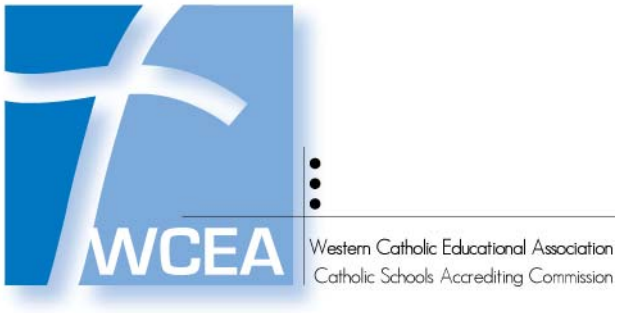

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

A Self Study Process for Catholic Elementary Schools

Continuous School Improvement Focused On High Achievement Of All Students

2012 Edition

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The Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA) works in partnership with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Schools (ACS WASC), the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC is a part of AdvancED), and the North Central Association Commission on Accrediting and School Improvement (NCA CASI is a part of AdvancED) to jointly accredit Catholic elementary schools through the use of this protocol developed by WCEA. The Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) and the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) also partner with WCEA and ACS WASC to jointly accredit some independent Catholic elementary schools, although a different protocol may be used with these two organizations.

Catholic schools in California, Hawai'i, and Guam are jointly accredited by WCEA and ACS WASC. Catholic schools in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington are jointly accredited by WCEA and AdvanceED/NWAC. Catholic schools in Arizona are jointly accredited by WCEA and NCA CASI/AdvancED. Some Catholic Arch/dioceses do not participate in a joint accreditation process and their Catholic schools are accredited only by WCEA.

As partners in this process, ACS WASC, AdvancED/NWAC, and NCA CASI/AdvancED allow the use of this Self Study protocol developed by WCEA and based on the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria and the twelve Accreditation Factors developed by ACS WASC and WCEA.

WCEA Elementary Commissioners are responsible for:

- training schools in the use of this instrument,
- obtaining chairpersons for these committees from outside the diocese,
- forming Visiting Committees, and
- training the committees prior to the school visits.

WCEA Elementary Commissioners constitute the reading teams to review the term of accreditation recommendations of the visiting committees. The WCEA Elementary Commissioners, as a body, determine the term of accreditation for each school and notify the partnering regional accrediting agency (ACS WASC, AdvancED/NWAC, NCA CASI/AdvancED) of this term. In ordinary practice, the partnering regional accrediting agency accepts the WCEA term and issues the same term of accreditation from their regional accrediting agency.

Although formatted differently than prior protocols developed jointly by WCEA and ACS WASC, this protocol continues to address all 14 Category-Based Criteria established by ACS WASC and addresses all Key Self Study Outcomes and Accreditation Factors developed by ACS WASC and WCEA and accepted by the partnering regional accrediting agencies: ACS WASC, AdvancED/NWAC, and NCA CASI/AdvancED.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

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Special Note: All templates are downloadable Word documents and may be found on the WCEA website (http://www.westwcea.org/). Templates in Appendix B are also available as Excel spreadsheets.

Contact your WCEA Elementary Commissioner if you have any questions about the templates found in the Appendix.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

THE PROCESS

A. OVERVIEW

Background: The accreditation process outlined in this protocol is the result of the efforts of the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA) to develop a Self Study protocol incorporating the 14 ACS WASC Criteria organized by four categories developed by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Schools, (ACS WASC) and the Key Self Study Outcomes and Accreditation Factors developed by ACS WASC and WCEA. It includes the Catholic Identity Accreditation Factor developed by WCEA and approved by the Bishops of Dioceses using the WCEA accreditation process. This protocol is meant to meet the needs of WCEA in having an instrument that helps Catholic schools assess the quality of their program while meeting the accreditation requirements of ACS WASC, AdvancED/NWAC, and NCA CASI/AdvancED, the three regional accrediting agencies with whom WCEA jointly accredits schools. Accreditation by a regional association is ordinarily granted after the school has completed a Self Study, had a visit by a WCEA Visiting Committee, and WCEA has granted a term of accreditation.

The basic concepts addressed in this new protocol focus upon assessment of student success in meeting Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs), Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. These basic concepts are:

- To what extent is Catholic Identity infused into the total school program?
- To what extent are the students achieving the SLEs?
- To what extent are students mastering the essential academic content standards?
- To what extent is there evidence of adequate ongoing academic growth for all students?
- To what extent does the school support high achievement for all its students?
- To what extent is assessment data being collected, disaggregated and analyzed?
- To what extent are student learning decisions being made based on the analysis of the assessment data?

The specific objectives of this document are to create a Self Study that:

1. Addresses all six Key Self Study Outcomes.
2. Integrates the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria with the Accreditation Factors of ACS WASC and WCEA to ensure a comprehensive accreditation process that reflects the standards of all regional accrediting agencies with whom WCEA is partnered;
3. Provides schools with a protocol to assess their current program and provide direction for continuous school improvement;
4. Aligns the school's Self Study with the Accreditation Factors, the *Report of Findings*, and the *Justification Statement*.

School Accreditation Cycle: The accreditation process is a periodic cycle of assessment, planning, implementing, monitoring, and reassessment (Self Study, visit, and follow-up).

- Starting eighteen months prior to the visit, the school performs a thorough review and clarification of its mission, philosophy, and SLEs (or creates/defines the mission, philosophy, and SLEs if this is the school's first accreditation visit) and begins the formal Self Study process that assesses the existing student programs and plans for future improvement of student learning.
- The outcome of the Self Study process is the development of a 3-4 year Action Plan focused on Improving Student learning.
- The completed Self Study is presented to the Visiting Committee members at their pre-visit meeting which takes place at least four-five weeks prior to the accreditation visit.
- The Visiting Committee visits the school to verify the findings of the Self Study.
- Using the results of the *Report of Findings* and in dialog with the Self Study committees, the school modifies its Action Plan and begins the annual process of review, revision and implementation of the Action Plan.

Importance of School's Mission, Philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations: An essential element of systematic school improvement is a clear statement and understanding of the school's mission and philosophy. A clear mission and philosophy explicitly state who the school is, who the school serves, and what the school intends to accomplish.

The mission statement and philosophy provide the school's foundation for establishing the SLEs. Defining the school's purpose through its mission and philosophy, and student achievement of the SLEs are integral to the school's accreditation process.

Importance of School's Curricular Standards: Curricular standards are powerful, measurable indicators of learning that define essential knowledge, skills, performance, and learning opportunities within disciplines. In a quality educational system, schools, in consultation with the Arch/diocese, determine the benchmarks for students' work that meet the standards. Schools use multiple assessment measures to identify the level of achievement for all students. This approach assists schools in defining quality achievement of the SLEs and determines the degree to which all students are accomplishing them.

Importance of Evidence: The Self Study phase of the accreditation process focuses on the ongoing task of gathering and analyzing data. This enables a school to conduct a comprehensive examination of what is successful and what needs to be improved. This analysis is critical to assessing and evaluating the spiritual climate and actual instructional program.

Some examples of evidence which are used in this analysis are:
- Observation of students' engagement with the learning process
- Examination of student work based on Schoolwide Learning Expectations and academic standards
- Interview of students about what they are learning
- Analysis of group data (e.g., norm-referenced tests, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc.)
- Review of individual student data (e.g., classroom work, projects, portfolios, tests, etc.)
- Summary of surveys from parents, staff, clergy, boards, and students

Accreditation Visit: After careful review of the school's written Self Study, a Visiting Committee of professional educators spends two and one-half to three days at the school. The

purpose of the visit is to provide an outside perspective from professionals who are familiar with the WCEA Accreditation Factors, the accreditation process, and the school's written Self Study.

The Visiting Committee gives insight to the school through dialogue with the Self Study Committees and other shareholders about the Self Study findings and by its own gathering of evidence and examination of student work. The dialogue and written *Report of Findings* verify and affirm the school's written Self Study and may identify areas for modification of the Action Plan.

Follow-up: Following the visit, the school revises its Action Plan based on the *Report of Findings*, submits the revised Action Plan to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, and begins implementation of the Action Plan. The Leadership Team will coordinate this implementation, the annual review of progress, and the refinement of the "next steps" in meeting the goals. All follow-up is done based on evidence that students are achieving curriculum standards, the SLEs, and other governing authority expectations. The school, using the process outlined in Appendix J, submits an annual review of progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner for the Arch/diocese in which the school is located.

Sequence for Beginning the Self Study:

1. Create a Leadership Team: This team is responsible for monitoring the work of the committees and making sure that the Self Study is completed accurately and in a timely fashion.
2. Complete Appendix A: Some of these forms may be completed by support staff.
3. Begin work on Appendix B: collect, disaggregate, and analyze data to discover trends, causes, etc.
4. Complete Chapter 2-A. Write the narrative for Chapter 2-A, the *School Profile*. Writing the *School Profile* must take place before any other section is started.
5. Gather student work: This will be used as evidence for the Self Study and Visiting Committee. Student work should reflect various levels of achievement and be connected to curriculum standards and/or Schoolwide Learning Expectations.
6. Review of the Mission and Philosophy Statements and SLEs: The school now reviews its mission and philosophy statements as well as its SLEs. Input from all shareholders is critical to this revision. Any changes to these documents should be widely communicated to all shareholders and receive input and buy-in from them.
7. Begin Committee Meetings: the school begins the committee meetings and writing that makes up the rest of the Self Study only after the *School Profile* is written, shared, and discussed with all teachers and other staff, teachers begin collecting evidence, and the mission, philosophy and SLEs have been reviewed.
8. Only after the Self Study Committees have met and discussed the questions should the Committee begin writing using the prompts in the appropriate section.
9. Significant accomplishments and goals for improving student learning are written after the narrative, and are tied to statements found in the narrative.

Special Writing Note: Discussion Questions are not writing points. Discussion Questions are meant to stimulate discussion and review of data and evidence, and build a big picture of the school. Committees may take notes but should not write narratives based on the Discussion Questions.

The writing prompt asks for a short, concise narrative explaining how and to what extent the school is addressing the Accreditation Factor.

In addition to the writing prompt, the school is asked to incorporate several points in its narrative to help the school focus on the Accreditation Factor. Occasionally, a parenthetical comment after the writing point further helps focus the narrative. For example, in Chapter 3, the first point to be incorporated into the written narrative is Catholic Identity – how and to what extent Catholic Identity is infused into this Accreditation Factor. Each section begins with this writing point and refines it with a parenthetical focus – e.g., 3-A talks about spiritual formation, 3-E talks about standards-based Religion curriculum, 3-H talks about resources used for Religion, etc.

Self Study Document: The written Self Study is a compilation of the school's findings (written narratives) and an Action Plan focused on improving student learning. Note: This Action Plan may be revised after the accreditation visit based on the *Report of Findings* and any critical goals identified by the Visiting Committee.

The format and content of the written Self Study are given on page 10. Note that chapters 1-4 of the *ISL* protocol, chapters 1-4 of the Self Study document, and chapters 1-4 of the *Report of Findings* have parallel construction and follow the same order as the Accreditation Factors found in the *Justification Statement*.

Two sections, Chapter 1-A *How the Self Study was Conducted* and Chapter 2-A *School Profile* do not have any Accreditation Factors associated with the section, nor are they associated with a Key Self Study Outcome. Nevertheless, they are important for both the school and the Visiting Committee. Chapter 1-A *How the Self Study was Conducted* helps the school and Visiting Committee understand how the protocol was implemented. Chapter 2-A *School Profile* creates a portrait of the school as it exists today in its own unique parish/local community. This is very important for a Visiting Committee to understand some of the factors affecting the school and its resources.

Organizational Note: *How the Self Study was Conducted* and *Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study* are located in Chapter 1, their logical location because it is an overview of the process used to complete the Self Study and shareholder involvement in the Self Study. However, Chapter 1 can only be completed after Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are written because it addresses the process used to complete Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the Self Study. The timelines (E-1 & E-2, F-1 & F-2) help make this clear.

Outline of the Self Study Document by Chapter and Sections

Preface

A. Cover Page
B. Table of Contents
C. List of School Personnel

Chapter 1 – Introduction

A. How the Self Study was Conducted
B. Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study

Chapter 2 – Context of the School

A. School Profile (with supporting data)
B. Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students

Chapter 3 – Quality of the School Program

A. Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity
B. Defining the School's Purpose
C. Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students
D. Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students
E. High Achievement by All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards
F. Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students
G. Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth
H. Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students

Chapter 4 –Action Plan

A. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings
B. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan

Appendix (may be in the Self Study or in another binder)

B. ACS WASC KEY SELF STUDY OUTCOMES AND CATEGORY-BASED CRITERIA

Six Key Self Study Outcomes: Completion of the school's Self Study will facilitate the engagement of the school staff and other school community members (shareholders) in the examination of the school's program in relation to the twelve Accreditation Factors which incorporate all 14 Category-Based Criteria (see pages 11-12 for a complete description). Through the completion of this process the school will have accomplished:

1. *The assessment of the school's Catholic Identity.* The focus of the school is on the authentically Catholic nature of the school which provides children with an opportunity not only for an academically excellent education but a faith formation which will serve them the rest of their lives. (*This Key Self Study Outcome was created by WCEA not by ACS WASC and is included here to provide a complete picture of the Outcomes.*)
2. *The involvement and collaboration of all shareholders in affirming evident strengths and promoting ongoing school improvement.* The focus of this outcome is to involve as many shareholders as possible in the process of accreditation. Shareholders are involved through their participation on committees, review of drafts, input through surveys, etc. A key understanding is that shareholder involvement and collaboration is 'appropriate' to their expertise and the Accreditation Factor being considered.
3. *The clarification of the school's mission, philosophy, and SLEs for all students.* The mission and philosophy provide the overarching direction for the school. Policies are created, resources are allocated, and student admissions are all based on what will allow the school to implement its mission and philosophy. SLEs are a focus for student achievement.
4. *The use of high quality WCEA/ACS WASC criteria to assess the actual learning program and its impact on student learning and spiritual development.* Curriculum decisions and changes are based on the assessment of student achievement. Data is disaggregated and instructional programs are designed to allow each student to achieve at his/her highest potential.
5. *The development of an Action Plan that addresses identified goals to enhance student learning.* After completing the Self Study, the school designs an Action Plan consisting of 3-5 goals that, when accomplished, will result in increased student achievement. The whole purpose of the accreditation process is to design a plan that will result in students' high achievement of the curriculum standards, SLEs, and governing authority expectations.
6. *The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring progress in meeting or redefining goals and strategies found in the Action Plan.* The focus of this goal can best be summarized by the term "continuous school improvement." The Action Plan outlines the direction for the school to take. The accountability system insures that the Action Plan will be implemented and not sit on a shelf and gather dust until the next accreditation.

ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria[1] The criteria are research-based guidelines of systemic school improvement that address accreditation's central tenet: a school operates with a clear understanding of its purpose. The criteria were developed with the assistance of numerous practicing educational leaders and theorists. The objective was to develop criteria that brought attention to concepts and factors that differentiate between effective and ineffective schools. Since most formal education occurs in an institutional setting, factors that impact institutional effectiveness were considered along with curriculum, instructional strategies and assessment. The criteria have been adapted for various joint accreditation processes. These Category-Based Criteria are:

Category A: Organization for Student Learning

A.1 School Purpose: *The school has established a clear statement of purpose that reflects the beliefs and philosophy of the institution. The purpose is defined further by adopted expected schoolwide learning results that form the basis of the educational program for every student.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #3 & #4)

A.2 Governance: *The governing authority (a) adopts policies that are consistent with the school purpose and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results for the school, (b) delegates implementation of these policies to the professional staff and (c) monitors results.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #4 & #5)

A.3 School Leadership: *The school leadership (1) makes decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results, (2) empowers the staff and (3) encourages commitment, participation and shared accountability for student learning.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #4 & #5)

A.4 Staff: *The school leadership and staff are qualified for their assigned responsibilities, are committed to the school's purpose and engage in ongoing professional development that promotes student learning.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #5 & #8)

A. 5 School Environment: *The school has a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's purpose and is characterized by respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism support, and high expectations for each student.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #3 #5)

A.6 Reporting Student Progress: *The school leadership and staff assess student progress toward accomplishing the expected schoolwide learning results and report student progress to the rest of the school community.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #5, #6, #7, & #8)

A.7 School Improvement Process: *The school leadership facilitates school improvement which (a) is driven by plans of action that will enhance quality learning for all students (b) has school community support and involvement, (c) effectively guides the work of the school, and (d) provides for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan.* (addressed in Accreditation Factor #1, #2, #5, #11, & #12)

[1] The 14 Category-Based Criteria on pages 11 and 12 are taken directly from the ACS WASC website in November of 2009 (**http://www.acswasc.org/about_criteria.htm**). They have been reformatted to match the formatting of this document. The parenthetical comments (aligning the Category-Based Criteria with the Accreditation Factors) are not part of ACS WASC but have been added by the ISL Writing Committee.

Category B: Curriculum and Instruction

B.1 What Students Learn: *The school provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through successful completion of any course of study offered.* (addressed in Accreditation Factor #7)

B.2 How Students Learn: *The professional staff (a) uses research based knowledge about teaching and learning; and (b) designs and implements a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's purpose and expected schoolwide learning results.* (addressed in Accreditation Factor #8)

B.3 How Assessment is Used: *Teacher and student uses of assessment are frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process. The assessment results are the basis for (a) measurement of each student's progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results, (b) regular evaluations and improvement of curriculum and instruction, and (c) allocation of resources.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #6, #7, #8, & #10)

Category C: Support for Student Personal and Academic Growth

C.1 Student Connectedness: *Students are connected to a system of support services, activities and opportunities at the school and within the community that meet the challenges of the curricular and co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #3 & #9)

C.2 Parent/Community Involvement: *The school leadership employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #3 & #9)

Category D: Resource Management and Development

D.1 Resources: *The resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the school program and are effectively used to carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #10, #11, & #12)

D.2 Resource Planning: *The governing authority and the school leadership execute responsible resource planning for the future.* (addressed in Accreditation Factors #10, #11, & #12)

See pages 13-14 for a complete list of the Accreditation Factors.

C. ACCREDITATION FACTORS

Note: These Accreditation Factors, except for Catholic Identity, are an integration of the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria organized by four categories that were originally developed by ACS WASC and adopted by WCEA.

The WCEA Visiting Committee assesses the degree to which a school meets each of the Accreditation Factors which incorporate all 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria. Rubrics used to assess a school on each Accreditation Factor can be found in Appendix K. The Visiting Committee will recommend a term of accreditation based on the Committee's assessment of how well the school meets each of the twelve Accreditation Factors.

Twelve Accreditation Factors:

1. **Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study** – *The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.* (Key Self Study Outcome #2; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7; *ISL* Chapter 1-B)

2. **Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students** – *The school has used the previous accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.* (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7; *ISL* Chapter 2-B)

3. **Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity** – *The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.* (Key Self Study Outcome #1; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.5, C.1, C.2; *ISL* Chapter 3-A)

4. **Defining the School's Purpose** – *The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations*. (Key Self Study Outcome #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.2, A.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-B)

5. **Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students** – *The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.* (Key Self Study Outcomes #2 & #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7; *ISL* Chapter 3-C)

6. **Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students** – *The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.* (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-D)

7. **High Achievement by All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards** – *All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.*(Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.1, B.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-E)

8. **Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students** – *The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.* (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.4, A.6, B.2, B.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-F)

9. **Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth** – *Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria C.1, C.2; *ISL* Chapter 3-G)

10. **Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students** – *The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria B.3, D.1, D.2; *ISL* Chapter 3-H)

11. **Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings** – *The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcome #5; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2; *ISL* Chapter 4-A)

12. **Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan** – *The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2; *ISL* Chapter 4-B)

See pages 11-12 for a complete listing of the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria.

D. KEY TERMINOLOGY

The following definitions are provided to ensure common understanding of the terms which are used in the Accreditation Factors, protocol, Discussion Questions, writing points, and rubrics. This terminology is operational for this *WCEA Improving Student Learning* (ISL) protocol.

Accreditation: A process of ongoing school improvement that examines all aspects of the school program and operations in relation to the impact on high quality student learning. A school conducts a Self Study that serves as the basis for a review by a Visiting Committee of professional educators representing WCEA and the local regional accrediting agency (ACS WASC, AdvancED/NWAC, and NCA CASI/AdvancED). The Visiting Committee assists the school in assessing the effectiveness of the school's program and operations and its impact on student learning. The school is assessed on (1) the Catholic Identity of the school and (2) the degree to which there is clarity of the school's mission reflected through the school's leadership, instructional program, policies, and use of time and resources; (3) how well data is being analyzed and the extent to which the data analysis drives curricular change, (4) the degree to which the school is meeting the ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria as found in the twelve Accreditation Factors that emphasize the Key Self Study Outcomes and important aspects of the ongoing school improvement process, and (5) the degree to which the Key Self Study Outcomes are addressed.

Accreditation Factors An external critical aspect of accreditation that guides the school in its assessment. These twelve Accreditation Factors incorporate the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria organized by four categories, the Key Self Study Outcomes and important aspects of the ongoing school improvement process. See pages 11-12 for a description of the 14 Category-Based Criteria and pages 13-14 for a description of the twelve Accreditation Factors. See Appendix K for a list of Accreditation Factors and rubrics used for measuring the effectiveness of a school's activities.

Action Plan: A unified document that consists of goals and strategies identified by the school to improve student learning. An Action Plan may have several goals and multiple strategies within each goal. All strategies include resources needed for implementing the strategy, a timeline for implementation, and a process for monitoring and reporting the implementation of the strategy.

All Students: A reference to the belief that each student will achieve significant learning within a faith-centered context and has sufficient support to enable him/her to achieve the curriculum standards, Schoolwide Learning Expectations, and governing authority expectations. Every student enrolled in the school, regardless of sub-population or unique characteristics, is included.

Analyze: Study and determine the fundamental elements and resulting trends of data.

Articulation: The collaboration of all teachers and administration so that subject area expectations (e.g., curriculum standards) are presented at developmentally appropriate grade levels and graduates of the school master the content, skills and strategies deemed essential, and the SLEs.

Assessment: The gathering, recording, and analyzing of information about student progress or program effectiveness.

- **Alternative Assessment:** Any type of assessment in which students create a response to a question (as opposed to assessments in which students choose a response from a given list, such as multiple-choice, true/false, or matching). Alternative assessments can include short-answer question, essays, performance assessment, oral/visual/PowerPoint presentations, demonstrations, exhibitions, portfolios, etc.
- **Authentic Assessment:** Assessment tasks that elicit demonstration of knowledge and skills in ways that resemble "real life" as closely as possible. It also engages students in activities that reflect best instructional practices.
- **Baseline Assessment:** Initial student assessment data against which growth will be measured.
- **Formative Assessment:** Ongoing measures designed to provide students, teachers, parents and administrators with information about student learning and program effectiveness.
- **Multiple Assessments:** Using more than one method to evaluate whether or not a student has mastered a curricular standard or accomplished an SLE.
- **Ongoing Assessment:** periodic assessment data used to show student growth in comparison to baseline assessment data.
- **Performance Assessment:** Direct observation of student performance or student work and professional judgment of the quality of that performance. Good quality performance assessment has pre-established performance criteria.
- **Summative Assessment:** Identification of the level of student understanding, mastery of standards, and/or program effectiveness.

Catholic Identity: The distinctive religious dimension found in Catholic schools which emphasizes message, community, service and worship centered in Eucharist as found in the Catholic tradition. See Accreditation Factor #3 and Appendix C-6 for additional detail.

Challenging Relevant Curriculum: A demanding, faith-centered curriculum that is based on themes and concepts that encourage the students to achieve at their potential, to use higher order thinking skills, and to apply and synthesize knowledge.

Charism: A special focus, ministry or devotion of a religious order founding a parish/school community. The founder often exhibited a special devotion to an aspect of educational ministry. For example, St. John Baptist de la Salle was especially interested in teacher preparation. A school with a "La Sallian Charism" will make special efforts to work with teachers.

Coherent Curriculum: A curriculum that is viewed as a broadly conceived concept and makes sense as a whole with subparts that are unified, connected, and integrated.

Competency: A performance objective that requires evidence of sufficient knowledge or level of ability gained to meet proficiency standards in a given curricular area.

Category-Based Criteria: The 14 research-based Criteria developed by ACS WASC that form the basis for school accreditation. They are organized within four categories: A) Organization for Student Learning, B) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment to Support High Achievement of All Students, C) Support for Student Spiritual, Personal and Academic Growth, and D) Resource

Management and Development. See pages 11-12 for a complete description of these 14 Category-Based Criteria.

Current Educational Research and Thinking: Research and related discourse and publications on education and learning. Examples include: works and publications on state, national and subject area standards; and government, business, and industry research.

Curricular Activities: Instructional and other activities focused on student learning. This is generally meant to cover the core curriculum including physical education and fine arts.

- **Co-curricular activities:** Those activities that complement, but are not a part of the core curriculum. For example a civics club or debate club could be considered a co-curricular activity.
- **Extra-curricular activities:** Those activities not falling within the scope of a regular curriculum. For example, sports could be considered an extra-curricular activity.
- **Note:** The definitions for co-curricular and extra-curricular are overlapping, and some may consider them interchangeable. As used here, they both refer to activities outside the normal curricular activities that take place in the classroom during the school day.

Curriculum Map: A 'scope and sequence' of the essential (core, enduring, power, etc.) standards specifying what standards are taught when and in what grades.

Curriculum Mapping: Curriculum mapping includes some or all of the following:

- Identification of the essential (core, enduring, power, etc.) standards.
- Scheduling the essential standards that are taught during the course of the year.
- Sequencing the essential standards to be taught in each grade.
- Assessing the essential standards.

Curriculum Standards: Also called content standards, they are designed to encourage the highest achievement of every student, by defining the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each grade level.

Data: Detailed information serving as a basis for discussion, inference, or policy determination.

- **Data Analysis:** The process of looking at the data to determine trends and discerning the underlying cause of the trend.
- **Disaggregation of Data:** Taking parts of a data whole for the purpose of analysis.

Differentiated Instruction: As used in this protocol, Differentiated Instruction is based on the following beliefs: a) Students differ in their learning profiles, b) Classrooms in which students are active learners, decision makers and problem solvers are more natural and effective than those in which students are served a "one-size-fits-all" curriculum and treated as passive recipients of information, c) "Covering information" takes a backseat to making meaning out of important ideas. Curriculum should be differentiated in three areas: 1) Content: Multiple options for taking in information, 2) Process: Multiple options for making sense of the ideas, and 3) Product: Multiple options for expressing what they know.

Discussion Questions: In this protocol, Discussion Questions are a series of questions that help a school committee understand the Accreditation Factors including the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria. The Discussion Questions are related to the Accreditation Factor in that

the concepts found in the Accreditation Factor are expanded so that the committee discussing the questions will gain a big picture view of the school in relation to the Accreditation Factor. Discussion Questions are not meant to be answered as a narrative. The answers to these Discussion Questions will provide data upon which the writing points can be addressed. School committees may find it helpful to take notes and create summaries of responses, charts and graphs, etc. to have data for the writing points.

Diverse Population: The variety of sub-populations in the school, populations defined by ethnicity, gender, religious affiliations/beliefs, ability levels, socio-economic status, etc.

Essential Standards: Also called core, enduring or power standards. These are the critical standards that must be mastered before a student can successfully transition to the next grade.

Evidence: Any kind of physical or electronic material that indicates student achievement of a curriculum standard or an SLE.

Facilitators: Creators of learning experiences that actively engage students in the learning process; those who provide a physical and instructional climate where students learn.

Goal: A desired outcome toward which a strategy is directed. In the context of ISL, the accomplishment of a goal will result in a measurable improvement of student learning. (see Strategy) A goal is generally non-specific and not measurable. For example, "improve math computation" is a goal while "increase math computation test scores by 10%" is not.

Grade Level Subject Area Expectations: Statements of what students are to know, understand, and be able to do at the completion of each grade.

- **Subject Area:** A specific body of information or knowledge, a discipline.
- **Subject Area Expectations:** Established expectations for what students are to know, understand and be able to do within a subject area at each grade level. These grade level expectations are aligned with the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and "enable" the students to progress toward accomplishing them.

Governing Authority Expectations: In this protocol, governing authority generally refers to the pastor(s), principal, and the advisory body (see 'school board') that is responsible for policy review and recommendation, budget review and monitoring, etc. Other groups such as the Parish Finance Council may be considered part of the Governing Authority depending on the structure of the parish and school. Expectations could include issues like building and maintaining a balanced budget, creating a curriculum that ensures that all students are at or above grade level, expecting all 8th grade students to qualify for entrance into a Catholic high school, etc. These expectations are generally understood by the Governing Authority, but seldom written down.

In-Depth Study: Detailed and systematic review of a specific area of the curriculum using a specified format.

Leadership Team: A team of 3-5 school staff including administration, instructional staff and support staff. The purpose of the Leadership Team is to oversee the Self Study process, create a draft of the Action Plan, integrate the Visiting Committee's recommendations into the revised Action Plan, and oversee the implementation and reporting of the Action Plan.

Mission: Overall purpose and intentions of a school, incorporating the beliefs, concepts, and values on which the school's programs are based, and the goals toward which the school's efforts are directed.

Organizational Structures of the School: Those leadership groups of the school, such as the school board, parent board/club, finance committee, faculty/staff (as a whole), and administration (including pastor and principal), who exercise influence over programs and directions that support high achievement of all students. There may be some overlap with governance structures (see school boards), but the groups are not necessarily identical.

Philosophy: Basic beliefs or principles which relate to what the school is attempting to do, clearly and concisely expressing the fundamental purpose of the school, and reflecting the four-fold dimension of Catholic education which includes message, community, service, and worship. In some cases, the philosophy of the school is incorporated into its mission statement or translated into its SLEs and may not be written as a separate document.

Portfolio: A purposeful collection of representative student work over a period of time.

Regional Accrediting Agencies:

- **ACS WASC:** Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Schools. Accredits schools in the states of California and Hawai'i. Also accredits schools in Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and East Asia. ACS WASC partners with WCEA in the accreditation of Catholic elementary schools in California and Hawai'i, and Guam.
- **AdvancED:** AdvancED is the unified organization of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC), Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI), and National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE). AdvancED accredits schools in the states of Alaska, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. They also accredit Department of Defense Dependent Schools and schools in the Navajo Nation. WCEA is currently not partnered with AdvancED although WCEA was partnered with NCA CASI and NWAC (formerly NAAS).
- **WCEA:** Western Catholic Educational Association. Accredits Catholic elementary schools in the states of Arizona, California, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and the island of Guam. The WCEA elementary school protocol is accepted by AdvancED/NWAC, NCA and ACS WASC for dual accreditation in the states and territories listed above. WCEA does not have a partnership agreement with AdvancED.

Resources: In the context of this document, resources means all the physical (buildings, materials) personnel (teachers, students, staff, parents, administration, committees) and financial assets of the school that exist or can be developed.

Report of Findings: A document created by the Visiting Committee and left with the school after the visit. The *Report of Findings* follows the same sequence as the school's written Self Study. It summarizes the Self Study and affirms the school for the work that has been done. It may point out areas that the school overlooked in its Self Study, either areas that have had a positive impact on student learning, or areas for the school to consider that would enhance student learning. The *Report of Findings* will also review the school's Action Plan from the viewpoint of the Committee based on the evidence they've observed during the visit. The *Report of Findings* should encourage and challenge the school to a process of continual school improvement.

School Board: In this protocol, the term "school board" is used generically and the body may be called a School Board, School Advisory Commission, School Advisory Committee, School Advisory Council, or some other name approved by the Arch/diocese. The "school board" advises the pastor and/or principal, recommends policy, etc. As a rule they are not a governing body, but instead follow Church norms for consultative groups. The name, authority and responsibilities may vary by Arch/diocese. An Arch/diocese may or may not require a "school board" as part of local governance norms.

School Community: The school community includes faculty, support staff, non-certified staff, administration, pastor/parish, parents, students, school board, arch/diocese, and community partners (businesses, education institutions, agencies, and service organizations).

Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs): Statements of what a student should know, understand, value, and be able to do by graduation. These learning outcomes are collaboratively developed and represent the focus of the entire school community.

Self Study Committee: A group of shareholders (faculty, parents, clergy, students, etc.) who meet to share their insights about the Discussion Questions in a given Accreditation Factor which includes some of the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria. Through their discussion, they help analyze the school, its programs and impact on student learning. The Self Study Committee is generally a mixed group of shareholders appropriate for the Accreditation Factor. For example, if the Self Study Committee is discussing the *Resource Management and Development* Accreditation Factor, the Committee may include the school's administration, members of the finance committee of the parish council or school board and staff. Students would probably not participate in this Committee. They (students) would be an integral part of the *Support Services* Self Study Committee.

Shareholders: Significant participants including students, staff, parents and alumni. Relevant shareholders are involved appropriately in the Self Study through participation in Self Study Committees, completing surveys, reviewing work, etc. For example, a school might involve the school or parish Finance Council on a Self Study Committee in reviewing the *Resource Management and Development* Accreditation Factor. Students and parents would appropriately be involved in the *Support Services* Accreditation Factor. The School Board might be the Self Study Committee for the *Organization for Student Learning* Accreditation Factor. Parents who are professional educators might be included in the Self Study Committee for the *Data Analysis and Action,* and *SLEs and Standards-Based Curriculum* Accreditation Factors.

