



**St. Peter's on Capitol Hill School
Washington D.C.
Feasibility Study Report**

October 12, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Greater Mission is pleased to present St. Peter School on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C. with this feasibility study report draft. It is important to note that interviews are ongoing. It has been a pleasure to work with Father Gary Studniewski, Principal Karen Clay, and the staff and lay leaders of the school on this project. We are most grateful to serve this wonderful Catholic community.

As St. Peter School celebrates its 150th anniversary, it is an opportune time to update its facilities and to make plans for the future. The school was engaged in a master planning process reviewing the needs and challenges of the school facility. The school engaged architects to help them design critically needed improvements to the new facility.

Funds raised through the campaign will become a part of a comprehensive funding plan for the project, including substantial school savings and contributions from the two parishes that provide primary support to the school – St. Peter and St. Joseph. The school has demonstrated a very strong financial track record in recent years that make it very credit-worthy to handle the bridge loan and the long-term debt financing required to finish the project. Once completed, the school will become an even stronger draw in the Hill district that carries very heavy demand for quality Catholic education. Following the active campaign period, Campaign Continuation and Comprehensive Development efforts at the school and in the parishes will provide additional funding to accelerate loan payments.

Case for Support - Capital Projects

Greater Mission, LLC conducted a feasibility study as part of the process for a capital campaign. The study was designed to determine if a successful campaign could be conducted to raise \$2.5 million from school families and other potential constituents to fund the school projects and make a significant contribution toward Plan A - estimated at approximately \$7.9 million.

In interviews and town hall meetings, specific capital improvements for St. Peter school were presented for consideration. An alternative plan was also developed at a lower cost, entitled Plan B.

School: Plan A will include: large interior multi-purpose space, additional classrooms, new offices, new resource rooms, an ADA-compliant ground floor entrance, a rooftop playground, restrooms, conference room and an elevator. Plan B does not include the new classrooms, new offices or the conference room. While costing less, Plan B will not garner as much support through the campaign because it does not deliver on key identified needs.

FEASIBILITY STUDY PROCESS

Joseph Citro, Campaign Director of *Greater Mission*, conducted the study during April, May and June of 2018. Anthony T. Gwiazdowski, Executive Vice President & Partner of *Greater Mission* completed the Study in September 2018. There were several major components of the study process:

Case Development & Material Development

The master planning committee analyzed the plans along with alumni, parents and teachers to identify capital needs. Projects were selected upon feedback from the committee and a survey along with design input from the architects engaged in the process. A preliminary Case Statement was reviewed, edited and approved by Father Gary. The case outlining improvements to the school was approved for the study.

Giving Analysis & Constituent Research

A comprehensive review of current school giving was conducted. It is important to note that the alumni records are inaccurate and incomplete, including many deceased individuals. The school does not conduct alumni outreach and the contact information listed is outdated. Also, the school only has the list of annual giving and gala giving efforts from the past year. This makes it challenging to pair past giving with potential based on the engagement and involvement of some of these families. *Greater Mission* correlated this data with research from one of its partners - *DonorSearch*. *DonorSearch* conducted a comprehensive electronic review of public financial data, philanthropic giving and other information to produce preliminary gift capacity ratings. *Greater Mission* then used this data, conducted follow-up research, and invited input from local leadership to identify constituents that may have leadership capacity. A master table with giving data was created and a suggested starter gift range was developed for each constituent based on the information available.

A number of names from the *DonorSearch* process were added to the interview list. A review of this research shows that the property values are quite high which flagged parishioners for higher potential giving. However, the cost of living in Washington D.C. is much higher than other metropolitan areas of the country. The raw capacity data is also skewed because of the high cost of education in the city. For example, some parishioners are paying around \$80,000 to over \$100,000 annually in tuition costs for 2-3 children. Most private high schools in the area cost over \$40,000 a year.

Individual Interviews

Joseph Citro, conducted 35 private, personal interviews with a total of 52 individuals. Anthony Gwiazdowski conducted an additional 5 interviews with a total of 6 individuals. This includes those school families that were interviewed during the parish feasibility study. The interviews provided an opportunity to present the case, show the renderings, review Plan A and Plan B, receive input and answer questions. It also provided an opportunity to gauge how much those individuals may be willing to consider giving to a campaign, their willingness to serve as campaign volunteers and their specific support for the project. The interviewees were also afforded the opportunity to voice concerns, share advice and become more fully engaged in the project. The school families interviewed represented a diversity of experience at the school.

Town Hall Meeting

Parents invited to one of two Town Hall meetings held on May 23rd at St. Peter at 9am and May 29th at 7pm. Approximately 25 parents attended a town hall meeting. Numerous schedule conflicts prevented a larger turnout of parents. For those who did attend, the engagement level was high.

