

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

**6.1** *The leader/leadership team meets national, state and/or (arch)diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leader(s) of the school.*

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

Benchmark 6.1 is about leadership preparation and qualifications for those serving as leaders in Catholic elementary and secondary schools. Each state does or does not set licensing (license, certificate or credential) requirements for private school teachers and administrators. In addition, each (arch)diocese, religious order, or independent Catholic school establishes its own preparation and qualification guidelines and requirements for school leadership. With this in mind, Benchmark 6.1 indicates that every leader or member of the leadership team is qualified to serve as a faith and instructional leader based on completion of a school leadership preparation program and/or licensing appropriate for the state of the school's residence and for faith-based school leadership in the diocese. The (arch)diocese, religious order, or independent Catholic school may include or modify the state qualifications or establish additional qualifications for school leadership based on local need. The spirit of Benchmark 6.1 is to indicate the necessity of both professional and faith-based school leadership preparation for those serving as the school's faith and instructional leaders.

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

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

- What are the national, state and/or local (arch)diocesan requirements for school administration licensing?
- What are the policies and/or directives regarding the licensing requirements of the school?
- Do the official records and transcripts of those serving in school leadership meet the national, state and/or local (arch)diocesan requirements for school administration licensing (license, certificate, credential)?

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- Do the job descriptions of those serving in school leadership specify a baseline preparation for meeting the national, state and/or local (arch)diocesan requirements for school administration licensing?
- Are school leaders held accountable for maintaining the ongoing professional growth to adhere to the requirements for school administration licensing?

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

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

the leader/leadership team possesses the national, state and/or (arch)diocesan professional credentials that indicate school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leader(s) of the school. The leader/leadership team renews these credentials as required in a timely manner.

#### At level 4- Exceeds Benchmark,

the leader/leadership team possesses national, state and/or (arch)diocesan professional credentials and participates in professional development beyond the requirements for renewal. This professional development supports their expertise in facilitating learning based on recognized best practices in the field.

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

the leader/leadership team because shows a minimal or inconsistent response to the requirements for possessing national, state and/or (arch) diocesan professional credentials.

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

the leader/leadership team does not possess national, state and/or (arch) diocesan professional credentials and shows no interest in or plan for achieving them in the future.

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

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

- Develop a plan for achieving the appropriate national, state and/or (arch) diocesan professional credentials and show interest in receiving the credentials by active and timely implementation of the plan. Completion of the plan becomes a priority for continued employment and is achieved within the parameters established by the governing body.

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

- Implement the requirement that the leader/leadership team achieve the appropriate national, state and/or (arch) diocesan professional credentials and actively develop a professional growth plan for timely renewal.

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

- Maintain and regularly renew the appropriate national, state and/or (arch) diocesan professional credentials and engage in ongoing professional development to strengthen professional expertise and faith-based leadership skills beyond minimum requirements for maintaining the credentials.

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

Credentials  
Licensing

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

**6.2** *The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.*

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

Benchmark 6.2 is about a leader/leadership team first developing a clear understanding of their vision and mission internally. Then the leader/leadership team creates a plan on how to create understanding in teachers, students, parents, parishioners and the wider community. After creating this understanding in the larger group, the leader/leadership team actively communicates how actions within the school tie back to the mission. In some situations, a written plan guides these communications until the overall community buys in to the vision and mission of the school and actively uses the vision and mission to guide their decision making process. The school leader/leadership team lives the vision and mission and easily relates these to the daily activities in their school. They regularly share how they reach their mission via written and verbal communication with all constituents. They regularly invite the school community to participate in connecting the mission with the school's lived experience and practice, and provide opportunities to do so.

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

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

- Is there evidence that conversations have taken place about the vision and mission with the leader/leadership team?
- Is there evidence that faculty and staff have discussed what the vision and mission really mean, or how they translate to concrete actions?
- Is there evidence that vision and mission statements are posted around the school, in publications, and referred to in meetings?
- Do members of the community recall references to the school's vision and mission at meetings and or public events held at the school?

