

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.1 *The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark indicates that the school has linked its mission statement to the Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools in a meaningful way. It is the responsibility of the governing body and the leadership team that such a consideration of the mission statement occurs. While the deeper components of the school's mission are to be contained in the foundational documents described in the Standard, the mission statement ought to contain unique, school specific language that aligns it with the Catholic mission articulated in the foundational documents of the school.

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

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

- Does the governing body and school leadership team speak about the mission of the school in terms articulated in the mission statement?
- Is the language of the mission statement aligned with the school's foundational documents?
- Has the school gone through a process where stakeholders have explored the heritage and vision of the school from a mission perspective?
- Is there evidence that the commitment to Catholic identity articulated in the mission statement is present within the school?

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1.1 The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.

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

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

the governing body and leadership team reviews and crafts the mission statement so that it uses language that aligns it with the Catholic heritage of the school. In doing so it clearly identifies the reason for the school's existence in the light of its Catholic tradition and the population it serves. For some schools this entails a specific commitment to the particular relationship with Jesus Christ it seeks to embody relating to its charism.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the mission statement uses definitive language aligned with the Gospel sense of proclamation arising from the defining characteristics and its Catholic heritage. The reason for the school's existence is phrased in terms delineating a commitment to the population the school seeks to serve.

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

the mission statement uses language that is not explicitly aligned with the Defining Characteristics, or its Catholic heritage, but has a Christian tradition implied in its reason for existing and the population it seeks to serve.

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

the mission statement is not aligned with the defining characteristics, nor does it use Christian language in identifying the reason for the school's existence and the population it seeks to serve.

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1.1 *The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Clarify the relationship of the school to the Catholic Church and express this relationship in a mission statement that contains more explicit Catholic language and indicates a particular audience that will be served.

To move from level 2 to level 3, the benchmark requires a mission statement consistent with the Catholic educational tradition.

- Utilize more specific Catholic language from the school's tradition, its founding body, or the Catholic theological, sacramental, or educational tradition.

To move from level 3 to 4, level 4 implies a particular manner of proclamation and evangelization that the school emphasizes throughout all its programming.

- Examine the school's spiritual underpinnings, and the manner through which it will conduct its work.
- Clarify the school's activities in a language consistent with the language of the mission.

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

Governing body
Leadership team
Catholic Identity
Mission
Mission Statement

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.2: *The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark indicates that the school has established a culture that uses the mission statement and the principles contained with it as the starting point for all school planning endeavors. The mission statement indicates the ideal to which the school aspires, and therefore is the basis for school planning.

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

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

- Do minutes of school meetings reflect a constructive use of the mission statement as a normative reference?
- Do the orientation materials for families, faculty and staff describe the school's mission in intelligible terms?
- Do announcements for new initiatives tie the initiative to the mission statement?
- Do school budgets reflect adequate resources towards advancing the mission of the school?
- Do financial allocations reflect assistance to serve the populations stated in the mission?
- Does the curriculum and extracurricular activities of the school reflect the values espoused in the mission statement?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.2: *The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.*

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

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

the governing body and leadership team of the school uses the mission statement to establish goals, and to engage a course of action when planning of a strategic or operational nature. Throughout the planning process key components of the mission statement guide the direction and the communication of the initiatives.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the leadership team and the governing body view the mission statement as an aspirational as well as an operational guide, and the mission statement and its key components move from a goal to being the method through which the school actually operates. The ideals, values, and audience(s) are used by the school leadership and governance to penetrate the daily operations of the school.

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

the mission statement serves as a goal that is distanced from operational use for the school for leadership team and governing body. For planning it is used as a corrective rather than as a motivation for action.

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

planning is undertaken with no functional reference to the mission statement.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.2: *The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Use the mission statement intentionally as well as the values implicit within it for planning and discussion among the governing body and the leadership team.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Utilize language and values from the mission statement in communicating the rationale and processes by which discussions are engaged and decisions are made by the governing body and the leadership team.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Make the language of the mission statement the operational language of the school in a realistic way.
- Make decisions as a leadership team and a governing body motivated by the mission statement and using the values implicit in the mission.
- Establish a deliberate manner to explain the work of the school in terms of its mission.

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

Normative reference
Mission statement
Foundation

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.3: *The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae) to clarify, review and renew the school's mission statement.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

As a regular practice (annually) the effectiveness of the mission statement as the guiding principle for the school's work is evaluated by the leadership team. In conducting this evaluation, all the stakeholders of the school are consulted to determine if the values, practices, and audience the school seeks to serve are authentically represented. This practice ought to become part of the school community's yearly expectation in order to evaluate the reach of the school's services, and the interplay of the stakeholders with the school's leadership team and school operations. The mission statement can then be affirmed as the yardstick against which school practice will be measured. If a substantial gap exists between the mission statement and the actual practices of the school the mission statement needs to be revised to reflect a new reality or school practices that conform more authentically to the mission.

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

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

- Are survey documents for the mission statement review process available for review?
- Is there a meeting with constituents scheduled on the school calendar to review the mission statement? Are there minutes for these meetings?
- Is administering the mission review process part of a specific individual's job description?
- Is there a process for processing the data for the review? For tracking the data from year to year?
- Is there a process for communicating the review's results to the governing body and to the school community?
- Can members of the school community describe how they learned the deeper meaning of the mission statement?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.3: *The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae) to clarify, review and renew the school's mission statement.*

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

At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

there is a regular annual process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. The process attempts to gather information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school's activities and decisions.

