2023 - 2024 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.

Catechist Certification

"The church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks for before Christ ascended to his father after His resurrection, He gave the apostles a final command – to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He had commanded. He thus entrusted them with the mission and the power to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of Life. He also entrusted them with the mission and the power to explain with authority what He had taught them, His words and actions, His signs and commandments. And He gave them the spirit to fulfill this mission." (Catechesi Tradendae, #1)

"The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions. The formation of personnel will allow the Gospel message and living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire life of the school community and thus be faithful to the school's evangelizing mission." (Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary & Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, USCCB, 2005, pp. 9-10)

"Teachers realize that their first responsibility is to be attentive to their own relationship with Jesus Christ. Every catechist must constantly endeavor to transmit by his teaching and behavior the teaching and life of Jesus." (Evangelization in the Catholic School, Archdiocese of Baltimore, p 6)

"But let teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world." (Gravissimum Educationis, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

Standard: The formation of teachers for catechetical and instructional competence is ongoing.
Checklist source: ISL 2012 Ap C-6 Catholic Identity, page 4.
__ All teachers have current catechist certification according to local Arch/Diocesan norms, or are in the process of obtaining such catechist certification.
__ Administration (pastor/priests and principal) provide ongoing faith formation activities for teachers as routine part of teacher in-service.
__ Staff, as a staff, participate in annual retreat days and other activities that help build a faith community among the staff.
__ Staff meetings include time for prayer and time for discussion about Religion, Catholic values, and the faith formation of the entire school community (parents, students, staff).

Key Questions for reflection and discussion concerning Religion Teachers
Source: E3 2016 Accreditation Protocol page 38.
- How sound are the qualifications of teachers for their religion-teaching / campus ministry duties?
- How active are these religion teachers in the practice of their Catholic Faith?
- How responsive are religion teachers to the requirements of personal and professional growth in the Catholic Faith?

Evangelization

"Although every ministry in a parish is an evangelizing ministry, Catholic schools have a unique opportunity and a grave responsibility to evangelize. One of the reasons for the Church's influence on the Christian formation of Americans is her vast presence in the field of education … the large number of Catholic schools makes possible a wide-ranging evangelizing effort, as long as there is a clear will to impart a truly Christian education." (Ecclesia in America, Pope John Paul II, #18)

Standard: All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.
Checklist source: ISL 2012 Ap C-6 Catholic Identity, page 7.
__ The principal builds a faith community that is welcoming, prayerful and makes a clear statement that this is a Catholic faith setting.
__ Prayer permeates the school. It is not limited to morning announcements.
__ Teachers bring Gospel values into their ordinary teaching experiences.
__ The school provides ongoing opportunities for faith formation for students, parents and staff.
__ Teachers realize that their first responsibility is to be attentive to their own relationship with Jesus Christ.
__ In every religion class, the teacher attempts to connect faith with life.
__ The teacher attempts to relate the moral, ethical or spiritual ramifications to each area of study.
__ The school reaches out to parents to engage them in the religious formation of their children in every grade – not just sacramental preparation grades.
__ Members of the school community (students, parents) reach out to the newly baptized through cards and gifts of welcome.

Key Questions for reflection and discussion concerning Evangelization – Religious Engagement of All
Source: E3 2016 Accreditation Protocol page 39.
- How wide and deep is the 'shared responsibility' that all school personnel demonstrate for the Catholic Faith life of the school?
- How much does the Faith permeate the policies and practices by which the school is governed and administered?
- How respectable a treatment does the Catholic Faith receive within all the classrooms and all the co-curricular operations of the school?
- How much is the Catholic Faith demonstrated by the *lived example* of school personnel?
- How responsive is the school to the programs and events that its (arch)diocese sets for the promotion of the school's Catholic identity?