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

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- Do students display an understanding of the school’s vision and mission in their discussions and work products?
- Do articles or community recognitions of the school include references to the school’s vision and mission?
- Are the school’s vision and mission evident in their procedures and guidelines for co-curricular and extra-curricular activities?
- Do the board’s by-laws reflect the school’s vision and mission?
- Do postings on social media reflect the school’s vision and mission?
- Can visitors to the school quickly understand what the vision and mission of the school are?
- Do surveys of the school community demonstrate a knowledge and adherence to the school’s vision and mission?

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

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

the leader/leadership team fully understands the vision and mission and uses this knowledge to guide their efforts within the school. The leader/leadership team provides consistent communication to the community about these issues. The leader/leadership team uses their vision and mission to guide decisions, and welcomes and includes the school community in making sure the mission and vision are lived.

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

the leader/leadership team fully understands the vision and mission. The vision and mission serve as a major factors in decision-making. When communicating with students, staff, parents and community members, the leader/leadership team frequently communicate the vision and relate it to the task at hand or subject of the conversation. A written plan explains how

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the leader/leadership team will communicate the vision and mission to all constituencies and engage them in integrating mission and vision into school life. Members of the school community can articulate and affirm what the mission means and how it is lived.

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

the leader/leadership team recognizes the value of communicating mission and vision, but communication is not clear and/or inconsistent and/or infrequent. No written plan exists for spreading the vision and mission to their constituencies and helping them integrate it into school life. The leader/leadership team uses the vision and mission as a touchstone for some decisions.

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

the leader/leadership team does not have an articulate understanding of the vision and mission of the school. The leader/leadership team does not provide leadership on integrating the vision and mission into the daily actions of the school. The decisions made by the leader/leadership team do not intentionally reflect the vision and mission of the school. Virtually no communication is distributed to the school's constituents regarding the school's vision and mission.

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

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

- Develop a basic understanding of the vision and mission and begin to connect the vision and mission to decision-making.
- Share with the stakeholders how the vision and mission affects major decisions in areas such as professional development, textbook selection, and other elements of the school's program.
- Engage the stakeholders of the school community such as the school board, pastor, faculty, and parents in discussions regarding the vision and mission for the purpose of common understanding.

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

- Develop a clear and articulate understanding of the school's vision and mission by all stakeholders.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.2** *The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.*

- Relate the actions of the leader/leadership team directly to the vision and mission.
- Communicate to all stakeholders how mission and vision connects to their experiences of the school, using multiple available resources.
- Create opportunities for stakeholders such as the school board, faculty, and students to contribute to the vision and mission.

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

- Integrate the vision and mission into every action and decision of all school programs through the work of all stakeholders. The entire school community recognizes and uses the school's vision and mission as a guidepost for planning and decision-making.

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

Vision  
Mission

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

*6.3 The leader/leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of faculty and staff in compliance with (arch) diocesan policies and or religious congregation sponsorship policies.*

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

Benchmark 6.3 is about the creation and development of a school's faculty and staff. No action by a leader/leadership team is more important than recruiting quality faculty and staff and developing them to their fullest potential. The leader/leadership team are responsible for deliberating and researching the best means of attracting and developing faculty and staff over multiple years using written plans for both faith formation and academic development. Assessment practices for faculty and staff are outlined in policy and procedure handbooks and include formal and formative tools for evaluating performance. The data gathered from faculty and staff assessment tools drive meaningful conversations that lead to changes in instruction, job performance, and future professional development goals for the individual teacher or staff member and school.

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

Here are some fundamental guiding questions that will help frame this item:

- What means does the leader/leadership team use to recruit faculty and staff?
- Does the leader/leadership team use formal and informal means of recruiting faculty such as outreach to university teacher development programs and networking with other educational leaders?
- Does the leader/leadership team seek the placement of student teachers to help develop relationships with prospective teaching candidates?
- Does the leader/leadership team encourage high school students to consider teaching at a Catholic school as a vocation?