Significant Accomplishment: Unlike the old "Strengths" of earlier protocols, a Significant Accomplishment is defined by its positive impact on student learning. For example: a 'Strength'

might have been having a fully credentialed teaching staff. A 'Significant Accomplishment' would be raising average standardized test scores by five percentile points over the past three years.

Self Study Coordinator: The facilitator/leader of the school's Self Study process. He/she is responsible for coordinating the process at the local level, making sure all focus groups are meeting as appropriate, and overseeing the writing of the narratives in a timely manner.

Six Key Self Study Outcomes: (see page 6 for a list of these Key Self Study Outcomes)

Standard: Level of excellence, attainment, etc. regarded as a measure of adequacy.

Standardized Achievement Testing: A battery of tests designed for each grade level to measure school/student achievement in relation to that of a national norm sample or in relation to national criteria.

Strategic Plan: A comprehensive plan that helps the school identify present needs, develop strategies to help it adjust to changing conditions, make current decisions that are future-oriented, and make future decisions more effectively. A comprehensive strategic plan will address finance and development, facilities and maintenance, enrollment and marketing, staffing, curriculum, technology, and health and safety issues.

Strategy – a specific sequence of activities designed to help accomplish a goal. In the context of ISL, each strategy includes a baseline measurement, activity, cost, person in charge, method of evaluation, and process for communicating the accomplishment of the strategy to the shareholders. Strategies can be accomplished in a limited time span. See the sample Action Plan in the Appendix for further detail. (See Goal)

Student-Centered Learning: A focus upon student success in meeting curriculum standards, SLEs, and governing authority expectations. The professional staff designs and implements a variety of learning experiences which actively engage students at a high level of learning that is consistent with the school's mission and Schoolwide Learning Expectations.

Sub-Groups: Homogenous groups of students disaggregated by a particular gender, ethnicity, placement on standardized testing (e.g., bottom quartile in math computation), or other explicit, identifiable characteristic.

Testing:

- **Criterion Referenced** – Tests to see whether students have mastered a body of knowledge.
- **Norm Referenced –** Tests that compare students with each other.

"…to Support High Achievement of All Students" – high achievement may vary according to student abilities. This phrase is not meant to indicate that all students are achieving at the 90th percentile, for example, but that each student is being challenged to achieve at their highest potential.

Write: The school is asked to write a short (generally 2-4 pages), concise narrative explaining how and to what extent the school is addressing the Accreditation Factor. In order to help focus on a specific Accreditation Factor, schools are asked to incorporate several points in their narrative. The first point in every section in Chapter 3 deals with Catholic Identity. A parenthetical statement after Catholic Identity (and many other points) helps the school focus on how that particular point addresses the specific Accreditation Factor. For example, in Chapter 3-B (Defining the School Purpose), the Catholic Identity 'point' asks the school to discuss how the mission and philosophy focus on the Catholic nature of the school and connect the school to the parish and Church. In Chapter 3-E (Curriculum), the Catholic Identity 'point' asks the school to discuss the Catholic values that are explicit in the curriculum and how the Religion curriculum complies with USCCB standards. In other words, the Catholic Identity 'point' is focused on the Accreditation Factor, not on generic Catholic Identity. This is true of other points as well – the points are not redundant, but rather focused on a specific accreditation factor.

E. SCHOOL COMMITTEES: PROBABLE PLAYERS

Careful thought should be given to the formation of the Self Study Committees. To conduct a meaningful Self Study, the school is expected to involve the total staff in the process. In addition to staff, parents, students, alumni, and members of the parish community should be included so as to gain their perspectives on school programs. This involvement may be through committee participation, interviews, surveys or other means.

Parental input on committees is especially important when reviewing the mission and philosophy statements, and working on committees for the Catholic Identity of the school (3-A) and Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth (3-G). Parents with teaching credentials might also be included on the Assessment (3-D) and Curriculum (3-E) committee. Members of the school board should definitely participate in committee work for Organization for Student Learning (3-C). Both school board and Parish Finance Committee members should be involved with Resource Management and Development (3-H). Student input for Catholic Identity (3-A), Standards-Based Curriculum (3-E), and Support for Personal and Academic Growth (3-G) is very important. While each school will determine what shareholders will be involved in each committee, it is very important to involve a variety of shareholders in more activities than just responding to surveys.

While this protocol suggests different committees for each of the sections in Chapter 3, each school has to determine the exact makeup, membership and size of the committee. Large schools might appoint different staff members to chair a committee (or perhaps a school board member or active parent to chair the committee), and have different teachers, parents, students, etc. serving on each committee. Smaller schools might use a "committee of the whole" approach with all the teachers serving on each committee and parents and students brought in as appropriate for the work of the committee. Whatever model the school uses, the committee needs to keep a roster of all participants, dates and times of the meetings, and notes from the discussion. These notes are evidence and will be the basis for responding to some writing points.

Below are some responsibilities and potential membership of committees for the Self Study process. Additional members may be added at the discretion of the school.

Leadership Team Responsibilities	• Facilitation of entire Self Study process • Refinement of Schoolwide Learning Expectations • Creation of an Action Plan using goals of Self Study Committees • Coordination of the follow-up process to monitor the implementation and the accomplishment of the Action Plan
Leadership Team Suggested Membership	○ Self Study Coordinators ○ School Principal ○ Vice Principal ○ Level Coordinators/Lead Teachers
School Profile Committee	• Development of the School Profile

Responsibilities

School Profile Committee Suggested Membership	○ Principal ○ Vice Principal ○ Administrative Office Staff
Self Study Committees Responsibilities	• Synthesis of all data within each section • Determination of goals to enhance student learning
Self Study Committees Suggested Membership	○ School Staff ○ Shareholders: A Self Study Committee is composed of school staff and other school community members. The number of Self Study Committees depends on the size of the school. The makeup of each Committee could include parents, students and alumni whenever appropriate.
In-Depth Curriculum Responsibilities	• Analysis of what is being taught and learned with respect to grade level subject area expectations, curricular references, criteria, and standards.
In-Depth Curriculum Suggested Membership	○ All who teach the subjects (Religion and subject area(s) to be determined by the school per Arch/diocesan guidelines) ○ Instructional Assistants

F. 1 TIMELINE FOR SPRING VISIT SCHOOLS (January, February or March)

Spring or Fall Visit: Each Arch/diocese may choose to hold only Spring WCEA Accreditation Visits, only Fall WCEA Accreditation Visits, or both. The decision as to the actual date of the visit is made collaboratively between the school and the local WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

***ISL* School In-service:** May, June, August or September of the calendar year two years before the visiting year (e.g., May, 2009 – September, 2009 for a Spring 2011 visit):

- Selection of the Self Study Coordinator, Leadership Team and identification of all committee participants and chairs.
- Participation in training/orientation by local WCEA Elementary Commissioner – Principal, Self Study coordinators, school staff, other shareholders.

Chapter 1 *ISL* – Introduction: Begin this chapter in September of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., September, 2009 for a Spring, 2011 visit). Finish writing in October of the Fall preceding the visit (e.g., October, 2010 for a Spring, 2011 visit).

- 1-A – Describe the process used to complete the Self Study including all the committees that were formed and when they met – Leadership Team
- 1-B – Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study: Throughout the process keep a list of the committees, their membership, and meeting notes. – Leadership Team

Chapter 2 *ISL* – Context of the School: September through October of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., September, 2009 – October, 2009 for a Spring 2011 visit):

- 2-A – Create/Update the School Profile, Parent/Student/Staff surveys – Leadership Team
- 2-B – Use of Prior Accreditation Findings – Leadership Team

Chapter 3 *ISL* – Quality of the School Program: November through May of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., November, 2009 – May, 2010 for a Spring 2011 visit):

- 3-A Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-B Defining the School's Purpose: Mission Statement and SLEs updates/revisions (as needed), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-C Organization for Student Learning: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-D Data Analysis and Action: gathering, disaggregation and analysis of data, meetings, discussion, conclusions of analysis of data, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-E SLEs and Standards-Based Curriculum: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-F Instructional Methodology: completion of In-Depth Study, meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-G Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-H Resource Management and Development: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees

Draft of Chapter 2 & Chapter 3: As directed by the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, the draft document, including appropriate appendices, is sent to the Commissioner no later than June

15 of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., June 15, 2010 for a Spring 2011 visit). Ordinarily a chair will be assigned by this time and the chair may also receive and review a draft copy of the Self Study.

Revision of Chapter 2 & Chapter 3: Based on updated enrollment, survey and other data, and with input from the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, the school completes any updates and edits in August/September of the school year of the visit.

Chapter 4 – Action Plan: August through October of the fall preceding the visit (e.g., August, 2010 – October, 2010 for a Spring 2011 visit):

- 4-A – Create an Action Plan based on the goals for Improving Student Learning identified in Chapter 3. – Leadership Team, approved by the entire staff and administration
- Copy of the Action Plan sent to WCEA Elementary Commissioner no later than October 30th
- Update School Profile with current staff and current test results
- Final revisions/edits of the Self Study

Print Self Study: November of the fall preceding the visit (e.g., November, 2010 for a Spring 2011 visit):

- Final document is printed and available to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner no later than December 1 and includes all appendices, current information, etc.

The WCEA Elementary Commissioner receives printed and electronic copies of the Self Study according to Arch/diocesan guidelines no later than the pre-visit.

Pre-Visit: The pre-visit takes place no less than four weeks preceding the spring visit (e.g., December, 2010 – February, 2011 for a Spring 2011 visit).

Spring Visit: The Spring Accreditation Visit will take place in January, February or March.

Revised Action Plan: The school is expected to turn in a revised Action Plan no later than 45 days after the school's visit. This allows the school ample time to review the recommendations in the *Report of Findings*, and any direction that may come from the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

Continuing: All teachers and administrators will continue to collect, disaggregate and analyze assessment data for the purpose of driving curricular decisions. Evidence will be minutes of meetings and curricular and individual student learning decisions made by the school staff (e.g., a decision to purchase new textbooks is based on student accomplishment of the curricular standards, identified areas for increases in student learning, and an identification of texts that will meet these needs). Annual progress reports are to be turned in to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner in the format designated by the Commissioner.

F. 2 TIMELINE CHECKLIST – SPRING VISIT

May – September, 2009 (20-18 months before the school visit)

___ School appoints the Self Study Coordinator and Leadership Team, identifies all Self Study committee chairs, and identifies committee participants.

___ WCEA Elementary Commissioner (prior to starting the Self Study) trains Leadership Team/Faculty.

September – October 2009 (18-14 months before the school visit)

___ Create/update the School Profile (Chapter 2-A and Appendix A) and distribute to leadership team and all committee chairpersons.

___ Create and distribute initial surveys to parents, students and staff. Collate the findings and distribute to the Leadership Team and committee chairs.

___ Summarize the progress made on the Action Plan from the previous Self Study. Be very specific as to the impact the Action Plan has had on student achievement.

___ Begin the narrative for Involvement of Shareholders (Chapter 1-B). Note: this narrative will not be completed until after the Self Study protocol is finished.

___ Schedule committee meetings and invite participants to the meetings.

November 2009 – May 2010 (14-8 months before the school visit)

___ Review the school's mission statement (and philosophy if there is one) by the faculty, staff, administration including governance, and parent community.

___ Review the Schoolwide Learning Expectations by the faculty, staff, administration including governance, and parent community.

___ Create/review rubrics for assessing student achievement of the SLEs, and begin gathering evidence of student accomplishment.

___ Committee chairs conduct meetings, gather evidence, and begin the narrative writing process. (Chapter 3, sections A-H)

June 2010 (8-6 months before the school visit)

___ Send a draft of the Self Study to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

August 2010 – October 2010 (6-4 months before the school visit)

___ Revise the Self Study document as directed by the Elementary Commissioner.

___ Update the school profile.

___ Create an Action Plan based on the goals of the school that will have the greatest impact on student learning. Use the template in Appendix F-1.

___ Share the Action Plan with the WCEA Elementary Commissioner and revise as needed.

___ Finish the narrative for Chapter 1.

___ Make arrangements for housing and transportation of the Chairperson (pre Visit & Visit).

November 2010 (4-3 months before the school visit)

___ Print the Self Study document. Give hard copies and electronic copies to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

___ Make arrangements for Visiting Committee housing and transportation, if needed.

___ Make arrangements for hospitality, meeting space, etc.

Schools will be notified of their term of accreditation by WCEA in the summer following the WCEA Accreditation Visit.

Notification by a regional accrediting agency will be according to the regional accrediting agency's timeline.

G. 1 TIMELINE FOR FALL VISIT SCHOOLS (October, November or December)

Spring or Fall Visit: Each Arch/diocese may choose to hold only Spring WCEA Accreditation Visits, only Fall WCEA Accreditation Visits, or both. The decision as to the actual date of the visit is made collaboratively between the school and the local WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

***ISL* School In-service:** January through March of the calendar year before the visiting year (e.g., January, 2010 – March, 2010 for a Fall 2011 visit):

- Selection of the Self Study Coordinator, Leadership Team and identification of all committee participants and chairs.
- Participation in training/orientation by local WCEA Elementary Commissioner – Principal, Self Study coordinators, school staff, other shareholders.

Chapter 1 *ISL* – Introduction: Begin this chapter in January of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., January, 2010 for a Fall, 2011 visit). Finish writing in May of the Spring preceding the visit (e.g., May, 2011 for a Fall, 2011 visit).

- 1-A – Describe the process used to complete the Self Study including all the committees that were formed and when they met – Leadership Team
- 1-B – Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study: Throughout the process keep a list of the committees, their membership, and meeting notes. – Leadership Team

Chapter 2 *ISL* - Introduction: March through May of the calendar year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., March, 2010 – May, 2010 for a Fall 2011 visit):

- 2-A – Create/Update the School Profile, Parent/Student/Staff surveys – Leadership Team
- 2-B – Use of Prior Accreditation Findings – Leadership Team.

Chapter 3 *ISL* – The School: September through February of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., September, 2010 – February, 2011 for a Fall 2011 visit):

- 3-A Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-B Defining the School's Purpose: Mission Statement and SLEs updates/revisions (as needed), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-C Organization for Student Learning: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-D Data Analysis and Action: gathering, disaggregation and analysis of data, meetings, discussion, conclusions of analysis of data, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-E SLEs and Standards-Based Curriculum: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-F Instructional Methodology: completion of In-Depth Study, meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-G Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees
- 3-H Resource Management and Development: gather evidence (surveys, assessments, etc.), meetings, discussion, and narrative – Self Study Committees

Draft of Chapter 2 & Chapter 3: As directed by the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, the draft document, including appropriate appendices, is sent to the Commissioner no later than

February 15 of the school year preceding the year of the visit (e.g., February 15, 2011 for a Fall 2011 visit). Ordinarily a chair will be assigned by this time and the chair may also receive and review a draft copy of the Self Study.

Revision of Chapter 2 & Chapter 3: Based on updated enrollment, survey and other data, and with input from the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, the school completes any updates and edits in March/April of the Spring before the visit.

Chapter 4 –Action Plan: March through May of the spring preceding the visit (e.g., March, 2011 – May, 2011 for a Fall 2011 visit):

- 4-A – Create an Action Plan based on the goals for Improving Student Learning identified in Chapter 3. – Leadership Team approved by the entire staff and administration.
- Copy of the Action Plan sent to WCEA Elementary Commissioner no later than May 31st.
- Update School Profile with current staff and current test results.
- Final revisions/edits of the Self Study.

Print Self Study: August of the summer preceding the visit (e.g., August, 2011 for a Fall 2011 visit):

- Final document is printed and available to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner no later than September 1 and includes all appendices, current information, etc.
- The WCEA Elementary Commissioner receives printed and electronic copies of the Self Study according to Arch/diocesan guidelines no later than the pre-visit.

Pre-Visit: The pre-visit takes place no less than four weeks preceding the fall visit (e.g., September, 2011 – November, 2011 for a Fall 2011 visit).

Fall Visit: The Fall Accreditation Visit will take place in October, November or December.

Revised Action Plan: The school is expected to turn in a revised Action Plan no later than 45 days after the school's visit. This allows the school ample time to review the recommendations in the *Report of Findings*, and any direction that may come from the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

Continuing: All teachers and administrators will continue to collect, disaggregate and analyze assessment data for the purpose of driving curricular decisions. Evidence will be minutes of meetings and curricular and individual student learning decisions made by the school staff (e.g., a decision to purchase new textbooks is based on student accomplishment of the curricular standards, identified areas for increases in student learning, and an identification of texts that will meet these needs). Annual progress reports are to be turned in to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner in the format designated by the Commissioner.

G. 2 TIMELINE CHECKLIST – FALL VISIT

January – March, 2010 (20-18 months before the school visit)

___ School appoints the Self Study Coordinator and Leadership Team, identifies all Self Study committee chairs, and identifies committee participants.

___ WCEA Elementary Commissioner (prior to starting the Self Study) trains Leadership Team/Faculty.

March – May 2010 (18-14 months before the school visit)

___ Create/update the School Profile (Chapter 2-A and Appendix A) and distribute to leadership team, all committee chairpersons, all teachers and school staff.

___ Create and distribute initial surveys to parents, students and staff. Collate the findings and distribute to the Leadership Team and committee chairs.

___ Summarize the progress made on the Action Plan from the previous Self Study. Be very specific as to the impact the Action Plan have had on student achievement.

___ Begin the narrative for Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders (Chapter 1-B). Note: this narrative will not be completed until after the Self Study protocol is finished.

___ Schedule committee meetings and invite participants to the meetings.

September 2010 – February 2011 (14-8 months before the school visit)

___ Review the school's mission statement (and philosophy if there is one) by the faculty, staff, administration including governance, and parent community.

___ Review the Schoolwide Learning Expectations by the faculty, staff, administration including governance, and parent community.

___ Create/review rubrics for assessing student achievement of the SLEs, and begin gathering evidence of student accomplishment.

___ Committee chairs conduct meetings, gather evidence, and begin the narrative writing process. (Chapter 3, sections A-H)

February 2011 (8-6 months before the school visit)

___ Send a draft of the Self Study to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

March 2011 – May 2011 (6-4 months before the school visit)

___ Revise the Self Study document as directed by the Elementary Commissioner

___ Update the school profile.

___ Create an Action Plan based on the goals of the school that will have the greatest impact on student learning. Use the template in Appendix F-1.

___ Share the Action Plan with the WCEA Elementary Commissioner and revise as needed.

___ Finish the narrative for Involvement of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study.

___ Make arrangements for housing and transportation of the Chairperson.

August 2011 (4-3 months before the school visit)

___ Print the Self Study document. Give hard copies and electronic copies to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

___ Make arrangements for Visiting Committee housing and transportation, if needed.

___ Make arrangements for hospitality, meeting space, etc.

Schools will be notified of their term of accreditation by WCEA in the summer following the WCEA Accreditation Visit.

Notification by a regional accrediting agency will be according to the regional accrediting agency's timeline.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Chapter One – Overview of the Process

A. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

Important Terms:

Improving Student Learning (ISL) is the protocol, or directions, for completing a Self Study as part of the periodic accreditation process by WCEA and a regional accrediting agency. *ISL* contains twelve Accreditation Factors (incorporating the 14 ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria), *Discussion Questions*, *Writing points*, *Conclusion* bullets, and directions for listing and displaying *Evidence*.

The *Self Study* is the written document produced by the school in responding to the directions found in the *ISL*. It contains a narrative response to the Accreditation Factor and bulleted lists for the conclusion and for evidence. Self study may also refer to the process of creating a *Self Study*.

The *Report of Findings* is the Visiting Committee's summary of their review of the school's *Self Study* and observations made during the accreditation visit. It affirms the work of the school and may point out areas the school overlooked that could have a significant positive impact on improving student learning.

The *ISL* protocol, the school's written *Self Study*, and the *Report of Findings* all follow the same sequence. That is, the sections found in Chapter 1 of the *ISL* protocol will be found in Chapter 1 of the *Self Study* and Chapter 1 of the *Report of Findings*. The same holds true for Chapters 2, 3, and 4. When writing the *Self Study*, be sure to keep the same chapter and section titles as found in the *ISL* protocol.

Review

Your school's leadership team is responsible for oversight of the entire process your school uses in translating this protocol into a meaningful *Self Study* document. The leadership team also has specific writing responsibilities: 1) create a *School Profile* (Chapter 2-A); 2) describe how the *ISL* protocol was implemented (Chapter 1-A); and 3) describe how the completed Self Study involved shareholders in the process (Chapter 1-B).

The leadership team should meet regularly to keep track of the progress of the work of the Self Study Committees, give guidance where necessary, seek advice from the WCEA Elementary Commissioner as needed, and keep notes on the progress of the school. Later these notes can be used as the basis of the narrative for this section and the next.

This is the first section in the completed *Self Study*, and the first thing that the Visiting Committee will read. However, neither this section (1-A) nor the next (1-B) can be completed until after Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are finished.

Write a concise 1-page narrative describing how your Self Study was conducted.

Incorporating the following points in your narrative will help you focus on describing how your self study took place (i.e., describe the process, not the document).

- The schedule of meetings for the leadership team;
- Your timeline for completing the Self Study;
- In addition to surveys, how parents, students, and alumni were involved in the self study process;
- The role of your school board in contributing to the discussion, writing, and review of the committee work;
- Frequency of Self Study Committee(s) meetings. (Appendix D has a form that you can use to document your committee meetings).

Conclude your narrative by identifying what obstacles, if any, you ran into in completing the self study (the process).

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *How the Self Study was conducted*. Evidence could be found in newsletters, meeting notes, etc. and displayed in the Visiting Committee workroom, school office, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Committee meetings as outlined in Appendix D
- Committee meeting notes
- Leadership Team notes
- Tabulated parent survey, student survey, alumni survey, etc. results

B. INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION OF SHAREHOLDERS IN COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY

Read – Accreditation Factor #1 (Key Self Study Outcome #2; ACS WASC Category-Based Criterion A.7)

The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- How was school instructional staff involved in completing the Self Study?
- How were other shareholders involved in this process? (E.g., parents, students, parish members without students in school, schools board, pastor and other parish priests, etc.)
- As shown in your survey data, what do parents, students, staff and administration think about your school?
- How has the school community been involved in assessing the Catholic Identity of your school?
- To what extent did the non-school staff who participated in this Self Study process represent a wide range of viewpoints?
- How was the entire community, especially parents and students, involved in the creation/review/editing of the mission, philosophy, and SLEs?
- How were parents, as well as school staff, involved in data analysis of student learning?
- How was data review and analysis focused on student learning?
- What did your school discover about student learning as a result of this analysis?
- How were shareholders involved in the development of an Action Plan to address the needs of your school to improve student learning?
- What provision is being made for on-going systemic analysis of data?
- How will your school communicate to your shareholders the accomplishment of benchmarks in your Action Plan?

Write a concise 1- to 2-page narrative describing how your school involves all **shareholders*** in completing the *Self Study* (i.e., data review and analysis and creation and implementation of action plans). (*shareholders – see Key Terminology)

Incorporating the following points in your narrative will help you focus on describing how you involve all shareholders in continuous school improvement.

- Involvement of all shareholders in discussions for each of the sections of this Self Study;
- Involvement of all shareholders in data review (What data was reviewed? Enrollment data? Financial data? Assessment data? etc.);
- Involvement of all shareholders in analyzing the data that was reviewed (What did the shareholders think of changes and trends in the data? What did they conclude were the causes of these changes/trends?);
- Involvement of all shareholders in creating goals and strategies, and included shareholders in the assessment and monitoring of the action plan;
- Involvement of all shareholders in a review of the significant accomplishments and goals for improvement of student learning.

Conclude your narrative by describing how you plan to keep shareholders involved in ongoing systematic analysis of your school's effectiveness.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing a Self Study*. Evidence could be found in newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey data
- Committee meeting minutes and rosters (Appendix D)
- List of parents, students, alumni, board members, etc. involved in Self Study Committees
- Action Plan that includes shareholders in monitoring and evaluation

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Chapter Two – Context of the School

A. SCHOOL PROFILE

Complete

After the leadership team is formed, they complete all profile templates in Appendix A. Place these completed templates in your Self Study or in a separate binder/folder. Use the data gathered to discuss the points below. Note: Appendix A-4 and A-5 deal with personnel data. Adhere to local Arch/diocesan policy regarding publication of this data.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions and respond to the writing points.

Look at the data to identify your school within the larger community. Later you will be asked to review the data found in the templates and identify trends.

- How would you describe your school in terms of community, geographic and socio-economic setting? How has it changed over the past 5 years?
- Is your school reflective of the parish and neighborhood community? If not, why not?
- Does your school serve a special population such as a commuter school, or serving the needs of a poor, non-Catholic community?
- Is your school a regional, multi-parish, diocesan, or other than a parish-based elementary school?
- What is the composition of your instructional staff (number, degrees, experience, diversity, specialists, number of religious, etc.)?
- What are the Arch/diocesan expectations of teachers (i.e., credential, staff development, Catechist Certification) and how are these being met?
- What is the composition of your support staff?
- What percentage of your students are achieving at grade level?
- What is the longitudinal trend of standardized test scores and other assessment data?
- Are there any special groups of students (e.g., special needs, gifted, second language learners, etc.) and what are the results of their test scores and assessment data?
- What is the acceptance rate for your students into a Catholic high school?
- How well do your students do when they get to high school? Are they on the honor roll? Do you track their average GPA?
- What is your school plant like? What preventive maintenance plans are being implemented? Any special features (e.g., a science lab, computer lab, inclusion classroom, etc.)?
- What unique or special challenges does your school face?
- What have you learned about your school from all the survey results?

Write a concise 1- to 2-paragraph narrative that summarizes the founding of the school.

Incorporating the following points in your narrative will help you focus on describing how your school began.

- When the school opened;
- The founding of the school (religious order, laity, etc.);
- The **charism*** of the founding religious order if founded by a religious order;
- Religious serving in the school today;
- The charism of the school today.

(*charism – see Key Terminology)

Continue your narrative about your school Profile.

The school's leadership team should update the school profile data annually using Appendix A. In preparation for the accreditation, the leadership team should look at five years of longitudinal data found in Appendix A **as well as**: finances (budgets), assessment data, programs that support significant sub-groups of students, and students' success in high school.

Write a concise 2- to 4-page narrative describing how you use the school profile.

Incorporating the following points in your narrative will help you focus on describing how you use the school profile.

- Annual update of the information in the school profile;
- Identification of trends in school profile data, causes of trends, predictions of the future impact of these trends on student achievement, and projected solutions.

Conclude your narrative by describing what your survey results tell you about parent/student satisfaction with your school.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *School Profile*. Evidence could be found in the newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Completed forms from Appendix A (follow Arch/diocesan guidelines on personnel information – some forms can be in the form of graphs in this section's narrative);
- Completed surveys (parent, student, priest, etc.)
- Demographic data from public sources (newspapers, etc.)

B. USE OF PRIOR ACCREDITATION FINDINGS TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

Read – Accreditation Factor #2 (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criterion A.7)

The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- Was faith-formation an integrated part of your previous Action Plan?
- What has been the impact on student learning of the accomplishment of your prior Action Plan Goal #1 (2, 3, etc.)? (Note: this discussion prompt does not ask whether or not you completed your Action Plan Goals. This prompt asks you to discuss the data that indicates improvement of student learning.)
- What evidence has your school collected to show improvement in student learning?
- How has students' ability to accomplish the Schoolwide Learning Expectations been affected by your school's implementation of previous accreditation findings including your school's Action Plan?
- How does your previous Action Plan fit into a bigger picture of continuous school improvement?
- What was the involvement of the entire school community including administration (pastor, priests, and school board), school staff, parents and students in helping to facilitate a continuous school improvement process?
- What is the role of each of these groups in monitoring and reporting improvement in student learning?
- How were the findings of the previous Visiting Committee integrated into your revised Action Plan?
- How have you continually updated your Action Plan with goals from your In-Depth Studies? (See Chapter 4-A regarding inclusion of In-Depth Study goals in your school's Action Plan.)
- How have you added goals to your Action Plan when the original goals were accomplished?
- Does the school submit annual progress reports to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner in a timely manner?

Write a concise 1- to 2-page narrative describing how completion of your prior Action Plan resulted in improved student learning. Include data that supports your statements.

Incorporating the following points in your narrative will help you focus on describing how your school has completed its prior Action Plan and the impact this has had on student learning.

- Completion of each of the goals of the previous Action Plan (Be sure to include both the original goals of the Action Plan, any revisions suggested by the Visiting Committee and Revisit Committee – if any – and any goals added to the Action Plan since the last Full Accreditation Visit. If there were any obstacles that prevented the completion of any of the goals or strategies in the Action Plan, be sure to describe them.);
- An Action Plan that was focused on high achievement of all students (Note: schools using PSI may have an action plan focused on improvements other than student learning.);
- Measurable improvement in student learning (include reference to the data indicating this improvement in student learning);
- Prior accreditation findings drove school improvement;
- Monitoring progress on accomplishment of the Action Plan and communicating this progress to your school communities;
- Integrating ongoing systemic improvement into the culture of your school.

Conclude your narrative by describing how the school was involved in a continuous process of school improvement during the years in which a WCEA Accreditation Visit did not take place.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Use of Prior Accreditation Findings*. Evidence should be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Previous Self Study and *Report of Findings* (required of all)
- Previous Action Plan and copies of annual updates (required of all)
- Copies of Annual Reports to WCEA Elementary Commissioner (required of all)
- Communications (newsletters, meeting minutes, etc.) informing school communities of progress toward accomplishment of the Action Plan
- Other prior accreditation findings that have been addressed by the school
- Measurable indicators of student progress including standardized test results and other assessment data
- Minutes of meetings (e.g., school board) that discuss school improvement plans
- Schoolwide Learning Expectations, rubrics and assessments of SLEs

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Chapter Three – Quality of the School Program

A. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S CATHOLIC IDENTITY*

Read – Accreditation Factor #3 (Key Self Study Outcome #1; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.5, C.1, C. 2)
The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), provides authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the sacraments, and promotes evangelization and service to the community.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

Catholic Identity Standards - To what extent does…

1. …the school have a mission statement and philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life?
2. …the school provide regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments?
3. …the school have a Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings and meet the requirements set forth by the USCCB?
4. …the Local Ordinary approve those who teach the Catholic Faith (Canon 805), and is there ongoing formation for catechetical and instructional competence?
5. .the school maintain an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children? (Canon 796)
6. …the school have a service-oriented outreach to Church and the civic community after the example of Jesus Christ who said, "I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." (John 13:15)?
7. …the school use signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church?
8. … (are) all school personnel actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience?

Additional Discussion Questions

- What are the Arch/diocesan requirements for Catechist Certification of teachers and other instructional staff? Are there consequences for lack of certification?
- What Arch/diocesan and local (school and parish) in-service opportunities are available to your staff to assist them in their own ongoing faith formation?
- How knowledgeable are teachers about relevant Church documents?
- How are Catholic values explicitly taught in all curricular areas (e.g., in language arts, science, fine arts, physical education, etc.)?
- What are the student, parent, and teacher service requirements, if any?
- What faith formation opportunities are provided for parents?

Write a concise 2- to 4-page narrative explaining how and to what extent your school has assessed itself as a Catholic school.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing the **Catholic Identity*** of your school. (*Catholic Identity – see Key Terminology)

- Catholic Identity (discuss improving the faith and spiritual formation of students, parents, and staff);
- A standards-based Religion curriculum (development, implementation, ACRE and other assessments);
- Staff development opportunities for instructional staff that are focused on faith development and religious instruction competencies;
- Analysis of how these changes have strengthened the Catholic Identity of your school.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about your school's Catholic Identity by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 **significant accomplishments***, found in your narrative, that describe your Catholic Identity and that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 **goals***, not **strategies***, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of Catholic Identity which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

(*significant accomplishments, goals, strategies– see Key Terminology)

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 2- to 4-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Catholic Identity*. Evidence should be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Catholic identity surveys (C-6)
- Sacramentals and prayer corners on display in the classrooms
- School routines that incorporate prayer throughout the day
- Teachers who have catechist certification according to Arch/diocesan norms
- Parent component in the Religion program in place
- Student/parent/staff service records
- Staff in-service records
- Lists of parent workshops/in-services/catechist formation opportunities

B. DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

Read – Accreditation Factor #4 (Key Self Study Outcome #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.2, A.3)

The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- How were the shareholders involved in a consensus process to create or revise the mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations?
- How does the mission and/or philosophy statements reflect the relationship of the school to the parish (parish schools only), the school to the diocese (diocesan schools only), and to the Roman Catholic Church (Catholic Identity Standard #1, page 41)?
- How is the role of the parents described in the mission and philosophy?
- What Church documents are used as a basis for the school's mission, philosophy and SLEs? (See Appendix C-6 for examples of how relevant Church documents are used as a basis for each Catholic Identity standard.)
- How are the SLEs related to the school's mission and philosophy?
- How have the SLEs been written or revised in age-appropriate language for students?
- How are Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist) used as the basis for student learning?
- How are the SLEs incorporated into the daily life of the school?
- How does the school measure achievement of the SLEs?
- How does the school formally assess SLEs in relation to student learning?
- What other governing authority expectations exist and how are they being measured and met?
- What is the role of parents in the school community (Catholic Identity Standard #5, page 41)?

