



St. Labre Indian School

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2029

Our Mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Catholic Tradition, by providing quality education which celebrates our Catholic faith and embraces Native American cultures, primarily the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Tribes, so that Native American individuals and communities of Southeastern Montana are empowered to attain self-sufficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Special Thanks

To the staff, families and communities of
St. Charles Mission School,
Pretty Eagle Catholic Academy,
St. Labre Indian School,
and to the St. Labre Donors
and employees, for their
countless hours of hard work
which contributed to this plan.

Thank You!

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BACKGROUND

St. Labre Indian School began in the late 1800s as one of the first efforts to help Native Americans who were displaced as a result of homesteading and violence in what would later become Southeastern Montana. Nearly 140 years later, St. Labre continues to serve the people of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian reservations.

When enrollment and funding diminished and it seemed that St. Labre would close its doors, our predecessors initiated a fundraising program, first, to save the school and later, to expand its capabilities. Over the intervening years, St. Labre grew to encompass two schools on the Crow Reservation and an active human services component that now serve approximately 500 students and many hundreds of adults each year.

Our Strategic Plan, coupled with our New Ambition, will guide our efforts to create a future where our students and communities are Proud, Prosperous and Free. Moving forward, it is not enough to have begun or to merely survive, we must expand as an organization and school to enhance our ability to effectively attain this mission.

The Mission of St. Labre calls on us to strengthen the Native communities we serve by

providing exceptional education and human services built on the foundations of Catholic Faith and Native American cultures. As we envision our future, we recognize that we are once again at a critical juncture for change and acknowledge the importance of taking purposeful steps toward the realization of the mission of St. Labre. Generation after generation has, so far, failed to build sustainable nations for the Northern Cheyenne and Crow. Still today, too many kids are not ready for the world and our children and our communities struggle to contend with loss of spirit and entrenched poverty. As a long-standing institution, built on helping our communities, we must evolve in our approach so that we are more effective than ever before.

We choose to create stronger, lasting change by enacting this Strategic Plan and New Ambition. They will guide our efforts toward the goals and methods collectively acknowledged by our students, staff, and stakeholders as the most critical and most effective means of creating self-sufficiency in the Native American communities we serve so that they may become Proud, Prosperous and Free.



THE PROCESS

In 2016, the Board of Directors decided to broaden the strategic planning process, working in conjunction with as many stakeholders and community members as possible in order to benefit from their collective knowledge and wisdom. This Strategic Plan encapsulates the thoughts, concerns and hopes of hundreds of participants, including members of the community, parents, staff, faculty, members of the Board of Directors and our donors.

A Steering Committee, which included representatives from key groups, was chartered by the Board to lead the process. The committee met for over 16 months to gather, understand, and disseminate information on the path to creating the strategic plan. Their work began with an analysis by key leaders to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (known as a SWOT analysis). This was followed by surveys of staff, community and donors; the hosting of stakeholder meetings; and the utilization of topic teams and expert advisers, all of which led to this Strategic Plan.

The goals and ideas developed for the Strategic Plan were the result of the collective participation of nearly 500 individuals who care



The goals and ideas developed are the result of the collective participation of nearly 500 individuals who care deeply about the positive results of St. Labre Indian School.

deeply about St. Labre and the communities that we serve. Now, our staff will take yearly steps to accomplish these goals for St. Labre and the Northern Cheyenne and Crow communities.

The devastating impact of COVID-19 on our students, communities and staff made clear the need to expand what St. Labre does to effect significant and durable improvements within the communities that it serves. Our staff worked to develop a new ambition, one that would tie us together as the world seemed to fall apart, in order to inspire the St. Labre family and donor community and re-energize the mission of St. Labre.

FUN FACTS!

- The Strategic Goals are the result of the collected comments and ideas from staff and community members during dozens of meetings.
- This Strategic Planning process took place over almost two years and involved thousands of hours of work.
- The St. Labre Board of Directors decided to take as much time as needed to ensure the input of the community and staff.
- The devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the need to reignite our efforts to help those we serve and led to the development of our New Ambition.

