

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

**1.1** *The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school has linked its mission statement to the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools in a meaningful way. It is the responsibility of the governing body and the leadership team that such a consideration of the mission statement occurs. While the deeper components of the school's mission are to be contained in the foundational documents described in the Standard, the mission statement ought to contain unique, school specific language that aligns it with the Catholic mission articulated in the foundational documents of the school.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Does the governing body and school leadership team speak about the mission of the school in terms articulated in the mission statement?
- Is the language of the mission statement aligned with the school's foundational documents?
- Has the school gone through a process where stakeholders have explored the heritage and vision of the school from a mission perspective?
- Is there evidence that the commitment to Catholic identity articulated in the mission statement is present within the school?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.1** *The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the governing body and leadership team reviews and crafts the mission statement so that it uses language that aligns it with the Catholic heritage of the school. In doing so it clearly identifies the reason for the school's existence in the light of its Catholic tradition and the population it serves. For some schools this entails a specific commitment to the particular relationship with Jesus Christ it seeks to embody relating to its charism.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the mission statement uses definitive language aligned with the Gospel sense of proclamation arising from the defining characteristics and its Catholic heritage. The reason for the school's existence is phrased in terms delineating a commitment to the population the school seeks to serve.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark**,

the mission statement uses language that is not explicitly aligned with the Defining Characteristics, or its Catholic heritage, but has a Christian tradition implied in its reason for existing and the population it seeks to serve.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

the mission statement is not aligned with the defining characteristics, nor does it use Christian language in identifying the reason for the school's existence and the population it seeks to serve.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.1** *The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Clarify the relationship of the school to the Catholic Church and express this relationship in a mission statement that contains more explicit Catholic language and indicates a particular audience that will be served.

**To move from level 2 to level 3,** the benchmark requires a mission statement consistent with the Catholic educational tradition.

- Utilize more specific Catholic language from the school's tradition, its founding body, or the Catholic theological, sacramental, or educational tradition.

**To move from level 3 to 4,** level 4 implies a particular manner of proclamation and evangelization that the school emphasizes throughout all its programming.

- Examine the school's spiritual underpinnings, and the manner through which it will conduct its work.
- Clarify the school's activities in a language consistent with the language of the mission.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Governing body  
Leadership team  
Catholic Identity  
Mission  
Mission Statement

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school has established a culture that uses the mission statement and the principles contained with it as the starting point for all school planning endeavors. The mission statement indicates the ideal to which the school aspires, and therefore is the basis for school planning.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Do minutes of school meetings reflect a constructive use of the mission statement as a normative reference?
- Do the orientation materials for families, faculty and staff describe the school's mission in intelligible terms?
- Do announcements for new initiatives tie the initiative to the mission statement?
- Do school budgets reflect adequate resources towards advancing the mission of the school?
- Do financial allocations reflect assistance to serve the populations stated in the mission?
- Does the curriculum and extracurricular activities of the school reflect the values espoused in the mission statement?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

the governing body and leadership team of the school uses the mission statement to establish goals, and to engage a course of action when planning of a strategic or operational nature. Throughout the planning process key components of the mission statement guide the direction and the communication of the initiatives.

#### At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

the leadership team and the governing body view the mission statement as an aspirational as well as an operational guide, and the mission statement and its key components move from a goal to being the method through which the school actually operates. The ideals, values, and audience(s) are used by the school leadership and governance to penetrate the daily operations of the school.

#### At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

the mission statement serves as a goal that is distanced from operational use for the school for leadership team and governing body. For planning it is used as a corrective rather than as a motivation for action.

#### At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

planning is undertaken with no functional reference to the mission statement.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Use the mission statement intentionally as well as the values implicit within it for planning and discussion among the governing body and the leadership team.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Utilize language and values from the mission statement in communicating the rationale and processes by which discussions are engaged and decisions are made by the governing body and the leadership team.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Make the language of the mission statement the operational language of the school in a realistic way.
- Make decisions as a leadership team and a governing body motivated by the mission statement and using the values implicit in the mission.
- Establish a deliberate manner to explain the work of the school in terms of its mission.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Normative reference  
Mission statement  
Foundation

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

As a regular practice (annually) the effectiveness of the mission statement as the guiding principle for the school's work is evaluated by the leadership team. In conducting this evaluation, all the stakeholders of the school are consulted to determine if the values, practices, and audience the school seeks to serve are authentically represented. This practice ought to become part of the school community's yearly expectation in order to evaluate the reach of the school's services, and the interplay of the stakeholders with the school's leadership team and school operations. The mission statement can then be affirmed as the yardstick against which school practice will be measured. If a substantial gap exists between the mission statement and the actual practices of the school the mission statement needs to be revised to reflect a new reality or school practices that conform more authentically to the mission.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are survey documents for the mission statement review process available for review?
- Is there a meeting with constituents scheduled on the school calendar to review the mission statement? Are there minutes for these meetings?
- Is administering the mission review process part of a specific individual's job description?
- Is there a process for processing the data for the review? For tracking the data from year to year?
- Is there a process for communicating the review's results to the governing body and to the school community?
- Can members of the school community describe how they learned the deeper meaning of the mission statement?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

there is a regular annual process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. The process attempts to gather information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school's activities and decisions.

#### At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

there is a regular annual process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. This process is well publicized and the input from the community is significant. The results are tracked from year to year. The process gathers useful information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school's activities and decisions. Constituents offer input on the status of the mission statement's propriety for the school's work. The leadership team reviews the process and provides input to the governing body on the review process.

#### At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

there is a process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. The process attempts to gather information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school's activities and decisions. This process is engaged prior to major events or decisions affecting the total life of the school.

#### At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

there is no process to review the mission statement that involves the school constituencies.



## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Establish a regular process for reviewing the mission statement with the school constituencies.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Establish an annual process of reviewing the mission statement with the school constituencies.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Enrich the current process to ensure broad communication and participation of the mission statement review process where the many school constituencies are represented.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

School constituencies

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.4:** *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

The mission statement stands at the core of a school's reason for existing, and as such, is an organizational tool, an educational tool, and a tool for public relations and branding. The mission statement should proclaim to the public and to the school's constituencies what the schools seeks to accomplish. For this reason it should be prominently displayed in both verbal and symbolic ways within the school building, on advertisements, and on all school communications. This includes electronic forms of communication.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Do the school's publications, web pages, and social media interactions reflect verbal as well as symbolic expressions of the mission and the manner in which it infuses all that the school undertakes?
- Do the school's discipline policies and handbooks reflect the mission statement?
- How is the mission statement displayed? Is it a permanent or transitional display?
- How does the mission statement tie together the visible aspects of the school?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.4:** *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the mission statement is a visible part of the school's presence in the community via stationary, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the mission statement is a visible part of the school's presence in the community via stationery, web sites, social media, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school, and is easily accessed online and through its physical presence throughout the school building. For the public it is closely associated with the school as an institutional presence. The school has integrated a symbolic sense of the mission statement into its physical structure and advertising.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the mission statement is displayed within the building and on school documents on a limited basis. It must be searched for on the web site, and is not easily associated with the school.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the mission statement is virtually unknown to the public and/or school community.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.4:** *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Post and publish the mission statement within the school and on school documents.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Make the mission statement a greater presence throughout the school and on documents.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Make the mission statement an essential part of the school's "brand."
- Represent the mission statement through the physical structure of the school in either a full or reduced form.
- Represent the mission statement on physical documents and publications as well as virtual portals to the school.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.5:** *All constituents know and understand the mission.*

### I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark indicates that the mission statement has permeated the life of the school. Members of the school community can recite the mission statement and explain its meaning and scope depending upon their age and experience. Examples of how the mission is incarnated into the life of the school and the lives of its community are readily available from individuals across the spectrum of the school community. People can describe and demonstrate a personal attachment to the manner in which the mission has affected their lives.

### II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Can school community members recite the mission statement from memory?
- Is the mission statement used at public gatherings of the student body?
- Is there a shorthand version of the mission statement that people can recite?
- Can people relate the values and vocabulary of the mission statement to instances of their lives in the school?
- What is the difference between the descriptions of the mission between those who are very involved in the school and those who are less involved in the school?
- How comfortable are members of the school community in using the mission statement's Christian and Catholic language in discussing the work of the school?
- Can members of the school community relate aspects of their personal development to the mission statement?
- Can members of the school community describe how they learned the deeper meaning of the mission statement?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.5:** *All constituents know and understand the mission.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### **At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school leadership takes responsibility through its formal and informal work to place the mission at the forefront of people's experience of the school. Where there is a lack of understanding of the school's mission steps are taken to explain it and allow students to experience it in action.

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the school leadership has taken care that all members of the community can explain the mission and how it affects their experience of the school. It may also have taken on a formalized program from year to year. For example, whereas Catholic Schools Week focuses on Catholic Schools as a national mission of the Church, local Mission Weeks could focus on particular aspects of the school's particular mission and the communities it serves. For new members of the community there is a formalized program orienting them to the mission and how it is lived through academics, activities, and social interactions. Members of the community have internalized the mission because they can easily describe their connection to its life within the school.

#### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

some members of the school community understand and can explain the mission. There is no formal program orienting members to the mission, and those who are more fully involved in the life of the school seem to have a better sense of the mission than those who only attend classes at the school.

#### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the mission exists in documentary form, but does not penetrate the life of the school. Few individuals can relate it, or explain how it affects their lives.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**1.5:** *All constituents know and understand the mission.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Inaugurate a program across all sectors of school life to communicate the mission statement and its inherent values. This may involve its overt use by members of the faculty and leadership team.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Expand the manner in which the mission is integrated into school life.
- Discuss the relevance of the mission at assemblies, meetings, and within classes to the particular events under consideration.
- Fashion a type of assessment where members of the community explain the mission.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Construct events when members of the school community demonstrate they know and understand the application of the mission to their educational, spiritual, and social lives.
- Publicize the events that best demonstrate the collective embrace of the mission by the entire community.
- Promote non-administrative individuals to take responsibility to orchestrate these events.
- Develop a system where the campus ministry team and a larger sampling of community members demonstrate that the mission is not just a function of campus ministry, but rather, an effort of the entire community.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.1:** *Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirement and standards of the (arch)diocese.*

### I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark indicates that religious education curriculum is aligned with the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese. The Catholic school has a clearly stated written religious education curriculum that describes anticipated outcomes for each course and/or grade level and is aligned with the (arch)diocesan curriculum framework. School leadership ensures that appropriate resources (documents, texts, media, etc.) that support curriculum and instruction are available.

### II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Does the religious studies curriculum reflect a thoughtful use of the (arch)diocesan requirements and standards for religious education?
- If dealing with a high school: Are *The Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age* (USCCB) a guiding force in the selection of textbooks, and the content of the curriculum?
- To what extent are school's curriculum framework, the courses of study, the syllabi and the teachers' lesson plans integrated from year to year according to (arch)diocesan requirements?
- Are developmentally appropriate learning resources used at every level to advance curriculum requirements?



## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.1:** *Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirement and standards of the (arch)diocese.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### **At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school's religious education program meets the requirements of the (arch)diocesan directives for curriculum.

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the school's religious education program indicates that learning activities are in place at every level to engage students in the curriculum in an active and meaningful way. Careful attention has been paid to the development of curriculum from year to year with a particular focus on the rigor of the course of studies and the age appropriate activities associated with the topics under consideration.

#### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

suggests that there is evidence that curriculum and instruction meet some of the requirements of the (arch) diocesan standards, but there is insufficient evidence that the religious education program is fully aligned with the requirements and standards of the (arch) diocese.

#### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

there is no evidence that curriculum and instruction are aligned with the requirements and standards of the (arch) diocese.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.1:** *Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirement and standards of the (arch)diocese.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Develop a religious education curriculum that includes and highlights some elements of the requirements and standards provided by the (arch)diocese.
- Provide resources, including but not limited to, texts and media, that support and advance those requirements and standards in instruction.
- Collaborate with the (arch)diocesan religious education director to develop the religious education curriculum.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Revise curriculum to be consistent and aligned with the requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.
- Provide learning resources including, but not limited to, textbooks, media, etc. that are aligned with the curriculum and support instruction.
- Develop a regular review system of these resources.
- Collaborate with the (arch)diocesan religious education director to strengthen the existing religious education curriculum.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Develop a systematic review and revision schedule of the written curriculum using the cross-curricular elements of vertical alignment, scaffolding, and developmentally appropriate rigor and aligned learning activities.
- Align this review system with elements provided by the (arch)diocese.
- Involve and consult with the (arch)diocesan religious education director in the evaluation and on-going revision of the (arch)diocesan religious education program.
- Develop a review system of learning resources including, but not limited to, textbooks, media, etc.
- Provide faculty training on new resources.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Vertically Aligned  
Scaffolded

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

*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 and other curricular materials.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school holds comparable expectations in rigor, student engagement and academic weight for religion classes as it does for other academic programs. Qualified Catholic teachers are assigned to teach religion classes. These teachers are able to present content correctly and confidently. These teachers are Gospel role models for the students. At the secondary level, qualified teachers hold degrees in theology or related areas. The school schedules consistent and sufficient class time for meaningful, engaging religious instruction. The school gives the appropriate consideration to the budget for instructional materials for religious education as it does for other academic areas.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

An examination of the following items will assist in reviewing this area:

- Do class schedules reflect appropriate time allotments for religion classes?
- Is there evidence of teacher qualifications and preparation via lesson plans, professional development, or catechist certification?
- What are the publication dates of textbooks and other instructional materials?
- Are scope and sequence charts, curriculum maps and other course and topical sequences available?

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

*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 and other curricular materials.*

### **III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?**

#### **At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

religion classes receive the same treatment as other academic disciplines regarding scheduling and allocation of resources. Religion teachers are qualified and certified as catechists at appropriate levels.

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

religion classes are innovative and highly engaging, and integrate the study and practice of religion into students' lives. Instructional materials and other experiences assist in this effort throughout the school. Religious themes and topics are integrated across the curriculum. Student-generated media that interprets and communicates the meaning of the religious content are available throughout the school. Religion teachers are highly qualified and certified as catechists at advanced levels.

#### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

there is a regular, organized religious education program in place. It is not given the same attention as other subjects in the selection of qualified teachers and of instructional materials. Less instructional time is allocated for religious instruction in the schedule.

#### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the school deemphasizes religious instruction. There is a religious education program but there is no priority given to how it is organized, nor to the qualifications of teachers, or to the quality of instructional resources. Class time is more easily and frequently reallocated to other activities than is class time of other academic subjects.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*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 and other curricular materials.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Allocate consistent scheduled time to religious instruction.
- Establish a program to credential religion teachers.
- Acquire texts, textbook series, and other up-to-date instructional materials for religion classes.
- Align religious instructional materials to grade-levels, development levels, and curricular expectations.
- Keep religion class times intact when altering the schedule.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Review the qualifications of religion teachers and makes changes necessary to assure that those who are teaching religion are qualified to do so.
- Assign criteria consistent with those of the other curriculum areas when choosing textbooks and instructional materials for religion classes. The scheduling of religion classes is given the same priority as that of the other classes.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Ensure that catechist certification is obtained by all religion teachers.
- Allocate specified time frames and an equitable allocation of class time for religion in relation to other academic areas.
- Collaborate to develop, evaluate and refine religion classes to ensure they are integrally woven into the larger academic program.
- Utilize innovative techniques to engage students in religious education classes.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.3:** *Faculty who teach religion meet (arch) diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the faculty members responsible for religious instruction meet the (arch) diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

The following questions should assist in framing this item:

- Is there a listing of the (arch) diocesan requirements for the preparation of faculty who teach religion in the school?
- Is there a list faculty members including both their academic degrees and catechetical certification?
- Is there a statement of professional development requirements in view of catechetical certification?
- Is there a list of faculty members who are progressing toward catechetical certification and their progress in the program?
- Is there a plan to maintaining and advance certification for teachers of religious education?
- Do teachers of religious education participate in professional development to address both pedagogical needs and content areas?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.3:** *Faculty who teach religion meet (arch) diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school is fully in compliance with the expectations of the (arch)diocese.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the faculty meets and exceeds the (arch) diocesan requirements. This is evident in efforts to create and maintain professional learning communities within and beyond their school community to deepen their professional expertise.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

not all of the teachers assigned to teach religion are qualified or in a preparation program to provide qualification.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

teachers are assigned to teach religion without fulfilling (arch) diocesan requirements.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.3:** *Faculty who teach religion meet (arch) diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Establish a method so all teachers of religion are in programs to meet (arch) diocesan requirements.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Enroll all faculty who do not meet (arch) diocesan standards regarding academic and catechetical preparation in a program to provide certification.
- Ensure that completing certification is mandatory.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Form professional learning communities for religious education faculty.
- Seek ongoing opportunities to deepen their expertise and improve their instructional skills for effective teaching within and beyond their school communities.
- Develop a plan to integrate developments in catechesis into the religion teacher professional development.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Professional Learning Community



## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that every student's learning experience provided by the school, including religious education, must promote excellence in academic and intellectual formation, both of which are constituent elements of its Catholic identity.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

The following questions should assist in framing this item:

