind, can think on their own and engage in intellectual discussions with others. They grow in virtue and character, and most importantly, develop a love for Christ and the Catholic faith.

Saint Therese Carmelite School has a strong Catholic identity, which is the most important factor when making decisions about curriculum and instructional methodologies. The faith permeates throughout the curriculum that is chosen, especially in the subjects of religion, history, literature, writing, and language arts. In addition, prayers, Mass, adoration, rosary, and confession are incorporated into the daily, weekly, and monthly schedules. The classrooms all display statues, saint quotes, and a crucifix. Each grade level has a special devotion to a particular Carmelite saint whom they pray to daily for guidance.

Saint Therese Carmelite School requires at minimum a bachelor's degree. Preference is given to candidates with experience teaching classical education or who were educated in a classical setting. The staff are highly educated in the Catholic faith and thus, are able to be strong apostles for the Church. Fifty percent of the teachers have undergraduate degrees in theology, one has a master's degree in theology, all teachers are in the process of obtaining Basic Catechetical Certification and three teachers are certified in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. The Carmelite friars are available to answer any questions that may come up for both students and teachers. Lastly, all the teachers are expected to know and live by the teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church. At the beginning of each school year, the teachers take a public oath to uphold these teachings in their lives and in the classrooms. As a result, the staff are well-prepared and well-supported in their efforts to model the values of the Catholic faith in all aspects of their teaching.

Teachers go through several trainings to help equip them to teach Religion. Under the guidance of our pastor, the staff is studying Bishop Barron's *Catholicism*, which has helped us be better instructors of the faith. We have also learned about Don Bosco's Preventive Method which focuses on a very gentle and friendly manner of preventing disciplinary problems with children while guiding them in the right path. This helps scaffold discussions about morality and Christian life, both inside and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, all our teachers are currently undergoing their Basic Catechetical Certification, which was interrupted by the shutdown of schools in March of 2020. This will further prepare teachers for effective instructional methodologies for teaching religion.

A classical curriculum is composed of the trivium, quadrivium, and the higher subjects. The **trivium** incorporates the basic tools of learning according to the three developmental stages of the students. The Grammar Stage is typically from TK - 5th grade. At this stage, they learn the form and function of language, or basically 'how to read and talk' through the study of literature, **reading, observation, and memory**. The Logic Stage follows for grades 6th – 9th approximately. The students learn the relation of language to thought, or 'how to talk sense' through **the study of arguments/proofs, reason, and interpretation**. They learn how to construct an intellectual argument and to dialog using the Socratic method. Last comes the Rhetoric Stage, which **incorporates the use and manner of language, or 'how to talk with style.'** The focus here is the study of expression, response, and application. When teaching according to these stages, the students become life-long learners; are able to come to know the good, true, and beautiful and can discuss them intellectually and eloquently with others.

The importance of knowing these natural stages of learning is so the teachers are able to teach utilizing tools of learning according to the natural stages of their students. They are taught through the medium of the **quadrivium**, which comprises arithmetic (study of numbers), geometry (study of shapes), astronomy (study of sciences) and harmony (study of music). These are the basis for all scientific studies. The tools of learning are also taught through the medium of the **higher subjects**, which include history, literature, philosophy, and the crown of all subjects, theology.

At Saint Therese Carmelite School, classical pedagogical methodologies are applied in the classroom according to students' natural stages of development. In the 1st – 5th grade, the

teachers focus on memorization skills. The students' minds are like sponges at this stage and can easily absorb and memorize information. Thus, the teachers provide ample learning opportunities for them to learn phonics, math facts, geography, poems, catechism questions, prayers and more through memorization. In the 6th – 8th grade, the teachers continue working with memorization skills while transitioning into a focus on logical thinking skills. At this stage, student naturally begin to form arguments. The teacher will engage the students in Socratic dialogue and discussions about the texts they are reading across the subjects, helping them to develop arguments which are based on sound reasoning and support from the text. It is at this stage that students can best understand and engage in the scientific method, algebra, geometry, debates, Latin declensions, and other tasks which require critical thinking skills and deduction. These methodologies have been used and tested for centuries and have been proven to produce exceptional results in the students.

The classical curriculum incorporates a multi-sensory approach to teaching across all subjects and grades. With the goal of reaching all different types of learners, the material is presented and assessed in numerous formats and research-based instructional methodologies so that all students are able to learn and understand successfully. This includes cooperative learning, direct instruction, Socratic dialogue, small group work, summarizing, differentiated instruction, note-taking, round Robin, scaffolding, individualized instruction, group instruction, exit tickets, read-alouds, oral recitations, written answers, hands-on projects, KWL charts, field trips and more. For example, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program is Montessori based and enables the young students to learn their faith well through hands-on activities, visual props, and oral stories. In the middle grades, the students build a California mission, describe it orally, and then write a paper explaining it. In the upper grades, the students build castles and model ears, dissect owl pellets and cow eyes, recite speeches and poetry, perform in debates, do science experiments, and write research papers. In all grades, the students are taken on field trips to experience a hands-on education about topics they are learning in class. Some examples include Huntington Gardens, Amy's Farm, Riley's Farm, Medieval Times, the Getty Museum, and the Reagan Library. Throughout each grade and subject, teachers are aware of the needs of each student. Material is repeated in different ways (textbooks, worksheet, review game, etc.) to meet the needs of each learner. As a result, the auditory, visual, and tactile learners all have opportunities to excel using the format that comes easiest to them and grow in the formats that are a little more challenging.

