

Catholic School Improvement Learning Cycle 2016 – 2017

St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School

MISSION STATEMENT

At St. Aloysius Gonzaga Catholic Secondary School it is our common purpose as Catholic Christian believers that students will be given every opportunity to fulfill their true potential spiritually, academically, athletically and socially. It is our belief that as nurturing educators our students will model themselves in the image of Jesus Christ. They will be caring, respectful and responsible individuals. They will develop a passion for learning and a belief in justice, generosity and forgiveness.

We, the students, parents, staff and community of St. Aloysius Gonzaga believe in the gospel values of Faith, Hope, Love, Peace and Service.

We believe in the intrinsic worth of each individual.

We believe that all have the ability and the need to learn and to succeed.

We believe that the diversity of our community should be honoured, protected and celebrated.

We believe that a safe and welcoming environment is an entitlement of every student.

We believe in engendering a culture of excellence, community involvement and leadership opportunities.

We at Gonzaga are committed to this vision of faith and learning.

MOTTO

For The Greater Glory of God

CATHOLIC FOCUS

St. Aloysius Gonzaga Catholic Secondary School is a vibrant community consisting of 1750 students and 150 staff members. The school was established in 2001 and, after moving from its initial facility, has been a part of the vibrant Erin Mills, Churchill Meadows and Streetsville communities. The school building is a “shared-use facility” that partners with the City of Mississauga, providing up-to-date classroom facilities, a 22 000 sq ft library, an Olympic-size pool and exercise and meeting rooms, creating a hub of activity that supports the educational, recreational, and healthy lifestyle of our community.

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In addition, our school has had a history of providing academic programming to meet the diverse learning needs of the students within our school community and the larger Dufferin-Peel community. Along with traditional classroom instruction, we are proud to offer an extensive technology curriculum as well as the Career Path (school to work) program, the Autism Spectrum Disorder diploma support program, Advanced Placement courses and the Extended French program.

The geographic proximity of the school to our Parish, Merciful Redeemer, has helped to create close ties between the school and parish communities. Through the guidance of our Pastor, Associate Pastor, Chaplaincy Team Leader and Youth Minister, we have fostered a connection between our school and Parish that allows for a richer development and more meaningful expression of our Catholic Faith.

Furthermore, the intentional inclusion of our parents in all aspects of school life and the active participation of our trustees in our school community has forged a strong and meaningful relationship among all the major stake holders in Catholic education.

Working together, we have been able to foster a culture focused on student achievement, success and well-being. Furthermore, the personal development of our students as meaningful contributors to the greater community reflects our school motto - "For the Greater Glory of God".

In support of the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board's Catholic Board Improvement Learning Cycle, St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School is further committed to:

- Deepening the understanding, appreciation and practice of the Catholic Christian lifestyle, with Jesus as role model;
- Aligning a school-wide approach to Catholicity, whereby all educational practices are implemented through a Catholic lens;
- Developing students who are fully alive in Christ, not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes and actions.
- As a diverse educational community responding to God's call, Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School fosters and nourishes an inclusive atmosphere rooted in tradition and scripture while:
 - Being authentic witnesses to our Catholic Faith;
 - Being responsible stewards of God's grace in the world;
 - Respecting human dignity;
 - Modelling all learners after Jesus, as ministers of compassion.

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DUFFERIN PEEL'S STRATEGIC SYSTEM PLAN CORE PRIORITIES

CATHOLICITY

How does the school community model, celebrate and nourish gospel values in the teaching and learning of our Christ-centered programs and services?

The St. Aloysius Gonzaga community is a faith-filled Catholic school that celebrates gospel values through formal instruction in religion classes as well as school-based events and the promotion of positive interactions between all community members. In addition to the celebration of school and class masses, grade retreats and morning reflections, student and staff nurture adherence to the gospel values through a conscious integration of the Catholic faith into the everyday curriculum. An exceptional example of this is the incorporation of scriptural visual aids into math lessons. Classrooms and office areas are also home to sacred spaces to constantly remind us of the presence of God in our daily lives and all classes and meetings begin with a prayer. Further reminders of our faith are the faith-based posters and artwork throughout the facility. These elements will increase with the building revitalization currently underway. The Virtues program and the Catholic Graduate Expectations, already integrated into the curriculum, will both be significant elements of this revitalization.

