

REPORT OF FINDINGS

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL
6500 HIGHLAND DR
VANCOUVER, WA
ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE



WCEA *Western Catholic
Educational Association*

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

**A SELF STUDY PROCESS
FOR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

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REPORT OF FINDINGS

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PREFACE

We, the Visiting Committee, wish to commend you, the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and student body of St Joseph Catholic School for working together to make the school a loving, caring and learning environment. We pray that the good work that you have done and the plans that you have made for the future will help you become an even better school.

The team found our three days at St Joseph Catholic School professionally rich and personally rewarding. We experienced a community where everyone is striving to provide a Catholic environment where quality education is a priority.

We wish to thank all of you, pastor, principal, faculty, staff, parents and students for your warm and gracious hospitality.

May the Christ we serve bless you with every success as you journey into your future.

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. How the Self Study was Conducted

What process has the school used to complete the Self Study (schedule of meetings, timeline, involvement of shareholders, etc.)?

St. Joseph Catholic School began its self-study process in March of 2011 with a review of the school's mission and philosophy. The staff met on two occasions in the spring of 2011 to review the current statements and begin to evaluate their current effectiveness. In August of 2011, the Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools gave an overview of the accreditation process to the entire staff. Six of St. Joseph Catholic School teachers served on Accreditation Visiting Committees in the 2010-2011 school year so they were each able to confidently lead in the process. The staff began working in their accreditation committees in the fall of 2011.

In November of 2011 the school held a stakeholders meeting to once again review the effectiveness of the current mission and philosophy. The Pastor, members of the parish councils, the School Commission and parents were invited to join in the process. This helped community leaders understand the accreditation process as well as allow them to give feedback. The School Commission also participated in the self-study process by giving their input during Commission meetings.

Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, staff members met during 3 full-day inservices and 4 half day inservices specifically calendared for accreditation work. Additionally, time was given during weekly Wednesday staff meetings to work on the self-study. The previous set of Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs) was reviewed and simplified. Students became familiar with the new version in the 2011-12 school year, and began the 2012-13 year with the expectations as common language.

The Action Plan was finalized in June 2012 and the draft document was then sent to the Assistant Superintendent for feedback. In September 2012, the document was once again shared with staff upon return to the new school year and then went to print in preparation for the pre-visit.

What obstacles, if any, did the school experience in completing their Self Study?

A minor obstacle faced during the self-study year was the school community knew that tuition would freeze for the following school year and several aides would lose their positions. The struggle was to focus and write about the great accomplishments of the current year, knowing that the following year would look a bit different. Also, the parish moved from a Pastor and an Associate Pastor in 2011-2012 to just a Pastor in 2012-2013.

B. Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study

Accreditation Factor #1: *The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.*

How effectively has the school involved all shareholders in data review and analysis, dialog about student progress, school accomplishments and needs, etc.?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in involving stakeholders in the self-study process. All stakeholders were informed of the accreditation process at the beginning of the 2011-12 school year through the family weekly e-newsletter called *NEWSflash*. An explanation of the process was also sent to parents as a reminder each time an inservice day approached to explain what the teachers were working on. Stakeholders were asked their opinion through multiple surveys. They also were involved in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's mission, philosophy and Schoolwide Learning Expectations.

Parents, school and parish staff, students, School Commission, Finance Council members, parish members and the Pastor were all part of the self-study process. Whether it was at School Commission meetings, the large stakeholder meeting, or in staff meetings, the school continuously updated the stakeholders. Open dialogue of the school's continued needs has been a focus. The Pastor meets with the school administration weekly to stay updated. The parish accountant has acted as a liaison with the Finance Council in assisting them to understand the process and needs of the school and parish.

How effective are the school's plans to keep shareholders involved in ongoing systematic analysis of the school's effectiveness?

St. Joseph School has an effective plan in keeping shareholders involved in ongoing systematic analysis of the school's effectiveness, and of the progress of the Action Plan over the next six years. Updates will be part of agendas at School Commission and council meetings, as well as school and parish staff meetings. The *NEWSflash* reaches the entire school community immediately and therefore will continue to be a primary means of conveying updates.

Chapter 2: Context of the School

A. School Profile

To what extent has the school compiled and analyzed annually updated data (cultural, demographic, financial, survey, interview) that identified major changes or trends since the last Self Study?

St. Joseph School has effectively compiled, analyzed and responded to the data they have collected for the self-study. In following the accreditation protocol data was collected and analyzed in areas of enrollment, high school attendance, staff, finances, and student assessment results.