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- Do interview procedures exist for faculty and staff positions? Do interview questions and protocols include focus on both professional qualifications and fit with mission? Are appropriate faculty/staff members asked to join the interview process?
- Are reference checks completed on all candidates?
- Can faculty and staff explain the assessment process used for annual performance review?
- Has the leader/leadership team clearly articulated and expressed what types of instruction they expect to witness in the classroom?
- Are examples of formal and informal observations present in the faculty/staff member's personnel files for multiple years?
- Are examples of growth plans present in the faculty/ staff member's personnel file?
- Do the goals on the growth plan relate to individual and school areas of need?
- Is there a written professional development plan for faculty that includes dates, subject matter, and name of presenters for topic sessions attended?
- Is there evidence that the topics for the professional development relate to concrete data on student needs?
- Does the professional development plan have a 2-3 year focus to ensure all faculty members adopt appropriate teaching strategies and practices?
- Are teachers asked to implement the professional development and share their experience with colleagues?
- Is time allotted for faith formation annually in the professional development calendar for faculty and staff?
- To what extent is a spiritual community developed among the faculty and staff?

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- Are sufficient funds budgeted annually for faculty and staff gatherings and retreats that promote the development of a spiritual community?
- Are sufficient funds budgeted annually to support professional development activities that meet the targeted individual performance expectation goals for faculty and staff?
- Do formal or formative assessments of faculty and staff relate to the professional development topic of individual performance expectation goals?
- Do formative assessments for faculty and staff occur regularly and provide immediate feedback?

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

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

the leader/leadership team has a defined recruitment plan to attract quality candidates for all faculty and staff positions. The professional development plan for faculty and staff is linked to student needs and ongoing school improvement. The school defines professional development as opportunities for both spiritual and professional growth for all faculty and staff. Time allocation in the school calendar signifies a commitment to both spiritual and professional growth of faculty and staff. The annual budget signifies a financial commitment to support both spiritual and professional growth of the faculty and staff. A policy and procedure handbook for performance evaluation provides for regular, timely, and appropriate assessment of and feedback for faculty and staff. Faculty and staff are regularly assessed and provided professional development to support the fulfillment of their job responsibilities.

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

in addition to the elements of level 3, the leader/leadership team has designed and effectively implemented a plan to develop future faculty and staff members. All professional growth plans for faculty and staff exhibit alignment with student learning needs and ongoing school improvement. Professional

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development and spiritual formation topics and activities serve the faculty and staff individually and as a professional learning community. The school-wide spiritual plan provides regular opportunities for faculty and staff to learn ways to integrate faith and professional practice into their specific job responsibilities. The performance evaluation process for faculty and staff uses both formal and formative assessment tools to provide ongoing feedback and professional growth. The feedback to faculty regularly relates professional development topics and activities to professional practice in the classroom and inspires reflection on the faculty member's part. The performance evaluation process for faculty and staff includes the creation of an individual professional growth plan that requires performance data to be used in forming an annual summative evaluation. The annual summative evaluation includes goals for the next school year related to performance expectations and supporting professional growth. All individual performance and professional growth plans are in alignment with and support the mission and vision of the school.

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

the leader/leadership team's plan for recruiting and attracting faculty and staff is limited and inconsistent. The school-wide professional growth plan is not clearly articulated. An inordinate amount of professional development time for teachers is spent working on operational and organizational tasks such as entering grades or preparing for parent teacher conferences. Teachers inconsistently relate information from professional development topics and activities to student learning and ongoing school improvement. Little, if any, reflection on professional development topics and activities takes place among the faculty within learning teams or departments for the benefit of student learning and program improvement. Faith formation topics and activities for faculty and staff may occur occasionally but are not a part of an annual spiritual growth plan. The leader/leadership team has a limited understanding of the goals and methods appropriate for an effective professional performance review process of both faculty and staff. Professional performance reviews of faculty and staff occur infrequently and tend to use only formal summative evaluation methods that do not ask faculty and staff to reflect on their professional practice.

