FCC Standards and Benchmarks Commentary

This document addresses what fully meets level of compliance for each accreditation benchmark. Suggestions, comments, questions, and/or necessary evidence are explained. This is a supplement that school personnel could use as the benchmarks are reviewed and discussed. Other documents that should be used include the FCC Rubrics with Specific Evidence and the Domain Guidelines.

Benchmarks
- Each benchmark has a detailed rubric to determine the level of compliance.
- On the resources page of the website, there is a rubric with specific evidence.
- Honest review of **current practice** and **evidence** (since the last site visit – Year 3 or 7)
    - The goal is to get to fully meets.
    - Most schools are at partially meets – very acceptable.
    - ***Cannot be fully accredited, if not meeting a benchmark (level 1).*** (New this year)
- Continuous improvement – make a plan to improve
- Use the comment boxes
    - Brief description of what this looks like at your school
    - Tell your story – what do you want reviewers to know
- Attach necessary evidence
    - More does not equal better or higher ratings
    - Make sure it is related to the narrative in the rubric
    - Don't overwhelm or underwhelm the reviewers
    - Every benchmark under review must have evidence
        - Year 1: Mission and Catholic Identity
        - Year 2: Governance and Leadership
        - Year 3: All Domains
        - Year 4: Academic Excellence
        - Year 5: Operational Vitality
        - Year 6: All Domains as preparation for Year 7 site visit

Domain A: Mission and Catholic Identity

Standard 1: Catholic mission statement and it's use

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 Catholic mission statement

Level 3: The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.

To determine compliance:
1. Remove the school's name from the mission statement
2. Read the statement with just the name "school"
3. Can a Christian school use it? – level 2
4. Can a non-Christian school use it? – level 1
5. Could it only be used by a Catholic school? – level 3

6. Is the primary purpose education in the faith? level 4

1.2 Mission statement used in planning

Level 3: The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning. Major planning efforts explicitly reference the mission at the beginning of planning and throughout.

Evidence of mission statement use on a regular basis – meeting agendas, minutes

1.3 Regular review of the mission statement

Level 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.

- Regular = annually
- Various constituencies = more than the faculty
- Is it Catholic?
- How is it used?
    - Part of SAC, PTO, faculty, and student council meetings
    - Integral part of classroom life
- How is it taught?
- How is it lived?
- How is it reviewed?
    - Word wall (one word) or phrase
    - Survey
- https://www.coloradononprofits.org/what-should-be-considered-when-we-write-or-revise-our-mission-statement
- https://www.nonprofitsteward.org/news/10-minute-board-exercise-mission-statement-review/
- http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/MISSION-STATEMENT-REVIEW-Sept-2016.pdf
- https://missionaccredcso.weebly.com/14-the-mission-of-catholic-schools.html

1.4 Mission statement displayed everywhere

Level 3: The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents

- In all classrooms, throughout campus
- Publications
- Website and Social Media
- Emails

Easy to exceed this benchmark because the main difference between meeting and exceeding is that it is highly visible and included in documents, websites, and social media, as well as in every classroom and throughout the campus.

1.5 Stakeholders know and understand the mission statement

Level 3: All constituents know and understand the mission. School leaders work to ensure that every group of constituents can articulate and explain the mission.

- Can students recite and explain the mission statement?
- Can the staff?
- Can the parents?
- Evidence of use in the classrooms?

Standard 2: Catholic curriculum and it's use

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 diocesan requirements

Level 3: Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese. The requirements are evidenced in course expectations, grade level expectations, and course content.

- Are curriculum standards used in religion classes? (Using a textbook does not mean standards are used.)
- Are the standards tracked?
- Vertical team meetings
- Is an assessment used?

Level 4 – Religious education curriculum and instruction at all levels in each course and in each unit meets or exceeds the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese. The requirements are evidenced in every course and unit. Courses are vertically aligned, scaffolded, and rigorous to ensure continuous growth in the knowledge of religion for all students.

If there is a curriculum for religion classes, standards are tracked, vertical team meetings occur, and an assessment is used, the school has evidence of a level 4.

2.2 Religion classes integral part of the academic program

Level 3: 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. School leaders consistently program religion courses with the same level of attention given to other subjects. All students are provided a religion class every day.

- Is religion taught 5 days a week to all students (Mass may count as 1 Religion class)?
- Do the teachers have catechist certification documented?
- Class schedules are used as evidence, as well as catechist certification, curriculum standards, and lesson plans

2.3 Faculty meet catechetical requirements

Level 3: Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.

