

Mission & Catholic Identity

An excellent Catholic school is driven and guided by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic identity that includes gospel values, a focus on the Eucharist, and a commitment to communal faith formation, academic excellence, missionary discipleship, and service.

1.1 The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement identifies the school as Catholic and references the school's unique religious character or charism.

1.2 The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.

1.3 The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various stakeholders (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, and alumni(ae) to review, clarify & renew commitment to the school's mission statement.

1.4 The mission statement is visible in public places & contained in official documents.

1.5 All stakeholders know and understand the school's mission.

1.6 Supplemental statements such as the school's motto, beliefs, philosophy, core values, charism, and/or graduate profile are aligned with the school's mission statement and are inspired by the school's Catholic identity.

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides an exemplary academic program for religious education and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.

2.1 Religious education curriculum and instruction facilitates an encounter with Jesus Christ that evangelizes and meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.

2.2 Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time, and the selection of texts & other curricular materials.

2.3 Faculty teaching religion meet diocesan requirements for academic & catechetical preparation & certification to provide effective religion curriculum & instruction.

2.4 The school's Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education.

2.5 Faculty use the lenses of scripture & the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.

2.6 Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture, as well as all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.

2.7 The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities both within and outside the classroom for Christ-centered student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of missionary discipleship and social justice

3.1 Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to grow closer to Christ through prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.

3.2 Every student is offered timely, regular, and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and/or other spiritual experiences that prioritize both personal reflection and interpersonal encounter.

3.3 Every student participates in authentic Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

3.4 Every student experiences role models of faith and service for social justice among the administrators, faculty, and staff.

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for Christ-centered adult faith formation and action in service of missionary discipleship and social justice.

4.1 The leader/leadership team provides engaging spiritual formation experiences that prioritize both personal reflection and interpersonal encounter for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.

4.2 The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith, making clear to families the appropriate supportive role of the school as it relates to parish and home.

4.3 The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions (for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, religious sponsor programs) to provide opportunities for parents/guardians to grow in the knowledge & practice of the faith.

4.4 All adults in the school community are invited to participate in authentic Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

4.5 Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the school community.

4.6 The leader/leadership team attends to the unique formative needs of faculty and staff so that all faculty and staff are equipped to support an authentic and vibrant Catholic school faith community.

Governance & Leadership

An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision-making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.

5.1 The governing body represents the diversity of stakeholders and the larger community.

5.2 The governing body functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.

5.3 The governing body with the leader/leadership team systematizes the policies of the school's operations to ensure fidelity to mission; support for justice, equality, and equity; and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions.

5.4 The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the Local Ordinary marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Local Ordinary's legitimate authority.

5.5 The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a constructive and beneficial relationship with the (arch)diocesan Education Office consistent with (arch)diocesan policy pertaining to the recognition of Catholic schools by the Local Ordinary.

5.6 The governing body, working within their defined roles and responsibilities and in collaboration with the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the designated ecclesial authority according to their school's governance model, marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, and continuing dialogue.

5.7 The governing body engages in effective board governance practices, including ongoing formation and self-evaluation to ensure the faithful execution of their responsibilities and continuous improvement.

5.8 The governing body holds the leadership team accountable for ongoing formation, professional development, and self-evaluation to ensure the faithful execution of their responsibilities and continuous improvement.

An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to recognize, prioritize, and successfully embody the school's mission and vision.

6.1 The leader/leadership team meets national, state and/or (arch)diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leader(s) of the school.

6.2 The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, consistent with its Catholic identity, and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.

6.3 The leader/leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of faculty and staff in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious sponsor policies.

6.4 The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.

6.5 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of Catholic identity and faith formation and uses school-wide evidence to plan for continued and sustained growth in these areas.

6.6 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.

6.7 The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school and upholds the dignity of the whole child.

6.8 The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.

6.9 The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for building leadership capacity and creating shared leadership within the faculty to ensure the long-term sustainability of the school's mission and vision.

Academic Excellence

An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with professionally accepted, research-based curriculum standards and gospel values implemented through effective instruction.

7.1 The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated curriculum standards in every subject area, and is vertically and horizontally aligned to ensure that each student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the curriculum standards.

7.2 The curriculum integrates Catholic worldview, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects.

7.3 Classroom instruction actively engages & motivates students to learn

7.4 Curriculum and instruction provide students with the knowledge, experience, understanding, and skills to communicate, collaborate, and think critically and creatively for the common good.

