



Feasibility Study for Visitation School Capital Improvements

Summary of Qualitative Responses to Online Survey

Comments regarding Visitation Parish and School effectiveness in living out its mission:

- School communication is an issue. We've lost some very good teachers recently. Concerned about enrollment and teacher attrition.
- In order to continue to strive for academic excellence I'd like us to find a way to pay our teachers more.
- I question the leadership of the school. We have a real problem retaining families and teachers. The school enrollment is continuing to reduce, and we are unable to provide the support and competitive pay structure and benefits package to keep our teachers.
- There is a real communication issue with the leadership at the school and I question if there is a plan in place to resolve the issue of families and teachers leaving the school community.
- I am concerned that frequent staff turnover inhibits the full potential for "academic excellence" that is part of the mission.
- Academic excellence is a lofty goal. I believe Vis is striving to do that but falls short currently. Other local schools such as St. Paul's and Pembroke are now being seen as a more desirable place to send children for school even by Vis parishioners and families. Several excellent staff members have left in recent years, and I am told more are planning to leave for those same schools mentioned prior. This is a problem!
- While we have a strong school and academic environment for our children, I feel like our spiritual growth as a community is lacking.
- Visitation is not reaching its potential due to the lack of first-class facilities. Additionally, difficulty retaining faculty, large class sizes, and mediocre support for gifted kids is preventing Visitation from reaching its full social and academic potential.
- I think we could do a stronger job of joining school and church efforts for a more unified Visitation community. This responsibility lies in the hands of all members and not just



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leadership, but can we develop some strategies to help create a culture that enables this more easily?

- My perception is that a number of families from the school are not involved in the parish and may not even attend mass regularly. I believe that in fully living out the mission, we would draw more families to church.
- We have had a great experience at the school, but I am quite concerned with the rate of attrition of great teachers at the school. Buildings don't matter if there aren't great teachers in the building.
- School Community has been a consistent strength for years. So many people love & have pride in the school. Focus on the core subjects so students are ready for high school.
- My two children had great experiences at Visitation school, as did I as a parent. They were both very prepared for high school and they both have a great understanding of their faith and spirituality.
- I think we can be more welcoming of EVERYONE, regardless of race, sex, background, etc.
- Visitation does a wonderful job of living out its mission and always strives to improve.
- The school does not devote enough hours to core academics: math, science, language arts, religion; too much time and effort goes into "specials" and societal topics such as harassment.
- I think the school staff and administration do as best they can to live out the mission but are lacking in parental support. It's easy for parents to get distracted with the needs and desires of their individual child and fail to think about the Christ-like and inclusive community we are trying to build for all Visitation families.
- Of course, I would like to see more of our students and alumni active in the parish. But the prevailing social tides do so much to make this so unlikely. I fear we will keep losing ground unless we do some things to bolster the school facility.
- Junior board, service opportunities, weekly mass, stations of the cross, daily prayer. I would love to see more daily religion classes and catholicity taught joyfully while inspiring students to love themselves so they can go out to world and love others. It should be "cool to be catholic."



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- Diocese budget limits our ability to compete for top educators.
- Visitation Catholic School and its staff and administration cultivates a community of respect, responsibility, and love. I appreciate all of the teachers that put forth such effort to help educate our children.

Comments regarding how you would rate the image of Visitation School:

- Has tough competition from other schools nearby.
- When people are looking for schools, Visitation is in the top 3 or 4. St. Paul's and Pembroke are options, but Visitation serves an important role by offering a Catholic education.
- The image has always been excellent but has been in question with the loss of some very long-term admirable teachers
- I think Visitation often has the image of being wealthy, white, entitled, family money. Many friends from other schools have told they would feel uncomfortable and not fit in
- In recent years, more families than I can recall in the 12 years we have been at Visitation School, have left for other private schools or have chosen to send some children to Vis while others go to St. Paul's or Pembroke. I think the inability to retain current families in our small geographical community where everyone knows one another has been detrimental to our image.
- I think Vis still has a high favorability rating as in the past, but a lot of that is based on historical excellence which is being somewhat eroded by the current realities.
- Vis has the reputation of being wealthy, white, and elitist. Obviously, that's a very superficial, one-dimensional image that surely doesn't capture every aspect of Vis, but it's also not wrong.
- With no early childhood development center/preschool, it is often overlooked by young families, including those who are Catholic, who end up enrolling their children at St. Paul's or Pembroke, both of which offer those options.
- We are not seen favorable in the eyes of other schools; too uppity.



