



St. Mary's School



St Mary's School

Echuca

2021

Annual Report to the School Community



Registered School Number: 584

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Minimum Standards Attestation

I, Jasmine Ryan, attest that St Mary's School is compliant with:

- All of the requirements for the minimum standards and other requirements for the registration of schools as specified in *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)*, except where the school has been granted an exemption from any of these requirements by the VRQA
- Australian Government accountability requirements related to the 2021 school year under the *Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)* and the *Australian Education Regulations 2013 (Cth)*
- The Child Safe Standards prescribed in Ministerial Order No.870 - Child Safe Standards, Managing Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

24/03/2022

NOTE: The School's financial performance information has been provided to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and will be available for the community to access from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Governing Authority Report

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd identifies learning and teaching as two parts of the same action designed to ignite the 'spark of the divine' in every child. We seek to provide safe, supportive and secure environments that value diversity, promote care, respect and co-operation. In 2021 our schools went into overdrive once again to plan and prepare for a learning model that would respond to the continuing impact and uncertainty of Covid-19.

Bishop Shane established Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd in 2021 to assume the ownership and operation of Catholic schools which previously operated as an unincorporated body. This change in our governance structure coincides with a time of increasing challenges that call us to imagine new and inspiring structures that will meet the needs of a changing Church.

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd governance requirements meant that schools would now develop School Advisory Councils to support the principal and school Leadership Teams to ensure the smooth running of our schools and continue the life-giving relationship between our schools and parish communities.

During extremely challenging times our schools were able to maintain their focus on each child, implementing the Victorian Curriculum and the Sandhurst Source of Life Religious Education Curriculum while providing outstanding pastoral support both on-site and through remote learning.

Significant investment in new learning facilities and school infrastructure through the Catholic Capital Grants Program and the hard work of our school communities have ensured the provision of high-quality learning and teaching facilities for both staff and students.

I continue to be extremely grateful for the commitment and professionalism that is clearly identified by the efforts throughout 2021 of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd- our schools and personnel in the Catholic Education Office. They continue to work tirelessly for the students and families in our schools, bringing the 'spark of the divine' into focus every day.

Paul Desmond

Executive Director

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd

Our School Identity and Vision Statements

A faith community,
Learning together,
Spreading the Good News of Jesus through
Positive relationships,
Trust and love.

RESPECT others, self and the environment.

COURAGE to stand up and be strong even when it is hard.

Be INCLUSIVE of all, value difference.

Strive to ACHIEVE and be our best.

SERVE others with Jesus as our model.

CELEBRATE faith, achievements, all that life gives us.

School Overview

St. Mary's school was relocated to West Echuca from central Echuca in 2009 with an enrolment of 350. The newly constructed buildings were purposefully built to provide innovative and contemporary learning opportunities for students. Enrolments continue to be strong with prep intakes being consistently high. The 2021, enrolment figure is 620.

As a faith community we celebrate liturgically on a weekly basis with Year Level, Community and whole school Masses; Reconciliation for students from Years 3-6; special occasions and assemblies when restrictions allow. There is a strong sense of community evident, and parents are actively involved at many levels when they are able. The Diocesan "Source of Life" Core document and Religious Education Curriculum" forms the basis of our Religious Education program. The school is promoting Professional Learning Communities and Teams, encouraging teachers to work collaboratively to develop skills and knowledge that will enable them to provide highly engaging learning opportunities.

The school continues to focus on building the capacity of all teachers. Teachers are encouraged to attend appropriate professional learning and to share their newly acquired skills with others. The school continues to promote leadership at all levels, encouraging and supporting staff in their development.

The school continues to develop an Investigative Inquiry approach to learning across the school and encourages children to be active participants in the learning process. Data gathered at many levels, continues to inform our practice as we strive to maintain high academic standards

The school is extremely well resourced and the investment in buildings and technologies is significant, providing all students with a comprehensive learning environment.

