

BISHOP O'CONNELL HIGH SCHOOL FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028

Our Mission is to provide students an education rooted in the life of Christ and to foster the pursuit of excellence in the whole person.

We Believe that our Catholic high school is an evangelizing community of students, teachers, staff, and parents, providing our students an education rooted in the life of Christ and directed toward a personal relationship with Him.

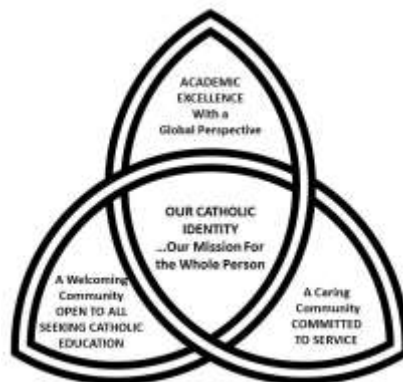
We Believe that our school is a great gift to our church and community, which carries out the mandate of teaching given to us by Christ to proclaim the gospel, and which celebrates the Catholic faith through worship and service to others.

We Believe in the full development of the human person, including the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of one's being. Commitment to academic excellence is an integral part of our identity as a Catholic school.

We Believe that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process, and when each student has appropriate opportunities for success.

We Believe that student self-esteem is enhanced by positive relationships and mutual respect among and between students and faculty; that students thrive in a supportive yet stimulating climate which affirms the dignity of all persons; and that we are called to educate students of diverse economic, cultural, religious, racial, ethnic backgrounds and learning needs.

Our Vision - Bishop O'Connell High School will be known as the Catholic, co-educational college preparatory high school that fosters academic excellence and educates the whole person within a supportive environment that helps students grow in their Faith and emphasizes service to others. Bishop O'Connell will distinguish itself through innovations in STEM fields, global studies enrichment opportunities and university partnerships that enable students to extend their horizons as they prepare for college and beyond.



Dear O'Connell Community,

Bishop O'Connell High School is a school built on the foundation of our Catholic faith, academic and extracurricular excellence, and virtue. All of this springs from our community—guided, we pray, by the providential care of God. The school is shaped by the legacy of the tens of thousands of students who have attended; the thousands of faculty, religious and staff who have served; and the myriad of parents, family members, alumni, pastors, priests, and religious who have supported and prayed for this institution since our founding in 1957. We look to the future knowing that our foundation is strong.

We invite you, the O'Connell family, to read and reflect on this 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. It contains the priorities, hopes, aspirations and expectations for our school as we plan its future.

We celebrate the storied history of this great school and take pride in Bishop O'Connell as we exist today, confident that we continue to fulfill our mission to provide an education rooted in Christ for our students, our families, our Diocese and our Church. At the same time we know that the future holds new challenges and opportunities for which we should prepare.

As we have throughout our history, Bishop O'Connell High School will depend on the creative and generous engagement of all in our community to build on the success that has always defined our school—some supporting with time, expertise, and treasure, and all through interest and prayer.

We, the school's leaders, are committed to shepherding this process with care and faithfulness. We invite you to continue your connection to Bishop O'Connell and to accompany this community as we strive toward our future success.

God Bless You,

Bill Crittenberger
Head of School

Frank Roque
Principal

BACKGROUND

The Bishop O'Connell High School 2023-2028 Strategic Plan is designed as a framework for current efforts, new initiatives and future projections, ensuring consistent, continuous improvement aligned with the mission of the school and faithful to the vision of Catholic education in the Diocese of Arlington.

This plan is organized into six categories which correspond to the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) from the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA). The plan has also been intentionally developed to dovetail with elements of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington's 2022 Strategic Plan, including affordability, faith formation, inclusion, and service to specific communities, which are reflected in segments of this strategic plan.

No strategic plan exists in a vacuum; rather it is the product of judgments made within the parameters of what is happening in society, in the Church and in the school community at the time it is presented. These years might be described as a transition time. The country is post-pandemic. The diocese is celebrating its jubilee. Having recently completed a capital campaign, the school has just begun full use of a new wing with 13 classrooms, a significantly expanded chapel, and a spacious atrium.

At the center of this strategic plan and all things we do at Bishop O'Connell is our Catholic mission. It is a reference point that marks both our history and our future. The trajectory that defines us and which we continue to follow is to provide students an education rooted in the life of Christ and to foster the pursuit of excellence in the whole person. This idea permeates everything we do: from curriculum to student life; from enrollment to advancement; from athletics to our campus ministry program; from facilities to financial aid. It is our hope that in implementing this strategic plan, we build on the firm foundation that is Bishop O'Connell High School—an institution and a community where students blessed with many and diverse gifts thrive and grow into young men and women of virtue, and where alumni and community members feel equally welcomed and valued; a place of Christ-centered joy.

We place this plan under the patronage of St. Joseph the Worker and Mary, Mother of the Church. May it bear fruit that will last and lead the O'Connell community to the future which God intends.

Strategic Priorities

- Faith and Catholic Identity
- Academic Excellence and Quality Programming
- Lifelong Community and Connectedness
- Facilities, Equipment and Technology
- Affordability and Operational Vitality
- Christ-Centered Leadership

Strategic Priority #1 - Faith and Catholic Identity

...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. - Matthew 6:33

Knowing the desire of those who founded the school to pass on the Catholic faith to future generations, firmly trusting in God's providential care for us, and called as a community to live out our beliefs in this specific time and setting:

We will...Present theology instruction in an engaging and relevant format which promotes individual and communal practice of the Faith with continued emphasis on the sacramental life and growth in virtue.

We will...Foster, support and strengthen a dynamic retreat program that facilitates the development and deepening of a personal relationship with Christ for all students.

