



PEORIA NOTRE DAME

Forming disciples in a community of Catholic faith, knowledge, and service.



**Advancing Our Mission: Strategic Plan Update
Winter 2025**

State of the School

Hello, PND families and supporters!

It has been more than two years since the Peoria Notre Dame strategic plan was developed through the ideas provided by 80+ community leaders, administration and staff. To help guide the implementation of those ideas, the consultative board was formed in late 2022. In its first two years the consultative board has focused on enhancing the school environment and educational experience with efforts across eight domain areas, and we have significant progress to report.

First, a further strengthening of the engagement with priests and principals of our Catholic grade schools has occurred. The percentage of graduating eighth graders from our local partner grade schools enrolling at PND has increased from 48% to 57% in the last three years. Engagement with our partner schools on curriculum alignment and student placement, as well as tuition assistance, helped us increase this capture rate.

Second, PND has improved its accessibility for families and students at all income levels. For the 2024-2025 school year, PND provided \$950,000 in assistance to support the availability of a Catholic education to all families. Tuition and any tuition assistance needed is now identified and agreed upon upfront with families so that families can budget appropriately. PND works with priests and principals to make every opportunity available, especially for families who have children in both PND and a partner school.

Third, PND strives to have facilities that reflect the high standards of its education and the excellence of its students. The board conducted an internal review. The findings confirm that all donations previously received by 2014 for the *Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future Capital Campaign* totaling \$6.5 million were fully invested in the road, water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure of the Allen Road property. The property is currently used daily for soccer and football practice and weekend JV football games during the school year. We thank our donors for their generous contributions. Additionally in 2024, to understand the near and long-term capabilities of the current Sheridan Road campus, a facilities assessment was conducted by local engineering and architectural firms. Best utilization of both properties will be considered in upcoming planning, with broader community involvement and clear communication to be provided.

As board members, we thank each of you for your continued support of Peoria Notre Dame and look forward to working with you to further strengthen the school and community for a rich, blessed future.

Jacqueline Kelly, Principal

Grant McInnis, COO

Dr. Jerry Sanderson, Superintendent

Dr. Susie Ciccirelli, Associate Superintendent

Fr. Patrick Henehan, Pastor of St. Jude

Fr. Luke Spannagel, Pastor of St. Philomena

Steve Knecht, Chair of Board & Finance

Kris Coulter, Vice Chair of Board & Advancement

Dr. Noreen Dillon, Secretary of Board & Academics

Garry Finch, Academics

Liz Wilson, Catholic Identity

Brian Winschel, Enrollment

Brian Flaherty, Facilities

Paula Davis, Governance

Kate Socha, Student Life

To contact the consultative board, please reach out to pndhs.board@pndhs.org.

Catholic Identity

OUR COMMITMENT TO FAITH FORMATION

- **Faith in Every Aspect:** At Peoria Notre Dame, we integrate Catholic values into all aspects of student life, from academics to athletics to extracurriculars. We believe that true success is achieved by living for the glory of God and the good of others.
- **Joyful Witness of the Gospel:** We are committed to fostering an authentic and joyful witness of the Gospel by helping students develop personal relationships with Jesus Christ and encouraging them to express the love of God and neighbor in all that they do.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Parenting Now-a-Days Sessions:** In partnership with our wellness counselor, Michelle Baker LCPC, CADC, PND provides monthly sessions that blend Catholic teachings with practical guidance on contemporary challenges such as dating, eating disorders, and substance abuse.
- **Cross-Curricular Faith Integration:** Our curriculum mapping initiative identifies areas where PND can incorporate faith more deeply into academic content, giving students a holistic educational experience that integrates Catholic values into every subject.
- **Expanded Class and Athletic Retreats:** PND continues to offer annual class retreats that focus on personal spiritual development. In addition, we have expanded our athletic retreats, offering three per year, which emphasize teamwork, leadership, and faith in action.
- **New Evangelization Efforts:** As part of our commitment to joyful witness, PND has introduced more frequent opportunities for students to engage in evangelization, including service projects, prayer leadership, and liturgical ministries where students actively participate in spreading the Gospel.
- **Student-Led Faith Initiatives:** Campus Ministry now supports additional student-led prayer groups, Bible studies, and faith-sharing circles, encouraging students to take ownership of their spiritual growth and to mentor their peers in faith.
- **Family and Community Worship Opportunities:** PND hosts special family Masses and community-wide faith events, encouraging the wider Peoria Notre Dame community to come together in worship and celebrate the Eucharist as a family of faith.
- **Expanded Service Projects:** PND has increased the number of service projects connected to faith formation, including outreach to local shelters, elderly care centers, and food banks, giving students hands-on opportunities to live out their faith by serving others in need.

