

## **Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks**

*7.6 Classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student and accommodating students with special needs as fully as possible.*

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

Benchmark 7.6 is about excellent instruction that engages learners while meeting their individual needs and assisting them in achieving learning goals. Instruction that involves students in active, cooperative processes supports them in transferring knowledge and skills from one content area to another and in learning at greater rates. Instruction that engages students' minds and has meaning for them leads to the development of critical thinking skills. Instructional practices should help to stimulate the natural curiosity for learning which exists in all students.

Well designed, differentiated and engaging instruction provides for student choice, allowing the student to take charge of his/her learning. In this type of environment, teachers facilitate and coach as students develop the skills to think critically, evaluate and create. Interdisciplinary units are constructed to provide students with opportunities to engage in authentic problem solving activities.

Instructional strategies that are designed to authentically engage students in problem solving, critical thinking, communication and creativity help students to develop a depth of knowledge that is very important to the learning process. Instruction must be differentiated according to each student's learning needs. Therefore, students who excel are provided with challenging lessons, just as the student who struggles is afforded supports that enable him/her to reach his/her full potential. Without this level of instruction, the school risks the ability to develop the whole child, as required by our church.

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

Here are a few fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Is student work that requires critical thinking and problem solving available for review?
- Do student and parent survey data provide evidence that students are authentically engaged in the learning process?

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- Does student performance data show regular and consistent learning for all students?
- Do classroom walk-through and teacher evaluation aggregate data indicate high levels of authentic student engagement?
- Is student work that indicates involvement in cooperative learning tasks and problem solving activities available for review?
- Do classroom walk-through and teacher evaluation aggregate data show differentiated learning tasks and assessments?

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

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

there is evidence of significant student involvement in meaningful learning processes. Technology use is integrated into almost all subject areas to both differentiate instruction and to create additional avenues for student engagement and critical thinking. Students sometimes have learning choices and a voice in demonstrating how they learn. There is some evidence that assignments are differentiated and differentiated instructional methods are observed in most classrooms, most of the time. Students frequently demonstrate an ability to evaluate information and analyze it for truth, accuracy, and relevance.

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

there is evidence of widespread student involvement in meaningful learning processes. Technology is utilized appropriately to both differentiate and to create additional avenues for student engagement and critical thinking. Project-based, interdisciplinary learning is evident in all content areas. Students have a choice and voice in how they demonstrate learning. Assignments are differentiated and ask the students to think, create, synthesize and engage. Students have the skills and responsibility to design, launch and maintain what they create. They consistently demonstrate an ability to evaluate the best means of accessing information and analyzing information for truth, accuracy, and relevance.

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

some students are involved in meaningful learning processes. Technology use is integrated into some subject areas to both differentiate instruction and to create additional avenues for student engagement and critical thinking. Teachers make decisions about how learning will take place with little input from students or regard to specific student needs. Differentiated assignments and methods are rarely observed. Student use of analysis and evaluation is sporadic and only encouraged for a small number of students.

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

there is little evidence that students are involved in meaningful learning processes that meet their needs. Instruction is not differentiated and the teacher follows a set curriculum that is inflexible. Special needs students do not receive accommodations. There is a “one size fits all” sense in instructional practice.

NOTE: Avoid scoring on this benchmark by counting. When the Review Team looks at evidence, they should be able to use good judgment about where the school currently operates.

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

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

- Provide education to improve instructional skills of teachers to increase differentiation practices in the classroom and monitor the implementation of these practices
- Provide professional development on how to use technology to enhance instruction and student engagement and monitor the implementation of the use of technology in the classroom

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

- Move from projects to project-based learning in order to increase student engagement and critical thinking
- Provide teachers with examples of best practices that increase student engagement

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- Provide teachers with examples of best practices that increase opportunities for student choice
- Provide teachers with additional professional development on the use of technology to increase differentiated learning opportunities
- Connect content to promote interdisciplinary learning

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

- Use technology in new and meaningful ways that are authentic and innovative
- Put policies, practices, and procedures in place to support increased and consistent differentiated learning to make it the norm
- Provide resources to assist teachers in developing engaging interdisciplinary units that meet the individual needs of learners
- Embrace the transformative nature of technology and structure the learning environment to offer instruction that is consistently differentiated and rich in critical thinking, synthesizing, and creativity

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

Technology

Media

Interdisciplinary

Project-based learning

Digital Citizenship