



**BOLDLY GROWING:
Strategic Road Map to 2023**

Mid-Point Progress Report
December 31, 2020

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 2017, Our Lady of the Elms School Board of Trustees affirmed and approved eight strategic initiatives for the future sustainability of the School. Revisions to the School's mission statement were proposed, along with newly-developed vision and core values statements. Final board approval of these statements occurred on February 12, 2018.

Boldly Growing: Strategic Road Map to 2023 emerged and was unanimously endorsed by the Elms Board of Trustees on January 28, 2019. ***Boldly Growing*** provides a guide for Our Lady of the Elms School for the fiscal years 2019 through 2022. We are pleased to provide a mid-point report on the success of ***Boldly Growing***.

MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

Mission

Our Lady of the Elms, a private Catholic school rooted in the Dominican tradition, educates girls and young women to live their lives boldly with purpose, confidence, kindness, resilience, justice, and faith.

Vision

Elms girls become confident leaders, accomplished professionals and advocates for justice and the common good. Prepared to succeed in life, they possess a spiritual, educational, global, and experiential foundation shaped at the Elms.

Core Values

Our Lady of the Elms School, founded on Catholic principles and enriched by Dominican spirituality, is sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Peace. Welcoming and inclusive, the Elms cultivates girls to be tomorrow's standard bearers for sustainability, equity and reconciliation among people by preparing them to live purposeful, spiritual and trailblazing lives demonstrated through:

Leadership

Creativity

Humility

Faith

Respect

Compassion

Kindness

Joy

MID-POINT STRATEGIC REPORT CARD

Strategic Initiative 1: Ensure the Elms' academic standards, educational experiences, spirituality, and life skills programs are excellent, exhibit respect for difference and academic freedom, and reflect the evolution of the educational process as articulated through the Dominican charism.

1. Our Lady of the Elms School received full, unconditional accreditation through the Ohio Catholic School Accrediting Association in May 2019. The overarching goals established for the school are:
 - a. Academic Performance Goal: Teachers will use Project Based Learning (PBL) to promote critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity
 - b. Catholic Identity Goal: Students will increase their understanding of the four Dominican Pillars in order to create a culture of respect for self, the community and the environment.
2. Project Based Learning (PBL) professional development opportunities have been made available to faculty since summer 2017. Three members of the Elms faculty are completing coursework to be certified PBL trainers and will complete training for all Elms faculty by Summer 2023.
3. A task force was appointed during Fall 2020 to create an implementation plan for Elms Girls LEAD (Center for Dominican Enrichment of Girls).

Strategic Initiative 2: Create an excellent Middle School (Grades 6-8) by simultaneously focusing upon academic, social, spiritual, and emotional health and providing girls the opportunity to excel at the appropriate academic level across all disciplines.

1. Middle School Academy model was developed and implemented in Fall 2018 that includes Grades 6-8.
2. Grade Six moved from the Lower School building to the Upper School building in the Fall of 2018.
3. A dedicated team of teachers was appointed to staff the Middle School in Fall 2018.
4. The Middle School schedule was modified to include academy time and age-appropriate learning minutes.
5. A Middle School trip was added to the curriculum and the first trip was successfully completed during the 2018-2019 school year (Cincinnati). The trip for 2019-2020 was planned for Washington, DC and has been delayed due to COVID-19.
6. The GAR Foundation funded the first phase of The Elms Farm in spring of 2018. The first gardens were planted in summer of 2018.
7. The Middle School students designed the chicken coop for the Farm. Parents and students worked together to build the coop and the chicken run. A dozen chickens moved into the coop in June 2018.

8. The chickens are tended daily by Middle School students and their families. The chickens have become self-sufficient and produce about a dozen eggs every day that are sold for \$4 per dozen.
9. Phase II of The Elms Farm was funded through the generosity of the GAR Foundation in spring 2020. A goat enclosure and fence will be constructed this spring by the Middle School girls in collaboration with Home Depot's community service program, and two pigmy goats will join the farm.
10. Over the past two years, we have retained over 82% of our Eighth Grade students for high school compared to 77% in the year prior.
11. MAP scores for our Middle School students indicate no loss of learning due to COVID-19 and Elms students are at or above grade level in every area.