NEW AMBITION

Nurturing Education. Nurturing Wellbeing. Nurturing Enterprise.

St. Labre needs to be more than a school. We need to be at the epicenter of change. We need to be nurturing our nations. To support each child as an individual student until together with our Northern Cheyenne and Crow communities, we have built a generation that will thrive.

OVERALL PLAN OUTCOME

St. Labre embraces this opportunity to significantly increase its impact on our communities.

We aim not just to sustain our service to the students, their families and their communities, but to expand our impact and increase our momentum. As an organization with nearly 140 years of service, St. Labre has demonstrated time and again a passion and dedication to serving Native American peoples. By working to identify the goals in this Strategic Plan, St. Labre continues to actively pursue and employ the best methods of serving the Northern Cheyenne and Crow people in their efforts to attain self-sufficiency while retaining their unique cultural identities.

By enacting this plan, St. Labre will reach, more effectively, members of the communities we serve. We continue to focus on nurturing the bright futures our children deserve by building on the visions of our ancestors, leaders like Alaxchiiyahush (Plenty Coups) and Vóóhéhéve (Morning star, more commonly known as Dull Knife). These great men straddled a time of cataclysmic change and responded with wisdom, ingenuity, and dedication so that future generations of their peoples would thrive in a changing world to enjoy prosperity and embrace their cultures in peace.

Like the teepees of the Plains People, our mission must have strong base poles. At St. Labre, our mission is built upon the foundation poles of Education, Native cultures (Northern

Cheyenne and Crow) and Catholic faith. Unless all are strong, the teepee will not withstand the storms that come. When each base pole is strong, the St. Labre lodge will have the strength to help the Native communities we serve flourish with prosperity and dignity.

Centered on the Mission statement, itself deeply rooted in the mission of Jesus and the visions of chiefs Dull Knife and Plenty Coups, we will: deliver the best education possible to our students, offer greater support for our communities and families, develop, recruit and retain expert staff and will continue to provide functional and up-to-date facilities.

These goals are attainable with cohesive efforts as a community and as an organization. Our staff, faculty and administration, together with our Board and donors, will work ceaselessly toward implementing our strategies with focus and with determination.



DID YOU KNOW?

St. Labre uses the image of the teepee to keep our organization centered.

Our history focuses on the combined strengths of the different people and groups we serve.

We continue to grow and improve our ability to strengthen our community through Strategic Planning and active community participation.



STRATEGIC GOALS

Our strategic goals advance the New Ambition of St. Labre by helping the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribes attain self-sufficiency through education and services centered on Catholic teachings and Native Cultures. Key areas were developed during the Strategic Planning Process to focus our efforts moving forward. These goal areas include: Education, Human Resources, Native Languages, Outreach Services, Facilities, Finance, and Fundraising. The goals were synthesized through the participation of parents, staff, faculty and community members. As we embark on our New Ambition, we revisited our Strategic Goals to focus on what it will take for those we serve to be Proud, Prosperous and Free.

These goals represent the efforts of many individuals who care for the success of St. Labre and the lasting impact of our endeavors. As a community of hope, we are dedicated to overcoming the challenges set before us.



By achieving these goals, we will make significant strides toward creating brighter futures and self-sufficiency for our students and our communities.

Education:

Every one of our children receives the education, academic or vocational, they require.

Human Resources:

Recruit, develop and retain outstanding employees.

Native Languages:

Be a Leader in Native Language Preservation & Revitalization.

Outreach Services:

Strengthen families and communities that we serve.



Facilities:

Maintain and build facilities that meet functional requirements, incorporate environmental considerations, and promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff, and tenants.

Fundraising:

Increase funds available for programs and capital expenses.

Finance:

Ensure long-term financial stability and viability.

EDUCATION

Every one of our children receives the education, academic or vocational, they require.

As we strengthen the foundations of Education, Native cultures (Northern Cheyenne and Crow), and Catholic faith, St. Labre will provide an education that helps each student find success, not only in their academic pursuits but throughout their lives. St. Labre will develop more effective curricula and work with our faculty to better meet the individual educational needs of our students. Our updated curricula will align with core subject standards while integrating the Catholic faith and Native cultures.

