

*A Master Plan for Achievement
in St. John the Baptist Parish*

Better Schools. Better Futures

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Vision: *Create an excellent education system for all students in St. John the Baptist Parish.*

Mission Statement:

- *Higher academic achievement for all students*
- *Prepare students to be effective citizens in a global market*

Three Overall Goals of the School System:

- 1. To Improve Academic Achievement*
- 2. To Improve Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency*
- 3. To Improve Community and Parental Input and Support of Schools*

In order to achieve these goals, objectives must be set which focus on three core beliefs:

- 1. ACHIEVEMENT** – Improving student achievement through a laser-like focus on teaching and learning.
- 2. EQUITY/PARITY** – Equitable distribution of resources.
- 3. ACCOUNTABILITY** – Use of data to ensure that we hold adults accountable for success of all students.

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Introduction

Any school system can build structures, fill it with furniture, books, students, and employees and call it an educational institution. Educators in an educational institution can acquire knowledge by studying curriculum, standards, principles, and theories. The knowledge acquired is important, but what is done with this knowledge or creating a Master Plan will determine whether or not the schools in a school district are successful. St. John the Baptist School District has developed a Master Plan to address a vision of an excellent educational system for all students. This Master Plan provides a quality education for all students through community teamwork and decision making. The basic framework guiding this plan is rooted in the belief that all children are capable of learning in a schooling environment that fosters high expectations for all. Three overall goals of the school system were determined: first, to improve Academic Achievement; second, to improve Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency; and third, to improve Community and Parental Input and Support of Schools. In order to achieve these goals, objectives were set in which to focus on three core beliefs - ***Achievement, Equity/Parity, and Accountability***.

The first goal is to improve academic achievement through various methods and processes. Intensive and consistent professional development training for all principals and teachers will be provided. High quality professional development will provide opportunities for teachers to share teaching strategies in demonstration/dream classrooms. A uniform core reading program will be provided throughout the district. Student learning will be closely monitored through Benchmark Assessment given three times during the school year. Intervention strategies will provide assistance to students at-risk both academically and socially. The plan increases the rigor and relevance in Math and Science. This goal utilizes a plan to address the high achieving students. A plan will be utilized to increase the number of career and technical endorsements. Truancy and the drop-out rate will decrease. The Master Plan also provides an ongoing, enriching state of the art technology plan. The result of addressing the before mentioned academic areas will improve schools' performance scores 2 – 3 % each year.



The second goal is to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency. The board and the community will work together on adopted goals. An organizational chart clearly outlining duties and responsibilities has been created. A workable public relations plan will provide communication with board, schools, families, and community. Legal services will also be assessed, reviewed, and monitored. The school district will provide clean, well-maintained, and up-to-date facilities. There is an emerging body of research that links student performance with school facilities. A strong positive relationship between overall building conditions and student achievement exist. The district will maintain a fund balance that is at least 5% of total revenues and maintain a salary structure that facilitates and retains personnel. A plan to increase employee morale will be implemented. The Master Plan will also improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency to reduce the wasting of time, funds, human potential, and space.

The third goal is to design a system of community input and support of the school district. This goal can be obtained by effectively informing families, community members, businesses, and industry about various school functions and programs. In order to do a better job of teaching and measuring 21st century skills which include critical thinking and judgment, complex problem solving, and communication and collaboration the school district will develop partnerships with universities and businesses to encourage students to further their education and improve career choices. Opportunities to gather input from key communicators will continue to strengthen community input.

St. John the Baptist Parish School District will utilize this Master Plan by focusing on teaching and learning to create a rigorous and relevant educational system for all students. The focus on core beliefs of achievement, equity/parity, and accountability will promote higher academic achievement for all students and prepare these students to be effective citizens in a global market.