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- Due to the loss of teachers and students in recent years, I think Visitation School is viewed as a somewhat volatile environment.
- I think a lot of outsiders view the parish as full of "entitled" somewhat snobbish people - which I think is judging a book by its cover, because most people would be hard-pressed to find a closer, more supportive community.
- I think our reputation has gone down in the last few years, due to poor compensation/treatment of teachers. This has also led to fewer enrolled students.
- I think our school's reputation took a huge hit during covid, but we are working to turn around that opinion.
- It seems like surrounding schools are not having as much staff turnover.
- There's always room for improvement
- Mostly favorable but not as good as it has been in the recent past.
- I hear from people who are not Catholic or who do not have kids how valuable the school is to the stability of the neighborhood
- Very necessary and an anchor in the community.
- I think Vis has the reputation of being a good school but whether or not it's an illusion, the perception is that there are stronger education opportunities at other private schools in the area. Our family feels our kids are loved, cared for, learning both academics but also a strong faith-based education that guides their whole being.
- There are but a few people around here who deprecate Visitation School. There are a few, but there are very few. Also, we do not entirely satisfy every family that comes to us. But, then again, what school does completely satisfy all of its patrons. I think we do well, given the complexity of our world and the burden of our mission.
- Our parish went through a divisive time during COVID but I'm hopeful that is behind us now.
- I believe that there are stereotypes associated with our community in the greater KC area at large, and these stereotypes lean towards "entitled." That being said, I believe that the



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parents of the school are committed to fostering a respectful community where our children can thrive and excel.

- I think the school is well regarded for its sense of community, its religious principles and its social values and awareness. I think the school is less well regarded due to the limited diversity of its student body and an educational curriculum that falls short of its academic counterparts, especially with respect to high achieving students.
- Vis sometimes gets a bad rap. The Covid times amplified people being divisive. It was tough. People have preconceived notions, but you often have to be a part of the community to know we ARE warm and welcoming. We just don't appear to do that on the surface.
- I think Visitation has a reputation of being a parish where people are very demanding. I think this is unfortunate because there are so many amazing families here. I would love to have the reputation of a school that is inclusive and gives back to the community.

What motivates your support of Visitation Parish and/or School?

- Our children attend; we love the community. We have family that will attend; we care about those children as well.
- We want a strong church and school for our neighborhood.
- We enjoy and value the community. We appreciate accountability and the engagement of families.
- The moral and religious underpinnings of the parish and school.
- I've been here my whole life, and the Eucharist keeps me coming back every week. My children, parents, this community - it means everything to me.
- It meets our spiritual needs; the school educated our children and we're grateful for that.
- Very important for the church to have a school and for the school to have a church.
- I am a fairly long-standing member of the church and currently have two students in the school and have a third child that will be starting at the school in two years. I love our neighborhood and want to continue living in our current home but worry about having a school option that will prepare my children for their future.



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- Our kids, community, relationships with other parents and teachers.
- My Faith and desire to keep the parish a strong presence in the neighborhood.
- Wanting a strong faith community and stellar education for our children.
- Making sure my kids have a decent place to go to school within a positive, loving community where they learn about social justice, compassion, generosity, responsibility, privilege, hard work/tenacity
- Neighborhood catholic school that is teaching so much more to our children than just academics and that gives us a sense of community with similar moral values.
- I think that Visitation School is what draws people to our parish and keeps them there. I think that school families being involved in the parish makes it vibrant and progressive.
- Church and School go hand-in-hand for our spiritual mission.
- The strength of Visitation increases the strength of the entire neighborhood.
- We want to belong to a parish that our children can attend, so it's very important to us.
- Quality education coupled with service to the community.
- In the simplest of terms, the community and world are better with Visitation Parish and School.
- Enjoy the church and staff.
- Strong faith-based education for my child and community.
- The school has helped to shape and educate our children. It is a worthwhile investment.
- Our family supported Visitation parish long before we ever had children at the school and now we continue - and will continue - to support the church and school so that others can have the same educational and spiritual opportunities that our family has.
- My family's history of being parishioners and now my children being enrolled students, is what motivates me in my support of Vis. I want the Vis legacy to remain strong so that, one day, my children may marry here, or raise their family in the parish.



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- It is the left arm of the parish in my opinion. Both need to be successful for the parish to thrive.
- We highly value education in general, important for stability and future of our community and neighborhood - especially when Kansas City's school system is so challenged.
- Catholic Schools are an essential part of the church's mission. Any parish that can have a school should have a school.
- I believe the School is a mission of the parish community and works to prepare the next generation to take the lead - in the world and in the church.
- My wife and I both grew up in Catholic schools; we want the same for our children.
- We've been parishioners for over 50 years. Love our parish and our community. We want to keep a great school in the neighborhood. It helps keep the neighborhood strong and property values strong.
- I support Catholic education and I know that our schools have preserved the neighborhoods of Kansas City's southwest corridor.
- The community of people is wonderful. The parish and school have been around for so long, with such a great track record of success.
- The community. The people take care of and support one another; it's the most beautiful part of our community.
- I want this place to be the best place possible for my children and for all the children in our parish for many years to come.
- I worked in diocesan schools, as a volunteer, a teacher and in professional development, for over 30 years. I know what good work goes on in our Catholic schools.
- Important in our family's spiritual life
- I value the open-minded philosophy of the church which is prayerful and inclusive.
- The future of our church depends on it, and other schools. Kids need to see faith in action.
- It aligns with our values at home. It makes things easier...but the spiritual part is even more important than the academic part. This gives us the leg up.