Student wellbeing is included in every action plan. The Positive Behaviour in Schools (PBIS) continues to provide us with the strategies to be Respectful of Others, Self and the Environment. There is also a significant focus on supporting children with need and a special education co-ordinator, speech pathologist and an occupational therapist, provide expertise and advice to teachers and parents. Our school is a child safe school where All Students have a Right to Feel Safe and Be Safe All the Time.

Parents are valued and the school is committed to ensure communication between school and home is consistent and practical. Parents are invited to be active participants in their child's learning.

The School offers a comprehensive and varied curriculum, which is inclusive of specialist Performing, Visual Arts, Physical Education, Social Emotional Learning, Digital Technology and Indonesian subjects.

The school's Three-Year Future Direction Plan continues to inform the decision making at many levels.

St. Mary's takes great pride in its ability to provide for the needs of many. It has a commitment to best Learning and Teaching Practice and is very well supported by the Catholic Education Office Sandhurst.

Principal's Report

What an exceptional year this was once again. Restrictions continued for a second year and children were required to access remote learning for large periods. Camps, excursions, assemblies and fundraisers were mostly denied. Parents were unable to access the school site, and this is the one thing that impacted on our strong sense of community. In fact, our year one parents have not yet experienced school events such as assemblies and sports days on site.

I am very grateful to our parent community for their patience and understanding. They understood the challenges the school faced at this time, especially when we had active Covid cases at our school. They themselves, were dealing with their own individual circumstances and I acknowledge the sacrifices many made to be at home for their children.

I was extremely proud of the staff here at St. Mary's. They demonstrated resilience and adaptability as they committed wholeheartedly to provide for their students. Senior and Middle leaders were exceptional, providing ongoing instruction, guidance and a sense of calm.

It was a moment to celebrate when we managed to have all students back on site and the children embraced their renewed friendships with delight. I believe that this group of children will continue to be resilient and grateful people as a result of their experiences.

After 11 years, I made the decision to complete my time here as principal at the end of this year. I will look back on my time at St. Mary's with pride and satisfaction. I believe this school is a special place offering facilities and staff of the highest quality. I know that you can all look to the future with confidence.

Thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement.

Brendan Atley

School Advisory Council Report

The School Advisory Council is entrusted with a role of providing support and advice to the Principal along with the responsibility of assisting in implementing and monitoring the Future Directions Plan.

During the year, the Council primarily maintained the Future Directions Plan whilst supporting our leadership team during the again challenging Covid restrictions.

Late in the year the Council was requested to provide community feedback around our school's future leadership. The Council was pleased to be able to provide reflection on these matters. We look forward to a continuation of strong educational and faith outcomes for our students by retaining and building on the solid base established.

The School Council will continue to work towards improving the space available for play and learning, creating a safe and welcoming environment for all at St Mary's Echuca.

The significant contributions that our volunteers, parents, students and staff make, reflect in the student outcome of to achieve and be our best.

The Parents & Friends group again have assisted in growing our sense of community with such a wonderful contribution of events, I would like to congratulate and thank them on their achievements.

Vince Fusti

School Council Chairperson

Catholic Mission and Identity and Education in Faith

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To build the capacity of staff to plan for and participate in meaningful, relevant liturgies.
- To recognise the Sacred within daily life.
- Develop capacity of staff in the understanding of Scripture and the use of the Shared Christian Praxis
- To ensure consistent practices and procedures in R.E from P-6

Achievements

To build the capacity of staff to plan for and participate in meaningful, relevant liturgies.

Staff to plan Yr level & Community liturgies

Covid 19 with its Remote Learning blocks continued to present many challenges - particularly with this first goal.

As whole school and large gatherings were denied, the liturgy planning that support was presented by the Catholic Identity Leader to smaller groups using including using technology and presented to students and families as videos.

In Remote Learning we changed our approach and had a few liturgies live using Zoom technology to allow students at home to participate. Staff showed great flexibility and creativity in having students at home remain engaged.

In Term 4, regular scheduling of liturgies resumed with two classes at a time taking part. Once again staff showed flexibility and creativity in planning liturgies.

Staff to plan for and participate in staff and whole-school/class liturgies.

There were no staff or whole-school liturgies throughout the year - until our End of Year Staff Mass - which was enthusiastically planned by all teaching staff members - resulting in a meaningful, relevant intended outcome simply did not transpire.