A key element of the modelling of gospel values in the Gonzaga community is the Chaplaincy Leader. Many of the faith Development initiatives are coordinated through the Chaplaincy Leader and her team of Prayer Warriors, Adult Faith Ambassadors and the Prefect Board of Directors. As the coordinator of the Sharelife program, the Eucharistic Ministry, Student Lectors and the Salesien Retreat program, the Chaplaincy Leader's role supports and promotes the Catholic vision of our school community. Gonzaga also acknowledges the liturgical calendar, pays special attention to the rosary and creates a Book of Life every November. In addition, the annual Christmas basket initiative, the Social Justice Trip to the Dominican Republic and Catholic Education week combine to show our Catholic Faith in action. Finally the Music ministry and the Christian Leadership Mentorship Program clearly indicate that Gonzaga truly is a faith-filled community.

CATHOLIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Summary of the school's most recent (2015-2016) EQAO Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

- Grade 9 Academic 93% of students at or above Provincial Standard
- Grade 9 Applied 61% of students at or above Provincial Standard

Summary of the school's most recent (2015-2016) Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

- Grade 10 Literacy 93% of students at or above Provincial Standard

Describe how the school fosters the continuous development of all through a caring, safe and inclusive environment.

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St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary is School is a very safe, caring and inclusive environment for both staff and students. The two major programs in the school that foster this atmosphere are the House System and 'Safe at Gonzaga', our Wellbeing group. The House System, in existence since the inception of the school, sorts incoming Grade 9 students into different Houses (Strength, Truth, Perseverance for example) in order to help build a sense of identity and connection. The House System is the vehicle by which activities like the House Olympics and leadership programs are delivered. The extremely popular Prefect and Junior Leader programs that run through the House System are perfect examples of how student voices are encouraged and listened to at Gonzaga. This reality allows students to feel connected and safe in our community. Students are assigned points based on positive contributions throughout the year and the entire system culminates in the extraordinary House Gala event towards the end of the year.

Safe at Gonzaga, the other major student wellbeing initiative at the school, promotes events and activities like Mental Health Mondays, the White Rose Campaign, Bullying Awareness and Prevention week and Speak-out presentations. By using daily announcements and posters and sponsoring guest speakers around the important issue of digital citizenship and Social Media, Safe at Gonzaga successfully promotes the consistent message that students belong at Gonzaga and have an impact on the safety and security that all of us feel.

The sense of belonging and security begins for students before they ever even enter the doors of the school! The Grade 8 Parents' Night, Gr. 8 Shadow Day, Grade 8 Boys and Girls Night in as well as guidance transition visits to elementary schools plant the seeds of connection to the greater Gonzaga community as soon as students indicate they will be a part of this community. There is also a Welcome Breakfast for all students new to the school in Grades 10, 11 and 12.

The celebration of the diversity of learners in our community is evidenced in many ways. In addition to the Academic Awards Night and Honour Roll breakfast to celebrate academic achievement at all levels, the Skills Canada competitions, ASD (our autism support program) Barbeque, CareerPath Orientation Evening, the Empower Language program, the Advanced Placement program and extensive preparation for EQAO Math and Literacy tests clearly display the commitment that our community has to ensuring that every student feels success and the sense of belonging and security that comes with that feeling. Black History Month events and a commitment to Native Studies reveals Gonzaga's commitment to cultural diversity as well. The Arts program at Gonzaga also assists in the development of this sentiment by organizing concerts, drama competitions, Coffee Houses, Christmas Carols and musical instruction visits to feeder schools. In addition, students of all athletic abilities are provided the opportunity to participate in Intramural activities that are run throughout the year.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How does the school demonstrate that it values the involvement of community through partnerships and collaboration?

St. Aloysius Gonzaga's status as a shared-use facility allows us the opportunity to develop strong-community relations with the City of Mississauga and many other educational stake-holders including Erin Mills Connects. The site is the centre of activity for a large part of the Erin Mills community. This is evidenced by the yearly Blood Donor clinics, MADD Presentations and Reader's Theatre.

The Specialist High Skills Major programs, the Co-op, CareerPath Co-op programs and our annual Career Fair connect our students and community and allow them to engage with local businesses in a constructive way. The Take Our Kids to Work program, guest speakers and our DECA club assist in this as well. Gonzaga's strong music program also engages in various ways with the community. The Music for the Elderly program, elementary school

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visits and community performances all contribute to the fabric of the community and are rich experiences for students.

Finally, Gonzaga's connection to the community and its commitment to social justice combine to create such worthy efforts like the prefect charities, donation drives to Canadian Food for Children, the Christmas Basket donations through the St. Vincent DePaul Society, the Terry Fox Run, the Inside Ride and disaster relief initiatives. The March for life and the Ordinandi Luncheon are exceptional events that allow our students to connect with our faith at a different level. In addition Gonzaga hosts the Day of Hope and the Shining Stars tournament for the family of schools; an extraordinary event that gives students of all abilities the opportunity to compete in fun events!

