

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

2.6 Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music, and architecture.

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark requires that there be substantial evidence of the Catholic faith throughout the school. In addition to prevalent symbols of the Catholicism, a rich and diverse Catholic culture permeates the environment, and finds expression through the visual and performing arts as well as through music and architecture.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are symbols of the Catholic faith present throughout the building? (e.g. crucifixes, statues, pictures, etc.)
- Do these symbols communicate the essence of the school's mission?
- Does the school's architecture and use of space reflect the larger Catholic culture?
- Are Scripture-based motivational bulletin boards and/or posters present?
- Are samples of artwork created by students and/or faculty displayed in the school and posted on the school's website?
- Do prayer services include music and the arts combining the talents of students and faculty?
- Are there photos of students, faculty, and parents at events reflecting the Catholic faith and culture posted on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter and on the school's website?
- Do the art projects, school plays, and band/chorus concerts afford students the opportunity to explore the Catholic faith and culture?
- Are students making the connection between issues of faith and 3-dimensional artwork?

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III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

the school clearly and visibly demonstrates its Catholic culture and faith in an intentional way. Architecture, décor, and arts programs and projects reflect the Catholic faith and culture.

At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

the integration of Catholic symbols and expressions of Catholic culture and faith in the arts and architecture is expressed in a manner that distinguishes the school as Catholic to external observers. Students demonstrate a clear appreciation of the Catholic faith and culture through the arts. The arts programs and projects are designed to invite students into a deepening of their faith.

At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

the expression of Catholic culture and faith is not easily apparent to anyone coming into the school. Arts programs and projects are not rooted in the Catholic faith and culture. Students are not encouraged to deepen their faith through their experiences in the arts programs.

At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

it is difficult to recognize the school as Catholic due to the lack of evidence of the school's Catholic culture. While there may be a concern for the spiritual in evidence, it is not distinctly Catholic.

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IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Review the mission statement and clarify its distinctive Catholic character.
- Enhance the school's Catholic identity by augmenting the number and type of Catholic symbols in evidence throughout the school.
- Encourage faculty contributions to integrate the arts, music and prayer in lessons to exemplify Catholic culture and faith.
- Encourage students to explore their faith through meaningful opportunities to participate in art programs that reflect a Catholic culture.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Increase the prevalence and thematic relevance of Catholic religious symbols throughout the school. The school's mission and traditions ought to be reflected for the public by these symbols.
- Plan with the faculty to institute a reflective process where students are encouraged to co-create with God through their work and critical reflections on the arts.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Enhance the Catholic environment by highlighting the context of the school within the presentations of Catholic culture and faith.
- Make architectural adjustments where possible to highlight the central features of the faith in a structural manner. (e.g. placement of statues, shrines, chapels, etc.)
- Integrate the visual arts, performance arts, and music so the arts are viewed as a critical experience in accessing Catholic culture and deepening students' faith lives.
- Provide opportunities for students to think ethically, critically and creatively about the world around them through the use of the arts in partnership with the faculty of history, science, and literature.

V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)