Write a concise 2- to 4-page narrative explaining how and to what extent your school has defined its purpose.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing the purpose of your school.

- The Catholic Identity of your school (discuss how the mission and philosophy focus on the Catholic nature of the school and connect the school to the parish and Church (CI #1));
- Your mission and philosophy (how they were created, reviewed, and/or updated);
- Your school's SLEs and their indicators (how they were created, reviewed, and/or updated);
- SLEs and written curriculum standards (discuss how SLEs and curriculum standards help define your school's purpose);
- **Governing authority expectations*** for your school (how are they identified, published, reviewed, etc.). (*governing authority expectations - see Key Terminology)

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about your school's Purpose by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Include a copy of the school's mission, philosophy, and SLEs in this section.

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your School's Purpose that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of School Purpose which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 2- to 4-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Defining the School's Purpose*. Evidence should be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey data
- Teacher lesson plans cross-referenced to curriculum standards and SLEs
- School displays of Mission and Philosophy statements and SLEs
- Tools to measure student achievement of SLEs
- Curriculum standards
- Standards based assessments
- Student and parent knowledge of SLEs

C. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

Read – Accreditation Factor #5 (Key Self Study Outcomes #2 & #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7)

The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- What is the role of the Pastor(s), school board, school administration, and staff in establishing, maintaining and communicating the Catholic Identity of the school?
- How do all organizational structures focus on facilitating high achievement of all students?
- How clear are the written policies, handbooks, etc. that define responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff?
- How are high standards for student achievement set and communicated to all shareholders?
- What regular reports are made to the Pastor(s), school board, and parents on student progress?
- How often does the school board agenda include time for regular reports on the school's curriculum?
- What role does the school board play in development and marketing?
- How does the school board develop and monitor the strategic plan of the school?
- What part do the Pastor and school board play in the recruitment of new students?
- To what extent are budget recommendations based on high achievement of all students?
- What budget decisions are focused on the spiritual growth of students, staff, parents, and other relevant shareholders?
- Does all staff participate in efforts to enhance the learning opportunities available to the students?
- Does the school have policies, codes, procedures and resources (e.g., facilities) that ensure a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning?
- What resources does the Arch/diocese provide to the school to support high achievement of all students?
- How effective are the existing structures for internal communication, planning and resolving differences?
- How effective are the procedures to ensure staff, students, parents, and other school community members understanding about student progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results and the curricular objectives?

Write a concise 1- to 2-page narrative describing how and to what extent your school's organization is focused on supporting high achievement for all students.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing how your school's organization is focused on high achievement of all students.

- The Catholic Identity of your school (discuss efforts of the school board and administration to promote the Catholic Identity of the school, the school board's/administration's insistence on faculty retreats, student retreats, parent faith formation opportunities, etc. (CI #8));
- A focus on student learning (include the role of the administration, especially the pastor(s) and school board);
- An environment that supports high achievement of all students (what focus does administration and the school board place on high achieving and low achieving students?);
- Communication of student achievement to all shareholders;
- A strategic planning process that includes a focus on supporting high achievement for all students.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about your school's Organization for Student Learning by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your school's Organization for Student Learning that have had significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of Organization for Student Learning which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 1- to 2-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students*. Evidence could be found in newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey data
- Meeting minutes, policies, directives
- Marketing plan, brochures, website, etc.
- Strategic plan for the school

D. DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTION TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

Read – Accreditation Factor #6 (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.3)

The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- What trends can be seen in the data collected for the school profile, especially in enrollment, high school acceptance, student performance, professional development, and financial development?
- Are these trends reflected in the greater community (local, national)?
- What are the causes of the observable trends (e.g., is the cause of declining enrollment the fact that families are moving out of the area, the economy, the lack of a curriculum that prepares students for high school success, dissatisfaction with the school, weak Catholic Identity, etc.)?
- What are the consequences of the observable trends?
- What can be done to reverse negative trends or continue positive trends?
- What impact do these trends have on student learning?
- What national norm-referenced (standardized) assessment data is being collected?
- What criteria-referenced and/or standards-based assessment is being collected at your school?
- How is this data disaggregated? How is it analyzed?
- What conclusions can you draw from this analysis?
- What sub-groups are being included in the disaggregation and analysis?
- What curricular decisions have been made from this assessment data?
- What process is in place to assess changes in assessment data caused by curricular changes?
- How are the SLEs being assessed (e.g., what rubrics are being used, interviews, student self-assessment, etc.)?
- What staff development activities, driven by assessment data, are planned to enhance student learning?
- How is staff development analyzed to determine what impact it has on student learning?
- How are your teachers using standardized test scores and other assessment data to differentiate instruction?
- How is student assessment data communicated with parents?
- Based on standardized test scores and other assessment data that you collect, are all your students achieving at their potential?

Write a concise 3- to 5-page narrative describing how and to what extent your school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect, **disaggregate***, and **analyze* data***; and uses the analysis as a basis for curricular/instructional improvement. (*disaggregate, *analyze, *data – see Key Terminology)

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing how your school uses data to drive instruction.

- The Catholic Identity of your school (discuss the analysis of data about faith formation of students, causes, trends, how the teachers use this data to modify instruction, etc. (CI #3, 4, 8));
- The ongoing, educationally sound, research-based, assessment data process used to collect data;
- Disaggregation of data into meaningful groups;
- Analysis of data to discover meaningful trends;
- Use of data disaggregation and analysis for curricular/instructional improvement.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about the school's Data Analysis and Action by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your school's Data Analysis and Action that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of Data Analysis and Action which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 3- to 5-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Data Analysis and Action*. Evidence should be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey data
- Completed charts/graphs from Appendix B including Arch/diocesan data
- Other data analysis charts and forms including formative and summative assessments
- Annual class/subject summary of students in bottom or top quartile
- ACRE test results
- Textbook or teacher-made test results based on curriculum standards
- Chamber of Commerce data showing community trends

E. HIGH ACHIEVEMENT BY ALL STUDENTS TOWARD CLEARLY DEFINED SLES AND CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Read – Accreditation Factor #7 (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Criteria-Based Criteria A.6, B.1, B.3)

All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- What are the school's clearly defined and measurable SLEs and curriculum standards?
- How is Catholic Identity and faith formation integrated into the total curriculum (e.g., math, reading, science, social studies, physical education, and extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, etc.)?
- How does the school define acceptable progress toward clearly defined and measurable SLEs and curriculum standards?
- How does the school measure acceptable progress for all students in achieving the SLEs and curriculum standards?
- How does the school measure acceptable progress for all students in their faith formation?
- How is student progress toward clearly defined and measurable SLEs and curriculum standards communicated to students, parents and the school's governing authority?
- Are there any groups of students that are not making acceptable progress? Who are they?
- What is being done/can be done to help all disaggregate groups of students make acceptable progress?
- How effective are the procedures to ensure staff, students, parents, and other school community members understanding about student progress toward the expected Schoolwide Learning Expectations and the curricular standards?
- How are resources beyond the limits of the textbook such as the library/media, internet, and community resources integrated into the teaching and learning program?
- How do the teachers use long range curriculum planning / curriculum mapping to ensure continuity of instruction and learning?
- To what extent is purchase of instructional materials, adoption of new programs, etc. based on student achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards?
- How are students using technology in the classroom to expand learning beyond textbooks?

Write a concise 2- to 4-page narrative describing how and to what extent your school ensures high achievement by all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and curriculum standards.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing student achievement of school's SLEs and curriculum standards:

- The Catholic Identity of your school (discuss the Catholic values that are explicit in the curriculum and how the Religion curriculum complies with USCCB standards (CI #3));
- Curriculum standards that are challenging, relevant, and create a continuum of learning for all students;
- Long-range curricular planning to insure continuity of learning for all students;
- Meaningful tools (rubrics) that measure student achievement of the SLEs;
- Multiple assessments that measure acceptable progress toward curriculum standards;
- Identification of students/groups of students who are not making acceptable progress;
- Design, monitor, and assess plans to assist these students in making acceptable progress;
- Integration of technology into the learning process (How do students use technology?).

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about the school's High Achievement by All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your students' high achievement of SLEs and curriculum standards that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of students' high achievement of SLEs and curriculum standards which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 2- to 4-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Standards-Based Curriculum* and *Acceptable Progress*. Evidence should be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey data
- A copy of the school's curriculum standards incorporating Catholic values
- Curriculum maps or other methods used to track curriculum across the grades
- Student explanations of how a given assignment helped them to accomplish an SLE
- Analysis of data collected by the school addressing SLEs, standards and expectations
- Rubrics used to measure SLEs

F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

Read – Accreditation Factor #8 (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.4, A.6, B.2, B.3)

The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.

Discussion Questions

These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- How are teachers trained in instructional methodology for teaching Religion?
- How are teachers informed and supported in their role as "an apostolic and ministerial worker of the Roman Catholic Church who teaches by way of example as well as by instruction"?
- What are the governing authority expectations regarding teaching and learning, including teacher and administrator qualifications?
- How does the teaching staff use a variety of instructional techniques to meet the needs of all learners?
- How are the teachers integrating student achievement of the SLEs into the teaching/learning process?
- To what extent is assessment frequent and varied?
- How is assessment matched to the learning style of the students?
- How are formative and summative assessments used to direct and evaluate the instructional/learning process?
- How are curriculum standards being used as the foundation for instruction?
- How effective is the school's supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff?
- What new teaching techniques have been implemented in the school as a result of this research?
- How does your school use professional learning communities to support research about learning and implementation of varying methodologies and strategies?
- How effective is the support of professional development with time, personnel and fiscal resources based upon the identified needs of the students and the teachers in the support of high quality learning?
- How is data analysis used to determine staff development activities requested under Federal Programs?
- How is technology integrated into the teaching/learning process to ensure high achievement of all students?

Write a concise 2- to 4-page narrative describing how and to what extent your staff uses instructional methodology to support high achievement of all students.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing how your school's instructional methodology is focused on student learning.

- The Catholic Identity of your school (describe how the entire staff model Catholic values, how teachers fulfill their role as apostolic and ministerial workers of the Roman Catholic Church, etc. (CI #4, 8));
- Focus staff development on research-based knowledge about teaching and learning, including use of technology;
- Frequent use of a variety of assessments to inform the teaching/learning process;
- Instructional methodology clearly linked to curriculum standards;
- Integration of technology into the teaching/learning process.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about the school's Instructional Methodology by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your school's Instructional Methodology that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of Instructional Methodology which will have a significant positive impact on student learning and faith formation.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 2- to 4-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Instructional Methodology*. Evidence could be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Student work aligned to standards and/or SLEs
- Samples of summative and formative assessments aligned to the standards/SLEs
- Teacher lesson plans
- Curricular maps
- In-Depth Studies
- Staff Development Program
- Use of Federal Program funds for staff development
- Integration of technology into the instructional process

G. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Read – Accreditation Factor #9 (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria C.1, C.2)

Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- How would you describe the "Community of Faith" in your school? How do parents and students describe it?
- What has the school done to create and maintain a safe environment for the students and staff? (e.g., emergency plans, first aid training for staff, etc.)
- What are some of the strategies employed by administration to ensure parental involvement in the school? How successful are these strategies?
- To what extent is the faith formation of students a priority among staff and parents?
- To what extent is the faith formation of parents and staff a priority of the administration, including the Pastor?
- What non-sports activities (clubs, etc.) are available to students? How are students who excel in these non-sports activities recognized for their efforts?
- How are Catholic values exemplified in extracurricular programs (e.g., sports)?
- How are these values communicated to parents as well as students?
- How is a student who needs academic assistance supported?
- How is a student who is not challenged by the regular curriculum challenged academically?
- To what extent does the discipline policy of the school support reformative, rather than punitive justice for students who err?
- How is the discipline policy of the school linked to the teachings of the Catholic Church?
- How are Federal Program services used to help all students achieve at high levels?
- What services are available for students who have undergone/are undergoing mental stress?
- How is the school's technology plan implemented and monitored?
- How is technology being used to supplement/enhance learning for students, especially those in the first and fourth quartiles?
- To what extent do students use resources beyond the textbook to enhance their learning?

Write a concise 1- to 2-page narrative describing how and to what extent your school provides support for student spiritual, personal, and academic growth.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing the support services you provide to students.

- The Catholic Identity of your school (describe how service learning opportunities are rooted in the Catholic principles of Social Justice, sport team prayers, sportsmanship, and how you involve parents in faith formation (CI #2, 5, 6, 7));
- The spiritual growth of the students and their parents;
- Student participation in a variety of curricular and co-curricular programs;
- Emergency plans for the school that support safety for all members of the school community;
- Meet the purpose of your school as defined in your mission and philosophy;
- Support programs for students with special needs including students with greater learning aptitude;
- Use technology to enhance the learning opportunities for all students, especially those in the first and fourth quartiles.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discover about the school's Support for Student Growth by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your School's Purpose that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of School Purpose which will have a significant positive impact on student learning and faith formation.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 1- to 2-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth*. Evidence could be found in the classroom, student work, lesson plans, bulletin boards, newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey Data
- A list of co- and extra-curricular activities available to the students
- The staff development goals listed on your Federal Program form (if used by your LEA)
- The school's technology plan
- The school's emergency plan
- The school's Title I plan

H. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

Read – Accreditation Factor #10 (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria B.3, D.1, D.2)
The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- Does the school use an Arch/diocesan approved chart of accounts or one that is acceptable under general accounting practices?
- What is the budgetary process and cycle of the school? When is a balanced budget created and by whom? To whom and how often are financial reports given?
- What are the qualifications or expertise of the persons who review these reports?
- By whom and how often is the budget revised/corrected during the school year?
- How is the school's financial status/progress communicated to its shareholders?
- How are human, instructional and other resources allocated based on assessment results of the students?
- Does the school budget include technology acquisition, maintenance, and replacement?
- What relationship is there between the decisions about resource allocations, the school's purpose and assessment of students' achievement of the SLEs?
- What sources of funds comprise the school's revenue?
- How often and by whom is an outside audit of the school's finances conducted?
- How did the school respond to the recommendations from the last audit?
- How does the school plan for emergency situations that could have a financial impact on the school?
- What resources does the Arch/diocese provide to assist the school financially?
- What resources does the parish provide to assist the school financially?
- Based on enrollment information and trends identified in the School Profile and Data Analysis sections, what is the school doing to stabilize/increase student enrollment?
- How is the school making use of Federal Program funds (e.g., Title I, Title IIA, etc.)?
- What strategic planning efforts, including development and marketing, are being made by the school to ensure the viability of the school?
- What efforts has the school made to involve alumni and parents of alumni?
- Are there sufficient funds available to the school for addressing the ongoing formation of the faculty and staff in catechist formation, retreats for faculty and students, Days of Recollection for faculty and students, Campus Ministry programs and projects, developing Religion curriculum, and the hiring of qualified Religion teachers?

Write a concise 2- to 4-page narrative describing how and to what extent your school's resource management and development is focused on supporting high achievement of all students.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing how your school's resource management and development is focused on high achievement of all students.

- The Catholic Identity of your school (describe resources used for faith formation of students, staff, and parents, creating an environment that supports Catholic Identity, etc.);
- Proper bookkeeping and accounting procedures are used to create and implement a budget, and monitor the financial position of the school;
- Budgets and strategic plans covering multiple years that support student learning;
- Periodic reporting of the financial status of the school to the shareholders;
- Resources (human, instructional, physical, and financial) are sufficient to sustain the school program and carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the SLEs, etc.;
- A plan to address budget deficits (if applicable);
- Technology plans including E-Rate, use of Telecom funds (CA schools), etc.;
- Use Federal funds (Title I, IIA, III, etc.) to support staff development for teachers and administrators.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discover about the school's Resource Management and Development by analyzing your data. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Conclusion

Use a bulleted list to respond to the following two statements.

1. Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your School's Purpose that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1-3 goals, not strategies, found in your narrative, that need to be accomplished in the area of School Purpose which will have a significant positive impact on student learning and faith formation.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 2- to 4-page written narrative.

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Resource Management and Development*. Evidence can be found in the newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Survey Data
- Five years of budgets, financial reports, tuition schedules, etc.
- Strategic plan for the school/parish
- Examples of alumni involvement with the school
- Copy of the school's technology plan

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Chapter Four – Action Plan

A. DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN WITH THE SELF STUDY FINDINGS

The purpose of an Action Plan is to address the school's need for *continuous school improvement focused on high achievement of all students*. While the school may have a critical need for improved facilities, student safety, increased enrollment or stable finances, the primary focus of the school's Action Plan should be on increasing student achievement. Administrators and staff are encouraged to work with their school boards to develop a strategic plan to address other critical needs of a school that are not focused on student learning.

Your school's Action Plan is built upon the narratives and findings of Chapters 1-3 of your Self Study. All of these chapters were designed specifically to help you identify and analyze your school's areas of greatest impact on student learning and to help you determine goals for what you can do next to further enhance student learning. Your Action Plan should be based on data that has been collected and analyzed, and be in alignment with these findings. Your Action Plan should include goals that are focused on student faith formation as well as student academic growth, and include strategies to implement these goals in a very specific manner. The alignment of your Action Plan with the data and goals will result in a strong Action Plan that is research-based and focused on the improvement of student learning.

Your Action Plan, as created in this section, should address no more than three goals, one of which must come from your most recent In-Depth Study, The Action Plan should be designed to accomplish all goals within the first three years following the accreditation visit. You may discover, in the course of implementing your Action Plan, that an extra year or two is needed to fully accomplish one or more of the goals. By starting with a three-year timeline, you will have that extra leeway, and still be on track for your next accreditation visit. You may also discover, as you assess the impact of your goal, that you need to make mid-course corrections in strategies that are not resulting in Improving Student learning and thus a three-year goal may become a four- or five-year goal. If you accomplish all goals within your specified timeline, go back to your Self Study to find and address other goals. Update the In-Depth Study goal to reflect the current In-Depth Study. Submit annual progress reports to your WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

There are two Action Plan forms in the Appendix that need to be completed. The first form (G-1) asks for the basic goals and strategies, timeline for accomplishing the strategies, how much it's going to cost, and who will be responsible for implementation. In addition, there is space for baseline assessment and ongoing measurement of the goal's impact on student learning. A second Action Plan form (G-2) is a monthly three-year timeline showing what strategies from each of the goals are going to be implemented during that month. This second form will help you see a bigger picture and not try to accomplish too much during a single time period, straining financial and/or staff resources.

Creation of an Action Plan that Addresses the School's Critical Goals to Support High Achievement of All Students

1. **Read – Accreditation Factor #11** (Key Self Study Outcome #5; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2)

The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

2. **Create a List of Significant Accomplishments**

Create **one** bulleted list of all the **significant accomplishments*** listed in the conclusions of Chapter 3, sections A-H. (*significant accomplishments, *goals – see Key Terminology)

3. **Create a List of Significant Goals**

Create **one** bulleted list of all the **goals*** listed in the conclusions of Chapter 3, sections A-H.

4. **Discussion Questions**

- What is the school currently doing that has the biggest impact on student learning? (Significant Accomplishments, see #2 above)
- What are the greatest learning needs of the students? (Goals, see #3 above)
- How can the school address these learning needs? (brainstorm strategies and activities)
- What evidence supports the correlation between the schoolwide action plan and analysis of student achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations?

5. **List of Critical Goals**

Based on your discussion, create a bulleted list of the **five goals** whose accomplishment will have the greatest impact on student achievement. Similar goals could be logically combined into a single goal. **Discuss, in a brief one paragraph per goal narrative, how the accomplishment of each goal will result in high achievement of all students.** These brief narratives will assist the Leadership Team in selecting goals for the Action Plan, and become the Rationale for the goals of the Action Plan. Include this list and corresponding narrative in your Self Study.

Select **two goals** from this list to create an Action Plan. Consider the following when choosing the two goals for your Action Plan:

- What resources are needed (time, money, people, etc.)?
- How will you monitor the Action Plan to ensure that targets are being met?
- Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan?
- How will you know if a strategy is successful or not?
- How will you communicate the successful completion of a strategy to the shareholders?
- What strategies have you used in the past that have been successful in improving student learning? Can these strategies be replicated for your new goals?

The **third goal** that will be included in your Action Plan is from your most recently completed In-Depth Study.

6. Write – All Accreditations

Unlike other writing points designed to create a narrative, the objective of this writing section is to create an Action Plan for the school. Ordinarily the Action Plan is created by the Leadership Team and reviewed by the school staff and other shareholders (e.g., school board, pastor, etc.). The Leadership Team then revises the Action Plan as needed based on input from shareholders.
Note: before creating an Action Plan that includes goals not focused on increasing student achievement (e.g., increasing enrollment, finding additional sources of funding, repairing the roof, etc.), discuss your plan with your WCEA Elementary Commissioner. Although the *ISL* protocol is focused on improvement of student learning, there may be valid reasons why parts of a strategic plan are included in your Action Plan rather than in a parish/school strategic plan. Your WCEA Elementary Commissioner needs to be a part of this process to ensure that the Visiting Committee knows that you have permission to focus on strategic goals as well as goals focused on improving student learning.

Your shareholders and the Visiting Committee understand that the two goals you selected, plus one from the In-Depth, are not the only areas where improvement is needed. However, it is not possible for you to do everything at once. When, therefore, a selected goal has been achieved, identify a new goal from the Self Study to take the place of the one that has been completed. Renew the In-Depth goal according to the timeline provided by your WCEA Elementary Commissioner. Remember, school improvement is an on-going and never-ending process. Appendix F-2 is specifically designed to help you ensure that your school's resources are not stressed by trying to accomplish too much in too little time.

Important: All goals should be stated in "goal language." A goal is general, non-specific, and generally not measurable in the sense that there is no end point. For example, "To improve math scores" could be a goal. It is general, does not specify content and has no measurable end point (you can always improve). "To improve math computation" is more specific, but could still be considered a goal. "To improve math computation of whole numbers by 10% as measured by standardized test results" is a strategy. To practice multiplication math facts daily is an activity.

Using the template provided in Appendix F-1, create strategies for each goal in the Action Plan. Each strategy must be specific, student-focused, data-driven, challenging, measurable, equitable (all students can succeed), and attainable within a reasonable time frame. A reasonable time frame is 1-3 years. A strategy may or may not contain specific activities. Each strategy or activity must include an estimated cost and the source of the funds (e.g., staff development could come from Federal Programs or the operating budget), who will be responsible for overseeing the strategy, how long the strategy is expected to take, how the school will monitor the strategy as it's being implemented, how and when the school will assess the strategy to determine whether the implementation has resulted in high achievement of all students, and, finally, how the implementation of this strategy will be communicated to the shareholders. Appendices F-3 and F-4 contain part of an example Action Plan with one strategy for each goal and several activities within that one strategy. NOTE: Goals ordinarily have more than one strategy – this is just an example of one strategy.

The bulleted list below contains the essential elements found in every *ISL* Action Plan:

Action Plan for a School

- Goal #1 (a statement of area for improvement in terms of student learning)
  - Rationale for the Goal (how accomplishment of the goal will result in high achievement of all students)
  - Alignment with mission, philosophy, Schoolwide Learning Expectations
    - Strategy #1 (description of the strategy)
      - activity #1 (a specific part of strategy #1)
        - cost or other resources needed
        - source of funds/resources (e.g., Federal Program funds, operating budget, fundraising, etc.)
        - person responsible for implementation or supervision of strategy
        - process for monitoring (ongoing)
        - assessment (how student learning growth will be measured, with benchmarks)
        - timeline (start and end of strategy)
        - communication to shareholders
      - activity #2 (a specific part of strategy #1)
        - cost or other resources needed
        - source of funds/resources (e.g., Federal Program Funds, operating budget, fundraising, etc.)
        - person responsible for implementation or supervision of strategy
        - process for monitoring (ongoing)
        - assessment (how student learning growth will be measured, with benchmarks)
        - timeline (start and end of strategy)
        - communication to shareholders
    - Strategy #2 (description of the strategy)
      - activity #1 (a specific part of strategy #2)
        - cost or other resources needed
        - source of funds/resources (e.g., Federal Program funds, operating budget, fundraising, etc.)
        - person responsible for implementation or supervision of strategy
        - process for monitoring (ongoing)
        - assessment (how student learning growth will be measured, with benchmarks)
        - timeline (start and end of strategy)
        - communication to shareholders

  And so forth…

Evidence

- List of Significant Accomplishments
- List of Significant Goals
- List of Critical Goals and brief narratives
- Action Plan with three goals and strategies to meet each goal

B. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN

Read – Accreditation Factor #12 (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7; D.1, D.2)

The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

Discussion Questions
These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.

- How has your school sought input from the Pastor, school board, and other interested shareholders on the implementation of the Action Plan?
- How has your school leadership involved shareholders in reaching consensus on the importance of the Action Plan?
- How does the budget allocate funds for the implementation of the Action Plan?
- How does your school propose to monitor the Action Plan and report progress to shareholders?
- If all the goals are met within three years, how does your school intend to maintain continuous improvement through adding goals to your Action Plan?

Write a concise 1- to 2-page narrative describing your school's capacity to implement and monitor your Action Plan.

Incorporate the following points in your narrative to help you focus on describing your school's capacity to implement and monitor your action plan.

- Accomplishment of your prior action plan;
- Process you will use to ensure ongoing and methodical assessment of your Action Plan;
- Appropriate involvement of shareholders in the implementation of your Action Plan;
- Evaluation of the impact of your Action Plan on student achievement;
- Method(s) of communicating results with all shareholders;
- Plans to incorporate additional goals into the Action Plan as current goals are achieved;
- Resources needed but not available right now.

Conclude your narrative by describing what you discovered about your school's capacity to implement and monitor your Action Plan. What data supports this analysis? What did you discover that needs to be improved?

Evidence

Create a bulleted list of types of evidence displayed in the school supporting the statements made in the narrative about *Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan*. Evidence can be found in the newsletters, meeting notes, Visiting Committee workroom, etc. Listed below are a few examples of evidence that might be found in your school. This list is not comprehensive; include additional evidence not listed below.

- Previous Self Study
- All annual Progress Reports sent to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner since your school's previous full accreditation visit
- Previous *Report of Findings*
- Mid-term Report (if applicable)
- Revisit Committee's Report (if applicable)
- Previous Action plan and all revisions

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

FOR USE BY THE SCHOOL IN COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY

Appendix A: School Profile Templates

This appendix contains a variety of templates to be used by the school as a basis for completing the *School Profile* found in Chapter 2-A. Some of this information can be presented in the narrative in the form of charts and graphs. Adhere to Arch/diocesan policy in the publication of staff information and testing data. At a minimum, the chair must have access to staff and testing data.

Appendix B: Data Analysis Templates

The templates provided in this section are for use in collecting and analyzing standardized testing data. These templates are available as spreadsheets on the WCEA website http://www.westwcea.org/**.** Schools may choose to use additional templates for data analysis. Please check with your local WCEA Elementary Commissioner.

Appendix C: Surveys

Schools are encouraged to gather survey data from all shareholders. Electronic surveys are encouraged. Summary survey data should be included within the narratives as appropriate.

Appendix D: Record of *ISL* Meetings

This form is used to record meetings, roster, decisions, etc.

Appendix E: *ISL* Self Study Writing Template

This is the template used by the school to create a Self Study. All the Accreditation Factors are included saving schools the need to rewrite these. The writing points are generic to help avoid temptation to address the points directly, and to encourage schools to write a narrative. Directions are included in the template.

Appendix F: Action Plan Template

All schools are required to use the template shown in this appendix. Schools may elect to print their Action Plan in portrait or landscape mode. Some sample partial goals for an action plan are included in this appendix.

ANNUAL FORMS USED BY ALL SCHOOLS AS PART OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Appendix G: Catholic Identity Ongoing Review

This appendix contains the process and timeline to complete an annual, ongoing review of the Catholic Identity of the school. It begins with the year the school starts the Self Study and continues with a focused, partial review in each succeeding year.

Appendix H: In-Depth Study

This appendix is the curriculum subject review known as the In-Depth Study. This is designed to complement and support *ISL* in that it uses the same Discussion Questions and writing points found in parts of Chapter 3. Schools completing these In-Depth Studies not only engage in continuous school improvement focused on high achievement of all students, but collect data and practice procedures needed for the Self Study.

Appendix I: In-Depth Writing Template

This is the template used by the school to create an In-Depth Study (see Appendix H). All parts are included including a simplified Action Plan. Schools are encouraged to use the third Action Plan template found on page

Appendix J: WCEA Annual Report Template

All schools are required to use the template included in this appendix for their WCEA Annual Report of Progress.

INFORMATIONAL - USE BY THE VISITING COMMITTEE

Appendix K: Accreditation Factors and Rubrics

This appendix contains the rubrics used by the Visiting Committee to complete the Justification Statement and recommend a term of accreditation for the school.

Appendix L: *Report of Findings* – informational only

This is the template used by the Visiting Committee to report their findings of the accreditation visit.

Appendix M: *Justification Statement* – informational only

This is the form used by the Visiting Committee to evaluate the school at the conclusion of the Committee's visit. This document will be the basis of determining a recommended term of accreditation.

Appendix N: *Recommendation for Accreditation Status* – informational only

This is the form used by the Visiting Committee to recommend an Accreditation Status for the Elementary Status. The WCEA Elementary Committee will use this recommendation to determine an actual Accreditation Status for the school.

INFORMATIONAL - OTHER

Appendix O: Resources – informational only

This is a non-exhaustive, non-comprehensive list of books focused on curriculum development and teaching methodology. It is meant to provide a starting point for research-based staff development.

Appendix P: Best Practices for Teaching Religion – informational only

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix A
School Profile Templates:

PUBLICATION OF STAFF AND TEST DATA SHOULD BE ACCORDING TO ARCH/DIOCESAN POLICY.

These templates will be data gathering templates.

1. Address and basic information
2. Current enrollment by grade and by ethnicity
3. Current teaching staff by grade/subject, Catholic/non-Catholic, highest degree, teaching credential, Catechist certification, years experience, years experience at this school, ethnicity, gender.
4. Current non-teaching staff by assignment, hours/days/weeks worked, years at school.
5. Participation in IDEA
6. Participation in ESEA Programs
7. Current standardized test results – summary 'total' data by grade, longitudinal data by grade

After these templates have been completed, the leadership team should discuss the impact on student learning of the data found in the templates.

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Appendix A-1
School Profile – Basic Information

School Code and Name | Grades | School Phone

Address | City | State | Zip

Principal | E-mail address | Home Phone

Pastor | Public School District

Director of Education for Religious Community in School | Religious Community

Address | City | State | Zip

Does your school have a school board? ___ Yes ___ No
If yes, is it an advisory body or a governing body? ___ Advisory ___ Governing

Who is the chair/president? _____

Do you have a Preschool Program? ___ Yes ___ No

What are the hours of operation? _____

Do you have an Extended Day Program? ___ Yes ___ No

What are the hours of operation? _____

What are the fees? _____

How many families participate? _____

For which grades do you have waiting lists? _____

Do you have an approved Technology Plan? ___ Yes ___ No

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix A-2
School Profile – Current Enrollment Information

	Male	Female	Total
Preschool			
Pre-K			
K			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
TOTAL			

Race and Ethnicity	Catholic	Non-Catholic	Total
Black			
Asian			
Hawai'ian / Pacific Islander			
Native American / Native Alaskan			
White			
Other			
TOTAL RACE			
Hispanic			
Non-Hispanic			
TOTAL ETHNICITY			

School Year	Number of Graduates Boys / Girls	Number applying to Catholic high schools Boys / Girls	Number accepted by Catholic high schools Boys / Girls
20__			
20__			
20__			
20__			
Current Year			

Questions to be discussed – trends & causes

1. Is the composition of the school reflective of the composition of the parish? If not, why not?
2. What is the acceptance rate of graduates into local Catholic high schools?
3. What articulation do your teachers have with local Catholic high school teachers?
4. How well prepared are the students for high school?
5. What is their strongest curricular area? Their weakest curricular area?

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix A-3

Adhere to Diocesan Policy in publishing this appendix

School Profile – Instructional (Teaching) Staff

Name	Grade Subj.	Catholic/ Non-Cath.	Highest Degree	Teacher License	Catechist Cert.	Total Yrs. Exp.	Exp. this school	Ethnicity	M/F

Questions to be discussed – trends & causes

1. What are the Arch/diocesan requirements for teacher credentialing? How is this being implemented at your school?
2. What are the Arch/diocesan requirements for teacher catechist certification? How is this being implemented at your school?
3. How many teachers are new since the last accreditation visit? Why did teachers leave? How are teachers being recruited?

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix A-4

Adhere to Diocesan Policy in publishing this appendix

School Profile – Support (non-teaching) Staff

Name	Assignment	Hours per day Worked	Days per year worked	Years Worked at this school	Qualifications (degree, certification, etc.)

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix A-5
School Profile – Participation in IDEA

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are responsible for locating, identifying, evaluating ("child find") and developing an individual education program (IEP) for any child living within the district's boundaries, including children enrolled in private and religious schools, who may have a disability (e.g., hearing, speech, sight, physical and mental impairments; emotional disturbances and learning disabilities, etc.) at no cost to the child's parents.

