

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

7.9 Faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values.

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Research indicates that the most important factor in student learning is an effective teacher. To be an effective Catholic school teacher, not only must a teacher know his/her students and effective pedagogy, but the teacher must also know the Catholic faith and be a model of Christ's love for the student.

Being a model of Christ's love and teaching children about the Good News of Christ is the most important thing that Catholic school faculty and professional staff do during the day. In order to do this well, faculty and professional staff members must be fully formed in the faith and have excellent knowledge of the Gospels and Catholic doctrine.

Students who attend Catholic schools are from diverse backgrounds. Planning effective instruction to meet the needs of an ever increasing diverse student population takes skilled faculty and professional staff who know their students. In order to assist students in meeting their potential, teachers must know about each student's family life, the family's religious beliefs, the child's family structure, and the student's socioeconomic status. Knowledge of how students fit into their community and society is important for faculty and professional staff if they are to build a relationship with a student that will facilitate the learning process. If "education is an intimate conversation between souls" as described by Richard Jacobs, then teachers must know the about the culture that forms their students.

In addition, teachers' knowledge of effective pedagogy and best practices which incorporate gospel values, and sensitivity to each child's context continually improves. The teachers' commitment to more actively involve students in content results in a greater depth of understanding and a more thorough application, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge. This results in greater academic growth and deeper faith formation for students. It is the faculty members' commitment to continuous improvement of professional skills that propels students toward academic excellence and a meaningful faith life in Christ.

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

Here are a few fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Does aggregate teacher evaluation data indicate that teacher instructional practices are effective?
- Does aggregate classroom walk-through data indicate that teacher instructional practices are effective?
- Does the school have a plan to help teachers grow in the faith each year?
- Does faculty and professional staff survey data indicate that they are receiving sufficient and effective professional development in educational issues, instruction, curriculum, the faith, and cultural sensitivity?
- Does parent and student survey data indicate that the instruction provided is effective?
- Does parent and student survey data indicate that faculty and professional staff are sensitive to students' cultures and knowledgeable about the cultures of their students?
- Does parent and student survey data indicate that faculty and professional staff are models of our Catholic faith?
- Is there evidence that worship and prayer opportunities are provided for all faculty and professional staff?
- Does student performance data indicate that students are benefiting from effective instruction in all academic areas?
- Is there evidence that students are growing in their knowledge of the faith and living the Gospel values being modeled and taught?
- Is there evidence that students and faculty and staff are respectful of all people and cultures?

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

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

faculty and professional support staff demonstrate annual growth in their knowledge of and in the skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values. The school establishes goals for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values. The school can provide some evidence of student growth in cultural sensitivity and Gospel values. Faculty members align professional goals with school goals and intentionally review their own progress and improvement in effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values. Evidence of these goals is visible in school climate.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

faculty and professional support staff consistently demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values. The school establishes integrated goals for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values and can provide evidence of student growth in cultural sensitivity and Gospel values throughout and at the conclusion of school programs. Individual faculty members align professional goals with school goals and intentionally review their own progress and improvement for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values. Evidence of these goals is visible in the school climate.

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

some faculty and professional support staff demonstrate growth in their knowledge of and in the skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values. The school can provide some evidence of student growth in cultural sensitivity and Gospel values. A few faculty members write professional goals and intentionally review their own progress and improvement in effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values. Evidence of these goals is visible in the school climate.

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

few faculty and professional support staff demonstrate growth in their knowledge of and in the skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values. Ongoing professional development is not an expectation to which faculty are held. There is little or no evidence of student growth in cultural sensitivity and Gospel values. Faculty members do not write professional goals for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and/or the modeling of Gospel values.

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Provide professional development for faculty and professional staff in effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, Gospel values, and the faith
- Create ways to measure student growth in cultural sensitivity and Gospel values for both faculty/staff and students
- Ask faculty and professional staff members to write goals to focus their efforts in the areas of effective instruction, cultural sensitivity and Gospel values

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Write school goals to improve instruction; grow in knowledge of cultural sensitivity, Gospel values, and the faith
- Ask faculty and professional staff members to write goals to focus their efforts in the areas of effective instruction, cultural sensitivity and Gospel values and that align with school goals
- Provide regular professional development in the areas of effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, Gospel values and church doctrine

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Write integrated school goals to work towards continuous improvement in building effective instructional practices, cultural sensitivity, and Gospel values
- Analyze student growth data to determine ways to improve instruction
- Analyze student data to determine additional steps to improve cultural sensitivity

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- Provide additional opportunities for faculty and professional staff members to learn more about Church doctrine and Gospel values
- Provide for additional ways for faculty and professional staff members to interact with student families in an effort to learn more about each child and their cultural background

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

Professional development