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- I support Catholic education because it includes a moral and spiritual foundation and focuses on basic reading, math and science without veering off into trendy issues of limited value.
- I feel that both the parish and school provide my family with a wonderful Christ-based community, and this is what motivates my support.
- Community feel combined with Catholic education. Unfortunately, there do not seem to be many school-aged children attending mass regularly.
- Visitation has been our family's spiritual and educational home for 35 years. Our parish and school provide many opportunities for engagement, involvement, and growth for all.

Comments regarding how you would rate your confidence in Visitation Parish and School leaders:

- The intentions are good, but leadership is not strong...
- ...many of our best, longest tenured teachers continue to leave Vis for other area schools. This is our biggest issue, and it needs to be addressed/corrected before any renovation begins.
- There are current issues with families and teachers leaving our community for other schools, however, there has been no communication from leadership on what plans are in place to change this trend.
- Despite any shortcomings of the leadership, the community has to take more ownership. We can blame the people in charge, but parents can do a lot to change the culture and the overall environment. What we feed our kids at home seeps into the school, re: gossip, negativity, toxic behaviors.
- On the school front, we do not have strong communications so it's difficult to imagine the leadership taking an active role in communicating all of the changes and plans that would impact students and families during construction.
- My greatest concern, as we consider a campaign, is that challenges of very recent years (lower enrollment, families leaving, staff turnover, hiring challenges) are not being



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assessed as potential signs of long-term problems but rather as cyclical fluctuations with historical precedent or universal challenges of a "post-COVID world".

- My confidence is eroding. It is still high, but I see several cracks and hear areas of discord among the community.
- My confidence in the leadership of the parish, parish council, and other committees remains high.
- We continue to lose quality teachers, which is disheartening and must certainly take its toll on remaining teachers/staff and students. Is it a culture they're trying to escape or is its poor pay?
- More efforts should be made to limit class size and increase marketing and awareness to potential incoming families. The kindergarten presentation to potential families is lacking compared to other schools in the area. Visitation should strive to be the best and we are losing out on children to other schools from people who are parishioners and Visitation alumni.
- I believe that the operation of a parish plus a school can be overwhelming at times for the parish and school staff. We are always constrained by the ability to hire the best because of the pay limitations placed on us by the diocese.
- School is making good plans, but my concern is lack of focus on learning challenges and emotional health.
- School communication is often poor, and it feels like there is a disconnect between the administration and what is going on within the classrooms.
- There seems to be a lack of confidence among parents of students regarding the quality of education being more prioritized and centered on the religious education part than the academic part.
- The biggest evidence of all of this is the number of excellent teachers, and good families who keep leaving. I don't place all the blame on leadership - but they have the greatest opportunity to turn the tides....
- ...we have not prioritized early childhood center enough - that is what will bring in our future (and is a source of income for our school).



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- School needs to improve communication with parents as we are losing families due to lack of responsiveness.
- I think that they certainly have our children's best interest at heart. I also think that there will always be room for improving communication effectiveness and understanding the necessity for continued improvement in innovative educational opportunities.
- I feel the communication could be improved among the school's leaders.
- The principal and vice-principal and school administration, parish, and school leadership teams are very good.
- I find leadership competent and highly invested in doing right by the children of Visitation School.
- All those involved in the leadership and maintenance of the Parish and school are activity involved in all facets of the success of the programs and activities.
- I strongly believe in the dedication of these people. They are confronted with many challenging issues, questions and problems vying for time, attention, and resources. I'm hopeful this survey will help prioritize those topics for the leadership in place.
- Improve salaries! These professionals who are in charge of the spiritual, sacramental, and educational experiences of our most precious parishioners need/deserve to make a living wage!
- Teacher turnover/retention is a great concern.

Comments regarding support for a campaign for capital improvements to the school campus:

- It needs to happen. If Phase I could happen over the summer, the parish could see results and be motivated for Phase II. The benefits of an early childhood center are a great idea. We question why we would have to wait for Phase II to begin this. If we utilized the area in Tighe Hall, it could happen sooner. Msgr. is the one person who seems reluctant.
- Before anything happens, we would have to see a business plan to determine the ROI on an ECC to make sure it's profitable.