- Does the school's mission statement philosophy clearly state that the school is committed to academic excellence?
- Does the curriculum guide indicate the anticipated outcomes for all subjects at all levels? Are these outcomes in line with established norms for academic excellence? Is the religion department held to these norms?
- Do student assessments in various forms demonstrate competency in communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking?
- Do grading policies and rubrics indicate the academic rigor of the religious and non-religious academic programs?
- Does the Professional Development Plan for the faculty contain a growth trajectory committed to academic excellence? Is the religion faculty held to these standards?
- Is there evidence that the school actively attempts to integrate faith, culture and life through its academic programs? For example, do teachers share ideas and evaluate attempts to integrate faith, culture, and life on a timely basis?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school provides evidence of its commitment to student excellence by clearly articulating standards and expectations in all disciplines. This commitment extends to the faculty professional development program as well.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the school demonstrates a sustained commitment to academic excellence and innovative academic growth throughout all its programs. The entire curriculum integrates faith, culture, and life effectively for students in tangible, measurable ways.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the school demonstrates some standards and expectations of academic excellence for its students and faculty.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the school does not present evidence that attention is given to excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects, including religion for students.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Establish a curriculum policy requiring measurable academic and intellectual formation of students be evident in all subjects, including religion.
- Provide appropriate professional development opportunities to assist faculty in achieving these goals.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Develop and implement clearly articulated standards and measurements of student progress.
- Develop performance expectations that demonstrate academic and intellectual achievement in all subjects including religion.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Demonstrate student mastery and success through multiple measures.
- Demonstrate student understanding of the integrated nature of faith, culture and life.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

**2.5:** *Faculty uses the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the faculty has a fluency and affinity for Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition. Faculty members are able to make that knowledge meaningful in the context of the students' lives and use subject areas to demonstrate opportunities to think critically and ethically about choices and consequences of choices. Age and developmentally appropriate instruction, performance, discussion, and projects, including service projects, provide opportunities to learn and practice these skills.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Do professional development plans for faculty formation include understandings of the Gospel and the Catholic intellectual tradition?
- Are assessments of the faculty's ability to interpret and instruct with these lenses used?
- Do student assessments measure students' ability to think critically and ethically about the world around them?
- Do faculty or professional learning community meeting agendas demonstrate intentional discussions and curriculum planning on the use of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition?
- Do curriculum outcomes reflect an expectation that Scripture is used throughout the school? How are these measured?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.5:** *Faculty uses the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

faculty infuse Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in their lessons. Examples of student work and communications reflect critical thinking arising from these efforts in all subject areas.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

faculty planning, student work, school communications and activities reflect an active engagement with moral discussions formed in Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition. Students demonstrate the ability to make connections across curricular lines based upon their encounter with the Catholic intellectual tradition.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the curriculum does not provide evidence that faculty use the lenses of Scripture and/or Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

little attention is given to the use of Scripture and Catholic intellectual tradition to help students learn to think critically and ethically. The faculty, itself, is not adequately prepared to access and utilize these sources.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*2.5: Faculty uses the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Work together as a faculty and an administration to understand what is meant by a Scriptural lens and the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Create meaningful common learning experiences to bring clarity and increase comfort levels of the adults in the building before designing student exercises.
- Provide students with effective critical and ethical thinking about the world around them.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Determine the best manner of integrating Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition into the school's academic culture across all disciplines.
- Create pilot programs to test and evaluate the progress of the effort.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Develop regular opportunities in all subject areas for students to participate in lectures, group discussion, debates, etc. that allow them to demonstrate their growing understanding and assimilation of Scriptures and the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Embed performance assessments in the curriculum.
- Aligned service projects and other experiences with the school objectives to attain this goal.
- Use the faculty work with Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition as a basis for further faculty growth and development.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for the terms listed below.)

Catholic Intellectual Tradition

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*2.6 Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark requires that there be substantial evidence of the Catholic faith throughout the school. In addition to prevalent symbols of the Catholicism, a rich and diverse Catholic culture permeates the environment, and finds expression through the visual and performing arts as well as through music and architecture.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are symbols of the Catholic faith present throughout the building? (e.g. crucifixes, statues, pictures, etc.)
- Do these symbols communicate the essence of the school's mission?
- Does the school's architecture and use of space reflect the larger Catholic culture?
- Are Scripture-based motivational bulletin boards and/or posters present?
- Are samples of artwork created by students and/or faculty displayed in the school and posted on the school's website?
- Do prayer services include music and the arts combining the talents of students and faculty?
- Are there photos of students, faculty, and parents at events reflecting the Catholic faith and culture posted on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter and on the school's website?
- Do the art projects, school plays, and band/chorus concerts afford students the opportunity to explore the Catholic faith and culture?
- Are students making the connection between issues of faith and 3-dimensional artwork?

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

*2.6 Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture.*

### **III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?**

#### **At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school clearly and visibly demonstrates its Catholic culture and faith in an intentional way. Architecture, décor, and arts programs and projects reflect the Catholic faith and culture.

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the integration of Catholic symbols and expressions of Catholic culture and faith in the arts and architecture is expressed in a manner that distinguishes the school as Catholic to external observers. Students demonstrate a clear appreciation of the Catholic faith and culture through the arts. The arts programs and projects are designed to invite students into a deepening of their faith.

#### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the expression of Catholic culture and faith is not easily apparent to anyone coming into the school. Arts programs and projects are not rooted in the Catholic faith and culture. Students are not encouraged to deepen their faith through their experiences in the arts programs.

#### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

it is difficult to recognize the school as Catholic due to the lack of evidence of the school's Catholic culture. While there may be a concern for the spiritual in evidence, it is not distinctly Catholic.



## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*2.6 Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Review the mission statement and clarify its distinctive Catholic character.
- Enhance the school's Catholic identity by augmenting the number and type of Catholic symbols in evidence throughout the school.
- Encourage faculty contributions to integrate the arts, music and prayer in lessons to exemplify Catholic culture and faith.
- Encourage students to explore their faith through meaningful opportunities to participate in art programs that reflect a Catholic culture.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Increase the prevalence and thematic relevance of Catholic religious symbols throughout the school. The school's mission and traditions ought to be reflected for the public by these symbols.
- Plan with the faculty to institute a reflective process where students are encouraged to co-create with God through their work and critical reflections on the arts.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Enhance the Catholic environment by highlighting the context of the school within the presentations of Catholic culture and faith.
- Make architectural adjustments where possible to highlight the central features of the faith in a structural manner. (e.g. placement of statues, shrines, chapels, etc.)
- Integrate the visual arts, performance arts, and music so the arts are viewed as a critical experience in accessing Catholic culture and deepening students' faith lives.
- Provide opportunities for students to think ethically, critically and creatively about the world around them through the use of the arts in partnership with the faculty of history, science, and literature.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

The school consciously and seamlessly integrates the social teaching of the Catholic Church (CST) into its curriculum. It permeates the school culture, is evident in instruction and interactions, and it motivates an orientation toward service and a concern for justice and compassion.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are curriculum outcomes aligned with the Church's social teaching?
- Do specific programs of study at the secondary level focus on Catholic social teaching?
- Do instructional materials and resources contain elements of Catholic social teaching?
- Has the faculty received training on integrating CST into the various disciplines?
- Do lesson plans and learning activities reflect a treatment of CST?
- Are service projects aligned to elements of the Church's social teaching?
- Are reflections geared towards meaningful thought about the impact of CST?
- Can students and faculty articulate how service is integral to being Catholic?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### **At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

Catholic Social teachings are evident through the school's instruction and practice. Students are asked to make connections between their learning and CST.