St. John the Baptist Parish: Executive Summary

Located half way between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, St. John the Baptist Parish is comprised of eight communities. The Mississippi River bisects the parish into east and west that provides an important transportation corridor which supports the heavy industry located in the area. St. John Parish is a mixture of industry, small towns, and rural farms of sugarcane. The people of St. John have retained many old family, community, and religious customs. Country fairs are held frequently to raise funds for worthy causes. The east bank has LaPlace, Reserve, Lions, Garyville, and Mt. Airy, each a thriving, bustling community. The west bank community contains the parish seat of Edgard along with the small communities of Wallace and Lucy. Many new homes were built after Hurricane Katrina to accommodate people moving away from hurricane damaged neighborhoods. Industries follow along the river, including a chemical plant, sugar refinery, grain elevators, and an oil refinery. Industries are expected to produce most of the employment growth in St. John Parish over the next five years. The combination of the old culture and new industry represents the interesting personality of St. John the Baptist Parish.

With a thriving industry and growing population, it is imperative that St. John the Baptist Parish School System acknowledges the necessity for an excellent educational system. The result will be increased expectations for our school system, particularly in student achievement. As this plan is being developed, St. John School System ranks 56th in the state of Louisiana. This ranking is based on a combination of factors such as Leap, *i*Leap, GEE tests scores, school attendance rate, school drop out rate, and high school graduation rate. Improved test scores, students ready to enter the work force, increased number of graduates, and students receiving TOPS scholarships are relevant academic areas of change in St. John School System.

St. John the Baptist Parish School Board has set goals and measurable objectives that support the vision of an excellent education for all students. Appropriate solutions have been identified by understanding the dynamics of the educational



system as a whole, the interrelations of the parts, and how the policies, procedures, and resource allocations support the ability to achieve the vision.

A Master Plan has been created through the efforts of the school board members, superintendent, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members which focus on teaching and learning. This district-wide plan projects the anticipated changes in the instructional programs, distribution of resources, and accountability. The Master Plan serves as a detailed and concrete guide specifying the objectives, activities, and the programmatic changes. The plan will utilize, whenever possible, existing expertise and establish processes for creating an excellent education system for all students in St. John the Baptist Parish.



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Most of us would agree that, next to the values instilled by the family, the quality of the education received by our children is the most important prediction of their future success, and that their success will in turn define the future of our community. The better our schools are, the brighter our future will be. The entire community of St. John Parish is affected by our public schools and our public schools are affected by the entire community. Therefore, the quality of life in our community connects directly to the quality of our public school system.

The population of St. John Parish is 54.5% Black, 41.7% White, and 3.8% other. 77% of the adults in St. John Parish have a high school diploma. As compared to the national average of 24%, only 13% of St. John residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. The average household income in St. John Parish is \$53,005.00 with 55% of households receiving less than the average.

The public school population is 79.2% Black, 16.5% White, and 4.3% others. 13.8% of the public school students are classified as special education. Even more significantly, the average ACT composite score of the students in our public schools is 18.1, far short of the state average of 20.3 or the national average of 21.1. According to current data, 83.7% of the students who attend St. John Parish Public schools are on free or reduced lunch indicating low socio-economic status. Research shows that socio-economic factors greatly impact children's learning. High quality educational opportunities focusing on teaching and learning can combat these negative influences.

Even though teacher salaries in St. John Public Schools are in the top 20% of Louisiana, our neighboring parishes are in the top 10%. This causes teacher recruitment to be very competitive and retention of experienced teachers very difficult. Teacher retention is an important factor in determining a school's learning environment. It is difficult for school administrators to implement new policies, effect necessary changes, or meet higher standards when the teaching



workforce is not steadfast. An investment in development and retention of educators will provide a high-quality education to all of our children.

To brighten the future of our community, St. John Public Schools need the assistance of all citizens. We need to attract and keep the strongest teachers to help our students achieve and become life-long learners. We need to provide facilities that foster success. By supplying our students with a quality education, we will be ensuring a higher quality of life for our entire community.