The school has successfully implemented the Classical Model at Saint Therese Carmelite School. Our students fully undergo the Grammar Stage, beginning in TK. The transition to the Logic Stage begins in 5th grade and we have seen the seamless and successful transition of many classes. The Logic Stage ends roughly in the ninth grade. In this regard, our students do not complete the Logic Stage at our school. Regrettably, our students do not reach the Rhetoric Stage at all, as this transition begins in the ninth grade. We have heard from many alumni how their classical education at Saint Therese Carmelite School has helped prepare them for high school. Similarly, we know from faculty members who were classically educated through the 12th grade how this model, especially in the Rhetoric Stage, prepares students for the challenges of writing and speaking well in university and beyond. Our parents, students, staff, benefactors, advisors, and the Carmelite friars would like to be able to give our students the fullness of the three stages of the Classical Model. Offering all stages of a classical education would benefit

our students by allowing them more time to work within the Classical Model. We are currently exploring ways to fully implement the Classical Model to support our students' high achievement of the SLEs, especially the Academic SLEs.

All teachers are required to submit year-long plans in the summer and weekly lesson plans throughout the year. SLEs that will be covered by each lesson are listed in the year-long plans. When creating their weekly plans, teachers refer back to this plan to see which SLEs need to be addressed and what methodologies will be used. At this time, teachers also refer to the previous week and adjust plans accordingly based on student mastery of subject content and SLEs.

In addition to SLEs, student assessments also inform curricular planning. Frequent and varied formative and summative assessments are clearly used to monitor student growth and modify instruction. Teachers use a variety of assessments throughout the school day. Spot checking, warm-ups, class discussions, homework assignments, pop quizzes, practice tests, exit tickets and small group activities are frequently used in each classroom. Specifically, the Socratic method is employed daily at every level, as this is the core instructional methodology of a classical curriculum. These assessments give teachers immediate insight into which students are grasping new concepts. This dictates which students are ready to move on and which need more practice. At the end of each unit, more formal assessments take place. These might be written exams, oral exams, essays, or final projects, and can vary based on the needs and abilities of particular students. Minor adjustments are made for children whom the teacher or the parents have identified as needing differentiated assessments. These formal and informal assessments demonstrate the student's mastery of the concept overall. All this data together informs the teacher of progress in the learning process and allows each teacher to adjust lesson plans or strategies, as necessary.

Teachers are closely supervised by the administration to ensure effective instructional methodologies and personal growth among staff. Each summer, teachers meet one-on-one with the principal or vice-principal to go over their year-long plans. The staff have yearly formal observations and frequent informal observations, where members of the administration visit the classrooms. Teachers attend in-service meetings throughout the school year, a retreat annually, daily morning meetings and weekly faculty meetings. During all of these, progress is discussed, and teachers are free to seek advice or help on any matters. Teachers also frequently seek each other out for suggestions on methodologies or techniques to make lessons more effective. Curricular planning is structured, consistent and collaborative.

Outside professionals are periodically invited to Saint Therese Carmelite School to teach/train the staff in certain areas. Each summer, a different professional speaks about the nature of classical curriculum. Guests have presented on the methodology of teaching IEW, the new and exceptional writing program that was implemented; the diocesan STEP program and how to implement it when needed; the importance of good books; how to take advantage of the stages in the trivium and other topics specifically related to a classical curriculum. All these professional development opportunities were chosen to effectively and efficiently aid teachers in incorporating the standards and methodologies of a classical curriculum into their lessons.

The teachers regularly use technology for lesson planning, grading and communication with parents and staff. All staff members are given a school account that allows them access to the Google Suite. Teachers also bring educational videos and music recordings into the classroom when it will enhance student learning as a supplement to material covered in class. During the pandemic, they used Zoom and Google Classroom daily.

Through our new curriculum, we have discovered that the methodologies of using classical curriculum, the three stages of learning, and a multi-sensory approach, all which have been implemented at Saint Therese Carmelite School, have been highly effective. The students, across the board, have shown a strong love of learning, growth in knowledge and understanding for their particular age levels, and an increased love of Christ and His Church. This is especially apparent in the students in the current 6th grade class and below who have attended Saint Therese Carmelite School since kindergarten, as the change to a classical curriculum was made 7 years ago. Evidence of this can be seen in our STAR testing results, on the report cards, in talking with the parents, and in walking through the classrooms during the school year.

We have also discovered that there are some areas where improvement is still needed. There is still a lack of understanding about how to properly and effectively implement the IEW writing program. Thus, having further instruction on this would be beneficial. In addition, the teachers would find it helpful to have a speaker from the Catholic Textbooks Project to give a talk on classical pedagogy and how to best implement these history textbooks in the classroom.

Learning expectations for students are high but realistic and are firmly anchored in a culture of research-based methodology. At Saint Therese Carmelite School a comprehensive challenging classical curriculum serves to achieve the SLEs, meet ACRE and STAR standards, and the expectations set by the administration that students master grade level materials and proceed to the next grade level year after year. We know from STAR, ACRE, classroom assessments, grade promotions, and grades that students are meeting these expectations. Our teachers can successfully utilize research-based methodologies that are in line with classical pedagogies, which are varied but specific to stages of the Trivium, to support high achievement of all students.