The meeting provided the opportunity for parents to learn more about the projects, share their opinion and concerns, and to receive their input regarding the specific projects proposed, the possible goal, their potential level of financial support, and their willingness to volunteer for the campaign.

Liz Hall began the Town Hall meetings with an overview of the campaign planning process and discussed the process. Meagan Jancy, a school parent and architect provided the plans and Tom Sonni shared the goal and potential funding sources for the campaign. Input forms were distributed and Joe Citro facilitated a process of completing them. In total, 22 input forms were completed by individuals or jointly by couples. Those responses have been used as part of the data collection for this study. Some attendees at the town hall were also part of the individual interview process.

FEASIBILITY STUDY FINDINGS

The following are the findings of the study process:

School parents were asked a series of questions about the school to gauge their level of involvement, feelings about the school and concerns. Please note that, in an effort to be concise, we will combine answers from the Interviews and the Town Hall Meeting.

1. What do you appreciate most about the school?

Parents gave a number of answers to the question, but the following are those cited most often:

Most Frequently Cited:

Community has provided lasting/ lifelong relationships

Academic rigor and curriculum

Proximity to family’s home

2. What are the greatest challenges facing the school?

The following are the most frequently cited answers compiled from the Individual Interviews:

Most Frequently Cited:

Physical Plant- Old buildings which do not have space

Turnover of Teachers

3. What is your initial reaction to the case that has been presented to you?

There was overall support for the case and overarching positivity about the school. School families are willing to support the school but many felt the school project was ambitious and there was a level of concern that the children will never see the completed project. The parents interviewed individually were asked to select which option they prefer. Of those who voted on either Plan A or Plan B, Plan A received 64% of the votes and Plan B received 36% of the votes. It should be noted that the sample was small with only 22 net total votes on one of the two plans. Many families wanted more information in regard to the breakout space and how that space would or could be used. All families see the need for a multi-purpose space and most prefer the resource rooms. Many had specific logistical questions. When bringing up the opportunities for advanced support, tutoring support and special needs students, the common question was – “are these the type of students who we are trying to recruit into the school?” Counsel recommends the school formalize more plans about the specific case elements and demonstrate the need for all case elements. Counsel suggests having St. Peter school families split their gift between the parish campaign and school campaign. The “Unsure” answers mainly come from the cost of making these improvements and the financial burden it will put on parents. The individual interviews allowed for more discussion regarding the specific projects, the following are the responses and some frequently cited comments:

Individual Interviews (Parish Case) Question3

Response	# of Responses	% of Response
Yes	33	94%
No	0	0%
Unsure	2	6%

Most Frequently Cited: Individual Interviews Only

What is the timetable for this project? Will my child see it?

Plan A gives us more space, plan B could get done faster

We need a multi purpose space
Would this multipurpose space have a kitchen or area where we don't pack a lunch
What type of programming/staffing will we need for advanced, tutoring and special needs students?

Town Hall Project Grading:

During the town hall events school families were able to rate each project in terms of importance from a scale of (1) very low to (5) very high. The highest overall project was the multipurpose room.

School:	Average:
Multipurpose:	4.31
Classrooms	3.8
Resource Rooms	3.72
Playground	3.47
Elevator	3.47
Entrance	3.4
Offices	3.3
Adult restrooms	2.5
Conference Room	2.47

4. Do you think the school can raise \$2.5 million for the needs presented in the case statement?

Individual Interviews

Raise the Funds	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	13	33%
No	3	8%
Unsure	23	59%

In general, school parents interviewed felt that the goal was ambitious. The projects are large in scale and the parents were unsure. Most recognized that the school will have to broaden its base to reach the goal.

5. Would you support this campaign financially?

Individual Interviews

Support Financially	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	40	100%
No	0	0%
Unsure	0	0%

Town Hall Meeting

Support Financially	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	21	95%
No	0	0
Unsure	1	5%

Clearly, the overwhelming majority of parents who responded indicated that they would provide financial support for the campaign. It should be noted that during the town hall, we asked families if they would support Plan B if that became our only option. 13 answered yes, 2 said no and 7 were unsure. This shows that parents may not be as financially supportive if Plan B is the only option.

6. Upon reviewing the possible gift chart, at what level could you see yourself contributing?

Gift Level	# Indicated	Cumulative #	Estimated Gift Total
\$1,000,000	0		\$0
\$500,000	0		\$0
\$250,000	0		\$0
\$100,000	1		\$100,000
\$50,000	4		\$200,000
\$25,000	8		\$200,000
\$10,000	18		\$185,000
\$5,000	18		\$95,000
\$3,000	4		\$12,000
Less than \$3,000	3		\$8,000
Total	56		\$815,000

The cumulative totals noted in the table above are responses from all levels of contact. A total of 62 school families participated in the study and 90% indicated a gift level. The 62 household responses represent 31% of the total school families. The average gift noted in the responses is \$14,554. Based on the amount of individual meetings with potential significant contributors and amount of prospects indicating smaller gifts than suggested, the potential for additional large contributors is limited. The data indicates that a goal of \$2.5 million is not achievable.