Child find is a component of IDEA that requires states to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, aged birth to 21, who are in need of early intervention or special education services.

1. Has your LEA carried out this "child find" requirement in your school? ___ Yes ___ No
2. If yes, how many children were actually identified as having a disability? _____
3. If No, have you ever requested the LEA to do a "child find?" and had that request denied? ___ Yes ___ No
4. Of those children identified with a disability, how many have had a formal Instructional Service Plan (ISP) developed by the LEA? _____
5. Of those children currently enrolled in your school and having an ISP with specified services identified, how many are receiving?
   NO specified services _____ SOME specified services _____ All Specified services _____
6. Of those children with disabilities currently enrolled in your school, how many are receiving the specified services in your school? _____
7. How many are receiving those services at a public school or neutral site? _____
8. For those receiving services at a public school or a neutral site, is transportation being provided at no cost to the child's parents? ___ Yes ___ No
9. How many of the children identified as eligible for services through 'child find' transferred to the public school? ____
10. How many of the children identified eligible for services through 'child find' chose to remain in your school and forego receiving the specified services? _____
11. How many children with disabilities, who applied to your school within the past three years, were unable to attend because your school does not offer services that meet their specific needs? _____

California schools only: note that California Ed Code 48203 (SB 1327) lists specific reporting requirements of California schools to the County/District Superintendent regarding issue addressed in question #11.

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Appendix A-6
School Profile – Participation in Federal Programs

Title I, Part A – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged

1. How many students are eligible for Title IA services? _____
2. How many students are receiving Title IA services? _____
3. What services are being offered at your school for Title IA students?

Title II, Part A – Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund

1. What is your per-pupil allocation for Title IIA services? $_____ per child.
2. What is your total Title IIA allocation for School Year ____-____? $_____
3. Have you developed/filed an approved Title IIA Staff Development plan? ___ Yes___ No
4. Attach a copy of your staff development plan to this section.
5. If you don't have a staff development plan, describe the staff development in-services you will be requesting.

Title II, Part D – Enhancing Education Through Technology

1. What is your per-pupil allocation for Title IID services? $_____ per child.
2. What is your total Title IID allocation for School Year ____-____? $_____
3. How will you be using these resources?

Title III, Part A – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement

1. Are you using any funds/services for Title III for your students? ___ Yes___ No
2. If Yes, please describe the services that you provide/are provided.

Title IV, Part A – Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities

1. What is your per-pupil allocation for Title IVA services? $_____ per child.
2. What is your total Title IVA allocation for School Year ____-____? $_____
3. How are you using these funds?

Title IV, Part B – 21st Century Community Learning Centers

1. Is your LEA participating in this program? ___ Yes___ No
2. How many students do you have that are a part of the target population for this program? ___
3. Describe the services that are provided for your target population.

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Appendix A-7

Adhere to Diocesan Policy in publishing this appendix

School Profile – Standardized Testing Program (GE, NPR, etc.)

Reading	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
20__							
20__							
20__							
20__							
Current Yr.							

Math	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
20__							
20__							
20__							
20__							
Current Yr.							

Lang. Arts	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
20__							
20__							
20__							
20__							
Current Yr.							

Core	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
20__							
20__							
20__							
20__							
Current Yr.							

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix A-8
School Profile – Staff Development Program

In the following section, outline your staff development plans. Usually, a professional development focus will run for several years, be associated with In-Depth Studies, involve the entire faculty, be connected with your Action Plan, and have an impact on improving student learning.

Staff Development for 20____ - 20____: Theme: _____

Activities/Cost: _____/$_____

_____/$_____

_____/$_____

Staff Development for 20____ - 20____: Theme: _____

Activities/Cost: _____/$_____

_____/$_____

_____/$_____

Staff Development for 20____ - 20____: Theme: _____

Activities/Cost: _____/$_____

_____/$_____

_____/$_____

Staff Development for Current School Year: Theme: _____

Activities/Cost: _____/$_____

_____/$_____

_____/$_____

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix B – Data Analysis Templates:

These templates will provide space to enter very specific data (e.g., enrollment over time) followed by questions about the data. The questions are Discussion Questions. Keep notes of your discussion to help write the narrative in Chapter 3-C. All templates are available in a pre-designed spreadsheet, or you can create your own spreadsheet based on the tables presented in this Appendix.

Appendix B-1
Data Analysis – Enrollment Trends

Grade Enrollment Over Time

Year	Preschool	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
20__											
20__											
20__											
20__											
20__											
20__											
20__											
20__											
20__											
Current											

1. As you trace a class diagonally (K-2003, 1-2004, 2-2005, etc.) do you see an enrollment trend? Are students entering or leaving at a specific grade level? What is the cause of this trend? What can the school do to change this trend, if a change is needed? For example, a significant number of students are leaving after 5th grade in order to attend the new public middle school with a brand new computer lab? What must you do to keep these students at your school?

Total Enrollment Over Time

20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	Current

2. As you look at total school enrollment, what has been the 10-year trend? What has been the most recent 5-year trend? What are the causes of increased or decreased enrollment? What have parents told you in their exit interviews when they leave school?

3. What is the trend in the public school? Is there a similar increase/decrease?

4. What recruitment efforts are you using to attract new students? Knowing that, in most cases, the mother decides what school her child will be attending before the child is 3 years old, what efforts are you making to put the name of your school before these parents?

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Appendix B-2
Finances

Per Pupil Cost Over Time

Year	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	Current Year
Amount								
% Increase								

First Child's Tuition Over Time

Year	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	Current Year
Amount								
% Increase								

Tuition as a % of Per Pupil Cost

Year	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	Current Year
%								

Budget Surplus/Deficit (Bottom Line)

Year	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	20__	Current Year
$								

1. In light of the above statistics, what are you doing to keep tuition affordable?
2. What efforts are you making to stabilize your revenue mixture (tuition, fees, fundraising, subsidy, etc.)?
3. How are you addressing budget deficits (if any)?
4. What is the role of the parish in addressing your school's budget deficits (if any)?
5. What is the role of the Arch/diocese in addressing your school's budget deficits (if any)?

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Appendix B-3
Disaggregation and Analysis of Test Results: Quartile Analysis

[This template can be used for all curricular areas assessed in a standardized testing programs. At a minimum, schools should use this for ELA and Math.] In the spaces below, put the number of students in each grade who score in that quartile.

Subject	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2-8 Totals
75-99%								
50-74%								
25-49%								
1-24%								

Data Analysis:

For the groups in each grade who scored in the first quartile (below the 25th %), what are their weakest areas of performance?

2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

After reviewing the data listed on this page, discuss the following questions:

1. Are a significant number of students scoring in the bottom quartile?
2. Why are a significant number of students scoring in the first (bottom) quartile?
3. What is being done to help these students?
4. What could be done that is not being done now?
5. Are a significant number of students scoring in the top quartile?
6. What is being done to challenge these students?
7. What could be done that is not being done now?

NOTE: A spreadsheet is available that will do all the totals and calculations. You still have to enter individual class data for the current year. Templates are available at www.westwcea.org Other online templates provided by your standardized testing company may be used for identifying low performing students and answering the questions above.

Examples of Quartile Analysis

Math – last year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2-8 Totals
75-99%	13	8	11	9	11	10	11	73
50-74%	7	10	7	9	9	10	10	62
25-49%	5	6	9	6	8	7	5	46
1-24%	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	20

For the groups in each grade who scored in the first quartile (below the 25th %), what are their weakest areas of performance?

2	Poor number sense, telling time
3	Basic computation (add, subtract)
4	Multiplication
5	Division
6	Decimals, especially division of decimals
7	
8	

Disaggregation: Quartile data from successive years may also be used for comparison. For example, assume that the data above was from the previous year, and the data below is from the current year.

Math – this year	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	2-8 Totals
75-99%	12	11	10	9	8	13	12	75
50-74%	9	10	9	10	7	9	9	63
25-49%	6	5	5	7	8	4	7	42
1-24%	3	4	2	3	3	2	2	19

Trace the numbers diagonally (3 second grade students in the first quartile last year, 4 third grade students in the first quartile this year; three third grade students last year, two fourth grade students this year, etc.). Additional questions raised by this disaggregation – comparison of two years of data – could include:

8. Who are the students who moved out of the bottom quartile?
9. Who are the students who moved into the bottom quartile?
10. What interventions seem to have the greatest impact on student learning?
11. What students have remained in the bottom quartile? Why?
12. [similar questions for students in the fourth (top) quartile]

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix B-4
Disaggregation and Analysis of Test Results: Student Growth Over Time

Using the online resources provided by your testing company, graph (ideally) five years of student growth. At a minimum, longitudinal graphs for ELA and Math for the current 5th through 8th grade students should be created. Growth scores could include standard scores or grade equivalents. Scaled scores can also be used to indicate growth, although the interpretation of growth is more difficult with scaled scores since scaled scores are not equal interval scores like standard scores or grade equivalents and cannot be plotted on a straight line.

Disaggregation of data can be external or internal. External disaggregation can compare the school's longitudinal data (e.g., 5 years of growth data for current 8th grade students in Math) with Arch/diocesan data, national Catholic school data, school cluster data or school cohort data, etc. Check with your local WCEA Elementary Commissioner to determine what data is available and/or what disaggregate comparison is preferred.

Internal disaggregation can compare groups within the school. Groups could include a comparison of an entire class (e.g., the 8th grade) with a subset of this group (e.g., 8th grade students who are in the band). Most common internal disaggregation is by gender or race. For example, longitudinal graphs for 8th grade boys and 8th grade girls in Math could be used for disaggregation; or the 8th grade class longitudinal growth could be compared to the longitudinal growth for Hispanic students in the 8th grade. One overlooked disaggregation is for students who have been attending your Catholic school since Kindergarten with those who entered in 6th grade. The purpose of this disaggregation is a comparison of two groups to determine what curricular changes could help the lower scoring group.

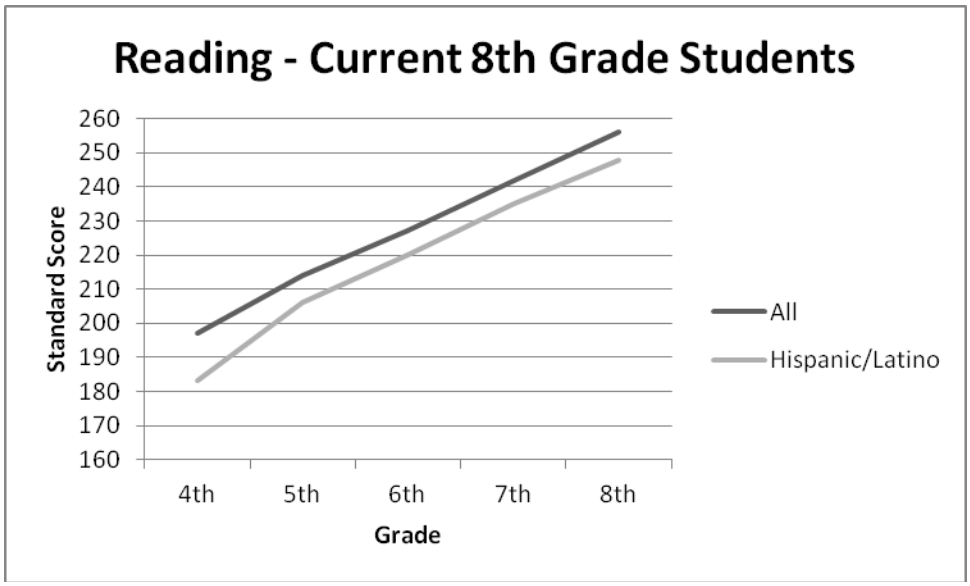
Repeat as needed for the curricular area under study.

1. What disaggregate groups are being compared? Why?
2. What statistically significant differences are displayed in the data?
3. What is/could be the cause of the difference? Are there trends?
4. What can be done to improve student learning?
5. What impact will this have on the budget?

Examples of Longitudinal Data Analysis

The following combined graph was created in a spreadsheet using data from the standardized testing company. An option would be to create two separate graphs (one for All students, one for Hispanic/Latino students) and copy/paste the graphs onto a single page. The information is the same, only the display changes. Which is easier for you to read and comprehend?

Reading	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
All	197	214	227	242	256
Hispanic/Latino	183	206	220	235	248



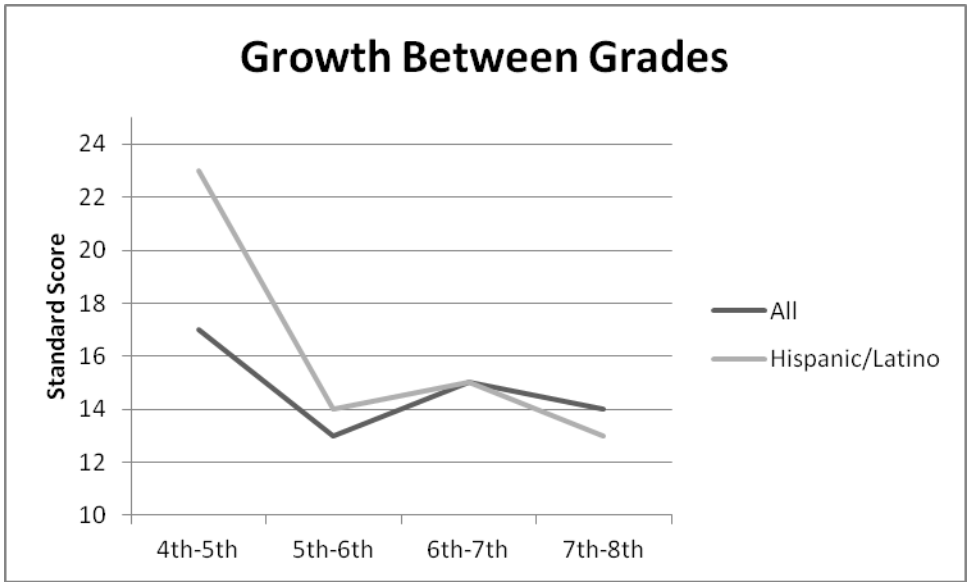
This graph disaggregates the students internally. One group is "all students" the other group is the Hispanic/Latino students. They are compared according to their standard scores at each grade level. The Hispanic/Latino students do not appear to score as highly as the entire class. The Hispanic/Latino students appear to have made significant growth between the 4th Grade and the 5th Grade, lowering the gap from 14 points to 8 points.

1. Why don't the Hispanic/Latino students score as well in Reading compared to the entire class.
2. What caused the significant narrowing of the gap between 4th and 5th grades?
3. Why wasn't this narrowing of the gap continued between 5th and 6th, etc.?

NOTE: In this particular example, which uses real data, the Hispanic/Latino students scored below national norms in 4th grade, at or slightly above national norms in grades 5-7, and well above national norms in 8th grade. If the disaggragation was to compare them to the nation, they are doing well in this school. But compared to the class, their scores should be better. Choosing which groups to compare is an essential part of disaggregation of data.

Another way of displaying the data shown on the previous page would be to look at the growth that has taken place between two successive grades. That data and graph is shown below. Once again, this is created in a spreadsheet. Different testing companies may have similar displays showing growth.

Growth Between Grades	4th-5th	5th-6th	6th-7th	7th-8th
All	17	13	15	14
Hispanic/Latino	23	14	15	13



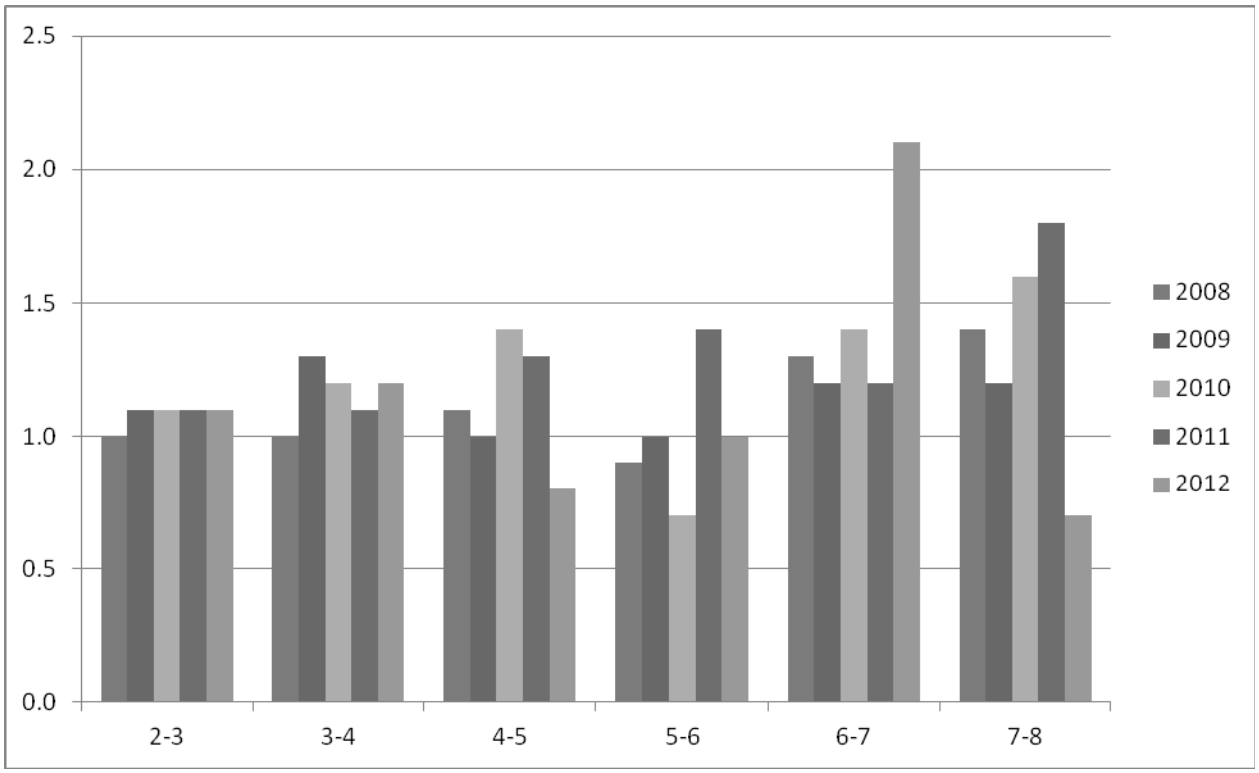
1. From this chart, it is apparent that the Hispanic/Latino growth in reading scores between 4th and 5th grades was about 33% greater than all other students. Why?
2. Why wasn't this growth sustainable?
3. How does the average growth between 5th and 8th grade (13-15 points for both groups) compare to average growth in the nation?
4. Does the current 7th grade display the same growth patterns between 4th and 5th grade? (The answer to this question is not available from the data shown above. It would require additional data and graphs from the online display or from a created spreadsheet. Actual data is listed in the table below.)

Growth Between Grades	3rd-4th	4th-5th	5th-6th	6th-7th
All	19	18	12	18
Hispanic/Latino	14	20	9	24

5. The current 7th grade did not experience the same 33% growth in 4th grade that was experienced by the 8th grade. However, they did experience that growth rate in 6th grade. What could account for that large increase in standard scores?

Hispanic/Latino was chosen as a sub-group because their numbers are large enough to give statistically significant results.

A final example of internal disaggregation of longitudinal data is between cohorts. Cohorts below are displayed by color, and by position (the first bar in each set is from the cohort that graduated in 2008, the second bar is from the cohort that graduated in 2009, etc. Once again, separate charts may be printed out from online displays of data, or the charts may be created within a spreadsheet displaying all data in a single chart.



Discussion questions for this data could include:

1. What disaggregate groups are being compared? Why?
2. What statistically significant differences are displayed in the data?
3. What is/could be the cause of the difference? Are there trends?
4. What can be done to improve student learning?
5. What impact will this have on the budget?

REMEMBER: the point of longitudinal data is to display growth over time to discover trends and explore causes for those trends. Other types of charts available from testing companies (scatter grams, bubble charts, etc.) may also be useful for the school. Check with your Elementary Commissioner to see what other types of charts/graphs are available for your use.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix B-5
Analysis of Disaggregate Test Results

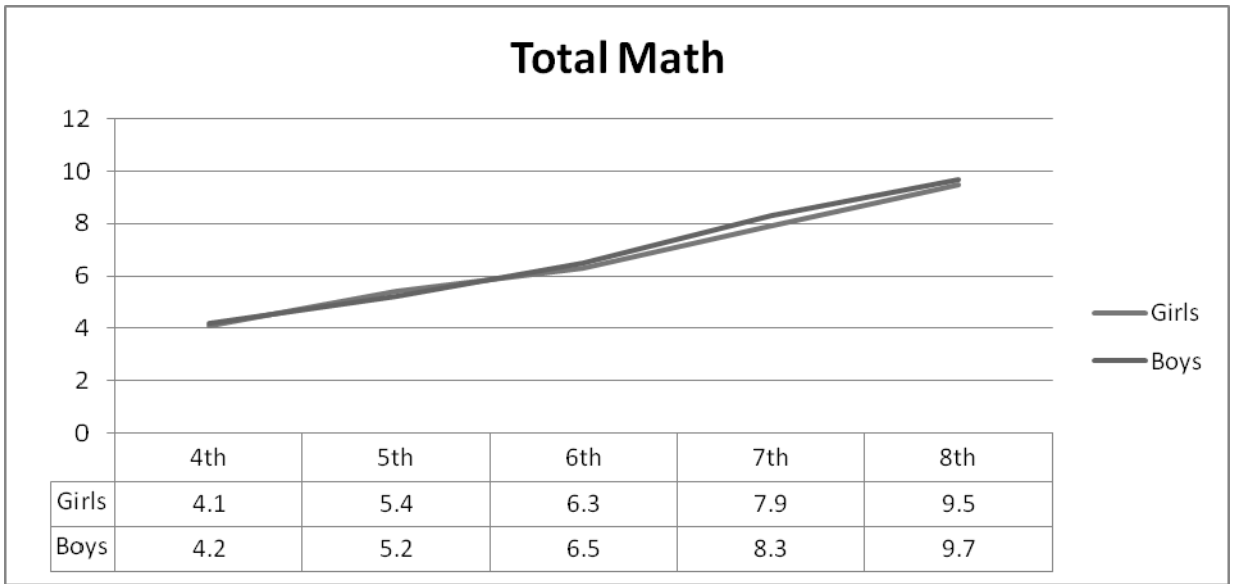
Throughout this Self Study, your school is being asked to disaggregate data, analyze the data, identify trends, and respond by developing goals to support high achievement of all students. Previous parts of this appendix have asked you to compare the number of students in each quartile with Arch/diocesan numbers (B-3) or look at curriculum areas (subtests) over time (B-4). This template asks you to identify disaggregate groups of students and compare the groups over time (e.g., compare the progress made by girls vs. boys in a given class for the past 5 years, etc.). The purpose of these graphs/charts is to identify whether the disaggregate group is making adequate progress over time.

The table below could be used to compare to groups – A & B (e.g., boys and girls). Schools should identify a subject and put it in the box marked "Subject". Five years of testing are placed in the first column (e.g., 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). The appropriate score (GE, %, Stanine, SS,) of the school's choice is placed for students in the disaggregate group in the appropriate boxes (e.g., 2A could be the % for second grade boys for each of 5 years, while 2 B could be the % for second grade girls for the same years).

Schools are encouraged to create their own tables and charts to be used here. The questions on the following page are meant to help the school analyze the data.

Subject	2A	2B	3A	3B	4A	4B	5A	5B	6A	6B	7A	7B	8A	8B
20__														
20__														
20__														
20__														
Current														

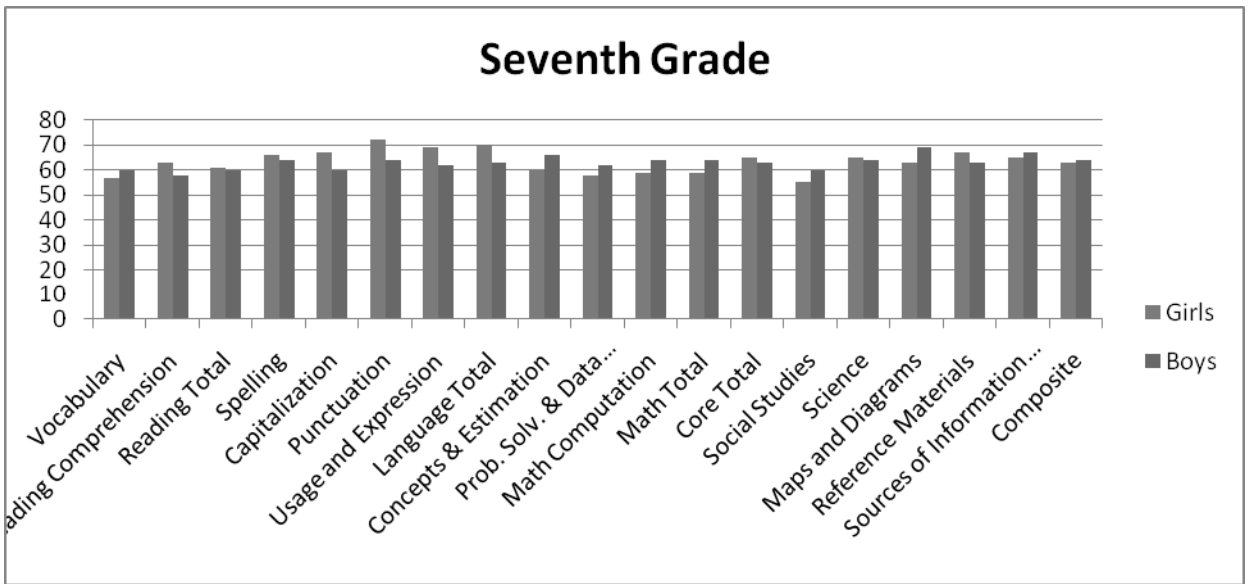
A school may wish to use longitudinal graphs to track disaggregate classes over time. For example, the sample graph below compares girls and boys, currently in the 8th grade, over time. Grade Equivalents are the basis for this graph. The chart and graph show that boys in this class do slightly better, but not significantly so, in Math. A question raised by this graph is what happened in the fifth grade that caused the girls to fall behind the boys?



	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th
Girls	4.1	5.4	6.3	7.9	9.5
Boys	4.2	5.2	6.5	8.3	9.7

Another way to make comparisons is to compare the disaggregate groups for a single grade across all the tests in a single year. This graph uses the subtests from the Iowa Tests of Basic

Skills (ITBS) for the seventh grade. The scores posted are the NPR (percentile) scores. The graph below shows that seventh grade boys have a slightly better vocabulary, but the girls are better at reading and language arts. Girls are listed first (the left bar in each pair).



Discussion questions for data analysis:

1. What disaggregate groups are being compared? Why?
2. What statistically significant differences are shown in the graphs and charts?
3. Is each disaggregate group making appropriate annual growth?
4. How can the school improve test scores for the lower disaggregate group?
5. What is the most significant difference between the groups?
6. How does this information impact the school's budget?

<u>The issue in Appendix B isn't what chart you use or how it is displayed, but how did you disaggregate the data, analyze the data, and **use the data to drive curricular change to improve student learning!**</u>

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix C-1
School Surveys – Staff Survey

Scale Definition:
HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; IE = Ineffective

Religious Instruction/Faith Formation	HE	E	SE	IE
There is a spirit of Christian community among faculty, parents, and students.				
The Catholic faith is clearly a priority among administration and staff.				
Prayers are said at various times throughout the school day.				
Traditions of the Catholic faith are taught in every grade.				
Religion certification and renewal is essential to every teacher.				
Staff have multiple opportunities for personal faith formation and growth				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

School Management/Principal	HE	E	SE	IE
I have an adequate voice in decisions that affect my area of responsibility.				
I understand and support the mission and philosophy of the school.				
I have a clear, written job description.				
I understand the importance of the SLEs as an outgrowth of the mission and philosophy.				
I base my instruction upon curriculum standards.				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

Parental Involvement	HE	E	SE	IE
Parents are supportive and helpful to the teachers.				
The communication among administration, faculty, and parents is good.				
Parents participate in fundraising activities and other school sponsored events.				

School Environment and Safety	HE	E	SE	IE
Disaster drills are held regularly.				
I understand my responsibility for student safety in and outside the classroom.				
My classroom has a pleasant, welcoming, Catholic environment.				
The positive environment enables teachers to be role models for the students.				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

Discipline/Student Behavior	HE	E	SE	IE
The student discipline policy treats everyone fairly and justly.				
Student discipline is handled evenly and fairly for all students.				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

Staff Development	HE	E	SE	IE
I receive regular and periodic formal evaluations that contribute to my growth as an educational professional.				
I get the support I need to do my job effectively.				
I have the appropriate materials/equipment to do my job effectively.				
I have access to the technology I need to effectively prepare my students for high school and beyond.				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

School Reputation	HE	E	SE	IE
The school receives positive publicity.				
The school has a good reputation in the community				
I contribute to the good reputation of the school				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

Please use additional space as needed for your suggestions.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix C-2
School Surveys – Parent Survey

Please circle the grades in which your children are enrolled:

PK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

How many years have your children attended this school? _____

Do you have children who have previously graduated from the school? _____

If yes, how well do you feel they were prepared for high school? _____

_____

_____

Please rank the reasons you send your children to this school. #1 is your most important reason for sending your child. You may add other reasons in the space provided.

Academic Excellence	
Catholic Faith Formation	
Catholic Values	
Discipline	
Location	
Safe Environment	
Other:	
Other:	

What do you like best about the school? _____

_____

What improvements would you like to see for the school? _____

_____

What makes this school a Catholic school? _____

_____

Curriculum and Instruction

How would you rate the education your children are receiving in the following subjects:
(HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; IE = Ineffective)

Subject	HE	E	SE	IE
Religion				
Family Life				
Mathematics				
Reading/Literature				
English/Language Arts				
Science				
Social Studies				
Computers				
Music				
Physical Education				
Art				
Other Languages				

If improvement is needed, please list your suggestions: _____

_____

_____

_____

Do you think the academic demands of the school on your child are:

___ too much ___ too easy ___ about right

Comments? _____

_____

Do you think the homework demands of the school on your child are:

___ too much ___ too easy ___ about right

Comments? _____

_____

What could be added to the curriculum to help meet your child's needs? _____

_____

Catholic Faith Formation

My child/children is/are receiving a solid religious education in the following ways:

Component	Yes	No	Somewhat	N/A
Providing an atmosphere in which Christian values and attitudes are emphasized and practiced.				
Teaching of basic facts of the faith				
Providing prayer opportunities				
Providing Scripture experience				
Teaching human development and Christian sexuality				
Making holy days and the Church Year meaningful				
Providing liturgies for children with student input				
Providing preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist				
Providing opportunities for parents to help their children grow in faith				
Providing opportunities for parents to grow in their own faith				

Would you like to see anything added to the religious education component of your children's education?

_____

Catholic Identity

My child/children is/are receiving a solid religious education in the following ways:

Component	Yes	No	Somewhat	N/A
The school has a mission statement and philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.				
The school provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments.				
The school's Religion curriculum is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings.				
Teachers are certified as catechists by the Arch/diocese.				
The school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children.				
The school has a service-oriented outreach to Church and the civic community.				
The school makes frequent use signs, sacramentals (e.g., rosaries, crucifixes, etc.), traditions and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.				
School personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.				

Comments? _____

_____

Teachers and Staff

Do you feel that the teachers and staff are easily accessible?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

Should the occasion arise, would you feel comfortable discussing a problem with the principal or faculty member?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

In our school, do teachers provide frequent feedback to students and parents concerning academic progress?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

School Environment

Do you feel that the morale of students in our school is good?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

Do most of the students and teachers in our school respect each other and have good working relationships?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

Do most of the parents and teachers in our school respect each other and have good working relationships?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

What do you think about the discipline in the school? _____

_____

_____

_____

Communications

Do you read the school bulletin?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

Do you feel that the school bulletin keeps you informed of the school's activities?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

Do your children inform you of school activities or problems?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

How could your school better communicate with you? _____

_____

_____

Plant and Facilities

Is your school kept neat and clean for your children?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

Do you feel that your children are safe at your school?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Somewhat

What are the positive features of our physical plant and facilities?

_____

_____

What would you like to see improved? _____

_____

_____

General

Do you have any general comments or suggestions about how the school can improve student learning focused on high achievement of all students? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix C-3
School Surveys – Student Survey
Grades K-3

I am in: ___ Kindergarten ___ 1st Grade ___ 2nd Grade ___ 3rd Grade

I have been in this school: ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 years.

When I am at school, I feel:	☺ Strongly Agree	☺ Agree	Neutral	☹ Disagree	☹ Strongly Disagree
I am safe.					
I have fun learning.					
I like this school.					
I have choices in what I learn.					
I have time to pray.					
I learn about being Catholic					
My teacher treats me with respect.					
My teacher cares about me.					
My teacher gives me extra help.					
My principal cares about me.					
I am recognized for good work.					
The work I do in class makes me think.					
I am a good student.					
I can be a better student.					
I behave well at school.					
Students are treated fairly.					
Students are friendly.					
I have many friends.					
My family wants me to do well.					

What do you like about your school?

What do you wish were different at this school?

What else would you like to share about your school?

