



3<sup>rd</sup> Edition  
SPRING 2021



## Mid-Year Report

The GRACE program undoubtedly has looked different this year than in previous times, and I wanted to thank each and every one of you for your patience as we navigated closures, re-openings, hybrid teaching, and so much more in 2021.

I know that your dedication to the GRACE program has been unwavering, and although we have not been able to do EVERYTHING that we wanted to accomplish this year yet, know that I appreciate the hard work that you have been doing in the classroom, with your staff and in your school communities.

The GRACE Regional Teacher Leaders and I are excited to start planning for the April GRACE meetings (registration will be sent out early April) and hope to provide some good professional development as well as building community around two major topics: Equity in our schools, and the peer observation process.

Looking forward, we plan to continue the tradition of providing a speaker or other meaningful professional development at our Catholic Educator Forum (specific dates are still TBD, based on guidance around pandemic reopening and end-of-school-year scheduling.) Although we still have not committed to anything specific for the CEF, we are committed to ensuring that you feel supported and have opportunities to lead and learn. With that in mind, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of your regional leaders if you are in need of support! –JPK

### DID YOU KNOW?

We had a record amount of schools from our K-8 Archdiocese participate in Winter MAP testing this year? 44 of our schools rostered and provided students opportunities to show their growth in reading and math – that is over 72% of our schools!

### NOW WHAT?

NWEA (MAP) has an entire teacher toolkit that is available to all NWEA members - if you want more training on how to utilize the scores or how to read through the results, check out their website or click on [MAP Assessment & NWEA Resources - My Catholic School](#) for more information!

Contact: Dr. Justyna P. King, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Excellence  
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Office of Catholic Schools | Archdiocese of Seattle

## The Importance of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

This year more than ever, we started curriculum planning for a very uncertain 2020-21 school year. The OCS and teachers in the GRACE program partnered to provide some guidance on Essential Standards and support on how to effectively choose what learning **MUST** be done, and what learning do we **WANT** students to leave with. These were incredibly difficult concepts with which to grapple, mostly because some of our best lessons are not necessarily those that completely align with essential learning. According to Richard DuFour's Learning by Doing, "to improve student achievement, educators must determine power standards – learning standards that are most essential because they possess the qualities of endurance, leverage, and readiness for success at the next level." (p. 123)

Even **BEFORE** the pandemic, this was true – whether we call them "essential" or "power," standards, the reality is that we all have a finite amount of time to spend with our students.

"The only way the curriculum in a school can truly be guaranteed is if the teachers themselves... have worked collaboratively to do the following:

- Study the intended curriculum
- Agree on priorities within the curriculum
- Clarify how the curriculum translates into student knowledge and skills
- Establish general pacing guidelines for delivering the curriculum
- Commit to one another that they will, in fact, teach the agreed upon curriculum " (DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 91

**Pandemic Caveat:** Curriculum, although important, cannot be the only purpose of teaching in a classroom if our students are to be well rounded, grounded, and feel loved. Relationship building is incredibly important, and providing some time for structured SEL (Social Emotional Learning) has never been more important than in 2020-2021.

The importance of a "Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum" means that beyond standards, we also acknowledge that our roles as educators span beyond just teaching and learning facts, skills, and concepts. So as you begin planning for 2021-22 this late summer/early Fall, continue to advocate for the needs of your students beyond the curriculum that they will be exposed to. We will be doing more targeted SEL work in the 2021-22 school year with the GRACE program.



**LEARNING  
COMMUNITY**





## With a Focus on Racial Justice in Catholic Schools

### Equity Resources – Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity Task Force

The Office for Catholic Schools is participating in an Archdiocesan Racial Justice and Cultural Diversity task force, whose goals include developing a toolkit, standards of behavior, terminology development and an internal Chancery audit. Committee members include Chancery employees, representatives from our Catholic school communities, leadership within the OCS and Fulcrum, etc. The long-term goals of this task force include cultural competency training for all Chancery/Parishes/School Staff, external communication to the wider community about our commitment to supporting and welcoming racially diverse communities, and to integrate efforts into Pastoral and Strategic Planning Efforts. The vision of this task force is to ensure we are a church where racism is NOT accepted.