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

the leader/leadership team does not have a recruiting plan. Professional development is not related to student achievement data and seldom occurs. No faith formation events are planned for faculty and staff. Faculty and staff performance are not assessed and little, if any, data about their performance is collected.

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

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

- Create a plan for recruiting well-qualified faculty and staff.
- Plan and implement professional development that includes faith formation and professional growth activities.
- Adopt an evaluation policy handbook.
- Conduct regular performance reviews of the faculty and staff.

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

- Develop a wide range of contacts and networks to attract well-qualified candidates for position openings.
- Create professional development topics that reflect documented student needs so that teachers have resources to implement strategies to improve student learning.
- Assess and provide feedback for faculty and staff through both formal and informal tools on a regular basis.
- Demonstrate reflective professional practice.

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

- Cultivate qualified candidates from a variety of resources to fill immediate faculty and staff position openings and future hiring needs.
- Relate professional development topics and activities directly to programs for immediate impact related to continuous improvement in student learning.
- Implement, reflect on, and assess the professional development topics and activities used to improve student learning.

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- Evaluate teacher performance using a process that includes individual growth plans, formal and informal observations, and an end of year summative evaluation.
- Reflect on professional practice regularly with colleagues and adjust instruction based on reflective practice that is focused on the improvement of student learning.
- Regularly assess the effectiveness of processes for faculty and staff development, formation, and performance assessment, using appropriate standards and criteria.

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

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

*6.4 The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.*

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

Benchmark 6.4 is about the establishment of a collaborative professional environment at all levels of the school community. This collaborative professional environment creates networks of stakeholders dedicated to excellence in all elements of the school's program. These networks are engaged in continuous improvement of the school's program as an ongoing focus of their talent and expertise. The work and outcomes of the networks are shared with the full school community with collaboration at all levels to advance the school's excellence. The school leader/leadership team serves as the initiator, promoter, planner, and supporter of collaboration among the school's stakeholders and provides them with clearly delineated goals, objectives, assessment protocols and budgets.

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

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

- Is there a documented structure describing each stakeholder collaborative network that includes member lists, meeting minutes, schedules, and products?
- Does each network group have a mission, goals, and objectives that are in alignment with the school's mission, goals, and objectives?
- Does the school community celebrate the achievements of network group collaboration through public recognition events?
- Is there evidence that the school's budget supports collaboration of network groups through allocation of financial resources for space, time, and hospitality?
- Is there evidence that the school's budget supports collaboration of network groups through allocation of financial resources to promote professional development, network meetings and stipends for outside experts?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.4** *The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.*

- Is there evidence of the shared use of outside experts?
- Is there evidence that network groups come together to share ideas and products?
- Is there time built into the school schedule for faculty professional collaboration?
- Is there evidence that the academic program has improved as a result of the collaborative network's effort to engage in continuous improvement?
- Is there evidence based on assessment that improvement in achieving student learning outcomes is directly related to the professional collaborative network?
- To what extent has collaboration been made more efficient and transparent by using online network tools for communication and record keeping?
- Has the school engaged in collaboration with other schools to establish a regional network in support of the common issues, concerns, and objectives?

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

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

the leaders/leadership team has established and supports networks of collaboration at all levels of the school community. These collaborative networks are present, functional, and engaged in communication to support program excellence. The leader/leadership team ensures that the school's schedule, budget, goals, and objectives support a culture of community and collaboration.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the leaders/leadership team has established and supported networks of collaboration at all levels of the school community. These collaborative networks are present, functional, and engaged in communication to support program excellence in all areas. All networks are focused on advancing

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program excellence and communicate progress with other networks regularly. All networks share resources, talent, and ideas, and outcomes to strengthen the bond of collaboration and improve the school. The leader/leadership team ensures that the school's schedule, budget, goals, and objectives support a culture of community and collaboration. It is evident that this culture exists and that the stakeholders consider it critical to ongoing program improvement.