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix C-4
School Surveys – Student Survey
Grades 4-8

I am in: ___4th Grade ___5th Grade ___6th Grade ___7th Grade ___8th Grade

I have been in this school: ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5 ___6 ___7 ___8 ___9 years.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel challenged in this school.					
I feel like I belong at this school.					
I feel like I am in charge of what I learn.					
I understand how to apply what I learn at school to real-life situations.					
The teachers encourage me to assess the quality of my work.					
I am treated with respect by the teachers.					
I am treated with respect by the principal.					
I am treated with respect by the other students in school.					
I find the work is challenging me.					
I feel successful in my classes.					
Doing well in school makes me feel good about myself.					
I am doing my best in school.					
Students at this school have opportunities to learn from each other.					
Participating in extracurricular activities is important to me.					
Students at this school respect other students who are different than they are.					
My Religion classes help me to learn about my faith.					
I have the opportunity to participate in school liturgies.					
Opportunities are provided for Christian service.					

My Teachers:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Expect students to do their best.					
Expect me to do my best.					
Are understanding when students have personal problems.					
Set high standards for achievement in their classes.					
Help me gain confidence in my ability to learn.					
Have confidence in me.					
Know me well.					
Listen to my ideas.					
Care about me.					
Make learning enjoyable.					
Are excited about what they teach.					
Give me individual attention when I need it.					
Challenge me to do better.					
Support the development of my faith.					
Talk about curriculum standards.					
Connect lessons to SLEs.					
Use test scores to alter lessons.					
In my classes, time is spent:	All the time	Most of the time		Some of the time	Rarely
Listening to the teacher talk.					
In whole-class instruction.					
Working in small groups.					
Reading.					
Answering questions from a book or worksheet.					
Working on projects or research.					
Doing work that I find meaningful.					
Using computers.					
I work well when:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I am working on projects or research.					
The teacher is leading a discussion with the whole class					
I am working in a small group.					
I am working by myself.					

What do you like about your school? _____

_____

What do you wish were different at this school? _____

_____

Appendix C-5
School Surveys – Pastor/School Board/Parent Association Officers

Describe the role of the school in the parish community life.

_____

_____

Describe your role in helping to maintain and deepen the Catholic character and atmosphere (Catholic Identity) of the school.

_____

_____

Evaluate the teaching of Religion in your school in terms of:

a. Amount of time given to the actual religious instruction
b. Content of the program
c. Theological/catechetical preparation of teachers
d. Formation of responsible Catholics

_____

_____

Do you have any suggestions for improvements in any of these areas?

_____

_____

Describe the pastor's role in the hiring and termination of staff.

_____

_____

Describe the frequency and effectiveness of your communications with the principal.

Describe the role and function of the school board.

How effective is the school board on supporting high achievement of all students?

Describe the degree of parental involvement in the school.

How effective are parents in supporting high achievement of all students?

Describe how the school's mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations define the school's purpose and are a lived reality of the school.

Describe the role of the Pastor, school board, and parent association in an annual budget process.

List the school's most effective areas for supporting high achievement for students.

List the school's greatest area for improvement

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix C-6
School Surveys – Catholic Identity Assessment Guide

Should be completed by Pastor, administration, staff, school board, and other appropriate shareholders (e.g., student council, parent association, alumni, parishioners, etc.)

"From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illuminated by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics. The Council summed this up by speaking of an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom." *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome, 1988

Purpose:
This *Catholic Identity Assessment Guide* incorporates a vision of the Catholic character of the school within an assessment and review process designed to identify strengths and target areas for growth. The focus of this assessment process is to build on the strengths within the school while affirming and encouraging efforts to live out the Catholic character in all aspects of the school's life.

Accreditation Factor:
The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.

Catholic Identity Standards:
1. **Mission & Philosophy:** The school's mission and philosophy statements reflect the integration of our faith into all aspects of school life.
2. **Prayer & Sacraments**: The whole school community is involved in a variety of prayer experiences. Sacramental reception is scheduled on a regular basis. Students and staff have opportunities to participate in a spiritual retreat.
3. **Curriculum**: The Religion curriculum is based on Arch/diocesan standards, assessments are connected to the standards and progress reporting is based on the standards. Any texts used by the teachers meet USCCB requirements.
4. **Catechist Certification**: All who teach Religion have valid, current catechist certification, or are in the process of obtaining such certification within the timeline established by the Arch/diocese.
5. **Parents as Partners**: The school maintains an active partnership with parents in the education of their children.
6. **Service**: Students have opportunities to provide service to the parish, school and civic communities.
7. **Signs and Sacramentals**: Signs and symbols of our Catholic faith are prominently displayed throughout the school. Catholic traditions and practices are observed throughout the year at appropriate times.
8. **Evangelization:** All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

Scale Definition:
HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; IE = Ineffective

1. MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

"Catholic schools are called to a renewal of purpose, and some reorganization. The goals appropriate to today's Catholic educational effort … (include) the need to prepare young men and women to be witnesses to faith during an era of instability and at the same time to act as agents of creative institutional change for which adequate models hardly exist. While the Christian purpose of the Catholic school must always be clearly evident, no one form is prescribed for it." (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, NCCB, 1972, #123)

"Our young people are the Church of today and tomorrow. It is imperative that we provide them with schools ready to address their spiritual, moral, and academic needs." (*Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, USCCB, 2005, p. 8)

Standard: The school has a mission statement and a philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.

__ The mission statement clearly indicates the relationship of the school to its parent body (e.g., the parish or religious congregation).
__ The mission statement and philosophy are prominently displayed in the front office, every classroom, and the parish offices.
__ The mission statement and philosophy are included in relevant school documents such as handbooks, websites, etc.
__ The mission statement and philosophy are often quoted in relevant school publications such as the parent/student/staff handbooks, school newsletters, registration materials, etc.
__ The principal/admissions officer talks about the school's mission and philosophy when interviewing prospective students and their families.
__ The principal (and pastor) discuss the mission and philosophy of the school with prospective teachers, aides, employees, volunteers (especially coaches) etc. before hiring them/bringing them on board.
__ Policy established by the school board is based upon, and quoted from the mission and/or philosophy.
__ Strategic Plan/School Improvement Plan/Action Plan is based upon, and often quotes from the mission and/or philosophy.
__ Parents and students, teachers and staff can paraphrase the mission statement if not quote it exactly.

2. PRAYER AND SACRAMENTS

"Within such (school) communities teachers and pupils experience together what it means to live a life of prayer, personal responsibility and freedom reflective of Gospel values." (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, #107)

"In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, United States Catholic Conference, 1994, #2565)

"Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within the Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, United States Catholic Conference, 1994, #1269)

Standard: The school provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments.

__ All children have the opportunity to attend Mass weekly.
__ All staff celebrate Mass with the children.
__ Children have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.
__ Every class has a 'prayer corner' with religious imagery.
__ Teachers pray with their students often during the day.
__ Students experience a variety of prayer forms including memorized and spontaneous prayer.
__ Students feel/are free to pray for special intentions (e.g., parents, family members, pets, etc.)
__ Parents are responsible for teaching their children various memorized prayers as outlined by the school.
__ Students have opportunities to experience some of the traditional forms of prayer and worship such as Benediction, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Stations of the Cross, Rosary, etc.
__ There are special prayer events throughout the year (e.g., blessing of animals, blessing of throats, etc.)
__ The school has a special celebration to recognize its patron saint.
__ Special attention is paid to the liturgical cycle of the church.
__ Children are encouraged to attend Mass on the weekend.

3. CURRICULUM

"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. … Above all, according to the Holy Father, the Catholic school helps in achieving a double objective: 'of its nature it guides men and women to human and Christian perfection, and at the same time helps them to become mature in their faith. For those who believe in Christ, these are two facets of a single reality.'" (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, The Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, #34, quoting *Insegnamenti*, VIII/1, pp. 618 f.)

"As we, the Catholic bishops of the United States, and the entire Catholic community continue our journey through the twenty-first century, it remains our duty to model the Person of Jesus Christ, to teach the Gospel, and to evangelize our culture." (*Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, USCCB, 2005, p. 14)

"But (the Catholic school's) proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through Baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith. (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

Standard: The school uses a Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings, and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB.

__ The school's written curriculum includes Catholic values infused throughout 'secular' curricular areas (e.g., when discussing the American Civil War values of human rights and economic justice are central to the discussion).
__ Reference to relevant Church documents is made throughout the curriculum. For example, reference could be made to *U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979* when talking about racism in society, or reference to *Civility in Media, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops* when talking about communications and the role of media in society.
__ Religion textbooks that are used are in compliance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and approved for use within the diocese by the Local Ordinary.
__ Sacramental preparation is according to the guidelines of the Local Ordinary.
__ The school uses a standards-based Religion curriculum that has been approved by the local Ordinary.
__ The teachers understand the mission of the Church and make a special effort to educate the whole child, using a variety of teaching methods and strategies that help the student to "order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation." (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

4. CATECHIST CERTIFICATION

"The church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks for before Christ ascended to his father after His resurrection, He gave the apostles a final command – to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded. He thus entrusted them with the mission and the power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of Life. He also entrusted them with the mission and the power to explain with authority what He had taught them, His words and actions, His signs and commandments. And He gave them the spirit to fulfill this mission." (*Catechesi Tradendae*, #1)

"The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions. The formation of personnel will allow the Gospel message and living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire life of the school community and thus be faithful to the school's evangelizing mission." (*Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, USCCB, 2005, pp. 9-10)

"Teachers realize that their first responsibility is to be attentive to their own relationship with Jesus Christ. Every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus." (*Evangelization in the Catholic School*, Archdiocese of Baltimore, p 6)

"But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world." (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

Standard: The formation of teachers for catechetical and instructional competence is ongoing.

__ All teachers have current catechist certification according to local Arch/Diocesan norms, or are in the process of obtaining such catechist certification.
__ Administration (pastor/priests and principal) provide ongoing faith formation activities for teachers as routine part of teacher in-service.
__ Staff, as a staff, participate in annual retreat days and other activities that help build a faith community among the staff.
__ Staff meetings include time for prayer and time for discussion about Religion, Catholic values, and the faith formation of the entire school community (parents, students, staff).

5. PARENTS AS THE PRIMARY EDUCATORS

"Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence, the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship him and to love their neighbor." (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #3)

Standard: The school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children.

__ Parents are identified as the primary educators in appropriate school documents (e.g., mission statement, handbooks).
__ The school provides formal opportunities for parents to learn about their role as primary educators.
__ A formal, institutionalized part of annual parent-teacher conferences is a discussion of the child's spiritual growth and development.
__ Administration encourages teachers to meet with parents outside of the annual parent-teacher conferences to discuss the faith formation activities of the school.
__ Administration provides opportunities for parents to meet and talk about the faith formation of their children.
__ Every newsletter contains one or more articles related to the faith formation of children.
__ Parents are involved in the faith formation of their children, and their successes (e.g., helping children memorize prayers) is reported back to the parents.

6. SERVICE

"More than any other program of education sponsored by the Church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and obligation to be unique, contemporary, and oriented to Christian service … oriented to Christian services because it helps students acquire skills, virtues, and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others." (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, USCCB, 1972, #106)

"The laity can also feel called, or be in fact called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1997, #910)

Standard: The school helps students develop a service-oriented outreach to the Church and civic community after the example of Jesus who said, "I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." (John 13:15)

__ Service opportunities are rooted in Catholic values – that students and faculty provide service because that is a hallmark of Catholicism, not because it is a graduation requirement.
__ Students are expected to complete a minimum number of service hours each year.
__ Students are expected to provide a clearly defined portion of these service hours by providing service to their parish of registry.
__ Service opportunities are organized by school staff and are age appropriate.
__ Students voluntarily participate in service opportunities for which they receive no credit toward school-mandated service.
__ Service opportunities are an overt expression of the Themes of Catholic Social Teaching (Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; and Care for God's Creation).

7. SIGNS AND SACRAMENTALS

"Sacramentals are instituted for the sanctification of certain ministries of the Church, certain states of life, a great variety of circumstances in Christian life, and the use of many things helpful to man." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1668)

Standard: There is widespread use of signs, sacramentals, traditions and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the school.

__ Every classroom has clearly displayed crucifixes.
__ Other religious imagery exists in classrooms and throughout the school.
__ Quotations from Church documents (e.g., *Gravissimum Educationis*, *To Teach as Jesus Did*), inspired writers (e.g., Thomas Merton, Joan Chittister) etc. are found in handbooks, on bulletin boards, in lesson plans, etc.
__ Students participate in a variety of traditions and rituals of the Church, e.g., May crowning, Advent Wreath prayers, daily Angelus, etc.
__ Students have opportunities and are encouraged to participate in prayer, traditions and rituals.

8. EVANGELIZATION

"Although every ministry in a parish is an evangelizing ministry, Catholic schools have a unique opportunity and a grave responsibility to evangelize. One of the reasons for the Church's influence on the Christian formation of Americans is her vast presence in the field of education … the large number of Catholic schools makes possible a wide-ranging evangelizing effort, as long as there is a clear will to impart a truly Christian education." (*Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II, #18)

Standard: All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

__ The principal builds a faith community that is welcoming, prayerful and makes a clear statement that this is a Catholic faith setting.
__ Prayer permeates the school. It is not limited to morning announcements.
__ Teachers bring Gospel values into their ordinary teaching experiences.
__ The school provides ongoing opportunities for faith formation for students, parents and staff.
__ Teachers realize that their first responsibility is to be attentive to their own relationship with Jesus Christ.
__ In every religion class, the teacher attempts to connect faith with life.
__ The teacher attempts to relate the moral, ethical or spiritual ramifications to each area of study.
__ The school reaches out to parents to engage them in the religious formation of their children in every grade – not just sacramental preparation grades.
__ Members of the school community (students, parents) reach out to the newly baptized through cards and gifts of welcome.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix C-7 – OPTIONAL according to Arch/diocesan norms

School Surveys – Arch/diocesan School Office Survey

Superintendent should give this survey directly to the Visiting Committee Chair and school principal (according to Arch/diocesan guidelines) prior to the accreditation visit.

1. School leadership is committed to school improvement.
   Comments:

2. School is fiscally responsible and adequate resources are available to support high achievement of all students.
   Comments:

3. School has a long range plan which is communicated to shareholders.
   Comments:

4. School has addressed previous critical growth areas.
   Comments:

5. All school structures focus on facilitating achievement for all students.
   Comments:

6. The school acts as an instrument for evangelization where the Gospel message is lived.
   Comments:

7. The school is Catholic providing opportunities for community worship, participation in the sacraments, and promoting service to the community.
   Comments:

8. The school maintains a partnership with parents emphasizing their role as the primary educator.
   Comments:

9. The formation of teachers is ongoing.
   Comments:

10. The school uses the Arch/diocesan curriculum standards in all subject areas.
    Comments:

11. Written In-Depth Studies are completed on an annual basis.
    Comments:

12. The school communicates with all shareholders on a consistent basis.
    Comments:

13 The school provides a variety of opportunities for holistic growth of students.
   Comments:

14. The school builds positive community relationships.
    Comments:

15. School administration, faculty, and staff are positive models of our Catholic faith.
    Comments:

16. The school cooperates with the Arch/diocesan Catholic schools office.
    Comments:

17. The school completes all required annual reports and submits them in a timely manner.
    Comments:

Person completing the form _____Date: _____

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix D
Record of *ISL* Meetings

Date of Meeting: Time of Meeting:

Attach list of participants and their role as a shareholder (e.g., staff, parent, student, etc.)

Kind of Meeting: (Check one … Also, provide identification of the Specific group.)
___ Leadership Team ___ Self Study Committee
___ Other (specify group) _____

Purpose of Meeting: _____ (check the box that corresponds to the purpose)

- ❑ Direct the accreditation process
- ❑ Receive training in the accreditation process
- ❑ Discern and report involvement and collaboration of shareholders in completing the self study
- ❑ Identify causes of trends discovered in completing the school profile
- ❑ Discern and report school progress from the last accreditation visit
- ❑ Discuss and clarify the Catholic identity of the school (3A)
- ❑ Discuss and clarify the purpose of the school (mission, philosophy, SLEs, etc.) (3B)
- ❑ Discuss and clarify the organization/governance structures of the school (3C)
- ❑ Discuss and analyze school data that supports student learning (3D)
- ❑ Discuss and clarify learning expectations (curriculum, SLEs, etc.) of the students (3E)
- ❑ Discuss and clarify instruction to support student learning (3F)
- ❑ Discuss and clarify support structures for student learning (3G)
- ❑ Discuss school resources to support student learning (3H)
- ❑ Identify significant accomplishments for chapter 3-___
- ❑ Identify goals to support student learning for chapter 3-___
- ❑ Write/review/edit the narratives for chapter 3-___
- ❑ Identify critical goals to improve student learning
- ❑ Formulate an action plan to address the critical goals
- ❑ Other_____

Summary of Major Accomplishments/Insights of this Meeting: (bullet format)

-
-
-

Explanatory Notes:

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix E
Self Study Writing Template

Special note on using this template: Highlight sections in red, change the font color to black, and enter text.

Copy pages 111-116 into your word processing program. This section uses Arial and Times New Roman fonts, common to both Macintosh and Windows platforms, and is justified throughout (except for the cover page). Be sure to add a footnote with your school's name, date of publication, and page numbers.

Fonts on the cover page can be reduced in size if your school wishes to incorporate a school logo, graphic or picture on the cover. Some space is already available for inserting graphics.

Writing points are generic and meant to prompt **narrative** writing. The hope of every Visiting Committee is to read a well-written narrative that follows the same writing rules we propose for our students (topic sentences and paragraphs, body, concluding sentences and paragraphs, etc.). The actual questions from *ISL* are not included in the hope that schools won't present a bulleted list of questions and answers.

Special Note: The actual writing template, a Word 97-2003 document, is available on the WCEA website (**http://www.westwcea.org**).

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

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A Self Study for:

[School Code and School Name]
[Address]
[City, State Zip]

Continuous School Improvement Focused On High Achievement Of All Students

[Year of Accreditation]

Preface

[Opening Statement]
[Table of Contents]
[List of School Personnel and positions]

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

A. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

[In a 1-page narrative, describe how your self study took place (the process). See page 34 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not answer the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative.]

B. INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION OF SHAREHOLDERS IN COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY

The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.

[Write a 1- to 2-page narrative describing how your school involves all shareholders in continuous school improvement. See page 36 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not answer the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of evidence as part of the 1-2 pages.]

CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

A. SCHOOL PROFILE (with supporting data)

[In one or two paragraphs, write a brief narrative that summarizes the founding of the school. See page 38 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not answer the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative.]

[Write a 2- to 4-page narrative describing how you use the school profile. See page 38 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not answer the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of evidence as part of the 2-4 pages.]

B. USE OF PRIOR ACCREDITATION FINDINGS TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.

[Write a 1-2 page narrative describing how completion of your prior Action Plan resulted in high achievement for all students. See page 40 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points

directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of evidence as part of the 1-2 pages.]

CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAM

A. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), provides authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the sacraments, and promotes evangelization and service to the community.

[Write a 2- to 4-page narrative describing the school's Catholic Identity. See page 42 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 2-4 pages.]

B. DEFINING THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

[Write a 2- to 4-page narrative describing how your school defines its purpose. See page 44 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 2-4 pages.]

C. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

[Write a 1- to 2-page narrative describing how all organizational structures of the school are focused on high achievement for all students. See page 46 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 1-2 pages.]

D. DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTION TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.

[Write a 3- to 5-page narrative describing how your school analyzes data and uses the analysis to drive curricular change. See page 48 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 3-5 pages.]

E. HIGH ACHIEVEMENT BY ALL STUDENTS TOWARD CLEARLY DEFINED SLES AND CURRICULUM STANDARDS

All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

[Write a 2- to 4-page narrative describing how your school uses SLEs and curriculum standards to ensure high achievement of all students. See page 50 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 2-4 pages.]

F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.

[Write a 2- to 4-page narrative describing how the instructional methodology focused on high achievement for all students. Be sure to include findings from your In-Depth Studies. See page 52 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 2-4 pages.]

G. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

[Write a 1- to 2-page narrative describing the support services available to students to support high achievement of all students. See page 54 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 1-2 pages.]

H. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

[Write a 2- to 4-page narrative describing the school's resources and how they are managed to focus on high achievement of all students. See page 56 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, goals, and evidence as part of the 2-4 pages.]

CHAPTER 4 –ACTION PLAN

A. DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN WITH THE SELF STUDY FINDINGS

The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

[List your significant accomplishments, significant goals, and critical goals according to the directions on *ISL* page 58. Use the template provided in *ISL* Appendix F to create your Action Plan with 3 goals (one of which comes from your most recent In-Depth Study) according to the directions on *ISL* page 59 and following the outline on page 60.]

B. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN

The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.

[Write a 1- to 2-page narrative describing your capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students. See page 62 of *ISL* for writing points. Do not address the points directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of evidence as part of the 1-2 pages.]

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____**School**

Goal #1: (from Chapter 3-__) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #1	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____**School**

Goal #1: (from Chapter 3-__) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #2 (add strategies as needed)	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____**School** **School Code**_____

Goal #2: (from Chapter 3-__) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #1	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____**School** **School Code**_____

Goal #2: (from Chapter 3-__) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #2 (add strategies as needed)	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____**School** **School Code**_____

Goal #3: (from In-Depth Study) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #1	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____School

Goal #3: (from In-Depth Study) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #2 (add strategies as needed)	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-1 – Landscape Mode
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for _____**School** **School Code**_____

Goal #1: (from Chapter 3-__) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

Strategy #	Activity #	Cost or Resources & Sources	Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Process For Monitoring	Baseline Assessment	Ongoing Assessment	Timeline Start/Stop	Process for Communicating to Shareholders

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-2
Action Plan Timeline

The purpose of this form is to ensure that the school is not stressed by trying to accomplish too much at one time, i.e., use too many of the school's financial or personnel resources during the same limited time period. The data for this form comes from the Action Plan. If too many things are happening at the same time, the school should revise its Action Plan to spread out the use of resources. Complete this form and consider the impact each month/year will have on staff and budgets.

Month/Year	Goal	Strategy or Activity	Cost	Person Responsible	Other

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix F-3
Action Plan for St. Sample School

Goal #1: (from Chapter 3-E) To improve student writing.

Rationale for this Goal: Based on teacher and parent surveys, we have identified writing as a goal area. St. Sample students must be able to present ideas and information in writing. These written pieces must effectively address audience and purpose using standard writing conventions.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: St. Sample students are effective communicators. (SLE A1)

Strategy # 1	Collect baseline assessment data.
Activities	1. Research writing assessment tools. 2. Create writing rubrics for the school. 3. Create standard grade-level writing questions. 4. Use rubrics to assess student writing sample based on the questions.
Cost or Resources & Sources	1. Internet, publishers ($100 for books on writing) – operating budget. 2-3. Time for work. School day or after school. No cost – this is part of a teacher's responsibilities. 4. Class time – no cost.
Person Responsible For Implementation	1. Principal/Leadership Team 2-3. Committee of Language Arts teachers. 4. Classroom teachers
Process For Monitoring	1. Principal/Leadership Team will present results at a faculty meeting. 2-3. Committee presentation at faculty meetings. 4. Lesson Plans
Baseline Assessment	None – being created
Ongoing Assessment	Annual administration of the baseline assessment tool at each grade level.
Timeline Start/Stop	1. August-October of current school year to research writing assessment tools. 2-3. October-March of current school year to create rubrics 3. March-June of current school year to create grade-level writing prompts. 4. September of each year – ongoing accumulation of baseline data.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	Rubrics, when completed, will be shared with parents and students. Student work will be graded by rubrics and sent to parents for their review, signature, return and inclusion in the student portfolios. Quarterly reports will be shared with school board.

This is the start of an Action Plan. **GOALS HAVE MULTIPLE STRATEGIES.** Additional strategies under this Goal could include implementation of a writing program such as Step Up To Writing, involving students in writing contests, pen-pals, etc. Each strategy should have multiple activities.

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Appendix F-4
Action Plan for St. Sample School

Goal #2: (from Chapter 3-D) To improve student math computation.

Rationale for this Goal: Based on standardized testing data and text- and teacher-created criterion referenced tests, we have identified improving math computation as a critical goal. Our students score below national norms on most of the standardized test sub-tests involving whole number computation. Many students score poorly on test- and teacher-made tests, and teachers have analyzed the tests to discover that math computation is the source of the mistakes.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: St. Sample students are effective problem solvers. (SLE B3)

Strategy # 1	Provide additional opportunities for students to practice math computation.
Activities	1. Weekly timed computation tests for grades 3-8. 2. Daily oral 'flash card' math facts before recess. 3. Use all computation problems for homework.
Cost or Resources & Sources	1. 10 cases of copy paper ($400) – operating budget. 2. Class time – no cost. 3. Time for work. School day or after school. No cost.
Person Responsible For Implementation	1. Math teachers. 2. Classroom teachers. 3. Students.
Process For Monitoring	1-3. Annual standardized test results, scores on text- and teacher-made tests. 1-3. Quarterly review of all grade levels at faculty meetings.
Baseline Assessment	1-3. Current standardized test results on sub-tests on math computation
Ongoing Assessment	1-3. Annual administration and review of the standardized test results. 1-3. Annual review of text- and teacher-made tests
Timeline Start/Stop	1-3. September of next school year. Ongoing.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	Current test results will be presented to the school board with an annual review. A newsletter will be used to communicate with parents and other shareholders the concern of the school and progress made to address this concern. Individual test results will not be communicated.

GOALS HAVE MULTIPLE STRATEGIES. Additional strategies under this Goal could include curriculum mapping of essential standards, text book review for computation work, finding/purchasing additional workbooks, pairing upper grade/lower grade students for drill, etc.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix G-1
Catholic Identity Ongoing Review

"From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illuminated by the light of faith and having its own unique characteristics. The Council summed this up by speaking of an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom." *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome, 1988

Accreditation Factor #3: Catholic Identity

The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), provides authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the sacraments, and promotes evangelization and service to the community.

Catholic Identity Standards:

1. The school has a mission statement and philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.
2. The school provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments.
3. The school has a Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB.
4. The Local Ordinary approves those who teach the Catholic Faith (Canon 805), and is there ongoing formation for catechetical and instructional competence.
5. The school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children. (Canon 796)
6. The school has a service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community after the example of Jesus Christ who said, "I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." (John 13:15)
7. The school uses signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.
8. All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

Timeline:

Year One: This is the year that the school begins the Self Study (i.e., the school year prior to the WCEA accreditation visit). The school assesses itself on all eight standards of Catholic Identity as indicated in the protocol (Chapter 3-A) using the Discussion Questions and writing points found in the protocol.

Year Two: This is the year that the school has a WCEA accreditation visit. The school does not assesses itself on any Catholic Identity standards.

Year Three: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 4 and 8.

Year Four: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 3 and 6.
Year Five: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 1 and 5.
Year Six: The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 2 and 7. [Note: this should be an internal survey by school staff – not a parent/student survey]

Process

Year One:

The school uses the process outlined in the *Improving Student Learning A Process for Catholic Elementary Schools* protocol, Chapter 3-A. The narrative, conclusions and evidence become a part of the school's Self Study.

Years Three through Five:

Task 1 – Survey Catholic Identity Practices

Using the appropriate part(s) of the instrument found in the *ISL* protocol, Appendix C-6, or an alternate instrument approved by the Arch/diocesan curriculum director, the school surveys its practices under the specific standard(s). As part of this survey, include parents and other shareholders who are not daily participants in the life of the school. You are looking for perceptions by non-school adults about the Catholic Identity of the school.

Task 2 – Write Summative Narrative

Write a concise 1-page narrative summarizing the information about Catholic Identity practices identified through the use of the instrument in Task 1. Be sure to note the perception of 'outsiders' to the Catholic Identity of the school, as well as the perception of shareholders.

What areas need to be addressed in order to promote the Catholic Identity of the School?

1. Identify 1 or 2 significant accomplishments of the school that have had a positive impact on Catholic Identity.
2. Identify 1 strategies, which need to be accomplished, that will have a significant positive impact on Catholic Identity.
3. Discuss the results of your Catholic Identity Assessment Survey with your pastor and school board. Be sure to incorporate his/their input into your Action Plan as appropriate.

Task 3 – Plan (Not an Action Plan – just a way to keep parents informed and involved in the Catholicity of your school)

Create a simplified plan for accomplishing the strategy identified above. Do not use the *ISL* template for this plan. Instead, in a short narrative describe 1) what the school will do to enhance its Catholic Identity, 2) who will be responsible for implementation, 3) how the strategy will be monitored, and 4) how the implementation of the strategy will be communicated to the shareholders.

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Appendix G-2
Catholic Identity Ongoing Review Rubrics by Standard

In order to assist schools with the ongoing review of Catholic Identity, the Highly Effective, Effective, Somewhat Effective, and Ineffective rubrics from Appendix K have been reprinted here by Catholic Identity Standard. A school in Year 4 of the Catholic Identity Ongoing Review, by way of example, could used the survey found in Appendix C-6, Standards 3 and 6, and use the rubrics found on the next page to evaluate the degree to which they meet the standard.

Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity – The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.

Catholic Identity Standards and Associated Rubrics:

1. **Mission & Philosophy:** The school's mission and philosophy statements reflect the integration of our faith into all aspects of school life.

   Highly Effective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements clearly support strong evangelization through the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.

   Effective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements indicate an integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into the school community but not to a level of depth that clearly impacts every aspect of school life.

   Ineffective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements do not reflect integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into the school community.

2. **Prayer & Sacraments**: The whole school community is involved in a variety of prayer experiences. Sacramental reception is scheduled on a regular basis. Students and staff have opportunities to participate in a spiritual retreat.

   Highly Effective Rubric: The total school community is involved in prayer experiences and the reception of the Sacraments on a regularly scheduled basis. The administration provides additional faith formation opportunities for students and school personnel.

   Effective Rubric: Most of the school community is involved in prayer experiences and the reception of the Sacraments on a regular basis. The administration provides prayer and retreat opportunities for students and school personnel.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: While classroom prayer and some opportunities for Eucharistic liturgy are provided, the school community is not engaged in providing a variety of prayer experiences, retreat experiences and liturgies on a regular basis.

Ineffective Rubric: There is no regular schedule or program for prayer and retreat experiences other than classroom prayer and Eucharistic liturgy on special occasions.

3. **Curriculum**: The Religion curriculum is based on Arch/diocesan standards, assessments are connected to the standards and progress reporting is based on the standards. Any texts used by the teachers meet USCCB requirements.

   Highly Effective Rubric: The Religion curriculum and teaching methodology are alive and vibrant in classrooms; aligned with Roman Catholic teachings; approved by the local Ordinary; and meet the requirements set forth by the USCCB.

   Effective Rubric: The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are current with the requirements of the Arch/diocese and the USCCB.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are somewhat current with the requirements of the Arch/diocese and the USCCB.

   Ineffective Rubric: The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are not current or consistent with Arch/diocesan requirements and those of the USCCB.

4. **Catechist Certification**: All who teach Religion have valid, current catechist certification, or are in the process of obtaining such certification within the timeline established by the Arch/diocese.

   Highly Effective Rubric: School personnel are actively engaged in their personal faith journey and adhere to Arch/diocesan catechist certification and renewal requirements.

   Effective Rubric: The school adheres to Arch/diocesan catechist certification and renewal requirements.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: There is a limited program of ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation for school personnel. When available, not all faculty and other school personnel make use of the program.

   Ineffective Rubric: There is no formal program of ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation for school personnel.

5. **Parents as Partners**: The school maintains an active partnership with parents in the education of their children.

   Highly Effective Rubric: There is active partnership on the part of parents in the faith formation of their children.
   Effective Rubric: The administration provides opportunities for parents to meet with teachers regarding the ongoing spiritual and academic formation of their children.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: While parents are encouraged to visit with teachers periodically to keep apprised of their children's progress in their spiritual and academic education, the school provides limited opportunities to do so.

   Ineffective Rubric: The involvement of the parents with the administration and faculty regarding the ongoing spiritual and academic formation of their children is very limited.

6. **Service**: Students have opportunities to provide service to the parish, school and civic communities.

   Highly Effective Rubric: Christian service is highly valued and integrated within the entire school community.

   Effective Rubric The school provides opportunities for service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: There are very limited opportunities provided by the school for service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community.

   Ineffective Rubric: There are no opportunities provided by the school for service-oriented outreach to the Church or civic community.

7. **Signs and Sacramentals**: Signs and symbols of our Catholic faith are prominently displayed throughout the school. Catholic traditions and practices are observed throughout the year at appropriate times.

   Highly Effective Rubric: Religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church permeate the entire school culture.

   Effective Rubric: There is appropriate use of religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church within the school.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: The use of the appropriate religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church is somewhat evident.

Ineffective Rubric: The use of the appropriate religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church is not evident.

8. **Evangelization:** All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

   Highly Effective Rubric: All are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience and there is an observable vibrancy of faith within the total school environment.

   Effective Rubric: Most are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience. The school environment is a testimony to its Catholicity and the development of faith among students.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: Some school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the educational experience.

   Ineffective Rubric: It is not evident that school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix H – Arch/diocesan guidelines could replace this section.