If you're looking for some great resources to implement in your classroom, consider the following:

<https://www.tolerance.org/the-moment/january-28-2021-why-we-need-black-history-month-especially-this-year> [tolerance.org]

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2019/02/black-history-month-resources-for-the-classroom/> [pbs.org]

<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/black-history-month-resource-guide-for-educators-and-families/> [centerracialjustice.org]

## What to do NOW:

- ✓ Meet with your principal and discuss the purpose for March/April/May staff meetings
- ✓ Prioritize the purpose of staff meetings: at least one meeting a month should be led by the onsite GRACE teacher leader(s)
- ✓ Report back to your principal the work that you have been doing on behalf of GRACE and what you would like to do this second semester with your role

### **MARCH – Happy Feast of St. Patrick!**

**Equity work** – meeting the needs of your most marginalized communities (BIPOC); also, celebrate Women's History Month (March)

Check out the GRACE Trello Board with resources for your classroom and training for educators

### **APRIL – Happy Easter Sunday!**

**Data Analysis** - SPRING MAP TESTING HAS BEEN MOVED TO MAY 10<sup>th</sup>-JUNE 4<sup>th</sup> 2021. However, you can look at your Fall and Winter data to spend some time analyzing where students should be at after Spring testing – interventions that need to take place between now and the end of the school year.

### **MAY – Dedicated to Mary**

**Catholic identity** – the Annual Progress Report is due May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Catholic Identity is a major component of the document – gather data to present to your staff to celebrate how your school has met those goals and the plan for going forward.

### **Supporting Your Local Black-Owned Businesses**

Black Restaurant Week (Feb. 19-28<sup>th</sup>) was hailed as a huge success in the Pacific Northwest – in fact, since last Summer, the greater Seattle area has seen a surge in support of Black-owned businesses. If you are interested in supporting your local community, here is a comprehensive list of Black Owned Businesses to check out: [230+ Black-owned restaurants & businesses to support in Western Washington | king5.com](https://www.king5.com/story/news/local/2021/02/19/black-owned-businesses-to-check-out-in-western-washington/7068614002/)





## THANK YOUR REGIONAL TEACHER LEADERS

Your Regional Teacher Leaders went far beyond their “regional” duties this year – they will be leading the charge for the April meeting and developing a fantastic meeting that centers around two main objectives: peer observations and Equity work. Feel free to reach out to them directly (even if they aren’t in your region, per se) to provide support, feedback, or resources that you think would be helpful for the April meeting!

Beth Anderson (Southern)	Our Lady of Lourdes, Vancouver Principal: Becky Hundt	<a href="mailto:banderson@lourdesvan.org">banderson@lourdesvan.org</a>
Jeannine Hanley (S. Seattle)	St. George, Seattle Principal: Monica Wingard	<a href="mailto:Jhanley@saintgeorgeseattle.org">Jhanley@saintgeorgeseattle.org</a>
Barbara Bolaños (Pierce)	St. Patrick, Tacoma Principal: Chris Gavin	<a href="mailto:bbolanos@saintpats.org">bbolanos@saintpats.org</a>
Abbey Kindt (S. King)	St. Bernadette, Seattle Principal: Eve Ruiz	<a href="mailto:akindt@stbernadettesea.org">akindt@stbernadettesea.org</a>
Emily Cornell (Olympic)	St. Cecilia, Bainbridge Island Principal: Susan Kilbane	<a href="mailto:ecornell@saintceciliaschool.org">ecornell@saintceciliaschool.org</a>
Kristin Scroggs (S. Sound)	St. Mary, Aberdeen Principal: Carrie Marlow	<a href="mailto:kscroggs@saintmaryschool.org">kscroggs@saintmaryschool.org</a>
Shauna Cogan (Eastside)	St. Joseph, Issaquah Principal: Wayne Wenzel	<a href="mailto:scogan@sjsissaquah.org">scogan@sjsissaquah.org</a>
Meg Sullivan (N. Seattle)	St. John, Seattle Principal: Bernadette O’Leary	<a href="mailto:Msullivan@st-johnschool.org">Msullivan@st-johnschool.org</a>
Annemarie Weber (Northern)	Immaculate Conception Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Everett Principal: Gwen Rodrigues	<a href="mailto:weber@ic-olph.org">weber@ic-olph.org</a>

### APRIL GRACE TEACHER LEADER MEETING(S) – APRIL 15<sup>TH</sup> 2021 AND APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup> 2021 @ 3:30PM

Our last official GRACE meeting before the Catholic Educator’s Forum in June will be formatted a little differently – these meetings will be wholly run by our GRACE RTLs and focusing on two major topics – equity (its role in GRACE and in our schools) and peer observations. We look forward to amazing discussions – come armed with some examples of both from your own school experience!

