

SCHOOL RELATED

Q: Have you surveyed the parish about interest in Catholic School attendance at St. Robert to help predict potential future attendance?

A: We have not surveyed the parish to predict potential future attendance.

Q: What evidence do we have to believe Catholic schools have a higher likelihood of retaining students until the baptism of their kids than public schools?

A: *Catholic school students are more likely pray daily, attend church more often, retain a Catholic identify as an adult, and donate more to the Church.* Based on findings from Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate report [HERE](#). Additional information can be found on the USCCB website, the Catholic School FACT Sheet, [HERE](#).

Q: What percent of P3-P4-young 5 go into Kindergarten?

A: It varies year to year, but about 66% of P3-P4 and Young 5 students continue to Kindergarten.

Q: How can we consider this school viable with only 63 students in K-5?

A: We have continued to grow over the past 4 years and believe this trend will improve as we welcome new students into higher grades. The process of growing a school takes a lot of faith.

Q: Do you have any realistic projections of the number of students in the future?

A: Yes, we have a conservative growth model that is shared in the town hall recording [HERE](#).

Q: How long will it take class sizes to grow so they can have competition requiring a full gym?

A: Catholic United and GRACEAC combine students from various Catholic schools to create teams. With the Catholic United and GRACEAC sports leagues, we can begin hosting competitive sports right away. We specifically designed a gym that could welcome other schools for tournaments.

Q: What are the specific St Robert school numbers in each class for 2020-2022? What percentage of these children are SRN parishioners?

A: The percentage of students who are parishioners of SRN is 95%. The number of students in each grade is as follows-

PS3 - 12	Grade 2 - 15
PS4 - 13	Grade 3 - 3
Young 5 - 18	Grade 4 - 6
Kindergarten - 13	Grade 5 - 1
Grade 1 – 25	

Q: How many families comprise the 106 students?

A: The 106 St. Robert school students represent 76 families.

Q: How many students, broken out by grade, attend other Catholic schools that we are paying to attend?

A: The number of students attending other Catholic schools SRN provides scholarship for is as follows:
Kindergarten - 1
Grade 1 - 7

Grade 2 – 6
Grade 3 - 11
Grade 4 - 10
Grade 5 - 9
Grade 6 - 13
Grade 7 - 13

Grade 8 - 4
Grade 9 - 20
Grade 10 – 8
Grade 11 – 9
Grade 12 - 9

Q: How many new parishioners do we currently have as a direct result of the school?

A: We currently have four new parishioners as a direct result of the school.

Q: Does having multiple grades in one room compromise learning?

A: The multiage model does not compromise learning and is an excellent way to educate students.

Q: What is the mission of the school?

A: St. Robert Catholic School provides a premier Catholic STEM based education where students are immersed daily in their faith which empowers them to become the individual God created them to be.

Q: What specifically differentiates St. Robert school from other Christian schools (grades K-5) and/or other Catholic schools?

A: St. Robert is a Catholic Immersion school with a STEM focus. We weave our faith into every aspect of the day. We also use a STEM model for teaching that allows a high degree of interactive and collaborative learning.

Q: What happens to the school if we do NOT go forward with the expansion?

A: If we do not go forward with the proposed plan, we will have to make an alternative plan for moving forward.

Q: What makes the expansion of the school so urgent?

A: The school needs more classrooms, and the parish has generously shared space with us as we began. At this time, we are running out of room during the school day.

Q: How will tuition be affected by much higher operating costs?

A: Tuition will not be affected. We are looking at development efforts that will help us meet operational costs.

Q: Are you confident if you build it “they will come.”

A: When we opened the school originally, families and students came. We believe a new building will generate even more excitement and interest in our school.

FAITH FORMATION RELATED

Q: What are the numbers in each class for Faith Formation for 2020-2022?