An emphasis of St. Joseph School is preparing their students for high school. In the last five years an average of 62% of the St Joseph graduates chose to attend one of the four accessible Catholic high schools in Portland. The opening of Seton Catholic in Vancouver four years ago has given families a local choice for Catholic education as well. The trend has shown that the number of students actually attending the local Catholic high schools has declined in the past five years. Through conversations and interviews, it is evident that the current economic situation has played a major role in this decline.

Student performance is viewed through the use of traditional tests and quizzes as well as authentic assessment activities such as portfolios, presentations, symposiums, projects, displays, power points, videos, etc. The teachers use daily observations to assess learning in order to adjust teaching strategies. The recent adoption of the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment through the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) has enabled teachers to immediately identify where their students are ready to begin to learn. This computerized test is given to all students in the fall and the spring and assists teachers in planning to reach the needs of each child.

The creation and analysis of budget fosters dialogue about the school's demographics throughout the year. The administration acknowledges that the economic situation is affecting families and how this impacts the increased need for tuition assistance. The rise in the number of applications for financial aid at St. Joseph Catholic School reflects the trends of greater economic need in the community.

What do parent/student/staff surveys tell about satisfaction with the school?

Shareholders were asked for their opinions through multiple surveys. The parent and student surveys helped to inform the school of areas of strength as well as areas of concern. Among the strengths highlighted were: Catholicity, academic excellence, positive learning environment, campus safety, staff retention. Surveys show that 77.2% of parents state that they send their children to St. Joseph School for academic excellence, and 62.6% highlight Catholic values as being the reason they choose to send their children to the school. Surveys also show that 87.8% of parents say that the demands of school are about right for their child and 93.6% feel St. Joseph

School has a positive learning environment. One concern mentioned centered on developing strategies to deal with and prevent bullying behaviors. Another concern raised was the fact that the school does not offer a foreign language program.

B. Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #2: *The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.*

How effectively has the school used the prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to support faith formation and high achievement of all students?

St. Joseph has effectively used prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data to support faith formation and high achievement of all students. The School Improvement Plan from the St. Joseph self-study of 2006 identified five goals.

Goal 1: Improve methods for identifying and assisting students with different learning styles.

To assist teachers in helping students with all types of learning styles, the staff was trained in the *Schools Attuned* program, a program to learn how to meet the needs of each child. Training has also been provided to identify and address sensory processing needs and to maintain best practices. Professional development opportunities are consciously chosen that will assist teachers in working with the individual needs of each learner. In the fall of 2010, the school adopted the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) testing, which identifies exactly where each child is currently performing. Subsequent testing will show each child's actual growth. Prior to the MAP test the school was using ITBS. Student progress is shared with each parent at conferences and again after the end-of-the year assessment.

Goal 2: Develop and implement consistent standards in writing throughout the school

Teachers have been trained in *Step-Up-To-Writing* (SUTW) to be used as a tool in the implementation of the writing curriculum. In 2009, the school's reading series was updated in grades K-5, as well as new literature and grammar books in grades 6-8. These updated resources and on-going conversation amongst the staff have helped to ensure that each student is assisted in his or her writing growth. In the summer of 2010 a writing committee was created to improve the teaching of writing across grade levels. The school's 8th grade Language Arts teacher wrote a writing handbook for grades 7 and 8 and another for grades 4-6 aligning curriculum to promote continuity across grade levels. The administration keeps a writing sample of each child from both fall and spring so progress can be viewed over time. Writing in Religion class and across the curriculum is an important part of each day at St. Joseph School.

Goal 3: Expand the integration of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations

The SLEs were a new concept to the school six years ago, but now, they are a part of the everyday existence at St. Joseph. The SLEs have been rewritten to be more student-friendly and accurately describe what is expected of all children at St. Joseph School. The SLEs have become common language in the community since the last accreditation. They are posted in classrooms and around the main building. The primary grades have developed a short prayer to incorporate the SLEs. Intermediate and middle school teachers use the expectations in their assessments as well as in goal setting.

Goal 4: Facility Maintenance and Improvements- evaluate and prioritize needs and repairs

As a result of the last accreditation, the improvement in communication between maintenance, staff and administration has addressed physical needs on campus and accomplished many upgrades. Auction Funds were moved out of operating budget to be able to fund special projects. Some of those projects include: new modular buildings for Library and Music; cupboards in the new space for Art; conversion of an old room to a Resource Room for tutoring and a teacher library and book room; redesign of the old Annex to house Extended Care and the new Pre-Kindergarten program; new play structure specific to Pre-K and Kindergarten students for their safety; new covered play structure; added HVAC system to the computer room; new windows on the main building; added play structure for the older children; replaced/added cabinetry in the staff work room as well as redesigned storage space and added bookshelves in six classrooms in the outer wing; redesigned space for development /fund raising projects; redesigned the work space area for staff and volunteers; replaced the old boiler with two new ones; purchased a new freezer in kitchen/cafeteria; and added a security system to improve the safety of the children. All of these improvements and updates have given a facelift to the building and programs, providing more opportunities for optimal learning in a safe and updated environment.