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

the leaders/leadership team has established some structure for collaboration but structure for networks remains in a formative stage. Although the leader/leadership team supports networks of collaboration at all levels of the school community, there exists a cultural debate as to value of full collaboration. These collaborative networks are only partially present, somewhat functional, and infrequently engaged in communication. Stakeholders are in agreement to support program excellence but the direction to follow is not commonly understood or accepted. The leader/leadership team struggles to ensure that the school's schedule, budget, goals, and objectives support a culture of community and collaboration.

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

autonomous individuals and groups that struggle to communicate their goals, objectives, and outcomes with each other in implementing the school's program is the norm.

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

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

- Develop a culture of collaboration through regular communication and team-building strategies.
- Design and implement structures for professional collaborative networks on a gradual basis building upon the success of supportive groups within the school.
- Begin a planned and formative process for collaboration to be implemented by the various stakeholder groups across the school.

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

**6.4** *The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.*

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

- Build on the planned and formative process for collaboration by developing the elements necessary for the cultural presence of a collaborative professional environment.
- Implement a process of regular meetings and communication for the various network groups that supports and links the ideas and results of their work with ideas and results of other groups.
- Utilize a system of sharing ideas and resources within the network to promote collaboration and mutual support for ongoing school improvement.
- Work to address feelings of autonomy and individual private agendas that may impede progress in focusing on the common goals that support program excellence.
- Ignite the art of consensus building as a practice for decision-making for all network groups.
- Develop and implement a method of assessing progress in implementing this collaborative model.
- Communicate to the entire school community that assessment of this collaborative model will be ongoing in order to maintain the integrity of the process.
- Develop schedules and design the school's budget to support a culture of collaboration.

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

- Provide evidence and communicate to the entire school community that a culture of collaboration has been in place for three to five years and has accomplished several program goals.
- Provide evidence and communicate to the entire school community that the successful implementation of this collaborative model is directly linked to the successful achievement of program goals.
- Provide evidence and communicate to the entire school community that sharing of resources and ideas has become a regular and expected function of the school community networks.
- Provide evidence and communicate to the entire school community that decision making at the group and community level is the result of fact-finding, discussion, and consensus that represents transparency through open lines of communication.
- Provide evidence and communicate to the entire school community that the school's collaborative culture has resulted in a positive impact on student learning.

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

**6.4** *The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.*

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

Collaboration  
Communication  
Networks  
Vertical Teaming  
Transparency  
Consensus  
Professional Learning Community

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.5** *The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.*

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

Benchmark 6.5 points to the leader/leadership team as the instructional leader of the school's curriculum. In collaboration with the faculty, the leader/leadership team is responsible for planning, assessing, and monitoring the school's curriculum in a climate of continuous improvement. It is in this collaboration that the school's curriculum can be used to achieve and sustain academic excellence. The leader/leadership team guides and supports the faculty in understanding what is to be learned (curriculum), how it is to be assessed (formative and summative assessments), and how it is to be taught (teaching strategies). The faculty understands that developing and communicating their curriculum (through mapping or some other process) provides for the best use of their teaching time, and that teaching strategies must match the students' needs and the material being learned. The faculty collects classroom and school wide data that is analyzed to inform future instruction and improve student academic growth and achievement. The leader/leadership team regularly assesses progress being made around curriculum design, mapping, and revision that is supported by fidelity to best teaching strategies from professional development and adherence to the assessment plan. The leader/leadership team assists the faculty in setting subject and grade level academic goals based on the analysis of school-wide data. In referencing Benchmark 7.1, the leader/leadership team is responsible for making sure that *the curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards, and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on standards and rooted on Catholic values.*

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

Here are some fundamental guiding questions to help frame this item:

