

Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Program (FCCAP)
PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS MANUAL
For Elementary Schools (Pre-K to 8th Grade)



Updated December 2011
(Effective the 2012-2013 School Year)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments		2
Foreword		3
Introductory Letter		4
The Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Committee (FCCAC)		5
Area A.	Beliefs and Mission	6
Area B.	School and Community	7
Area C.	Program of Learning	8
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Design • Curriculum • Assessment • Age Entry Date • Virtual Education Program 	
Area D.	Personnel	11
Area E.	Administration	16
Area F.	Learning Media Services	19
Area G.	Pupil Services	20
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Counseling Program • Health and Safety 	
Area H.	School Plant and Facilities	21

Appendix:	Indicators	
	A. Beliefs and Mission	I
	B. School and Community	II
	C. Program of Learning	IV
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Design • Curriculum 	
	F. Learning Media Services	VII
	G. Pupil Services	VIII
	H. School Plant and Facilities	IX

Addendum:	Standards for Special Purpose Schools and Special Purpose Programs within a Regular School	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition, Rationale, Implementation • Area C: Program of Learning • Area D: Personnel • Area E: Administration • Area G: Pupil Services 	A B C D E

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The FCCAC acknowledges the superintendents, principals, and pastors who read and reacted to all the proposed revisions.

FOREWORD

The Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Program was adopted by the Florida Bishops during the 1970-1971 school year. This program, developed by state diocesan educational leaders in consultation with school pastors and principals, is now in its fifth revision and has been approved for use in the Catholic schools by the Florida Bishops.

The standards of this accreditation program are derived from sound educational research and influenced by Catholic educational philosophy which integrates faith and values with life and learning. These standards assist schools in working through a dynamic self-evaluation process which promotes accountability and on-going excellence. Further, these standards, by serving as a basis to ensure quality in the schools, justify the faith that parents and others have placed in them.

Catholic schools educate and contribute to the formation of a healthy and morally sound lifestyle. They are a tool for evangelization and have a reputation for quality education, discipline in the classroom, and transmission of Catholic values. The Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation program is designed to enhance all of these areas.

Since its beginning more than three decades ago, this accreditation program has ushered in many positive changes and has ensured the continuation in improvement of Catholic schools in Florida. We are indeed thankful for and proud of the dedicated pastors, administrators, teachers and others who have made this possible. Their efforts are a blessing to this program and to the children in Catholic schools in Florida.

*Most Reverend John C. Favalora, D.D.
Metropolitan Archbishop of the Province of Miami
President, the Florida Catholic Conference
1994*

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Colleague:

In the late 1960's, the Bishops of the State of Florida proposed that all of their elementary schools would be accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference. In 1970, the FCC established an Accreditation Committee which developed the first set of principles and standards which every Catholic school would need to meet in order to be accredited. This began the efforts to continually improve education in Catholic schools. In particular, the Bishops were eager that the Catholic identity and mission of each school would be reflected in the standards. In 1995, at the request of the Bishop of Savannah, Georgia, the schools of his diocese began participation in the accreditation program of the Florida Catholic Conference.

Over the years, the Florida Catholic Conference Accreditation Committee has regularly reviewed and revised its Accreditation Standards in order to continually improve the quality of Catholic education in the State of Florida. This current document contains the fifth revision of the Standards.

This fifth revision was used as a working document during the 2001-2002 school year. This was to allow sufficient time for schools to transition to the revised standards. During that time, the Accreditation Committee requested input concerning these revised standards from those who are responsible for the schools. This working draft was revised again on the basis of input that was received. After this final revision, the standards were approved by the FCC Accreditation Committee, the FCC Schools Committee, and the Bishops of Florida and Savannah, Georgia and are to be officially implemented with the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year.

In the area of personnel, it should be understood that a person who was hired for a particular position before 2002-2003 would continue to be governed by the standards that were in place at the time of hiring. However, the "grandfathered" person is expected to continue annual progress and updating

- The first section of this document contains the revised Standards
- The second section (Appendix A) contains "Indicators." Indicators are not standards but are intended as suggested action steps which are given in order to help the school understand the intent of the standards and provide further clarification.

It is our hope that these new standards will help the Catholic schools of Florida and the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia, to become even better places of learning and faith development.

The FCC Accreditation Revision Committee
2002

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FLORIDA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

AREA A: BELIEFS AND MISSION

“The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony. Through it, the local Church evangelizes, educates, and contributes to the formation of a healthy and morally sound life-style among its members.” (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, Rome 1988*)

PRINCIPLE: The identity and unique purpose of a Catholic school are rooted in its beliefs and mission. Specified beliefs and a mission statement that are cooperatively identified, clearly stated, and mutually accepted, direct the student throughout the entire educational experience.