Moving forward, we will track the effectiveness of our efforts through standardized and established assessments to ensure our students will have a wide field of opportunities and choices available to them upon graduation from St. Labre. We also will place special emphasis on character education to mold

individuals with moral and ethical values to guide them in bettering their communities, nation and world.

We believe self-sufficiency is strengthened by embracing Native culture and Catholic faith, while not excluding the unique faith of each individual. As each generation of students masters essential knowledge and skills and develops a strong sense of cultural and spiritual identity, they will add to a growing narrative of success for their families, communities and future generations.

Accomplishing this goal is imperative to the success of our students and rests on finding and developing the best educators available. Therefore, we must also focus a portion of our efforts on recruitment, professional development and training.

Measurable Targets:

- Each student will demonstrate at least one year of growth in Reading and Math in each academic year as measured by the MAP assessment.
- Every student will be on grade level in Reading and Math by the end of the 4th grade.
- By the end of school year 2023-2024, the composite Catholic Identity score for each school as measured by the Assessment of Religious Knowledge (ARK) test will increase by 10%.
- By the end of the 2029 school year, we will have completed and implemented a comprehensive preK-12 curriculum of Essential Understandings about Native American tribes, with a special emphasis on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribes.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Recruit, develop and retain outstanding employees.

Strengthening the effectiveness of St. Labre as a Roman Catholic educational institution dedicated to serving Native Americans requires outstanding personnel. St. Labre faces the challenges of isolation, serving and living on or near chronically-impooverished Indian reservation communities, and relatively-lower pay scales plaguing rural schools' recruitment and retention efforts.

By enacting this goal we commit to attracting, developing and retaining employees who are competent and experienced, and who will devote themselves to understanding and appreciating the Catholic faith and unique cultures of the Crow and Northern Cheyenne tribal nations.

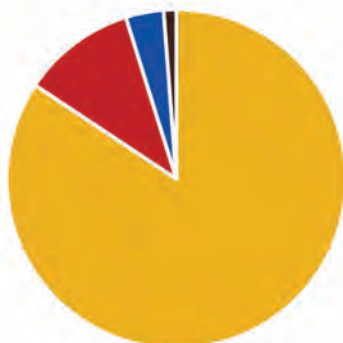
To achieve these objectives, we will implement best practices to recruit and develop outstanding employees, locally and from around the country, and create an attractive environment where employees are competitively compensated and the work and its outcomes are part of the reward.

As an educational and Catholic institution, our students are encouraged to enter into teaching or other religious or lay vocations



that serve the community, thereby strengthening the future stability of St. Labre and the communities we serve.

2018-19 Teaching Staff



■ Certified ■ Provisional License
■ Class 7 certified ■ Status Pending

Measurable Targets:

- Completed comprehensive employee development program.
- Improve employee recruitment program to increase number of qualified applicants to 2-3 per vacancy.
- Increase staff satisfaction.
- increase staff retention and decrease vacancy rate.

NATIVE LANGUAGES

Be a leader in Native Language Preservation and Revitalization

St. Labre will strengthen and expand its work to preserve and revitalize the languages of both the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribes. With the population of fluent Native speakers rapidly diminishing, particularly among the Northern Cheyenne, St. Labre will intensify its language preservation and revitalization efforts. Absent the concerted efforts of St. Labre and other entities, it is estimated that the Northern Cheyenne Language will lose the remainder of its fluent speakers in little more than a decade and the Crow Language will cease to be spoken within the next three generations.

Preserving and revitalizing Native languages has the added effect of preserving the unique cultures of the Native communities we serve. Language is an essential element to keeping

a culture thriving, maintaining cultural identity and fortifying tribal sovereignty. Revitalizing the languages also provides an opportunity to heal the trauma in our communities, some of which was inflicted by organizations like St. Labre, and to bring generations and families together.

A strong cultural identity has been shown to give students a sense of belonging, community, and connection that, all other things being equal, increases their confidence, identity, resilience and acts to springboard their success. St. Labre will join together with key experts, tribal members and community groups to create new language learning materials, curricula and effective teaching methodologies.

