

Yellow highlights indicate the benchmarks where the board has direct responsibility

**Mission and Catholic Identity (School)**

- 1 An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.
  - 1.1 The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.
  - 1.2 The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.
  - 1.3 The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae)) to clarify, review and renew the school's mission statement.
  - 1.4 The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.
  - 1.5 All constituents know and understand the mission.
- 2 An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.
  - 2.1 Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.
  - 2.2 Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.
  - 2.3 Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.
  - 2.4 The school's Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education.
  - 2.5 Faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.
  - 2.6 Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture.
  - 2.7 The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.
- 3 An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - 3.3 Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.
  - 3.4 Every student experiences role models of faith and service for social justice among the administrators, faculty and staff.
- 4 An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.
  - 4.1 The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.
  - 4.2 The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.
  - 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/guardians to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith.
  - 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.
  - 4.5 Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the school community.

**Governance and Leadership (Board)**

- 5 An excellent Catholic school has a governing body (person or persons) which recognizes and respects the role(s) of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making (authoritative, consultative, advisory) in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence, and operational vitality.
  - 5.1 The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.
  - 5.2 The governing body systematizes the policies of the school's operations to ensure fidelity to mission, and continually and sustainably through leadership successions.
  - 5.3 The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop's legitimate authority.
  - 5.4 The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a constructive and beneficial relationship with the (arch) diocesan Education Office consistent with (arch)diocesan policy pertaining to the recognition of Catholic schools by the Bishop.
  - 5.5 In the case of a parish school, the governing body, in collaboration with the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the canonical administrator (pastor or designee of Bishop) marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, and continuing dialogue.
  - 5.6 The governing body engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.
- 6 An excellent Catholic school has a qualified leader/leadership team empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.
  - 6.1 The leader/leadership team meets national, state and/or (arch)diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leader(s) of the school.
  - 6.2 The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.
  - 6.3 The leader/leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of faculty and staff in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies.
  - 6.4 The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.
  - 6.5 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.
  - 6.6 The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.
  - 6.7 The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.

**Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools**

- Centered in the Person of Jesus Christ
- Contributing to the Evangelizing Mission of the Church
- Distinguished by Excellence
- Committed to Educate the Whole Child
- Steeped in a Catholic Worldview
- Sustained by Gospel Witness
- Shaped by Communion and Community
- Accessible to All Students
- Established by the Expressed Authority of the Bishop

**Academic Excellence (School)**

- 7 An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills, and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.
  - 7.1 The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards, and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.
  - 7.2 Standards are adopted across the curriculum, and include integration of the religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects.
  - 7.3 Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical, and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global citizens.
  - 7.4 Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning prepares students to become expert users of technology, able to create, publish, and critique digital products that reflect their understanding of the content and their technological skills.
  - 7.5 Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind.
  - 7.6 Classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student, and accommodating students with special needs as fully as possible.
  - 7.7 Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction to result in high levels of student achievement.
  - 7.8 The faculty and professional support staff meet (arch) diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for academic preparation and licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum and instruction.
  - 7.9 Faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values.
  - 7.10 Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.
- 8 An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent, and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.
  - 8.1 School-wide and student data generated by a variety of tools are used to monitor, review, and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs; to plan for continued and sustained student growth; and to monitor and assess faculty performance.
  - 8.2 School-wide and aggregated student data are normed to appropriate populations and are shared with all stakeholders.
  - 8.3 Faculty use a variety of curriculum-based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning, including formative, summative, authentic performance, and student self-assessment.
  - 8.4 Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are valid, consistent, transparent, and justly administered.
  - 8.5 Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to monitor individual and class-wide student learning through methods such as common assessments and rubrics.
- 9 An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.
  - 9.1 School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents/guardians to enhance the educational experiences for the school community.
  - 9.2 Guidance services, wellness programs, behavior management programs, and ancillary services provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.
  - 9.3 Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to further identify and develop their gifts and talents and to enhance their creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual capabilities.

**Operational Vitality (Board)**

- 10 An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three to five year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative process, emphasizing faithful stewardship.
  - 10.1 The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in nonprofit management and funding.
  - 10.2 Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, dioceses, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.
  - 10.3 Financial plans define revenue sources that include but are not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships, endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch)diocesan and/or religious communities' assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.
  - 10.4 Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.
  - 10.5 Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.
  - 10.6 Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.
  - 10.7 The governing body and leader/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.
  - 10.8 The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.
- 11 An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies developed in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff (clergy, religious women and men, lay and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.
  - 11.1 Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e., central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies.
  - 11.2 Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, and benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.
  - 11.3 Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.
  - 11.4 Human resource policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care and retirement.
- 12 An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.
  - 12.1 The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.
  - 12.2 The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.
  - 12.3 The school's purchasing, and physical and technological improvements are, by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals, and consistent with environmental stewardship.
- 13 An excellent Catholic school enacts a comprehensive plan, based on a compelling mission, for institutional advancement through communications, marketing, enrollment management, and development.
  - 13.1 The communications/marketing plan requires school leader/leadership team and staff person(s) to insure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences, and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.
  - 13.2 The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.
  - 13.3 The development plan requires school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to insure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni(ae), over time and when appropriate.