

--- The St. Elizabeth of the Trinity School is the largest, most important, parish ministry in passing on the faith to others. To help foster the effectiveness and vitality of this mission, a strategic planning process has begun, and you are asked to be a part of it. Dr. Debbie Sullivan, a former principal in the Archdiocese, who currently teaches at Loyola University and is a consultant, will be facilitating this process. We will be using the National Catholic Standards of Education as the planning tool. You can learn more about it here: www.ncea.org/NSBECS

The purpose of the strategic plan using the NSBECS tool is to help improve the school in four very specific areas (called Domains) over the course of about five-years. We have a non-staff parishioner to serve as steering heads for each Domain, who will work directly with Debbie Sullivan and report back to Dr. Hillmann and me. Consider joining one of the subcommittees that will meet monthly over the course of the next year.

The four Domains for focus and improvement along with their committee head are:

Mission and Catholic Identity, led by Nello Selvaggio

Governance and Leadership led by Peggy Bradley

Academic Excellence led by Julie Weiss

Operational Vitality led by Donna Quirk

The school budget, space, and programming make it by far the largest investment of the parish with the goal of making intentional and faithful Catholic disciples of Jesus Christ. Please help us strengthen the school in its mission of forming our children well in body, mind, and spirit. Check the school page in the bulletin for an application, or email Kristine Hillmann at k.hillmann@stelizabethtrinityschool.org. This is a pivotal and exciting moment for the parish and school.

After the period of planning, the Greeley Center, which Dr. Debbie Sullivan works for, will produce the final publishable report and plan for us to use.

--- ***“Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it.”***

One of the most challenging things for Catholics in our hectic and distracting modern world is to keep our eyes on the prize. This is true for us individually, but also for Catholics communally in parish, school, work, or social life. In all of her writings over the years about Catholic education, which holds true of all her works of mercy, the Church has stressed first the supernatural end of the human person, our heavenly goal. Vatican II explained Catholic education in this way:

“To fulfill the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother Church must be concerned with the whole of man’s life, even the secular part of it, insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling. There, she (the Church) has a role in the progress and development of education” (Vat. II *Gravissimum Educationis*).

Of course, the Church has always taught that parents have the first right and duty to educate their children to conform with their own moral and religious convictions. In that sense the parish RE and school programs serve as an extension of the parents, a second home as it were in cooperation with the parents. The parish, like parents, tries to legitimately meet the needs of its children physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually. May we all try to remind each other as often as needed to keep first things first in our homes and in the parish:

--- ***“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”***

God bless,

Fr. Mike