

2024- 2025 Two Catholic Identity Standards Focus – Office for Catholic Schools

Factor 1 The Catholic Identity of the School

The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.

Religion Curriculum

“The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony. Through it, the local Church evangelizes, educates, and contributes to the formation of a healthy and morally sound life-style among its members. ... Above all, according to the Holy Father, the Catholic school helps in achieving a double objective: ‘of its nature it guides men and women to human and Christian perfection, and at the same time helps them to become mature in their faith. For those who believe in Christ, these are two facets of a single reality.’” (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, The Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, #34, quoting *Insegnamenti*, VIII/1, pp. 618 f.)

“As we, the Catholic bishops of the United States, and the entire Catholic community continue our journey through the twenty-first century, it remains our duty to model the Person of Jesus Christ, to teach the Gospel, and to evangelize our culture.” (*Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium*, USCCB, 2005, p. 14)

“But (the Catholic school’s) proper function is to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through Baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and man is illumined by faith. (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

Standard: The school uses a Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings, and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB.

Checklist source: ISL 2012 Ap C-6 Catholic Identity, page 3.

- ___ The school’s written curriculum includes Catholic values infused throughout ‘secular’ curricular areas (e.g., when discussing the American Civil War values of human rights and economic justice are central to the discussion).
- ___ Reference to relevant Church documents is made throughout the curriculum. For example, reference could be made to *U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979* when talking about racism in society, or reference to *Civility in Media, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops* when talking about communications and the role of media in society.
- ___ Religion textbooks that are used are in compliance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and approved for use within the diocese by the Local Ordinary.
- ___ Sacramental preparation is according to the guidelines of the Local Ordinary.
- ___ The school uses a standards-based Religion curriculum that has been approved by the local Ordinary.
- ___ The teachers understand the mission of the Church and make a special effort to educate the whole child, using a variety of teaching methods and strategies that help the student to “order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation.” (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

Key Questions for reflection and discussion concerning Religion Curriculum; cite evidence.

Source: E3 2016 Accreditation Protocol page 38.

- How well is the religion curriculum aligned with the Doctrinal Framework for high school religion of the USCCB?
- How responsive is the school to the oversight that the Local Ordinary demonstrates concerning the religion curriculum and instruction?
- How knowledgeable in the Catholic Faith are students?
- How inclined are the students to receive the school's religion curriculum as catechesis?
- How much does the religious instruction promote the moral formation of students? How inclined are the students to receive this formation?

Service – Missionary Discipleship

“More than any other program of education sponsored by the Church, the Catholic has the opportunity and obligation to be unique, contemporary, and oriented to Christian service ... oriented to Christian services because it helps students acquire skills, virtues, and habits of heart required for effective service to others.” (*To Teach as Jesus Did*, USCCB, 1972, #106)

“The laity can also feel called, or be in fact called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1997, #910)

Standard: The school helps students develop a service-oriented outreach to the Church and civic community after the example of Jesus who said, “I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.” (John 13:15)

Checklist source: ISL 2012 Ap C-6 Catholic Identity, page 6.

- ___ Service opportunities are rooted in Catholic values – that students and faculty provide service because that is a hallmark of Catholicism, not because it is a graduation requirement.
- ___ Students are expected to complete a minimum number of service hours each year.
- ___ Students are expected to provide a clearly defined portion of these service hours by providing service to their parish of registry.
- ___ Service opportunities are organized by school staff and are age appropriate.
- ___ Students voluntarily participate in service opportunities for which they receive no credit toward school-mandated service.
- ___ Service opportunities are an overt expression of the Themes of Catholic Social Teaching (Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; and Care for God's Creation).

Key Questions for reflection and discussion concerning Service Orientation - Missionary Discipleship; cite evidence

Source: E3 2016 Accreditation Protocol page 38.

- How well-conceived is the school's service requirement for students?
- How responsive to this requirement are students?
- What opportunities do students have to reflect on their Christian service activities? Reflect on their call to Missionary Discipleship?
- How well does the service program succeed in forming students for service to the Church? To the wider civic community?