Measurable Targets:

- Develop a program to provide a means of increasing language use among families while also assisting with basic needs.
- Develop interactive media, applications, video, audio, and print, to engage the students and communities in language learning and fluency.
- Curricula established, which meets OPI Standards of instruction, for Northern Cheyenne and Crow. (2029)
- Indigenous Languages Instructors Association (ILIA) established.
- Native Language Endowment Fund Initiated - Goal \$10MM. (2029)



OUTREACH SERVICES

Strengthen the families and communities that we serve.

Strengthening families and communities is a large and complex task. St. Labre, with its combination of education, Native culture and Catholic faith, is uniquely positioned to make a significant impact in the region. Our goal is to provide Outreach Services in underserved areas where we can most effectively address immediate needs while developing methods that better promote self-sufficiency.

We will explore expanding to serve key locations with essential necessities such as

food, heating and warm clothes for individuals in need on both the Northern Cheyenne and Crow reservations.

We will expand our Work Incentive Program which provides employment training, interview skills, resume building and instruction in interpersonal skills at work to enhance opportunities for self-sufficiency for the families we serve.

Measurable Targets:

- Reestablish and expand the Work Incentive Program.
- Explore expanding child care program to the Lame Deer community.

DID YOU KNOW?

The weekend Backpack Program, now Miracle Meals, was created to make sure our students have nutritious food to eat while they are away from our schools. Each year, this program provides 8,000 backpack bags to our students!

St. Labre Youth and Family Services hosts classes, provides Thanksgiving dinners, operates the Food Pantry and Clothes Room, and manages our Work Incentive Program.

Our Work Incentive Program provides meaningful opportunities for community members to work and earn items they need the most.





FACILITIES

Maintain and build facilities that meet functional requirements, incorporate environmental considerations, and promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, staff, and tenants.

Since our start in a three-room cabin in 1884, St. Labre built and expanded our campuses one building at a time in direct correlation to the needs of our students and communities. We provide campuses and facilities which create a safe and nurturing environment for students to grow. The condition of the physical environment sends a message to students of the importance of education and how much it is valued by their community.

To sustain and improve these assets, St. Labre will evaluate all buildings and equipment by age and condition. In order to increase our capacity to serve, we will address the need to repair and expand our campuses. Qualified outside resources will be used to determine the cost effectiveness of continued repairs compared to replacement with new structures and equipment.

Based on the results we will begin an aggressive program of building and infrastructure upgrades based on priority and availability of funds. By evaluating and addressing the specific needs of each campus location, while keeping the long-range goals in mind, St. Labre will effectively



prepare for decades of continued service to our communities.

Through careful planning, we will be able to reduce our annual spending on repairs and begin taking steps toward energy efficient, sustainable campuses that set the landscape for environmentally conscientious communities.

Measurable Targets:

- Reduce the backlog of capital improvements needed at each campus. (2029)
- Design a new Pretty Eagle Catholic Academy school building which meets budget constraints, state education standards, and incorporates cultural and Catholic values and aesthetics. (2029)
- Secure title to property adjoining St. Charles Mission School for future needs. (2029)
- Develop and implement an employee housing program that is appealing to current and prospective employees, updates aged housing units, and reduces the backlog of needed repairs. (2029)

FUNDRAISING

Increase funds available for program and capital expenses.

Increased net revenue provides St. Labre with the ability to expand programs and fund capital projects. In order to best serve our communities, St. Labre will expand and diversify our fundraising efforts, embracing the understanding that fundraising is the source of our ability to serve our students and the Northern Cheyenne and Crow tribal communities.

Over 60 years ago, fundraising kept the doors of St. Labre open when closure of our school seemed imminent. In the time since, fundraising has provided education and services to our students, tribal communities, and staff.

Our goal is to increase net fundraising revenue to fund existing programs, capital

improvements, and initiate new programs. These funds will come from various and more diverse revenue streams, including major gifts, grant writing, planned giving, digital and direct mail and capital campaigns, and other new and developing strategies. St. Labre will evaluate changing donor demographics and giving behaviors and adapt to them so that new generations of donors are inspired to join in our work.