Enrollment

OUR COMMITMENT TO GROWING OUR CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

- **Building a Vibrant Community:** We are dedicated to fostering a diverse and welcoming Catholic community that draws students and families from various parishes and regions.
- **Collaborating with Parishes and Schools:** By partnering with area priests, grade schools, and families, we highlight the Peoria Notre Dame experience and the shared mission of forming disciples of Jesus Christ.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Record-Breaking Freshman Class:** For the 2023-2024 school year, we welcomed the largest freshman class in years, with 143 students, reflecting the growing appeal of our mission and programs. Additionally, total enrollment has increased in each of the past two years, a first in at least two decades!
- **Prayer Pals Program:** PND established a connection between students in our partner schools (grades 2 and 8) through the Prayer Pals program, writing to students receiving important sacraments. PND expanded the program to include elderly and shut-ins in the 2024-2025 school year to foster deeper community ties.
- **Engaging with Local Priests:** PND hosted four quarterly priest meetings last school year to share updates, trends, and momentum within the school.
- **Engaging with Administration in Partner Schools:** PND leadership meets annually with our partner school principals to review goals, align missions, and support one another's efforts to promote a K-12 model for our families.
- **Expanded Outreach Efforts:** With more school visits, shadow days, and family tours than ever before, PND continues to engage prospective students and families, introducing them to the Peoria Notre Dame community.



Student Life

OUR COMMITMENT TO A WELL-ROUNDED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- **Fostering Growth in Body, Mind, and Soul:** We are dedicated to creating a vibrant community where students grow spiritually, academically, and socially. Through our extracurricular activities, athletics, and retreats, we help students develop into servant-leaders and disciples of Jesus Christ.
- **Building Community:** Our student life programs are designed to create meaningful interactions with peers, fostering a deeper sense of fellowship and school spirit.
- **Encouraging Belonging and Leadership:** Our student life programs create a strong sense of community, encouraging fellowship and the development of students' God-given talents. Through these programs, students are empowered to become role models, critical thinkers, and compassionate leaders who are prepared to enact positive change in the world around them.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Band Integration:** PND has successfully integrated band into the regular course schedule, ensuring that band students have time to connect and build community with their houses during advisory.
- **Campus Ministry Leadership:** Campus Ministry continues to engage students through leadership retreats and faith-centered activities, empowering student leaders to take active roles in shaping the spiritual life of the school.
- **Phone-Free Fridays:** PND has introduced Phone-Free Fridays to encourage students to disconnect from their devices and engage with their peers in fun activities from rosary-making, to outdoor games, to trivia, and more.
- **Advisory Period Enhancements:** An advisory committee, made up of faculty and staff members, was formed to continually assess and improve the advisory period and house system, ensuring they meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students.
- **House System and Community Building:** Weekly community or house meetings provide students with opportunities to strengthen relationships within their houses, enhancing a sense of belonging and school unity. These gatherings are designed to foster teamwork, leadership, and mutual respect among students from different grade levels.