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- School campus needs some TLC.
- I'm generally supportive BUT we need to see school families on Sunday at mass. That pre-empts my support of the school. Catechesis begins at home and families - especially Catholic school families - need to come back to church.
- I am all for improving the physical facilities of the school, but that does us no good if we cannot attract and retain quality teachers. If we do not have quality teachers and a solid plan and direction of the school we will have families jump ship for other communities. If we do not get these problems solved it does not matter what improvements we make to the school if we don't have quality teachers and families that are willing to send their kids to the school.
- This is no small endeavor, and we are going to need major donors to accomplish this. We will need to know that we have that level of support before moving on this.
- This is such a critical endeavor. Our family started out at Sion because of the early childhood education program. Most families want to build solid foundations and long-lasting relationships with schools, and an early childhood program at Vis would only help ensure growth in enrollment.
- My child has special needs and, though the school has an incredible program for inclusive education + special ed support, the school does not have the right spaces for one-on-one or small-group work... a lot of our child's one-on-one work happens in hallways and other highly visible, high-distraction areas such as the cafeteria.
- A strong push for capital should be made to the 64113 and 64112 households regardless of whether they attend Visitation. Spending millions to enhance the school will enhance their property values.
- Let's go! School modernization is needed to serve our kids and future. Fully support the fee-based preschool as well!
- Incredibly supportive. This is necessary for the school's future.
- I think adding the preschool is extremely important and will lead to more families interested in Visitation from outside the parish as well as serving the needs of those families in the parish.



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- Visitation deserves a campus and school facilities that, at the least, are on par with neighboring parishes in the Brookside community. The parish should strive for exemplary facilities that place it in a category with the city's top private lower schools.
- I think economic conditions need to improve before we stretch for a capital campaign.
- While our enrollment continues to decline, I don't know why we'd begin an expansion of our school. Until the issues causing the decline are addressed/corrected, it seems like a poor decision to move forward with this.
- I feel that they are all necessary and great things, but my primary concern is that we are attracting quality teachers that will provide the students with a competitive education.
- This space is needed not only to allow expansion of other grades enrollment, but to also support the surrounding community with early childhood education. We've lost several Vis alumni families to St. Peter's and St Elizabeth's because of the lack of preschool.
- I am very supportive of renovating the existing structure and very supportive of the concept of an early childhood center (even though our family will in no way benefit directly). I think it will extend the mission of the parish and draw in new families to the school who will then stay through 8th grade.
- We are happy to support the parish but our interests are not towards funding the school campaign. We are more interested in supporting social concerns and faith development for all parishioners.
- I don't understand how the capital improvements will affect the future budget of the school...I'm not sure the parents or church can assume the costs without knowing the projected increase for operations, if any.
- It is time and needed! The infrastructure is dated, and we need to stay current, and I feel an early childhood is crucial to helping to capture families.
- I question the use of space in Tighe Hall and the old Kindergarten spaces. With real estate and space being so expensive in our location, do we really need so many rooms reserved for groups meeting here for a couple hours a week? Should they be utilized more effectively as not to have space that sits vacant many hours a day/night?
- It should be done to stay competitive with other educational options for parents.



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- I am 110% onboard with phase 1...it needs to be done. As for phase two, can we support the additional maintenance costs also? Seems like the school budget is already tight.
- Absolutely needed to compete with other parochial schools and tuition-based schools.
- Increasing enrollment is wishful thinking. Need info about enrollment trends.
- I am supportive of renovations of the school but do not agree with all the choices included in the plans, especially phase 1.
- The idea of an early childhood center is intriguing, but we need to study if people will pay to use it? They may think it's included if they "tithe".
- There are so many worthy places pulling on our parish budget. Education is very important to me but so is social outreach and quality programs for our adult parishioners. I think we need a balance.
- A quality physical environment directly correlates to a quality education, especially with younger children.
- The phases and budget seemed thoughtful and achievable
- While adding a preschool might help "feed" students into the school I have doubts about keeping them there. There are several families who are leaving my child's grade and it's not because they want a school with a "maker space" or pickle ball court. They want dynamic leadership, common sense, teachers that communicate well and a community that feels inclusive.
- I would be supportive if we didn't have to move or set up a temporary school.
- Interest rates and inflation have affected this price and should be updated before moving forward.
- I don't have a great grasp on those numbers, but it seems like a huge monetary investment but, honestly, I would be very supportive of this. If we're doing it, which I feel we should, we should go "all in".
- To take our school into the second century of Visitation School, I think it is pertinent. It is also important to incorporate a preschool that feeds the school and keeps families together.



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What do you see as the greatest advantages to Visitation pursuing capital improvements to its school facilities?

- The ECC would be an important mission of the church; the community is aging so it would be good to attract tuition-paying students with a nicer, newer school.
- The modernization of our school is critical for our relevancy in the community. We have to retain our parishioners and entice our families to maintain their commitment to our community. We have lost too many of our parishioners to other schools in our area because we are not providing the same or better-quality educational experience.
- We believe education and the educational environment are extremely important to help shape life-long learners who will see service as a normal part of their lives.
- ECC would be a benefit. Keeping the school updated is a good idea. We're not overly involved at the parish but updating Tighe Hall sounds like a good benefit for the ministries.
- Continue to attract students; our enrollment is declining; we need to improve demographics and attract families
- Keeping our level of education on par with our competition is key - keeping up-to-market with our facilities and technology. The school is tired and needs new learning environments.
- The school needs to be updated to attract new students including those in the broader community.
- The ECC would be great; anything that would improve math, science, and cafeteria.
- Bringing classrooms up to modern standards and providing energy efficiency is long overdue.
- Potential to attract more students and make ourselves more competitive with other private schools in the community.
- Keeping up with modern teaching methods and requirements.
- Greater education, opportunities, more enhanced nutrition at school, technological advances, and safety upgrades to the school.