- Does the school have a curriculum map (or other form of written curriculum) for all grades and subjects that has been designed and/or lead by the school's the leader/leadership team in collaboration with the faculty?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*6.5 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.*

- Is there a professional development plan, directed by the leader/leadership team, in place with a multiple year focus that emphasizes best instructional practices in alignment with the school's instructional goals?
- Is there a school-wide assessment plan of instructional strategies used by the leader/leadership team to supporting the curriculum analysis and planning?
- Is there a school-wide assessment plan of student learning that is used by the leader/leadership team to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth?
- Does the leader/leadership team, in collaboration with faculty, preform an item analysis of standardized tests in order to determine student strengths and weaknesses and set learning goals?
- Does the leader/leadership team emphasize the use of a variety of formal and informal classroom assessments to judge the progress of student learning?
- Does the leader/leadership team direct a process for collecting, logging, and charting indicators of student progress in academic growth and the achievement of academic excellence over multiple years?
- Does the leader/leadership team regularly communicate assessment data on school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic goals to all stakeholders?

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

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

the leader/leadership team orchestrates the creation and or adoption of the curriculum. Preferred instructional strategies are well known and implemented on a regular basis by all faculty. School wide data is gathered on a regular basis, reviewed by the faculty, and influences both instruction in the classroom and future professional development offerings to ensure a high level of achievement.

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

*6.5 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.*

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

the leader/leadership team implements a standards-based curriculum and establishes a climate of collaborative professional interaction with faculty to benefit student learning. The leader/leadership team ensures that resources of time and finances are allotted for faculty to engage in the development of research-based instructional strategies to support and enhance the school's curriculum. The leader/leadership team directs and monitors the effective use of the curriculum map to ensure vertical alignment. Teaching strategies are implemented throughout curriculum areas in a conscientious manner that reflects students' needs and the best means of helping students achieve the designated learning. The school-wide assessment plan outlines multiple standardized, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments to measure change, growth, and objectives. The leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the faculty, comprehend the purpose of various classroom and school-wide assessments and discuss accumulated data regularly in a climate of continuous improvement.

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

the leader/leadership team adopts a curriculum but are not yet able to link the curriculum to specific teaching philosophies and strategies. Few intentional connections are made between the curriculum and the standardized, diagnostic, or classroom-based assessments. The faculty review assessment data irregularly and few adjustments to instruction take place after reviewing assessment data.

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

the leader/leadership team has not facilitated the development of a curriculum for the faculty to use. Faculty members randomly select teaching strategies with little or no continuity. There is no school wide assessment plan and the school lacks a focus on continuous improvement. Rather, the school implements programs in a haphazard manner that does not connect to overall, standards-based learning goals.

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

*6.5 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.*

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

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

- Begin to create or adopt a school wide curriculum that flows from the joint work of the stakeholders of the school.
- Begin to make a correlation between the curriculum and specific teaching strategies to be used for delivery of the curriculum.
- Decide on the school wide assessment tools to assess student learning based on the curriculum.
- Link the connections between the curriculum and student assessments by grade level and/or department.
- Begin to assess some of the critical areas of the curriculum on a regular basis.

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

- Link curriculum, teaching strategies, and student learning in order to provide assessment data to support or revise curriculum based on student needs.
- Design and implement a professional development plan for teachers that responds to student needs based on the assessment data.

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

- Facilitate the transformational change to a standards-based curriculum where teachers understand that textbooks, etc. serve as resources to help students reach set learning objectives.
- Create a climate of understanding among the faculty that vertical alignment of the curriculum is a process that requires a professional learning community advocating for collaborative continuous improvement.
- Implement teaching strategies gained from professional development offerings that directly impact student instructional needs and curriculum delivery.
- Emphasize that continuous improvement is a result of reviewing the curriculum, teaching standards, and the planned assessments.
- Measure the school's goals and desired learning outcomes by a sophisticated assessment plan implemented by all faculty of the school through vertical teams and/or interdepartmental collaboration.
- Apply the data received from assessments to regular improvement of the school's program and student learning initiatives.
- Regularly communicate progress using assessment data on school-wide progress in achieving the school's academic goals to all stakeholders.