A: Little Disciples Preschool	27	Junior Disciples Grade 4	43
Little Disciples Kindergarten	29	Junior Disciples Grade 5	35
Junior Disciples Grade 1	42	Young Disciples Grades 6-7	66
Junior Disciples Grade 2	81	Young Disciples Grade 8	76
Junior Disciples Grade 3	41	Teen Disciples Grades 9-12	35

Q: How is this going to benefit our Faith Formation programs for the students who are not part of the school?

A: The school and faith formation share classroom space. The school uses the classrooms during the day and faith formation uses them in the evenings and on weekends. Faith formation will benefit from the extra classrooms to allow more students to attend sessions.

CHURCH RENOVATION

Q: When will we hear about the renovation of the church, specifically the altar?

A: Fr. Russo and the finance council will communicate with the parish about the renovation of the Altar in early to mid-November.

Q: Is Fr. Russo's desire to renovate the Eucharistic Chapel and relocate the altar a separate plan? Will additional fundraising be needed for that if it goes through?

A: Yes, the Eucharistic Chapel and relocation of the Altar is a separate plan. No additional fundraising is needed once approved by the Diocese of Grand Rapids.

FINANCIAL

Q: Does the school, as a separate entity, pay rent to the Church since we paid for the original construction? If so, how much?

A: Yes, the school pays \$932.00 rent per month to SRN.

Q: Does St. Robert parish have reserve monies that can be put toward this project?

A: SRN does have a savings account. Use of these funds for the campaign would have to be decided by the Pastor and Finance Council

Q: If the project is \$19-20M now, what are the projected costs when it begins in 2 years?

A: The cost study for the complete project costs in fall 2022 \$19.1M, predicting escalation for the future under current conditions is very difficult. We anticipate a project cost at \$20M+ in 2 years' time but understand that predicting future costs is extremely variable.

Q: Is there a specified date that the benefactors will not be paying for staff and expenses?

A: There is no date set. They invested in the school originally, are doing so now, and naturally want it to succeed. They are confident that the school will be an asset to the church community as a whole and will be supported in the future.

Q: What was the total amount of parish collections in FY 2021-2022?

A: The total amount of parish collections in FY 2021-2022 is \$2,109,270.76

Q: Besides the cost of buildings, what are the projected costs of maintenance and utilities per year?

A: With the additional 45,000 square foot building addition, we anticipate an increase in utilities, ongoing maintenance, and staff. As we are currently at the conceptual phase, the school and parish leadership are working to refine projected operational budgets for the school and parish. Part of these cost increases will come from a combination of additional tuition revenue from increased enrollment and development or fundraising revenue.

Q: Staff salaries? Teacher salaries? Secretary? Custodial? Lunchroom staff? Compared to public school salaries, there are current shortages in all categories. Can we compete?

A: We are working to make sure our pay scale is about 80% of that of the public schoolteacher. This is an improvement from where we used to be. Catholic schoolteachers and employees see their work as a mission and understand the pay is not equal, but passing on the faith in the educational setting is worth it.

Q: What is the tuition cost now? Will it increase? If so, by how much?

A: Tuition is \$6,300 with \$1,500 in parish support for each parishioner student. Because we are considered a parish without a school, SRN pays that same support for students who attend Catholic schools in the area, including St. Paul, St. Thomas, IHM, etc. Once St. Robert school becomes a parish school, this will not have to happen.

Q: If the diocese is requesting a parish school, are they able to help finance it and how much are they contributing?

A: We do not have an answer at this time; we will hear after the feasibility study is complete.

Q: What if you don't get the parishioner commitment? What is your backup plan?

A: When the feasibility study is completed and the report has been submitted, it will include a series of recommendations as well as a conclusion regarding the potential for a campaign. It is possible that if there is not the potential for the entire project as presented it could be scaled back in size and scope and/or phased over time. In building projects such as this there are always options to meet needs.

Q: Are you only fundraising for the school?

A: The proposed project has elements that will directly impact the school, faith formation for adults and children, and ministry support areas.

Q: Can we afford this new construction and a quantum increase in operating costs?