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- Improved safety, security, and enhanced learning spaces--long overdue! Perhaps this will attract and help us retain quality teachers
- Capital improvements are necessary to compete with other "peer" schools in the area, maintain status in the neighborhood, retain and attract teachers, and meet goals.
- Student and staff retention. I also think the addition of early education will ensure steady, strong enrollment for Visitation School in the future.
- Preschool, more families, and a direct pipeline to Visitation grade school
- More modern facility = more families and being more competitive with schools like St. Paul's and Pembroke.
- Ensuring parish families choose the parish school as their first option without considering competing options such as Pembroke, St. Paul's, or moving to Kansas.
- Creating a learning environment that grows with modern demands and keeps the school relevant.
- Better able to meet the needs of our parish, plus address the needs of special needs students and even those students needing extra resources to succeed.
- Our school is out of date and needs to be refurbished/renovated etc.
- They are quite outdated, so I think renovating existing spaces is likely needed. I'm not sure how we'll pay for this though.
- Preschool is essential to maintain school and church growth!
- I think the school 100% needs the improvements. After recently touring several area catholic and independent schools in KC, the improvements would be a huge plus and a win for Vis school.
- There's a need for more quality early childhood education in our area and this will likely contribute to attracting quality teachers as well.
- Keeping facility modernized.
- I believe it strengthens the neighborhood by drawing new families into our community. It also keeps families here that now consider Visitation School just average.



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- To update our facilities and be a more modern educational space. I believe St Paul's has done a great job of improvements of educational spaces and has thus competed against Vis for enrollment. Further, their summer programs are another example of recruitment and retention of enrollment.
- Hopefully, it helps retain quality teachers and staff and increase enrollment.
- Better enrollment, advanced learning for our children, kitchen would provide more lunch options for the children
- My one hesitation with sending my son to Visitation was the current state of the school facilities. I love the community but once I heard about the plan to improve the school, we decided to keep our son at the school.
- Needed to compete with other educational options in the community. Adding a preschool may also attract new families to the parish who may consider other places currently that have preschool options.
- Visitation families always step up financially, spiritually, and with time/talent.
- Keeping current families at Visitation and becoming attractive to new families with school-age children. Not losing Visitation families to other schools.
- Our students need better facilities, and we need to make improvements to remain competitive with other neighboring schools. I have no doubt enrollment would be bolstered by these efforts.
- Feeder in early childhood education to continue to grow and retain a strong church/school community.
- Updating the building and school to provide technology and makers space areas that are consistent with other schools in the area.
- The school and parish seem to be in a bit of a slump: post pandemic, Catholic Church in general, etc. It may be a bit of a gamble - but hopefully would add more energy and growth to the parish - and make the school a draw to the neighborhood.
- If the school is deteriorating, improvements must be made.



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- There will be less maintenance and cost in the long run if things are replaced instead of fixed temporarily over and over.
- Long term viability of the school for future generations.
- Providing stability in the neighborhood.
- A strong school will create a strong neighborhood.
- It is a great advantage to have all students on Baltimore.
- I see the greatest advantages to Visitation pursuing capital improvements to its facilities is the students there now and students yet to come. We are changing the future with these improvements.
- Better learning spaces; opportunity to grow; opportunity to bring current spaces up to 2023 needs.
- Better technology = better education. Having a pre-school as a feeder to Vis would be a big plus.
- Improving the school will be an advantage for the church. Too many parishes have closed after their school closed
- Need improvements to current structure in order to retain student body and offer opportunities for STEM development, staff retention. The building seems in fair to poor condition. Moving kindergarten to the main school is a positive. Would like to see expansion in order to have larger classes and/or just space to spread out a little. Much improvement is needed.
- Keeping up with the demands on modern educational needs, which are dramatically different than not long ago. Also, modern security is front of mind as a parent to future students there.
- We need an EEC. My family will not directly benefit from this endeavor because all of our children are already in elementary school...but this could bring financial gains to the parish and help with enrollment to ensure strong continuity.
- Keeping the school top notch both academically and spiritually is a boon to our parish and the greater community.



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- The biggest advantage is signaling to the local community that Vis is here for the long term. Parents care about facilities. It signals quality and care for their children's future.
- We need this for our students, especially a kitchen with lunchroom on site.
- It seems to me to be an investment in the future. A lot of these ideas will be sustainable for years and decades in the future.
- A second century of strong-Catholic education for our local community.
- Capitalize on the energy of young families. This can help invigorate the parish and school.

What do you see as the greatest disadvantages to Visitation pursuing capital improvements to its school facilities?