STANDARDS:

1. The beliefs and mission of the school shall reflect the integration of Catholic faith and Gospel values with learning and life-giving direction for the entire educational program.
2. The beliefs and mission of the school shall be based on relevant Church documents and reliable research consistent with accepted and developmentally appropriate educational practices.
3. The school shall have a clear, written statement of its beliefs and mission which is cooperatively developed through appropriate participation of pastor(s), principal, other administrators, faculty, students, parents, board members, and parish/school community representatives who are sensitive to and interested in the needs of the students.
4. The beliefs and mission of the school shall be promulgated to the school community.
5. All key decisions of the school shall be in accordance with its beliefs and mission statement.
6. The beliefs and mission of the school shall be reviewed annually by the pastor(s), principal, other administrators, faculty, students, parents, board members, and parish/school community representatives and, if necessary, revised to meet changing needs.

AREA B: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

PRINCIPLE: In order to provide a quality Catholic educational environment and program, it is essential that there be interaction, collaboration, and open communication among the school, the home, and the local faith and civic communities.

STANDARDS:

1. The school shall become aware of and reflect parish and civic community needs in determining its program.
2. The school shall recognize the comprehensive and complex needs of its students and make use of services and resources provided by the community.
3. The school shall provide for family and community involvement in its program.
4. The school shall maintain ongoing communication with pastor(s), parents, alumni, and other constituencies.

AREA C: PROGRAM OF LEARNING

PRINCIPLE: The Catholic school provides the student with the fullest and best opportunities to realize the fourfold purpose of Catholic education: message, community, worship and service. The full development of each student is facilitated by a comprehensive educational program that includes a balance of appropriate and authentic school and real life experiences; recognition of individual talents and differences; the acquisition of essential skills, concepts, and knowledge; and the developmental assessment of each student's progress.

STANDARDS:

Instructional Design

1. The school program shall be based on Catholic educational philosophy and developed in accordance with the school's beliefs and mission.
2. The school program shall be contemporary, challenging, and research-based. It shall foster the active involvement of students and provide them with sustained opportunities to learn essential skills and concepts in each content area.
3. The school program shall be student-centered and based on developmentally, age appropriate research and practice.
4. The school program shall foster the enhancement of the spiritual, academic, aesthetic, physical, social, emotional, and cultural life of the students through a variety of experiences.
5. Instruction shall emphasize the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills that encourage students to apply their knowledge and become life-long learners.
6. A school-wide, written technological plan shall be developed and updated annually that incorporates available technologies with instructional strategies to support and optimize the students' educational experiences in all curriculum areas.
7. The school program shall incorporate instructional technologies and other instructional resources which support, enhance, and optimize the students' educational experiences.
8. Each school shall provide a referral for, or provision of, individualized evaluation and placement of students in accordance with their special learning needs.
9. Each school shall provide reasonable accommodations, including mainstreaming and inclusion opportunities, within an appropriate learning environment for students.
10. The school shall make an effort to provide remediation opportunities for those students who meet stated criteria.

11. The school shall make an effort to provide enrichment and accelerated programs for those students who meet stated criteria.
12. *A Resource Program in a school must have a teacher certified in special education and its students must be able to participate in a regular academic education program with accommodations, or in some cases, mild modifications.
13. The school program shall provide opportunities for participation in educational activities within and beyond the local school community to enrich and improve learning.
14. The school shall provide a planned program that effectively supports transition from one level of instruction to another and is consistent with the educational needs of the students.
15. Co-curricular activities shall be based on the beliefs and mission of the school and meet the needs and interests of the students.
16. The school day shall include a minimum of 540 net instructional hours for kindergarten, 720 net instructional hours for grades 1-3, and 900 net instructional hours for grades 4-8.

***NOTE: A Resource Program is an effective instructional arrangement for helping “gifted and talented” or “at risk” students who have been formally identified at a Student Support Team Meeting as having mild special academic and/or behavioral problems/needs.**

Curriculum

1. The curriculum shall furnish instruction in Catholic truths and moral values that are an integral part of the school program.
2. The curriculum shall place an emphasis on the systematic development of skills and concepts as a basis for understanding in each academic discipline.
3. The curriculum shall be integrated to reflect an interrelatedness of all areas of learning and a balance of factual and conceptual knowledge with developing skills and thought processes.
4. The curriculum shall be based on appropriate theory and practice in learning and human development and offer clearly defined expectations for student learning.
5. Scheduling practices shall reflect the developmental stage of the students.
6. The curriculum shall include diverse cultural, artistic, creative, and spiritual experiences that enhance the students’ perspective and appreciation of aesthetics and culture.
7. The curriculum shall provide programs that address the physical, social, and emotional needs of the students.
8. The curriculum shall present a variety of educational strategies and materials which, while adaptable to the students’ learning styles and ability, also capitalize on the students’ spontaneity and intellectual excitement

9. The curriculum, textbooks, and other instructional resources shall be evaluated and updated on a regular basis to reflect current needs, instructional goals, and developments in academic disciplines.
10. The curriculum shall include a plan for accelerated, enrichment, and remedial programs which may include individualization or small group instruction to meet the particular needs of the students.
11. The curriculum shall utilize instructional technologies to give a broad range of experience for the student and to support current curricular goals and objectives.
12. The school shall develop, implement, and communicate a set of policies, procedures, and guidelines to govern student participation in all co-curricular activities under the sponsorship of the school.