7. Who would you recommend to be among the lay leaders for the campaign?

School families in each of the data collection segments provided insight into potential parent leaders. There were 8 names cited multiple times (from the interviews and town hall meetings) as potential campaign leaders. After the study is completed answers were provided through all data collections methods and the results will be provided to Father Gary and the School Finance Committee under separate cover.

8. Would you volunteer to be involved in this effort as, (Leader), (Advocate), (Other)

Volunteer	# of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	33	85%
No	1	2%
Unsure	5	13%

The parents interviewed individually were very eager to be of assistance. While 36% of those that attended the town hall listed unsure for volunteering. It will be critical for parents to encourage each other to get involved. Home gatherings by grade will likely play a pivotal role to our success. These engaged families want to see this project become a reality.

9. Who do you think might be able to support the campaign at a significant level?

After the study is completed answers were provided through all data collections methods and the results will be provided to leadership under separate cover.

10. Do you have any further advice that you would like to provide Father and the parish leadership?

After the study is completed answers were provided through all data collections methods and the results will be provided to leadership under separate cover.

The following are the most frequently cited comments:
Don't carry it alone, pick up the phone and ask for help.
Work to achieve the best plan possible

Conclusions to the Findings

St. Peter School is a leading Catholic community in our nation's capital. The school is celebrating its 150th anniversary and has received acclaim as a National Blue-Ribbon School. Ms. Clay is wrapping up her first year as principal and parents are excited about the direction of the school.

The school has seen its low times and high times over the many decades. The school is continuing to grow and is at a unique time in its long history. The last time the school made wide-scale

facility changes was back in the 1930's. The goal of this campaign is to expand its walls and make way for the next generation of young leaders.

As a community evolves, so does the schools in the area. However, these school parents have found community with each other. The largest strength of the school are these tight bonds among parents and students. Over the years this area has become more affluent and more family oriented. This has also affected the cost of living and tuition in the area. The hill has become less diverse racially and socioeconomically. While many people in the area are transient, the school has remained constant. It is an old building which does not have an adequate multipurpose space and is it not ADA compliant. Parishioner do not usually visit the school or know its needs. The campaign will lift the profile of the school in the parishes and the community.

However, school families do see these needs. Plan A and Plan B give the school an opportunity to make these much-needed adjustments. The largest need identified by parents is a large multipurpose space. Parishes will also have an opportunity to use the new large gathering space for social and possibly even athletic functions.

The school will need to receive a financial policy exemption for either plan to become a reality in the next several years. The donor base at the school is small, the alumni database is poor, giving records are nonexistent, and there are no seven-figure prospects. Counsel will have to grow and broaden the constituent base to raise more funds.

This campaign is an opportunity to bring this parish, school and larger community together. The school should focus on opportunities to cut across generational gaps or cliques within the parish and school. Counsel recommends finding ways to broaden the donor base and show the impact the school is having in this community. This will be critical during and after the campaign and can motivate community leaders to become more engaged. Parents will play a critical role in the campaign and will need to step up into various leadership roles. If they want Plan A to happen, they need to make a serious financial and volunteer commitment.

This campaign has the opportunity to be very successful but it will require a recalculation of the overall goal, strong communication, involvement of lay leaders and leadership by Fr. Gary, Ms. Clay and the school staff. Counsel has not been able to interview any alumni. If parents want this to be successful, they need to be "all-in" from the day the campaign starts. After speaking with Father Gary and reviewing the project and data, counsel believes that a lower goal is more realistic. Father Gary also understands that many of his school families will split their gift between the parish and school campaign. We will also try to identify those parents that can make a matching gift.

While counsel suggests the goal be reduced, there are many positives. Parents see the need and there are a core group of school families that can lead the charge. Marking the 150th year of the

school creates an opportunity to come together and build on the legacy of success at St. Peter School.

Based on these conclusions to the findings and our experience, *Greater Mission* makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations

1. Determine what can be financed over the short and long term through the Archdiocese of Washington.
2. At the present time we propose that St. Peter School reduce the goal of \$2.5 million to \$1.75 million including Campaign Continuation efforts over the next three years. St. Peter School families will be invited to split their total gift commitment between the parish and the school. This is based on the potential giving at the parish and data analysis.
3. Father Gary, Ms. Clay and lay leaders will need to take a pivotal role in meeting individually with about 50 major donors. Some of these are also St. Peter parishioners.
4. The lay leader support will be critical. These parents will need to get each other engaged and involved in this process.
5. A strong communications plan will need to be developed. This plan will focus on educating and informing parishioners about the current state of parish, school and projects.
6. Utilize a committee of parents as connectors to open doors and broaden the donor base from extended family, alumni and the community.