Significant Accomplishments

- Successful implementation of the Classical Model of Education through the Logic Stage
- Use of a classical curriculum and teaching according to the three stages of learning
- Using a multi-sensory approach
- Incorporating the Catholic faith throughout the curriculum, classroom, and daily schedules
- Hiring teachers who are well-educated in the Catholic faith
- Having the Carmelite friars being heavily involved with the school, teachers, and students

Significant Goals

- Provide more training in the IEW writing program
- Provide a refresher on classical pedagogy from the Catholic Textbooks Project

- Provide further instruction on how to effectively implement a Catholic curriculum
- Complete Catechetical certification for all teachers
- Fully implement the Classical Model of Education

Evidence

- Catholic classical curriculum
- Multi-sensory approach
- Student work samples
- Samples of summative and formative assessments
- Samples of the teachers' lesson plans
- Displays in the classroom
- Field trips
- Interactive presence of the Carmelite Friars
- Staff Development
- Use of technology when appropriate
- The Saint Jerome Educational Plan
- Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum
- Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence

G. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Saint Therese Carmelite School's mission is to form students in faith, academics, and virtue. To this end, we provide our students with a variety of activities and support services to assist them in their spiritual, personal, and academic growth. Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Archdiocesan curriculum standards, and governing authority expectations.

Saint Therese Carmelite School has a rich and supportive Community of Faith. As a Roman Catholic school that professes a Carmelite spirituality, a personal connection with God and a fellowship with our church is a top priority. There are many interactions between religious members, parents, students, faculty, and parishioners every day. Friars are present in our classrooms and on the playground and are available to students for spiritual needs at any time. At our daily Morning Assembly, parents are welcome to pray with the students and faculty to begin the day. Parishioners see students and faculty at morning Mass during the school week and at Sunday Masses each weekend. Parishioners also volunteer in our classrooms, giving them a further chance to get to know the students. Alumni often attend religious events, such as our

annual Our Lady of Guadalupe festival. All these opportunities for spiritual and social interactions help to support and strengthen our Community of Faith.

Faith formation of our students is a primary focus at our school. Both our curriculum and our extracurricular activities have a strong Catholic focus. Every day begins with a Morning Assembly which brings the whole school together for prayer. Our religion classes are faithful to the Roman Catholic Church. In addition to the religion taught as part of the curriculum, all our teachers incorporate prayer into their daily classroom routines. Further, each classroom is dedicated to a particular Carmelite saint and has a designated prayer table or corner. All school sports games, assemblies, and events also begin with a prayer.

We hold a school Mass at least every Friday, and priests come to hear Confessions during school hours at least once a month, in addition to the three weekly confessions scheduled at the parish; these opportunities help our students to foster a love for and dedication to receiving the Sacraments. We incorporate other Catholic devotions and traditions such as learning about saints for All Saints Day, celebrating Carmelite feast days, celebrations for Our Lady of Guadalupe, May Crowning, all school rosaries, novenas, and Stations of the Cross during Lent, which form a rich spiritual life in our students.

Parents are very involved at our school. They are often present on campus, both for their own faith formation and to aid in the formation of our students. Parents are invited to attend our school Masses on Fridays. Additionally, we have a Sunday school Mass every month which is hosted by a different class each month. This reinforces the school's community and unites us more closely with the parents. We also inform parents of novenas and special devotions to pray with their children in emails and in our bulletin, *The Little Way*. Parents and grandparents also volunteer to help with reading groups and art classes every week. Parent Service Organization members plan and coordinate events and fundraisers throughout the school year. The school's mission statement expresses our belief that parents are the primary educators of their children, and it is our goal to give parents a greater number of opportunities for spiritual development and involvement.

Academic formation is also a core principle for our school. The school accommodates students who require extra academic support as well as those who excel above their grade level in certain areas. Our teachers are willing to work with students one-on-one when needed. We also offer academic enrichment after school, where they can get assistance in areas of need. Students who present with needs for special adjustments are immediately placed on a STEP plan, after which administration, teachers and parents of the student begin regular meetings to strategize for improvement and monitor progress. For students who excel above their grade level, teachers work to differentiate classes for them. Students are given alternate assignments or more challenging requirements that meet their specific abilities and challenge them to progress. In certain subjects, students can also place into a higher class. In K through 2nd grade, students are placed in Phonics and reading classes based on their abilities. These placements are fluid, and students can move between groups throughout the year as becomes necessary. In 6th-8th grade, students are placed in math and Latin courses according to their abilities. Students who show mastery of the material can be advanced to the next level of the subject in order to encourage further academic growth.

The school incorporates many ways for students to access resources beyond textbooks. Teachers plan field trips and invite in guest speakers that are directly related to the topics covered in class. Students in 3rd-8th grade also participate in the interactive history programs *Walk Through California*, *Walk Through the American Revolution* and *Walk Through the Ancient World*, each of which requires students to write skits, memorize facts, create costumes, and participate in reenactments. In TK-4th grade, hands-on activities are emphasized, especially in science. During these experiments, their teachers and their classmates serve as resources for each student. Beginning in 5th grade, students begin to study many primary source texts for history, Latin, and religion. These texts give students firsthand accounts of the events that they are studying. The library is currently being updated and catalogued. This reorganization will allow easier access to relevant and age-appropriate resources for our students.

Saint Therese Carmelite school supports students' personal growth through promoting the development of virtue and wholesome hobbies in our children. We employ a gentle method of discipline by promoting good behavior and setting students up for success. Each summer, teacher's use Harry Wong's principles to develop clear rules and procedures for their classrooms. By setting these clear boundaries and modeling and practicing routines, students know what to expect each day and are more willing to comply. Virtues are also discussed each day in Morning Assembly and in the classrooms using the program *Education in Virtue*. Students are asked to identify virtues that they see exemplified in stories and in real life. By doing this, they become very familiar with how virtues can be utilized to affect behavior. This encourages students to live out the virtues themselves. Virtuous behavior is publicly recognized immediately wherever it is happening and also every Tuesday at Morning Assembly. We have also learned about Don Bosco's Preventive Method which focuses on a very gentle and friendly manner of preventing disciplinary problems with children while guiding them in the right path. When behavioral issues do arise, we appeal to the students' goodness and discuss with them how virtuous behavior could have brought about different results.

