

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

7.10 *Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

“Jesus shared with you his teaching ministry. Only in close communion with Him can you respond adequately... Yours is a great gift to the Church, and a great gift to your nation.”
-Blessed Pope John Paul II

Benchmark 7.10 is about the creating an environment that supports the continuous professional and spiritual growth of faculty and staff. Professional growth is necessary to serve students with increasingly diverse learning needs. Personal spiritual formation is the foundation of the Catholic identity and culture of the school.

Professional development and faith formation offerings are cohesive, systemic, and directly tied to student learning. There exists a direct link between which data sources surface as critical learning needs, how professional development resources are allocated, and how faculty are held accountable for implementation and student learning outcomes and for faith formation of students. Professional development for all content areas including religious education are abundant.

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

Here are a few fundamental guiding questions which will help determine the extent to which the professional development described in Benchmark 7.10 is actually taking place at the school:

- What opportunities exist for faculty and staff to gather as a faith community?
- How does the faith formation of the faculty and staff impact the Catholic culture of the school?
- How are decisions about professional development made?
- To what extent is student learning data used to inform the professional learning experiences of the teachers?
- Does the school have a written plan that ties together professional development, resource allocation, and student learning outcomes?

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- What support structures are in place for individual teachers to implement professional development concepts and strategies?
- Do teachers have individual professional development plans tailored to their needs and interests? How do these efforts tie to school-wide goals?
- Apart from calendared professional development days, how are the implementation of knowledge and skills acquired through profession development discussed, analyzed, and adjusted throughout the year?

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

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

faculty and staff meet or exceed required levels of Religious Education Certification (REC), and there are frequent opportunities to gather in prayer, attend retreats, etc. Faculty and staff are conscious of social trends and issues facing students and create a learning environment that supports Catholic values in dealing with them. Assessments are in place to assess faith knowledge and formation. Professional development is tied to student learning goals and teachers are accountable for implementation and effectiveness. Professional development, data-gathering, and collaboration are used by all teachers and are tied directly to the continuous improvement efforts of the school. Teachers have access to and use support structures to implement new instruction and assessment strategies.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

Faculty and staff model a lifelong commitment to spiritual growth and make the spiritual formation of the students integral to everything they do. Faculty and staff have created a true community of faith at the core of their identities.

Assessment data is used to inform religious instruction, climate and culture. School improvement goals are built on staff consensus and based on student learning data. A vision of success for all students in all subject areas is realized through effective job-embedded professional development. Professional

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development resources are a priority in budgeting. Teachers are comfortable as action researchers and responsible risk-taking is encouraged.

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

faculty and staff have or are working on attaining the required levels of religious education certification but certification is pursued individually. Some teachers effectively integrate Catholic teachings and dispositions into the teaching of content areas. An overall school plan based on student needs determines what professional learning will be offered, but implementation is inconsistent and data is not used to hold teachers accountable for results.

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

faculty and staff do not have the required levels of religious education certification. Religion instruction is taught in “religion class” with little integration into other academic areas. Professional development is sporadic and unfocused, with no direct tie to student learning.

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2

- Require all faculty and staff to attain or have a plan to attain the required level of religious education certification.
- Assess the extent to which Catholic teachings are integrated into all areas of the curriculum and make that inclusion an expectation in the written curriculum.
- Identify the student learning needs of greatest concern and determine professional development based on those needs.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- In addition to all faculty and staff meeting or exceeding required religious education certification, provide opportunities for everyone to gather as a faith community.
- Make it a shared responsibility to provide social and emotional support for all students in the context of the Catholic faith

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- Design/acquire and administer assessment tools that assess faith knowledge and formation
- Collaboratively create a school-wide plan to improve student learning that is data-based and includes accountability measures for teachers and specific learning outcomes for students
- Allocate professional development resources to support implementation at the school and classroom levels

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Assure that adult religious formation increases and solidifies knowledge of the faith in a systematic and cohesive way through planned professional development and faith formation programs
- Be certain instructional practice improves academic student learning responsible for both religious education and academic achievement
- Prioritize the inclusion of opportunities for faculty, staff and students to grow in their faith and support each other in a true community of faith
- Use data to assess all areas of school life, both academic and spiritual/emotional
- Complete an annual review of student learning needs and work collaboratively to confirm or revise goals based on multiple data sources
- Allow teachers to self-assess their professional learning needs based on school-wide initiatives and provide job-embedded support
- Encourage responsible risk-taking and action research to engage teachers and challenge them to continually improve practice

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

Job-embedded professional development