- Do all staff members have basic catechetical certification? Appropriate document should be kept in staff files.
- Spreadsheet of staff members: Name, position, date of hire, background screening, safe environment training, catechetical certification, FL certification

2.4 Academic excellence in all subjects

Level 3: The school's Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education. In keeping with its Catholic identity, the school sets clearly articulated standards for and expectations of academic and intellectual excellence in all subjects, including religious education.

- Does the mission statement or philosophy reference academic excellence?
- Clearly articulated standards within subject areas?
- Clearly articulated expectations for students and academic excellence?
- Handbooks normally contain the information and evidence needed for this benchmark.

2.5 Using the lens of scripture and Catholic intellectual tradition

Level 3: 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.

- Is the faculty fluent in scripture? Catholic intellectual tradition (religion and science can co-exist, the search for all that is good and true)?
- How are these brought into ALL subjects?
- https://www.accunet.org/Store
- https://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/center-for-catholic-faith-and-culture
- http://newmansociety.org/wp-content/uploads/Sullins-Rev-March-15-2010-Final-1.pdf
- Evidence in lesson plans and student work product

2.6 Catholic culture and faith evident

Level 3: Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture. Any visitors to the school (including parents/guardians, staff, students, and others) readily identify signs and symbols of Catholic culture and faith.

- How can a visitor tell it is a Catholic school? Classroom? Hallway? Program? Assembly?
- What makes it Catholic?

2.7 Catholic social teachings part of the curriculum and instruction

Level 3: The theory and practice of the Church's social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum. Every student receives planned instruction in the Church's social teaching.

- There are seven themes of Catholic Social Teachings. Religion curriculum do not always include all seven. Need evidence in lesson plans and student work products.

- PLANNED instruction; EVERY student; CST is part of the curriculum at all grade levels – this is different from Christian Service Program
- https://www.crs.org/resource-center/seven-themes-catholic-social-teaching-handout
- https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/catholic-social-teaching
- https://missionaccredcso.weebly.com/45-catholic-social-teaching-and-our-mission.html

Standard 3: Catholic faith life in action

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 Regular liturgy

Level 3: Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy. Every student is offered the opportunity to participate in the Mass at least weekly.

- To fully meet, must have weekly liturgy
- To exceed, students must be involved in the design

3.2 Regular retreats and spiritual activities

Level 3: Every student is offered timely, regular, and age-appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats <u>and</u> other spiritual experiences.

- To meet, all grade levels must have a retreat (time outside of class to focus on their relationship with God).
- What other spiritual experiences are offered?
- Is time given for reflection?

3.3 Christian service program

Level 3: Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice. Intentional connection to Gospel values and Catholic faith teachings are offered as rationale for engaging in service.

- Christian service program includes all grade levels
- The "why" of Christian service must be in evidence and articulated by students
- Corporal Works of Mercy or Catholic Social Teachings or Scripture Passages could be used as the focus of the Christian Service Program, explaining the rationale behind the service.
    - Put these on the flyer, email, bulletin board, FB post, etc.
- Create a reflection sheet for the whole class or individual: http://www.stkiliancong.org/Project_Reflection_2017-2018.pdf

3.4 Role models of faith and service

Every student experiences role models of faith and service for social justice among the administrators, faculty and staff. Being a role-model for faith and service is a consideration in hiring. This is an expectation of the school.

- How are staff role models in faith? In service?
- Need evidence that being a role model of faith and service is an expectation of the school - new staff orientation; staff handbook, meeting minutes

Standard 4: Catholic faith formation for the adults

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

4.1 Faculty retreats

Level 3: The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis. Faculty retreats are offered at least once a year and, additionally, there are regular opportunities for spiritual experiences throughout the year.

- Annual faculty retreat (evidence: retreat program or flyer)
- What other spiritual experiences are offered?

4.2 Assist parents as primary educators

Level 3: The leader/leadership team assists parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith. Supports are intentional and consistent.

- Are parents recognized as the primary educator? How are they supported in this role?
- How are parents included in faith education, in particular?
- Programs offered? Parents surveyed?