We also support the talents of our students. At our annual Talent Show, students showcase singing, dancing, juggling, acrobatics, and more. During Musical May, students are invited to play instruments for the school at Morning Assembly. These students are often called on to assist with school Masses, Christmas sing-alongs and other school activities. In *The Little Way*, we publish outside accomplishments of students, such as winning chess competitions, golf tournaments, etc. Acknowledging these talents helps promote confidence in these students and inspires other students to try new activities.

We offer a variety of extracurricular activities and clubs to complement the academics. The students take PE two days each week, and they gain appreciation of the arts in their weekly music and art classes. Students can also participate in after-school sports such as basketball, volleyball, and track. Through these sports we encourage our students not only in physical growth, but also in sportsmanship, humility, and other virtues. Other extracurricular activities and clubs include the Saint Therese Carmelite School Ambassadors program, Cor Jesu, Schola, Rosary making, student council, alter serving, lectors, drama, and chess club. All of these activities are very beginner-friendly, and students are often signing up for new activities. Each of these sports and activities require a consent form wherein the expectations for the activity are laid out for the student and parents. Behavioral standards are also explained in our Parent-

Student Handbook and apply to all school activities. We recognize extracurricular achievements in our morning assemblies and in our weekly newsletter *The Little Way*.

Students' safety is a priority at our school, and we take a variety of measures to be prepared in the event of an emergency and to assure the safety of the students in the hands of our faculty. During school hours, we are a closed campus, and we have recently installed additional gates to section off our classrooms from the parking lot. Our classroom doors are equipped with safety locks, and we hold emergency drills (for fires, earthquakes, and lockdowns) regularly every year. Our staff is fingerprinted and trained in VIRTUS and first aid. First aid kits and emergency binders can be found in the classrooms and in our school office.

Saint Therese Carmelite School offers students a wide variety of services, activities, and opportunities all with the common goal of forming the children in virtue, academics, and the Catholic Faith. The faculty meets regularly to discuss achievements and improvements. We would like to continue to improve our science curriculum and stock our Science Lab to be able to better serve our students. The sciences are a major component of classical education and as such it is important to have the proper resources to foster high achievement of all students across all subjects. A stronger science program with a properly fitted lab will provide our students with additional resources to better achieve the SLEs.

Significant Accomplishments

- We maintain a strong Catholic identity in our curriculum and in extracurricular activities.
- We provide frequent opportunities for our students to receive the Sacraments and for families to participate in Catholic devotions and traditions.
- Parent involvement is high, and many parents are often volunteering at or attending our school events.
- We accommodate students who require extra academic support, as well as those who excel above their grade level in certain areas.
- We offer resources beyond textbooks to promote academic growth among our students.
- We support the personal growth of students through promoting virtuous behavior, celebrating student talent, and encouraging new extracurricular activities.

Significant Goals

- More opportunities for spiritual development and involvement of parents
- Strengthen the science program

Evidence

- Faculty meeting agendas
- PSO meeting agendas
- Newsletter *The Little Way*
- Parent-Teacher Conference Sign ups
- Morning Assembly Hymns & Prayers Booklet

- Talent Show photos
- Christmas Sing-Along Videos
- Extracurricular applications
- Volunteer Sign-Ups

H. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

The pastor, principal and school board develop, implement and monitor resources and plans to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and expectations from the Carmelite friars. The pastor, board president, president of the Parish Finance Council and principal work closely together to support high achievement of all students and the sustainability of our school.

The principal and the board president prepare a preliminary budget and a final budget every year. The budgets are then submitted to the president of the Parish Finance Council for approval. Once approved, the budgets are submitted to the pastor for his final approval. The approved budgets are then submitted to the archdiocese for review and approval. Monthly reports are created by the president of the board, who oversees the school's accounting and bookkeeping, and submitted to the pastor. An annual report of the school's accounts and bookkeeping is prepared by an independent accounting firm and submitted to the archdiocese.

The school uses an approved chart of accounts that is acceptable under general accounting practices. Saint Therese Carmelite School uses FACTS for tuition collection, and Quickbooks for bookkeeping. Bookkeeping and accounting practices are in full accord with sound financial practices. The president of the board is a financial businessman, and he oversees and approves budgets. The principal prepares a financial report that is presented to the school community at a mandatory parent meeting at the beginning of the year.

Saint Therese Carmelite School allocates funds in its budget to sustain its curricular programs, including searching for and hiring qualified teachers, and maintaining an art and music program. Allocating for qualified teachers with experience and expertise in classical education ensures proper delivery of our comprehensive challenging curriculum. In addition to being practicing Catholics and being able to teach religion in full accord with the teaching Magisterium of the Church, teachers at Saint Therese Carmelite School must be able to teach all academic subjects, including Latin and Algebra. Furthermore, the arts and music have a crucial role at our school because we are a classical school and because the arts and music are part of our philosophy and SLEs. We are blessed to have access to the Carmelite friars who very generously assist with ongoing formation for the faculty and staff. The annual faculty retreat takes place at El Carmelo and the Carmelite friars are the retreat masters. The eighth-grade retreat is held on-site with

Carmelites leading; the students take a Rosary walk on the Saint Joseph Campus with the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The students are welcome to participate in the parish teen outreach Cor Jesu. The friars, with advanced degrees in theology and philosophy, help with teacher formation and catechist certification. The pastor participates in the interviews and hiring of new teachers. The friars are available for Mass, confessions, rosary, Stations of the Cross, benediction, spiritual direction, Anointing of the Sick (for our students who have been hospitalized) and any spiritual needs of our student body. In addition, they teach religion, art, PE, and street hockey.