PARISH – HOME – SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Describe how the school demonstrates strong partnerships and collaboration among Parish, Home and School are based on mutual respect rooted in our lived Catholic Faith.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga CSS has always been the beneficiary of a strong relationship with the local Parish and an active parent community. The physical proximity of Merciful Redeemer parish to St. Aloysius Gonzaga is a key factor in establishing and maintaining the Parish-Home-School relationship. The whole school masses that occur four times a year are the most obvious example of this. To watch the entire school safely cross the street to attend mass is a very tangible and visible sign of our connection to the Parish. In addition, the parish priests come to Gonzaga to celebrate class masses as well as to engage in the Sacrament of reconciliation throughout the year. The relationship between the parish and the school is also evidenced by the annual tradition of a Graduation Mass the connection between the school and the various youth groups at the church including Life teen and the Alpha Program. Layered upon that is Gonzaga's Catholic School Council. A comparatively large committee, the group is eager for information and to share their opinion regarding the direction of the school. The recently completed 'Bread of Life' mural in the main entryway was sponsored by the school council is symbolic of the strong connection between church home and school that exists at Gonzaga. Our close relationship with our three Trustees confirms the Parish-Home-School link that helps to make St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School the exceptional community that it is.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Describe how the school is committed to healthy and safe learning and working environments that enhance well-being, engagement and achievement.

The shared facility that incorporates St Aloysius Secondary school and the Erin Meadows Community Centre combined with our proximity to Merciful Redeemer Parish provides a unique setting that allows our staff to nourish mind, body and soul. The existence of swimming and library facilities at the community centre is ideal and allows us to run a swimming course for our physed class and have access to extraordinary library resources. As for the school itself, we are blessed to have an extensive presence of custodial and maintenance personnel at the school for extended hours. This allows staff and students to fully utilize the facility and build a sense of well-being and community that goes well beyond the traditional school day. The construction of a new resource room with attached conference room and office has created a more open and inviting atmosphere for students who benefit from the support provided by our Academic Resource teachers. This year, the school has created a Building Revitalization Committee to examine and revitalize the aesthetics of the school. The committee has recommended an improved announcement system through tv broadcasts, a painting of the main hall of the school and a general tidying of the walls and common areas of the school in order to restore a sense of harmony. Over the next few years, the committee is promoting a unified vision of the common areas of the school.

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In addition, ongoing and proactive Health and Safety monthly inspections and reviews also assist in keeping the physical environment safe and productive.

TECHNOLOGY

How is the school committed to a responsible approach in addressing the technology needs of our learners in a global context?

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the level and quality of technology available to the students and staff of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. The Digital Citizenship and Social Media presentations that accompanied the rollout of the new WiFi have laid the foundation for the appropriate use of technology as an educational tool. In addition, the installation of digital projectors in classrooms as well as existing Smartboards provides staff with the tools necessary to engage students in a productive use of technology to further learning. In an effort to increase the level of communication regarding events and activities, the school is in the process of re-distributing existing television monitors throughout the common areas of the school and cabling them back to a source that can be easily updated with current school information.

The community has embraced technology by maintaining an active and dynamic presence on the Internet and through social media outlets like Twitter. In classes, a significant number of teachers have adopted web-based supports and apps like Office 365, Desire 2 Learn (a blended learning platform) as well as Turn It in, Kahoot and Remind to help manage student learning and assist in various forms of evaluation. On a larger scale, My Blueprint and DPLite are two programs that assist students in choosing courses and staff in identifying and responding student learning needs respectively. In addition, many school processes have been moved to the internet to improve accessibility, efficiency and accountability. These processes include piloting the Online Payment System, Online Surveys and online reporting.

SACREDNESS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

How does the school encourage the respectful and sustainable environmental practices of reducing, reusing and recycling?

As a Platinum School in the Eco-Schools Certification program, St. Aloysius Gonzaga is an exemplary community regarding respecting the sacredness of the environment. Good On One Side paper re-use, an Electronic Waste Drive as well as monitored recycling are all programs coordinated and run by the very active Green Scene club at the school. This group of dedicated staff and student always keep ecological justice at the forefront through these initiatives and many more. Some of the recent successful initiatives include water-bottle filling stations, a Butterfly Garden, and a MiWay Transit-promotion event. Recently, a new photocopy tracking system combined with increased access to technology has led to the reduction in paper use in curriculum delivery. For several years Gonzaga's Green Scene has successfully participated in events like Earth Hour, National Sweater Day, Lights Out Friday and Ride Your Bike to School Day. Gonzaga is also home to an Environmental Specialist High Skills Majors whose students take a battery of courses and engage in Co-op placements designed to prepare them for careers in the growing field of Environmental Sustainability. All of these initiatives reflect Gonzaga's commitment to sustainable environmental practices.

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