Is this primary role mentioned throughout handbook, presentations, meetings, etc.:
- All that the school provides is meant to complement the efforts of parents in providing similar faith development experiences at home. When both the family and the school community make continuous efforts to assist students in the formation of their faith, students grow in and become committed to their faith, and the Church is strengthened in its mission of proclaiming the Gospel.
- We Believe: Parents are the first and primary educators of students.
Examples of partnerships
- Invited to participate in organizations, planning meetings, conferences
- Surveyed to determine programming offered
- Faith-formation programs promoted

4.3 Collaborate with institutions to provide opportunities for parents to grow in faith

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.

- How does the school help parents grow in faith? Are they invited to programs?

- Does the school promote parish/diocesan adult faith formation opportunities?

4.4 Adults participate in Christian service program

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. Participation is the norm.

- Defined Christian service program?
- Are adults part of the Christian service program at all levels?

Looking at 3.3 and 4.4:
Define/Design a Christian service program – schoolwide, classroom, club, etc.
     How will students be involved?
     How will staff be involved?
     How can parents and families be involved?
     Can the parish be involved?
Include the connection to CWM, CST, or Scripture passage
Include reflection

Great Examples in many schools
- Traditions
- Each grade level has a job within the larger project
- Each grade level has their own project of focus
- Connections made to local organizations or needs
To fully meet these two benchmarks, it has to be much more than just collections that take place.

4.5 Adults visibly support faith life

Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the community. This is a clear expectation for every administrator, faculty and staff member.

- Staff members at school Masses? Prayer services?
- Staff members at parish Masses? Events?
- Need evidence that this is an expectation: part of job description or staff handbook?

Domain B: Governance and Leadership

Standard 5: Governing Body and Its Responsibilities

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 Governing body, council/board functions

Level 3: The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.
- Diversity – gender, culture/ethnicity, skillsets

- Does the school advisory council have bylaws? When was the last time they were reviewed? Do the bylaws follow diocesan policy?
- Is membership public knowledge?
- Meeting agendas/minutes

School Advisory Board
- Bylaws: up to date & in alignment with diocesan expectations
- Membership: diverse, term limits, posted
- Active board:
  - Regular meetings – minimum quarterly with committee meetings in between or monthly without committees
  - Orientation – at the beginning of each year (recommitment meeting, if no one is new)
  - Progress – Goal setting; plans implemented
  - Evaluation – Self-evaluation each year (plan evaluations)

5.2: Systematizes policies and succession planning

Level 3: The governing body systematizes the policies of the school's operations to ensure fidelity to mission, and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions. There are systems in place that ensure the ability of the school to operationalize the policies. There is planning for leadership succession on all levels.

- Policies in place, public knowledge – handbooks
- Do policies align with the mission, with practice?
- Leadership succession – written plans in place that address day-to-day information, replacement plans, substitutes, policies, passwords, etc.

5.3: Relationship with the bishop

Level 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.

- Bishop invited to the school
- School promoting and participating in the bishop's initiatives
- Not a picture of the bishop's picture on the wall   (The bishop's picture on the wall does not constitute a relationship with him)

5.4: Relationship with the superintendent

Level 3: The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a constructive and beneficial relationship with the diocesan Education Office consistent with diocesan policy pertaining to the recognition of Catholic schools by the Bishop.

- Meetings with the superintendent/associate
- Attending diocesan meetings
- Participation in committees
- Implementing diocesan policies

Exceeds the Benchmark**:** The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, continuously fosters a mutual, productive and beneficial relationship with the Diocesan Education Office, working to support the work of the central office, adopting and integrating initiatives from the central office and working in collaboration with other schools in the community. The governing body supports the work of the leadership team as members of diocesan working groups. All work is monitored for consistency with all diocesan policies pertaining to Catholic schools.

In addition to everything from level 3:
- Ensure all work, policies, and procedures are in alignment with diocese
- Evidence of collaborating with other diocesan schools

5.5: Relationship with the pastor

Level 3: 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.

- Weekly principal and pastor meetings
- Participation in parish meetings
- Pastor's involvement with the school
- In the case of non-parish schools, this benchmark should be left blank

Exceeds the benchmark: In the case of a parish school, the governing body, in collaboration with the leader/leadership team, fosters and develops a continuous working relationship with the canonical administrator (pastor or designee of Bishop) marked by regular, positive interactions, shared goals, mutual trust, close cooperation and continuing dialogue that is productive, sustained and focused on the future of the school.

In addition to everything from level 3:
- Shared goals and vision are evident
- Visible team, noted by stakeholders

5.6: Governing body training and evaluation

Level 3: 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. Formation and self-evaluation occur on a regular schedule and utilize at least one measure of accountability for each group.