# Peer Observations

## Peer Observations – Helping Understand Teaching and Learning in Your School

Many teachers, being their own worst critics, fear that their observer will pick up on the least engaging portions of their lessons, and not on the innovative, creative, and collaborative parts. And when the observer leaves their classroom, teachers sigh relief, but then replay the parts of the lesson in their heads that did not go as planned. So what part of this process is supposed to be helpful you ask?

It comes down to understanding the purpose of the teacher observation process – notice I’m refraining from calling it an “evaluation” process – because really, it should be about observation and conversation. The post-teaching reflection and follow up conversation that a teacher has with their observer is the most important part of the entire process for growth.

When coupled with a preemptive pre-observation check in to understand what it is that the observer is looking for, the observation process actually makes us better, more reflective and open teachers.

Peer observations play a critical role in schools and leadership development for several reasons – a) they are not high stakes since a peer is not an “evaluator” and b) they help both the teacher and the observer to understand the role of each part of the observation cycle. Practice, in this sense, really does perfect the system.

For our GRACE teacher leaders, we are asking that every teacher leader embarks on some form of peer observation process this year. There are many to choose from, ranging from the CEL 5D protocol or eWalk, to a simple T-chart (there are several tools that you can find on the GRACE Trello board to help you out). The process for a quick and effective peer observation cycle is as simple as:

**Step 1:** email a teacher whom you have not seen teach before, but that may be open to a peer observation and ask them if you could do a peer observation cycle with them (this can all be done virtually)

**Step 2:** set up a date/time/platform in which you would like to complete this task – ie: if it is in-person, it can be during a class that they teach but you have a prep period, or if it is virtual, it can be during their synchronous learning time and they can invite you to “join” in. Set up a 10 minute pre-observation discussion either in-person or virtually. Schedule a post-observation with them as well, preferably within a week of the observation itself.

**Step 3:** Meet with that teacher for a pre-observation. Reiterate the purpose of your peer observation protocol (Hint: Saying “because I have to” isn’t going to instill faith or support in the process) and ask them whether there is something that you should look for – most teachers appreciate honest feedback if they ask for observations of something specific. Show them the tool that you will be using to provide feedback.

**Step 4:** Observation (20 minutes max)– use non-judgemental scripting ONLY – do not write “wow that was a totally boring article you had them read,” instead, you can say “students were asked to read an excerpt from a text written in 1882 by a British accountant” – you can let the teacher read between the lines there.

**Step 5:** Provide your peer with the observation feedback and give them a few days to reflect upon their lesson that you observed. Think about the kind of feedback you’d want to provide for them, if there are resources or PD you could suggest if needed. This may take some work on your part.

**Step 6:** Meet for the post-observation. THIS, my friends, is THE MOST IMPORTANT PART of the process. This is where the magic happens. This is where trust, growth, collaboration and partnership come into play. Always start with giving your peer the opportunity to self-reflect upon their own lesson – something as simple as “how did you think your lesson went?” followed by “how did you think \_\_\_\_\_ (the feedback for the lesson that you were asked to observe) went?” and “Did the student learn what you intended for them to learn? How do you know?” Are all great questions to start the conversation.

**Step 7:** Provide context for your scripting – this is the part where you provide your observations and talk with your peer about the positive aspects of their classroom and the potential areas of growth. If you have specific areas of support that you can provide, this is the place to do it – any PD, additional readings, maybe ideas that you were able to think of in Step 5 – this is where you can provide that meaningful feedback and brainstorm ideas together.

**Step 8:** Thank your peer for allowing you to do this – acknowledge the vulnerability in allowing for another teacher to observe their work and despite how dysfunctional or messy the lesson really was, always find the good to end on – and in my decade of being an administrator, I can without a doubt say that there is ALWAYS something good that can be said about a classroom or lesson.

**The GOAL:** We have our next GRACE TL Meeting in April (04/15/2021 for new GRACE TLs and 04/22 for seasoned GRACE TLs) and I hope that you will find some time between February and April to have this conversation/process in place with at least one peer. Bring any materials that you use to the meeting.