In-Depth Study for ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies

The purpose of the In-Depth Study is for teachers and administrators within a school to look carefully at each curriculum area by reviewing how and to what extent the school's curriculum supports high achievement of all students. An outcome of this process is to identify significant accomplishments that have had a positive impact on student achievement and to identify areas that should be addressed to increase student learning. After reviewing the curriculum area, an action plan is created, implemented and monitored in relation to the impact on student learning.

The following tasks should be completed as a collaborative effort by administration and instructional staff. Administration and staff should devote time throughout the year to discuss curriculum issues (content standards, assessments, research about teaching and methodology, etc.), not just a meeting to 'do' the In-Depth Study.

Each task corresponds to an Accreditation Factor in the *Improving Student Learning* accreditation protocol. The task, as outlined in this In-Depth Study, is focused solely on a curriculum subject and does not cover all *ISL* areas. For example, "**Task 1:**" asks schools to use test scores to describe student performance in mastering the curriculum area being studied. It does not ask schools to analyze enrollment trends, financial trends, etc. as found in *ISL*. Each In-Depth Study will support, but not replace, a section in *ISL* and will assist the school in completing their Self Study when the times comes for school accreditation. However, the purpose of the In-Depth Study is to review and analyze a specific area of the school's curriculum. The entire Accreditation Factor is listed to help schools make the connection between In-Depth Studies and school accreditation.

The last task in this In-Depth Study is to create one goal for the *ISL* Action Plan. The Action Plan will undergo periodic updating depending on how frequently the school undertakes an In-Depth Study. This makes the Action Plan a living document and stresses the importance of the academic curriculum in Catholic elementary schools.

The *Improving Student Learning* protocol contains a variety of forms that may assist schools in completing the In-Depth Study. Appendix B contains a variety of forms meant to be used to analyze standardized and other test data. Schools must use the Action Plan template found in Appendix F of *ISL* to design their goal and strategies for their Action Plan.

NOTE: Check with your local Curriculum Director to determine what subjects should be addressed through an In-Depth Study, and the sequence and timeline during which they should be addressed.

Task 1: Analyzing Curriculum Assessment Data

Read Accreditation Factor #6: Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students – *The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.*

Discussion Questions: *These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.*

- What national, norm-referenced, criteria-referenced, and/or standards-based assessment data is being collected?
- How is this data disaggregated and analyzed?
- What trends exist in this data over the past 3-5 years (see *ISL* Appendix B for some data gathering/analysis forms)?
- What curricular decisions have been made from this assessment data?
- What process is in place to assess changes in assessment data caused by curricular changes?
- What staff development activities, driven by assessment data, are planned to enhance student learning?
- How will staff development activities be analyzed to determine what impact they have on student learning?
- To what extent is purchase of instructional materials, adoption of new programs, etc. based on student achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards?

Write a concise 1-3 page narrative describing how you analyze data as a basis for curricular change. The following points will help you focus on data assessment for curricular change:

- Charts of data for standardized test scores as well as subject area assessments (e.g., Math Diagnostic Testing Program, Writing Assessments, *ISL* Appendix B, etc.)
- Evidence that students are learning including an analysis of test results for the past 3-5 years and identification of trends and possible causes of the trends.
- Disaggregation of data by groups of students and identification of sub-groups that are having difficulty with this area of the curriculum.
- The connection between the assessments and the curriculum standards used by the school. (This is the critical question for schools.)

Conclusion

1. Identify 1-2 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your school's Data Analysis and Action that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1 goal, not strategy, found in your narrative, that needs to be accomplished in the area of Data Analysis and Action which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 1-3 page written narrative.

Task 2: Using Curriculum Standards

Read Accreditation Factor #7: High Achievement by All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards – *All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.*

Discussion Questions: *These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.*

- How does the school define and measure acceptable progress for all students in achieving curriculum standards? What is being done/can be done to help all disaggregate groups of students make acceptable progress?
- How is Catholic Identity and faith formation integrated into the total curriculum (e.g., math, reading, science, social studies, physical education, and extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, etc.)?
- How are curriculum standards being used as the foundation for instruction?
- What process is being used by the school to ensure comprehensiveness of the curriculum, i.e., that all important standards are being covered without unnecessary repetition?
- How do the teachers use long range curriculum planning (e.g., curriculum mapping) to ensure continuity of instruction and learning?

Write a concise 1-3 page narrative describing how you use SLEs and curriculum standards to insure high achievement by all students. The following points will help you focus on your use of SLEs and standards:

- Describe the role of Arch/diocesan or state curriculum standards in developing the course of learning for your school.
- How do you define acceptable progress by each student?
- Include a curriculum map for each grade level in this subject area. The curriculum map should include: the standards being taught, focus of the lessons, assessments of learning, and resources and strategies. (The school may wish to consider creating a curriculum map as a strategy for their Action Plan if one does not currently exist.)
- What conclusions can you draw? What is being taught and what are students learning? Does the review of data in Task 2 support these conclusions?

Conclusion

1. Identify 1-2 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your school's Curriculum that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1 goal, not strategy, found in your narrative, that needs to be accomplished in the area of Curriculum which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 1-3 page written narrative.

Task 3: Instructional Methodology

Read Accreditation Factor #8: Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students – *The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.*

Discussion Questions: *These questions are provided to stimulate discussion and help build the "Big Picture" of the school; not to be specifically answered in the narrative. The written narrative should synthesize the information gathered in these discussions, fully address the Accreditation Factor and respond to the writing points.*

- How are formative and summative assessments used to direct and evaluate the instructional/learning process? (e.g., How are your teachers using standardized test scores and other assessment data to differentiate instruction?)
- How does the teaching staff use a variety of instructional techniques to meet the needs of all learners? How is assessment matched to the learning style of the students?
- How effective is the school's supervision and evaluation procedures in order to promote professional growth of staff?
- What has the staff done to increase their knowledge of current research about teaching and learning strategies? What new teaching techniques have been implemented in the school as a result of this research? How does your school use Professional Learning Communities?
- What research-based best practices are being discussed, used, and monitored in your school? What has been their impact on student learning?

Write a concise 1-3 page narrative describing how you use Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement by All Students. The following points will help you focus on your use Instructional Methodology:

- Discuss how best practice strategies are being implemented school-wide in relation to what the research supports about each.
- What professional staff development opportunities have been provided to teachers in the past three years to help them become proficient at teaching this curricular subject?
- What is the evidence of the impact on student learning from this staff development?
- What conclusions can be drawn regarding the implementation of research-based teaching strategies and the impact on student achievement? What evidence supports these conclusions?

Conclusion

1. Identify 1-2 significant accomplishments, found in your narrative, that describe your school's Instructional Methodology that have had a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.
2. Identify 1 goal, not strategy, found in your narrative, that needs to be accomplished in the area of Instructional Methodology which will have a significant positive impact on faith formation and student learning.

PLEASE NOTE: Data and data analysis that leads to your conclusions must be included/referred to in the 1-3 page written narrative.

Task 4: Summarize your Findings

Writing points: *In a **1-page** narrative, respond to the following:*
As a result of analyzing testing data, reviewing the curriculum standards and curriculum map, comparing current teaching strategies with best practices, and analyzing the effectiveness of staff development:

- Identify 3-5 significant accomplishments of the school that have had a positive impact on student learning. What has caused the positive impact? Can it be replicated in another curricular area?
- Identify which goal of the three already listed will have the greatest significant positive impact on student learning. Why?

Task 5: Create an Action Plan

Important: A goal is general, non-specific, and generally not measurable in the sense that there is no end point. For example, "To improve math scores" could be a goal. It is general, does not specify content, and has no measurable end point (you can always improve). "To improve math computation" is more specific, but could still be considered a goal. "To improve math computation of whole numbers by 10% as measured by standardized test results" is a strategy, to practice multiplication math facts daily is an activity.

Create multiple strategies for each goal in the Action Plan. Each strategy must be specific, student-focused, data-driven, challenging, measurable, equitable (all students can succeed), and attainable within a reasonable time frame. A reasonable time frame for an In-Depth Study goal is 1-2 years. Each strategy or activity must include an estimated cost and the source of the funds, who will be responsible for overseeing the strategy, etc. *ISL* Appendix F pp 121-122 contains a template for an In-Depth Study Action Plan. **Remember that your In-Depth Study Goal is Goal #3 of your ISL Action Plan!**

Action Plan for a School

- Goal #3 (a statement of area for improvement based on In-Depth Study)
  - Rationale for the Goal (how accomplishment of the goal will result in high achievement of all students)
  - Alignment with mission, philosophy, Schoolwide Learning Expectations
    - Strategy #1 (description of the strategy)
      - activity #1 (a specific part of strategy #1)
        - cost or other resources needed
        - source of funds/resources (Federal Program funds, operating budget, fundraising, etc.)
        - person responsible for implementation or supervision of strategy
        - process for monitoring (ongoing)
        - assessment (how student learning growth will be measured, with benchmarks)
        - timeline (start and end of strategy)
        - communication to shareholders

In-Depth Study Checklist

___ 1. Choose an area for your In-Depth Study. This may be an area required by the Arch/diocese, or one that you choose based on your needs.
___ 2. Using the templates found in Appendix B of *ISL*, gather assessment data (norm-referenced, criterion referenced, standards-based, benchmarks, etc.) about how well students are learning in this particular curricular area.
___ 3. As a faculty, discuss the Accreditation Factor in Task 1. Reach a consensus on the meaning of the Accreditation Factor. You may wish to use the rubrics in Appendix K of *ISL* to help you with the meaning of this Factor.
___ 4. As a faculty, discuss the Questions found in Task 1. Do not take notes for this initial discussion. Instead you should discuss each prompt so you have a common understanding of what the prompt is asking. In a subsequent discussion, you should take notes regarding the data, trends, information, etc. uncovered in the discussion.
___ 5. An individual teacher (or small committee of 2-3 teachers) should create a narrative that answers the questions in Task 1 using the data from the faculty discussions. Use the same narrative writing techniques that you require of your students. Keep in mind the 1-3 page writing limit for your narrative response.
___ 6. As a faculty, discuss the written narrative for this task to ensure that it answers all of the writing points using the information uncovered in the discussion of the Questions. Edit and revise as necessary.
___ 7. As a faculty, discuss the most significant accomplishments of your school in regard to this Accreditation Factor. List them after the narrative.
___ 8. As a faculty, create one goal for the school to accomplish that will result in a significant improvement in student learning. List it after the narrative.
___ 9. Repeat steps 3-8 for Task 2 and Task 3.
___10. As a faculty, review the three goals you've created. Choose the one whose accomplishment you feel will have the most significant impact on student learning.
___11. Complete the Action Plan template found in Appendix F pp 117-122 of *ISL*.

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Appendix I
In-Depth Study Writing Template

Special note on using this template: Highlight sections in red, change the font color to black, and enter text.

Copy pages 161-164 into your word processing program. This section uses Arial and Times New Roman fonts, common to both Macintosh and Windows platforms, and is justified throughout (except for the cover page). Be sure to add a footnote with your school's name, date of publication, and page numbers.

Fonts on the cover page can be reduced in size if your school wishes to incorporate a school logo, graphic or picture on the cover. Some space is already available for inserting graphics.

Writing points are generic and meant to prompt **narrative** writing. The hope of every Elementary Curriculum Director is to read a well-written narrative that follows the same writing rules we propose for our students (topic sentences and paragraphs, body, concluding sentences and paragraphs, etc.). The actual questions from the In-Depth Study are not included in the hope that schools won't present a bulleted list of questions and answers.

Special Note: The actual writing template, a Word 97-2003 document, is available on the WCEA website (**http://www.westwcea.org**).

In-Depth Study

An In-Depth Study in [insert curricular area here]

by:

[School Code and School Name]
[Address]
[City, State Zip]

Continuous School Improvement Focused On High Achievement Of All Students

[School Year of In-Depth Study]

Preface

[Opening Statement]

TASK 1 – ANALYZING CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT DATA

The school uses educationally sound assessment process to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.

[In a 1-3 page narrative, describe your evidence that students are learning and that there is high achievement of all students. Do not answer the questions in Task 1 directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, and a goal for improvement of student learning, as part of the 1-3 pages.]

TASK 2 – USING CURRICULUM STANDARDS

All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

[In a 1-3 page narrative, describe your evidence that students are making acceptable progress toward clearly defined curriculum standards. Do not answer the questions in Task 2 directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, and a goal for improvement of student learning, as part of the 1-3 pages.]

TASK 3 – INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.

[In a 1-3 page narrative, describe how best instructional practices are being used to support high achievement of student learning. Do not answer the questions in Task 3 directly, but incorporate the answers into a comprehensive narrative. Include a bullet list of significant accomplishments, and a goal for improvement of student learning, as part of the 1-3 pages.]

TASK 4 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

[In a 1-page narrative, identify 3-5 significant accomplishments of the school that have had a positive impact on student learning. Identify what has caused the impact and if this can be replicated in another curricular area. Identify the goal whose accomplishment will have the greatest positive impact on student learning.]

TASK 5 – ACTION PLAN

Action Plan for _____**School** **School Code**_____

Goal #3: (<u>from In-Depth Study</u>) _____

_____

Rationale for this Goal: (how will the accomplishment of this goal increase student achievement?)

_____

_____

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: _____

_____

Strategy #1 (add strategies as needed)	
Activity #	
Cost or Resources & Sources	
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	
Process For Monitoring	
Baseline Assessment	
Ongoing Assessment	
Timeline Start/Stop	
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix J
WCEA Annual Report of Progress

Purpose of the WCEA Annual Report of Progress: To report progress on the school's Action Plan to ensure continuous school improvement focused on high achievement of all students.

These annual reports are filed with the WCEA Elementary Commissioners in each Arch/diocese. A school is expected to follow an Action Plan based on the Self Study and *Report of Findings* that becomes the "road map" to guide the work of the school as it relates to improving student learning. This Action Plan is updated annually and new goals are added as goals are accomplished. In-Depth Study goals are integrated into the school's Action Plan and updated periodically as new In-Depth Studies are completed.

Six Year Cycle of Annual Progress Reports (years coincide with Self Study progress and Catholic Identity surveys):

Year One	Self Study begins, drafts of Chapter 3 due to WCEA Elementary Commissioner by December (Fall visits) or May (Spring visits), Annual Progress Report on Action Plan (check with local WCEA Elementary Commissioner)
Year Two	Year of Visit – revised Action Plan due to WCEA Elementary Commissioner **45 calendar days** after the accreditation visit
Year Three	Annual Progress Report on Action Plan, Refine Action Plan, Update School Profile
Year Four	Annual Progress Report on Action Plan, Refine Action Plan, Update School Profile
Year Five	Annual Progress Report on Action Plan, Review All Progress, Update School Profile, Mid-term Progress report if required, re-visit if required
Year Six	Annual Progress Report on Action Plan, Refine Action Plan, Update School Profile

IMPORTANT: Whenever a goal is added or substantial changes are made to the strategies of a goal, include the new goal (using the template provided in Appendix F-1) with your Annual Progress Report.

See the next page for a template of the WCEA Annual Report of Progress.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

WCEA Annual Progress Report for 20___

Name of School, City:	
Month/year of last accreditation visit:	
Term of accreditation received:	
School year of next visit/revisit:	

1. **Write your Action Plan goal below**.

   If this goal has been added since the original revised Action Plan after your accreditation visit, indicate source of the new goal (e.g., Critical Goal from the Self Study, the goal from In-Depth, curriculum mapping, etc.). Write a short summary for each Action Plan goal describing what has been accomplished this school year. Identify the assessment used to evaluate the impact on student learning.

Action Plan Goal	Source of New Goal	Summary	Assessment of Impact on Student Learning
1.			
2.			
3.			

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Appendix K
Accreditation Factors Rubrics

1. **Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study** – The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning. (Key Self Study Outcome #2; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7; *ISL* Chapter 1-B)

   Highly Effective Rubric: All school instructional staff and other shareholders* are appropriately involved in every aspect of data review, analysis and dialogue regarding perceived significant accomplishments and goals. The Self Study process occurs in a faith environment of ongoing systemic analysis of the school's effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes. (*shareholders—see Key Terminology)

   Effective Rubric: For the most part, school instructional staff and other shareholders are appropriately involved in data review, analysis and dialogue regarding perceived significant accomplishments and goals. The Self Study occurs in an faith environment of ongoing systemic analysis of the school's effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: There is partial involvement of school instructional staff and other shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue to determine significant accomplishments and goals. The Self Study occurs in an environment of limited systemic analysis of the school's effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes.

   Ineffective Rubric: There is very limited involvement of school instructional staff or other shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue to determine significant accomplishments and goals. There is no evidence of an environment of ongoing systemic analysis of the school's effectiveness in the six Key Self Study Outcomes.

2. **Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The school has used the previous accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement. (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7; *ISL* Chapter 2-B)

   Highly Effective Rubric: Ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning permeates the school's culture and clearly drives student learning within a faith environment. All critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee have been addressed successfully which has significantly impacted student learning and has ensured high achievement of all students in relation to faith and academic development.

   Effective Rubric: Ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning is evident within the school's faith culture. The majority of critical goals discovered by the school and

identified by the Visiting Committee have been addressed which has impacted student learning and has ensured high achievement of all students in relation to faith and academic development.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: There is little evidence of ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning. Critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee have been addressed with limited impact on faith formation and student achievement in relation to faith and academic development.

Ineffective Rubric: There is no evidence of ongoing systemic data analysis to enhance student learning. Critical goals discovered by the school and identified by the Visiting Committee were not adequately addressed, and neither faith nor academic development of students have been positively impacted.

3. **Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity** – The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community. (Key Self Study Outcome #1; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.5, C.1, C.2; *ISL* Chapter 3-A)

   Highly Effective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements clearly support strong evangelization through the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life. The total school community is involved in prayer experiences and the reception of the Sacraments on a regularly scheduled basis. The Religion curriculum and teaching methodology are alive and vibrant in classrooms; aligned with Roman Catholic teachings; approved by the local Ordinary; and meet the requirements set forth by the USCCB. Religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church permeate the entire school culture. The administration provides additional faith formation opportunities for students and school personnel. School personnel are actively engaged in their personal faith journey and adhere to Arch/diocesan catechist certification and renewal requirements. There is active partnership on the part of parents in the faith formation of their children. Christian service is highly valued and integrated within the entire school community. All are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience and there is an observable vibrancy of faith within the total school environment.

   Effective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life. Most of the school community is involved in prayer experiences and the reception of the Sacraments on a regular basis. The administration provides prayer and retreat opportunities for students and school personnel. The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are current with the requirements of the Arch/diocese and the USCCB. There is appropriate use of religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church within the school. The school adheres to Arch/diocesan catechist certification and renewal requirements. The administration provides opportunities for parents to meet with teachers regarding the ongoing spiritual and academic formation of their children. The school provides opportunities for service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community. Most are actively engaged in bringing the Good

News of Jesus into the total educational experience. The school environment is a testimony to its Catholicity and the development of faith among students.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements indicate an integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into the school community but not to a level of depth that clearly impacts every aspect of school life. While classroom prayer and some opportunities for Eucharistic liturgy are provided, the school community is not engaged in providing a variety of prayer experiences, retreat experiences and liturgies on a regular basis. The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are somewhat current with the requirements of the Arch/diocese and the USCCB. The use of the appropriate religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church is somewhat evident. There is a limited program of ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation for school personnel. When available, not all faculty and other school personnel make use of the program. While parents are encouraged to visit with teachers periodically to keep apprised of their children's progress in their spiritual and academic education, the school provides limited opportunities to do so. There are very limited opportunities provided by the school for service-oriented outreach to the Church and the civic community. Some school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the educational experience.

Ineffective Rubric: The Mission and Philosophy Statements do not reflect integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into the school community. There is no regular schedule or program for prayer and retreat experiences other than classroom prayer and Eucharistic liturgy on special occasions. The Religion curriculum and methods of instruction are not current or consistent with Arch/diocesan requirements and those of the USCCB. The use of the appropriate religious signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church is not evident. There is no formal program of ongoing spiritual and catechetical formation for school personnel. The involvement of the parents with the administration and faculty regarding the ongoing spiritual and academic formation of their children is very limited. There are no opportunities provided by the school for service-oriented outreach to the Church or civic community. It is not evident that school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

4. **Defining the School's Purpose** – The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.2, A.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-B)

   Highly Effective Rubric: The school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations are fully integrated into the lived reality of the school. All shareholders are involved in the review and revision of the school's mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are clearly measurable. Curriculum standards fully define the spiritual and academic purpose of the school in setting high expectations for student achievement. Additional governing

authority expectations*are clearly articulated. All of these pieces define and support the school's purpose to a high degree. (*see Key Terminology)

Effective Rubric: The school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations are integrated into the lived reality of the school. Shareholders are involved in the review and revision of the school's mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are measurable. Curriculum standards define the spiritual and academic purpose of the school in setting high expectations for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations are articulated. All of these pieces define and support the school's purpose.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: The school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations have minimal impact in the lived reality of the school. Shareholder involvement is limited in the review and revision of the school's mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are not clearly measurable. Curriculum standards somewhat define the faith and academic purpose of the school in setting expectations for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations are not clearly articulated. The identified pieces do not clearly define and support the school's purpose.

Ineffective Rubric: The school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations have no impact in the lived reality of the school. Shareholder involvement is not evident in the review and revision of the school's mission statement, philosophy and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The SLE indicators are not measurable. Curriculum standards do not define the faith and academic purpose of the school in setting expectations for student achievement. Additional governing authority expectations are not articulated. The identified pieces are fragmented and do not define and support the school's purpose.

5. **Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders. (Key Self Study Outcomes #2 & #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7; *ISL* Chapter 3-C)

   Highly Effective Rubric: Organizational structures are in place, clearly defined, and understood by all shareholders. The governing authority* includes appropriate input from shareholders. Leadership is vibrant and highly supportive of the faith formation and academic achievement of all students. Faculty and staff are cohesive and fully committed to high achievement of all students. Student achievement is consistently communicated in a variety of ways to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment is enhanced and enriched by the full participation of all organizational structures. (*governing authority—see Key Terminology)

Effective Rubric: Organizational structures are in place, defined, and understood by shareholders. The governing authority includes appropriate input from shareholders. Leadership is active and supportive of the faith formation and academic achievement of all students. Faculty and staff are committed to high achievement of all students. Student achievement is consistently communicated to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment is supported by the participation of all organizational structures.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: Organizational structures are in place, but may not be clearly defined, or understood by shareholders. The governing authority includes some input from shareholders. Leadership is aware of the faith formation and academic achievement of students. Faculty and staff are committed to the achievement of most students. Student achievement is inconsistently communicated to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment is supported by the participation of some organizational structures.

Ineffective Rubric: Organizational structures are not in place, defined, or understood by shareholders. The governing authority does not include input from shareholders. Leadership has little impact on the faith formation and academic achievement of all students. Faculty and staff have minimal commitment to the achievement of students. Student achievement is not clearly communicated to parents and other shareholders. The Catholic school environment lacks the support of the organizational structures.

6. **Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement. (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-D)

   Highly Effective Rubric: The collection of student achievement data is ongoing (systemic), research based, and includes a variety of assessments* in all grades. There is a high degree of documentation, disaggregation, and discussion of data. Extensive analysis of data includes identifying trends, discerning individual student needs, and using these findings to adjust instruction and enhance programs to improve student learning. (*assessments and disaggregation—see Key Terminology)

   Effective Rubric: There is a commitment to the collection of a variety of student achievement data in all grades. There is documentation, disaggregation, and discussion of data. Analysis of data includes identifying trends, discerning individual student needs, and using these findings to adjust instruction and enhance programs to improve student learning.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: Some data is collected and disaggregated but with unclear or limited interpretations. Trends and possible issues are identified to a limited degree. Disaggregated data is presented to staff and a few other shareholders in a general manner.

   Ineffective Rubric: Incomplete data is collected and presented with little interpretation provided for instructional staff and other shareholders.

7. **High Achievement by All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards –** All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.1, B.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-E)

   Highly Effective Rubric: Students show significant growth in learning within the context of the total Catholic school environment. Multiple measures validate progress for all students - i.e. all subgroups of students*. Schoolwide Learning Expectations are used as the foundation for learning, are measurable and are clearly articulated throughout the school community. Curriculum standards, integrated with Catholic Identity, are rigorous and are used as the foundation and benchmark for student learning. (*sub-groups—see Key Terminology)

   Effective Rubric: Students show growth in learning within the context of the total Catholic school environment. Multiple measures do validate this progress for all students – i.e. all subgroups of students. Schoolwide Learning Expectations are visibly connected to student learning. There is alignment with curriculum standards which are integrated with Catholic Identity.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: There is a disparity in relation to overall growth in learning and achievement**.** Assessment measures show growth targets are not being reached for some subgroups of students. SLEs and curriculum standards are sporadically used as the basis for instruction and it is unclear how they are connecting to the Catholic Identity of the school. Assessment measures show growth targets are not being reached for some subgroups of students.

   Ineffective Rubric: There is perceived limited student learning within the context of the school environment and little indication of the integration of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and a faith based curriculum. Growth targets need refinement and clarity in order to measure student achievement. Assessment measures indicate that learning targets are not being reached for subgroups of students.

8. **Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students** –The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.4, A.6, B.2, B.3; *ISL* Chapter 3-F)

   Highly Effective Rubric: All teaching staff utilize a wide variety of classroom teaching methodologies leading toward a high degree of faith formation, academic achievement and student growth. Learning expectations for students are high but realistic and are firmly anchored in a culture of research-based methodology. Curricular planning is structured, consistent and collaborative. Frequent and varied formative and summative assessments are clearly used to monitor student growth and modify instruction.

Effective Rubric: Teaching staff utilizes a variety of teaching methodologies focusing on faith formation and academic achievement. There is adequate curricular planning and structure. Assessment is frequent and varied and is often used to modify teaching and learning.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: Effective classroom instruction is limited among some teachers and is not necessarily reflective of best practices in relation to faith formation and academic achievement. Assessment is limited and is not utilized to monitor/modify teaching and learning.

Ineffective Rubric: Overall teaching methodology is inadequate. Assessment is ineffective and is not observed to be utilized to monitor/modify teaching and learning.

9. **Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth** – Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria C.1, C.2; *ISL* Chapter 3-G)

   Highly Effective Rubric: Within the school's community of faith, students have a plethora of opportunities to participate in support services and activities that ensure the highest possible degree of student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders are fully committed to providing an engaging and enriching environment that supports all students' achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations.

   Effective Rubric: Students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities that ensure student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders provide an environment that supports all students' achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations.

   Somewhat Effective Rubric: Students have limited opportunities to participate in support services and activities that ensure student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders provide an environment that occasionally supports students' achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations.

   Ineffective Rubric: Students have inadequate support services and activities to ensure student success. Leadership, faculty, staff and shareholders exert minimal effort to provide an environment that supports all students' achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations.

10. **Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students** – The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria B.3, D.1, D.2; *ISL* Chapter 3-H)

    Highly Effective Rubric: The resources available to the school enhance/expand the school program, reflect sound financial practices and responsible stewardship to a high degree. Resources are extensive and are used effectively to carry out the school's mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations in supporting high achievement of all students. There is an acted upon comprehensive plan for the long-term viability of the school.

    Effective Rubric: The resources available to the school adequately sustain the school program; reflect reasonable financial practices and responsible stewardship. Resources are used to carry out the school mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. There is a plan for the long-term viability of the school.

    Somewhat Effective Rubric: The resources available to the school do not support the school program, reflect reasonable financial practices and responsible stewardship. Resources are not appropriately used to carry out the school mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. There is minimal planning for viability.

    Ineffective Rubric: Lack of financial resources prevents the school from sustaining the school's core programs and continuing its faith mission. There is an absence of planning for the school's viability. The school is in danger of closing in the near future.

11. **Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings** – The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #5; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2; *ISL* Chapter 4-A)

    Highly Effective Rubric: The School's Action Plan addresses, to a high degree, the multiple and varied critical goals identified by the school which supports high achievement of all students, the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. There has been a thorough analysis of all appropriate data/information about student achievement, and each goal is well documented and rigorous.

    Effective Rubric: The School's Action plan addresses the multiple and varied critical goals identified by the school which supports high achievement of all students, the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. There has been analysis of appropriate data/information about student achievement and each goal is addressed adequately.

Somewhat Effective Rubric: The school's Action Plan is somewhat focused on improving student achievement, the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. There appears to have been little analysis of data/information about student achievement and documentation is incomplete in relation.

Ineffective Rubric: The school's Action Plan has little, if any; focus on improving student learning and faith development and is not perceived to be tied to the school's Schoolwide Learning Expectations or curriculum standards. There is no analysis of data/information about student achievement or supported documentation.

12. **Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan** – The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2; *ISL* Chapter 4-B)

    Highly Effective Rubric: There is a well-documented and concerted effort by the entire school community to fully integrate the Action Plan into the culture of the school thus ensuring high achievement of all students in relation to faith and academic development. Shareholders are aware and integrally involved in implementation of the goals and strategies. Goals and strategies will be evaluated in terms of impact on a regular basis and student achievement results shared consistently with all shareholders. Student achievement results will be used to identify priorities and further actions for improvement.

    Effective Rubric: Leadership and instructional staff embrace the integration of the Action Plan within the school. The goals and strategies of the Action Plan include ongoing and methodical assessment of the goals and strategies. Shareholders are aware and appropriately involved in implementation of the goals and strategies. Goals and strategies will be evaluated in terms of impact on student achievement and results shared regularly with all shareholders. Student achievement results will be used to identify priorities and further actions for improvement.

    Somewhat Effective Rubric: There is a general understanding by school administration and instructional staff about the need for implementation. The link between the Action Plan and student learning is weak and not clearly understood by administration and instructional staff and other shareholders.

    Ineffective Rubric: The process of implementation is not clarified as to who will be responsible and what will be accomplished. The need and value to link the Action Plan to high student achievement is not understood by administration and instructional staff and other shareholders.

Special Note: Appendix G-2 on pages 129-132 has the Catholic Identity rubrics disaggregated by standard and effectiveness.

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix L
Report of Findings

The following template is provided for information purposes only. The *Report of Findings* is completed by the Visiting Committee and presented to your school at the end of the visit. The purpose of including it here is to present *ISL* as a unified, coherent and transparent process.

Please note that a Visiting Committee responds to the exact same questions that the school responds to in writing their Self Study.

SPECIAL NOTE: Your school **does not** complete this appendix. This is informational only.

REPORT OF FINDINGS

[SCHOOL CODE AND NAME]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE ZIP]
DIOCESE OF [ ]

AND

PARTNERING ACCREDITING AGENCY, IF ANY

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING 2012

A SELF STUDY PROCESS
FOR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

[DATES OF ACCREDITATION VISIT]

REPORT OF FINDINGS

for

[School Code and Name]

Chairperson [Diocese] [School] [Address] [City, State, Zip] [Phone]	Team Member [School, City]
Team Member [School, City]	Team Member [School, City]
Team Member [School, City]	Team Member [School, City]
Team Member [School, City]	Team Member [School, City]

Signed hard copy **as well as** electronic copy (Word format only – **not** pdf) is to be given to the Elementary Commissioner following the Accreditation Visit.

Special note on using this template: Highlight sections in **red**, change the font color to black, and enter text. Be sure to include language that can be transferred to the *Justification Statement* and is found in the Self Study, evidence, or during the Visit. Delete this box before printing. The **BLUE** sections serve to guide the Visiting Committee narrative and should be deleted after the narrative has been written and all Visiting Committee members agree to the narrative.

PREFACE [Visiting Committee Chair – modify as needed/desired]

We, the Visiting Committee, wish to commend you, the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and student body of [School] for working together to make the school a loving, caring and learning environment. We pray that the good work that you have done and the plans that you have made for the future will help you become an even better school.

The team found our three days at [School] professionally rich and personally rewarding. We experienced a community where everyone is striving to provide a Catholic environment where quality education is a priority.

We wish to thank all of you, pastor, principal, faculty, staff, parents and students for your warm and gracious hospitality.

May the Christ we serve bless you with every success as you journey into your future.

Chapter 1: Introduction [OPTIONAL CHANGE]

A. How the Self Study was Conducted

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the Self Study was conducted:

- The process the school used to complete the Self Study (schedule of leadership team meetings, timeline, involvement of parents serving on committees, role of school board, frequency of Self Study Committee meetings);
- Any obstacles, the school experienced in completing their Self Study.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

B. Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study

Accreditation Factor #1: *The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.*

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing involvement and collaboration of shareholders in completing the Self Study:

- How effectively the school involved all shareholders in: discussions using the discussion questions (all chapters), assessing the spiritual development of students (Chapter 3-A), editing and revising the mission and philosophy (Chapter 3-B), editing/revising SLEs and creating rubrics (Chapter 3-C), assessing student progress toward clearly defined goals (Chapter 3-D), analyzing data that was reviewed, review of significant accomplishments, creation of goals and strategies, monitoring implementation of the action plan (Chapter 4-A), continuous school improvement;
- How effective the school's plans are to keep shareholders involved in ongoing systematic analysis of the school's effectiveness.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Chapter 2: Context of the School

A. School Profile

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing the school profile:

- To what extent the school has compiled and analyzed annually updated data (cultural, demographic, financial, survey, interview), identified major changes or trends since the last Self Study, and projected solutions;
- What parent/student/staff surveys tell about satisfaction with the school**.**

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

B. Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #2: T*he school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.*

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school used prior accreditation findings to support high achievement of all students:

- Completion of all goals from the previous Action Plan including any revisions mandated by the Visiting Committee (and Revisit Committee if applicable) and any goals added since the last accreditation visit;
- How effectively the school used the prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to support high achievement of all students;
- How effectively the school monitored its progress on accomplishment of its action plan and communicated this progress to its shareholders;
- How effectively the school implemented the concept of continuous school improvement, e.g., data analysis and action, focus on high achievement, etc. in non-accreditation years?