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

*6.5 The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.*

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

Curriculum  
Continuous improvement  
Vertical teams

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

*6.6 The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.*

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

Benchmark 6.6 is about the collaboration between the leader/leadership team and governing body to ensure operational vitality for the school's programs and services. Critical to this benchmark is the organizational model used by the leader/leadership team and governing body to create an infrastructure that works in harmony based on clearly designed, recognized and implemented roles and responsibilities. This collaborative model seeks to create and maintain programs and services that promote continuous growth of student learning in an atmosphere seeking to achieve a shared vision. The leader/leadership team has the responsibility to lead the planning and implementation of goals related to the components of operational vitality within this collaborative model. Specifically, the leader/leadership team ensures the operational vitality and effectiveness of the infrastructure components related to enrollment management, personnel decisions, budgeting, finance, human resources, facilities, technology, marketing, and advancement.

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

Here are some fundamental guiding questions that will help frame this item:

- Does the organizational model utilized by the leader/leadership team and governing body give evidence of collaboration throughout the school's program to ensure operational vitality?
- What documents, including minutes and reports, are present that indicate a regular collaborative meeting structure exhibited by all working groups of the school?
- Is there evidence that a strategic plan has been developed, implemented, and assessed through the collaborative efforts of the school's leader/leadership team and governing body?
- Do the stakeholders of the school, through recent survey, recognize collaboration between the school's leader/leadership team and governing

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.6** *The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.*

body as providing a structure for open communication, planning and programming that ensures operational vitality?

- Are there policies and procedures in place to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school?
- Do the programs and services have sufficient personnel to ensure effective implementation of responsibilities related to each infrastructure component?
- Is there sufficient financial allocation through annual budgeting to ensure the operational vitality of the infrastructure that supports programs and services?

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

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

all stakeholders recognize that the collaborative functioning of the school's basic framework produces strong and dynamic programs and services. Sufficient personnel and financial capacity are present to effectively implement policies, programs and procedures.

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

all stakeholders recognize that the collaborative functioning of the school's basic framework produces strong and dynamic programs and services. Sufficient personnel and financial capacity are present to effectively implement policies, programs and procedures. In addition, plans for facilities, budgeting, advancement and development are transparent and shared with stakeholders. The community of stakeholders is then empowered to ensure the operational vitality of the school.

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

it is evident that the school's leadership is not fully supported by the governing body or vice versa. Although some collaboration occurs between the leader and governing body, it is cursory and lacks a bonded commitment to the schools' mission and vision. The organizational structure of the school does not promote collaboration towards programs and services that support the

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.6** *The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.*

operational vitality of the school. Policies and procedures related to programs and services are designed, implemented, monitored, and assessed by the leader/leadership team without collaborating with the school's governing body. Sufficient personnel and finances to support an infrastructure of programs and services that would ensure operational vitality are somewhat present but are inadequate and/or unbalanced.

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

the leader/leadership team and governing body do not work in collaboration. The lack of connectedness and mutual support interferes with the design and implementation of policies and procedures that could support the operational vitality of the school. The school's leader/leadership team does not take an active role in developing policies, and procedures related to programs and services and is only involved in ongoing management of existing policies and procedures. The school's programs and services lacks an infrastructure of personnel and finances to support operational vitality.

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

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

- Recognize that the collaborative functioning of the school's basic operating framework produces strong and dynamic programs and services.
- Implement a plan and steps to follow to establish a collaborative environment between the school's leader/leadership team and governing body.
- Show collaboration, for the benefit of the school's programs and services, between the leader/leadership team and governing body in the early stages of the plan.
- Design policies and procedures that support an infrastructure of programs and services that ensure operational vitality.
- Allocate funds in the annual budget to support policies and procedures for an infrastructure of personnel, programs, and services that ensure operational vitality.