- Does the school advisory council participate in trainings? Does it complete self-evaluations?
- Is the principal evaluated on a regular basis? Does the principal complete a self-evaluation?

Standard 6: Leadership team and its responsibilities

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: Leadership hold Florida certificates

Level 3: 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. The principal has a Florida Administrator's Certificate (professional certificate with educational leadership on it). Assistant principals have at least a Florida teaching certificate.

- Administrators have the current Florida certificates described

6.2: Leadership articulate clear vision

Level 3: 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.

- What is the administration's vision for the school? How is it articulated? (This is not simply the mission statement of the school.)
- Is this a shared vision?
- Is it in alignment with the mission and school culture?

6.3: Oversight of personnel

Level 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.

- Regular observations – multiple ones for each faculty member each year, should include simple walk-throughs
- Annual evaluation for each faculty member each year
- Individual professional development plans written by the teacher in consultation with the principal
- School-wide professional development plans
- Faith formation of staff

Exceeds the benchmark (level 4): The leadership team adopts and initiates personnel policies as designed and endorsed by the governing board in accordance with the designated overarching personnel policies. Recruitment includes a search process providing access to a diverse population, and new hires are made in collaboration with all on the leadership team. Professional growth plans for all faculty and staff are developed and reviewed at least yearly and delineate the benchmarks for performance appraisals. The planning process and the budget intentionally and visibly support professional development opportunities. Formal assessment is designed to reflect the goals and objectives delineated in the professional development plans. Assessment is both formative and evaluative. Data gathered during the assessments is used to make personnel decisions.

- To exceed the benchmark, the individual professional development plans must be tailored to the teacher, written by the teacher in consultation with the principal. Meetings must take place regarding the plans and whether or not they have been met successfully. These plans are used in the formal evaluations.

- The recruitment process must be a well-developed plan as described in the rubric.
- Evidence in the budget for professional development

Partially meets the benchmark (level 2): The leader/leadership team is not included in the development of processes for the oversight of personnel but is required to exercise oversight for the faculty and staff. Levels of compliance exist but are not measurable, or the leadership team is neither consistent nor uniform in the adoption and application of personnel policies. Formal assessment procedures are in place but are implemented in an inconsistent fashion, or procedures for formal assessments are in place but not for all personnel. Professional development is ad hoc and offered as a choice with no overall plan for professional growth and faith formation.

- If every teacher is not evaluated on an annual basis, the school partially meets the benchmark.
- If observations do not happen on a regular basis throughout the school year, the benchmark is partially met.
- If professional development is not a thoroughly developed plan, the benchmark is partially met. (A list of professional development opportunities is not a through plan.)

6.4: Networks of collaboration

Level 3: The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence. The leaders/leadership team ensures that the school's scheduling, budget, and work demands support a culture of community and collaboration.

- How do staff members collaborate? How is that supported?
- How do committees collaborate? How is this supported?
- How do organizations and clubs collaborate?
- What is the expectation regarding professional networking and collaboration?

6.5: Use of school-wide data for improvement

Level 3: 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.

- What data is collected? Evidence is much more than the test results.
- How and when is it analyzed? By whom?
- What happens with that analysis? Who uses it?
- How often are results and analysis discussed and used?
- How is it used in decision making?
- This benchmark is focused on school-wide data, including grade-level and subject area data. It is not about individual student data and achievement.

6.6: Programs and services for operational vitality

Level 3: 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. To

ensure this, budget and personnel are provided to create and implement policies, programs, and procedures.

- Is there a collaborative approach to leadership? What is the governance infrastructure (organizational chart)
- Is planning, goal setting, and decision making transparent?
- Does the school have all of the programs and services needed to meet the needs of students and staff?

6.7: Leadership communicates new initiatives

Level 3: The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.

- How/When does the administration communicate with staff? With parents? With the community?
- Is everyone aware of new initiatives and changes in a timely fashion?

Domain C: Academic Excellence

Standard 7: Curriculum and Instruction

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: Vertically aligned curriculum

Level 3: 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.

- Curriculum standards and tracking; not textbooks
- Vertical subject area meetings
- More than diocesan or state standards – need evidence of the school using the standards

7.2: Integration of faith in all subjects

Level 3: Standards are adopted across the curriculum, and include integration of the religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects.

