

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.7 recognizes that families pay to go to Catholic school and most need assistance on the possibilities available to support their vision. How do you pay? This requires the leadership team to work closely with families to ensure they all have access to comprehensive and practical information related to multiple sources for tuition assistance and how to seek out such funding, especially sources not directly related to the school. Also most family need to reflect and participate in guided discussions regarding how to plan to pay for tuition and all other expenses related to Catholic school education. Guided assistance in multiple formats, medium and languages is among some of the best practices.

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

This topic requires the board, the leadership team and external reviewers to ask questions such as:

- Is there evidence of focused meetings with families at the time of application, acceptance and entry focused solely on the cost of one child and the expected contributions from the family?
- Is there evidence of focused meetings on how to develop plans to pay the expected tuition (family contribution) for Catholic education?
- What printed materials are provided on paper, on the web page, in workshops or on webinars hosted by the school?
- Are there experts working with the schools to craft and create documents that tell the good news story regarding alternative sources of funding?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

- Are all expenses associated with the education of one child carefully listed, with payment deadlines and school policies regarding payment and non-payment, especially if “fees” are charge for special items?
- Are there planning templates and instructional opportunities to assist families with the creation of planning documents for their families?
- Who are the experts that are providing counsel for families as they plan on how they will fund and pay for the education of their children?
- Is there a published calendar regarding these events?
- Are these events accessible to all families being scheduled for alternative times, rather than the obvious one night a week so often selected?
- What other creative strategies are employed to honestly assist families, rather than punitive measures?
- Are there any established relationships with external funders, or scholarship funders?
- Is there an assessment strategy to determine whether the process in place is effective and to allow for continuous improvement and adjustment?
- Are all materials bilingual and accessible to all populations seeking a Catholic school education?
- Who is monitoring the local environment for reputable information regarding new sources of funding, payment plans and tuition assistance?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

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

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

there is evidence of a clear communication strategy to provide the information to families regarding the costs, tuition expectations and planning strategies for providing the funding necessary to plan for the long term. This strategy is clear, concise and communications reach all constituents ensuring access to information about tuition assistance and planning for long-term education of their child through graduation.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

communications plans to reach out and serve all constituents are well established and well designed. Families are receptive and participating with school staff to gather information regarding tuition assistance, payment planning. Each family is individually packaged with a financial plan, clear delineation of costs and tuition assistance and tuition payment expectations. Families understand the policies and provide feedback on all facets on a regular basis. Evidence of collaborative relationships with donors, funders and dioceses demonstrate the openness to growth and change of all aspects of programming for this aspect of sustainability.

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

the economic picture of the school is not shared with the families, where all understand the cost of educating one child and what the expectation is for payment from each participating family. Tuition assistance information is provided to those who ask or a narrow list of program is listed for all to investigate on their own using websites and other forms of guidance. Some form of arbitrary award system limits any local assistance. There is little or no active engagement or empowerment of families to learn and own the responsibilities of funding for Catholic education.

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

There are no efforts by the governing board or the leadership team to provide tuition assistance information broadly to all families as well as instructional opportunities to understand how to manage these opportunities. Each family is on its own to find the funding and in some cases will be assisted depending on who is contacted.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Develop strategies to share information regarding available tuition assistance with information regarding how to apply.
- Publicize information regarding payment plans.
- Host opportunities to begin the conversation regarding the need to prepare plans to pay over the long term.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Develop a clear communication strategy/plan on the “financing” of a Catholic education at your school.
- Include opportunities for meetings, workshops, and print materials and online resources.
- Create lists of tuition assistance available from traditional sources and lists of opportunities not widely shared, and perhaps unique to your local community or the talents of your students.
- Ensure that all families are fully informed and individually packaged so that they understand all the facets of funding their children’s education at this school.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Families are actively involved in the planning of their payments with school staff and consult on a regular basis.
- All communications are clear and in multiple languages allowing all who seek a Catholic education to apply.
- Directions are very well written and forms are easy and simple.
- Policies are well written, well publicized and widely accepted, known and understood.
- Plans to achieve level four are delineated by the board in collaboration with the staff and include the intentional review and revision on a yearly basis.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

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

Tuition assistance
Payment plans
Financial package