

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.5** *The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.*

### **I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?**

Benchmark 6.5 points to the leader/leadership team as the instructional leader of the school's curriculum. In collaboration with the faculty, the leader/leadership team is responsible for planning, assessing, and monitoring the school's curriculum in a climate of continuous improvement. It is in this collaboration that the school's curriculum can be used to achieve and sustain academic excellence. The leader/leadership team guides and supports the faculty in understanding what is to be learned (curriculum), how it is to be assessed (formative and summative assessments), and how it is to be taught (teaching strategies). The faculty understands that developing and communicating their curriculum (through mapping or some other process) provides for the best use of their teaching time, and that teaching strategies must match the students' needs and the material being learned. The faculty collects classroom and school wide data that is analyzed to inform future instruction and improve student academic growth and achievement. The leader/leadership team regularly assesses progress being made around curriculum design, mapping, and revision that is supported by fidelity to best teaching strategies from professional development and adherence to the assessment plan. The leader/leadership team assists the faculty in setting subject and grade level academic goals based on the analysis of school-wide data. In referencing Benchmark 7.1, the leader/leadership team is responsible for making sure that *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 standards and rooted on Catholic values.*

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

Here are some fundamental guiding questions to help frame this item:

- Does the school have a curriculum map (or other form of written curriculum) for all grades and subjects that has been designed and/or lead by the school's the leader/leadership team in collaboration with the faculty?

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- Is there a professional development plan, directed by the leader/leadership team, in place with a multiple year focus that emphasizes best instructional practices in alignment with the school's instructional goals?
- Is there a school-wide assessment plan of instructional strategies used by the leader/leadership team to supporting the curriculum analysis and planning?
- Is there a school-wide assessment plan of student learning that is used by the leader/leadership team to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth?
- Does the leader/leadership team, in collaboration with faculty, preform an item analysis of standardized tests in order to determine student strengths and weaknesses and set learning goals?
- Does the leader/leadership team emphasize the use of a variety of formal and informal classroom assessments to judge the progress of student learning?
- Does the leader/leadership team direct a process for collecting, logging, and charting indicators of student progress in academic growth and the achievement of academic excellence over multiple years?
- Does the leader/leadership team regularly communicate assessment data on school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic goals to all stakeholders?

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

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the leader/leadership team orchestrates the creation and or adoption of the curriculum. Preferred instructional strategies are well known and implemented on a regular basis by all faculty. School wide data is gathered on a regular basis, reviewed by the faculty, and influences both instruction in the classroom and future professional development offerings to ensure a high level of achievement.

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### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the leader/leadership team implements a standards-based curriculum and establishes a climate of collaborative professional interaction with faculty to benefit student learning. The leader/leadership team ensures that resources of time and finances are allotted for faculty to engage in the development of research-based instructional strategies to support and enhance the school's curriculum. The leader/leadership team directs and monitors the effective use of the curriculum map to ensure vertical alignment. Teaching strategies are implemented throughout curriculum areas in a conscientious manner that reflects students' needs and the best means of helping students achieve the designated learning. The school-wide assessment plan outlines multiple standardized, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments to measure change, growth, and objectives. The leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the faculty, comprehend the purpose of various classroom and school-wide assessments and discuss accumulated data regularly in a climate of continuous improvement.

### **At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the leader/leadership team adopts a curriculum but are not yet able to link the curriculum to specific teaching philosophies and strategies. Few intentional connections are made between the curriculum and the standardized, diagnostic, or classroom-based assessments. The faculty review assessment data irregularly and few adjustments to instruction take place after reviewing assessment data.

### **At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the leader/leadership team has not facilitated the development of a curriculum for the faculty to use. Faculty members randomly select teaching strategies with little or no continuity. There is no school wide assessment plan and the school lacks a focus on continuous improvement. Rather, the school implements programs in a haphazard manner that does not connect to overall, standards-based learning goals.

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### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Begin to create or adopt a school wide curriculum that flows from the joint work of the stakeholders of the school.
- Begin to make a correlation between the curriculum and specific teaching strategies to be used for delivery of the curriculum.
- Decide on the school wide assessment tools to assess student learning based on the curriculum.
- Link the connections between the curriculum and student assessments by grade level and/or department.
- Begin to assess some of the critical areas of the curriculum on a regular basis.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Link curriculum, teaching strategies, and student learning in order to provide assessment data to support or revise curriculum based on student needs.
- Design and implement a professional development plan for teachers that responds to student needs based on the assessment data.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Facilitate the transformational change to a standards-based curriculum where teachers understand that textbooks, etc. serve as resources to help students reach set learning objectives.
- Create a climate of understanding among the faculty that vertical alignment of the curriculum is a process that requires a professional learning community advocating for collaborative continuous improvement.
- Implement teaching strategies gained from professional development offerings that directly impact student instructional needs and curriculum delivery.
- Emphasize that continuous improvement is a result of reviewing the curriculum, teaching standards, and the planned assessments.
- Measure the school's goals and desired learning outcomes by a sophisticated assessment plan implemented by all faculty of the school through vertical teams and/or interdepartmental collaboration.
- Apply the data received from assessments to regular improvement of the school's program and student learning initiatives.
- Regularly communicate progress using assessment data on school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic goals to all stakeholders.

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

Curriculum  
Continuous improvement  
Vertical teams