- Lesson plans and unit plans with evidence of integration
- Curriculum standards
- Student work that gives evidence of standards (displays of student work with standard(s) noted); integration

7.3: Instruction provides 21st century skills

Level 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. Student performance and work products demonstrate critical, creative, literate, and moral thinking related to solving real world problems and making decisions.

- Observable – do you see all students exhibiting these behaviors/skills on a regular basis in all classrooms?
- Do you have student work products that demonstrate this?
- Lesson and unit plans
- More than Christian service projects; more than the use of technology
- What is the skill development expectation at each grade level?

7.4: Instruction provides opportunity for students' use of technology

Level 3: 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. Student products and performance require students to be expert users of technology, able to create, publish, and critique digital tools.

- Observable – students are using technology on a regular basis in order to do the work of the curriculum standards
- What student products are available?
- Is this in lesson and unit plans?
- Authentic use: not as a worksheet substitute, not simply books online. Technology used to do research, to communicate with other students, to complete a project, etc. See this information from the Guidelines:

  Benchmark 7.4 is about the authentic integration of technology to assist students in demonstrating mastery of what they are expected to know and be able to do. It is used in a student-centered learning environment to promote independent learning. Students complete assessments that require higher-level thinking and real-world applications, including collaboration and communication with resources outside the school such as experts in a field.

  - Most importantly, there is demonstrated evidence that technology is improving student learning, especially as a tool for differentiation of instructional delivery and production of student work products.

  - Fully meets: there is evidence of significant student involvement in creating or using blogs, wikis, student-centered websites, podcasts, and digital media presentations. Technology use is integrated into all subject areas and project-based learning is used often, is interdisciplinary in nature, and targets critical thinking and problem solving. Students are able to work independently and have the freedom to demonstrate their understanding in multiple ways. They demonstrate the ability to use a variety of means to access information and assess its accuracy. Students have access to digital devices at all times during the school day.

7.5: Instruction addresses affective dimensions and habits of mind

Level 3: Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind. Unit and lesson plans show deliberate attention to such things as perseverance, risk taking, collaboration, self-regulation, initiative, etc. Affective dimensions of learning incorporate Gospel values.

Affective Dimensions of Learning:
- Feelings and attitudes toward learning and toward the content of learning
- Intellectual and social dispositions
- Relationship building

Habits of Mind:
- Persisting
- Managing impulsivity
- Listening with understanding and empathy
- Thinking flexibly
- Thinking about thinking
- Striving for accuracy
- Questioning and posing problems
- Applying past knowledge to new situations
- Thinking and communicating with clarity
- Gathering data through all senses
- Creating, imagining, innovating
- Responding with wonderment and awe
- Taking responsible risks
- Finding humor
- Thinking interdependently
- Remaining open to continuous learning

Note that level 3 specifically mentions unit and lesson plans. That means that these topics must be included in lesson plans (or unit plans) on a regular basis, in order to fully meet the benchmark. To incorporate the Gospel values, schools could approach this benchmark from the aspect of Catholic virtues.

7.6: Instruction engages and motivates all students

Level 3: 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. Units and lesson plans give evidence of differentiation. Students entering the school with IEPs or 504 Plans are transitioned to Student Support Plans (or the school's equivalent). These plans are reviewed and updated annually.

- Observable – more than whole group instruction, student choice, small groups, assignments are different, etc.
- Unit plans or lesson plans must show differentiation
- SSP team meetings are held at least annually to review and update student support plans for each student that has one.
- From the guidelines: Well designed, differentiated and engaging instruction provides for student choice, allowing the student to take charge of his/her learning. In this type of

environment, teachers facilitate and coach as students develop the skills to think critically, evaluate and create. Interdisciplinary units are constructed to provide students with opportunities to engage in authentic problem solving activities.
- In level 2 of the benchmark is the sentence, "Whole group instruction is the dominant methodology." If this is true of the school, then it is partially meeting the benchmark.

7.7: PLCs for curriculum and instruction

Level 3: 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. 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.