Goal 5: Create a Preschool

In 2007-2008 the St. Joseph Pre-Kindergarten program opened with one morning class. Since then the program has added an afternoon class. The St. Joseph Pre-Kindergarten has provided opportunities for students and families to be prepared for entry into the Kindergarten program. Students experience great success with the familiarity of the St. Joseph programs, routines, and staff, providing a smooth transition to Kindergarten. The Pre-Kindergarten class entering into the fall of 2012 is full. The school wants to add a 3-year-old class as well, but at this time, space limits the program to a Pre-Kindergarten program.

How effectively has the school implemented the concept of continuous school improvement, e.g., data analysis and action, focus on high achievement, etc. in non-accreditation years?

St. Joseph School has been effective in implementing the concept of continuous school improvement through its responses and actions and their focus on high achievement since their last accreditation self-study. The school's five goals have been the driving force for

improvement, and progress has been made in all goal areas. The school has worked to create an environment suited for optimal learning, while providing teachers the educational training to put the students at the center of improvement. Continuous school improvement will be strengthened with analysis of data using the new MAP assessment tool.

Chapter 3: Quality of the School Program

A. Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity:

Accreditation Factor #3: *The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.*

How effectively has the school improved the spiritual formation of students, staff, and parents?

St. Joseph is highly effective in providing authentic spiritual formation to the entire school community. The school's administrative team and pastor have fostered a sense of Catholic Identity for its students, parents, faculty, and staff. The school has outward signs of their Catholic Identity from the presence of the scripture verse at the school's entrance to ongoing thoughtful prayer and liturgical opportunities. Communal prayer, daily classroom prayer, weekly worship, and community service projects contribute to the school's mission and faith development. The school's implementation of Monday morning prayer service has helped the school improve the spiritual formation of the students, parents and staff. The pastor and principal are deeply committed to the spiritual formation of all the student, staff, and parents through parent communications, staff retreats, catechetical certification, staff development and a sacramental preparation program.

How effectively has the school implemented changes to improve their Catholic Identity and fully integrate it into the life of the school?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in implementing changes to improve and fully integrate the Catholic Identity into the life of the school. Catholic Identity is manifested in the school's implementation of new programs such as *Rachel's Challenge*, and the "Caught" program. These changes cultivate an atmosphere that celebrates the essence of the Catholic faith within the school community.

St. Joseph School's Catholic Identity, as evidenced by its mission, philosophy, and revised SLEs, ensures a program based on gospel values, service projects, and spiritual experiences that develop the faith of the students, faculty, and parents.

How effectively has the school analyzed changes they've made in Catholic Identity to determine how these changes have strengthened their Catholic Identity?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in analyzing changes to strengthen their Catholic community. The newly implemented Monday student-led community prayer services have added a greater partnership with parents and resulted in a deeper sense of community.

In an effort to increase positive student interactions, author Trudy Ludwig was invited to address the school community to discuss the bullying prevention strategies. *Rachel's Challenge* activities demonstrate a chain of kind acts along with faith as a guiding force. Early indications suggest a greater awareness of recognizing random acts of kindness and encouraging a positive learning environment.

B. Defining the School's Purpose

Accreditation Factor #4: *The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

How effectively does the school's mission and philosophy reflect the Catholic nature of the school?

St. Joseph School's mission and philosophy is effective in reflecting the Catholic nature of the school. All shareholders collaboratively reviewed and revised the original mission and philosophy statements to better suit the current school community's needs. The mission states, "St. Joseph School is centered in Gospel values, partnering with parents and the parish community to develop the spiritual, academic and social growth of each student." The philosophy focuses on encouraging the practice of the Catholic faith through participation in prayer and liturgical life as well as fostering high academic expectations and respect for others through actions, words and service. The mission and philosophy statements became the foundation by which the original Schoolwide Learning Expectations were created. The updated SLEs were amended to more directly align to the current mission and philosophy statements. The St. Joseph school community has embraced the mission and philosophy statements, along with their revised SLEs as a means of affirming "their commitment to excellence in Catholic education."

How effectively has the school integrated their mission, SLEs, and standards into the total reality of the school?