GOAL #1: TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- Provide intensive, consistent professional development training for all principals and teachers
- Create demonstration/dream classrooms
- Implement a uniform Core Reading Program
- Monitor student learning three times a year with Benchmark Assessment
- Provide intervention strategies for students at-risk both academically and socially
- Provide state of the art technology at all schools
- Increase the rigor in math and science
- Increase organizational coherence in all schools
- Develop and implement a plan to address the high achieving students
- Develop and implement a plan to increase the number of career and technical endorsements
- Improve Schools' Performance Scores 2-3% each year
- Reduce truancy and the drop-out rate
- Increasing organizational coherence in all schools



GOAL #2: TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

- Work with the board/community to create a strategic plan on the two adopted goals
- Create an organizational chart clearly outlining duties and responsibilities
- Develop a workable public relations plan
- Provide clean and well-maintained facilities
- Review the district's use of Legal Services
- Communicate with board, schools, families, and community
- Maintain a fund balance that is at least 5% of total revenues
- Maintain a salary structure that facilitates recruitment and retention of personnel
- Develop a plan to increase employee morale
- Reduce waste of: Time, Funds, Human Potential, and Space



GOAL #3: TO DESIGN A SYSTEM OF COMMUNITY INPUT AND SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Effectively inform families, community members, businesses, and industry about school functions and programs
- Develop partnerships with universities and businesses to encourage students to further their education and improve career choices
- Gather input from key communicators
- Annually report progress of district actions and endeavors
- Strengthen district goals and objectives by utilizing faith-based initiatives
- Secure participants who agree to serve on the Advisory Council for the Educational and Facilities Plan from a cross section of business, government, ministers and community leaders in St. John Parish