- Are regular PLC meetings scheduled? (not business meetings) These are meetings to discuss the curriculum and plan instructional strategies. Then the strategies are implemented and the teachers come back together to determine how well the strategies are working. These are ongoing sessions, not a one and done type of seminar.
- Do all faculty members understand the purpose of the PLCs?
- Meeting minutes or notes

7.8: Teachers hold Florida educator certificates

Level 3: 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. Compliance with these requirements is factored into all employment decisions.
- Regular classroom teachers (in kindergarten through grade 12) must hold a Florida teaching certificate for their grade level (and subject area).
- Prekindergarten teachers must have a minimum of:
  - CDA, or
  - Associate's degree with an emphasis in early childhood education, or
  - Bachelor's degree with at least six credits in early childhood education
- PE teachers must hold a Florida teaching certificate
- Foreign language, music, art, technology teachers must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and documented qualifications validated in writing by the superintendent
- A school counselor (or person functioning in this role) must have a Florida or national school counselor certificate or a valid Florida license in an area of mental health such as Clinical Social Worker, Mental Health Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, Clinical Psychologist, or any another area in the mental health field, as approved by the superintendent.

A general teacher qualifications statement or teachers' specific qualifications must be included on the school's website and parent handbook.

- Do all teachers have a Florida educator certificate?
- Create a spreadsheet of all staff members – name, position, degree, background screening and expiration, certificate and expiration date, catechetical certification, etc.
- Well organized files

Partially Meets (Level 2): The majority of 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. Those not in compliance are aware of necessary steps to ensure academic preparation and licensing and are expected to complete those on a designated timeline. Some teachers do not have a Florida professional educator certificate (as described in level 3), but they do have a temporary Florida educator certificate. If a teacher or professional does not have a temporary certificate, they do have a (arch)diocesan approved plan in place to meet the requirement.

- If some teachers have a temporary certificate or a diocesan approved plan to meet the benchmark, then the school partially meets this benchmark.

7.9: Faculty individual professional development

Level 3: Faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values. Annual goal setting includes plans for continuous improvement in effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values.

- Do all faculty members set annual goals?
- Does each teacher have an individual professional development plan? How extensive is the plan – level 4?
- School-wide PD plan, goals, PD offered in these areas

7.10: Professional development tied to student learning

Level 3: Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning. Faculty set goals for improvement and select professional development for growth. The effectiveness of the professional development is measured by student learning growth.

- Does PD include religious/faith formation?
- Does everyone have an IPDP?
- Is there follow up regarding the effectiveness based on student growth?

Standard 8: Assessment and the Use of Data Analysis

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: Variety of tools to evaluate curriculum and growth

Level 3: 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. Elementary schools administer the Terra Nova assessment annually to students in grades 2 through 8. High schools administer an approved norm referenced test to students in grades 9 and 10 annually.

- Variety of tools to assess curriculum and co-curricular programs

- Variety of tools used to plan for continued student growth
- Variety of tools to monitor and assess faculty performance – on evaluations, discussed in meetings
- Norm referenced test is given annually

8.2: NRT results are shared

Level 3: School-wide and aggregated student data are normed to appropriate populations and are shared with all stakeholders.

- The school gives norm referenced tests. Are the general results shared? Evidence from newsletters, email, or meetings
- Are the individual results reviewed with parents?

8.3: Variety of assessment tools to assess learning

Level 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. Faculty adjust instructional practices based on data from assessments.

- Do all teachers use formative and summative assessments? Authentic performance and student self-assessments?
- How does the faculty adjust instruction based on results from these assessments? How is the analysis used beyond data days by individual teachers?

8.4: Consistent criteria used to evaluate student work

Level 3: Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are valid, consistent, transparent, and justly administered. Faculty collaborate to develop school-wide criteria for valid assessment of students. Parents and students understand the criteria and can easily access reports.

- What is the evaluation expectation?
- How is this defined in the parent handbook? In the staff handbook?
- Does the faculty discuss grading policies?
- Is the SIS used on a regular basis, kept up to date?

8.5: Assessment focused PLCs

Level 3: Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to monitor individual and class-wide student learning through methods such as common assessments and rubrics. These learning communities meet frequently and intentionally with defined criteria for goals and objectives guiding their work. Faculty teams meet regularly at scheduled meetings on school time during which goals and benchmarks for improvement based on shared student learning data are revised and adjustments are made to curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement.

- How focused on assessment results are the PLCs?
- Does the faculty implement a strategy, return to the PLC to discuss, and then adjust the strategy?

Standard 9: Academic Support Services

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: Programs & opportunities for parents

Level 3: School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents to enhance the educational experiences for the school community. Parents/guardians invited to participate in a variety of partnership experiences that extend beyond the regularly scheduled mandatory parent/teacher conferences.

