

A New Vision at Father Marquette

An Eye on the Future

The success of Father Marquette Catholic School won't happen by accident. Future success of the school requires knowing where the school needs to go, the strengths of the school and its limitations. Having a clear strategic direction and strategic plan with a focused implementation process in place is important. FMCS adopted a brand new strategic plan earlier this year. The plan reflects the values of the school, establishes goals and objectives, and guides daily decision making.

A key component of this plan involves an increased focus on offering a curriculum that prepares our students to enter the 21st century workplace while ensuring that they are resolute in their character, compassion, and most importantly, their faith.

Classical Liberal Arts

Schools in the Diocese of Marquette have been asked to design their curriculum around a foundations document. The primary academic elements of the foundations document are ordered basic knowledge, basic skills or tools of learning, development of the moral imagination, and the principle of correlation between subjects. The curriculum that has been chosen to work towards these goals is classical liberal arts.

Father Marquette is in the early stages of a transition to this classical liberal arts curriculum model. You may be asking yourself, what does classical liberal arts look like at FMCS? Our wonderful teachers have already been adopting parts of this curriculum this year. Some examples include:

- Hands-on Science (using Delta Science modules)
- Logic
- Classical Literature
- IEW (Institute for Excellence in Writing)
- Public Speaking
- Poetry Analysis

Our excellent teachers will continue to receive training in these areas and many more, specifically at the 2016 Midwest Conference taking place in Escanaba in June. The teachers are a key element of this plan, as they are charged with developing and nurturing the curiosity of the students, demonstrating their passion for learning, and being role models for virtuous living.

The following page outlines a few of the resources previously mentioned and provides links for further information.



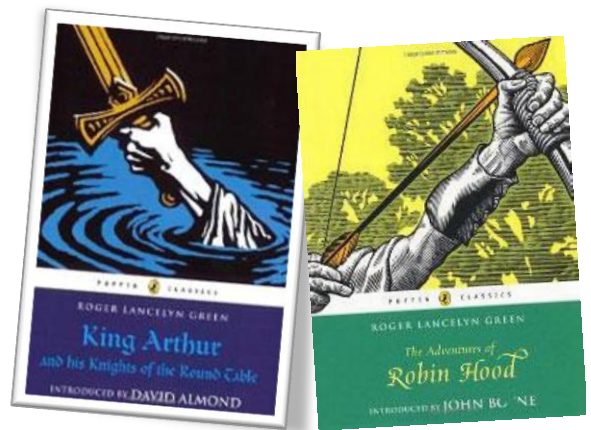
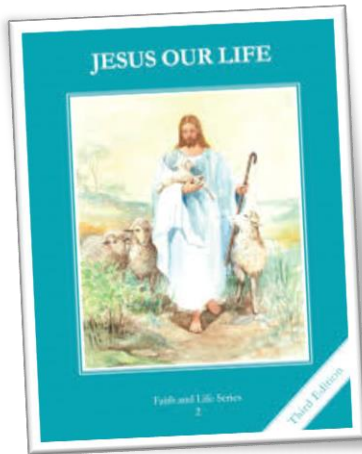
Delta Science Modules

We recently purchased two Delta Science kits for the 4th and 6th graders (Magnets, Flight and Rocketry). These are kits that allow students to learn about science via hands-on activities and readings from that particular content area. Plans are currently in place to expand our offerings for grades 1-3 and 5-8 for the 2016-2017 school year. We are currently considering kits in the areas of Electrical Circuits, Soil Science, Force and Motion, Pollution, Electromagnetism, and DNA / Genes, to name a few. For more information visit:

<http://www.deltaeducation.com/stem-solutions/delta-science-modules>

Classical Literature

Over the past few months, we have been adding plenty of classical literature to our 5th and 6th grade classrooms. Books such as *King Arthur*, *Robin Hood*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, and *Where the Red Fern Grows*. We are currently exploring options for grades 3-4 and 7-8 for the 2016-2017 school year.



Religion

This year we adopted a new religion textbook series: Faith and Life from St. Ignatius Press. The students each receive their own activity book that corresponds with their textbook. Our younger students (pre-K and K) have been using a series called Image of God – Who Am I? These resources have been an excellent addition to our religion curriculum as we help our students grow in their faith.

For more information visit:

<http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/faithandlife/>

Writing

Miss Wayland (3rd-4th) and Mrs. Flynn (5th-6th) have been piloting a program called Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW) with our 4th and 5th graders. This program is widely used across the diocese and will play a key role in helping our students become better listeners, speakers, thinkers, and readers. We will be looking to expand this program even further next year.



For more information visit:

<http://www.iew.com/>

Uniforms

The second key component of this plan is student uniforms. Exit survey data collected from a majority of former FMCS families has consistently indicated that lack of school uniforms was a primary issue underlying their reason for leaving. Further, the 2015-16 satisfaction survey of current FMCS families frequently listed lack of uniforms as a concern. For these reasons, consideration of school uniform adoption was taken up by the Catholic Identity Committee for review. Positive findings led the pastors to put forth a recommendation to implement uniforms at FMCS to the School Council. The subcommittee that was formed to further research the pros and cons of school uniforms presented their findings and positive endorsement to the School Council on April 5th. At that School Council meeting, the Council voted unanimously to support our priests in implementing uniforms for the 2016-2017 school year as part of our strategic plan to move toward strengthening our identity. Together, these recommendations have led to our decision to adopt school uniforms at FMCS. **We believe school uniforms at FMCS will set the bar high for excellence and success for our students.**

Catholic schools are called to develop a sense of community where all people are treated equally and included regardless of financial circumstances. A consistent uniform worn by all students helps students feel part of the community and enables them to show pride and respect for their school. A high standard of dress and grooming is essential for all students at Father Marquette.

Rationale: A uniform dress code reinforces in students a pride in their own appearance, instills recognition of themselves as an integral part of the school community, and assists in developing pride in representing their school. Issues of equality, health and safety, and expense are also factors that contribute to the establishment of the Dress Code.

Aims:

- To promote equality amongst all students.
- To further develop a sense of pride in, and identification with our school.
- To provide durable clothing that is cost effective and practical for our school environment.
- To maintain and enhance the positive image of the school in the community.

Implementation: The school has developed a Dress Code that we believe provides choice for the students, allows for students to safely engage in the many varied school activities, and considers the financial constraints of families.

You are invited to learn more about the implementation of uniforms at FMCS. Bring the family and join us for pizza and a Uniform Showcase featuring models wearing the variety of approved uniform wear on **Wednesday, April 27, at 6:00 pm at Father Marquette Middle School.**

Pastors, council members, and staff will be available to answer any questions you may have about our uniform rollout. We are excited to move forward and appreciate your support in this change.

In closing, we wanted to thank you for taking the time to review some of the primary components of our vision for Father Marquette going forward. It is our goal to be an exemplar of Catholic education in the Diocese of Marquette. On behalf of the teachers and students of Father Marquette, we appreciate your continued support.

God bless,

Msgr. Michael Steber – Pastor, St. Peter Cathedral
Fr. Glenn Theoret – Pastor, St. Louis the King
Fr. Greg Heikkala – Pastor, St. Michael

Michael Hedges – Principal, FMCS
Matt Maskart – Chair, FMCS School Council