Assessment

1. The school shall develop a comprehensive assessment system to measure student performance, improve the quality of the curriculum and instruction, and interpret and communicate student progress and test results to parents.
2. The school's assessment system shall be consistent with developmentally appropriate practices and expectations for student learning.
3. In determining student growth and achievement, the school shall employ a variety of assessment techniques and instruments which include, but are not limited to, a defined grading and reporting system, portfolio assessment, conferencing, diagnostic evaluations, and a standardized testing program.

Age-Entry Date

The age of the student is the primary appropriate entrance requirement. Entry dates shall be in accordance with the following schedule:

Pre-Kindergarten	3 years of age	On or before September 1st
Pre-Kindergarten	4 years of age	On or before September 1st
Kindergarten	5 years of age	On or before September 1st
First Grade	6 years of age	On or before September 1st and successful completion of Kindergarten

Virtual Education Program

A virtual education program in a school must:

1. Support not supplant on site instruction
2. Have a written plan developed in consultation with and approved by the diocesan superintendent
3. Use an accredited virtual program that demonstrates compliance with best practices and standards such as those published by the National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA).

AREA D: PERSONNEL

PRINCIPLE: The school staff strives to foster the beliefs, mission, and functions of a Catholic elementary school. The principal nurtures the faith development of the school community and provides leadership by supervising and improving the educational program, by fostering a sense of community within the school, and by managing and maintaining the plant and facilities. The staff supports and implements the educational program that includes the intellectual, spiritual, physical, and social development of the students. Members of the administration and staff are qualified by preparation and experience to contribute to the attainment of educational goals.

STANDARDS:

1. All members of the administration and staff shall be knowledgeable of and foster Catholic beliefs and values in their work within the school.
2. The **Principal** shall:
 - a. be a Catholic in good standing;
 - b. complete diocesan catechist certification program
 - c. have a master's degree in educational leadership or an educational leadership related field
 - d. within five years from the initial date of employment as principal have a current and valid Florida (Georgia for the Diocese of Savannah) or national administrator's certificate; and
 - e. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.
3. The **Principal as Teacher:**

Schools with eight or more full-time classroom teachers shall have full-time principals. In schools with fewer than eight full-time teachers, principals may teach one class period per day.
4. The **Assistant Principal** shall:
 - a. have a bachelor's degree;
 - b. within three years of employment have a current and valid state or national teaching certificate;
 - c.
 - i. in the case of a part-time assistant principal, within two years of appointment to the position of assistant principal, shall have earned six college credits in school administration; OR
 - ii. in the case of a full-time assistant principal, within five years of appointment to the position of assistant principal, shall have earned 15 college credits in school administration; and
 - d. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

5. Need for Assistant Principal

In schools with an enrollment greater than 300 students, there shall be a part-time assistant principal. In schools of over 500 students, there shall be a full-time assistant principal.

6. The Pre-Kindergarten Teacher shall:

- a.
 - i. have a bachelor's degree with the equivalent of six college credits in early childhood education; **OR**
 - ii. have an associate's degree with an emphasis in child development or early childhood education; and
- b. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

7. The Kindergarten Teacher shall:

- a.
 - i. have a bachelor's degree in early childhood; **OR**
 - ii. have a bachelor's degree in elementary education with six college credits in early childhood education;
- b. within three years of appointment to the position of teacher, have a current and valid state or national teaching certificate in elementary education or in an area of early childhood; and
- c. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

8. The Teacher of Grades 1-8 shall:

- a. have a bachelor's degree;
- b. within three years of appointment as teacher, have a current and valid state or national teaching certificate in the area of his/her primary teaching assignment;
- c. within five years of the appointment as teacher, have at least six college credits in the area of his/her secondary teaching assignment; and
- d. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

9a. The state certified Classroom Teacher who teaches one or two classes of religion shall:

- a. be a Catholic in good standing,
- b.
 - i. have a bachelor's degree in theology or religious studies; **OR**
 - ii. have a bachelor's degree in and complete a basic level in diocesan catechist certification program* **AND**
- c. show evidence of continuing religious education.

9b. The **Religion Teacher not described in standard 9a** shall:

- a. be a Catholic in good standing,
- b.
 - i. have a bachelor's degree in theology or religious studies; **OR**
 - iii. have a bachelor's degree in and complete a basic level in diocesan catechist certification program* **AND**
- c. within two years of employment complete 3 college credits or the equivalent in instructional methodology and 3 college credits or the equivalent in child/adolescent development as approved by the diocesan superintendent. One of these must be completed in the first year. **AND**
- d. show evidence of continuing religious education.