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

**6.6** *The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.*

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

- Practice a collaborative model of decision making on behalf of operational vitality of the school in planning and establishing policies and procedures for the school's programs and services.
- Implement policies and procedures that support an infrastructure of programs and services that ensure operational vitality.
- Allocate and utilize sufficient funds in the annual budget to support policies and procedures for an infrastructure of personnel, programs, and services that ensure operational vitality.

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

- Work collaboratively in an environment of transparency engaging all stakeholders in the responsibility of ensuring operational vitality.
- Empower all stakeholders to share in the school's plans and implementation for ongoing improvement of the school's programs and services that ensure operational vitality.
- Provide sufficient funds through annual budgeting to support short and long-term plans for policies and procedures for an infrastructure of personnel, programs, and services that ensures operational vitality at the highest level of performance.

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

Operational vitality

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

*6.7 The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.*

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

Benchmark 6.7 is about the leader/leadership team approaching communication to constituents in a systematic manner with either a universally understood or written communication procedure to be used for major initiatives. An understanding exists that communication is essential in creating a sense of community and moving the institution towards its vision and mission. With this realization the leader/leadership team knows communication must take place with regular frequency using a wide variety of communication tools such as paper, email, social media, videos, individual conversations, presentations to groups, etc.

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

Here are some fundamental guiding questions for school leaders to ask to help frame this item:

- Does evidence exist to demonstrate that an organized approach to communication is taking place in the school? For example, are communication patterns for what groups should be contacted, the means of communication to be used, and in what order specific constituents are contacted in writing?
- Does evidence exist that communication on major initiatives takes place prior to, during, and after implementation?
- Does the leader/leadership team state the reason(s) why the initiative is taking place and what success will look like?
- What evidence is there that communication means and methods are matched to the intended audience?
- Does communication relate back to the school's vision and mission?

## Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

**6.7** *The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.*

- Does communication frequently relate back to the school's strategic plan and goals?

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

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

the leader/leadership team clearly demonstrates that communication is very important and regularly puts out communication about specific initiatives prior to, during, and after implementation. Many communication tools such as newsletters, bulletins, emails, social media, etc. are used; the communication tools are matched to targeted audiences. The communications are linked back to the school's vision and mission.

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

the leadership team has a written communication plan/procedure that includes target audiences matched to specific means of communications. Communication takes place prior to, during, and after implementation of an initiative. The leader/leadership team has defined what success looks like for the initiative and how it ties back to the school's vision and mission and includes this in communications. The leader/leadership team shares an understanding with all stakeholders that communication is key in creating a sense of community for the school.

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

the leader/leadership team understands that communication is important and regularly communicates information to constituents; however, there is no agreed upon plan, so communication may be incomplete, convey an inconsistent message, not appropriately targeted to audiences, and not clearly linked to mission and vision.

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

the leader/leadership team fails to realize the critical importance of regular and systematic communication in reaching its vision and mission. The communication pattern is irregular and ineffective in reaching stakeholder audiences. There is little or no monitoring of school communication

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

*6.7 The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.*

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

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

- Acknowledge that communication to constituents is important.
- Develop a process and procedure for communicating new initiatives.
- Communicate new initiatives in the early stages of implementation to all stakeholders using a limited but strategic number of communication tools.

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

- Begin to identify target audiences and use a wide range of communication tools to contact stakeholders.
- Communicate needs that support initiatives prior to, during and after implementation.
- Align communication of initiatives with the school's vision and mission.

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

- Identify all target audiences and match them with specific communication tools for greatest effect.
- Relate initiatives back to the school's vision and mission routinely and consistently.
- Implement a communication plan that incorporates procedures on how often to communicate, with whom to communicate, and why communication is essential.
- Emphasize and implement the process for annual monitoring, assessing, and revising of the appropriate strategies to achieve maximum effectiveness in communication with all constituents.

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

Communication