

❖ Why is St. Michael School transitioning to a Catholic Classical Curriculum?

St. Michael School is a wonderful school, dedicated to preparing students to be well-educated young people of service who live out the gospel mandate to love God and to love others. We have been an important part of our community and its educational system for over 140 years, and we appreciate the support of St. Michael the Archangel Church and the parishes of the Holy Cross Community. After much research, we believe that a transition to a Catholic Classical Curriculum is in the best interests of our students and further refines and develops St. Michael School's mission: to engage students in a program of Christian formation, characterized by a challenging and enriching curriculum in a nurturing environment.

❖ What is a Catholic Classical School?

Catholic Classical Education is a successful method that is historically based and rooted in the Catholic faith and tradition. It educates based on instilling a sense of wonder, curiosity, and love of learning in students along with a desire to seek what is true, good, and beautiful. Classes are naturally integrated so students see the relationships between what they are currently learning, giving them a greater understanding and foundation in all subjects. Students excel in the classical method because it builds on their natural intellectual curiosity and development. Children learn in different ways at different ages. In the earlier grades, their brains develop in such a way that they can memorize and be taught large amounts of information. This period is referred to as the "grammar stage" of education. As the students develop, the methods of teaching them do as well. The "logic stage" of education begins as students approach middle school, when their ability to reason develops. Logic, critical thinking, debate, and reasoning skills are taught while delving deeper into the information students mastered in earlier grades. This type of education provides a foundation for advanced studies in all disciplines. The focus is on students becoming responsible citizen-leaders of the world who continue to grow in wisdom and knowledge while retaining a love of learning throughout their lives.

❖ What are the upcoming steps?

The transition to a Catholic Classical Curriculum will take place over several years. The curriculum will not be changed as much as it will be enhanced. To be true to our Catholic identity and mission, during the first year we will focus on faith integration. Also during the first year, we will be enhancing the curriculum to incorporate an emphasis on classical literature. Latin will be taught in all grade levels, including Kindergarten. The remaining classes will be enhanced and integrated over a two to three year timeframe.

❖ **Why Latin?**

Latin is taught to all grades beginning in Kindergarten to provide a deeper understanding of all languages. Latin study is also beneficial to the teaching of logic, grammar and vocabulary. Latin teaches students to break down sentences into their grammatical components and helps expand students' vocabulary in both English and other languages.

❖ **What about technology?**

Catholic Classical Education works well in 21st century classrooms. Technology is a tool that can be used to great benefit in education, but it should be kept in the perspective that critical thinking and the development of ethical and moral discernment is of paramount importance. We will still continue to use laptops and white boards in our classrooms as educational tools, but we will also be using other methods to ensure every student has a well-rounded education.

❖ **Will we need new staff?**

We already have excellent teachers and staff who are invested deeply in the success of our students. The faculty will use their professional development half days to plan the integration of new methods and content into the curriculum.

❖ **Are there any other Catholic Classical Schools in the area?**

We will be the first school with a Catholic Classical Curriculum in the Diocese of Norwich. This model not only attracts schools throughout the country, but also is attracting students back to Catholic schools.

❖ **Will the cost of tuition change?**

Tuition for the 2017-2018 academic year will remain the same as the previous academic year.

❖ **Are there websites or resources I can read on this further?**

The following website further explains Catholic Classical Education:

- ❖ <https://www.catholicliberaleducation.org>