Academics for Students

OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENT SUCCESS



- **Celebrating Every Student's Journey:** We believe in recognizing the unique path each student takes to achieve his or her goals. Success comes in many forms, and all are worth celebrating.
- **Fostering Passion and Perseverance:** We encourage students to dive into their interests, face challenges head-on, and embrace learning beyond the pursuit of grades.
- **Enhancing Academic Excellence and Tailored Learning Experiences:** We are committed to offering a challenging and comprehensive curriculum that meets the diverse needs of our students. By doing so, we ensure that every student is equipped to reach his or her full potential.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Inclusive Recognition:** PND introduced a Latin Honors ranking system, allowing students from all academic disciplines—whether in fine arts, business, or math—to receive recognition for their hard work.
- **Dedicated Math Support:** Our new math lab, available during the school day, offers personalized instruction for students needing extra help, with more than 30 students already benefiting.
- **Advisory Tutoring:** General tutoring is provided during advisory by teachers representing various departments to aid students in one-on-one instruction.
- **Aligned and Extended Learning:** Switching to a semester system has increased instructional time, aligning better with AP and dual-credit courses, and minimizing learning loss in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics) subjects.
- **Curriculum Alignment:** PND has developed detailed curriculum maps to ensure our courses meet the highest standards and objectives, providing a clear pathway to success for every student.
- **Freshman Assessments:** All freshmen are now assessed in core subjects including English, math, social studies, and science, with results shared with regional grade schools to strengthen K-12 curriculum alignment.

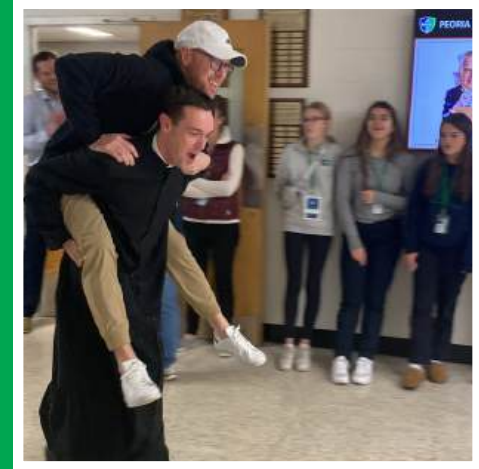
*"I have really enjoyed the switch to semesters because it aligns well with my dual credit and AP classes and prepares me better for college."
Claire Coulter, Class of 2025*



Academics for Faculty & Staff

OUR COMMITMENT TO TEACHER DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP

- **Supporting Professional Growth:** We are committed to fostering an environment where every staff member is supported in his or her professional development, empowering each individual to grow and contribute meaningfully to Peoria Notre Dame's mission.
- **Attracting and Retaining Top Talent:** We actively work to attract and retain highly qualified faculty through competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, and a supportive community that values teacher leadership and growth.
- **Staff Leadership:** By encouraging shared leadership, we ensure that everyone in our community plays a role in shaping the future of Peoria Notre Dame.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Enhanced Recruitment Efforts:** PND is partnering with the diocese to recruit across all regions, using the diocesan portal (Frontline) and attending local job fairs to attract a wider pool of applicants and ensure we hire the best candidates.
- **Spiritual and Professional Nourishment:** Our faculty participates in nine faith formation mornings on late-start Wednesdays, complemented by an annual retreat, to nourish both their spiritual and professional lives.
- **Focused Professional Development:** Teachers engage in monthly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and additional professional development on late-start Wednesdays, ensuring their instructional strategies remain innovative and student-centered.
- **Teacher Autonomy in Growth:** Through a more robust evaluation program, PND provides faculty with opportunities to choose the areas where each person wants to improve, fostering personal ownership of his or her professional growth.
- **Leadership and Mentorship:** Leadership training is provided for department chairs and faculty leaders, while new teachers benefit from mentorship programs, ensuring that every educator feels supported in his or her development.
- **Ongoing Feedback and Improvement:** Regular walk-throughs and both informal and formal evaluations provide continuous feedback, fostering a culture of growth and excellence that benefits both educators and students.

Advancement

OUR COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

- **Gratitude in Action:** We are dedicated to responsibly managing the resources entrusted to us, ensuring that every decision we make supports our students' growth—academically, spiritually, and socially.
- **Prioritizing Student Impact:** We continually assess and prioritize projects and initiatives that directly benefit our students, helping them grow as well-rounded disciples of Jesus Christ.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Centralized Fundraising:** Our FAN Club, established in 2023, had a successful inaugural year having raised more than \$100,000, which directly supports athletics and student activities.
- **Community Engagement:** By hosting 1,700 attendees at the annual ShamROCK and partnering with alumni reunions, we continue to build relationships with members of our community.
- **Supporting Our Mission:** The success of our 2024 gala fund-a-need enabled us to purchase two new white buses, improving transportation for our sports, extracurricular activities, and everyday bus routes. Overall, our annual fundraising events, including the golf outing, cash and car raffle, and gala netted \$540K in the 2023-2024 school year.
- **Legacy Gifts:** We have created the 1863 Society, which encourages donors to place Peoria Notre Dame in their estate plans to ensure the school will thrive for future generations.