St. Joseph School has effectively integrated its mission, SLEs, and standards into the total reality of the school. The SLEs are well defined and have been incorporated into all aspects of the school day. Posters of the mission, philosophy and SLEs are present throughout the school. Teachers are constantly developing new ways to incorporate and reinforce the SLEs. They have aligned lessons and curriculum with the new SLEs to provide age appropriate experiences that help students live the mission, philosophy, and SLEs. Teachers document which SLEs have been taught, and submit a summary to the principal at the end of each month. Students are encouraged

to align their own work with the SLEs and some teachers are keeping notebooks about how their SLEs are being met. A new report card is being created to reflect the achievement of the SLEs, which will be implemented during the current school year.

How effectively has the school communicated their mission and purpose, including any governing authority expectations, to their shareholders?

St. Joseph School has effectively communicated its mission and purpose, including any governing authority expectations, to its shareholders. Parents and students are aware of the school's SLEs and expectations. The mission and philosophy statements are communicated to shareholders via the school website, classroom websites and newsletters, parent and student handbooks, newsletters, *NEWSflashes*, student work, classroom displays, and hallway bulletin boards and displays.

C. Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #5: *The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.*

How effectively have the organizational structures of the school supported the school's mission and created an environment that is focused on high achievement of all students?

St. Joseph School is highly effective at supporting its mission and creating an environment that is focused on high achievement of all students. St. Joseph School has a highly committed faculty and staff, which provide a strong academic program. The school staff has access to professional development opportunities, student tracking software, and a strong parent-teacher organization, which supports the high achievement of their students.

St. Joseph School teachers and staff are dedicated to life-long learning and professional growth. The teaching staff attends numerous workshops and classes that meet the needs of their students. Faculty and staff members immerse themselves in learning about differentiated instruction through the *All Kinds of Minds: Schools Attuned* program. Many staff members hold catechetical certification and/or others are in the process of obtaining certification.

Tracking student growth and progress are important to student achievement. St. Joseph School has added the web-based program PowerSchool in order for students, parents, and teachers to view student grades. MAP testing of students in grades 1-8 in both the fall and spring give teachers information on each student's incoming knowledge and end of the year knowledge in the critical areas of math and language arts.

St. Joseph School has support staff and volunteers to work with students. Both full and part time aides work in the classrooms with small groups of students to reinforce teachings and provide additional support. A Reading Support Teacher provides individual and small group instruction in the area of reading fluency and comprehension.

Parents are members of the PTO as well as the School Commission. The PTO's main purpose is to assist the school in providing educationally enriched activities as well as fundraising efforts. The School Commission advises and supports the pastor and the principal in the operation of St. Joseph School. The School Commission helps to assess the needs of the school community and works to address those needs through strategic planning, formulating policy recommendations and consulting on the development of the school budget. The School Commission's efforts help support high achievement of all students.

How effectively have the organizational structures of the school communicated student progress to the shareholders?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in communicating student progress to the shareholders. Parents are informed of school activities and student progress through weekly *NEWSflashes*, PowerSchool, emails, classroom websites and newsletters. Student-led fall conferences and report cards also communicate student progress.

The School Commission promotes communication within the school community and collaborates with the pastor and principal in educating the parish on the importance of the ministry of the school.

D. Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #6: *The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.*

How effectively has the school used educationally sound assessment processes to collect, disaggregate and analyze student performance data? (Note: include information about the use of standardized tests, teacher-made tests, and text-created tests; as well as the school's use of clear interpretations of the data analysis.)

St. Joseph School is effective in using data from educational assessments in order to drive the improvement in instruction. Teachers are tasked with using data from multiple sources to set goals, make curricular and instructional choices, and allocate instructional time.

In 2010, St. Joseph School implemented the MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress) Tests. The results of these tests have been disaggregated to determine how the outcomes impact classroom instruction and support individual students. Prior to 2012, the school was using ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) as a tool to help with the assessment of student achievement. The school felt that the ITBS data was not used effectively to impact teaching, consequently, the school opted to replace the ITBS with the MAP tests.

The MAP is administered to all students in grades 1-8, twice a year, once in the fall and the again in the spring. Teachers use this assessment tool to create leveled math and reading groups and

determine which students meet with the Reading Support Teacher. The MAP and ITBS were used to provide students with additional academic help, which includes an action plan with more focused accommodations and target goals for improvements. The faculty and staff have identified the need to spend more time analyzing and disaggregating data to improve instruction.

In addition to MAP tests, all teachers are expected to adjust/modify their teaching based on various formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include, KWL charts, student “thumbs-up/down” and other informal polling, quizzes, journaling, homework, warm-ups, projects, individual whiteboard and presentations. St. Joseph School employs a variety of summative assessments to measure student progress towards academic standards. Summative assessments include themed reading tests, comprehension tests, unit tests, projects, presentations and research papers.

How effectively has the school assessed SLEs and academic standards?