A: The objective of the feasibility study process, that of surveying the entire parish family, is to see whether the parish will support the project. If the parishioners do not feel this is a high enough priority and do not support it at the level necessary for success, then that will be reflected in the outcome of the study process with recommendations and what the next likely steps should and could be.

Q: Is it likely only current parishioners will be asked to foot the majority of the bill?

A: The funding plan for the project as presented is equal parts of generous benefactor's contributions matched by the parishioner's contribution in a proposed multiyear capital campaign. It is possible that after the feasibility study and considering optional funding plans that a longer term mortgage could be taken out which would be paid off overtime by future parishioners.

PROPOSED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Q: How much land is used? Including elevation?

A: The entire property encompasses 16.6 acres- the proposed addition does not impact any additional land, the proposed parking to the south as well as north does impact existing green space.

Q: How many parking spaces will be lost, how will we accommodate parking especially for large events and Christmas Masses?

A: The proposed master plan maintains the same number and size of parking spaces that currently are on site (approx. 465 spaces) – the existing sanctuary seats approx. 1,335 people and requires 445 parking spaces by code.

Q: Did you consider a separate school and church connected by a walkway for shared facilities?

A: During the master planning process, multiple expansion options were studied, the proposed expansion in the master plan was the preferred option selected by the master planning committee due to providing the best learning environment, building community, delivering functionality and cohesive circulation, efficiency, maximization of footprint/acreage and cost.

Q: Why is the extension of the building in its location? Why not a courtyard?

A: During the master planning process, multiple expansion options were studied, the proposed expansion in the master plan was the preferred option selected by the master planning committee due to providing the best learning environment, building community, delivering functionality and cohesive circulation, efficiency, maximization of footprint/acreage and cost.

Q: Where would storage for the multi-event items be located?

A: Storage is provided as part of the activity center and has been sized for maximum seating and tables configuration as well as physical education and athletic equipment.

OTHER

Q: Is this project a need or a want?

A: School leadership, the previous and current pastor, faith formation staff, and outside professionals have deliberately developed a plan that answers real and urgent space needs for the school and faith formation, as well as projected needs for the future. The success of the project will now be determined by the parishioners during this feasibility study process.

Q: When is OSOF pledge commitment finished for St. Roberts?

A: OSOF pledge commitments are fulfilled in 2023.

Q: How about doing it in phases - Marian Chapel first at 1.9 mill?

A: It is possible at the conclusion of the feasibility study that there is initially only support for a portion of the proposed plan. The first logical investment in that master plan would be the Marian chapel.

Q: Please list the members of the Master Planning Team

A: Feasibility Study Committee members include:

Parishioners

Amy Chambers

Nick Dondzila

Dr. Patrick Droste

Al Juarez

Barb Mahey

Anne Schieber

Renee Vaughan-Dwyer

Ted Wright

Staff

Father Tony Russo, Pastor

Father Logan Weber, Parochial Vicar

Teri Burns, Faith Formation

Anne Krug, Communications

Liz Peters, School Principal

Shelley Yakubowski, Business Manager

Q: Will there be a SRN parishioner survey about the expansion? If so, and the results are negative, will you respect them and act accordingly?

A: The feasibility study will use a combination of surveys to the entire parish as well as 40 to 50 personal interviews with individuals or couples deemed opinion leaders in the parish. The results of those interviews and surveys combined with the multi-year history of the company conducting the feasibility study will be the basis for forming conclusions and making recommendations about next steps.

Q: Why would you open a gym at “all hours” when you won’t open the Church at all hours?

A: We would open the activity center/gym for events that meet the needs of our parish and school communities.

Q: How many families do we have registered at St Roberts church as of today, October 2022?

A: As of October 22, 2022, SRN has 2868 registered households.

Q: How many families did we have registered at St Roberts church pre-pandemic, October 2019?

A: There were 2,550 registered households prior to the pandemic.

Q: How many families over the year provide some financial donations to St Robert church?

A: 1,135 families provide some financial support to SRN during a one-year period.