



Prayer - Planning - Possibilities

Key Indicators for a Healthy School in the Diocese of Erie

Based on the
**National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic
Elementary and Secondary Schools**

In the Diocese of Erie, a healthy Catholic school or school system is expected to have the key indicators listed in the document that follows. A school may not exhibit all the indicators at a particular time; however the hope and expectation is that schools will have potential to realize these indicators and can demonstrate measurable progress toward them. The indicators are organized within the framework of the *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*¹. The title statements are taken from the National Standards and the sub points are specific to the Diocese of Erie.

The key indicators provide a vision for healthy schools across the Diocese of Erie, a vision the diocesan pastoral plan for Catholic schools strives to achieve. They also provide a foundation for strategic planning at the local level. As schools conduct self-assessments and look at their school improvement plans, the indicators are meant to provide direction and establish a standard for achieving healthy status. The ways in which schools achieve a healthy status may differ depending on enrollment being small or large, location being rural or urban, or organization being parish or system. As schools update their current strategic/pastoral plans or formulate new plans, the key indicators describe what every school should strive to be.

¹ *National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*, Center for Catholic School Effectiveness, School of Education, Loyola University Chicago, in partnership with the Barbara and Patrick Roche Center for Catholic Education, Lynch School of Education, Boston College. March 2012.

MISSION AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

1. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school is guided and driven by a clearly communicated mission that embraces a Catholic Identity rooted in Gospel values, centered on the Eucharist, and committed to faith formation, academic excellence and service.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 1.1 The school is guided by a clear statement of its Catholic mission, including a focus on Jesus and an acknowledgement of the importance of spreading the Gospel.
- 1.2 The entire school community understands the mission and works to carry it out.
- 1.3 The school mission statement and symbols of the Catholic faith are visible throughout the school building.
- 1.4 Clergy and religious maintain a presence in the school whenever possible.

2. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 2.1 The religion curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the Diocese of Erie.
- 2.2 Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.
- 2.3 Religion teachers meet diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.
- 2.4 Faculty, staff and administration support and adhere to the official teachings, doctrine and laws of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 2.5 The Catholic faith and its implications are integrated into all subjects.

- 3. National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities outside the classroom for student faith formation, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.**

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 3.1 Students are offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the importance of prayer, the Eucharist and liturgy.
- 3.2 Timely, regular and age-appropriate opportunities for retreats and other spiritual experiences allow students to reflect on their life experiences and faith.
- 3.3 Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of social justice in action.
- 3.4 Administrators, faculty and staff serve as role models of faith and service for social justice.
- 3.5 The school culture welcomes and accepts students from diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and religious backgrounds.

- 4. National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.**

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 4.1 Retreats and other spiritual experiences for faculty and staff are provided on a regular and timely basis.
- 4.2 Administration and faculty assist parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.
- 4.3 The school is an effective vehicle of evangelization and ongoing faith formation for students and their families. The school actively encourages Catholic school parents, students and staff to attend Mass and be involved in their parish.
- 4.4 All adults in the school community are invited to participate when appropriate in the school's Christian service program to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

5. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school has a governing body which recognizes and respects the roles of the appropriate and legitimate authorities, and exercises responsible decision making in collaboration with the leadership team for development and oversight of the school's fidelity to mission, academic excellence and operational vitality.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 5.1 The school has an advisory board. The advisory board represents the diversity of the school community and functions according to an approved constitution and bylaws.
- 5.2 The advisory board ensures fidelity to mission, continuity and sustainability through leadership succession.
- 5.3 The school values its relationship with the bishop, accepts his authority, cooperates with the diocesan Office of Education and adheres to diocesan policies.
- 5.4 The advisory board engages in formation and ongoing training and self-evaluation for itself and the administration to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.

6. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school has qualified administration empowered by the governing body to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 6.1 School administrators meet national, state and diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leaders of the school.
- 6.2 The school administration articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, and engages the school community to maintain a school culture that embodies that mission and vision.
- 6.3 A vibrant collaborative spirit guides the relationship among the principal, teachers and staff.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

7. *National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills and Gospel values, implemented through effective instruction.*

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 7.1 The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.
- 7.2 The school is accredited by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges.
- 7.3 The curriculum is comprehensive in scope. Opportunities are provided to enrich the academic program and support the development of the whole child, including but not limited to music, international language, art, drama, physical education and athletics.
- 7.4 Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers and socially responsible global citizens.
- 7.5 Current technology and educational resources are used effectively to enhance learning in an integrated manner throughout the curriculum.
- 7.6 Students are taught by qualified, certified teachers committed to the mission of the school who are enthusiastic, life-long learners using effective teaching methods.
- 7.7 Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.

8. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school uses school-wide assessment methods and practices to document student learning and program effectiveness, to make student performances transparent and to inform the continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 8.1 Appropriate analysis of school-wide and student data is used to monitor, review and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs; to plan for continued and sustained student growth; and to monitor and assess faculty performance.
- 8.2 Faculty use a variety of curriculum-based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning including formative, summative, authentic performance and student self-assessment.

9. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enrich the academic program and support the development of student and family life.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 9.1 Guidance services, wellness programs and behavior management programs provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.
- 9.2 Co-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to further identify and develop their gifts and talents and to enhance their creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical and spiritual capabilities.

OPERATIONAL VITALITY

10. ***National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school provides a feasible three to five-year financial plan that includes both current and projected budgets and is the result of a collaborative stewardship.***

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 10.1 The school operates with a balanced budget, follows ethical principles in its business practices and adheres to diocesan policies regarding financial accounting. The budgets are filed on a timely basis and financial obligations are paid on a timely basis.
- 10.2 A realistic three to five-year financial plan and projection is updated annually.

10.3 Tuition, including all sources of tuition assistance (e.g. EITC, endowment, etc.) and fees account for a minimum of 50 percent of annual revenue. Uncollected tuition is limited to five percent of billed tuition.

10.4 Schools have a preferred class enrollment of 20 to 25 students (maximum of 30 students) to ensure viability. The school retains 90 percent or more of its students each year.

10.5 Development and fundraising revenue equals 10 percent or more of annual revenue.

10.6 Schools take advantage of funds available from state and federal sources as well as EITC funding, private foundations and corporate philanthropy. The school has an endowment fund which is regularly promoted.

11. National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school operates in accord with published human resource/personnel policies, developed in compliance with diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies, which affect all staff and provide clarity for responsibilities, expectations and accountability.

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

11.1 The school provides just compensation for employees in accordance with diocesan policies.

11.2 All elements of school leadership – pastor(s), principal, advisory board – understand their respective roles and fulfill their responsibilities.

12. National Benchmark: An excellent Catholic school develops and maintains a facilities, equipment and technology management plan designed to continuously support the implementation of the educational mission of the school.

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

12.1 The school facility is safe, attractive and in good repair. The school has a facilities plan that supports the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.

12.2 The annual budget supports facilities, equipment and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements and replacement.

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

Indicators for Diocese of Erie

- 13.1 The school develops and implements an advancement plan and budget that addresses essential elements of annual fund, alumni support, major gifts program and planned giving.
- 13.2 The school establishes and implements a multi-year enrollment management plan that effectively addresses marketing for enrollment, recruitment activities, admissions policies and student retention.