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
1. Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 multi-media computers in every classroom • Ceiling mounted projectors in all high school classrooms • Technology Proficient Instructors: All teachers will effectively use and integrate technology to support student learning. • 8th grade students will develop electronic portfolios. • Revamp “Study Skills” classes at all middle schools. • Computer Literacy Program for middle school • Improve technology in labs for KN-5th grade students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently, SJBP has 4 or more computers in every classroom. Therefore, each year we will add to our classrooms until we reach our goal of 6. • Provide professional development for teachers and strengthen collaboration with Region 3 TLTC in order to facilitate meaningful technology trainings. • Administrators will participate in professional development (LEADTECH) in order to support the integration of technology. • Teacher uses technology to provide students with nontraditional forms of assessment (e.g. multimedia projects, websites, electronic portfolios). • Demonstration of Technology Integrated Lessons in Newly Created Dream/Demonstration Classrooms • Data wiring and electrical service to support learning in every classroom and lab, plus a computer projection system • Maintain broadcast studio at J.L.O. • Keyboarding I and II for middle school • Computer Applications for 8th grade • Design and Develop Digital-Age Learning Experiences and Assessment. • Promote and Model Digital Citizenship and Responsibility. • Provide K-12 classes that will interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media. • Provide Portable Computer labs for research and information fluency.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
2. Curriculum and Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize Human Potential by streamlining central office and building capacity at the school sites. • All students will read on grade level. • Use Data Driven Instruction • Classroom Best Practices incorporated into lessons • Extend school year for special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign four district level C and I directors to the four lowest performing schools. • Assign a Title I Master Teacher and RtI teacher to each school site. • Role of Master Teacher: To strengthen teacher instructional capacity and increase student achievement • Role of RtI Teachers: To provide high-quality research-based instruction/intervention matched to student needs • The Response to Intervention (RtI) model, a three-tiered approach to ensuring the education success of all students to be fully implemented at all grade levels (K-12). • Begin benchmark testing: Fall, Winter and Spring Quick Peeks – to inform instruction and measure growth in individual classrooms • Everyday Math Calendar Counts in every K-7 grade classroom • Content and Context Alignment, Adoption of New Core Reading Series, Scripted Summer School Curriculum, and Scripted After School Curriculum • Data dialogues aimed towards prescriptive school-wide support for learners • Create a scope and sequence guide for each grade level in ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. • Provide summer programs in Math and Reading for students (based on data) to achieve proficiency. • Data dialogue aimed towards prescriptive school-wide support for learners • Review special education student failures and make adjustments in instruction as appropriate. • Hire an Inclusion Support Teacher. • Reorganize special education staff responsibilities to provide more direct support with curriculum and instruction. • Implement four pilots of Fast Forward, Brain-based research strategies, to address cognitive functioning deficits of students with disabilities. • Monitor IEP (individual education plan) implementation with focus on utilizing student accommodations and BIP (behavioral intervention plan) when appropriate. • Monitor implementation and effectiveness of Early Intervening Programs.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
3. Professional Development of Principals, Faculty and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Demonstration/Dream Classrooms • Set-up Year Round Sustained Professional Development • Complete classroom observations bi-monthly district-wide in order to promote coherence and a focus on teaching and learning • Promote teacher participation in Cohort Program for Educational Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin and maintain Strategy Saturdays in the new demonstration/dream classrooms. • Provide one full week of professional development for principals – THE ART OF LEADERSHIP. • Organize professional development initiatives in ways that encourage a wider circle of leadership in the schools. • Observations to be completed using a standard form focusing on effective teaching practices • Monthly principal’s meetings for purpose of focusing on teaching and learning, sharing information, reviewing district issues, and planning for the future • Provide one full week of Literacy training for all teachers before the start of each school year. • Monthly meetings for all 4th grade teachers district-wide • Master Teachers will spend 20% of their day modeling best practices in classrooms. • Provide magnet teachers the opportunity to attend classes/workshops that will allow them to incorporate math/science into all subjects. • In 2008, develop job-embedded professional development calendar for special education teachers. • Provide professional development initiatives in ways that encourage a wider circle of leadership in the schools. • Provide a consortium for teachers to become part of the Southeastern University cohort program to receive a Master of Education in Educational Leadership.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
4. School Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and take care of deferred maintenance issues at each school site • Address ADA accessibility • Upgrade school security • Improve open play areas • Improve HVAC Systems • Improve athletic facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete comprehensive study of facilities. • Tax Renewal – 46 million for facilities – Nov. 08 Election • With architect and program management firm, outline and follow the maintenance and construction plan for the next 5 years and coordinate priorities.
5. Universal Pre-K for 4 Year Olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to early education classes is critical in order to meet the socioeconomic differences in cognitive development. • Give 4-year olds universal access to preschool • Provide universal preschool in coordination with the district’s state and federal preschool programs for 4-year olds. • Run a high-quality program by meeting the standards set by the state for 4-year old children. • Involve district and community members to focus on ways to improve the program. • Provide staff development opportunities for teaching staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children turning 4 years old before September 30th will attend school. • Promote universal preschool through flyers, radio, cable television, and a special registration drive. • Collaborate district funds with those generated through the state and federal preschool programs. • Have program director order materials, supplies, furniture, and equipment that are developmentally appropriate for 4-year old children. • Hire teachers who have a bachelor’s degree and certification in early childhood education. • Form an advisory board to determine the needs within the community. • Use Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale – Revised to evaluate the program. • Mandate staff development of teaching staff in accordance with state preschool programs. • Maintain a list of community partners and hold quarterly meetings to review goals and objectives. • Purchase materials, supplies, furniture, and equipment to set up the classrooms • Implement the program by following state curriculum standards for 4-year old children. • Form early childhood partnerships with businesses and agencies in the community. • Years 1 & 2 funding will support start-up costs of 4 year old program district wide. • Years 3 – 10 funding will support operating costs of 4 year old program district wide.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
6. High Achieving Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an accelerated component for high achieving and effortful students using data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand Gifted and Talented Program. • Develop partnerships with universities to provide college level courses. • Writing across the content areas • Offer ACT/SAT preparation classes for targeted students. • Provide professional development for teachers in flexible grouping and compacting strategies aimed at challenging high achieving and effortful students • Use data to create or accelerated component for high achieving students • Begin long range planning for creating academic learning centers for each high school.
7. Renewed focus of Math and Science Magnet programs at Garyville/Mount Airy School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve capacity of Math and Science labs • Provide Outdoor Science Activities • Professional Development • Focusing on Math and Science extended school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teacher assistant in each lab to coordinate teacher projects, maintain inventory, and provide additional support to classes. • Develop and mandate scheduled labs • Include construction center in the math labs • Renew greenhouse program • Provide inquiry-based professional development for teachers to incorporate math/science into all subject areas • Computer applications focused on math and science • Science classes will engage students in partial and full inquiries that are within their developmental capabilities.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
8. Attendance Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve attendance for students • Improve attendance for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement truancy intervention plan for identifying students with habitual absenteeism, recording all absentees, and reporting to parents, SIS, and the court system. • Work with judicial system to develop an inter-agency plan to alleviate juvenile truancy. • Monthly review of truancy case folders • Rewards for good attendance: certificate or note of recognition, free homework pass, school supplies
9. SJB Graduation Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase graduation rate to 85% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Graduation Rates District-Wide: 56.7% ESJH: 56.6% WSJH: 78.8% • Hire a Graduation Coach for ESJH.. • Utilize the Dropout Early Warning System. • Monitor students in danger of failing and continuing to provide tutoring to assist students with their class work and better prepare them to be successful on GEE. • Focus on Relevance and Relationships at both high schools. • Develop interventions for seniors not on track for graduation (student names, number of credits earned, etc.). • Organize counseling centers that target scholarships and college admissions. • Organize counseling centers that target scholarships and college admission.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
10. High Schools: Career Pathways/Courses of Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to add dual enrollment and program certifications • Refocus and reorganize pathways • Refine Credit Recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a comprehensive Career/Technology Plan for both high schools. • Create innovative, efficient, and relevant middle school and high school master schedules. • Create positive relationships with business and industry to support job shadowing, internships, and other work-based learning experiences. • Develop and maintain a partnership with Louisiana Technical College. • Educate the parents on the program certifications currently being offered: Nursing Assistants, Welding, Drafting. • Develop a comprehensive credit recovery program for both high schools. • Create innovative, efficient, and relevant middle school and high school master schedules. • Develop a comprehensive credit recovery program for both high schools. • College Night
11. 9th Grade Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze patterns in student achievement data • Develop and establish internal and external monitoring and evaluation designs for instructional support • Raise expectations for all students to ensure that all staff support and believe that every child can and will learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and review data notebooks before Sept. 1st. • Develop and use informal walk through observation forms by Oct. 1st. • Assign a district level director to be permanently housed at the 9th grade academy site to provide support and assistance. • Review instructional program, practices, curriculum and supportive materials for evidence of effectiveness in improving student achievement.
12. Teacher Recruitment and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a competitive salary structure that facilitates recruitment and retention of personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and maintain a new salary schedule and maintain. • Annual review of salaries and recommend appropriate adjustments • Establish and maintain a relationship between universities and teacher programs to keep abreast of new teachers. • Design and implement a pay scale to reward content specific masters degree teachers who are to teach as adjunct professors at local universities.



