

Mr. Tremblay, Faculty Members, Fellow Board Members and Esteemed Friends, thank you for giving me a few minutes to present to you the new Mount Royal Academy Strategic Plan. Hopefully all of you have had a chance to pick up one of the nifty printouts that Mr. Bellavance so generously printed for this event. If not, you can find one at (location). Please take these with you. They are for our community. (Just don't share them with anyone outside of our community. We don't want to be giving the local public-school administrators any free hints on how to run a successful school!)

You know, a little over 25 years ago, my dad got involved with Mount Royal Academy as a board member. From the beginning, the mandate of our school community was clear: to create a refuge for our kids from the storm that was and is besieging the morals of our society. I can't actually tell you what was going on in the bathrooms at Kearsarge Regional Middle school in 1992 that caused my parents to send me to an all-boys Catholic high-school hours away from here, and then ultimately to become involved in the leadership at Mount Royal Academy. Not because I don't know what was going on (unfortunately I knew then as an 11-year-old), but because I don't want to scandalize the teenagers here with us today who thankfully have never been exposed to the kind of junk that was going on then. And that was 30 years ago! We all know what this "junk" has developed into in the name of progressivism over the last 30 years. And so, our mission is as important as ever!

But our Mission is not just to protect our kids. Our mission is to create an environment where they can thrive, and be formed to live as beacons in this crazy world we live in. To live as beacons who with God's grace will in time turn the darkness into light!

I am quoting now from our renewed School Mission Statement: "Mount Royal Academy's mission is to educate the whole person through the spiritual, academic, and human formation of each student. We aim to develop holy, responsible, and qualified persons for all vocations within the Church, their families, and in their communities. Our aspirations direct all temporal efforts toward building Catholic culture and our Father's eternal kingdom." The members of our Board of Directors believe firmly that the Church and Catholic culture are a beacon of light in the darkness. We want our children to be immersed in this culture, to become this culture, and to shine brightly.

The founding fathers of our great country understood that without this beacon, our democracy would fail. Our own Daniel Webster once said “The Christian religion - its general principles – must ever be regarded among us as the foundation of civil society.” (Discourse Delivered at Plymouth, on December 22, 1820). I implore you all to never forget that this is the core of what we do at Mount Royal Academy. The stakes could not be higher. We are at risk of losing the entire moral fabric that our Country was founded upon. I am sure that if we abandon this mission, our great country, our society, as we know it, will fail.

The board of directors has listened carefully to our community feedback, collected throughout the past year. We have analyzed it, discussed it, had clarifying follow-up conversations, and organized it. As we move into the future, we feel strongly that our path must be navigated within the following 4 guideposts. We promise to:

1. Continue delivering a high-quality and affordable classical education that equips students for postsecondary success, and most importantly, prepares them for lives of sanctity and purpose.
2. Maintain Mount Royal’s Catholic culture and strong sense of community, even as it contemplates welcoming more families, some from other faith traditions, as well as potential expansion and future programmatic investments.
3. Strengthen relationships: with families, with faculty, with alumni.

These first three promises are things that I believe we do well already as a school community. Our promise is to not lose sight of these fundamental principles. Much of our strategic discussion has centered around the fourth promise, which is to **manage growth wisely**.

We have seen some interesting changes over the last 3 years in demographics, and in the overall education funding landscape in NH. These changes have affected our school. Most of the change has been positive. We think that there is an opportunity to use these changes to bring more stability to the life of our school. This would involve building some reserves that could be used to fund capital

improvements, attract and retain more talented teachers, and improve programs that will help our students to be more successful. The meat of our Strategic plan addresses these issues.

A primary focus of the strategic plan is how exactly to go about expanding our campus footprint. To be clear, we are not looking at doubling the size, but rather at options for accommodating measured growth and improving the quality of the footprint. Our carrying capacity currently is around 230 students. We are not far from that number, and anticipate that we may have some space constraints moving forward. The plan calls for the board to convene a capital planning committee to come together, evaluate our options and plan for measured growth while we build financial reserves. If you are interested in participating in this committee, and feel that you have some experience or skills that could assist in this process, please let Mr. Tremblay know, as we will be convening this committee soon.

Finally, as you take time to look through the goals and plans that we have set, I encourage you all to think about the role that you personally will assume in helping fulfill these goals. Our school is not just our faculty and staff. It certainly is not just our board of directors. It isn't even just our students. It is made up of every single one of these individuals, as well as each of you, the beloved members of our community. Without all of us contributing our talents, our time, and our devotion, Mount Royal Academy would not be what it is today, and won't be anything special tomorrow; but with our efforts, it will carry on into the future being the beacon of light that it was created to be. Thank you all for the part you play in this great mission! Let us hope that 25 years from now one of our own kids will be standing here speaking to the Mount Royal Academy community of the future; one that is an even bigger, better, and brighter beacon than it is today. God bless you all! - Bernie Towne, Chair of Strategic Planning Committee