- Living through it would not be fun. We need to see the operating and maintenance costs for the ongoing expenses of a 3-story building.
- Not sure we need the second building; we would need to ensure we have enrollment. Perhaps the ECC would help with that.
- Financial. Can we raise the money - that's the biggest hurdle. All of the people we know with resources their children have graduated. It will be important to engage them.
- It is imperative to have the right leadership in place. Otherwise, we will not have the support and buy-in...that would be a big problem.
- It feels a little like putting the cart before the horse. It seems there are issues that have nothing to do with the physical building that should be addressed. Get back to basics. Make needed repairs, expand the space, if needed, to include a preschool or other necessary improvements and upgrades to ensure student and staff safety.
- It is financially concerning. It has to be fully supported to not saddle the parish with a lot of debt.
- The interest rates are not great right now. That's a concern.
- Possibility that demand won't justify the cost.



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- It is very costly given our land constraints and cost of materials today, but I believe the parishioners will support it.
- I know there is a lot of frustration within the school families, and it will be a challenge to raise funds if they do not believe in the leadership and direction of the school.
- Cost of the project, although I don't have concerns about the Vis community getting behind the project.
- Is \$16+ million enough to make us competitive with other private schools? Is there a greater issue of Catholic families not valuing a faith-based education? What if we put the money into building this and it's still not enough to increase enrollment or keep Vis families at our school?
- A "Build it and they will come" plan alone will not succeed. Leadership first, physical assets next.
- I think it could take a while to raise the money, but honestly I see zero drawbacks to doing the project. I think it only improves the lives of our school families.
- None! This is needed. I guess I am concerned that we will not be able to fund it, but that's never NOT a concern with an endeavor like this. We can do it!
- How to pay for it, and if it's smart to do right now, given decline in church attendance, registered students, etc.
- Donor fatigue, big hurdle if current families won't benefit from the investment.
- No disadvantages.
- Growing too big comes with difficulty
- None, as long as the money is used in the proper way. The decision makers need to be transparent and communicate with parishioners every step of the way.
- Need for tuition
- Understanding the operating cost to run the new facility when built.



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- I don't want to see current services and educational opportunities for our kids being diminished in order to pay for a nice new building that many kids won't be able to see or enjoy until after their Visitation school careers are over.
- Concerned with what this expansion would do to the school budget and how we can fund this annually.
- Facilities are a big piece, but also need confident leadership that understands the choices Visitation parishioners are making with regard to choosing other schools over Visitation.
- The costs and plans are too exorbitant.
- Too much money. Our school has everything it needs.
- There's always going to be people who are against it. But if you asked and explain it thoroughly, I feel people will support it. It has many benefits.
- Cost is my only concern. But I feel advantages far outweigh the concerns. We have generally been a growth-minded, forward-thinking parish.
- Any project like this is hard to do. It will take sacrifice all the way around. But this parish is blessed in human resources and material resources too. We can do this.
- Do we have enough parishioners with income to support the cost involved?
- Younger families moving in from outside the community might not have the same commitment. Escalating prices for everything
- Getting support from parishioners who don't have children in the school + competition from other schools.
- Disruptions to learning and school calendar are a concern.
- I don't see any disadvantages as these changes are necessary to compete with other schools.
- There are other Catholic schools in the metro area who offer none of those things and are at full capacity with waitlists. There seems to be a disconnect on what people want for their children vs. what some people THINK they should want.



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- Innovative classroom design for student-centered, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning is fine and good...but if you can't attract and keep quality teachers to teach in these fancy classrooms, it's all for nothing.
- Cost is always a limiting factor, including construction and ongoing maintenance. That said, it will never be cheaper to do the same thing in the future.
- Raising money and making capital improvements do not change the quality of education directly...investment in teachers does.



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Comments regarding the daycare/preschool option.

- If the ROI is there, it would be very beneficial.
- ECC will need good play space - both indoors and outdoors. The only other concern is ensuring it can be sustained among other parochial centers nearby.
- It needs to be viable. Need a business case to ensure this will work financially. It's important to have this on-site. Can we staff it? Daycares are facing terrible staffing shortages - that will be the biggest hurdle. There will be lots of requirements that we need to make sure we can fulfill. Likely won't be the cash cow everyone thinks.
- The ECC is important to sustainability of the school and parish.
- It is a must have. Almost all parochial schools have a preschool feeder.
- This is extremely needed in our community and will increase profits at the school.
- We MUST add early childhood and preschool education at Vis! Visitation is losing students every year due to the lack of early childhood and preschool education!
- Early childhood education center is a must. First, fee based so it actually should be an income generator. I know students who go to St E's or St Peters for early childhood education and that makes them less likely to go to Vis. This a feeder aspect is also important.
- I think this will help attract young families to the school and once they are in the "feeder" system they are more likely to enroll in the school.
- Our community needs all the childcare options it can get.
- I feel like this is a huge step for Visitation, this is a giant lost revenue source for the school and resource for young families. We are giving our money away to other parishes and early education facilities because Visitation does not have this.
- We lose too many families to other schools that do have preschools--Cure, St. E's, St. Peter's. We desperately need a preschool.
- An Early Childhood center is a key component to enhance Visitation's community and maintain strong enrollment. Is it possible to start the Early Childhood center sooner, in a



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temporary location (such as the church basement) in advance of the future addition to the school?