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Chapter 3: Quality of the School Program

A. Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity

Accreditation Factor #3: *The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community*.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school assessed its Catholic Identity:

- How effectively the school has assessed its Catholic Identity by improving the spiritual formation of students, staff, and parents; by developing, implementing, and assessing a standards-based Religion curriculum; by providing development opportunities for staff focused on faith development and religious instruction competencies; and by analyzing changes they've made in Catholic Identity to determine how these changes have strengthened their Catholic Identity;
- How effectively has the school discovered areas of their Catholic Identity that need to be improved.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

B. Defining the School's Purpose

Accreditation Factor #4: *The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school defined its purpose:

- How effectively the school's mission and philosophy reflect the Catholic Identity/nature of the school;
- How effectively the school uses their SLEs and curriculum standards to define the school's purpose;
- How effectively the school communicates their mission and purpose, including any governing authority expectations, to their shareholders;
- How effectively the school discovered what improvements are needed to its mission, philosophy, SLEs, standards, and/or governing authority expectations.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

C. Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #5: *The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders*.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school's organization for student learning supports high achievement of all students:

- How effectively the organizational structures of the school support and promote the Catholic Identity of the school;
- How effectively the organizational structures create an environment that focuses on student learning;
- How effectively the organizational structures of the school communicate high achievement by all students to the shareholders;

- How effectively the school analyzed how their governance and other structures could be improved to support student learning.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

D. Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #6: *The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement*.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses data analysis to modify the curriculum/instruction/learning:

- How effectively the school used data about faith formation, etc. to strengthen their Catholic Identity;
- How effectively the school used educationally sound assessment processes to collect, disaggregate and analyze student performance data (Note: include information about the use of standardized tests, teacher-made tests, and text-created tests; as well as the school's use of clear interpretations of the data analysis.);
- How effectively the school used analysis of assessment data to drive curricular change, i.e., to modify teaching/learning, to offer additional academic support to students in the first and fourth quartiles, to help other students who are not at grade level;
- How effectively the school used disaggregation, data analysis, trends, etc. as a basis for improving student learning such as: modifying instruction, challenging students to achieve, implementing new curricular materials, etc.;
- How effectively the school analyzed their use of data to drive curricular improvement.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

E. High Achievement By All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards

Accreditation Factor #7: *All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards*.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses SLEs and standards-based curriculum to support high achievement of all students and ensure acceptable progress by all students:

- How effectively the school has incorporated Catholic values into the curriculum;
- How effectively the school ensured that the curriculum standards are challenging, comprehensive, and relevant for all students;
- How effectively the school measures student achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards;
- How effectively the school ensured that each student is making acceptable progress toward the achievement of SLEs and curriculum standards;
- How effectively the school has integrated technology into the learning process;

- How effectively the school identified students who are not making acceptable progress, implemented plans to assist these students, evaluated these plans, and modified these plans as necessary to increase acceptable progress by all students;
- How effectively the school assessed their programs used to support disaggregate groups and ensure acceptable progress for all students.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

F. Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #8: *The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning*.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses instructional methodology to support high achievement of all students:

- How effectively the school staff model Catholic values;
- How effectively the school implemented research-based instructional methodology to enhance student learning.
- How effectively the school used assessment to modify instruction/curriculum to help all students achieve the SLEs and curriculum standards.
- How effectively the school integrated technology into the teaching/learning process.
- How effectively the school identified what improvements are needed in curriculum and instruction to support high achievements of all students

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

G. Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth

Accreditation Factor #9: *Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school supports student spiritual, personal, and academic growth:

- How effectively the school support programs, service learning opportunities, etc. are rooted in Catholic values (e.g., are Principles of Social Justice the reason for service learning?);
- How effectively the school provides services, resources, and activities to help all students achieve at high levels in both curricular and non-curricular areas;
- How effectively the school has planned for emergencies;
- How effectively the school used parents, community resources including Federal Program funding, technology, etc. to assist students;
- How effectively the school provides resources and services to help students with special needs including students with greater learning aptitude;.
- How effectively the school identified support services that they need to provide to students to support high achievement of all students.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

H. Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #10: *The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations*.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school uses resource management and development to support high achievement of all students:

- How effectively the school used its financial resources to support Catholic Identity;
- How effectively the school developed, implemented, and monitored a financial management system;
- How effectively the school reports its fiscal status to its shareholders;
- How effectively the school plans to ensure that its resources are sufficient to sustain the school's program, carry out the school's purpose, and support student achievement;
- How effective the school is at planning for its long-term viability;
- How effective the school is at planning for technology implementation, upgrades, etc.;
- How effectively the school analyzed their financial position to determine the most effective way to exercise financial stewardship to ensure the financial viability of the school.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Chapter 4: The Action Plan

A. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings

Accreditation Factor #11 (*The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations*.)

Schoolwide Lists of Significant Accomplishments and Critical Goals

Schoolwide Significant Accomplishments (the eight most significant determined by the VC)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

7.
8.

Critical Goals (identified by school)

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing how the school has aligned its Action Plan to its critical goals:

- How effectively the school identified critical goals that are focused on improving student learning;
- How effectively the Action Plan aligns with and addresses the school's critical goals in order to support high achievement of all students;
- How effectively the Action Plan identifies specific strategies and activities to be accomplished;
- How effectively the Action Plan identifies implementation strategies (e.g., the person(s) responsible for implementation, costs, timeline, etc.);
- How effectively the Action Plan includes specific assessments designed to monitor growth in student learning.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

PLEASE NOTE: The Visiting Committee is not required to complete either of the next two optional parts. If either or both of these parts are not used, the Visiting Committee should delete all text except for "OPTION A:" and "OPTION B:" and put N/A after each phrase. Delete this text before printing.

If either optional part is used, the Visiting Committee must have identified and clearly supported the need for this modification or new critical goal in the *Report of Findings* narrative. Delete this text before printing.

OPTION A: ***Modification of a critical goal:***

If the finding of the Visiting Committee is that one of the school's critical goals should be modified, the Visiting Committee should write a narrative describing what modifications are needed, and the rationale for these modifications.

Begin writing here or put N/A after OPTION A: if no modification is needed.

OPTION B: ***Critical Goal Identified by the Visiting Committee***:

If the finding of the Visiting Committee is to **replace** a school's critical goal in the school's Action Plan, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be replaced, and write a

brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the Visiting Committee into the school's Action Plan. NOTE: Because there can be no more than two critical goals from the Self Study incorporated into the School's Action Plan, the Visiting Committee recommendation will replace **one** of the school's two critical goals.

If the opinion of the Visiting Committee is to add a critical goal for incorporation into the school's Action Plan in the **future**, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be added, and write a brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the Visiting Committee into the school's Action Plan. NOTE: The school's Action Plan evolves over time and new critical goals are incorporated as critical goals are accomplished.

Begin writing here or put N/A after OPTION B: if no replacement critical goal is needed.

B. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan

Accreditation Factor #12: *The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

Incorporate the following points in the Visiting Committee narrative describing the schools capacity to implement and monitor their Action Plan:

- How effectively the school implemented the previous Action Plan and what effect might this have on implementation of the current Action Plan;
- How effective the monitoring processes (assessment/evaluation, communication to shareholders, involvement of shareholders in implementing and monitoring the Action Plan, etc.) are that are incorporated into the Action Plan;
- How effective the school plan is to evaluate the goals in the Action Plan on the basis of their impact on student achievement;
- How effectively the school identified resources needed for implementation of their Action Plan – especially those resources currently not available to the school;
- Any impediments that the school must address in order to accomplish the Action Plan.

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Visiting Committee Summary Thoughts:

The Visiting Committee observed [begin writing here]

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix M
Justification Statement

Like Appendix L, this appendix is informational only. It is likewise provided to show your school the basic parameters used by the Visiting Committee to recommend a term of accreditation.

PLEASE NOTE: Your school **does not** complete this appendix as part of the Self Study. This will be completed by the Visiting Committee. It is provided here to present an integrated, comprehensive, and transparent view of *Improving Student Learning*.

JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

For proper processing, please complete the information in the box:

Chair Name _____ **School Code** _____

Name of School/City Visited _____

Chair Phone Numbers:

Work _____ **Home** _____ **Cell** _____

Chair e-mail address(s): _____

Signatures

_____
Visiting Committee Member

_____
Visiting Committee Member

_____
Visiting Committee Member

_____
Visiting Committee Member

_____
Visiting Committee Member

_____
Visiting Committee Member

_____
Visiting Committee Chairperson

On the following pages, insert the rating that best fits the results of the Self Study and the visit that was selected through Visiting Committee dialogue and consensus. (Highlight the underlined section after Rating and type the appropriate rating. Font and size are preset.)

HIGHLY EFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide evidence of (1) the achievement of a high degree of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor and (2) a strong operable school improvement process not requiring external monitoring.

EFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor; and (2) the need for some minimal outside monitoring to support the school improvement process.

SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide limited evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor and (2) the necessity for outside monitoring to support the school's improvement.

INEFFECTIVE: The results of the Self Study and the visit provide little, if any, evidence of (1) the achievement of student learning with respect to the Accreditation Factor and (2) the necessity for consistent outside monitoring to support the school's improvement process.

RUBRICS: The rubrics for determining if an Accreditation Factor is Highly Effective, Effective, Somewhat Effective, or Ineffective can be found in Appendix K of *ISL.*

On the following pages, provide a brief narrative that describes the degree to which the school supports student learning through each Accreditation Factor. The statements made in the narrative should reflect statements made in the *Report of Findings*. No 'new' information should be included in the narratives in this *Justification Statement*. If it is not said in the *Report of Findings*, it should not be stated in the *Justification Statement*.

Special note on using this template: Highlight "Begin writing here", change the font color to black, and enter text. Be sure to include language found in the *Report of Findings* and is found in the Self Study, evidence, or during the Visit. Delete this box before printing.

An accreditation term is based upon a school demonstrating the following*:*

1. **Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study.** *The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.* (Key Self Study Outcome #2; ACS WASC Category-Based Criterion A.7)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

2. **Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students.** *The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.* (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criterion A.7)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

3. **Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity.** *The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.* (Key Self Study Outcome #1; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.5, C.1, C.2)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

4. **Defining the School's Purpose.** *The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcome #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.1, A.2, A.3)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

5. **Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students.** *The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.* (Key Self Study Outcomes #2 & #3; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.2, A.3, A.4, A.5, A.6, A.7)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

6. **Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students.** *The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.* (Key Self Study Outcome #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.3)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

7. **High Achievement By All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards.** *All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards*. (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.6, B.1, B.3)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

8. **Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of all Students.** *The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.* (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.4, A.6, B.2, B.3)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

9. **Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth.** *Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcomes #3 & #4; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria C.1, C.2)

   Visiting Committee Rating: _____

   Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

10. **Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of all Students.** *The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria B.3, D.1, D.2)

    Visiting Committee Rating: _____

    Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

11. **Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings.** *The Action Plan addresses the school's goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.* (Key Self Study Outcome #5; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2)

    Visiting Committee Rating: _____

    Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

12. **Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan.** *The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other*

institutional and/or governing authority expectations. (Key Self Study Outcome #6; ACS WASC Category-Based Criteria A.7, D.1, D.2)

Visiting Committee Rating: _____

Narrative Rationale: Begin writing here

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix N

Recommendation for Accreditation Status for Catholic Elementary Schools

In the event of a formal appeal, this document will be provided to the school principal.

Code and Name of School Visited:_____

Address of School: _____

_____

Enrollment at School: _____

Grades to be Accredited:_____

Name of Arch/diocese: _____

Dates of School Accreditation Visit:_____

One of three accreditation statuses may be conferred on a school as a result of a WCEA Accreditation Visit. Regardless of Accreditation Status, all schools must submit an annual WCEA Report of Progress to the Arch/diocesan WCEA Elementary Commissioner using the format approved by the Commissioner.

Signatures

_____

Visiting Committee Member Visiting Committee Member

_____

Visiting Committee Member Visiting Committee Member

_____

Visiting Committee Member Visiting Committee Member

_____

Visiting Committee Chairperson Date Phone Numbers: (Office & Cell)

- **FULL SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION: Six-Year Accreditation Status with a required Annual Report of Progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner:** The school performs mainly at or above the **Effective** level on all Accreditation Factors of the accreditation process **and** any recommendations of the Visiting Committee do not detract to a serious degree from the quality of the school's educational program. The Visiting Committee's use of Option A in the *Report of Findings* is generally considered not to detract from the quality of the school's program. Schools must submit a WCEA Annual Report of Progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner using the format approved by the Commissioner

- **PROVISIONAL SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION: Six-Year Accreditation Status with a required Annual Report of Progress to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner, a mid-term report, and a required 1-day revisit:** The school performs at the **Somewhat Effective** level in two or more of the Accreditation Factors **and/or** the Visiting Committee has made recommendations concerning critical goals using Option B in the Report of Findings. Schools must submit a WCEA Annual Report of Progress to the Elementary Commissioner using the format approved by the Commissioner. The Accredited With Provisions schools will also complete a Third-Year Progress Report instead of an Annual Report of Progress using a format approved by the Elementary Commissioner. In addition to the revised Action Plan, Annual Reports of Progress, and the Third-Year Progress Report, all Accredited With Provisions schools will receive a one-day revisit three (3) years after the Accreditation Visit to ensure that the recommendations of the Visiting Committee are being addressed. The Third-Year Progress Report will serve as the base document for the revisit. The revisit team is ordinarily the Chair of the original visit and one other team member from the original Visiting Committee.

- **CONDITIONAL SIX-YEAR ACCREDITATION: One-year Accreditation Status with a required comprehensive progress report to the WCEA Elementary Commissioner at the end of the first year addressing the concerns of the Visiting Committee, and a visit by the WCEA Elementary Commissioner or a Visiting Committee:** The school performs at the **Ineffective** level on two or more of the Accreditation Factors **and** the Visiting Committee has identified area(s) that seriously and negatively impact student learning. The Visiting Committee has made recommendations concerning critical goals using Option B of the Report of Findings. The school/school system is provided a year to demonstrate progress toward addressing the required actions. At the end of the year, the school/school system submits a comprehensive progress report to the Elementary Commissioner. The report is reviewed by the Elementary Commissioner to ensure sufficient progress is being made on the recommendations of the Visiting Committee. Depending on the progress of the school in meeting the recommendations of the Visiting Committee, and other factors impacting the school, the Elementary Commissioner may request 1) Accredited with Provisions Status which requires a revisit in two years, 2) and extension of the Conditional Accreditation for one more year due to external factors or unforeseen circumstances, or Denial of Accreditation. Any change of status must be approved by the WCEA Elementary Commission.

The Status Recommendation

This is a confidential report. Unless the school contests the Accreditation Status, the contents of the *Recommendation for Accreditation Status* are known only to the Visiting Committee, the Arch/diocesan Superintendent, and the WCEA Elementary Commissioners.

The rationale for accreditation status depends upon the degree to which the Accreditation Factors are fulfilled in the *Justification Statement* and the consensus of the Visiting Committee.

Each member of the Visiting Committee must sign the *Recommendation for Accreditation Status* before departure. The Visiting Committee chairperson sends the original, signed copy of this document as well as electronic copy to the Arch/diocesan WCEA Commissioner.

Visiting Committee's Recommendations from the *Report of Findings*. If the recommendations have a significant impact on student learning, please explain.

Begin writing here

Provide a complete narrative, which summarizes the Visiting Committee's rationale for the recommended conditions (If there is an unresolved minority opinion please indicate and explain.)

- Accreditation Statuses seriously considered: Begin writing here
- Reasons for the *recommended Status*: Begin writing here

In the narrative, reflect upon the following:

- The visiting committee's discussions and process (summarize as needed in the narrative)
- The degree to which students are learning
- The strength of the school in all areas of the program and the operation
- The capacity of the school to implement and monitor the action plan

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix O
Resources

The following list is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive. It is a start for schools interested in exploring research about curriculum and instruction.

Best Practice – Today's Standards for Teaching & Learning in America's Schools, Steven Zemelman, Harvey Daniels, Arthur Hyde, 2005, Heinemann

Checking for Understanding – Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom, Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, 2007, ASCD

Classroom Instruction that Works – Research Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, Jane E. Pollock, 2001, Pearson Education

Creating a Curriculum That Works – A Guide to Outcomes-Centered Curriculum Decision-Making, Lorraine A. Ozar, Ph.D., 1994, NCEA

Developing a Quality Curriculum, Allan A. Glatthorn, 1994, ASCD

Dimensions of Thinking: A Framework for Curriculum and Instruction, Robert J. Marzano, Ronald S. Brandt, Carolyn Sue Hughes, Beau Fly Jones, Barbara Z. Presseisen, Stuart C. Rankin, Charles Suhor, 1988, ASCD

From Standards to Success, Mark R. O'Shea, 2005, ASCD

Getting Results with Curriculum Mapping, edited by Heidi Hayes Jacobs, 2004, ASCD

A Handbook for Classroom Instruction that Works, Robert J. Marzano, Jennifer S. Norford, Diane E. Paynter, Debra J. Pickering, Barbara B. Gladdy, 2001, Pearson Education

Integrating Differentiated Instruction and Understanding by Design – Connecting Content and Kids, Carol Ann Tomlinson, Jay McTighe, 2006, ASCD

School Leadership that Works – From Research to Results, Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters, Brian McNulty, 2005, ASCD

A Teacher's Guide to Performance-Based Learning and Assessment, Educators in Connecticut's Pomperaug Regional School District 15, 1996, ASCD

The Truth about Testing – an Educator's Call to Action, W. James Popham, 2001, ASCD

Total Instructional Alignment – From Standards to Student Success, Lisa Carter, 2007, Solution Tree

Transformative Assessment, W. James Popham, 2008, ASCD

Understanding by Design, Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe, 1998, ASCD

What Works in Schools – Translating Research into Action, Robert J. Marzano, 2003, ASCD

Appendix P

Best Practices for Teaching Religion

Developed by:
The California Catholic School Superintendents Curriculum Committee (CCSSCC)

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Religion Teacher's Self Evaluation ..... pages 203-204

Religion Teacher's Summative Evaluation ..... pages 205-206

Religion Teacher's Weekly Lesson Plan (template) ..... pages 207-210

Religion Teacher's Weekly Lesson Plan (sample) ..... pages 211-213

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS REGARDING EFFECTIVE TEACHER METHODOLOGY IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGION

1. Based upon school In-Depth Studies (Religion), WCEA Self-Study Accreditation Process and diocesan personnel school site visitations, it is felt that the vast majority of schools have overall strong religion programs.

2. There is a variance within a school as to the utilization of "best" practices by all teachers. Some teachers are more traditional in their approach to the teaching of religion.

3. New teachers coming into a school lack the training in methodology in teaching religion. They also have a tendency to be weaker in their theology due to their educational and life experience background.

4. Ongoing in-servicing in teacher methodology for the teaching of religion needs to be made available to both new and veteran teachers.

5. It is felt that schools need to continually think "beyond their own box" in relation to teacher practices that would be more effective. Striving to make effective use of faith experiences, social justice outreach and assessment of knowledge of the Catholic faith will benefit both the catechesis and faith formation of students.

6. The use of the ACRE results can be beneficial in relation to evaluating the knowledge level of students as can be other research based outcome assessments and observation of student behavior.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD[2]

By Gini Shimabukuro, Ed.D.

Essential to the building of a gospel-based learning community is the sincere, ongoing effort to understand each child. This understanding permits the educator to fulfill the Christian call to formation and transformation of learners.

Since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's, Church documentation related to education offers insight into this concept through the "integral formation" of the child. "Integral formation" refers to teaching that fosters the unification of the many aspects of the child—spiritual, moral, religious, intellectual, developmental, social, emotional physical—and to learning that enables the child to make necessary connections among these interior dimensions.

Effective formation, then, precludes an awareness of these many human dimensions as active in the learning process and of their relationship to each other: emotional with religious, intellectual with physical, moral with developmental, and so on.

In order to achieve this holistic goal of learning that is integrated and formative, it is necessary to understand that teaching is more than mere transmission of knowledge. We need to design content-based processes that will empower the child to internalize his or her learning.

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[2] **Resources**: Groome, Thomas, *Educating for Life*. Allen, Texas: Thomas More Publishing Co. 1998:
The Congregation for Catholic Education, T*he Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1988

WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
ACCREDITATION FACTORS
CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND IN-DEPTH

Accreditation Factor #3: Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity
The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing authentic Catholic teaching[3], opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.

Catholic Identity Standards:

1. **Mission & Philosophy:** The school's mission and philosophy statements reflect the integration of our faith into all aspects of school life.
2. **Prayer & Sacraments**: The whole school community is involved in a variety of prayer experiences. Sacramental reception is scheduled on a regular basis. Students and staff have opportunities to participate in a spiritual retreat.
3. **Curriculum**: The Religion curriculum is based on Arch/diocesan standards, assessments are connected to the standards and progress reporting is based on the standards. Any texts used by the teachers meet USCCB requirements.
4. **Catechist Certification**: All who teach Religion have valid, current catechist certification, or are in the process of obtaining such certification within the timeline established by the Arch/diocese.
5. **Parents as Partners**: The school maintains an active partnership with parents in the education of their children.
6. **Service**: Students have opportunities to provide service to the parish, school and civic communities.
7. **Signs and Sacramentals**: Signs and symbols of our Catholic faith are prominently displayed throughout the school. Catholic traditions and practices are observed throughout the year at appropriate times.
8. **Evangelization:** All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

[3] Catechesis: An education of children, young people, and adults in the faith of the Church through the teaching of Christian doctrine in an organic and systematic way to make them disciples of Jesus Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Chapter 5; pp. 426-427)

The annual In-Depth Study for Religion has been replaced by the Ongoing Review of a school's Catholic Identity. See Appendix G-1 and G-2 for details on how this Review is conducted. The timeline for the ongoing review is listed below.

Timeline:

Year One:	This is the year that the school begins the Self Study (i.e., the school year prior to the WCEA accreditation visit). The school assesses itself on all eight standards of Catholic Identity as indicated in the protocol (Chapter 3-A) using the Discussion Questions and writing points found in the protocol.
Year Two:	This is the year that the school has a WCEA accreditation visit. The school does not assesses itself on any Catholic Identity standards.
Year Three:	The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 4 and 8.
Year Four:	The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 3 and 6.
Year Five:	The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 1 and 5.
Year Six:	The school assesses itself on Catholic Identity standards 2 and 7. [Note: this should be an internal survey by school staff – not a parent/student survey]

BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING RELIGION
Criteria and Indicator Teacher Reference

1. Teacher Preparation

a. *Materials/Equipment/Technology/Resources* – Teacher does not rely solely on material in the textbook; uses supplementary material such as books, media, etc. with creativity and care in order to achieve the objective of the lesson.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Prayer corner/setting
- Approved diocesan textbooks
- Church documents
- Chalkboard/overhead
- Audio-visual equipment/technology
- Guest speaker – DRE/Priest/Pastor or Pastoral Coordinator
- References/supportive resource materials
- Manipulative materials and supplies (felt boards, puzzles, clay, crayons etc.)
- Liturgical Calendar
- Colored Cloths relating to the liturgical season
- Sacramentals – Rosary, crucifix, holy water, statues of saints, etc.

b. *Variety of Activities Planned* – Teacher uses a wide variety of age-appropriate activities related to the aim of the lesson and appropriate to the level of faith development of the student.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Prayer experience
- Classroom discussion (large & small group)
- Games—(i.e. biblical "bingo")
- Chalk or dry board/overhead
- PowerPoint/smart board/DVD
- Role play
- Projects (individual/groups)
- Oral/silent reading
- Manipulative materials
- Lectures
- Management activities (Classroom management)
- Explanations including questions/answers
- Music/Dance

c. *Lesson Plan/Objectives/Procedures* – Teacher has a lesson plan that demonstrates thoroughness and resourcefulness in preparation of content, learning activities, materials and equipment.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Written lesson plan
- Materials ready for student use
- Equipment set up and ready
- Smooth flow from activity to activity
- Time given for teacher reflection

d. *Physical Set-up of Environment* – As much as possible, the teacher sets an environment that is conducive to individual and group learning. Physical environment is attractive, welcoming and comfortable. Room arrangement and prayer table are creative and relate to the objective/theme of lesson.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Prayer table/corner
- Bulletin board(s) reflective of Catholic identity/curriculum
- Clearly displayed religious symbols

2. Catholic/Christian Information/Instruction

a. *Development of Content* – Teacher shows knowledge in area being taught. Approach is sequential, age appropriate and effective. Movement from one segment of the lesson to another is smooth. Teacher does not need to refer to the text frequently.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Variety of activities
- Subject matter covered (utilize Diocesan Religion Standards/Guidelines)
- Objectives of lesson plan met
- Resources used (e.g. church documents, approved supplemental materials)
- Student involvement

b. *Prayer* – Teacher provides opportunities for creative prayer, formal or informal relating to the lesson or liturgical season. This includes the beginning and ending prayer.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Variety of prayer experiences observed in classroom
- Prayer is frequent
- Listen and responding to scripture
- Prayer corners form a central part of classroom environment

c. *Student Inquiry/Participation* – Students are attentive and motivated. Their participation is encouraged within individual and group activities through a variety of ways.

OBSERVABLE DATA:
- Activities Used for Student Involvement
- Cooperative learning
- Center activities
- Collaboration: discussion/sharing faith/prayer/intentions/spontaneous prayer
- Sacred gestures
- Prayerful dance
- Liturgical rituals
- Role playing
- Partner reading/studying
- Discussion: large/small
- Teacher-led question/answer
- Activities used for student inquiry
- Research/group discussion/peer-to-peer
- Resources used to enrich activities

d. *Recognition of Learning Styles/Age-Appropriate Development* – The teacher provides age-appropriate activities which include different learning styles to help students to use their talents and abilities.

OBSERVABLE DATA:
- Age appropriate activities/multi-sensory activities/multiple intelligences learning opportunities
- Ways of addressing learning difficulties
- Multiple activities recognizing different talents/abilities
- Optional pathways to a conclusion permitted and encouraged
- Peer teaching/peer interaction
- Teacher with small groups or one-on-one
- Review of previous lesson and "tie-in" within this lesson
- Seating arrangement

e. *Integration of Message into Life Experience* – The teacher makes a strong tie between scripture, doctrine and students' life experiences. The teacher relates materials and activities to current issues according to the lesson objective.

OBSERVABLE DATA:
- Listen And respond to scripture
- Paraphrase prayers in personal words
- Compose prayers and petitions
- Identification of saints and the impact of their lives on today
- Define lawful authority in society
- Show concern for needs of others

- Be aware of family customs and cultures
- Recognize that sexuality is a gift from God
- Develop an awareness that life is a gift from God
- Demonstrate how stewardship is an integral part of Christian living
- Identify various types of ministry within the Church

f. *Application to Life* – The teacher is able to relate classroom lesson to life and society.

OBSERVABLE DATA:
- Quotes that demonstrate correlation (student and teacher)
- Activities which explore correlation
- Materials which challenge students' curiosity about relevance in one's life—expansion of Church teaching into current issues facing society (cloning, euthanasia, abortion)
- Questions/answers encouraged from students
- Role playing—"What would Jesus Do" situations
- Small group investigations—relating Church doctrines to text material and current event issues
- Directed reading
- Pictures/books/display/ news clippings/videos
- Community service projects
- Field trips to homeless shelters, convalescent homes
- Field experiences to places of other faith traditions and experiences (Holocaust museum, synagogue)

g. *Culminating Activities* – The teacher is able to bring the lesson to closure by integrating evaluation with a meaningful summarization or activity.

OBSERVABLE DATA:
- Time allotted for reflection throughout the lesson itself
- Statements of summary from the catechist and teacher, and the students
- Resources to culminate lesson (video/music/poetry/prayer, etc.)
- Assignment to reinforce concepts covered in the lesson

3. Assessment

a. *Formal and Informal Assessments* – Monitor student learning of developmentally appropriate student learning objectives. This measure of progress should be frequent and integrated into the teaching and learning process through the use of in-class activities, question/answer, and more formal assessment of acquired learning of content based objectives.

OBSERVABLE DATA:
- Active and engaged participation
- Homework, handout completion
- Practice of prayer (recitation)

- Contribution to discussions in class
- Dioramas, posters, reports
- Role-playing activities—scripture passages etc.
- Journal responses internalizing faith knowledge and internalization
- Quizzes, tests, oral assessments
- Technology projects/online use of religious sites
- Regular attendance at Mass
- Participating in singing, liturgical dance, etc.

b. *Formative and Summative Assessments* – Monitor student learning objectives and religion program in light of content mastery, skill acquisition, and experienced faith development. This measure of evaluation will assess teachers to refine their planning and methodology as well as determine resources for future growth and faith internalization.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- On-going survey of teachers, parents, students
- Analysis of ACRE assessment results
- Diocesan content standards assessment
- Portfolio assessment
- Rubric assessment
- Projects
- Student response to outreach activities
- Teacher designed test matching religion curriculum and taught objectives
- Textbook assessment
- Essay questions
- Faith sharing activities

4. Supervision

a. *Student Cooperation and Self Regulation* – The teacher maintains a positive atmosphere in which students work well in individual or group activities. Time is used effectively. Order is maintained and self-discipline is being developed.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Classroom rules are posted
- Students demonstrate self-discipline/on-task behavior
- Catechist statement to students are positive, empowering, collaborative
- Activities toward self-direction
- Spoken/unspoken intervention of inappropriate behavior
- Flexibility
- Positive movement of students from one activity to another
- Minimum friction and interruption

5. Relational

a. *Interaction: Peer to Peer* – The teacher provides an environment which results in mutual support, trust, and respect from student to student as faith community is being built.

OBSERVABLE DATA:

- Students are actively engaged in integrating their faith with each other through classroom activities
- Students participate in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacrament
- Evidence of cooperation in a faith centered learning activity
- Students show mutual interest/ attention to each other's responses
- Collaborative teams stay on task, support each other and successfully complete project
- All students actively participate in sharing their own special talents to a project
- Cross age mentoring is apparent (school families) for faith activities and sharing.

b. *Interaction: Teacher-to-Student* – The teacher is able to establish a positive rapport with the students, individually and collectively, resulting in high morale as faith community is being built.

OBSERVABLE DATA

- Statements of encouragement and affirmation – student to the teacher and from the teacher to the student
- Personal knowledge of each student (interests, abilities/family, etc.)
- Student's contributions are accepted by the teacher and other students
- An atmosphere of mutual respect (mutual statements of courtesy, etc.) is maintained
- Discipline is always done with respect to the individual and its outcome is designed to be formative in establishing a pattern for more positive behavior.
- Teacher serves as a faith role model

BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING RELIGION
Practical Applications

Teacher Preparation:
A teacher who is well prepared has taken the first foundational step to successfully educating children and youth in the Catholic faith. Faith and spiritual development is an ongoing process that begins before we can speak and ends when we take our last breath. Just because we have taken on the title of "teacher" does not mean that we have completed our education in the faith. We, as teachers/catechists, must constantly strive to know more and further enrich our own faith journey by investigating and indulging in the resources available to us.

The list and suggestions provided below are only a few of the many resources available to you. Your parish may have a resource library on site, or your Arch/diocese may have resources available at the Pastoral Center. Ask your Director of Religious Education or Principal where you can go to check out materials that will assist you in your role as catechist. Remember to search the Internet for online resources as well.

Supplemental to written references, other materials will support the learning taking place in your classroom. Puzzles, felt board stories, bulletin board pictures, statues, holy cards, and many more items can be attained through textbook publishers or religious goods suppliers. A copy of the liturgical calendar would be a helpful addition to your classroom. Colored cloths in the liturgical colors (green, white, purple, red) can be obtained at any fabric shop. Construction paper would even work to cover a prayer table or bulletin board with the color of the liturgical season. In this way, your students will become familiar with the cycle of the church year.