## Thomas Guskey on Effective PD for New Programs

(Originally titled "Professional Learning with Staying Power")

In an *Educational Leadership* article, Thomas Guskey (University of Kentucky) says that during the pandemic, educators are being inundated with online learning opportunities and programs. "How do we know what's worthwhile, makes a difference, and truly works?" he asks. **The historical track record for PD is dismal, with little evidence of impact on classroom practices or student learning.** "For new instructional practices to be implemented well and continue," says Guskey, "they must become a natural part of teachers' repertoire of classroom procedures." For this to occur, Guskey suggests:

- *Start with the end in mind.* Schools and districts need to do their homework, deciding on specific student learning outcomes and how they will be measured. Too many leaders go to conferences "trolling for talent," says Guskey – "trying to find reasonably priced speakers who will entertain and motivate," and not pushing for specifics when people intone, *All the research says*. The key is finding really solid, evidence-based programs that target those student learning outcomes. "The time and energy teachers invest is too valuable to waste on efforts supported only by blogs, Twitter chats, or the opinions of charismatic consultants."
- *Agree on what success looks like.* Administrators often look at standardized test scores and district assessments to judge an innovation, while teachers put more faith in what they see students doing day by day in their classrooms. Before implementing a new program, it's important to sit down and agree on the criteria for success, both in assessments and in day-to-day student actions. "When teachers decide the evidence and plan how it's going to be gathered," says Guskey, "not only are they more likely to find it, but it also will be more meaningful when they do."
- *Adapt appropriately.* Whenever a new program is introduced, changes are usually needed in educators' attitudes and practices, and the program must be tweaked to fit local conditions. "Too much change in either direction can mean disaster," says Guskey. "If the innovation requires too much adaptation from individuals and departs significantly from their current practice, implementation is likely to be mechanical and ineffective. But too much adaptation of the innovation may result in the loss of elements essential to program impact." Leaders have to strike just the right balance.
- *Convince teachers that the innovation will make a difference for their students.* "Nearly all teachers have had the experience of working hard to implement programs that promised far more than they delivered," says Guskey. Teachers will get excited and invested when they believe that what's being implemented will increase their students' day-to-day engagement and long-term learning.
- *Plan to gather evidence on effects quickly.* Trying something new means extra work for teachers, some bumps in the road, and the risk that it might not work. "To continue using new practices without evidence of positive effects means risking that students might not learn as well," says Guskey. "And teachers won't sacrifice their students for the sake of innovation." Waiting for end-of-year test scores is not a credible approach. "Instead, leaders must find ways to check on success *within the first few weeks*," says Guskey. "Positive results provide the encouragement teachers need to persist in their efforts." And if interim results are not good, that means solving the problems – or going back to the drawing board.
- *Provide ongoing support – and pressure.* With any new program, there will be ups and downs. "Day-to-day variations in students' moods and dispositions confound teachers' best efforts," says Guskey. That means front-line educators must receive lots of support, appreciation, early evidence of positive change, and "occasional nudging that some practitioners need to persist in the challenging tasks that are inherent in all improvement efforts."

"Professional Learning with Staying Power" by Thomas Guskey in *Educational Leadership*, February 2021 (Vol. 78, #5, pp. 54-59); Guskey can be reached at [guskey@uky.edu](mailto:guskey@uky.edu).

**REMINDER: OCS CURRICULUM AND PD DAY IS MARCH 12<sup>th</sup> – REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY 03/05.**



## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Leadership Openings:** Administration Openings in the Archdiocese of Seattle can be found on the OCS Website here:

<https://mycatholicschool.org/careers-employment/>

**Educational Leadership Partners:** Fulcrum and OCS Educational Leadership Partner Programs (including Educational Leadership Grant) can be found here:

<https://mycatholicschool.org/for-catholic-schools/professional-development/leadership-academy/>

**University of Notre Dame FACE to FACE webinar series:** A free and interactive Zoom series with weekly conversations focused on critical issues impacting Catholic schools and educators. Whether you're looking to renew your own "yes" to Catholic schools, or are trying to find the language to invite others into Catholic education's unique mission, culture, and experience, we hope you'll choose to join us for this final FACE to FACE that will remind us what we're all about. Past and future sessions can be found here : [FACE to FACE sessions](#)