At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

there is a regular annual process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. This process is well publicized and the input from the community is significant. The results are tracked from year to year. The process gathers useful information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school's activities and decisions. Constituents offer input on the status of the mission statement's propriety for the school's work. The leadership team reviews the process and provides input to the governing body on the review process.

At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

there is a process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. The process attempts to gather information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school's activities and decisions. This process is engaged prior to major events or decisions affecting the total life of the school.

At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

there is no process to review the mission statement that involves the school constituencies.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.3: *The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school's various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae) to clarify, review and renew the school's mission statement.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Establish a regular process for reviewing the mission statement with the school constituencies.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Establish an annual process of reviewing the mission statement with the school constituencies.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Enrich the current process to ensure broad communication and participation of the mission statement review process where the many school constituencies are represented.

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

School constituencies

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.4: *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

The mission statement stands at the core of a school's reason for existing, and as such, is an organizational tool, an educational tool, and a tool for public relations and branding. The mission statement should proclaim to the public and to the school's constituencies what the schools seeks to accomplish. For this reason it should be prominently displayed in both verbal and symbolic ways within the school building, on advertisements, and on all school communications. This includes electronic forms of communication.

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

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

- Do the school's publications, web pages, and social media interactions reflect verbal as well as symbolic expressions of the mission and the manner in which it infuses all that the school undertakes?
- Do the school's discipline policies and handbooks reflect the mission statement?
- How is the mission statement displayed? Is it a permanent or transitional display?
- How does the mission statement tie together the visible aspects of the school?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.4: *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

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

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

the mission statement is a visible part of the school's presence in the community via stationary, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the mission statement is a visible part of the school's presence in the community via stationery, web sites, social media, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school, and is easily accessed online and through its physical presence throughout the school building. For the public it is closely associated with the school as an institutional presence. The school has integrated a symbolic sense of the mission statement into its physical structure and advertising.

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

the mission statement is displayed within the building and on school documents on a limited basis. It must be searched for on the web site, and is not easily associated with the school.

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

the mission statement is virtually unknown to the public and/or school community.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.4: *The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Post and publish the mission statement within the school and on school documents.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Make the mission statement a greater presence throughout the school and on documents.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Make the mission statement an essential part of the school's "brand."
- Represent the mission statement through the physical structure of the school in either a full or reduced form.
- Represent the mission statement on physical documents and publications as well as virtual portals to the school.

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

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.5: *All constituents know and understand the mission.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark indicates that the mission statement has permeated the life of the school. Members of the school community can recite the mission statement and explain its meaning and scope depending upon their age and experience. Examples of how the mission is incarnated into the life of the school and the lives of its community are readily available from individuals across the spectrum of the school community. People can describe and demonstrate a personal attachment to the manner in which the mission has affected their lives.

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

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

- Can school community members recite the mission statement from memory?
- Is the mission statement used at public gatherings of the student body?
- Is there a shorthand version of the mission statement that people can recite?
- Can people relate the values and vocabulary of the mission statement to instances of their lives in the school?
- What is the difference between the descriptions of the mission between those who are very involved in the school and those who are less involved in the school?
- How comfortable are members of the school community in using the mission statement's Christian and Catholic language in discussing the work of the school?
- Can members of the school community relate aspects of their personal development to the mission statement?
- Can members of the school community describe how they learned the deeper meaning of the mission statement?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.5: *All constituents know and understand the mission.*

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

At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

the school leadership takes responsibility through its formal and informal work to place the mission at the forefront of people's experience of the school. Where there is a lack of understanding of the school's mission steps are taken to explain it and allow students to experience it in action.

At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

the school leadership has taken care that all members of the community can explain the mission and how it affects their experience of the school. It may also have taken on a formalized program from year to year. For example, whereas Catholic Schools Week focuses on Catholic Schools as a national mission of the Church, local Mission Weeks could focus on particular aspects of the school's particular mission and the communities it serves. For new members of the community there is a formalized program orienting them to the mission and how it is lived through academics, activities, and social interactions. Members of the community have internalized the mission because they can easily describe their connection to its life within the school.

At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

some members of the school community understand and can explain the mission. There is no formal program orienting members to the mission, and those who are more fully involved in the life of the school seem to have a better sense of the mission than those who only attend classes at the school.

At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

the mission exists in documentary form, but does not penetrate the life of the school. Few individuals can relate it, or explain how it affects their lives.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

1.5: *All constituents know and understand the mission.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Inaugurate a program across all sectors of school life to communicate the mission statement and its inherent values. This may involve its overt use by members of the faculty and leadership team.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Expand the manner in which the mission is integrated into school life.
- Discuss the relevance of the mission at assemblies, meetings, and within classes to the particular events under consideration.
- Fashion a type of assessment where members of the community explain the mission.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Construct events when members of the school community demonstrate they know and understand the application of the mission to their educational, spiritual, and social lives.
- Publicize the events that best demonstrate the collective embrace of the mission by the entire community.
- Promote non-administrative individuals to take responsibility to orchestrate these events.
- Develop a system where the campus ministry team and a larger sampling of community members demonstrate that the mission is not just a function of campus ministry, but rather, an effort of the entire community.

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