RESOURCES:
The Catholic Source Book by Rev. Peter Klein (2007)
The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB (2006)
Called to Be a Catechist – Your Practical Guide by Cullen W. Schippe (2005)
The National Directory for Catechesis by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005)
What Do I Do Now? A Guide for the Reluctant Catechist by Dan Pierson and Susan Stark (2005)
The Courage to Lead: Catholic Identity and Diversity by James L. Heft, SM, and Gordon D. Bennett, SJ, DD (2004)
Perspectives on Leadership and Catechesis by Robert I. Colbert and Janice A. Kraus (2001)
The General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English – A Summary and Commentary by Bill Huebsch (2001)
A Call to Reflection: A Teacher's Guide to Catholic Identity for the 21st Century by Gini Shimabukuro, Ed.D. (1998)
General Directory for Catechesis by United States Catholic Conference (1997)
Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry by National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1997)
The Catechetical Documents by Liturgy Training Publications (1996)
Catechism of the Catholic Church by United States Catholic Conference (1994)
The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School by Congregation for Catholic Education (1988)

To Teach As Jesus Did by National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1972)

Websites to explore: These sites will link you to hundreds of other sources.
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops **www.usccb.org**
National Catholic Educational Association **www.ncea.org**
California Catholic Conference **www.cacatholic.org**
Vatican **www.vatican.va**
Catholic – USA **www.catholic-usa.com**
Catholic Sites **www.catholicsites.com**
Catholic Mom **www.catholicmom.com**

Variety of Activities Planned:
When preparing to teach a lesson, it is important to remember that students learn in multiple ways. Three of the basic ways in which people learn are *cognitively* – gaining knowledge by absorbing facts and content through listening, seeing/reading, and writing; *affectively* – gaining knowledge through feelings and attitudes; and *behaviorally* – gaining knowledge through actions and experience. Ideally, you want to present a religion lesson in such a way that all of these areas can be addressed. Do not be afraid to infuse your lesson with a variety of activities that will appeal to several learning styles. The goal is to encourage your students to seek, accept, and integrate the Catholic Christian message more fully into their daily lives. Effective religious education goes beyond knowing the facts and truths of the Catholic Church; it is putting those truths in action on a daily basis. Section IC will discuss how to create meaningful lesson plans for your students.

Classroom Management:
To be an effective catechist, you must be able to control a classroom in such a way that students are free to learn without disrupting others. This is more than a discipline plan. Discipline is part of classroom management, but classroom management is more about clearing stating the behavioral expectations and outlining classroom procedures so that discipline will not become an "issue" that distracts from the presented lesson.

Students work to their greatest potential when they have a structure to follow that provides reasonable limits allowing them to grow and experience the lesson, while expressing their thoughts and ideas in an environment that is not disruptive or offensive to others. The following steps will allow you to develop a classroom management system that maximizes the learning potential for your students.

Know Your Students – What are the students' likes and dislikes? What activities do they participate in outside of school? What skills or talents do they have? Is the student experiencing changes in their family structure? Does the student have any learning/physical problems that might affect behavior or performance?

Many of these questions can be answered through a casual, friendly call to parents introducing you as the child's catechist. You want to be careful not to pry too personally into the family situation, but rather express yourself as a partner with the parents in the child's faith development. Parents need to know you, as catechist, are willing to assist when and as you are

needed. Information on students can also be gathered by asking the students directly through surveys sheets or casual conversation. Even though you are trying to better understand your students, it is important to remember that you are not the student's friend or peer – you are an adult teacher and must act accordingly.

Mutual Respect – How do you respond to students' questions or responses? How are students greeted as they arrive for class? How does the teacher dismiss students to leave after class? Do you foster a sense of security and care for your students? Are students required to address adults and other students with respect and dignity? Is diversity celebrated within the classroom?

Focusing on these questions will support the climate that will be present within the classroom. Students who believe that their teacher likes and respects them will be motivated to respond with respect and perform to the best of their ability. It is important to stress the value of respect at the very first class meeting. State the expectations and establish the procedural practices for your classroom right away. Keep the rules simple and state them in a positive tone. For example, instead of saying, "Don't use put-down or bad language," state, "Use kindness in your words and actions," or "Treat others with respect at all times." Do not set too many restrictions for the students; keep the rules general to cover many situations. It is best to allow the students to participate in establishing the rules. In this way, they are mutually owned and understood by all members of the classroom community. Students should also understand the consequences for not following the rules before any are broken. Make consequences that are clear, enforceable and age-appropriate. Constantly reward good behavior with verbal praise or gestures (a smile, a nod of the head, a pat on the back). Once rules and consequences are established make sure they are visible in the classroom at all times, well-communicated and understood by all, and that they are consistently followed.

When considering the climate you want to establish in your classroom, it is also important to set up procedures for routine events. How is a child dismissed to use the restroom? How are papers/supplies to be passed out and collected? What is the appropriate way in which to answer a question; throw trash away; or get a Kleenex? What is the proper way to enter and exit the classroom? Which way do we exit in case of an emergency? These are all questions that need to be answered in the teacher's/catechist's mind before the first class. The students need to be aware of the classroom procedures at the first class meeting to avoid confusion and disruptions to the lesson.

Preparation for Class – Is the lesson plan well-written? Do I have all the supplies I need for the lesson activities? What prayers will I be using? What will I do with the students who come early? What will I do with the students who finish early? What will I do if the lesson finishes earlier than expected? What do I do if the children do not understand? Does the lesson include a variety of activities that will capture the students' attention?

If the teacher/catechist is well-prepared and organized the students will be more likely to exhibit good behavior. When a teacher's attention is drawn away from students, students are left to do as they please. Lessons should keep students active and engaged. A wise teacher will have a reserve of activities (puzzles, worksheets, games, songs, and books) to use in the case when a lesson

finishes earlier than expected, or a student finishes the activity earlier than others. Discipline problems can be avoided when students are actively engaged in the lesson.

Familiarity with Program Guidelines – How are the students dropped off for class? Are parents required to sign children out of class? What do I do if a student becomes ill during class? Is there a policy regarding homework? Is there a discipline policy already established for the parish/school? What areas within the campus are "off-limits" to students?

It is important that you become familiar with the policies and procedures adopted by the parish/school before a problem arises. The school or parish program guidelines allow you to know the expectations placed on teachers/catechists, parents and students. The classroom discipline program you establish in your classroom should support the rules, guidelines, and philosophy set up by the school or parish program. The Principal or Director of Religious Education (DRE) is there to assist you in facilitating an effective classroom climate for the students.

When a Problem Occurs – When should I investigate a problem? Should the parents be called? How can I get this student to stop being disruptive? If I discipline the student, am I hurting his/her self-esteem? How did I lose control of this class?

There will come a time when a student will challenge your authority, or disregard classroom rules. An effective way to correct a poor choice of behavior is to: 1) Address the problem directly (unless this is a whole class problem, it is best to handle this in a way that respects the student's privacy. This will allow the student to be corrected without public humiliation.); 2) Inform the student that the behavior was not appropriate and reference the classroom rule that was broken; 3) Explain the consequence that will happen or that must happen as a result of the behavior choice; 4) Have the student recap what you said so you are sure he/she understands.

If a student continues to exhibit poor choices, or shows disregard for the rules, ask for assistance from the Principal or DRE. It may be necessary to contact parents if a child continues to create a distraction in the classroom. The Principal or DRE can assist you in handling this type of situation.

Prayer Experience:
One of the most important elements of faith that you will assist your students in developing is a prayer life. Children and youth need to know how to communicate one-on-one with God, and how to come together as a community of believers in prayer.

Many books are available on this topic that appeal across the age levels. The basic forms of prayer are the *traditional* – memorized prayers that can be found in the back of the religion text and in Catholic prayer books (Eucharist, Benediction, and the Rosary are traditional prayers); *spontaneous* – these are prayers that come from the heart, conversations with God that are spoken aloud; *guided meditations* – a prayer in which the teacher/leader verbally guides the class through imagery with a set goal/lesson/destination in mind; *contemplative* – prayer that centers around deep thought on one object or scriptural passage; *echo prayer* – the students repeat what is spoken by the teacher (this is especially popular with younger students); *liturgical movement*

or dance – prayer that is accompanied by appropriate symbolic movements; and *song* – King David sang his prayers to God constantly. Find some appropriate songs and ask your students to really mean it when they sing. Prayer is communication with God. Anyway the students can communicate can be a form of prayer.

The following are a few books that can get you started on integrating prayer throughout your lessons:

Blessed Are You: A Prayerbook for Catholics by Gwen Costello (2003)
Prayers for Feasts by Charles Singer (2002)
Bless This Day by Patricia Mathson (2002)
600 Blessings and Prayers from Around the World by Geoffrey Duncan (2001)
In My Heart Room by Mary Terese Donze (1982/1990/1998)
Praying With the Saints by Gwen Costello (1999)
Jesus, Teach Me to Pray: A Catholic Child's Prayerbook by Alison Berger (1999)
The Stewardship Rosary by International Stewardship Council, Inc. (1999)
Prayer Services for Catechist and Teacher Meetings by Gwen Costello (1998)
30 Rituals and Prayer Services for Catechist and Teacher Meetings by Alison J. Berger (1989)

Questioning Techniques:
Class participation is crucial to an effective lesson. Students usually fall into three general categories: 1) *the dominators* – these are the students who are sure of themselves and usually have the correct response; they are not afraid to risk the having the wrong answer and thus are usually first to raise their hands; 2) *the reluctant participators* – these are the students who will participate if they have to; they are usually afraid of ridicule or having the incorrect answer; 3) *the non-participators* – these are students who do not want to be in class; they do not want to share an opinion or attempt an answer. Each group has its own challenges when presenting a lesson. One way to assure that all students given an opportunity to respond to a question, the teacher can require students to reflectively pause before raising their hands to give an answer. This is something that seems awkward at first, but with training and practice can be beneficial to student learning. Before asking a question, tell the students that they cannot raise their hand to respond until you give them a "signal." The signal can be counting to five with your hand, or when you say, "Answers, please." Another way to encourage student participation in discussion is to ask the question and have the students share their answer with a specific person sitting near them. It is important that responses are positively affirmed. This will encourage increased participation as class continues.

In order to maximize student participation, the following strategies can be used: 1) Prepare your questions in advance – write questions for the concepts you want to reinforce throughout the lesson. Refer to the teacher's manual for assistance. Do not rely on adlibbing questions as the class progresses. This can cause confusion with the students. 2) Use an opinion question to begin the discussion – opinion questions allow students to participate without the fear of being wrong. 3) Vary the types of questions you ask – fact questions, opinion questions, "can you give an example" questions, questions that draw on prior experience, prediction questions, review questions, comparison questions, difficult and easy questions.

Lesson Planning:
Teacher's edition of the textbook will outline the lesson for you and give several suggestions and references on how to present the lesson. Usually, more information is given in the teacher's edition than you will be able to present. It is important that you carefully choose and plan the lesson you will present to the students. You will want to make the lesson your own. The students must see that you believe and have passion for what you are teaching. You, as teacher/catechist, must always be aware that you are teaching the Catholic faith and traditions as the Bishop would – you are not to teach the "Catholic Church according to your ideas." If you do not know an answer to a student's question, it is always acceptable and correct to say, "That is a really good question. I will have to look into that for you." We are all life-long learners on this faith journey – you do not need to know everything off the top of your head.

A lesson plan should be written so that anyone could come into your class and teach the concepts, text pages, and activities in your place. The lesson should contain four parts: *experience, message, discovery*, and *response*. To incorporate these elements you should have an outline written as to how your class will proceed. Do not rely on the textbook to teach the class for you. The textbook is a tool. You make the concepts ***real*** for the students.

Before meeting the students for class, carefully consider the four elements mentioned above by planning your lesson. The preliminary step is to determine the aim/objective of the lesson. What do you want the students to learn, and how will you know that they learned it? This can be written in one or two sentences. After the aim is determined, the teacher/catechist can plan how to get students to *experience* this concept in their own lives. This can be achieved through discussion, guided reflection, role-playing, situation games, or reflection on the student's prior knowledge. The next step of the lesson is presenting the *message*. This is the core of the lesson. It can be told by going through the textbook pages and activities, storytelling, lecture, Scripture reading, drama, technology, DVD, music, and by many other means. The *discovery* element of the lesson ties the lesson content to the student's personal experience. The purpose of discovery is to make the lesson/concept purpose-filled for the students – something they can really use on a daily basis. This part of the lesson can be enhanced by questions and answers, personal experience, imagining, and reflection exercises. The *response* section of the lesson gives students an opportunity to act or practice the concept taught. Effective expressions of response are prayer, music, writing, art projects, celebration, and most especially service. The goal of Catholic Christian education is to take the concepts learned and apply them to everyday living with the hope of building the Kingdom of God today.

Physical Environment:
The physical environment you create for your students is extremely important to student achievement. The classroom environment needs to be welcoming and conducive to good learning. No one can learn in a distracting, unorganized or chaotic environment. This can be challenging for classroom teachers who share a classroom everyday with the religious education program, and for the catechist who uses the classroom space once a week to fit the needs of the students he/she is blessed to teach. The following are tips that can be used to make sharing the space more practical.

Create a plan of how you want your classroom to look. How do you want the desks to be arranged? Where will the students gather for prayer? Is there some floor space available for small group activities? Once you have a plan, discuss the classroom set up with the teachers using the room. The classroom teacher who uses the room on a daily basis should have a floor plan of how the classroom needs to be assembled each morning. The catechist using the room in the evening or over the weekend will need the room put back into place for classes the next morning. It may help to label desks with a code (numbers or colored dots) so that placing the desks back in the correct order can be accomplished with ease.

Prayer Tables/Corners:
A prayer corner or table should be part of every Catholic Christian classroom. This is a small area that serves as a focal point for devotions or prayer. The table has a cloth on it. The cloth can be changed to reflect the liturgical season. For example a green cloth would cover the table during Ordinary Time, a white cloth would be used during Christmas and Easter Seasons, a purple cloth could be used during the seasons of Advent and Lent. Typically, the table would have an age-appropriate Bible, a rosary, a battery operated candle, Mary statue, and a crucifix. The teacher/catechist may add items such as holy cards, pictures, flowers, seashells, loaves of bread, wheat stalks, chalice-type cups, etc. depending on the content of the lesson or the season of the year. The items could be easily transported if the prayer table could not be a permanent fixture in the room.

Every classroom should have a bulletin board that focuses on the religious theme being taught. Classroom teachers have this element readily available to them. Catechists have more of a challenge with this. Science display boards (sold in office supply or craft stores) make wonderful bulletin boards for religious education classes. These boards stand up by themselves and have plenty of room to display student work or prayer petitions. Students can write their prayer petitions on Post-It Notes and put them on the display board, or the response to a question or drawing can be put on these notes to decorate the "instant" bulletin board as well. Post-It Notes also come in chart paper size. Students can color, paint, or glue items right to these papers. The large Post-It papers can then be "stuck" to any surface to create your own class bulletin board. These papers are easy to remove, too. Teacher editions of the textbooks will sometimes give ideas for bulletin board themes. Religious goods stores have ready-made bulletin board materials available.

Recognition of Learning Styles/Age-Appropriate Development:
Not all children learn in the same way, nor do they express what they know in the same way. As catechists, we are assisting to develop a very important part of a child – the spiritual and faith elements of their being. Thus, it is important that we use a variety of ways to convey the message of faith presented in the lessons.

Howard Gardner has identified several distinct "intelligences" that allow students to understand and relate to the world around them. These "intelligences" include: verbal, logical/mathematical, kinesthetic, musical, spatial, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Students who prefer the verbal form of intelligence enjoy expressing themselves in writing – they excel in journaling, providing a written answer, or writing a story on a specified topic. Logical/mathematical students enjoy working with puzzles and solving riddles to learn new information. Kinesthetic students

prefer expressing their knowledge through movement, dance, hand gestures, or any activity that involves moving from one location to another. Students who prefer musical intelligence learn well through music, song and rhythm. Spatially intelligent students enjoy learning when they can fit the "pieces" of the lesson together and can identify how the "pieces" are interconnected. Students with naturalistic intelligence learn new ideas by relating them to nature. Interpersonal students enjoy learning by interacting with others. They like to discuss a situation and work with others on a solution or before formulating their own opinion or analysis of the situation. Intrapersonal students need to have quiet time to themselves to process the information given. They would prefer to work alone rather than with others.

It is important that when catechists are planning lessons that they keep in mind the various intelligences in which their students learn and express their knowledge best – will challenging the students to explore and develop the other realms of intelligence.

Meeting the diverse needs of the students you are blessed to serve can also be addressed in your attentiveness to students while they are present in your class. It is important that the catechist walk throughout the room during the lesson to assure that all students are on the same page, or that they are completing the task properly, or have a clear understanding of the discussion. As the catechist walks through the room, student behavior and understanding can be redirected as needed. Students' needs can be most effectively dealt with if the catechist is fortunate enough to have a co-teacher or aide assisting with the class.

Integrating the Message into Life Experience/Application to Life

This is an area that is often overlooked by teachers/catechists as they attempt to cover ALL the material in a lesson and thus run out of time. It is important to give our students information/knowledge, but this information/knowledge will be better retained when it is connected to a real life experience that the student has encountered. Each lesson taught should include tying the material to real life experience.

This collation can be accomplished at the beginning of the lesson by assessing the students' prior knowledge of the subject matter by asking what they already know about the topic. For instance, if the lesson is on the Eucharistic celebration, the catechist could ask, "Who can share a time when you enjoyed a special meal with your family?" to introduce the lesson. The integration of the message into real life situations could take place during the lesson as well by pausing during the lesson and asking the students, "How would you <u>feel</u> if you were in this situation?" or "What would you have <u>done</u> in that situation?" The lesson can be tied to a life experience at the end of a lesson by asking, "So now, after hearing the story and discussing the questions, what are we called to do in our own lives?" or "How will you use what you learned in class today?"

Culminating Activities

A culminating activity is one that ends the lesson by tying all the key components together. This might include an art project that sums up the lesson. This serves two purposes – 1) it allows the students to process what has been taught in a creative way and 2) serves as a means of "evangelizing" to parents regarding the topic learned. The culminating activity could be learning a song, completing a worksheet, reading a story, or assigning a homework assignment or project.

Remember, the purpose of the culminating activity is to relate the important points of the lesson into a summary.

Student Assessment
It is important to be aware of what your students are learning and what parts of the lesson may need further development to improve student understanding. Assessment is a way of "testing" what your students understand. This can be accomplished in formal or informal/casual ways.

Formal assessments may come in the form of tests, quizzes, recitation of traditional prayers, memorization of scripture, worksheets, or written assignments. These are items that were usually "graded." But these are not the only ways our students can show understanding. They could participate in a play, or complete a project individually or as a group. They could create a story, poem, rap song, or piece of art related to the topic in such a way that you can assess that understanding was gained by the student.

Informal/casual assessments can be done instantaneously as the lesson is being taught. There are several fun and interactive ways to check for student understanding. Signal Cards can be used – in this method you give each student a green, red, and yellow card. Green means GO; yellow means CAUTION; and red means STOP. Students can monitor their own learning by letting you know they are keeping up with what you are saying and thus showing the green card; showing yellow would mean "slow down – I am getting confused;" and red would indicate, "I am lost – I need some help." The colored signal cards could also be used to answer questions such as green = always; yellow = sometimes; red = never. When using these cards, the catechist can see instantly where each student understands as they hold up the different colored cards.

Another variation of this instant response is the "thumbs up / thumbs down / thumbs sideways" approach. Thumbs up = yes/I agree; thumbs down = no/I disagree; Thumbs sideways = I am unsure/undecided. Any indicator, whether it is colored cards or hand signals could be a set response by the teacher, as long as the students know which indicator goes with the desired answer. For example: Thumbs up could mean Old Testament; Thumbs down could mean New Testament; and Thumbs sideways could mean both. Then the catechist would ask questions such as, "Where is the book of Genesis located?" or "You find information about the life of Jesus and the Apostles in this section of the Bible."

Individual white boards could also be used to check for student understanding. As the catechist asks a question, the students write their response on the white board and then hold up the board for the teacher to see. (It is best if how to hold up the board is established before the activity to maintain classroom control.) If the teacher does not wish for the students to hold up the boards, she/he may walk around the room and easily and quickly check to see which students had the correct response. It is recommended that the answer be given out loud, and clarification explained so the students will know if they are correct or not.

Student Cooperation/Self-Regulation
To have a successful and smooth running class, it is important that the catechist gain student cooperation. Behavior expectations must be given by the teacher at the beginning of the year, understood by all students, and consistently followed throughout the course of the year. Students

could assist with formulating the class rules – ones that would benefit all students allowing for a safe and productive year. Students should be involved in assisting with passing out materials and caring/maintaining the classroom environment as they are able. This would be different in a class of preschoolers than it would be for a class of high school students. Students should be aware of the classroom rules and procedures – what is allowed/not allowed; how are supplies distributed; what is the procedure for dismissal/arrival; how do we exit the room in case of an emergency. When students know, understand and comply with these expectations, the lessons being taught are more effective and enjoyable for all.

Relational Interaction

One of the most important components of being a catechist is how you relate to the students, parents, and colleagues. The best witness you can give is not solely by what you say, but how you act and treat others. Students watch your every move – you are a role model for them whether you mean to be or not. Thus it is important to work on sound relationship skills.

Student to Catechist/Catechist to Student – When relating to students it is important to remember that you are not their peer or their friend. You are an adult role model or a mentor to them. They look to you for leadership and to understand what is expected of them as they grow into adults. You may share appropriate portions of your life with your students so they gain a better understanding of who you are and the journey you have taken to this point in your life, but by NO MEANS do your students need to know EVERYTHING about you. There are some things that are private and personal to you that should not be shared with your students. You also need to make it clear to students that if they share something that can be harmful to themselves or others, you will and must share the information with their parents and the appropriate authorities (as the situation requires).

Catechist to Adults/Colleagues - It is important that you build relationship with the parents of the students you teach. These parents are entrusting you with their most precious possession, and it is your role to assist them in raising their children as Catholic Christians. They are counting on your help! Send notes home informing parents of what you will be covering in class. Ask for assistance on special project (be sure to check the Diocesan policy regarding volunteers). Be open to meeting with parents when concerns arise. Ask parents for assistance when you are having trouble reaching/relating to a student. Always begin the conversation with something positive that you have learned about their child, and then express the concern that you are experiencing. Chances are the parents know exactly what you are talking about and will have a solution to take care of it immediately. Approach parents as partners in this educational realm and realize you are playing on the same team -When this is established, the child benefits.

It is equally important that you make the effort and take the time to relate to the teachers and supervisors who work with you in the program/school. Together, you can assist each other by problem solving situations that arise in your classroom, share ideas for lesson plans, bulletin boards or prayer services, and support each other in your own faith journeys. Be open and welcoming toward colleagues, parish workers, and your catechetical director/principal. These people are working with you to provide the best program possible to benefit the students. Together we make a difference for our students.

BEST PRACTICES IN TEACHING IN RELIGION
Rubric Assessment Tool

	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
Commitment	Students **are very actively engaged in integrating their faith** with everyday living.	Students are **engaged in integrating their faith** with everyday living	Students are **seldom challenged to integrate their faith** with everyday living.	Students **are not challenged to integrate their faith** with everyday living.
Community	The school provides a **rich faith community** experience. Students **consistently participate** in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.	The school provides a **faith community** experience. Students **regularly participate** in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.	The school's faith community **is weak, and/or not a central part of school life.** Students have **limited chances** to participate in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.	The school provides a **very poor faith community** experience. Students have **very limited or no opportunities** to participate in communal prayer, worship, Scripture and the sacraments.
Conversation	Sharing personal, age-appropriate faith stories that support church doctrine is **actively encouraged and supported**.	Sharing personal, age-appropriate faith stories that support church doctrine **is encouraged**.	Personal faith sharing **may not** be age-appropriate or at times **in conflict** with church doctrine, and /or is **not supported**.	Personal faith sharing is **often not** age-appropriate, **in conflict** with church doctrine, and/or **not supported or actively discouraged**.
Compassion	**Consistent** opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.	**Regular** Opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.	**Limited** Opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.	**Few or no** Opportunities to discuss/demonstrate personal compassion and the application of Catholic Social Teaching.
Celebration	The school provides **multiple** liturgical *and* non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.	The school provides **multiple** liturgical *and* non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.	The school provides **multiple** liturgical *and* non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.	The school provides **multiple** liturgical *and* non-liturgical opportunities for celebrating faith in age-appropriate way that engage students.

	Highly Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
Creed (Doctrine)	The religion curriculum **very effectively teaches the authentic doctrine** of the Catholic Church.	The religion curriculum **teaches the authentic doctrine** of the Catholic Church.	The religion curriculum's **foundation in the authentic doctrine of the catholic Church is weak.**	The religion curriculum is **unclear,** or relies on material or guidance documents **not in accord with the authentic doctrine** of the Catholic Church.
Sacraments	**Regular opportunities** to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is a **critical aspect of school life** and community celebration	**Periodic opportunities** to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is **a part of school life** and community celebration.	**Limited opportunities** to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation are **not important in school life** or community celebration	**Few or no opportunities** to participate in the sacraments. Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is not a focus of school life, and/ or is not connected to the community.
Living the Christian Life	Challenge of living the Christian life is **fully integrated and evident** in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities.	Challenge of living the Christian life is **somewhat integrated** in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities	Challenge of living the Christian life is **minimally integrated and evident** in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities	Challenge of living the Christian life is **absent**, in the school's daily life and student learning and social activities
Prayer	Students are **actively engaged in a wide range of opportunities** for prayer in a **variety of forms**	Students are in **engaged in regular opportunities** for prayer in **different forms.**	**Opportunities** for prayer **are limited**, and the kinds of prayer **are limited**.	**Opportunities** for prayer **are rare**, and are **extremely limited in kind**.

Western Catholic Educational Association
Catholic Schools Accrediting Commission

RELIGION TEACHER'S SELF-EVALUATION TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR RELIGION

School Name:

School Code:

Name of Teacher:

Semester/Year:

The following are strategies with research based implications that have been identified from WCEA School Self Studies, Religion In-Depth Studies, supervisory classroom observation and school faculty input. This form is designed to assist the Religion teacher in keeping an account of curriculum classroom strategies utilized over a period of a semester.

Acceptable Strategies for Teaching Religion	Dates
Guided text lessons	
Oral Discussion	
Journal/Response writing and reflection	
Memorization (Prayers, basic church tenets, commandments, scriptures, etc.)	
Role play/dramatizations	
Discussion of current events issues from a Catholic perspective	
Scripture study	
Study of religious artwork	
Peer activities / group projects	
Integration across curricular areas (social justice issues in Social Studies; "cloning" in science)	
Oral presentations	
Research and written reports	
Peer tutoring	
Social justice units	
Liturgical year study	
Utilization of biblical text	
Story telling (flannel board for younger children	

Acceptable Strategies for Teaching Religion	Dates
Visual Aids	
Preparation for liturgies and prayer services on an appropriate developmental level	
Active student participation in liturgy and sacraments	
Modeling of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations	
Faith devotions (Marian, Lenten, etc.)	
Sharing of prayer throughout the day	
Prayer services	
Outreach programs (food bank, local and foreign missions)	
Retreats	
Participation in choir, altar server, lector programs	
Cross age mentorship in liturgy celebrations, service projects, etc.	
Varied prayer experiences (spontaneous, memorized, paraphrased, centering, meditative, reflective)	
Interaction with clergy	
Vocational experiences	
Celebrating faith traditions	
Opportunities to practice social justice	
Participation in poetry, art, song, and dance as forms of praise	
Conflict management/problem solving, through faith teaching	
Community outreach/service projects	
Opportunities for faith sharing/witness at school and at home	
Guest speakers	
Biblical re-enactments	
Sharing/praying for special intentions	
Textbook Assessment	
Observation and analysis of behavior, attitudes and participation	
Interpretation and application of ACRE testing results	
Rubric Assessment	
Portfolio Assessment	
Classroom discussion, journal responses	

Teacher's Signature

RELIGION TEACHER'S SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

This form is to be used as an end-of-the-year summative evaluation of a teacher of religion. It is designed both as a measure as well as an assessment of a teacher's effectiveness over the course of a school year. It should be based, at least, upon formal lesson evaluation, frequent walk-throughs, as well as general observations and records in relation to integration of the teacher into the overall life of the school.

Conferencing in relation to this form should be part of the teacher's end-of-the-year and should be included in the overall performance evaluation and placed in the teacher's personnel file.

School Code: **School Name:**

Name of Teacher **Date**

The Religion Teacher:	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
1. Gives clear witness of Gospel values in the classroom and at school-related activities.	☐	☐
2. Accepts and implements the school philosophy and goals.	☐	☐
3. Helps students see the relevance of Gospel values in their daily lives.	☐	☐
4. Makes an effort to update his/her knowledge of the Catholic faith and keeps current with the Religious Certification/renewal program.	☐	☐
5. Participates in building a faith community.	☐	☐
6. Prayer/Catholic Identity are woven throughout the school day.	☐	☐
7. Creates a positive physical environment for catechesis.	☐	☐
8. Shapes a social environment in which faith can be nurtured.	☐	☐
9. Utilizes creative activities in learning.	☐	☐
10. Develops successful lesson plans.	☐	☐
11. Manages positive behavior in the catechetical setting.	☐	☐
12. Assists learners to pray together.	☐	☐
13. Applies dogma to lessons and every-day life.	☐	☐
14. Provides community/outreach service for students.	☐	☐

Overall Comments:

Signature: Teacher

Signature: Evaluator

Date

RELIGION TEACHER'S WEEKLY LESSON PLAN
WEEK OF _____

LESSON TOPIC:

-

LESSON OBJECTIVE – Students will learn:

-
-
-
-

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATION(S)

-
-
-

GRADE LEVEL SUBJECT AREA EXPECTATIONS

-
-
-

LITURGICAL SEASON:	LITURGICAL CYCLE: Cycle

IMPORTANT FEAST DAYS THIS MONTH

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:

OPENING PRAYER:

Monday:
Tuesday:
Wednesday:
Thursday:
Friday:

KEY WORDS:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

ACTIVITIES:

Monday
Tuesday:
Wednesday:
Thursday:
Friday:

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Monday:
Tuesday:
Wednesday:
Thursday:
Friday:

MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES:

ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Monday:
Tuesday:
Wednesday:
Thursday:
Friday:

REVIEW:

Monday:
Tuesday:
Wednesday:
Thursday:
Friday:

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO REMEMBER:

HOME CONNECTION:

CLASS CONNECTION:

COMMUNITY CONNECTION:

RELATED PROJECT(S):

ASSESSMENT

EVALUATION:

RELIGION TEACHER'S WEEKLY LESSON PLAN (SAMPLE)

WEEK OF October 9, 2006

LESSON TOPIC:

- The Church Celebrates Seven Sacraments

LESSON OBJECTIVE – Students will learn:

- Jesus gave the seven Sacraments
- The Sacraments of Initiation
- The Sacraments of Healing
- The Sacraments of Service to others

SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATION(S) – refers to each school site SLEs:

-
-
-

GRADE LEVEL SUBJECT AREA EXPECTATIONS

Complete all applicable in Curriculum Guidelines

LITURGICAL SEASON:	LITURGICAL CYCLE:
Ordinary Time	Cycle A

IMPORTANT FEAST DAYS THIS MONTH:

October is the Month of the Rosary
October 15 is the feast of St. Teresa of Avila

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:

John 15: 9-12

OPENING PRAYER:

Use "We Gather" prayers
Monday: p. 44
Tuesday: p. 46
Wednesday: p. 48
Thursday: p. 50
Friday: p. 52

KEY WORDS:

1. Sacrament - p. 45
2. Sanctifying grace – p .45
3. Christian Initiation – p. 47
4. Common vocation – p. 47
5. Holiness – p. 47

ACTIVITIES:

Monday: Write a poem about one of the signs of God's love and presence in the world.
Tuesday: Draw a symbol of God's love.
Wednesday: Make cards for people in local nursing homes or design a magazine ad that tells about the Sacrament of Healing.
Thursday: Show and tell memorabilia from home.
Friday: Look up communities of Priests on the Internet. Identify their principle mission: Teaching, health care, missions, cloister, etc.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Monday: Paper and pencils/pens
Tuesday: Paper, markers, crayons, glue
Wednesday: Paper, markers, crayons, glue
Thursday: Materials from home
Friday: Internet access, paper and pencil/pen

MULTI-MEDIA RESOURCES:

Internet to look up Communities of Priests

ANY SPECIAL NEEDS:

STUDENT RESPONSE:

Ask: "We Respond" questions
Monday: Oral response
Tuesday Written response
Wednesday: Make cards for the people at the local nursing home.
Thursday: Show and tell memorabilia from home.
Friday: Look up an order of priests on the Internet.

REVIEW:

Use "Quick Check" on Monday and Tuesday
Monday: Oral Response
Tuesday: Written Response
Wednesday: Make cards for the people at the local nursing home.
Thursday: Black Line Master, page 43G
Friday: Use assessment on page 52 in the student text.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO REMEMBER:

Vocabulary
Names of the Sacraments
Type of Sacrament: Initiation, Healing, Service

HOME CONNECTION:

Bring in Baptismal Certificate, Baptismal Candle, pictures from Baptism, Baptismal gift/dress, Marriage Certificate, Wedding Pictures, Pictures of a friend or relative who is a priest.

CLASS CONNECTION:

Class Project: Mosaics of Sacraments, page 43c in teacher manual.
Start on day one.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION:

Identify an area of need in the community. Invite students to participate in a way that addresses this need. (Mowing the lawn of an elderly neighbor; baby sitting for free while a young mother does her grocery shopping; visit a sick person for one-half hour; look for a newspaper story that shows reconciliation; etc.)

RELATED PROJECT(S):

Class-wide service project for the year.

ASSESSMENT:

Page 52 of student text; mosaic project with presentation to the class; black-line master on page 43c in teacher's manual.

EVALUATION:

How did it go? What was good? What was better? What was Best? How will I do it differently next time?

Reference: William H. Sadlier, Inc., **We Believe**, Grade 5, Sacraments.