

National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective

Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools

Rubrics for Benchmarks

Standard 2: An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.

Benchmark: 2.1

Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	Religious education curriculum and instruction at all levels in each course and in each unit meets or exceeds requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese. The requirements are evidenced in every course and unit. Courses are vertically aligned, scaffolded, and rigorous to ensure continuous growth in the knowledge of religion for all students.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese. The requirements are evidenced in course expectations, grade level expectations, and course content.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	Religious education curriculum and instruction meets some of the religious education requirements and/or standards of the (arch)diocese.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	Religious education and curriculum and instruction does not meet the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.
Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson plans• The Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework for the Development of Catechetical Materials for Young People of High School Age (USCCB)• National Directory of Catechesis• Religion curriculum/graded course of study• Curriculum maps, syllabi• Course work offered beyond what is required in the standards

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Benchmark: 2.2

Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	Religion classes are regarded by the school community as exciting, interesting, innovative, and highly engaging. These classes are an integral part of the academic program with equal or prioritized standing with other academic classes. Highly qualified teachers are trained and certified as catechists at advanced levels. The allocation of class time in relation to other academic areas is equitable and is scheduled in specified time frames. The selection of current state-of-the-art texts and other curricular materials contribute to the innovative approach. Religion classes may be service-based and integrated with other academic courses, concepts, and outcomes. Student performance in religion classes are included in academic achievement reports.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials. School leaders consistently program religion courses with the same level of attention given to other subjects.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	Religion classes are somewhat integrated into the academic program. Religion classes are assigned regular teachers, scheduled into specified time periods, and have designated texts and/or curriculum materials. They may not always be given equal priority with other classes in scheduling.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	Religion classes are not an integral part of the academic program. The assignment of teachers, the amount of class time, and the selection of texts and other curricular materials are not prioritized for religion classes. Teachers are assigned in an ad hoc manner and an equitable amount of time is not ensured. If academic time is lost in a given day, religion class is likely chosen as expendable.

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Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master plan of classes for the school including number of days and time of day religion classes are offered• Evidence of adherence to the master plan of classes• Textbook selection committee- notes and choices of this committee• Catechetical training levels for teachers• Copies of religious education certificates• Frameworks• Appropriate curriculum materials• USCCB approved resources• Intentional scheduling of religion in academic program by school leaders• Demonstration that the leadership has clear knowledge of religion design and planning of academic program for religion• Perceptions survey of school community• ACRE test results, affective portion• Senior year theology course at local Catholic college, AP dimension
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Benchmark: 2.3

Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	All faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction. The faculty meets regularly in professional learning communities to intentionally develop their expertise and to focus on the need for continuous improvement in skill and knowledge while recognizing the changing world of catechesis. The faculty employs best practices through instructional methodologies and meets standards that result in effective teaching.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	Some faculty who teach religion meet all or some (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide religion curriculum and instruction.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	Few or none of the faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide religion curriculum and instruction. Meeting (arch)diocesan requirements is not a condition for teaching religion at this school.
Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentation of catechetical certification• Records of CEU's for teachers• Records of professional development workshops, conferences, courses etc.• Evidence of facilitation of workshops, courses, etc.• Documentation of catechetical certification requirements by diocese and/or diocesan designate• Published diocesan requirements• Some faculty contribute their expertise to the preparation and



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	<p>enhancement of skills for colleagues in their own learning community and/or the (arch)diocese and beyond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of developmentally appropriate methodology• Teacher evaluations –forms and schedule of completed evaluation• Professional development plans for religion faculty• Retreats and pilgrimage to enhance faith life• Strategy of evaluation effectiveness of teachers• Study of effectiveness of the religion program on lives of the students• Graduation speeches or evidence of student internalization of religion• Responses to crises that demonstrate elements of faith in decision making• ACRE scores and/or similar assessment• Meeting notes of professional learning community for religion teachers
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Benchmark: 2.4

The school’s Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	In keeping with its Catholic identity, the school sets clearly articulated standards for and can demonstrate academic and intellectual excellence in all subjects, including religious education. Curriculum in all subjects including religious education gives evidence of the integration of faith, culture and life.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	The school’s Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education. In keeping with its Catholic identity, the school sets clearly articulated standards for and expectations of academic and intellectual excellence in all subjects, including religious education.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	In keeping with its Catholic identity, the school pays attention to and requires academic and intellectual excellence in the curriculum including religious education.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	Excellence in academic and intellectual formation is not evident in all subjects, including religion.
Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mission statement• Curriculum guides that include standards in all subjects• Catholic identity goals, objectives in all subjects• Grading scales and rubrics in all subjects• Departmental and or subjects standards and outcomes

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Benchmark: 2.5

Faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	In all subjects faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition to require students to think critically and ethically about the world around them. Students participate in lectures, debates, service opportunities or other experiences that give evidence of their growth and maturation in the Catholic intellectual tradition and moral ethical thinking. These and other performance assessments are embedded in the curriculum.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	Faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	In only a few subjects, some faculty use the lenses of Scripture and/or Catholic intellectual tradition to helps student think critically and ethically about the world around them.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	Faculty are not familiar with the definition of Catholic intellectual tradition and do not manifest teaching behaviors that evidence it. Faculty do not use or seldom use the lenses of Scripture and/or Catholic intellectual tradition in subjects to help students think critically or ethically.
Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lesson plans• ACRE results• Student outcomes that give evidence to understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition and moral/ethical reasoning• Student performance that gives evidence to understanding of the Catholic intellectual tradition and moral/ethical reasoning• Course text materials• Use of resources Center of the 21st Century



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Benchmark: 2.6

Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	Catholic culture and faith are expressed and integrated throughout the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture. Symbols of Catholic faith abound at every level and recognition of the school’s Catholic culture and faith as expressed through visual and performing arts, music, and/or architecture are noted in a significant way by parents/guardians and those outside of the immediate school community.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture. Any visitors to the school (including parents/guardians, staff, students, and others) readily identify signs and symbols of Catholic culture and faith.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through some form of visual and/or performing art and/or music and/or architecture. If someone actively looks for Catholic culture and faith they are apt to find something.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	Catholic culture and faith are not expressed or are expressed minimally in the school through forms of visual and performing arts, music or architecture. A tour of the school does not give evidence of Catholic culture and faith. Visual and performing arts and/or music created by teachers and students do not or rarely exemplify Catholic culture and faith. Symbols may point to spiritual realities but are not expressly Catholic.
Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual works of art seen or created• Examples of music heard, performed or created• Theater, dance, movement seen or created• Architecture of large school building structures• Architecture of individual classrooms



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presence of religious symbols
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Benchmark: 2.7

The theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.

Level 4 Exceeds Benchmark	The theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum in multiple subject areas including religious education. Students are involved in forms of service that are intentionally designed and informed by the Church’s social teaching. Students receive planned instruction multiple times in their programs of study and are involved in service learning.
Level 3 Fully Meets Benchmark	The theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum. Every student receives planned instruction in the Church’s social teaching.
Level 2 Partially Meets Benchmark	The theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings are minimally present in the curriculum. Students may be exposed to the Church’s social teaching but there is not a clear plan of instruction.
Level 1 Does Not Meet Benchmark	The theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings are not found in the curriculum.
Possible Sources of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum guides aligned to Church’s social teaching• Graded courses of study• Service learning projects aligned to Church’s social teaching• Assessments tied to the Church’s social teaching• School wide plan for instruction in the Church’s social teaching• USCCB document...Seven Pillars for Catholic social justice teaching, look at USCCB website 1999 sharing Catholic social teaching challenges and directions http://old.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml• Lesson plan activities aligned to Church’s social teaching