Involve Middle Leaders in planning and preparing for Whole School Masses

To recognise the Sacred within daily life.

Model and strongly encourage the use of the Daily Examen across the school as a way of reflection on our day and to recognise God's presence in everyday life.

Once again Covid 19 had a part to play in the achievements around this goal and intended outcomes. Many teachers regularly used the Daily Examen as a way for students to reflect on their day and to recognise and be grateful for God's presence in everyday life.

To reinforce the use of Christian Meditation across the school.

Christian Meditation was used across many year levels as prayer - both with regular routines and throughout Remote Learning.

To ensure 2-3 mins of prayer every morning across the school and then a longer period of time 5-10 mins at another time each day.

Remote Learning actually assisted in ensuring that the initial 2-3 minutes of every day began in prayer for all students. The Catholic Identity Leader actually provided a brief prayer for each year level every morning. These prayers combined Christian Meditation with other prayer methods.

These prayers - often videos created by the Catholic Identity Leader, were received very well by both students and staff. These prayers concentrated upon recognising the Sacred within daily life - largely through the garden but also through animals, seasons, people, relationships, ups and downs, Scripture etc.

Prayer was scheduled across every class for the beginning of each day and staff, parents and students enjoyed this. It was beautiful to watch students at home meditating - eyes closed, still, in the moment and or adding to any discussion when prompted to share their responses or prayers.

As all prayer activities across the school were planned and presented by the Catholic Identity Leader, it meant that staff and students were exposed to a variety of different ways of praying and to a variety of resources in this area. This worked very well in terms of being able to model ways of praying to staff.

Develop capacity of staff in the understanding of Scripture and the use of the Shared Christian Praxis

Join Planning sessions regularly.

This intended outcome was achieved. Catholic Identity Leader joined planned planning sessions and it was constantly reiterated how important it is to ensure that Religious Education must be relateable to the lives of students, how important that students have an opportunity to name and reflect upon life experiences that are related to the unit in hand.

PLC and Staff Meeting time for PD on Scripture & Shared Christian Praxis.

This goal was not achieved as staff had so many new ways of being with Remote Learning, that there were other priorities.

Coaching & Mentoring for the use of Shared Christian Praxis - Modelling, Observing.

This goal too was difficult to achieve. Although there were some opportunities to model RE both 'live' and through 'Zoom'.

New Staff - Diocesan PD Source of Life

Catholic Identity Leader worked through PD with staff new to Source of Life.

Use of Scripture commentaries

Some staff are beginning to turn to Gospel commentaries, but this goal is not achieved across the board.

VALUE ADDED

There were many quality conversations with staff about how to ensure that Shared Christian Praxis was the prime methodology for RE even though this was made more difficult with Remote Learning.

The modelling of RE lessons was very helpful in assisting with developing the capacity of staff in using Shared Christian Praxis

To ensure consistent practices and procedures in R. E from P-6

Employment of Catholic Identity [including Rel Educ Coach for 6 hours per week].

This was working well in Term 1, but then went into obeyance when our Catholic Identity Leader was required to take Leave.

General Value Added

Caritas K's

- Sock it to Poverty - brilliantly ran by Yr 5 and 6 students.
- Catholic Identity snippets within every Newsletter
- Gr 6 Awards at the end of the year were based around the Graduate Outcomes: Respect, Courage, Inclusive, Achieve, Serve, Celebrate, in addition to a Catholic Identity Award.
- Brigidine and Augustinian Awards given to two outstanding Yr 6 students who fulfil the criteria applicable to each charism. Also, Catholic Identity Award.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- Refine feed-forward strategies and procedures from P-6 embedded in ongoing, quality formative assessment.
- To continue to build a culture of accountability and responsibility for all students.
- To continue to foster the consistent practice and high expectations for student outcomes across key learning areas: Religious Education, Literacy & Numeracy.
- To take every opportunity to Dialogue and Recontextualise through all facets of our Catholic Identity.

