

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Current Need

Catholic families face a serious educational challenge. Having ensured in many cases that their children receive a high quality Catholic grade school education, they find the doors to a high quality, classical Catholic high school education closed due to the lack of the presence of such a school or massive tuition costs. A compelling and urgent need for the development of an academically strong, fiscally sound, and authentically Catholic classical high school south of Milwaukee now exists. Structuring the school as a college preparatory institution, while also preparing those who may not intend to pursue post-secondary education, represents the bulk of this proposal.

The proposing team, including Mr. Chris Lundin and Mr. Dave Tomasiewicz, educators well-versed in both classical Catholic high school education and the School Choice movement, stands committed to preparing Catholic leaders for the Church and society, and advancing student academic achievement through proven pedagogical methods, classic liberal arts content, and solid character development. The team's plan calls for the opening of grade 9 in the fall of 2011, fostering in new areas its success in providing youth with a rigorous, Catholic education that adequately prepares them for post-secondary studies and the working world. The proposing team seeks to assist families by creating additional Catholic high school capacity ensuring that the first choice and available option for a child in our Catholic grade schools is an affordable, high quality Catholic high school.

As current Catholic high schools are suffering from the economic downturn and a decline in enrollment, the time has come for a new plan: a return to the authentic philosophical, pedagogical, economic, and theological methods which have served the Church and society so well. The team views the plan as doing no harm to the existing Catholic high schools in the Archdiocese.

## **Prospective Parents and Students: Demographic Data and Market Analysis**

### **Target Student Population**

Students in the south suburbs of Milwaukee and the areas near the Illinois border, i.e., Racine and Kenosha and surrounding counties, specifically seeking a classical Catholic education at an affordable price, and, ultimately, students for whose families such an education would be unattainable without substantively discounted tuition.

### **Public School District(s) for Target Population**

Racine and Kenosha Public Schools

### **Number of Students When Opening:**

100

### **Grades Served When Opening:**

9<sup>th</sup>

## Leadership and Governance: Uniquely Positioned To Succeed

The leadership team is uniquely poised to advance the education of students seeking a classical Catholic secondary education, and has a proven track record of successes, including fostering a strong sense of Catholic identity and mission, demonstrable student academic achievement gains via evidence – based instructional paradigms, creation of specific and sequential teacher professional development and training programs, implementation of web – based student information systems, grade books, and achievement data tracking and reporting, ongoing expansion and renovation of buildings and facilities, innovative use of technology to aid and differentiate student learning, and parent “buy – in” and commitment. The administration takes seriously the school’s accountability to the students and families served, and to the broader community as a whole, and, as potential future participants in the Parental Choice Program, to the taxpayers of the State of Wisconsin.

### UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO SUCCEED

- Administrative team with demonstrated success in school expansion from 400 to over 1000 children
- Staff experienced with facility expansion and renovation
- Experienced with rigorous curriculum preparing urban children for post-secondary education
- Familiarity with school choice movement and programming, and federal funding programs.

## Governance Structure

The school would operate with the following government and management structure: the school directors would have day – to – day operational jurisdiction over school affairs, in regular consultation with the Director of Finance and an advisory board to be comprised of local business, cultural, religious leaders, and parents.

## Management Team

When St. Anthony School, where the proposing team has been integral in expansion, began, some years ago, its program of comprehensive school reform and renewal, bureaucratic doubts, internal opposition, and limited vision seemed ready to doom the project to failure. Nevertheless, tenacity on the part of the administrative team, which never wavered in its commitment to high quality Catholic education for every student, led to the current demonstrated successes.

**Dave Tomaszewicz** is a native of Chicago, Illinois, where he was educated in the parish schools of the Archdiocese and at St. Viator High School in Arlington Heights. After baccalaureate studies at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin, and graduate studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Dave left the retail industry and moved into teaching in an urban Catholic parish school in Chicago. His wife, Jennifer, and daughters, Margaret and Sophie have lived in Dousman since 2003. He has served as classroom teacher, Dean of Academics, Disciplinarian, Athletic Director, Director of Institutional Advancement, and was formerly Dean of the High School for St. Anthony School of Milwaukee.

**Chris Lundin** is a native of Springfield, Illinois, where he attended St. Theresa of the Little Flower Parish School and Sacred Heart-Griffin High School. He graduated from Eastern Illinois University, and began classroom teaching in the sixth grade at St. Anthony School in 2007. He was promoted first to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, and then joined the high school team, where he currently teaches history and rhetoric to sophomores. Chris also serves as Athletic Director for SAHS, where he has developed a fiscally sound, competitive, and highly organized sports program for the high school students.

## **Instructional Philosophy and Programming**

The proposing team believes that a rigorous, Catholic, liberal arts, college-preparatory curriculum, side – by – side with a program that fosters a solid academic preparation for those not necessarily considering the pursuit of post – secondary university studies, must be available to all students from the earliest grades through high school regardless of family financial circumstances. They seek to build upon the successes of their work with their current academic programs by extending a similar commitment to implementation of a common, college – preparatory curriculum at the high school level for families living south of the City of Milwaukee. The team has chosen to implement a high school content sequence with a proven record of success at multiple schools throughout the nation, a sequence developed at the Hillsdale Academy in Michigan, and adapted appropriately for implementation at a Catholic school.

This adapted sequence includes four years each of Humane Letters (history and literature, including civics and economics in the senior year), catechesis, Latin and Spanish, the natural sciences, and mathematics. Students also complete the following: three years of rhetoric and composition, and courses in art, music, and physical education. After completing pertinent coursework, students may elect to take advanced college placement tests.

Our experience in grade school education also makes the administration cognizant of the fact that some students, for varying reasons, may come to high school functioning several years below grade level. Successful remedial intervention will be utilized to accelerate students to grade level in mathematics and reading.

The development team is engaged in creating an educational environment that will produce positive outcomes in improving graduation rates for high school students, improving overall student achievement, increasing consistent school attendance, improving student behavior through instruction in the moral doctrine and praxis of the Catholic Church, and promoting increased parental involvement in the education of the children. Additionally, they look to increase access to post-secondary educational opportunities among low income or first-generation American students.

## **Development**

In addition to relying on funding provided to students through the Parental Choice Program following its expansion to the southern counties, the team is in the process of securing additional funding from private foundations for the school. Tuition, at a cut rate, would provide the bulk of the revenue for the school coupled with the generous support of foundations and donors, making a classical Catholic education a viable option for families unable to provide it for their children given the current fiscal models in place in many Catholic schools.

The School will develop an advisory board of interested and qualified individuals to provide input on expansion and operations, financial advice and support, assistance in recruitment and development, and expansion of community interest in the mission and programming of the school.

## **Facilities and Site**

The proposed school could be accommodated in an existing building in Racine. A minimum property size of 30,000 to 40,000 square feet will be needed over the next four years with an additional 20,000 square feet of space needed in the future for athletic and fine arts programming.

## **Operating Budget Projections for Year 1**

The graph on the following page is a projected operating budget for the first year of the high school and does not include potential federal or state funding, or yearly tuition increases.