



# Guidelines

*For Developing a Four-Year  
Mission Integration Plan - Schools*

Marianist Office of Sponsorship  
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# The Four-Year Cycle at a Glance

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The Mission Integration Planning & Contact Cycle is vital in the Marianist Province's collaborative relationship with its sponsored schools and retreat centers. This process serves as leaven to sustain the sponsored ministry's Catholic and Marianist mission and identity.

The Characteristics of Marianist Education (CMEs) should be essential to each Marianist-sponsored school's educational philosophy and pedagogy. The CMEs can provide a framework for reflection and strategic action for the Marianist vision of education.

The four-year Mission Integration Planning & Contact Cycle builds on itself and helps these ministries achieve their Mission Integration goals.

## **Year 1: Plan Development**

The objective of Year 1 is to develop and implement a new Mission Integration Plan (MIP). It is a collaborative effort of the sponsored ministry's community and engages the support and feedback of the Office of Sponsorship. This collaboration culminates in a teleconference with the Office of Sponsorship, the leadership of the sponsored ministry, and the chair of the Mission Integration Team (MIT) to review the MIP submitted by the ministry.

## **Year 2: Visitation and Review**

Year 2 includes a visitation by a representative of the Office of Sponsorship to monitor the ministry's progress in implementing its MIP. The visitation also includes a review of the ministry's ongoing relationship with the province and a discussion of ways the ministry and the province can strengthen their collaborative relationship and partnership in mission. This discussion considers the different requirements of the *Sponsorship & Services Agreement*, including the MIP. During this visit, the Office of Sponsorship representative meets with various members of the sponsored ministry's community to obtain their input. The results of these visits are documented and shared with the ministry's leadership.

## **Year 3: Progress Update**

The objective of Year 3 is to review progress in implementing the MIP. The MIT chair and the leadership of the sponsored ministry meet via teleconference with the Office of Sponsorship to demonstrate evidence of progress made with the Plan.

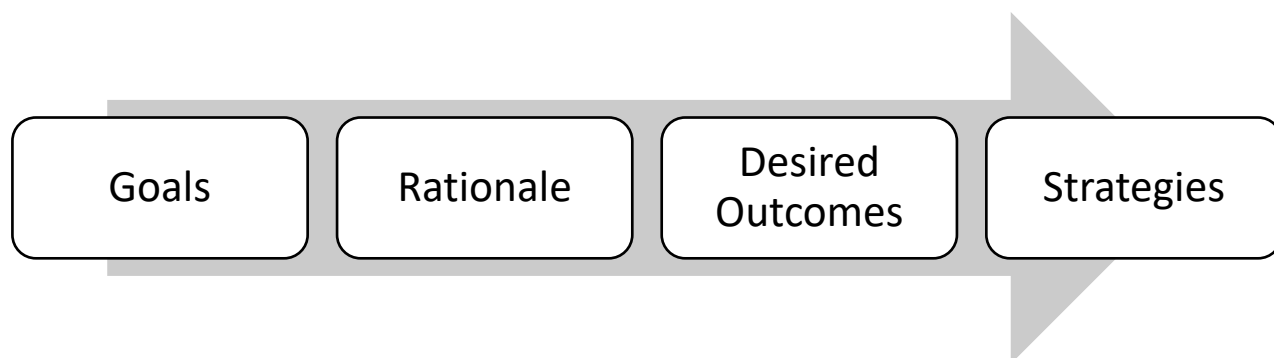
## Year 4: Visitation and Evaluation

Year 4 includes a visitation and evaluation by a team selected by the Office of Sponsorship from other Marianist-sponsored ministries. Like the Year 2 visitation, the visiting team meets with various members of the sponsored ministry's community to evaluate progress in implementing the MIP and suggest areas of focus in developing the next four-year MIP. The results of these visits are documented and shared with the leadership of the sponsored ministry and evaluated by the Office of Sponsorship.