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the Church's social teachings will be infused into multiple subject areas including religious education. Students are involved in forms of service that flow from Catholic social teaching. Students are able to express why service is important in relation to CST. Students and faculty demonstrate a fluency with CST. Students are able to see and experience natural connections between Eucharist, coursework and service.

#### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the Church's social teachings are not consciously infused into the curriculum or instruction but may be addressed less systematically from time to time or from teacher to teacher.

#### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the theory and practice of the Church's social teaching are not addressed in the curriculum or service projects.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Review the school's mission statement. How is the school's mission connected to the Church's social teaching? How is the school's understanding of the Eucharist connected to CST?
- Review the theory and practice of the Church's social teaching.
- Integrate CST into existing curriculum in an extended discussion with the faculty.
- Insert the Church's social teaching into a class or subject area where it is most relevant.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Integrate the theory and practice of the Church's social teaching into the curriculum.
- Structure the CST instructional program to assure that every student is involved.
- Assess what students are gaining from the service projects and adjust these projects so they are more intimately linked to the students' understanding of Eucharist.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Create and implement a plan to integrate Catholic social teaching into multiple subject areas, including religion.
- Design service projects around themes derived from CST.
- Reflect on the effectiveness of the service undertaken in this regard in the light of being a community centered on the Eucharist.
- Empower students to direct a process of reflection on their service experiences.
- Communicate the results of this process to the community.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.1:** *Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.*

### I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark is about schools providing multifaceted approaches on ways to be Catholic in accordance with its mission, and to help students draw closer to God. Schools should articulate an understanding of Catholicism that is relevant to the lives of its students and create fresh and adaptive experiences that inspire students to encounter God. These approaches should be assessed for their effectiveness with student input to the process.

### II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are students initiating and leading prayer in multiple forms?
- Do students openly share ways they witness their faith?
- Do all adults explore prayer with students?
- Do students play an active role in the planning of liturgies?
- Do students enjoy the opportunity to be ministers during the liturgy?
- Do students have a joyful understanding of the Eucharist?
- Do the homilies teach and inspire students to be Christ for others?
- Do homilies illustrate how the Gospel and the scriptures relate to the context of students' lives?
- Does the music selected for liturgies enliven students?
- Is there a process in place to gather input and assess the effectiveness of the various opportunities for prayer, Eucharist, and liturgy at the school?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.1:** *Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

students encounter relevant opportunities to learn about prayer and its relationship to the Eucharistic and larger liturgical life of the Church.

#### At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

students take a leadership role in the prayer life of the school. Students are involved in liturgical planning and evaluation. Liturgy has a special role in the life of the school and is celebrated in a variety of forms on a regular basis.

#### At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

students pray regularly but prayer is led by adults. The liturgical life of the school exists through its expression on feast days relevant to the school or the Church as a whole.

#### At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

the prayer lives of students are absent or are displayed in a way that does not connect with the lives of students or the tradition of the school. Liturgical celebrations are absent, or are a minimal part of the school's routine.

Note: To measure these benchmarks accurately, the *student voice* out to be be a significant part of the process used to evaluate this item.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.1:** *Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Partner with students to explore online and local resources about praying.
- Interview members of the school community about how and why they pray.
- Find creative projects to collect and share the findings.
- Encourage students to write letters to area priests inviting them to celebrate the Eucharist with them during the year.
- Explore the structure of Catholic liturgy.

#### To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Develop a shared understanding of the purpose of prayer and invite students to create a prayer book or an online archive of prayers, prayer videos, etc.
- Explore and reflect on the language of the Last Supper with students to help them develop a personal connection to the celebration of the Eucharist.
- Expand students' appreciation of the liturgy by training and designating students in liturgical ministry roles for school liturgies.

#### To move from level 3 to 4,

- Encourage the presider to visit with the students in advance of the school mass (virtually or in person) to help the presider connect to the joys, anxieties and hopes of the student body.
- Train students to plan liturgies and make this a student leadership opportunity.
- Default to student-composed or student-led prayer at all school-wide prayer times.
- Connect with Catholic college student ministry teams (or alums of the school) to witness ways young adults are leading faith-driven lives.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Presider  
Joy  
Student voice

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.2:** *Every student is offered timely, regular, and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.*

### I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark is about schools committing resources of time, space, and funds to provide students with meaningful and joyful encounters with God within the parameters of the school schedule. It is about demonstrating the value of spiritual reflection as a timeless life skill, central to our students' achievements. It is about putting spiritual reflection on par with academics.

### II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are the costs associated with student retreats accounted for annually in the school budget?
- Are retreats differentiated by age-level?
- Do retreat leaders meet with students ahead of time to learn about the students' joys, anxieties, and hopes?
- Does the retreat planning process include a meeting between the relevant school stakeholders to discuss the school's mission, charism and retreat outcomes?
- Do students play a role in the planning of the retreat?
- Do retreats provide a genuine departure from a typical school day?
- Is the retreat evaluated? How extensively?
- Do retreats provide students with fresh and innovative ways to recognize God in their lives?
- Do retreats and spiritual experiences encourage students to be Christ for others?
- Do retreats allow students to encounter the Catholic tradition from a new perspective?
- Are retreats and spiritual experiences focused on youth and joyful?



## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.2:** *Every student is offered timely, regular, and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level 3- **Fully Meets Benchmark,**

students are presented with at least one organized opportunity to engage in a retreat experience under the direction of qualified personnel. Students play a role in the planning of the retreat so it deals with their life experiences in the larger context of the faith.

#### At level 4- **Exceeds Benchmark,**

students are presented with multiple retreat and reflective experiences throughout the year which they assist in planning under the direction of qualified personnel. These experiences are designed to continuously provide students with an awareness of God's love and God's presence at work in their lives. Schools highlight their traditions to discover methods and practices that reflect the deeper spiritual heritage of the institution.

#### At level 2- **Partially Meets Benchmark,**

students are offered retreat or reflective experiences rarely, and have little role in the planning of these experiences. The presence of qualified personnel to direct these experiences is sporadic. The experiences bear little relevance to students' lives.

#### At level 1- **Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

retreats or sustained reflections are not a part of the students' experience.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.2:** *Every student is offered timely, regular, and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Begin to develop a retreat budget.
- Take steps towards placing the retreat and spiritual experiences at the center of the school's life.
- Invite students to gather evidence of God working in their lives and explore creative ways this evidence can be shared.
- Work across the building to swap classroom space for retreat activities so students experience a disruption of their location within the school day.

#### To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Expand resources in the retreat budget.
- Calendar student retreats while other major school calendaring is being done. Coordinate retreat programming with your school's mission and charism.
- Invite students to focus their community service projects to just one charitable organization and prepare for the retreat by fostering gratitude for those operating the charity and empathy for those being served by the charity.
- Build programming that readies and deepens students' experience of the liturgical seasons of Lent, Advent and Christmas.
- Utilize online prayer platforms.

#### To move from level 3 to 4,

- Foster a sense of retreat as an on-going journey.
- Provide regular opportunities for students to journal about their journey.
- Support a student blog on their faith experiences pre and post retreat.
- Hire experienced retreat leaders to collaborate with students and renew retreat program.
- Collaborate with students to choose a retreat theme for the year. Let this theme be woven into academic subjects.
- Partner with area parishes, colleges, and community centers to find alternative retreat spaces.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Blog

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark is about schools creating a coordinated process for service that requires all students to participate. It is about harnessing students' natural desire to connect school-based learning with the wider world. It provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate central tenants of their school's mission by living their faith with others, for others, as Jesus taught.

### II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Do students have an age-appropriate understanding of why they are doing service?
- Do school leaders, teachers and students discuss how the mission of the school informs service program opportunities?
- Do service program leaders (including students) meet with charity leaders to understand the mission of the charity?
- Do students connect the meaning of the Eucharist with their community service?
- Are service projects designed to elevate students' understanding of social justice including an awareness of the systems that oppress others in your wider community?
- Do students collaborate in selecting the charities the school will serve?
- Are students given age-appropriate responsibilities in coordinating service programs?
- Are students given time to reflect before and after a service project, comparing their expectations with realities, worries with joys? Is this reflection structured?
- Are schools documenting their work, finding ways to measure the impact they are making in their service projects?
- Do schools follow up with charities to understand ways to improve on the support they want to offer?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### **At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

all students participate in a service program that is integrated within the social justice teachings of the Church. Within this context students reflect on their experiences in the light of the Gospel values that animate the school's mission

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

all students discern from a variety of options and engage in service learning that is integrated within the social justice teachings of the Church. Matching their talents and interests with the needs of the community students reflect on their experiences in the light of the Gospel values that animate the school's mission. Students indicate how their experiences have broadened and deepened their understanding of their faith in action.

#### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

some students participate in service programs that are tied into the liturgical year. Opportunities to reflect on the experience in the light of the Gospel are sporadic.

#### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

students are not required to participate in a service program that incarnates the Gospel in a meaningful way. Reflection is not part of the service process.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Initiate conversations with students about the mission of the school and ways to express it in service to others.
- Invite students to research area charities.
- Learn the mission of these charities and determine which charity the school is best able to support in this initial stage of developing a community service program.
- Organize ways the school can begin to support each charity.
- Delegate aspects of the project across the school, integrating social justice learning into the curriculum where appropriate.

#### To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Deepen the school's partnership with a charity.
- Consider developing a service program that, over the course of the students' years, allows students to take on more sophisticated projects for a charity. This approach provides the school and charity to have a stronger mutually beneficial partnership, where the charity's deeper and more constant challenges are met by students and staff who have grown to understand the charity and the complexities facing those it serves.

#### To move from level 3 to 4,

- Promote service that is global and local.
- Allow students to reflect on Eucharistic themes of unity and diversity as students witness God in the lives of those so far away, who perhaps live in very different circumstances.
- Have students plan special liturgies featuring unique prayers and liturgical music native to that global region.
- Deepen the school's partnership with an area charity by utilizing students' gifts and talents to serve the charity.
- Encourage students to blog about what they are discovering about social justice, the steps they are taking toward solidarity with God's people, and what it means to be bread for others through their ongoing service with local and global communities.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Social justice

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark looks to engage the “community” in community service. Catholic schools strengthen their mission and Catholic identity by intentionally bolstering the relationships of all its community members. There is a lack of authenticity to school-wide service if it only calls upon the students, some teachers and parents to act. This benchmark also necessitates a vibrancy of Standard 4, where school administration, faculty and staff feel comfortable and encouraged to share and deepen their faith together.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Do all administrators, faculty and staff take time together to pray, especially for students?
- Do administrators communicate this expectation with candidates during the hiring process?
- Are students comfortable asking faith-based questions in each class?
- Do students seek out different adults for sharing and receiving advice?
- Are conversations regarding service projects welcome in all classes or are they relegated to religion class?
- Do students know which charities or causes their teachers are active in?
- Are there public records witnessing the commitments adults have made?
- Do all administrators, faculty and staff have responsibilities in the school service projects?
- Do all administrators, faculty and staff discuss what a faith role model is, and share resources to develop this role continuously?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

all students have active relationships with school personnel that model a commitment to faithful service. The school emphasizes its commitment to teaching and practicing social justice in multiple ways. Hiring practices reflect this commitment.