***NOTE: Each diocese has set up a format and schedule for basic and advanced catechist certification courses. A reasonable time period for completion should be determined – in consultation with the Superintendent's Office – and consideration should be made for the frequency of courses offered, important school scheduling needs, etc. A Religion Teacher in the above situation may be considered "in process" of meeting catechist certification under Area D, Personnel Standard 9, but progress should be carefully monitored and reported via the Annual Report for Continued Accreditation (ARCA).**

10. The **Teacher of Special Education or Resource Teacher*** shall:

- a.
 - i. have a bachelor's degree in special education; **OR**
 - ii. have a bachelor's degree with certification in an area of special education;
- b. within three years of appointment as teacher, have a current and valid state or national certificate in an area of special education; **and**
- c. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

***NOTE: A Resource Teacher is an individual who has completed a degree or certification in any area of special education. The Resource Teacher provides specialized instruction and assessment, plans, implements, supports and monitors the student's program in collaboration with the administration, regular education teachers and parents.**

11. The **Physical Education Teacher (one or more periods)** shall:

- a. i. have a bachelor's degree in physical education, and, within three years of appointment as teacher, have a current and valid state or national certificate in physical education; OR
- ii. have a bachelor's degree and successfully complete the state subject area examination in physical education, and, within three years of appointment as teacher, have a current and valid state or national certification in physical education; and
- b. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

12. The **Educational Media Specialist** shall:

- a. i. have a master's degree in educational media; OR
- ii. have a bachelor's degree in a field related to educational media (e.g. English, elementary education, etc.) and familiarization with technologies;
- b. within three years of appointment as media specialist, have a current and valid state or national certificate in educational media or related field; and
- c. maintain recency of credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

NOTE: For instructional staff who do not hold appropriate qualifications as specified in D4-12, principals must apply through their diocesan superintendent for a Limited Teaching Endorsement (LTE). The approved form must be completed and presented by the superintendent for approval by the Accreditation Committee at one of its regular bi-annual meetings.

13. The **School Counselor** shall:

- a. have a master's degree;
- b. i. have a current and valid state or national school counselor certificate, OR
- ii. have a Florida state license in an area of mental health such as Clinical Social Worker, Mental Health Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, Clinical Psychologist, or any other area in mental health which the state shall license; and
- c. maintain recency of credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

14. Additional Staff

- a. **Part-time teachers** in major subject areas except Religion, shall:
 - i. have a bachelor's degree and
 - ii. have at least 12 college credits in their teaching area.
 - iii. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

- b. **Personnel** who teach foreign language, music, art, and technology shall:
 - i. have documented qualifications validated in writing by their superintendent AND
 - ii. within two years of employment complete 3 college credits or the equivalent in instructional methodology and 3 college credits or the equivalent in child/adolescent development as approved by the diocesan superintendent. One of these must be completed in the first year. AND
 - iii. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

- c. **Support personnel**, such as library and teacher assistants, shall be under the direct supervision of an administrator or teacher.

- d. **Personnel to provide remedial and enrichment support** to meet the individual needs of students shall have documented educational qualifications validated in writing by their superintendent.

15. Professional Development

There shall be a written, school-based program of professional development designed to improve the effectiveness of all school personnel.

16. Planning Period

Each full-time teacher shall have the equivalent of five planning periods per week.

AREA E: ADMINISTRATION

PRINCIPLE: Effective integration and coordination of all factors that contribute to the defined purposes of the school program including instruction, organization, administration, and finance are essential to the achievement of quality education.

STANDARDS

1. Class Size

GRADE LEVEL	CLASS SIZE LIMIT*
Pre-Kindergarten – 3 years	20
Pre-Kindergarten – 4 years	25
Kindergarten	30
Grades 1-8	35

***NOTE:** When feasible, determination of class size should take into account the number of students in the class who require special learning accommodations.

2. Staff/ Student Ratios

Staff/student ratios shall be maintained in relation to the age of the student.

GRADE LEVEL	STAFF/ STUDENT RATIO
Pre-Kindergarten 3 Yrs.	A part-time teacher assistant is required for 11-15 students.
	A full-time teacher assistant is required for 16-20 students.
Pre-Kindergarten 4 Yrs.	A part-time teacher assistant is required for 16-20 students.
	A full-time teacher assistant is required for 21-25 students.
Kindergarten	A part-time teacher assistant is required for 21-25 students.
	A full-time teacher assistant is required for 26-30 students.
Grade 1	A part-time teacher assistant is recommended for 1-20 students.
	A part-time teacher assistant is required for 21-25 students.
Grades 2-3	A full-time teacher assistant is required for 26-35 students.
	A part-time teacher assistant is recommended for 1-30 students.
Grades 4-8	A part-time teacher assistant is required for 31-35 students.
	At least one part-time teacher assistant(s) shared among these grades is recommended for 1-35 students.

3. Nondiscrimination Policy

The school shall publish, implement, and display statements of nondiscrimination of students and personnel in accordance with federal law and regulations.

4. School Calendar

The school shall develop an academic calendar and supporting attendance policies that are sufficient to the operation of a quality instructional program with a minimum of 180 actual school days.

5. Evaluation of Personnel

There shall be a systematic review and written performance evaluation of administrators, teachers, and staff.

6. Salary Scale

Each school shall have and follow a written salary scale based on diocesan guidelines.