Year 1: Plan Development	Year 2: Visitation and Review	Year 3: Progress Update	Year 4: Visitation and Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Development of a new four-year Mission Integration Plan</li> <li>•Review of Plan with the Office of Sponsorship</li> <li>•Implementation of Year 1 Action Items</li> <li>•Development of Year 2 Action Items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Implementation of Year 2 Action Items</li> <li>•Visitation by Office of Sponsorship</li> <li>•Development of Year 3 Action Items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Implementation of Year 3 Action Items</li> <li>•Teleconference with Office of Sponsorship</li> <li>•Development of Year 4 Action Items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Implementation of Year 4 Action Items</li> <li>•Visitation and Evaluation by Peer Review Team</li> <li>•Review of Visitation and Evaluation by Office of Sponsorship</li> </ul>

# The Four-Year Plan: Charting a Course

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As the MIT of a Marianist-sponsored ministry, you will develop a Four-Year MIP designed to enhance the Marianist character of your school.

The sections in this series outline a planning methodology, borrowing concepts and language from standard planning models and adapting them to our purpose. We begin by addressing the initial big-picture elements of the planning process, posing three critical questions for the planning team.

## The Planning Process

The Marianist Office of Sponsorship supports a four-year planning, implementation, and contact cycle for Marianist-sponsored schools. In this four-year process, we expect the planning, implementation, and feedback will support a more significant means for the growth of sponsored schools in their Marianist character. The Four-Year Plan necessitates a more reflective process that asks your school to answer three questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where do we want to be in four years?
3. How will we get there?

These are not trivial questions. Answering them should not be a mere exercise to complete in a single meeting but rather a process that requires time for reflection, discernment, prayer, assessment, and collaboration if done thoroughly. The product should be a well-articulated plan to move the school forward to achieve the Marianist vision of Catholic education.

Developing the Four-Year MIP is the responsibility of your MIT. However, meaningful answers to the above questions will require input from the broader school community. To be effectively realized, the completed Plan will require ownership by that community.

## Where Are We Now?

Effective planning always requires some assessment of the current reality. You know generally where you want to go - **you want your school to be more characteristically Marianist**. You need to know where you are now to plan your route effectively.

As the planning process begins, your MIT addresses these questions within the context of the Characteristics of Marianist Education:

- What are the most significant areas of need in making our school more characteristically Marianist over the next four years?
- What are our areas of strength upon which we can build over the next four years?

It is up to your MIT to determine how to address the answers to these questions. The team members can draw on their understanding of the broader school community, consult directly with others, consider what past reports of Mission Integration Visits have suggested, and gather additional data. These and additional methods will likely be necessary to form a reasonably complete picture. It is important to remember that the completed Plan will be a plan for your school community, not only for the MIT.

## Where Do We Want to Be in Four Years and Why?

### Identifying Goals

As the needs and strengths of the school community become clear, some **GOALS** should begin to surface. **Goals represent the results desired over the plan term**. At the broadest level, your goal is to enhance the Marianist character of your school. However, being more specific in the planning process will be more helpful. Some examples of the kind of language that goals could include:

- To deepen the faith of our school community
- To create a culture of caring among our students
- To expand our school's experience of Family Spirit

### Articulating Rationales

For each **GOAL**, there should be a **RATIONALE**. The rationale states why your team feels the need to accomplish this goal, your motivation and reasoning behind the goal, and how that goal will help to animate the Marianist identity of the school. Often, it is helpful to ask: Why is this goal necessary?

## How Will We Get There?

### Identifying Desired Outcomes

**Desired Outcomes are specific.** They are your statements of what you want this Plan to accomplish. **Desired Outcomes are measurable.** These measurements will allow your team to assign accountability and regularly evaluate the Plan's effectiveness and meaningful impact.

### Forming Strategies

**Strategies are the** steps you will take to accomplish your desired outcomes and achieve your goals. Strategies include activities, methods you will employ to achieve the goals and desired outcomes, and identifying resources needed to succeed. **Strategies should include accountability** - identifying, as precisely as possible, who is responsible for each strategy's accountability for accomplishing it within identified target dates.