7.5 Curriculum and instruction empower students to responsibly use and evaluate technology for research, computation, innovation, communication, and collaboration.

7.6 Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as Catholic virtue, intellectual and social-emotional dispositions, relationship and community building, and skills of executive function.

7.7 To ensure the inclusion of and to meet the needs of diverse learners, classroom instruction utilizes current research in interventions, student accommodation, and curriculum modification.

7.8 Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement, and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum & instruction to result in high levels of student achievement, engagement, and well-being.

7.9 The faculty and professional support staff meet (arch)diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for academic preparation & licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum & instruction for each student.

7.10 For effective instruction, faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy that aligns to Catholic social teaching that supports the full dignity of each student.

7.11 Faculty and staff engage in high-quality and research-based professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning and well-being.

An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

8.1 School-wide student data are used to inform, review, and evaluate the curriculum, co-curricular programs, ancillary services, sustained student growth, and faculty performance.

8.2 School-wide and aggregated student data are normed to appropriate populations and are shared with all stakeholders.

8.3 Teachers use a variety of curriculum-based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning and to plan for continued and sustained student growth.

8.4 Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are valid, consistent, transparent, equitable, and justly administered.

8.5 Faculty use student data to inform the work of their professional learning communities; such data are collected and used to monitor individual and class-wide student learning and to set goals for the professional learning community.

An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.

9.1 School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents/guardians to enhance the educational experiences for the school community.

9.2 Guidance services, wellness programs, behavior management programs, and other services offer appropriate, mission-aligned support focused on the spiritual, social, emotional, academic, and physical well-being of students and their families.

9.3 Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for each student to further identify and develop gifts and talents and to enhance creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual capabilities.

Operational Vitality

An excellent Catholic school develops, carries forward, and monitors a feasible three- to five-year plan, including both current and projected budgets that are the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship & sustainability.

10.1 The governing body and leader/leadership team conduct a financial planning process and consult with available experts in nonprofit management and funding.

10.2 Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved including parishes, dioceses, religious sponsor, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible board.

10.3 Financial plans clearly define all revenue sources including tuition, subsidies, fundraising, and other identified categories.

10.4 Financial plans delineate all costs for key target areas including salaries, instructional programs, equipment and facilities, capital projects, and other identified categories.

10.5 Current and projected budgets include a statement of all actual and projected revenue, by source, and a statement of all projected expenditures, by category, identifying the cost per child while showing appropriate balance.

10.6 The governing body and leader/leadership team annually communicate an explanation to stakeholders of the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.

10.7 The governing body and leader/leadership team provide families equitable access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.

10.8 The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices.

An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with the school's published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with the policies of the (arch)diocese and/or religious congregations, and/or other sponsorship groups, and Catholic social teaching regarding the dignity of work, with an understanding of how federal/state policy impacts school policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, laity, and volunteers) and that provide clarity for responsibilities and accountability.

11.1 Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e., central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies.

11.2 Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, and benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning, and retirement.

11.3 Human resource policies ensure that benchmarked compensation is applied fairly and equitably to salaries and benefits for all staff.

11.4 Human resource policies ensure that institutional planning includes benefits such as investment in professional growth opportunities, health care, and retirement.

An excellent Catholic school develops, implements, and monitors a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan, which is consistent with Catholic social teaching regarding the environment, and that continuously supports the implementation and sustainability of the educational mission of the school.

12.1 The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes measurable objectives to support the school's mission, the delivery of the educational program of the school, and accessibility for all students.

12.2 The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for maintenance, capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.

12.3 The school's purchasing, physical, and technological improvements are, by design, done in alignment with the mission, with budget funds and appropriate external revenue sources.

An excellent Catholic school develops and implements a comprehensive strategy for institutional advancement based on a compelling mission through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.

13.1 The communications/marketing plan requires the school leader/leadership team and staff person(s) to ensure the implementation of contemporary strategies to reach targeted audiences, maintain communication outlets, serve all stakeholders, and provide data analysis.

13.2 The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of recruitment, enrollment, and retention data for all student groups.

13.3 The development/advancement plan requires the school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies and metrics are in place to identify, cultivate, analyze, and maintain significant funding sources.