7. Budget

A budget that gives evidence of financial support sufficient to achieve the school's purpose shall be prepared annually by the pastor(s), principal, and an advisory group.

8. Financial Records

Records of all school funds collected and disbursed shall be kept according to diocesan policy. These records of operational funds shall be separate from parish financial accounts.

9. Financial Stability

There shall be evidence of financial stability in the form of a Financial Statement that is prepared annually.

10. Tuition and Fees

The school shall develop and publish a tuition and fee schedule appropriate to its operations and clientele as well as a refund policy that is well communicated and meets legal and ethical considerations.

11. Development

Marketing, development, and fund-raising activities shall be consistent with the philosophy of the school and diocesan policies.

12. Advisory Board

Each school shall have an advisory group such as a School Board or Advisory Council.

13. School Policies

There shall be written school policies that are reviewed annually and revised as needed.

14. Planning

There shall be evidence of long-range financial and educational planning by pastor(s), principal, and appropriate school organizations.

15. Personnel Files

a. Personnel files for administrators and teachers must be checked and updated annually, comply with diocesan guidelines, and include:

- i. an official copy of college/university transcripts,
- ii. a copy of professional certificate,
- iii. results of background screening,
- iv. proof of diocesan safe environment training
- v. three written references,
- vi. a written job description,
- vii. evidence of continuing professional development,
- viii. evidence of catechist certification,
- ix. a copy of an annual evaluation,
- x. a copy of the contract, and
- xi. a copy of a completed job application.

b. Personnel files for all support staff employed by the school must be checked and updated annually, comply with diocesan guidelines, and include:

- i. results of background screening,
- ii. proof of diocesan safe environment training
- iii. three written references,
- iv. a written job description,
- v. a copy of an annual evaluation,
- vi. a letter of employment as per diocesan regulation, and
- vii. evidence of job-related training.

16. Student Records

The school shall maintain records for students containing information, procedures, and confidentiality as required by law and as necessary for the operation of a quality educational program. (Closed schools will follow diocesan procedure regarding these records.)

AREA F: LEARNING MEDIA SERVICES

PRINCIPLE: An effective school provides access to a balanced, up-to-date, and well-maintained collection of library media resources which includes technological support to enhance the curriculum.

STANDARDS:

1. The learning media center shall offer a comprehensive program of print, multi-media, and instructional technological resources.
2. The school shall provide a balanced, basic book collection of at least 10 usable, single title, library volumes per student. Books on electronic media may be counted for meeting 35% of this requirement. New schools shall have at least four volumes per student upon opening and must meet the requirement as for all schools within five years.
3. All media center materials shall be catalogued using a recognized system.
4. The school shall subscribe to a minimum of 10 periodicals annually, 50% of which may be electronic. The selection shall be student-oriented and serve all grade and ability levels.
5. There shall be funds budgeted and expended annually for adequate and appropriate learning materials and equipment in support of the school's curriculum, e.g. on-line searches, CD-ROM programs, computer software, laser disks, etc. In the absence of such, there shall be a feasible plan for acquisition and use.
6. The school shall have a media specialist and sufficient personnel responsible for the overall operation of the media center to meet the needs of the students and teachers.
7. Learning media staff shall provide for planning with faculty to ensure the best use of the learning media center. The staff shall acquaint students and faculty with the services provided by the media center and provide training for students in its use for research purposes.
8. The media center shall have an annual plan for ongoing maintenance and replacement of outdated equipment and books.
9. The media center shall be accessible to students and faculty during the normal operation hours of the school.
10. The school shall implement an access and use policy to provide guidelines for safe and appropriate access, use, and filtering of the Internet.

AREA G: PUPIL SERVICES

PRINCIPLE: Adequate provision is made to implement an effective program of services to facilitate the total development of each student.

STANDARDS:

School Counseling Program

1. The school shall provide for and implement a written plan for comprehensive, school-based, developmental counseling services for students.
2. The school shall have a full- or part-time school counselor with a minimum presence of one full day per week.
3. The school shall provide for staff development to assist teachers and staff in understanding the nature of the students at various stages of development.
4. The school shall offer services to parents that help them in understanding and assisting their children in areas of psychological development.
5. The school shall offer services that identify students struggling with problems or crises and, after consultation with the parent(s), provide referral for specialized services.
6. The school shall offer services that identify students with special learning needs and, after consultation with the parent(s), develop interim accommodation strategies, including as appropriate, mainstreaming/inclusion opportunities, and initiate the referral process as warranted.
7. The school shall maintain appropriate records of those students who receive services.

Health and Safety

1. The school shall develop a written plan for mandated diocesan, county, and state health procedures; provide a safe environment to prevent illness and accidents; deal with emergencies should they occur; and educate students concerning safe and healthy practices.
2. The school shall maintain health records that include immunization data, hearing and vision screening, scoliosis screening, and school-entry medical examinations.
3. The school shall be in compliance with diocesan and applicable state and county requirements, regarding protection, health, sanitation, and safety.
4. The school shall develop and make available a written safety and security plan which shall include a section on emergency procedures to address such matters as natural disasters, environmental hazards, dangerous weather, violent incidents, and evidence of evacuation drills.
5. The school shall be in compliance with provincial and diocesan safe environment policies.