St. Joseph School is effective in assessing the SLEs. The SLEs are posted in every classroom and common area of the school through SLE posters. These SLE posters display the different SLEs category, which allows for teachers to acknowledge them throughout the day. Some classrooms also use graphic organizers to align the SLEs to student learning. Students show which SLEs correlates with the various lessons through written verification and orally in class.

St. Joseph School bases its curriculum on the guidelines provided by the Seattle Archdiocese, cross-references Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), with the Common Core Standards being integrated as they become available from the State. The school effectively assesses academic standards using a variety of formative and summative methods as well as using the MAP to monitor student progress.

How effectively has the school used data analysis, trends, etc. as a basis for improving student learning such as: modifying instruction, challenging students to achieve, implementing new curricular materials, etc.?

St. Joseph School has been effective in using data analysis as a basis for improving student learning. Teachers collect data from a variety of sources including curriculum-based assessments, chapter tests, classroom projects, and observations. Assessments (data analysis) have been used to facilitate discussion and implementation of accommodating students with academic concerns and there is a clear process for identifying and evaluating these students.

Students at St. Joseph School who are not making acceptable progress in their learning are granted accommodations such as being allowed extended time in test-taking or being provided alternative homework assignments. Alternatively, students who excel are grouped in faster-paced classes. Several extracurricular academic-oriented clubs and activities are available to all students for enrichment, including Math Club, Lego Robotics, Chess Club, Mad Science, etc.

In an effort to transition to Common Core Standards St. Joseph School has purchased a new K-5th grade math program. The school has adjusted the 7th and 8th grade schedule to add minutes in core classes to increase instructional time. Parents report that graduates of St. Joseph School are well prepared for high school.

E. SLEs and Standards-Based Curriculum to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #7: *The school provides a challenging, comprehensive and relevant curriculum for each student that results in achievement of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations. All students make acceptable progress toward clearly defined and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

How effectively has the school developed a curriculum based on SLEs and curriculum standards?

St. Joseph School has effectively developed a standards-based curriculum that is based on its SLEs (Spiritual Growth, Academic Growth, and Social Growth). St. Joseph School bases its curriculum on the guidelines provided by the Seattle Archdiocese, cross-references Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), and is integrating Common Core Standards as they become available from the State. Furthermore, St. Joseph School is in the process of mapping their curriculum using the Rubicon system to ensure a curricular flow from grade to grade. The school has identified this as a critical goal to formalize a cohesive and spiraling curriculum.

How effectively has the school measured student achievement of the SLEs?

St. Joseph School effectively measures student awareness of SLEs in a variety of creative ways. Classroom posters are used to visually call out the SLE categories; students in younger grades organize their binders according to SLEs, while the older students map each lesson to a SLE by marking the appropriate category on various student deliverables.

Because the SLEs are aligned with the school's standards-based curriculum, the measurement of student achievement of the SLEs is inherent to the assessment of student progress with respect to its curriculum. Additionally, the principal collects 'Teaching Progress Summaries' monthly from all teachers to ensure SLE alignment. Between the years 2000 – 2009, the school used Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) to assess student academic progress, but felt that the data was not used effectively to impact teaching. Consequently, they replaced the ITBS with the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test. In addition to MAP tests, teachers measure student progress and achievement in a variety of ways such as curriculum-based assessments, chapter tests, classroom projects, observations, and more.

How effectively has the school measured student achievement of the curriculum standards, e.g., the use of multiple assessments to measure student progress, etc.?

St. Joseph School effectively measures student achievement of the curriculum standards in a variety of ways. As of 2010, St. Joseph School has used the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test to assess student performance in grades 1-8. In addition to MAP tests, all teachers are expected to employ various formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include student “thumbs-up/down” and other informal polling, quizzes, journaling, homework, warm-ups, projects, presentations, and more. Summative assessments include exams, papers (research and other types), projects (including Science Fair), presentations, and portfolios.

How effectively has the school ensured that each student is making acceptable progress toward the achievement of SLEs and curriculum standards?

St. Joseph School is effective at ensuring that each student is making acceptable progress toward the achievement of SLEs and curriculum standards. In general, St. Joseph School assumes that learning is a developmental process such that teachers are expected to instruct, monitor student understanding, and re-teach when necessary. The evaluation of student progress is accomplished using a variety of methods including test data, and the monitoring of classroom performance, student self-assessment with the goal of improving instructional quality.

Teachers select and organize the curriculum and instructional materials. They are expected to adapt methods and materials to accommodate a variety of learning styles and plan for both long term and short-term instructional goals. Students at St. Joseph School who are not making acceptable progress in their learning may need additional learning support, and are provided accommodations whereas those students, who excel, are grouped in faster-paced classes. The school has identified a critical goal of continuing to ensure students with unique needs are receiving appropriate instruction.

F. Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students

Accreditation Factor #8: *The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.*

How effectively has the school integrated Catholic values throughout the curriculum?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in integrating Catholic values throughout the curriculum. A shared sentiment among the pastor, faculty and parents is that Catholic faith and values permeate all aspects of the school program. One of the components of the SLEs is a faith-filled individual who demonstrates knowledge of the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, participates in prayer, Mass and rituals of the church, and serves others in a local and global community. These ideals are woven throughout St. Joseph School.

Students are taught from a young age about the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments. Students are taught to problem solve using these tenants as a guide. St. Joseph School has implemented programs such as *Rachel's Challenge* to highlight students' acts of kindness. The idea that kindness causes a ripple effect is physically represented in each class by making a paper chain called a "Chain of Kindness." The WISE (Wonderful Individuals Sharing in Education) pairs classrooms with seniors/grandparents who visit once a month and talk about the month's character theme. All classrooms participate in service projects ranging from food drives to shoe collections to toy drives. In these programs the needs of the local and global community are taught and understood. The school has identified a critical goal of ensuring that lessons of kindness permeate the day to reduce social aggression.

How effectively has the school used research-based instructional techniques to improve student learning?

St. Joseph School has effectively used research-based instructional techniques to improve student learning. The teaching staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all learners. Teachers work with instructional assistants and the Reading Support Teacher to help all students reach their potential. Students begin the year testing using the online MAP program giving teachers the information on each student's areas of strength and weakness.

Throughout the year teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to guide instruction. Interactive notebooks, brain-based learning activities, projects and presentations, and tests and quizzes all help in tracking student learning. Teachers use this data to inform their teaching and unit plans.

The staff at St. Joseph School has spent time on the other side of the desk learning how to be stronger and more well-informed educators who are current with new instructional techniques. They have attended numerous workshops and in-services to hone their skills. In recent years they have attended the *All Kinds of Minds: Schools Attuned* training. Teachers also learned about sensory processing and how to incorporate activities into the classroom. An inservice centered on the program *Step-Up-to-Writing* helped to strengthen the writing curriculum. The school has identified a critical goal of developing comprehensive writing standards and expectations across grade levels to increase student learning.

How effectively has the school integrated technology into the teaching/learning process?

St. Joseph School is effective at integrating technology into the teaching/learning process. The school has made steps in improving technology resources and the integration into the curriculum. St. Joseph School has a computer lab which all students have access to use. In Kindergarten through grade 6, each class is scheduled to attend a technology class twice a week. During their time they are working towards proficiency in high-use programs such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Publisher. Students are also learning keyboarding. These are practical skills that will be used both in and out of school. For grades 7 and 8, there are open blocks of time available for students to apply their knowledge in the classroom in a technology project or presentation.

Students in these grades also use the lab to review for quizzes or tests using a variety of online study tools. Computers are used to enhance student learning; video clips from United Streaming allow students to visualize content rather than only reading from a textbook.

St. Joseph School recognizes they have outdated versions of software programs such as Word and Excel, which cause compatibility issues between home and school. Having access to greater technological resources available will only enhance student learning. This is something they are actively working towards. The school has recently received a gift donation specifically designated for technology enhancements. The school plans to install WiFi, purchase additional iPads and document cameras. The school recognizes that technology is a critical area within the Action Plan. The Visiting Committee suggests a review of the school's technology plan to reflect the recent financial donation.

Currently, families in grades 5 through 8 have access to PowerSchool; a database school management program that allows students and parents to view grades and student progress. Parents are also kept up-to-date on classroom projects and topics through teacher newsletters. This helps to bridge the home to school connection.

The MAP testing that is used for every student in grades 1 through 8 is completed online. This helps to gather and disseminate data quickly for teachers to use to guide their classroom instruction.

How effectively has the school used assessment to modify instruction/curriculum to help all students achieve the SLEs and curriculum standards?

St. Joseph School is effective in using assessment data to modify instruction/curriculum to help all students achieve the SLEs and curriculum standards. The school originally used ITBS before moving to MAP to collect standardized test data. ITBS was valuable in the sense that it affirmed where students fit within the norm against the national average, but it was not helpful in making instructional adjustments for the individual learner. Using MAP has given teachers the ability to see curricular gaps and areas of strength. They use the results to create leveled math groups, determine which students meet with the Reading Support Teacher, gather books at a particular reading level, and send home supplementary work. The school has identified the need to use data more effectively using the results of the MAP assessment to determine students' readiness to learn and to impact student learning.