Strategic Initiative 3: Expand programs and resources to empower all Elms' students to discover their passion and realize their true potential.

1. Award winning co-curricular activities for 2019-2020 included:
 - a. Elms' *Just Write* Division I team placed second in the state finals
 - b. Trifecta! Elms' students took first, second and third place in the Akron-Summit Holocaust Arts & Writing Contest
 - c. Elms' Junior recognized as a National Speech & Debate National Qualifier and finished as a quarterfinalist in two events
 - d. Middle School Academic Challenge finished in second place at the Hawken School Tournament in January 2020
2. Award winning co-curriculars continue for 2020-2021:
 - a. Elms' Senior is recognized as a National Speech & Debate Nation Qualifier – the first time in Elms' history a student has qualified in back-to-back years.

Strategic Initiative 4: Field an athletic program that is competitive, fun, and demonstrates respect for all.

1. Swimming was added as a varsity sport in winter 2019-20.
2. Coaches are evaluated annually based on the student-athlete experience.
3. No cut policy is an Elms' hallmark and allows students to grow in resilience.
4. Assessing the viability of adding cross country in fall 2021.

Strategic Initiative 5: Foster opportunities to share our knowledge of faith-based girls' education that promote the Elms' as a welcoming, student-centered school where ambition and joy work hand-in-hand to build our community

1. Value proposition workshop for the Board of Trustees took place in fall 2019.
2. Marketing Task Force is operational as an official arm of the Board of Trustees.

3. Board member recruitment includes a new member with expertise in marketing (fall 2019).
4. Geofencing has enhanced marketing opportunities, along with social media advertising. Over 20,000 Elms' impressions have been delivered weekly since summer 2019.
5. Enrollment in Primary School (K-5) continues to soar, with enrollment surpassing established plan goal of 90 students for Fall 2020 (over 125 students are enrolled).
6. Website refresh completed Summer 2020.

Strategic Initiative 6: Design and implement friendraising and fundraising activities to diversify and increase philanthropic giving.

1. Fundraising surpassed goal for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.
2. Membership in the St. Dominic Society for \$1,000+ donors grew to 89 members in both 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. In each of those years the group contributed more than \$600,000 in support of the School compared to 2017-2018 when the membership contributed less than \$400,000 with fewer than 75 members.
3. Alumnae Board has been reconstituted and is operating with new bylaws (Winter 2018).
4. Parent Committees have merged into one high-functioning organization called the Elms Community Club (ECC), which became operational in 2019-2020.
5. Development activities have been assessed and evaluated by Yankey Associates and a multi-year plan has been delivered to enhance fundraising and friendraising in preparation for the Centennial Campaign (Fall 2019).
6. Director of Community Engagement hired (Spring 2020)
7. Recommendation to proceed with Feasibility Study will be made to the Board of Trustees in March 2021 by the Advancement Committee.
8. Prospect screening firm has been engaged and data has been received
9. Top 50 prospects have been identified for feasibility.
10. Physical plan needs have been compiled as a part of needs assessment
11. Viability of a foundation is being studied.

Strategic Initiative 7: Pursue the optimal property and facilities arrangements for the Elms' future.

1. Loan for athletic complex at Crown Point has been satisfied.
2. Conversations began with the Dominican Sisters of Peace regarding the Board's interest in securing the West Akron property in the name of the School (Spring 2019).

Strategic Initiative 8: Focus and strengthen the Board of Trustees to model and support the Mission, Vision and Values of Our Lady of the Elms School.

1. Board Committees have been aligned with initiatives of the Strategic Plan.
2. Committee work is meaningful and supports goals of Board and administration.

3. Toward goal for alumnae to constitute 1/3rd Board membership (up to 7 Board members), 3 of 16 Board current members are alumnae (19%).
4. Board education opportunities have been made available through the Dominican Sisters of Peace Office of Founded Ministries.
5. Board demographic survey has been completed (winter 2020).
6. Prospective Board members have been identified to fill up to five Board positions.

Proposed language changes to be voted on by Board in Spring 2021.