Areas of Focus:	Measurable Target:	Action Plan/Activities:
13. Physical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put quality outdoor play spaces at all K-8 schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an elementary, middle, and high school physical education program. Provide needed physical education equipment. Provide running tracks for both high schools.
14. Character Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create year-round and after school activities for students that focus on academics and good character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a character building program for students to use in-school that can be reinforced after school. Provide varied experiences and exposure to events that will reinforce concepts that develop academics. Require K-8 counselors to implement character education into the curriculum. Create summer camps that integrate academics with real world experiences. Provide transportation for youth to participate in local YMCA.
15. Arts Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and establish art education enrichment Establish art heritage through cultural history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate community art programs. Solicit local artists' input. Exhibit students' art. Provide activities that develop aesthetic perception, creative expression, arts heritage, and critical analysis. Develop an art curriculum that is developmentally appropriate.
16. Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize faith-based initiatives to strengthen district goals and objectives Communicate board policies, parental involvement strategies, and research to parents and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit participation of faith-based organizations to address youth social, behavioral, and academic issues. Create a parental involvement advisory group. Utilize Channel 70. Hold Breakfast Club meetings. Open computer labs after hours for student and parent use. Schedule LEAP Night – Teach strategies to parents.. Organize Math/Science Family Night. Increase involvement in schools . Active PTO organizations Schools and organizations contribute current events and programs for web master Provide Weekly School Newsletter. Regularly update District web page. Publicize scheduled Open House.