AREA H: SCHOOL PLANT AND FACILITIES

PRINCIPLE: The school plant, consisting of the site, buildings and equipment, provides the physical setting for the total educational program and is designed, operated, and maintained in accordance with the school's beliefs and mission.

STANDARDS:

1. The construction and design of the school buildings shall conform to fire, safety, health, and school building codes as prescribed by local, state, and federal laws.
2. The site, buildings, and equipment shall be clean, operational, and well-maintained. Periodic inspections shall be conducted for dangerous conditions and/or hazardous materials and products.
3. Buildings shall be climate-controlled, well-lighted, and well-ventilated.
4. The school plant shall include rooms arranged and equipped for a variety of instructional purposes and programs, and for the accommodation of both large and small groups.
5. There shall be adequate administrative facilities including space for counseling services, workrooms, an adequately-equipped clinic, faculty/staff lounges, and lavatories.
6. Access for the disabled shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of applicable local, state, and federal laws.
7. Classrooms shall be of sufficient size and arrangement to provide comfortably for maximum allowable enrollment. In new schools, classrooms shall meet applicable local, county, and state regulations with regard to usable floor space per student.
8. Newly-constructed or refurbished media centers shall have a minimum of 1500 sq. ft. plus adequate space for technology, storage, workrooms, and other appropriate areas.
9. Newly-constructed schools shall provide an outside area for physical education activities and sports competition.
10. School grounds shall be well supervised and large enough to provide for the location of safe parking, play, and physical education activities.
11. The school's outdoor physical environment shall offer opportunities and equipment for safe and age-appropriate exploration and learning.

APPENDIX A

INDICATORS

Indicators are not standards but are intended as suggested actions which are given in order to help the school understand the intent of the standards and provide further clarification.

AREA A: BELIEFS AND MISSION

Standard 1

1. As part of the hiring process, teacher candidates are informed that they are expected to integrate Catholic beliefs (**message**), Gospel values, and morals into their class presentations. The principal clearly explains the school's beliefs and mission statement and secures from the candidates an agreement to actively support and inculcate these in their classroom presentations.
2. Efforts are made at the school to create a sense of and an appreciation for **community** among the students, faculty, administration, staff, and parents.
3. Programs are established and monitored which encourage and provide opportunities for students to become involved in **service** activities.
4. In the school there are efforts to prepare the students for informed and active participation in **worship**, and opportunities are provided for worship services within the school day.
5. At the time of registering a new family, the pastor or his designee will clearly explain the school's beliefs and mission statement and require that the parents subscribe to both before agreeing to accept the child(ren) into the school.

Standard 2

1. The beliefs and mission statements should include a statement of intent for addressing the individual needs of students.

Standard 3

1. The Student/ Parent Handbook contains the statement of beliefs and the statement of mission, with an indication of the importance these play in the life of the school.
2. The Faculty Handbook contains the statement of beliefs and the statement of mission, with an indication of the importance these play in the life of the school.

AREA B: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Standard 1

1. The school works closely with the religious education and youth ministry programs of the parish.
2. The school provides its students with service opportunities which include a global awareness of social needs and respond to the needs of the parish/school/civic communities.
3. When possible and where needed, the school offers an extended day program as a resource for parents. This program is well-administered, of high quality, healthy and safe, and includes age-appropriate social and educational activities.

Standard 2

1. Administration collaborates with officials in community agencies that serve students and their families.
2. Administration maintains a directory of student-focused community agencies and their services for families.
3. Administration knows the public school district procedures and the continuum of services for students with special learning needs.
4. Administration knows state and federal programs which will enhance services for students and families.
5. The school, when possible, makes its resources available to the community.

Standard 3

1. Administration invites parents and students to visit the school before enrollment. An orientation program is in place for all new students to facilitate transitions.
2. An interview takes place with administration, the parents, and the student who may have special learning needs to determine if the school is the appropriate educational venue. If necessary, a referral for assessment is recommended prior to acceptance.
3. The school provides information and help to parents regarding Catholic values.
4. The school provides opportunities and resources for parents to continue their growth and development in parenting skills.
5. There is sustained communication between the home and school which may include actively engaging parents in developing appropriate programming for their children, especially those who have special learning needs.

6. There is a school improvement/long range planning committee which includes membership representative of the school's constituencies.
7. There is an organized system for volunteer recognition.
8. There are active volunteers for:
 - a. committees, home and school projects, and other special activities;
 - b. classroom assistance (tutors, readers, listeners); an
 - c. operational assistance (keeping records, assisting in the library, etc.).