- A daycare/preschool would allow Vis to offer to current families who are choosing other Catholic schools in the area based on the fact that they offer this. Some families then choose to stay at the schools for continuity.
- It's a fantastic idea but we need to increase the enrollment of K-8 first.
- My daughters have incredible challenges finding acceptable daycare/preschool options, particularly post-pandemic. It is apparently very hard to find teachers. We would have to face that issue.
- This subject was pursued many years ago and it was decided that there were several strong early childhood programs in the area that fed into Visitation. However, I hope that if this plan comes to fruition an intense cost analysis study be implemented for early childhood specifically.
- An ECC study should include program accreditation and licensing, teacher/child ratio, teacher salary, teacher education, a respectful and challenging curriculum, and a smooth transition to kindergarten for the children.
- YES! Other schools offer this, and families chose those schools over Vis because of this single (but significant!) offering.
- It is essential to grow the school, and it will also be a source of revenue.
- I think the current status of the church basement would be ideal for preschool
- I'd be "very favorable" once a business plan is provided. I'd like to understand the cost to operate the new facility, the "breakeven" enrollment, etc. And, frankly, I think it'd be a much easier sell to the parish if we were to "toe in" to an early childhood center by starting one in Tighe Hall. We already have the space built out with kindergarten classrooms no longer in use. The space is tremendously underutilized now that the kindergarten has vacated. The argument for moving the kindergarten over to Baltimore was so that kindergartners didn't need to cross Main Street
- I don't think it is necessary. It seems VIS has enough community support and a good reputation, improvement to the campus alone will draw families to the school.



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- A properly run daycare can be a nice source of revenue that could support the school to pay for additional services needed for Vis kids - enrichment opportunities, special needs instructors and support staff, SpEd training, professional development, etc.
- If it is truly self-supportive I would be very favorable.
- Daycare/preschool would be a fantastic addition to growing families!
- I am not in favor of this until the school starts moving in the right direction. Let's get it fixed before we take on more.
- I still believe this could exist today in the current Tighe Hall (former Kindergarten space) for much less cost.
- Pre-school is essential to keeping the school viable
- We need a preschool. Use the rooms we have in Tighe Hall.
- We need daycare. It is a money maker and a feeder for the school and families desperately need daycare.
- YES! Maybe more important than any other addition to the project.
- This is a great way to build a feeder system. The neighboring community will support this.
- This seems to be a successful approach used by other excellent schools successfully

Are there other needs or priorities that the parish should address prior to or in addition to school improvements? If yes, please explain.

- No. The church is very nice. We don't have any other needs.
- I can't think of anything. The things we need don't cost money - we need more engagement and volunteers - people to come back to church.
- The parking isn't great, but I'm not sure we can do anything about it
- Parking and outdoor space is not fully addressed in the master plan. H+M should have presented more creative ideas to maximize and our limited site. Outdoor space is the most valuable missing asset we have.



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- Paying teachers more.
- Getting families back to mass, retaining Vis families in the school, a focus on recruiting and retaining top educators.
- A campaign to bring back spiritual awareness and, most of all, support for our parish. We can have all these beautiful buildings, but if we don't go to mass together as a community, we are not going to be connected.
- Teacher retention, class size management, and support for gifted children.
- As mentioned before, a continuous assessment of student to teacher ratio to ensure the children continue to receive the education expected. No class should have a 20:1 student to teacher ratio.
- Please consider enhancing programming for high-school aged parishioners. Whether it's social events, volunteer opportunities, clubs, etc...we need more!
- A few updates to the gym and Stage area and lobby.
- Look into solar panels on the roof of the school and new school building.
- Front of church streetlights that are worn out and leaning.
- Enhance courtyard to utilize space
- Any solar panels anywhere? Any trees being added? Are you considering Climate change? We have got a lot of concrete in the city.
- Safety of surrounding infrastructure and consideration of increased adjacent development
- Would love to see some bike racks to encourage biking to school, but this isn't urgent.
- I feel the church needs to strive to provide a community and a spiritual home as people desperately need this but seem to be turning to traditional churches less and less for this home. We see the lack of values and polarity in America, and it seems faith communities have the answers but cannot rely only on traditional services. Younger people needed to be invited to our church in ways that they value and see as relevant.



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- Yes, offer more activities that involve our Visitation graduates, other than Confirmation meetings.
- One thing that I don't see listed here and wish was more accessible now is better access to outdoor space/grass/etc. I know the location of the school makes that a near impossibility, but if there was a way to incorporate it, even like we have in the current building with the courtyard, I think that would be important.
- I would like to see school-aged children and families attending mass. I do not see the school families supporting the church and that is a major problem if I'm being asked for the church to fund new school facilities.
- No capital needs, but we do need more encouragement to get people back to church. If we are to remain a tithing school, this is critical.