We will...Create additional on-site faith experience opportunities for students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni and other members of the extended O'Connell community.

We will...Expand service and campus ministry activities with the intent of leading all members of the community, both Catholics and those of other faiths, to a deeper and more mature relationship with God.

We will...Fully participate in diocesan initiatives.

We will ... Infuse every aspect of the school with a Catholic vision of the human person based on Christian anthropology and Church teaching.

Strategic Priority #2 - Academic Excellence and Quality Programming

You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. - John 8:32

Missioned to provide an education rooted in the life of Christ, and aware of the opportunities and challenges facing adolescent learners in the 21st century:

We will...Maintain excellence in academics, providing students with the knowledge and skills they will need in college and adult life, by continually evaluating and strengthening our curriculum.

We will...Create additional extracurricular and curriculum-related opportunities beyond the classroom.

We will...Encourage growing enrollment in elective courses, including business, technology, engineering and the arts, while maintaining high expectations in core subjects.

We will...Expand dual credit courses, online offerings, and other college-level opportunities.

We will... Broaden offerings and activities for students of differing abilities and learning styles, and give attention to inclusion of students with cognitive disabilities as an integral expression of the school's identity.

We will...Recruit, form and strive to retain administrators, teachers, counselors and staff members committed to the ministry of Catholic education and the mission of the school through a supportive environment, competitive compensation, and professional development opportunities.

Strategic Priority #3 - Lifelong Community and Connectedness

For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. - Romans 12:4-5

Recognizing that creating a sustained, intergenerational community of students, teachers, administrators, families, graduates, and friends is integral to the legacy of a diocesan Catholic high school:

We will...Undertake a review of all community-building efforts with an emphasis on enhancing alumni involvement, specifically appealing to alumni from varying groups and time periods.

We will...Explore how to creatively involve parents/guardians more fully in the life of the school.

We will...Maintain a vibrant and expansive program of performing arts, athletics, and extracurricular activities.

We will...Plan and coordinate new community outreach efforts, actively networking with alumni, local professionals, and businesses.

We will...Emphasize personal wellness and continue to invest in robust counseling programs and clinic resources in order to assist students in navigating the complexities of home and school life in healthy ways.

We will...Foster respect for the gifts of others, treasuring the unity that comes with diversity.

Strategic Priority #4 - Facilities, Equipment and Technology

If the Lord does not build the house, in vain do its builders labor. - Psalm 127:1

Aware of the need to maximize functionality and sustainability within an aesthetically and ergonomically comfortable learning environment, and committed to maintaining a simplicity of style centered on collaborative opportunities:

We will...Create a new Master Plan for facilities that includes phasing and financial considerations.

We will...Upgrade aging infrastructure and building systems to contemporary standards.

We will...Focus on updating and renovating older parts of the school building, with an eye toward utilizing the facility to optimal capacity.

We will...Evaluate and upgrade technology and IT systems and processes to meet current needs as well as anticipated future needs across all school programs and functions.

We will...Maintain ongoing relationships with diocesan and county personnel regarding safety and security procedures and guidelines.

We will...Develop a robust “care for the campus” mindset among all members of the school community as a reflection of our belief in our responsibility to care for creation, providing opportunities for alumni to join this effort.

Strategic Priority #5 - Affordability and Operational Vitality

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. - Matthew 7:7

With the goal that Catholic education at the high school level be attainable for all families who seek it, and knowing that sustainable resources and wise stewardship are vital to the ongoing success of the school:

We will...Identify funding sources beyond tuition and fees to sustainably support educational programs, enrollment, and facility needs.

We will...Maximize effectiveness of allocated resources, and use collaborative budgeting processes to set priorities and parameters for annual financial management.

We will...Expand enrollment management efforts to include more school-wide outreach to diocesan elementary schools and parishes.

We will...Develop a long-range advancement plan for ample sustainable funding, exploring new approaches to reaching existing and potential O'Connell supporters—especially alumni—while strengthening the school's annual fund and steadily increasing diocesan endowment investments.

We will...Investigate methods for making school more affordable, seeking to maintain moderate and predictable tuition increases, with special attention to non-tuition expenses and fees.

We will...Explore procedures for financial aid and flexible financing which offer respectful awareness of all families' resources.

Strategic Priority #6 - Christ-Centered Leadership

Be shepherds of the flock entrusted to you. - 1 Peter 5:2

Proclaiming that Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes, the model of its faculty, and the inspiration of its students; and accepting the responsibility of leading the O'Connell community with creative hope and joyful service:

We will...Proclaim the school's mission and execute the diocesan vision for Catholic education as articulated by the Bishop and the Office of Catholic Schools.

We will...Provide consistent messaging and purposeful decision-making, prioritizing a "toward the most good" approach for new and existing initiatives.

We will...Maintain and enhance the current direction of faculty formation and staff development, with an increased emphasis on personal and professional growth and on nurturing the culture of collaboration, which permeates all aspects of the school.

We will...Support, prepare and develop Christ-centered leaders in our school community.

We will...Strive to maintain and, if possible, increase IHM presence in the school community.

We will...Model the faith, virtues and skills expected of O'Connell graduates as they meet challenges the world will present to their generation.

It is the collective hope and expectation that from 2023 through 2028, Bishop O'Connell High School will continue its steady upward trajectory as a community in which all members feel equally welcomed, valued, respected, and cared for, and where a world-class Catholic education is readily available to all of our students, who through their successful, enjoyable, and formative high school journey grow in knowledge, faith, humility and self-assurance as evangelizing servants of Christ.

BISHOP O'CONNELL HIGH SCHOOL
6600 Little Falls Road
Arlington, VA 22213
703-237-1400
www.bishopoconnell.org