- Activities for parents
- How does the school collaborate or invite parent participation?

9.2: Programs & services

Level 3: Guidance services, wellness programs, behavior management programs, and ancillary services provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program. Students and parents/guardians know about and how to access these services.

- Well-developed guidance program
- School-wide or classroom level behavior management programs
- Wellness programs and other services
- SEL programs

9.3: Extra curricular activities

Level 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.

- Extra curricular activities
- Field trips and speakers
- Are activities offered at every grade level?

Domain D: Operational Vitality

Standard 10: School finances

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: Financial planning with experts

Level 3: The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in non--profit management and funding.

- What is the financial planning process?
- Who is involved? What is their background? Is there a flow chart or explanation of the process?
- Does the parish finance committee review the budget? List of finance committee and background
- Minutes from meetings
- Evidence of working with diocese (experts)
- 3-5 year financial plan?

10.2: Partners are financially committed

Level 3: 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.

- Does the parish contribute to the financial stability of the school?
- Has the governing body found any other partners to contribute?
- Long term financial planning?

10.3: Revenue includes more than tuition and parish support

Level 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.

- In addition to tuition, what are the other sources of revenue? To fully meet, there needs to be something outside of tuition, parish support, and internal fundraising
- State scholarships are an additional source

10.4: Key areas included in the budget

Level 3: 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.

- Are these key areas in the budget?
- How are the amounts determined?
- Are the budget and financial plans the full picture of costs associated with maintaining and growing the school?

10.5: Using actual vs budget, salary scales

Level 3: 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.

- Cost per child determined
- Salary scales used

- Budget/financial plan beyond current year
- How often is actual compared to projected? Who sees this? When is it reviewed?

10.6: Cost per child published

Level 3: 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.

- Cost per child determined and published; where is it published?
- To fully meet, what is published must include some type of breakdown on how the cost is covered (pie chart, percentages)
- Annual report?

10.7: Tuition assistance

Level 3: 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.

- Is tuition assistance information easily accessible for all?
- Registration and tuition payment process
- Individual parent meetings

10.8: Financial planning

Level 3: 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.

- Are diocesan protocols implemented?
- Is there a 5-year financial plan?
- Finance committee and diocesan involvement

Standard 11: Human Resources

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, laity and volunteers) and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

- All dioceses have someone in place at the diocesan level. All dioceses have standards in place.
- Need evidence of use: pay scale, job descriptions, PD offered (in budget), IPDP

11.1: HR personnel

Level 3: Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e. central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies. A trained professional assists the school leadership team with personnel management.

- All dioceses have someone in place. If the school follows diocesan requirements and works with HR, this benchmark is fully met (paperwork; emails)
- Some schools exceed the benchmark

11.2: HR policies

Level 3: 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. The HR standards are sufficient to enable effective management of personnel and other HR issues.

- All dioceses have standards in place. If the school follows diocesan requirements and works with HR, this benchmark is fully met (paperwork; emails; pay scale; job descriptions; PD expectations)
- Some schools exceed the benchmark

11.3: Salaries, benefits, and PD provided

Level 3: Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.

- All dioceses have the standards in place, but the school will need evidence of practice to fully meet
- Pay scale, benefits, some PD offered/paid for all staff

11.4: Individual PD, health care, & retirement

Level 3: Human resource policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth [i.e. targeted professional development for all personnel], health care and retirement.

- All dioceses have the standards in place, but the school will need evidence of practice to fully meet
- Targeted PD – IPDPs needed; evidence of PD provided; budget line item

Standard 12: Facilities, maintenance, & technology

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: Facilities, Equipment, &Tech management plans tied to educational program

Level 3: 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. Objectives in these areas are aligned to the mission of the school. This plan could be a single document or three interrelated documents.

- Full plan, including mission statement, vision, goals, etc.

- Listing of equipment, dates, costs, replacement, etc.

Standard 12.2: Facilities, Equipment, &Tech management plans included in budget

Level 3: The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.

- Line items in the budget
- Equipment listing
- Third party reviewers or local expert (Armstrong Consulting in Melbourne) - reserve fund
- Utilities usage review (Troy & Banks: https://www.troybanks.com)

12.3: Facilities, Equipment, &Tech purchases and improvements

Level 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.

- Plan(s) and budget/financial plan provide for continued improvement of the facilities and technology

Standard 13: Marketing, enrollment & development plans

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

13.1: Communications and Marketing Plans

Level 3: The communications/marketing plan requires school leader/leadership team and staff person(s) to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.