Comments regarding the size of capital gift you might consider pledging:

- The cart is ahead of the horse. Let's invest in the academics and stabilize that, then the project is a good investment not only for Visitation, but for the community. Our community doesn't need a bigger mediocre school.
- I hope to continue supporting the parish long after my last child leaves school.
- With many kids in school, it would be a challenge at this time to make a significant increase to what we already tithe.
- We're a family of four on one income so we'll do all we can.
- We can barely pay our mortgage at the moment! But we prioritize giving, and this is important, so we'll give what we can.
- I think people will hesitate to commit given our current economic environment.
- I would be interested in seeing a more detailed plan before committing, specifically what the early childhood center would look like.



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- I prefer not to answer at this time until I see a real plan that includes a business case for the new building and a full explanation as to why we must do this new building prior to launching it.
- There are other parishes and organizations raising funds for projects that we have already committed to, as well as our annual commitment to Visitation.
- My kids are just starting in Vis. We also live relatively close, so we would be proud to support on the higher end as we would see more value than many others.
- We're a little taxed with our students at university over the next few years, but could make some pledge.
- Yes, we will consider a capital gift.
- My spouse and I would have to discuss but would be willing to contribute.

Comments regarding the parish initiating a capital campaign:

- We should fix any issues we have in place now. We need to retain teachers, etc. Those things need to be addressed.
- Seems to be for the wrong reasons as outlined. I'm not hearing it's a facility problem, but it's an educational problem...which capital campaigns do not fix.
- Phase I needs to be done. Inflation and the stock market are not great, but most people would agree it's time. Better to spend money now than to wait for even bigger repair and maintenance bills.
- If the proper leadership team is in place then it is a good time to move forward.
- We need to do it to attract and keep students for our enrollment.
- Enough time has passed; the costs are only going up from here.
- If the stock market was better, there might be a better time to pursue. If there are urgent needs at the school that need to be addressed, then yes, we should take care of those things right away. Otherwise, we should ensure there's adequate funding before embarking on something like this.



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- I think the economy and the inflation rate has everyone worried about a recession.
- Although it seems like yesterday that we did the church and school renovation, the current group of parents haven't been through anything like this, and I think they would respond to the call.
- I think it's a great idea.
- There's probably never a good time. With inflation high and the stock market taking a step back, chances are folks don't feel as rich as they did a few years ago. But, 13 years since the completion of the last campaign is a lot of time. The current facility is getting old. Each generation needs to do their part.
- The school needs updating, and the early education center would be a strong factor in gaining new families.
- The school may need to be updated but the total project needs to be scaled down to a reasonable cost.
- I think explaining the scope, business case, and cost of the project is more important than the timing.
- We should fix any issues we have in place now. We need to retain teachers, etc. Those things need to be addressed.

Are there any other comments, suggestions, or questions you would like Visitation to consider?

- School class size has fluctuated in the past three years, and 2018-2021 are years with lower total births. The parish needs to have a solid estimate of the potential future enrollment and a good idea of how Vis will compete with other schools for early childhood education before taking on such a big project.
- In the last campaign, the priest had a gift for fundraising. The school had also just won a Blue Ribbon of Excellence Award...we likely should plan for the best people to help lead a successful campaign.



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- The strength of a school is largely determined by its leadership, the faculty and staff. When they are happy, it shows. Paying them a fair wage brings in the best teachers. Having updated facilities also draws better teachers. I think both need to be considered.
- I think Fr. Greg will have much insight about the recent St. E's renovation and will be a good mentor.
- It likely depends on how big of a project this is; and if we have a FAITH community to support this. It is definitely needed but it is discouraging to support something when families are not embracing the practice of weekly mass.
- If people have confidence in the school, there will be strong support for the campaign.
- Drawing people back to Vis by showing leadership at the school should be the priority. Once that is underway, more people would feel inclined to contribute to the school. I don't think the sentiment is there that will lead to a successful campaign.
- The parish needs something to be excited about. Our future, which is our children, is a good thing to rally behind. And the renovation of the Tighe Hall will also give the parish something tangible to utilize.
- I think support for a campaign depends on who is leading the campaign and how well they articulate the message and develop a process that is inclusive of as many parishioners as possible. That is what the 2006-10 process did. It was an inclusive process--with over 20 committees involved.
- I believe school families will be supportive for obvious reasons; I believe older parishioners like my parents will want to support it because it's important to them.
- Our contemporaries will be supportive because they appreciate the education their children received at Visitation. Even if we don't have kids in school, it's the right thing to support; someone else planted the tree we're sitting under...we need to plant the next one for future generations.
- I would like Visitation to consider tuition.
- Continue to connect the parish and school communities - in both directions. Create an identity of one - not two - communities.



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- We seem to have far fewer members joining the church, baptisms, and attendance. I would think evaluating those trends might better solve the issue of why the school has lost enrollment.