The other major component of the budget is textbooks and materials for the staff and students. We purchase textbooks based on the existing curriculum and recommendations made by teachers and the curriculum advisor. Recommendations emerge from examining ACRE scores, STAR data, class assessments, pacing of individual courses, needs of classes and grade level needs.

The school has a moderate budget for technology because technology is not part of our curricular programs. Teachers bring their own devices. The school has two office computers, a laptop for the school principal, one for publications, one for the media cart, and one for the front office. Teachers-use of computers for presentations is limited. Therefore, we do not have to allocate major funding for media carts and computers. The school did purchase a set of twenty chromebooks during the pandemic. Funds were fully raised through parental efforts. The chromebooks serve our students and they are now used for STAR assessments. The internet service is paid for by the parish.

The revenue from the school comes from tuition, fundraising, donations, grants, and church support. We are blessed with the generosity and commitment of our school families and, especially, the parishioners. Each family has a \$500 annual fund to help bridge the gap between tuition and the cost of education. Additionally, we hold an Auction Dinner, a jog-a-thon, See's Candies drive and a Winter Drawing. The parish has a "School Support Fund" from second collections and parishioner donations for our school. We receive a small grant from the Christ Child Society.

The archdiocese extended a small loan to the school at the beginning of the pandemic. In addition, we receive financial assistance to offset tuition costs for students who meet CEF guidelines and apply for CEF scholarships. The school has a scholarship drive called Adopt-a-Saint to help students who cannot pay the full tuition. Aside from CEF and Adopt-a-Saint, the school resorts to negotiated tuition to meet the needs of families who cannot afford full tuition.

With a limited budget, the school plans for emergency needs by working closely with the Parish Finance Council. The parish has been generous in helping the school with unexpected expenses. Both the church and the schoolwork hard in the upkeep and maintenance of the school and church grounds.

Low enrollment trends and the desire for a classical curriculum with a strong Catholic Identity led the pastor and the Parish Finance Council in 2015 to adopt classical education. This type of education best serves the needs of the parish community at Saint Therese. About half of the parish children were attending a private Catholic school in the area that offers all stages of the

Classical Model. Families from the parish already enrolled in a classical school stayed at their school. Since becoming a classical school, however, Saint Therese Carmelite School has been drawing more and more parish families. The challenge that we face comes when families wish to continue classical studies into high school. When the eldest student in the family reaches 9th grade and they enroll at a school that offers the fullness of Catholic classical education, we tend to lose the entire family since families prefer to have all their children enrolled in one school. The better we do classical education, the more families realize its value and desire it, which effectively results in losing two to four or more families every year since we do not offer all three stages of the Classical Model. Since 2015, families have been asking for us to offer 9th grade and above to be able to serve the needs of the Saint Therese Community– a classical education with strong Catholic Carmelite values. The pastor has been working with the board to develop strategic plans and an aggressive marketing plan to best meet the needs of our community.

Though alumni participate in fundraisers, the school recognizes a need to improve alumni relationships and involvement. Involved alumni can be vital to ensure future financial stability and viability of the school.

Though we operate on a limited budget, we locate all available resources to enhance, expand and maintain our curricular offerings and ensure high achievement of all students. Resources are used effectively to carry out the mission, philosophy and SLEs of the school – form students in faith, academics, and virtue. Through sound financial practices, the school has demonstrated responsible stewardship. We are confident that with the support and dedication of the pastor, Parish Finance Council, principal and board, the long-term planning of the school will ensure its viability.

Significant Accomplishments

- Prioritizing of funds for qualified teachers
- Budget for essential expenditures of classical education – textbooks, art, and music program
- Support of parish

Significant Goals

- Marketing plan to address enrollment and viability
- Expand alumni involvement
- Explore the possibility of offering education past 8th grade
- Develop Strategic plan
- Fully implement the Classical Model to include all three stages

Evidence

- Financial reports
- Budget
- Letters of interest in 9th grade and above

- Tuition schedule
- Adopt-a-Saint brochure

CHAPTER 4 –ACTION PLAN

A. DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN WITH THE SELF STUDY FINDINGS

The Action Plan addresses the school’s critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don’t exist), and other governing authority expectations.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Integration of Catholic teaching and values in all aspects of school life
- Mission and Philosophy Statements that state partnership with parents
- The Faith is naturally incorporated into the atmosphere and academics of the school
- Daily, weekly, monthly, and special celebrations which are designed to help the students build their relationship with Jesus Christ
- Meeting new Archdiocesan Religion Standards
- Faith formation opportunities for students and staff
- School purpose is clearly defined through the Mission and Philosophy Statements
- SLEs fully integrated into the life of the school
- School Mission, Philosophy, and SLEs published on website, handbook, marketing materials so that parents, teachers, students, and shareholders have access to them
- Strong involvement and support from the pastor and the Carmelite friars
- Dedicated staff who collaborate to support high achievement of all students
- Support from Parish Finance Council
- Regular faculty meetings to support high achievement of all students
- Good working relationship among principal, pastor, and parish
- Analysis of STAR testing indicates that our students are largely achieving at or above benchmark in both reading and math
- Students that are identified with limited growth are receiving additional support through small group instruction and when needed the STEP program
- Students have strong faith knowledge, which we hope to grow through literature studies on saints, following the classical model.
- 8th Grade students have 100% acceptance rate to local Catholic High schools
- Comprehensive challenging curriculum infused with Catholic values and teachings
- Clearly defined SLEs
- ACRE results showing high achievement of religious standards
- Comprehensive yearlong planning by all teachers
- Successful implementation of the Classical Model of Education through the logic stage