By actively cultivating, soliciting, and producing sustainable and achievable revenue for the organization, we provide funds to fulfill the goals of the Strategic Plan.

Measurable Targets:

- Improve donor satisfaction and retention by 8% through quality offers, and provide an omni-channel experience.
- Improve fundraising efficiency ratios by 5%.
- Increase net income to meet the financial needs of the organization.
- Complete feasibility study for capital campaign for building Pretty Eagle school.

WHY FUNDRAISING?

In the early 1950s, St. Labre Indian School faced imminent closure. Responding to requests from tribal elders, St. Labre expanded a new Direct Mail fundraising program that raised enough money to keep the doors to the school open. In time, the fundraising efforts were so successful that St. Labre was able to add two other schools to its system; St. Charles Mission Grade School and Pretty Eagle Catholic Academy, and was able to make large-scale updates to its campuses.

St. Labre has survived almost entirely from the money raised because of the generosity of donors

throughout the United States. Why fundraising? Fundraising allows us to be tuition free, spiritually free and to be autonomous, independent and self-governing. Every light, air conditioner, door repair, and teaching position is the result of the collective efforts of the hard-working staff at St. Labre and the incredible generosity of our donors.

Without our donors, St. Labre would close completely.

The Development Department faces incredible challenges. As we work to combat the ever-increasing costs of reaching

our donors via mail across the United States, our development staff research innovative means of increasing our communication channels and improving our ability to raise funds. With an increase in grants, planned gifts, major gifts, and digital and media campaigns, our hope rests on the receptive hearts and minds of our donors across the country.

We fundraise to carry out the mission of St. Labre to serve and to move our local communities to become Proud, Prosperous and Free, connecting our donors to God's work among the Northern Cheyenne and Crow peoples.



FINANCE

Ensure long-term financial stability and viability.

St. Labre's Development program has allowed us to provide an extraordinary level of support to our students and the community by raising funds for nearly 70 years. Our ability to provide a wide array of services and exceptional education depends on the mindful stewardship of our financial blessings. In order to achieve the goals envisioned by this plan, St. Labre will place a careful focus on protecting our ability to serve. We will evaluate and adapt our financial approach to support this Strategic Plan as an investment in a brighter future for our students.

Though there is always more we can do, development potential is not unlimited. We

will use financial modeling tools to evaluate and prioritize our ability to accomplish the goals in the Strategic Plan. We will ensure that the most important programs, program expansions and capital projects are supported by the organization's financial resources while maintaining healthy reserves.

Each goal, program and need defined during the strategic planning process likely will require increased and well-managed finances. As we move forward into improving our ability to serve our students and communities, we must use expert knowledge and adaptive methods to ensure the long-term financial stability and viability of the organization.

Measurable Targets:

- To have a multi-year financial plan/model, with preliminary data, that can provide financial projections and test scenarios as needed.
- Determine the appropriate amount, each budget cycle, that could be used from the organization's investments to fund some of the strategic plan objectives.
- Research pros and cons of establishing and operating a for-profit arm of the organization to support the mission of St. Labre.
- Achieve a 1.5-year operating reserve. (2029)



CONCLUSION

This plan will be our guide as we move forward as an organization. Our decisions and efforts for a brighter future will focus on what you, as a stakeholder, donor, participant, staff member, or parent participating in the planning process deemed the most important, essential goals to pursue.

**Thank you for taking
this journey with our
St. Labre family.**

To every parent, guardian, and family member who came to Stakeholder Meetings and sat for hours to help us determine the goals and needs of our communities, thank you. To the staff who took time out of their hectic work days to contribute to discussing the issues and challenges they face, thank you. To the donors who responded to surveys to help determine what issues were most important to fund, we cannot thank you enough.

We invite you to join us again in our efforts and to work with us to make certain these goals are met. It will take every member of the St. Labre family to make these goals a reality. We are stronger with your support. In fact, we couldn't accomplish our mission and New Ambition without each and every one of you.



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