**March 12th Curriculum Day – join us for various high school sessions** On March 12th, teachers and administrators will have an opportunity to connect for a virtual professional development day. Registration opened 2/22. Topics include: early childhood, social and emotional learning, equity training, and more. If you are interested in joining in on one or more of these sessions, connect with your school leadership team or contact Justyna

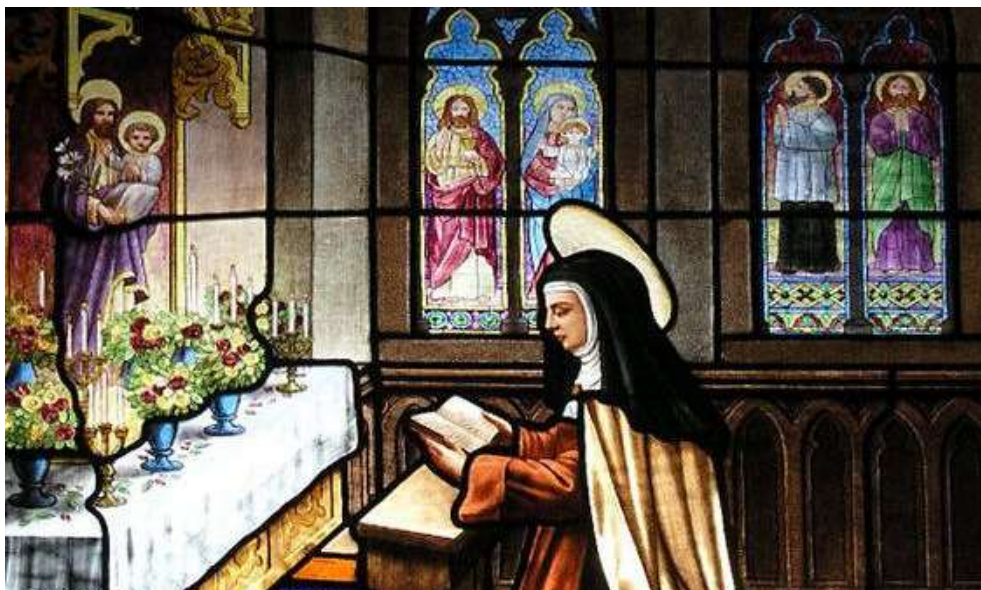
**Accreditation**—One of the greatest professional development experiences is being a part of an Accreditation Visiting Team. The Office for Catholic Schools is now registering people for the 2021-22 Accreditation visits for the fall and spring. Click here to learn more:

[Join an Accreditation Team in 2021-22](#)

**Changing Our World, Inc-Advancing Our Church Podcast:**

<https://advancingourchurch.com>

See Vivian Shannon, Executive Director of the Fulcrum Foundation and Kristin Moore, Director of Marketing and Enrollment, podcast sessions.



**In Celebration of Women's History Month and International Day of the Woman (March 8<sup>th</sup>) – A Reminder that there are also Exciting Changes for Women in the Catholic Church:**

[Francis changes Catholic Church law: women explicitly allowed as lectors, altar servers | National Catholic Reporter \(ncronline.org\)](#)

According to the NCR, "Pope Francis has changed Catholic Church law to make explicit that laywomen can act as readers and altar servers in liturgical celebrations, effectively removing a previous option for individual bishops to restrict those ministries only to men.

In an unexpected apostolic letter published Jan. 11, the pontiff says he is making the change to recognize a "doctrinal development" that has occurred in recent years. That change, the pope says, "shines a light on how some ministries instituted by the church have as their foundation that common condition of baptism and the royal priesthood received in the Sacrament of Baptism."

This year will certainly be interesting for women in our church and beyond – if you would like to get involved more fully in the Catholic faith or in your school as a disciple of Christ, feel free to reach out to me or any of the OCS team – we are here to serve you! – [justyna.king@seattlearch.org](mailto:justyna.king@seattlearch.org)

### **Interested in Helping with GRACE and Equity Work?**

*Many of you are! Thank you for reaching out to me with an interest in doing this important work on behalf of marginalized and under represented communities. I apologize for not galvanizing a team together yet – we are working with Fulcrum on some exciting efforts. I will be in contact with anyone who has reached out to me, before our next meeting in April.*

*I appreciate your patience!*



ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021

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