- Use of a classical curriculum and teaching according to the three stages of learning
- Using a multi-sensory approach
- Incorporating the Catholic faith throughout the curriculum, classroom, and daily schedules
- Hiring teachers who are well-educated in the Catholic faith
- Having the Carmelite friars being heavily involved with the school, teachers, and students
- We maintain a strong Catholic identity in our curriculum and in extracurricular activities.
- We provide frequent opportunities for our students to receive the Sacraments and for families to participate in Catholic devotions and traditions.
- Parent involvement is high, and many parents are often volunteering at or attending our school events.
- We accommodate students who require extra academic support, as well as those who excel above their grade level in certain areas.
- We offer resources beyond textbooks to promote academic growth among our students.
- We support the personal growth of students through promoting virtuous behavior, celebrating student talent, and encouraging new extracurricular activities.
- Prioritizing of funds for qualified teachers
- Budget for essential expenditures of classical education – textbooks, art, and music program
- Support of parish

SIGNIFICANT GOALS

- Provide more opportunities for the spiritual growth of the parents after school hours.
- To rebuild the student presence and ministry in our school Masses to the pre-Covid levels
- Continue to include SLEs in Yearlong Plans and Lesson Plans
- Continue to work on rubrics and criteria to measure all SLEs
- Recreate the Board
- Develop a Strategic Plan
- Continue to offer Professional Development to teachers to support high achievement of all students, particularly in classical pedagogies, language arts, and math
- Provide faith formation opportunities for parents
- Continuing professional development for all staff members to become better at classical pedagogies
- Develop SLE rubrics by grade level
- Continue to explore ways to help students increase reading scores
- Explore use of technology and how it fits within the model of classical education at our school
- Fully furnish the Science Lab with proper science materials to conduct labs
- Provide more training in the IEW writing program
- Provide a refresher on classical pedagogy from the Catholic Textbooks Project

- Provide further instruction on how to effectively implement a Catholic curriculum
- Complete Catechetical certification for all teachers
- Fully implement the Classical Model of Education
- More opportunities for spiritual development and involvement of parents
- Strengthen the science program
- Marketing plan to address enrollment and viability
- Expand alumni involvement
- Explore the possibility of offering education past 8th grade
- Develop Strategic plan
- Fully implement the Classical Model to include all three stages

Critical Goals

1. Increase Professional Development
2. Strengthen the Classical Model of Education currently in existence at Saint Therese Carmelite School
3. Strengthen the science program
4. Provide more opportunities for spiritual development and involvement of parents
5. Complete Catechetical certification for all teachers

Schoolwide Action Plan

Action Plan for St. Therese School

School Code E263

Goal #1: (from Chapters 3F, 3H)

Strengthen the **Classical** Model of Education currently in existence at Saint Therese Carmelite School.

Rationale for this Goal:

Through careful evaluation of our curricular programs, surveys from parents, students, and staff, ACRE and STAR scores, as well as input from our pastor and shareholders, we determined that it is important that we continuously assess and improve on how we are implementing the Classical Model. We know that our students are meeting ACRE, STAR and curricular standards. To best prepare the students through the classical curriculum model for college and for life as a knowledgeable and critically thinking adult, it is important to implement all three stages of the Classical Model of education. The students starting the Grammar Stage in Transitional Kindergarten, develop to the Logic Stage at around 5th grade, and the classical curriculum is expected to gain the most fruit by transitioning the student into the Rhetoric Stage around the 9th grade. Without all three stages, the classical curriculum model cannot achieve its full potential. Having all three stages will enhance student achievement because our students will be able to fully apply what they have acquired in the Grammar and Logic Stages into the Rhetoric Stage. A full application of the stages will increase student achievement because our students will be better prepared academically and spiritually.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs:

It is at the core of our Mission and Philosophy to educate our students through the Classical Model in faith, academics, and virtue. The SLEs explain what the expectations are in terms of faith, academics, and virtue. Strengthening the Classical Model at our school will directly impact all ten of our the SLEs. By strengthening the classical model in our classrooms, we will be strengthening student learning. Full implementation of all stages of the classical model will allow our students to best achieve SLEs 4 and 5.

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| Strategy # 1 | Review and analyze implementation of stages of learning in the classical model at STCS |
| Activity # | 1) Survey staff about implementation of Grammar Stage 2) Survey staff about implementation of Logic Stage 3) Review and analyze Data 4) Make changes based on review and analysis |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | 1) No cost 2) No cost 3) No cost 4) Cost estimated between zero and \$2500 depending on necessary adjustments |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | 1) Principal and vice-principal 2) Principal and vice-principal 3) Staff 4) Staff |
| Process For Monitoring | ACRE scores STAR scores Surveys Teacher and classroom observations Principal/pastor meetings |
| Baseline Assessment | Teacher and classroom observations |
| Ongoing Assessment | ACRE scores STAR scores Surveys Teacher and classroom observations Principal/pastor meetings |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | Faculty meetings Mandatory parent meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Principal/pastor meeting |