#### At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

all members of the school community model a commitment to faithful service. The school emphasizes its commitment to teaching and practicing social justice in multiple ways. Hiring practices reflect this commitment. The school's commitment to this value is well communicated to all stakeholders and the public at large.

#### At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

there are several role models of faithful service throughout the community who encounter students. Some administrators and faculty demonstrate the practice of social justice within the community. Hiring practices do not make this component of faculty service a priority.

#### At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

there is not an overt commitment of the school community to social justice or faithful service. A consideration of faith integrated into a service outlook is not a requirement for administrators or faculty.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Commit to Standard 4 by providing all people working in the school community with ways to deepen their faith lives.
- Work to build trust between school administration and faculty and staff.
- Reflect on scripture that illustrates faith role-modeling.
- Require the staff to engage in service projects.
- Survey students about how teachers help them to encounter God.

#### To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Sponsor a series of conversations among all people working in the school community about role modeling by asking them to identify someone who has been a faith role model for them.
- Share stories and identify what elements made the modeling effective and meaningful.
- Empower employees to foster these elements with certain students in the context of a school-wide initiative.
- Assess what methods are effective with students and plan to expand the faith role modeling effort in a greater capacity.
- Continue developing goals articulated in Standard 4 benchmarks.

#### To move from level 3 to 4,

- Champion faith role-modeling school wide by empowering all stakeholders with the tools and time to develop relationships (using as many unique pairings as possible).
- Create faith reflection groups comprised of different stakeholders and grade levels.
- Work with these groups as the school prepares and debriefs community service projects.
- Think outward about how the school can be a role model of faith to other organizations and those in need of care and kindness.

### V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)



## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.1:** *The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school is committed to providing ongoing faith formation opportunities (i.e. retreats and other spiritual experiences) for the faculty and staff. It is the responsibility of the leader and leadership team to ensure that such opportunities are being provided on a regular basis. This benchmark indicates that ongoing spiritual experiences will enrich the spirituality of the faculty and staff so that the Catholic identity of the school will be strengthened.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- What is the structure of the faculty/Staff retreat program?
- When are faculty/ staff retreats scheduled?
- What is the frequency of the retreats?
- What kinds of other spiritual experiences are offered to the faculty and staff?
- Is there an ongoing program of individual as well as group discernment to measure the effectiveness of the program?
- Are faculty and staff involved in the planning and execution of the program?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*4.1: The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the leadership team takes responsibility for setting a yearly course for faculty and staff's spiritual enrichment. Both individual and communal experiences are offered throughout the year.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the leadership team takes responsibility for establishing a group that helps to set a yearly course for all faculty and staff to participate in spiritual discovery and enrichment. There is a progressive growth process in place where faculty and staff proceed individually and as a community. The style and substance of the retreats and spiritual experiences are aligned with the spiritual heritage and mission of the school in that the faculty and staff can explore their roles as the current stewards of the school's spiritual and religious heritage. The experiences are evaluated on a yearly basis to maintain quality and relevance to the faculty and staff.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark**,

the leadership team takes responsibility for setting up occasional experiences for faculty and staff's spiritual enrichment. There is no plan in place to offer individual and communal experiences.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

retreats and spiritual experiences are not provided.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.1:** *The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Begin to offer retreats and/or other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff.

#### To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Begin to offer retreats for the faculty/staff at least once a year.
- Provide regular opportunities for spiritual experiences throughout the year.
- Engage qualified individuals to facilitate these experiences.

#### To move from level 3 to 4,

- Ensure that the retreats and other spiritual experiences address the spiritual needs of the faculty/staff both personally and as a community.
- Engage qualified individuals to facilitate these experiences.
- Offer spiritual opportunities throughout the year that are aligned with the liturgical calendar.
- Organize a faculty/staff team to assist in planning and evaluating the spiritual experiences offered by the school.
- Investigate opportunities for personalized spiritual experiences for faculty and staff.
- Align the spiritual development process with the heritage and mission of the school community.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Leadership Team  
Retreat  
Spiritual Experiences  
Discernment  
Spiritual heritage

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.2:** *The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school has established a culture that views parents as the primary educators of their children's faith lives. The leader/leadership team and faculty have clearly indicated the roles that parents are to play in the religious development of their children in partnership with the school's mission. Programs have been established to orient and educate parents so they can participate meaningfully in these roles.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- What kinds of support are offered to assist parents in the faith education of their children?
- How are these supports communicated to parents? (e.g. workshops, parent meetings, blogs, etc.)
- Is there any input from parents to determine what supports they need?
- Is there any assessment of the effectiveness of these supports for future planning?
- How are parental programs tied to the mission of the school?
- Is there a development model utilized so that parents can grow in their stewardship of the school's mission?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.2:** *The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school offers programming for parents to become involved in their children's religious education. The programming is consistent from year to year and meets the needs of the parent community.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the school offers orientation and educational programs for parents to understand and participate in the religious education of their children while enrolled at the school. A parent group exists to help new families become acquainted with the religious mission of the school and the role that parents are expected to play in the mission. Regular evaluations are made to adjust the program to changing needs of the parent or student community. Educational programs are designed by qualified personnel.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the school offers non-programmatic support for parents in their roles as religious educators of their children. The support is generally offered on an "as needed basis" or by request.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the school does not offer support for parents in this capacity.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*4.2: The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.*

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Begin to offer assistance to parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith. This support may be limited and/ or sporadic.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Offer regular and ongoing assistance to parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith. This support should be intentional and consistent.
- Engage qualified individuals to facilitate these experiences.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Offer support and programs to parents that are consistent and effective.
- Ensure that support is ongoing and encompasses the child's school career.
- Enrich support programs with parent input, involvement, and feedback so as to best meet their needs.
- Engage qualified individuals to facilitate these experiences.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.3:** *The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions (for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, religious congregation-sponsored programs) to provide opportunities for parents to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school views other Catholic institutions as resources for adult faith formation and recognizes the value of collaborating with these institutions. In addition, the school recognizes the importance of supporting parents in their knowledge and practice of their faith in an effort to support them in educating their children.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- With which institutions is the school collaborating?
- What kinds of opportunities are offered for parents to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith?
- Is there any input from parents to determine what opportunities would best meet their needs?
- Is there any assessment of the effectiveness of these collaborations and opportunities for future planning?
- What is the depth of the collaboration with the selected institutions?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.3:** *The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions (for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, religious congregation-sponsored programs) to provide opportunities for parents to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith.*