Facilities

OUR COMMITMENT TO A SAFE AND INSPIRING ENVIRONMENT

- **Honoring Our History:** Our facility holds a rich tradition. We are dedicated to maintaining and upgrading the building to provide a safe, inspiring environment for learning, faith, and extracurricular activities.
- **Continuous Improvement:** We focus on necessary health, safety, and technology upgrades to ensure that our campus remains a place where students, faculty, and staff can thrive.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Comprehensive Facilities Assessment:** We conducted an assessment with Keith Engineering Design and PCM + Design Architects to prioritize key areas for improvement, ensuring that we address the most pressing needs for the safety and success of our school community.
- **Sports Facility Enhancements:** We renovated the baseball press box, turfed the area around the baseball home plate, replaced the soccer tower, and automated the gym camera for livestreams and team films. Additionally, the Allen Road facility has been outfitted for youth sports camps, practices, and JV games, providing additional space for athletic development.
- **Kitchen Upgrades:** PND updated our kitchen with all new equipment, improving the facilities used to support both students and staff.
- **Technology Infrastructure:** Investments in new infrastructure and technology tools have enhanced learning environments, supporting both classroom instruction and extracurricular activities. We also revamped our library into a student center with space and resources for study hall and math lab along with our books.



Finance

OUR COMMITMENT TO A WELL-MANAGED BUDGET AND ACCESSIBILITY

- **Supporting Recruitment & Retention of Staff:** We provide benefits and salaries at a competitive level to attract and retain faculty and staff members.
- **Promoting Financial Sustainability:** We invest strategically in additional resources to promote enrollment, make decisions based on anticipated demographic changes, and ensure families understand our desire to work with them to achieve a Catholic education for their students.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Competitive Salaries:** Faculty salaries have been increased by 7-9%, demonstrating our commitment to retaining high-quality educators and attracting top talent to join our community.
- **Emphasis on Accessibility:** To grant financial aid, PND created a new process to evaluate families, especially emphasizing families with students attending both PND and partner grade schools.
- **Investment in the Future:** PND has invested in additional resources and personnel to increase enrollment including the marketing department and in student support services.



Governance



PND Consultative Board

Back Row: Brian Flaherty, Garry Finch, Kate Socha, Elizabeth Wilson, Paula Davis, Dr. Noreen Dillon, Brian Winschel, Kris Coulter, Steve Knecht
Front Row: Fr. Patrick Henehan, Grant McInnis, Jacqueline Kelly, Dr. Susie Ciccirelli, Fr. Luke Spannagel
Not Pictured: Dr. Jerry Sanderson



OUR COMMITMENT TO INNOVATIVE AND UNITED LEADERSHIP

- **Shared Leadership:** We adopted a revised administrative model to balance the school's needs and effectively implement the school's mission.
- **Feedback and Collaboration With Community Members:** Our consultative board and domain committees provide feedback and ideas to our school leadership to further implement and promote the school's mission.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Principal-COO Model:** PND has adopted a shared leadership role of principal and COO, allowing each to focus on shared responsibilities within the eight domains. The principal oversees "Living the Mission" of Catholic identity, academics, and student life. The COO oversees "Supporting the Mission" of advancement, enrollment, facilities, finances, and governance.
- **Establish a Consultative Board:** Our consultative board was established with representatives of all eight domain areas, the Office of Catholic Schools, and local pastors to aid in the implementation of the strategic plan.
- **Implement Data-Driven Decisions:** The board reviews metrics for each domain quarterly to evaluate progress of key initiatives and make recommendations to PND administration.
- **Community Engagement:** Quarterly updates from our COO, shared through newsletters with 2,000 viewers, keep our stakeholders informed and engaged in the school's mission.



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