Teachers use a variety of assessments to make curricular decisions. Formative assessments range from thumbs up and down, quizzes, homework, entrance and exit surveys, and quick writes to monitor student progress. Summative assessment helps teacher to determine the mastery of a concept. Chapter and unit tests, rubrics, projects, and presentations provide data on knowledge acquisition.

G. Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth

Accreditation Factor #9: *Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

How effectively has the school provided services, resources, and activities to help all students achieve at high levels?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in providing services, resources, and activities to help all students achieve at high levels. St. Joseph School offers opportunities to participate in activities that develop skills, build character and instill confidence. This is evident in the variety of extra-curricular activities made available to all students through both athletic and non-athletic enrichment experiences. The goal of athletics is to encourage cooperation, teamwork, skill development, and healthy competition. With the support of teachers, parent volunteers and the PTO, St. Joseph School offers a variety of enrichment opportunities including Chess Club, Math Club, Mad Science, Lego Robotics, and Young Rembrandts.

How effectively has the school used parents and community resources, including Federal Program funding, to assist students?

The school is highly effective utilizing parents and community resources, including Federal Program funding, to assist students. The school utilizes a wide variety of resources to assist students in their spiritual, personal and academic growth. The school uses Federal funds to provide resources for qualifying students and professional development for teachers. Parents are utilized as classroom volunteers, coaches for athletics and as helpers throughout the school. Students are supported through the Archdiocesan adopted *Talk About Touching Program* and the *Safe Environment Called to Protect Program*. Additionally, St. Joseph School uses a variety of programs to help students deal with bullying issues. These include the *Rachel's Challenge* "Chain of Kindness" Program and school-wide sessions with local author Trudy Ludwig; "Understanding our Students' Social World."

The school values its support by parents, families and community members. The parents are actively involved and highly visible in many aspects of the school community. Parent and parishioners support the school by volunteering their time on School Commission, PTO, Development Steering Committee, CYO and fundraising efforts.

H. Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students

References:

Accreditation Factor #10: *The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

How effectively has the school developed, implemented, and monitored a financial management system, to support high achievement of all students?

St. Joseph School is effective in using sound financial practices and generally accepted accounting principles to sustain the school programs. These practices have been effective in developing, implementing and monitoring a system of financial management. A budget sub-committee, consisting of school administration and members of the School Commission and Finance Council, has been established and creates a budget. The budget is reviewed and analyzed by the Pastoral Assistant for Administration and the parish accountant. The budget is then presented to the School Commission, with the Pastor making the final decision about tuition and the overall budget. There is an enrollment analysis that occurs in September, which allows the principal to know what financial adjustments must occur during the year for the budget to balance.

The school's revenue is made up from tuition, tuition assistance from auction funds, extended care proceeds, endowment funds, fees, parish and neighboring parish subsidies and various donations. It was noted in the self-study, through this analysis, there would be no tuition increase for the 2012-2013 school year, five staff were laid off and teachers only received a 1% pay increase. An audit of accounting practices by the Archdiocese of Seattle occurred and suggestions for improvements were made, which the school implemented.

How effectively has the school used external resources to supplement tuition, fees, and fund-raising?

The school is effective in using external resources to supplement tuition, fees and fundraising. In August of 2011, St. Joseph School hired a Development Director. The Development Director's key directive was to complete a ten-month review and recommendations for a 5-year vision plan, further work will occur on producing a long range strategic plan. The Development Steering Committee was established to investigate ways to ensure the future sustainability of the school. Outcomes from this committee included the formation of an Enrollment Management Plan, and the formation of an Annual Campaign that will help fill in the gap between tuition and the total cost of educating a child at St. Joseph School. An Alumni Association has been reactivated. Alumni records were made current, mailings were sent and alumni were invited to various events all in hopes of securing additional funds for the school.

How effective is the school at planning for its long-term viability?

St. Joseph School is effective at planning for its long-term viability. There has been a concerted effort to gather information that will assist them in creating a 5-year vision document. These plans outline key objectives for advancement, enrollment, sustainability, and alumni and volunteer engagement. The goal of The Development Steering Committee is to produce a strategic plan that ensures long-term financial viability.