Achievements

St Mary's bases all curriculum on the Victorian Curriculum covering the eight domains and consists of integrating all learning areas through an Inquiry/Investigation Learning approach. Our curriculum encompasses Religious Education with faith development, Christian Praxis, scripture knowledge and social justice incorporated into all areas of school life. The literacy and mathematical programs emphasise explicit teaching using information gained from ongoing assessment and data analysis. Students explore Visual Arts, Performing Arts (drama and music), Health and Physical Education and L.O.T.E (Indonesian), Social and Emotional Learning and Digital Technology through specialist programming.

St Mary's school is committed to individual student's learning where they are both supported and challenged in all key learning areas and where the students experience ongoing success as learners. The school caters for varied learning styles and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Students who require additional support are identified and supported both in the classroom and with intervention programs that are monitored through rigorous and ongoing data analysis.

St Mary's promotes 'in the moment intervention' through focused teaching groups by both our curriculum coaches and classroom teachers. Technology at St Mary's supports the 21st Century learning pedagogy and has been developed throughout the school with the continuation of the 1:1 device program in the senior area. The Yr. 3/4 area is provided with 1:2 laptops. The Yr. 1/2 a 1:3 program and the Prep year level have the use of i-pads. All classrooms are fully equipped with Interactive Whiteboards and staff are supported by our e-Learning coordinator engaging in professional development to support current best practices in technology. St Mary's has successfully completed all aspects of learning and compliance to be an accredited eSmart School.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Improved Student outcomes are a driving force at St Mary's as we strive to provide the best possible learning opportunities and experiences. Assessment is used extensively across the school to gather data to inform learning and teaching. Our school performance data show that in Year three, reading, spelling, writing and numeracy are all at National standard.

Yr. 5 NAPLAN data indicates that our students are at the National standard level in all areas of the curriculum with the exception of numeracy which experienced a slight drop in 2021.

Early Literacy data indicated that from Prep to Yr. 2 a continuation of the gains made in 2020 and 2021 with attainment and betterment of text-level benchmarks in all year levels. In Foundation 83% of students achieved or bettered the target standard of Level 10. In Year 1 over 98% of students were at or above the target standard of Level 20 and in Year 2 66% at or above 28+.

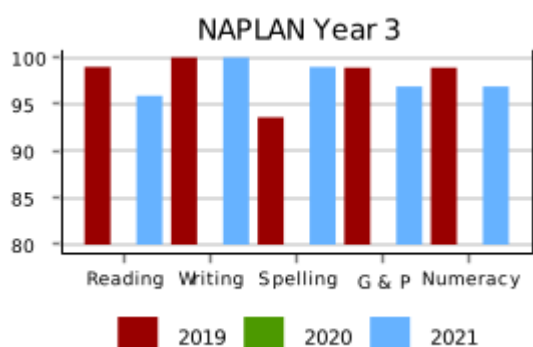
2020 and 2021 present immense challenges for all educators and students. St Mary's teaching staff continued to adapt and improve the quality of explicit teaching during both remote and onsite learning. Our data variations for 2021 were an indication of the need to focus on the core curriculum, with minimum hands-on opportunities for children to explore. We celebrate the achievements of each and every student in 2021.

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS					
NAPLAN TESTS	2019 %	2020 *	2019 – 2020 Changes *	2021 %	2020 – 2021 Changes *
YR 03 Grammar & Punctuation	98.9	-	-	96.9	-
YR 03 Numeracy	98.9	-	-	96.9	-
YR 03 Reading	99.0	-	-	95.9	-
YR 03 Spelling	93.6	-	-	99.0	-
YR 03 Writing	100.0	-	-	100.0	-
YR 05 Grammar & Punctuation	98.6	-	-	96.2	-
YR 05 Numeracy	100.0	-	-	98.0	-
YR 05 Reading	100.0	-	-	99.0	-
YR 05 Spelling	97.3	-	-	90.4	-
YR 05 Writing	96.0	-	-	98.1	-

* There are no NAPLAN results to report in 2020 as the Australian Government decided that due to the COVID-19 pandemic NAPLAN Assessments would not take place.