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3- Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the school has established a relationship with a Catholic institution in order to broaden the understanding of the Church within the context of the school. This relationship is continuous and helps parents to deepen their understanding of the faith.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the school has established an ongoing relationship with a Catholic institution in order to broaden the understanding of the Church within the context of the school. This relationship is articulated throughout the year, and provides opportunities for parents to develop their deeper sense of the faith from both a practical and theological viewpoint. Parents assist in the outreach and evaluation of the partnership program.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the school has established a relationship with a Catholic institution in order to broaden the understanding of the Church within the context of the school. The offerings are sporadic, and help parents to deepen their understanding of the faith.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the school has not established a relationship with a Catholic institution in order to broaden the understanding of the Church within the context of the school.



## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**4.3:** *The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions (for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, religious congregation-sponsored programs) to provide opportunities for parents to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith.*

### **IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?**

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Establish collaborative relationships with other Catholic institutions to provide some types of opportunities for parents to grow in their faith.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Collaborate regularly with other Catholic institutions to provide opportunities for parents to grow in their faith.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Ensure that collaborations with other Catholic institutions are on a regular basis and provide numerous and ongoing opportunities for parents to grow in their faith. Include parent input and feedback in these collaborations.

### **V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)**

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## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that the school community recognizes the importance of involving adults in community service programs to further develop their faith experiences and serve as role models to students. The school has established a culture of Christian service and social justice. Opportunities for involvement are extended to all adults in the school community.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- How does the school define “all adults in the school community”?
- In what Christian service programs is the school involved?
- How do these programs align with Catholic social teachings?
- How are adults invited to participate in these Christian service programs?
- To what extent are the adults in the school community able to recommend and/or design service projects?
- Does the Christian service program include any preparatory opportunities for the adults to understand the teachings of the Church regarding social justice and to recognize the Gospel’s call to action?
- Does the Christian service program provide for Gospel reflection and sharing on the experience following each project?
- Is there any assessment of the effectiveness of these service programs and opportunities for future planning?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

a program exists that invites all the adults in the community to participate in service programs that operate according to Christian service and Catholic social justice principles. The majority of adults participate in this program.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the adults in the community are all involved in service programs that operate according to Christian service and Catholic social justice principles. Adults have gone through a discernment process to ascertain how to serve, where to serve, and engage in meaningful Gospel reflection about the role that service plays in their spiritual development.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark**,

programs are made known to adults in the community inviting them to participate in service programs that operate according to Christian service and Catholic social justice principles.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

there is no formal program to inform adults in the community of the dimension of service in a Christian context.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Promote Christian service opportunities and engage more adults to participate in Christian service programs.
- Shift the culture of the school to reflect a focus on participation in such service programs.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Develop a specific plan to invite all adults to participate in Christian service programs.
- Create a plan of action to shift the culture of the school to make participation in these projects an expected norm.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Ensure that all adults in the school community are actively engaged in participation in Christian service programs.
- Make participation and reflection on the service program a part of faculty formation.
- Conduct regular reviews of the program soliciting input from the adults involved in the program(s).

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Christian service programs

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

This benchmark indicates that great importance is placed on the administrators, faculty, and staff members to visibly support the faith life of the school community. This visible support is both an established part of the school culture and is an expectation of all adults in the community.

### **II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?**

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- In what visible ways are the administrators, faculty, and staff visibly supporting the faith life of the school community?
- Do the administrators, faculty, and staff actively participate in school-wide prayer and liturgy?
- Do the administrators, faculty, and staff engage in prayer and para-liturgical celebrations with their students in their classrooms?
- Do the administrators, faculty, and staff pray together regularly?
- Do administrators lead prayer publicly? Are prayers relevant to the times of year and the occasions?
- In their relationships and interactions, do the administrators, faculty, and staff witness the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives?
- Do the administrators, faculty and staff engage in Christian service projects?
- Are the administrators, faculty and staff a faithful presence in the larger community on behalf of the school?
- Can students describe how adults in the community have expressed their faith and support the faith life of the community?
- Can students talk about an adult who serves as a personal role model for their faith development?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

#### At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark,**

all administrators, faculty and staff are a visible presence at school events witnessing the Catholic identity of the school. The faculty and staff regularly participate in the full array of religious events at the school.

#### At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

all administrators, faculty and staff are a visible presence at school events witnessing the Catholic identity of the school. Christian service programs, liturgical celebrations, prayer occasions, and spiritual development activities are opportunities where the staff gathers in a spirit of Christian communal solidarity.

#### At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

some administrators, faculty and staff are a visible presence at school events witnessing the Catholic identity of the school. The faculty and staff sporadically participate in the full array of religious events at the school.

#### At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

administrators, faculty and staff are not a visible presence at school events witnessing the Catholic identity of the school.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

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

### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Initiate a program that involves administrators, faculty, and staff to visibly support the faith life of the community.
- Discuss among the administrative staff and faculty what the dimensions of such a program would entail – what it would look like for administrators, faculty and staff to visibly and meaningfully support the faith life of the school.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Design a specific plan or policy that includes every administrator, faculty, and staff member to visibly support the faith life of the community.
- Establish clear expectations for administrators, faculty, and staff member participation.
- Provide numerous opportunities for administrative staff and faculty to participate in faith-related activities, and to express and support faith life of those in the school community.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Involve administrators, faculty, and staff members to design events and programs that visibly support the faith life of the school community.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and authenticity of these programs and events so they are visibly representative of the faith life of the school.

### V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for the terms listed below.)