Chapter 4: The Action Plan

A. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings

Accreditation Factor #11 (*The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.*)

Schoolwide Lists of Significant Accomplishments and Critical Goals

Schoolwide Significant Accomplishments (the eight most significant)

- Monday Prayer Services have allowed for all students to participate in leading and participating in prayer and has brought a focused start to each week in prayer
- Introduced the “Caught” program has increased awareness of the character theme of the month, giving students pride in being “Caught” doing something good
- Continually provided professional development opportunities that address the needs of all students
- The adoption of the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) has given teachers immediate data to affect instruction and assist with the achievement of all students
- Implemented Rubicon curriculum mapping to align subject/grade levels
- Added a Reading Support Teacher to work with first through fifth grade students
- Brought presentations and trainings on for strategies on dealing with bullying behavior for students, parents, and staff: Trudy Ludwig “Understanding our Students’ Social World” and *Rachel’s Challenge*
- Hired a new Development Director in 2011

Critical Goals (identified by school)

- Formalize a cohesive and spiraling curriculum across grade levels
- Use MAP data to identify students’ readiness to learn
- Develop comprehensive writing standards and expectations across grade levels
- Ensure students with unique needs are receiving appropriate instruction
- Ensure lessons of kindness permeate our day by reducing social aggression

How effectively did the school identify critical goals that are focused on improving student learning?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in identifying the critical goals to focus on during their next term of accreditation. The school's identification of the development of curriculum mapping, analysis of test scores, ensuring students with unique needs are receiving appropriate instruction and working on consistent writing standards will have a direct impact on student learning. The *Rachel's Challenge* is an important goal that will ensure a safe and comfortable environment for students to learn and grow.

How effectively does the Action Plan align with and address the school's critical goals in order to support high achievement of all students?

St. Joseph School is highly effective in writing an Action Plan that both aligns with and addresses the school's critical goals to support high achievement of all students. The goals that they have selected will have great impact on the total school program. The Action Plan includes specific strategies, activities, costs, timelines, the person responsible and a process for monitoring and communicating to the community. The thoroughness of these plans, in addition to the way that the school addressed the critical areas of growth from their last accreditation self-study, led the Visiting Committee to believe that St. Joseph School will successfully address the issues identified by their critical goals during their next term of accreditation.

PLEASE NOTE: The Visiting Committee is not required to complete either of the next two optional parts. If either or both of these parts are not used, the Visiting Committee should put N/A in place of the narrative. If either optional part is used, the Visiting Committee must have identified and clearly supported the need for this modification or new critical goal in the *Report of Findings* narrative.

OPTION A: If the finding of the Visiting Committee is that one of the school's critical goals should be modified, the Visiting Committee should write a narrative describing what modifications are needed, and the rationale for these modifications.

N/A

OPTION B: *Critical Goal Identified by the Visiting Committee:*

1.

If the finding of the Visiting Committee is to replace a school's critical goal in the school's Action Plan, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be replaced, and write a brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the

Visiting Committee into the school's Action Plan. NOTE: Because there can be no more than two critical goals from the Self Study incorporated into the School's Action Plan, the Visiting Committee recommendation will replace one of the school's two critical goals.

If the opinion of the Visiting Committee is to add a critical goal for incorporation into the school's Action Plan in the future, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be added, and write a brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the Visiting Committee into the school's Action Plan. NOTE: The school's Action Plan evolves over time and new critical goals are incorporated as critical goals are accomplished.

N/A

B. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan

Accreditation Factor #12: *The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

How effective are the monitoring processes (assessment/evaluation, communication to shareholders, involvement of shareholders in implementing and monitoring the Action Plan, etc.) that are incorporated into the Action Plan?

The Visiting Committee believes that St. Joseph School will be highly effective in monitoring the processes that are incorporated into their Action Plan. The administration will be responsible for making sure the new Action Plan is implemented through staff meetings, in-services, professional development, teacher reports and reports of student progress. Success will come when student learning is positively impacted. As they align and map their curriculum, students will engage in an experience of learning presented methodically and in a spiral fashion. Teachers will also meet the needs of individual learners through the study of MAP data.

Involvement of shareholders will be ongoing as the Action Plan is carried out. Shareholders will be informed through the weekly *NEWSflash* and reports to the School Commission. The Pastor will be kept informed of progress on the Action Plan through weekly meetings with the school administration. Once a goal has been met, a new goal will be selected from the self-study and added to the Action Plan.

How effective is the school plan to evaluate the goals in the Action Plan on the basis of their impact on student achievement?

The Visiting Committee believes that St. Joseph School will be effective if they continue to collect and disaggregate data to assess the effectiveness of the Action Plan on student achievement.

What impediments, if any, must the school address in order to accomplish the Action Plan?

The school identified that the main impediment in implementing their Action Plan is finding dedicated time for teachers to work on curriculum mapping and to analyze MAP data. Funding to implement technological improvements is no longer an impediment due to the generous donation of anonymous donors in the summer of 2012. At this time, the school is currently procuring and implementing planned technology enhancements.

St. Joseph School is in position to effectively implement structures and strategies for growth in the future. The recommendations of the previous Visiting Committee have been effectively addressed and implemented.

The Visiting Committee is confident, based on observations, review of evidence, and interviews, that the school's plan, which will include all areas of growth from the self-study and this report, will be carried out.