For each of the strategies, you need to identify:

- **WHAT:** What activities will you do? What specific actions are required? What methods will you employ to make this happen?
- **WHO:** Who will steward this responsibility, and who within your ministry will you need to engage as collaborators?
- **WHEN:** When do you hope to initiate and complete each initiative? What are your target dates (over the four years of the Plan)?
- Identify what **RESOURCES** you will need. (Like budgeting monies for an initiative or asking for time for a meeting)

## A Frequently Asked Question

How many goals should you have in your Four-Year Mission Integration Plan? - There is no single best answer to this question, no magic number, but 2-5 seems standard. But at a minimum, goals should impact and forward the school's mission.

Only by beginning with a thoughtful assessment of where you are now as a source of Catholic education in the Marianist tradition can you realistically decide where you want to be in four years. The content and number of goals should reflect your assessment.

# The Four-Year Plan: Making It Real

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Determining broad goals, articulating the rationale for those goals, identifying the desired outcomes, and planning strategies for meeting the goals and outcomes are essential steps in developing a Four-Year MIP.

In the process of developing a MIP, it is also essential to consider the following so you can track and gauge the impact of your Plan:

## Measuring Progress and Staying on Target?

- Be **Specific**
- Make it **Measurable**
- Make it **Meaningful, Realistic, Relevant & Attainable**
- Be **Accountable**
- Be **Timebound** - State expected dates/checkpoints

*(From the SMART criteria standing for Specific, Measurable, Realistic, and Timebound)*

Once your MIT has identified one or more strategic approaches to reaching a goal, it is time to move from abstract and general ideas to concrete and specific ones. What will you do to measure whether you met the goal and desired outcome? How will you know you have been successful? When do you expect to finish? Did it make a difference? Who is responsible? How will you check progress?

Suppose you have chosen a strategy of expanding your student retreat program to address your goal of deepening the faith of your school community. To do this, you could add one or more new retreats, lengthen, or intensify existing retreats, increase attendance, or involve more staff, among other possibilities. Your MIT needs to choose from among these or other options.

Suppose your MIT decides to increase attendance at existing retreats. Have you applied SMART criteria? One possible example: Increase the number of students attending a Spring Retreat by 10% compared to prior years.

Is it specific (the targeted retreat is named), measurable (you can count the number of students attending), and timed (is there a stated expected date or checkpoint through the period of the Plan that will help you stay on track and measure progress)? Are your goals, desired outcomes, and strategies reasonable and attainable? Will it have a meaningful impact on your school's growth and expression as a Marianist Catholic school?

Suppose your MIT, instead, or in addition, decides to add a new retreat. Given your school's resources and competing priorities, is this reasonable and attainable? Do those who will need to create the new retreat agree? Can it be achieved within the span of the Plan? What does adding a new retreat mean? How will the outcome be measured?



## Remembering the Purpose of this Plan

Your Plan should **meaningfully enhance the Marianist character of your school**. Blessed William Joseph Chaminade used a fulcrum and a lever as a metaphor to demonstrate how his followers worked. It is appropriate, then, that your Plan has leverage. You may generate many strategies that meet the SMART criteria. With unlimited resources, you could adopt them all. In reality, your MIT must choose those that move you closest to your goal with the resources you have.

In identifying goals and desired outcomes, ask these questions: do they advance your goal of deepening the faith and Catholic Marianist identity of your school community? Is the effort relevant and meaningful in strengthening your school's Marianist approach to education? (Perhaps it does, alone or as one of several supporting initiatives.) How can these work together to leverage a more significant impact? Only your MIT, in consultation with your school community, can answer these questions. The important thing is not to become so focused on attaining specific tasks that you lose sight of the overall goal.

One of the advantages of being part of a network of Marianist-sponsored schools is the opportunity to learn from one another, broaden your perspective, and experience new ideas. There can, however, be a temptation to try to adopt wholesale an idea that has been effective in another school simply because it has been effective there. **Make this Plan yours**. Using another school's successes as inspiration is appropriate, but your MIT should choose goals and desired outcomes that meet your school's needs, build on your school's strengths, and support your school's goals.