

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?

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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.

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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