

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**3.3:** *Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.*

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

This benchmark is about schools creating a coordinated process for service that requires all students to participate. It is about harnessing students' natural desire to connect school-based learning with the wider world. It provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate central tenants of their school's mission by living their faith with others, for others, as Jesus taught.

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

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

- Do students have an age-appropriate understanding of why they are doing service?
- Do school leaders, teachers and students discuss how the mission of the school informs service program opportunities?
- Do service program leaders (including students) meet with charity leaders to understand the mission of the charity?
- Do students connect the meaning of the Eucharist with their community service?
- Are service projects designed to elevate students' understanding of social justice including an awareness of the systems that oppress others in your wider community?
- Do students collaborate in selecting the charities the school will serve?
- Are students given age-appropriate responsibilities in coordinating service programs?
- Are students given time to reflect before and after a service project, comparing their expectations with realities, worries with joys? Is this reflection structured?
- Are schools documenting their work, finding ways to measure the impact they are making in their service projects?
- Do schools follow up with charities to understand ways to improve on the support they want to offer?

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

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

all students participate in a service program that is integrated within the social justice teachings of the Church. Within this context students reflect on their experiences in the light of the Gospel values that animate the school's mission

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

all students discern from a variety of options and engage in service learning that is integrated within the social justice teachings of the Church. Matching their talents and interests with the needs of the community students reflect on their experiences in the light of the Gospel values that animate the school's mission. Students indicate how their experiences have broadened and deepened their understanding of their faith in action.

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

some students participate in service programs that are tied into the liturgical year. Opportunities to reflect on the experience in the light of the Gospel are sporadic.

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

students are not required to participate in a service program that incarnates the Gospel in a meaningful way. Reflection is not part of the service process.

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

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

- Initiate conversations with students about the mission of the school and ways to express it in service to others.
- Invite students to research area charities.
- Learn the mission of these charities and determine which charity the school is best able to support in this initial stage of developing a community service program.
- Organize ways the school can begin to support each charity.
- Delegate aspects of the project across the school, integrating social justice learning into the curriculum where appropriate.

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

- Deepen the school's partnership with a charity.
- Consider developing a service program that, over the course of the students' years, allows students to take on more sophisticated projects for a charity. This approach provides the school and charity to have a stronger mutually beneficial partnership, where the charity's deeper and more constant challenges are met by students and staff who have grown to understand the charity and the complexities facing those it serves.

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

- Promote service that is global and local.
- Allow students to reflect on Eucharistic themes of unity and diversity as students witness God in the lives of those so far away, who perhaps live in very different circumstances.
- Have students plan special liturgies featuring unique prayers and liturgical music native to that global region.
- Deepen the school's partnership with an area charity by utilizing students' gifts and talents to serve the charity.
- Encourage students to blog about what they are discovering about social justice, the steps they are taking toward solidarity with God's people, and what it means to be bread for others through their ongoing service with local and global communities.

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

Social justice