** Data cannot be reported for this year as the number of students that sat the test was below 5 and the data has been suppressed for privacy reasons in accordance with the ACARA NAPLAN data reporting provisions.

*** No students sat the NAPLAN tests in this year level and in one or both of the relevant years.



Pastoral Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To develop the capacity of all staff in the practice of mindfulness.
- To build the capacity of all staff in PBIS process
- To build the capacity for all staff and parents to recognise and refer to the wellbeing team, children, and community with social and emotional needs.
- To ensure compliance in all areas of Child Safe standards.
- To implement consistent practice and response to behaviour management.

Achievements

Through the continual challenges of swapping between remote learning and learning on site St Mary's has remained positive and staff and students have displayed willingness to adjust to change so teaching and learning is accessible for all.

During staff meetings we have continued to build on consistent language and practice in our response to behaviour management.

Staff have stayed up to date with mandatory reporting and child safe standards.

VALUE ADDED

- Regular check ins with students online regarding wellbeing
- Check in phone calls with parents to gauge online learning and challenges with remote learning
- Continual focus on regular Wellbeing team meetings
- Resilience Rights and Respectful Relations Program
- Positive Behaviour and Early Intervention in Schools Framework
- Bullying No Way Day
- Care Meals
- School Learning Walks
- Social worker as a part of staff from Term 1 to Term 4 working with small groups on Social and Emotional learning
- Alternative activities for students at recess and lunch when on site
- Alternate learning programs with hard copy packs accessible or remote learning
- Family Liaison home visits

STUDENT SATISFACTION

Student engagement, morale, attendance and enthusiasm across the whole school suggest that student satisfaction has remained high. Social media has been used to show case students learning from home with the school community.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- Electronic role to be taken by 9am & 2:05pm each day using SIMON
- Hard copy role to be taken at the same time by CRT's and this is sent to the office to mark electronically.
- Text sent to all unexplained student absences by 9:30am on the day of absence.
- Student attendance is monitored fortnightly by Pastoral Wellbeing Team
- Follow up of unexplained absences by class teachers and the Pastoral Wellbeing Team
- A courtesy call from teachers is encouraged before reaching official notification to parents of unsatisfactory attendance
- Recording of unsatisfactory attendance is available on students' files via SIMON.

During Remote Learning attendance was taken at the beginning of a Zoom session for the particular year level. Students were asked to respond via the microphone when welcomed by the teacher to show they were present and attentive for learning. Students that were at school during remote learning followed the normal role procedure

AVERAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE BY YEAR LEVEL

Y01	93.6%
Y02	93.7%
Y03	93.8%
Y04	92.9%
Y05	92.3%
Y06	93.2%
Overall average attendance	93.3%

Child Safe Standards

Goals & Intended Outcomes

The Child Safety focus in 2021 was to make sure that all students were safe in remote learning.

The intended outcome was that all students were aware of the school's expectations and safety measures.

Achievements

- Integrating information from Child Safe policies into our online learning platforms and policies in the school.
- Policies and documentation updated and reviewed by Leadership and Well Being Team.
- Engagement of families and the wider school communities in promoting child safety when online and in zoom sessions.
- Ongoing Professional learning in Mandatory Reporting for staff.
- Ongoing Attention and Promotion of Reporting procedures using the PROTECT model as our guide.
- Ongoing Attention to Employment of Staff Guidelines ensuring all those employed are suitable to work with children.
- Regular meetings between Parish Priest and Principal discussing Child Safe practices.
- Child Standards an ongoing item on School Advisory Council Agenda and staff meetings.

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To continue building the capacity of Middle and Curriculum Leaders to coach and empower teams.
- To develop student voice measures.
- To explore alternative staff, parent and student survey tools.
- To further develop the student leadership model.
- To understand the new Governance model.

Achievements

Two staff members continue to influence planning and teaching practices as Literacy Coaches and a Numeracy Coach position was established this year. The consistency in delivery and across year levels remains a key goal for our Coaches.

The appointment of another Senior Leader was made, and this leader will continue to be upskilled in readiness for 2022 senior leadership changes.