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| Strategy # 2 | Develop plan to ensure sustained viability under the Classical Model |
| Activity # | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase enrollment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Goal 5% annually b. Secure Donors c. Seek grants 2) Expand alumni involvement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create alumni database b. Invite alumni to both alumni events and school events c. Develop alumni fundraising appeal 3) Increase advertisement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update website b. Increase social media presence c. Promote school at fairs d. Distribute flyers, banners |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Time to reach out to donors 2) Time to reach out to alumni 3) Cost and volunteers to put on alumni events 4) Advertisement costs - \$3000 per year 5) Volunteers to represent school at fairs and community events 6) Time to update website |
| Person(s) Responsible for Implementation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pastor, Parish Finance Council, board, and principal 2) Staff 3) Parent Service Organization |
| Process For Monitoring | <p>Increased enrollment Increase in donations and grants Greater advertisement Updated website Social media presence Presence at school fairs and community events</p> |
| Baseline Assessment | <p>Increase in enrollment Alumni involvement Increase in donations Increase in grants</p> |
| Ongoing Assessment | <p>Enrollment increase Donations Increase in grants Alumni presence</p> |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to shareholders | <p>Board meetings, Staff meetings, Mandatory parent meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Principal/pastor meeting</p> |

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| Strategy # 3 | Implement all stages of the Classical Model of Education |
| Activity # | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Research how to best implement Rhetoric Stage 2) Research curricular needs 3) Consult Classical Education experts 4) Implementation of all stages |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Time and personnel to research 2) Consultation fees ranging from \$500 to \$3000 3) Cost of materials - \$5000 |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Principal and vice-principal 2) Pastor, board, Finance Council, principal |
| Process For Monitoring | <p>Research results Consultation Implementation of stages Surveys</p> |
| Baseline Assessment | <p>Consultation Research results Implementation of stages</p> |
| Ongoing Assessment | <p>Classroom and teacher observations Continued research and consultation ACRE data STAR data</p> |
| Timeline Start/Stop | March 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | <p>Pastor/principal meetings Board meetings Parent meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Faculty meetings</p> |

Goal #2: (from Chapters 3E, 3G)

To strengthen the science program currently in place at Saint Therese Carmelite School

Rationale for this Goal:

Through careful evaluation of our curricular programs and through staff feedback, we determined that science is an area for improvement for us. Every year we review the curriculum to determine whether and where changes need to be made. Several years ago, we determined our middle school science program was not challenging enough. While we added more books and activities to supplement the curriculum, the one area that we feel would be of most benefit to our students is providing more frequent and more in-depth experiments for our students. If we can increase the hands-on learning done in our life science, physical science, and earth science classes, this will directly impact student performance and we will see an increase in overall student achievement.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs:

The school mission is to form students in faith, academics and virtue. In the logic stage (5th-9th grade), students really begin to develop their critical thinking skills, using the facts they have memorized to make their own logical deductions. The scientific method is a critical tool at this stage. Furthermore, our SLE # 5 states that our students will be academic achievers who think critically and our SLE #7 expects that students will develop a sense of wonder and depth of inquiry at Saint Therese Carmelite School. By strengthening the science program currently in place, we will be strengthening student learning and better addressing these SLEs.

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| Strategy # 1 | Review current curriculum |
| Activity # | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Survey teachers about current science curriculum 2) Analyze data from student scores and teacher surveys 3) Make adjustments to curriculum if needed |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) No cost 2) No cost 3) Cost estimated between \$0 and \$2500, depending on changes needed |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Principal, vice-principal, and teachers 2) Teachers 3) Principal, vice-principal, and curriculum advisor |
| Process For Monitoring | <p>Science test scores Science projects Science fair entries STAR data Surveys Teacher and classroom observations Principal/Pastor Meetings Principal/Curriculum Advisor Meetings</p> |
| Baseline Assessment | Teacher and classroom observations |
| Ongoing Assessment | <p>Science test scores Science projects Science fair entries STAR scores Surveys Teacher and classroom observations Principal/Pastor Meetings Principal/Curriculum Advisor Meetings</p> |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | <p>Faculty meetings Parent meetings Report cards <i>The Little Way</i> Principal/Pastor Meetings</p> |

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| Strategy # 2 | Develop plan to procure funding for new science materials |
| Activity # | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase enrollment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Goal 5% annually b. Secure Donors c. Seek grants 2) Expand alumni involvement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create alumni database b. Invite alumni to both alumni events and school events c. Develop alumni fundraising appeal 3) Increase advertisement <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update website b. Increase social media presence c. Promote school at fairs d. Distribute flyers, banners |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Time to reach out to donors 2) Time to reach out to alumni 3) Cost and volunteers to put on alumni events 4) Advertisement costs - \$3000 per year 5) Volunteers to represent school at fairs and community events 6) Time to update website |
| Person(s) Responsible for Implementation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pastor, Parish Finance Council, board, and principal 2) Staff 3) Parent Service Organization |
| Process For Monitoring | <p>Increased enrollment, Increase in donations and grants</p> <p>Greater advertisement</p> <p>Updated website, Increase Social media presence</p> <p>Presence at school fairs and community events</p> |
| Baseline Assessment | <p>Increase in enrollment</p> <p>Alumni involvement</p> <p>Increase in donations, Increase in grants</p> |
| Ongoing Assessment | <p>Enrollment increase</p> <p>Donations</p> <p>Increase in grants</p> <p>Alumni presence</p> |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | <p>Board meetings</p> <p>Staff meetings</p> <p>Mandatory parent meetings</p> <p><i>The Little Way</i></p> <p>Principal/pastor meeting</p> |

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| Strategy # 3 | Furnish the science lab with proper materials to conduct science labs |
| Activity # | 1) Acquire microscopes 2) Replace safety goggles 3) Upgrade lab tables, chairs, and sinks |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | \$5,000-\$20,000, depending on materials purchased |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | Pastor, board, principal, administrative assistant |
| Process For Monitoring | Science lab inventory Science lab observations Principal/Pastor Meetings |
| Baseline Assessment | Science lab inventory |
| Ongoing Assessment | Science lab inventory Science lab observations Principal/Pastor Meetings |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-July 2025 |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | Faculty Meetings Parent Meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Principal/Pastor Meetings |

Goal #3: (from Chapters 3A, 3D, 3G, WARP)

Provide more opportunities for spiritual development and involvement of parents. The goal is to continue to build a strong and active partnership with parents. We are firm believers that parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is imperative that the school partner with them to ensure the best academic and spiritual formation of their children.