- More than generic list of activities
- Delineated audiences
- Goals; steps/activities; person responsible; evaluation
- Various forms of media

13.2: Enrollment Management Plan

Level 3: 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. The measurement and analysis actually takes place, according to plan, and the information is used to direct decision-making related to tuition, marketing, communications, and other aspects of school operations that are linked to overall enrollment.

- Written plan with goals
- Addresses enrollment and retention

- Includes enrollment data over time; narratives; exit interviews or surveys
- Much more than a list of enrollment numbers over time

13.3: Development Plan

Level 3: The development plan requires school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni(ae), over time and when appropriate. School leaders act on the plan.

- More than a list of fund-raisers, but that's a good start
- Plan to grow the funding sources outside of tuition, parish support, and fund-raisers
- Annual report/drive is a part of it
- Outreach to alumni is part of it

Standard 14: Health & safety, Florida requirements

An excellent Catholic school operates in compliance with all diocesan and applicable state, and local policies.

14.1: Health & safety

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.

- Clinic; sick student protocols
- Cleaning and sanitizing protocols
- Injury protocols
- Health education

14.2: Health Records
The school shall maintain health records that include immunization data, hearing and vision screening, scoliosis screening, and school-entry medical examinations. This includes completed DH3040 and DH680 forms for each student, documentation of scoliosis screening in 6th grade, and DH684 report for kindergarten and grade 7.

- Student health files (can be all in one)
    - DH3040 and DH680
    - 6th grade scoliosis screening results
    - Hearing and vision screening results
- School DH684 report (for grs K & 7)

14.3: Building/Facility requirements
The school shall be in compliance with diocesan and applicable state and county requirements regarding protection, health, sanitation, and safety. The school shall have completed Florida Department of Health forms, as applicable. This includes DH 1777 for Radon, DH 4160 for sanitation, DH 4023 for food service, and a completed fire code inspection and compliance report.

- DH1777 (Radon Measurement Report);

- DH4160 (proof of compliance with sanitation standards for K-12 private schools)
- Fire department, smoke & fire detector, and kitchen inspections

14.4: Safety & security

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.

- Safety & security plans
- Evidence of evacuation, tornado, and lock-down drills (logs; fire drills monthly)
- Exit maps in classrooms; Safety posters
- Building entrance procedures

14.5: Safe environment

The school shall be in compliance with provincial and diocesan safe environment policies, including training, background screening, and history checks with previous employers. The school shall post a diocesan approved staff code of ethics which includes training and the requirement to report abuse. Abuse reporting posters shall be on display in the school.

- Safe environment training certificates in files
- Background screening results and history checks in files
- Spreadsheet of staff members (catechetical training, educator certificates)
- Posted code of ethics
- FLDOE approved abuse reporting posters

14.6: Nondiscrimination

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

- Statement in compliance with diocesan attorney recommendation
- In handbooks, website

14.7: School calendar

The school shall develop an academic calendar and supporting attendance policies and records that are sufficient to the operation of a quality instructional program with a minimum of 180 actual school days. The school year 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 4-12. High schools (and middle schools teaching a course for high school credit) shall ensure that one full credit includes a minimum of 135 instructional hours.

- School calendar with days noted
- Class schedules with minutes tallied

14.8: Student age entry date and School entry

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

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

School personnel shall document meetings held with parents prior to acceptance to review the school's academic programs and policies, customized educational programs, student code of conduct, and attendance polices.

- Copy of birth certificate in file
- Handbook
- Meeting log; documents

14.9: 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. These files shall include a copy of the birth certificate, parent data, attendance record, courses taken, and standardized testing results, at a minimum. Permanent records shall be kept with the summary of this information. (Closed schools will follow diocesan procedure regarding these records.)

- Well organized student files
- Checklist in the front
- Permanent files
- Handbook

14.10: Personnel records

The school shall maintain records for all personnel. These files shall include the employment application, employment history check, level 2 background screening documentation, college transcripts, Florida educator certificate, BEC-PASS documentation, Professional Practices Database of Disciplinary Actions documentation, catechist certification data, ethics training documentation, safe environment training certificate/documentation, and signed receipt of staff handbook, at a minimum. A spreadsheet or database of the specific information shall be maintained with current expiration dates.

- Well organized personnel files, containing everything listed above
- Checklist in the front
- Spreadsheet