Standard 4

1. Activities and upcoming events are publicized appropriately.
2. The school provides a student/parent handbook regarding the policies, practices, and procedures of the school.
3. Using media and public relations opportunities, the school community conveys the school's purposes and program to the larger community.
4. The administrator works with staff to design and implement a variety of communication vehicles that stress positive interaction. These may include: church bulletins, calendars, phone calls, notes home, a weekly teacher letter, newsletters, parental visitations and observations, parent surveys, and evaluations.
5. Designated time is set aside each year for the parish/school community to visit the school.
6. Families are kept informed about the school's mission and its instructional program.

C: PROGRAM OF LEARNING

Instructional Design

Standard 1

1. Religion is integrated and infused throughout the school program.
2. The students develop an understanding of the Catholic faith, experientially and cognitively, through participation in prayer, liturgical celebrations, religious studies, and service opportunities.
3. The school program incorporates the dimensions of social justice and peace, family life, and respect for the dignity of life.
4. The school evidences gracious and considerate behavior, sets firm and sensible limits, is fair and consistent, and provides students with appropriate role models.
5. Group projects are provided to foster honesty, integrity, loyalty to democratic ideals and processes, appreciation and use of one's talents, and acceptance of one's limitations according to the development and maturity of the individual student.
6. Various opportunities are offered for students to practice the effective use of time, money, and natural and human resources.
7. Priority is given to sportsmanship and fair play at all times.

Standard 3

1. The methods of instruction, the disciplinary rules, and the form of reporting progress to parents take into account the age of the student.

Standard 6

1. The school has an on-going technology plan, including ethical guidelines and acceptable use policies (AUP), that provides for the integration of technology into all curriculum areas. The plan addresses the following components:
 - a. mission statement,
 - b. ethical use of technology,
 - c. needs assessment,
 - d. funding and procurement,
 - e. student competencies,
 - f. student access time allotments,
 - g. monitoring and evaluation,
 - h. staff development, and
 - i. maintenance and support.

Standard 7

1. For all students who are experiencing difficulty with learning, the school provides:
 - a. a student support team to consult and plan with the parent(s) for reasonable and appropriate accommodations which will be outlined in a written student support plan;
 - b. a system for monitoring, conferencing, and updating the student support plan, at scheduled intervals; and
 - c. the initiation, as appropriate, of the referral process for psycho-educational evaluation.
2. For students with identified special learning needs, the school provides a reasonable, appropriate environment for learning by:
 - a. determining if the school is able to meet the needs of the student based on a thorough review of all academic reports and other professional evaluations;
 - b. providing a student support team to consult with the parent(s) to plan for reasonable and appropriate accommodations which will be outlined in a written student support plan;
 - c. providing a system for monitoring, conferencing, and updating the student support plan at scheduled intervals; and
 - d. consulting with the parent(s) regarding an alternative venue for the student when the school is unable to provide a reasonable, appropriate program.

Curriculum

Standard 1

1. Content is in line with Catholic Gospel values, traditions, and social teaching.
2. The curriculum fosters within students a healthy, conscious formation of love and concern for others, as well as a sense of responsibility for their own actions.

Standard 8

1. The school program has active and quiet times.
2. There are independent and guided activities within the school program.
3. The school provides concrete materials and objects students can manipulate.
4. The school provides multisensory media for individual and group experiences.

5. Students have opportunities to explore, investigate, and discover, especially in mathematics, science, and social studies.
6. The classroom arrangement provides learning areas to offer a choice of materials and activities. The classroom is adaptable, flexible, livable, and welcoming.
7. The classroom environment promotes the interaction of the student with other adults, students, and materials.
8. Projects are promoted which stress interaction between students.
9. Intergenerational activities are designed to foster mutual respect and promote caring attitudes.

Standard 9

1. The school has a written textbook rotation plan.

Standard 11

1. Teachers demonstrate appropriate use of technologies as a part of their planning and instructional program.
2. Each school has an adequate number of Internet access sites based on student population, i.e. one access per classroom or one access site in the school per 35 students.

Standard 12

1. The school has a written policy concerning field trips which includes:
 - a. an educational purpose grounded in the curriculum;
 - b. adequate supervision;
 - c. appropriate transportation guidelines; and
 - d. attention to liability issues including consent forms, insurance, background screening, and applicable state laws.

AREA F: LEARNING MEDIA SERVICES

Standard 4

1. Periodicals in the media center include student-oriented materials such as: daily newspaper, Catholic newspaper, **Scholastic** magazines, **Ranger Rick**, **Science World**, etc. Electronic periodicals could include such materials as **SIRS** publications.

AREA G: PUPIL SERVICES

Health and Safety

Standard 1

1. Medication is administered to the students in accordance with state law and diocesan policy.

Standard 3

1. Teachers and staff are knowledgeable of and observe child abuse laws and procedures.
2. Provisions are made for the safe arrival and departure of the students.
3. If transportation is provided by the school for the students, vehicles are equipped with age appropriate devices as required by law.
4. If the school provides meals and/or snacks, they are planned to meet the students' nutritional requirements and dietary needs in proportion to the amount of the time the students are in the school each day.
5. The school provides timely and accurate data for diocesan and state surveys (e.g. Florida Department of Education Data Base Survey).