Rationale for this Goal:

Parents entrust the academic and spiritual formation of their children to the school because the school upholds the spiritual and academic standards that parents want for their children. The school can educate students in the faith and in academics, but these must be fostered at home. For this reason, it is important to maintain a strong and proactive partnership with parents. By bringing parents in and soliciting their active participation, parents become aware of the school's efforts, and they are, in turn, able to emphasize at home what is being taught at school. This makes for stronger Catholic community and, therefore, a stronger school Catholic Identity. We are also working at bringing participation to pre-covid levels.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs:

The school mission is to form students in faith, academics and virtue. As part of the philosophy, Saint Therese Carmelite School is first and foremost a Catholic school. We cultivate Catholic values and spiritual formation of the school community through daily prayer, weekly school Masses, recitation of the Rosary, praying the Stations of the Cross, May Crowning, and the sacraments. By providing opportunities for parents' spiritual development and involvement, parents will take part in the same of the spiritual formation that our students receive. This will, in turn, strengthen the faith formation that our students receive. Our students will be able to better achieve the Faith SLEs.

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| Strategy # 1 | Offer parent formation nights with speakers |
| Activity # | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spiritual talks from the friars 2. Parenting talks with outside speakers 3. Safety talks for parents |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | \$100-\$150 stipend for community speakers |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | Pastor, Principal, and Parent Service Organization |
| Process For Monitoring | Parent feedback Observations Formation night attendance |
| Baseline Assessment | Formation night attendance |
| Ongoing Assessment | Parent feedback Observations |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | Faculty Meetings Parent Meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Email blasts Principal/Pastor Meetings |

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| Strategy # 2 | Offer opportunities for parents to attend liturgies |
| Activity # | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rosary 15 minutes before pick up 2. Mass at drop off 3. Special feast day celebrations (Our Lady of Guadalupe, May crowning, Carmelite saints) 4. Family Mass 5. Confessions 6. Retreat |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | No cost |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | Pastor and Principal Parent Service Organization Carmelite friars |
| Process For Monitoring | Parent feedback Observations Liturgy attendance |
| Baseline Assessment | Liturgy attendance |
| Ongoing Assessment | Parent feedback Observations |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | Faculty Meetings Parent Meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Email blasts Principal/Pastor Meetings |

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| Strategy # 3 | Provide community building events for parents |
| Activity # | 1. Wine and Cheese with the Carmelites 2. Fall Dance for the school 3. Movie night for the school |
| Cost or Resources & Sources | Up to \$200 per event Fundraising done by Parent Service Organization |
| Person(s) Responsible For Implementation | 1) Pastor 2) Principal 3) Friars 4) Staff 5) Parent Service Organization |
| Process For Monitoring | Parent feedback Student feedback Observations Event attendance |
| Baseline Assessment | Event attendance |
| Ongoing Assessment | Parent feedback Student feedback Observations |
| Timeline Start/Stop | August 2022-ongoing |
| Process for Communicating to Shareholders | Faculty Meetings Parent Meetings <i>The Little Way</i> Email blasts Principal/Pastor Meetings |

B. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN

The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Saint Therese Carmelite School has the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that supports high achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and curriculum standards for all students. As evidenced in our Self Study, the school has the support of the pastor, the Parish Finance Council, the board, the Parent Service Organization, staff, parents, and students to ensure high achievement of all students. We have a dedicated, hard-working school community.

The school is confident that the Action Plan has realistic goals that can be reasonably accomplished within the scope of the goals and strategies delineated within. Saint Therese Carmelite School believes that it has the financial resources and a clear structure for carrying out each action plan. This structure with a well-defined timetable as well as the persons responsible for its implementation will ensure that we carry it out. Furthermore, the accountability of monitoring and reporting progress additionally aids in the implementation of our Action Plan.

The school has a process where shareholders hold regular meetings. School improvement is always a topic of discussion at these meetings. This serves as one measure to assess how well we are carrying out each Action Plan. The principal and the pastor discuss ongoing school improvement at their weekly pastor/principal meetings. At faculty meetings the staff takes the time to assess and review progress toward the action plan. Progress is reported at pastor/principal meetings, mandatory parent meetings, staff meetings, board meetings, in *The Little Way*, through email blasts, at church, Morning Assembly, student Ambassador's meetings, and at Parent Service Organization meetings.

The school successfully implemented, monitored, and amended the Action Plan from 2015. The school was able to implement the prior action plan and adapt it to fit the needs of the Classical Model. The school engages in a continuous process of self-improvement. The pastor, board, staff, and parents make school improvement a priority. Goals and strategies within our action plan will be evaluated and reviewed based on student assessment data. The data from student assessments will dictate the necessary adjustments and steps to follow.

Shareholders are committed to the Action Plan. The pastor, Carmelite friars, Parish Finance Council, staff and parents are committed to student achievement. Each action plan will directly impact and positively impact student achievement in faith, academics, and virtue.

Evidence

- Previous Self Study
- WARP report
- Previous *Report of Findings*
- Mid-term Report
- Revisit Committee's Report
- Previous Action Plan and all revisions