Our Middle Leaders continue to develop their skill set and each continues to lead a particular portfolio. Each of these leaders are having a significant influence on those they work with. This is assisting Senior leaders in their roles.

The Pivot student surveys provided valuable information for our leaders to set future goals.

The School Board have had a significant role to play in land discussions and these discussions are ongoing with the Shire at this time. The Board now is known as the Advisory Council and the Terms of Reference document now guide operations. The group will continue to learn more of the newly adopted Governance structures.

Staff and parents survey tool investigation will continue.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Description of Professional Learning undertaken in 2021

St Mary's took part in professional development as best we could given we were in another year of Covid and remote schooling.

Focus areas were aligned with teams and individuals while whole school professional development was distributed through staff PLC protocols.

Focus Areas;

- Reading Recovery
- Developmental Trauma
- Finance & Budgeting
- ICT

- Indonesian Conference
- Learner Diversity Network Days
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Plan, Check, Go
- RE Accreditation
- REC Network Days
- Science of Learning
- Understanding Poverty
- Zart Art Conference
- Well Being
- Writing Assessment

TEACHER SATISFACTION

Once again this was a very difficult year for teaching staff. Staff continued to be extremely positive in their efforts and they were appreciative of the supports and guidance provided to them through this period. The school will no longer use the Insight SRC data as its source for teacher and parent satisfaction levels. The school is working with Catholic Education Sandhurst for a replacement evaluation tool.

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE

Teaching Staff Attendance Rate	87.7%
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ALL STAFF RETENTION RATE

Staff Retention Rate	86.7%
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TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
Doctorate	0.0%
Masters	4.8%
Graduate	4.8%
Graduate Certificate	2.4%
Bachelor Degree	73.8%
Advanced Diploma	19.0%
No Qualifications Listed	16.7%

STAFF COMPOSITION	
Principal Class (Headcount)	2.0
Teaching Staff (Headcount)	51.0
Teaching Staff (FTE)	41.8
Non-Teaching Staff (Headcount)	24.0
Non-Teaching Staff (FTE)	17.3
Indigenous Teaching Staff (Headcount)	1.0

School Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes

- To foster and develop connections in community.

Achievements

This was a difficult year again with parent access on-site limited. A sense of community was not easily attained. Our main focus was to ensure children were connected with their classmates and this was helped when children were able to once again return to school. The challenge was that children were returning at various times. Adjustments were again made for home learning and zoom provided for learning and connections. Staff did their best to keep parents involved and informed. We managed to finish the year with all children back on site, although whole school gatherings were still denied.

For the majority of the year parents were not allowed on site. Those natural connections that are made at school were absent. New families to the school found it very difficult. Our Home School Liaison Officer played an important role in supporting families.

Fundraisers were again limited, reducing opportunities to be community. Parents of the year 1 children are yet to attend things such as sports days.

We managed some of our camps and excursions this year and the children were delighted to have this opportunity. We celebrated that we were able to conduct our Graduation celebrations for our year sixes. On the return to school we made an effort to have a fun day for our children as the traditional Fete was cancelled.

I congratulate the staff again on their ability to adjust and to provide an environment where their class experienced connections and links to school.

We must hope that 2022 can be a welcoming year for our students and parents. We know we have plenty of work to do in order to be the community that people know St. Mary's to be.

PARENT SATISFACTION

Parents were very appreciative of the efforts of staff through remote learning periods. Once again, parents were denied access to the school environment and whilst they accepted this, they found it very challenging. We have parents of year 1 students that have had 2 years not experiencing many school events such as sports days, whole school assemblies and liturgies.

Future Directions

Our main objective will be to provide a stable and consistent model of education. We need to welcome parents back into our school and to promote community connections at all opportunities.

Our aim is to further progress land purchase that will enable us to have more space for an extra oval and improved pick up and drop off options.

In 2022, we expect the new toilets for the Foundation students to be completed. This facility will be well received by prospective parents.

The new Governance model for schools will continue to be implemented and the newly appointed Principal and Deputy will need to be supported in their roles.

The new 3-5 year strategic plan will be developed late 2022.