Standard 4

1. A system exists for ensuring that the students are released only to authorized people.

AREA H: SCHOOL PLANT AND FACILITIES

Standard 10

1. The school's outdoor play area is protected from access to streets and other dangers.

Standard 11

1. Cushioning materials such as but not limited to mats, woodchips, or sand are used under climbing equipment, slides, and swings.
2. There is a separate play area for the Pre-Kindergarten-Primary program with a minimum of 45 sq. ft. per student, or as required by the county.

ADDENDUM

STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL PURPOSE PROGRAMS WITHIN A REGULAR SCHOOL

Definition

Special Purpose Schools are schools which operate as stand-alone entities which have a non-grade level academic program, exclusively servicing a population of students with varying exceptionalities. **Special Purpose Programs** are special programs which operate within a school with a separate director who is a qualified Resource Teacher

Rationale

This Addendum to the existing *FCC Principles and Standards: Elementary School (PK-8), July 2008* has been designed to better serve schools that provide specifically for students with varying exceptionalities. It enables these schools to realistically meet accreditation requirements, while remaining true to the complexity of meeting the targeted needs of the population they serve.

Further, this Addendum seeks to encourage these schools to develop stronger and better-defined programs of differentiated instruction, more comprehensive student services, and ongoing accountability for teaching and learning.

Implementation of the Addendum

These FCC Standards for Special Purpose Schools and/or Special Purpose Programs are intended as a special addendum to the *FCC Principles and Standards: Elementary Schools (PK-8), July 2008*. Special Purpose Schools and/or Special Purpose Programs first follow the original standards and then adhere to these additional standards in this Addendum.

AREA C: PROGRAM OF LEARNING

Curriculum

1. The school shall provide appropriate adaptive physical education based on the needs of the students as indicated by the Individual Student Support Plan.
2. The school shall incorporate life, communication, and social skills training, as appropriate.

AREA D: PERSONNEL

1. The **Principal of a Special Purpose School** shall:
 - a. be a Catholic in good standing;
 - b. (1) have a bachelor's degree in special education, OR (2) have a current and valid state or national certificate in special education;
AND
 - c. (1) have a master's degree in school administration, OR
(2) within five years of initial date of employment as principal, have a master's degree;
 - d. within five years from the initial date of employment as principal, have a current and valid state or national administrator's certificate; and
 - e. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.
2. The **Principal as Teacher**:

Special Purpose Schools with 50 or more students shall have full-time principals. Principals in special purpose schools with fewer than 50 students shall have at least 2/3rds of each school day free from teaching duties in order to provide for supervision of instruction and other leadership responsibilities.
3. The **Assistant Principal of a Special Purpose School** shall:
 - a. have a bachelor's degree in special education;
 - b. within three years of employment have a current and valid state or national certificate in special education;
 - (1) in the case of a part-time assistant principal, within two years of appointment to the position of assistant principal, shall have earned six college credits in school administration; OR

- (2) in the case of a full-time assistant principal, within five years of appointment to the position of assistant principal, shall have earned 15 college credits in school administration; and
 - c. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.
- 4. The **Director of a Special Purpose Program** shall:
 - a. have a bachelor's degree in special education;
 - b. have a current and valid state or national certificate in special education; and
 - c. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.
- 5. The **Teacher in a Special Purpose School or Program** shall:
 - a. have a bachelor's degree in special education;
 - b. within three years of appointment as teacher, have a current and valid state or national certificate in special education; and
 - c. maintain recency-of-credit (six college credits or its equivalent) every five years.

***NOTE: For a teacher in a Special Purpose School or Program who teaches an upper level content course(s), an additional appropriate certification/endorsement is recommended.**

- 6. The **Teacher Assistant in a Special Purpose School** shall:
 - a. have meaningful orientation and instruction regarding the nature and needs of the students prior to working directly with students;
 - b. be expected to continue professional development regarding the nature and needs of the students in the school; and
 - c. be under the direct supervision of an administrator and teacher.

AREA E: ADMINISTRATION

1. Class Size - Special Purpose Schools/ Programs

In Special Purpose Schools/ Programs, it is recommended that the average class shall be no more than 12 students. This standard shall be modified based on the severity of the disabilities of the students. Para-professionals, shall be used, when possible, to provide assistance in the program. These para-professionals will receive professional development.

AREA G: PUPIL SERVICES

School Counseling Program

1. The school shall ensure the appropriate development, implementation, and monitoring of the Individualized Student Support Plan in consultation with the parent.
2. Every three years, the student's psycho-educational evaluation shall be reviewed to determine whether a formal re-evaluation is appropriate.
3. When transitioning a student to another level, formal evaluation should be initiated and completed to help determine program placement.
4. The school shall offer comprehensive guidance services for all students, including counseling, assessment, staff consultation and collaboration, referral and educational/vocational transition and career planning.
5. The school shall provide appropriate ancillary support services utilizing community or county resources and based on student need as indicated in the Individualized Student Support Plan, e.g. Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language, and School Counseling.

Health and Safety

1. The school shall provide training for all staff members in special medical conditions.