

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**2.1:** *Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirement and standards of the (arch)diocese.*

### I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark indicates that religious education curriculum is aligned with the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese. The Catholic school has a clearly stated written religious education curriculum that describes anticipated outcomes for each course and/or grade level and is aligned with the (arch)diocesan curriculum framework. School leadership ensures that appropriate resources (documents, texts, media, etc.) that support curriculum and instruction are available.

### 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 religious studies curriculum reflect a thoughtful use of the (arch)diocesan requirements and standards for religious education?
- If dealing with a high school: Are *The Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age* (USCCB) a guiding force in the selection of textbooks, and the content of the curriculum?
- To what extent are school's curriculum framework, the courses of study, the syllabi and the teachers' lesson plans integrated from year to year according to (arch)diocesan requirements?
- Are developmentally appropriate learning resources used at every level to advance curriculum requirements?

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

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

the school's religious education program meets the requirements of the (arch)diocesan directives for curriculum.

#### **At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

the school's religious education program indicates that learning activities are in place at every level to engage students in the curriculum in an active and meaningful way. Careful attention has been paid to the development of curriculum from year to year with a particular focus on the rigor of the course of studies and the age appropriate activities associated with the topics under consideration.

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

suggests that there is evidence that curriculum and instruction meet some of the requirements of the (arch) diocesan standards, but there is insufficient evidence that the religious education program is fully aligned with the requirements and standards of the (arch) diocese.

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

there is no evidence that curriculum and instruction are aligned with the requirements and standards of the (arch) diocese.

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### IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

#### **To move from level 1 to level 2,**

- Develop a religious education curriculum that includes and highlights some elements of the requirements and standards provided by the (arch)diocese.
- Provide resources, including but not limited to, texts and media, that support and advance those requirements and standards in instruction.
- Collaborate with the (arch)diocesan religious education director to develop the religious education curriculum.

#### **To move from level 2 to level 3,**

- Revise curriculum to be consistent and aligned with the requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.
- Provide learning resources including, but not limited to, textbooks, media, etc. that are aligned with the curriculum and support instruction.
- Develop a regular review system of these resources.
- Collaborate with the (arch)diocesan religious education director to strengthen the existing religious education curriculum.

#### **To move from level 3 to 4,**

- Develop a systematic review and revision schedule of the written curriculum using the cross-curricular elements of vertical alignment, scaffolding, and developmentally appropriate rigor and aligned learning activities.
- Align this review system with elements provided by the (arch)diocese.
- Involve and consult with the (arch)diocesan religious education director in the evaluation and on-going revision of the (arch)diocesan religious education program.
- Develop a review system of learning resources including, but not limited to, textbooks, media, etc.
- Provide faculty training on new resources.

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

Vertically Aligned  
Scaffolded