



WCEA *Western Catholic
Educational Association*

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING



**St. Philomena
Catholic School**

A Self Study for:

St. Philomena School

1815 S. 220th St.
Des Moines, WA 98198

Continuous School Improvement Focused on High Achievement of All Students

Spring 2011

Preface

St. Philomena School has a long history of providing a solid Catholic education to the families of St. Philomena Parish and the surrounding communities. This education is rooted in challenging academics, strong moral values, and excellent instruction. Our mission is *to teach, model, and promote Gospel values in all areas of a balanced curriculum so that the teachings of Christ become our focus and Christ Himself, our constant point of reference.*

St. Philomena School Statement of Philosophy

The St. Philomena Parish Catholic School Community is committed to teaching, modeling and promoting the Catholic faith in addition to providing a challenging and contemporary academic curriculum infused with the Gospel message of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church.

- We encourage the growth of each student in a nurturing environment, recognizing their diverse gifts and talents.
- We challenge all students to take academic risks as they prepare to meet the needs of an ever-changing world.
- We prepare our students to live their faith daily as reflective, contributing citizens in service to their church and to their communities.

St. Philomena Catholic School's Student Learning Expectations

A St. Philomena School Student is...

✚ a student of Catholic faith who...

- acquires knowledge of faith, traditions, and authentic teachings of the Catholic Church.
- participates in liturgical, sacramental, and prayer experiences.
- practices the Golden Rule and resolves conflicts peacefully.
- develops strategies for moral and ethical decision making.

✚ an active learner who...

- acquires a solid academic foundation through a standards-based, balanced curriculum.
- develops a strong work ethic through goal setting, study habits, time management, and organizational skills.
- demonstrates responsible use of technology to enhance learning.
- practices academic risk-taking through critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and working cooperatively.
- communicates clearly, confidently, and skillfully.

✚ a servant leader who...

- acquires an awareness of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.
- demonstrates respect for the diversity of all God's children.
- responds to Christ's call to serve.

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ST. PHILOMENA SCHOOL FACULTY & STAFF

PRINCIPAL
VICE-PRINCIPAL
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE –OVERALL
KINDERGARTEN
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE- CLASSROOM
GRADE 1

GRADE 2
GRADE 3
GRADE 4
GRADE 5
GRADE 6
MIDDLE SCHOOL
GRADE 7

GRADE 8

K-8 MUSIC/CHOIR/6th GRADE
BAND
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

TITLE I/RESOURCE
LIBRARY MANAGER
LIBRARY INSTRUCTION
COMPUTERS
BOOKKEEPER
KIDS' CLUB DIRECTOR
HOT LUNCH COORDINATOR
MAINTENANCE

Mr. Steve Morissette
Mrs. Mary Ruth
Mrs. Chris Korzeniecki
Mrs. Pat Incrocci
Miss Christina Moreno
Mrs. Ann Yanak
Mrs. Vanessa Brogan
Mrs. Samantha Toner
Miss Kathleen Fogarty
Miss A'ndria Salcedo
Mrs. Teri O'Connor
Mrs. Amy Aphorp
Mrs. Sarah Gibson
Mrs. Meghan Hoyer
Mrs. Marilyn Byers
Mr. Frank Crosswhite
Mrs. Mary Ruth

Mrs. Nancy Merlich
Miss Frances McKamey
Mrs. Sarah Gibson, Mrs. Marilyn
Byers, Mr. Frank Crosswhite
Mrs. Theresa Parson
Mrs. Ginny Hunt
Mrs. Nancy Merlich
Mrs. Byers and all teaching staff
Mrs. Michele Ogle
Mrs. Angie Mendez
Mrs. Ann Yanak
Mr. Derrin Walter

ST. PHILOMENA PARISH ADMINISTRATION
PRIEST ADMINISTRATOR
DEACON
PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR ADMINISTRATION
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
CCD/SACRAMENTS
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
YOUTH GROUP
FACILITIES
HISPANIC MINISTRY
ACCOUNTANT

Parish # 206.878.8709
Fr. Stephen Woodland
Jerry Graddon
Amelia Marin
Candy Adams
Kara Montplaisir
Mike Dolan
Dee Jenkins
Darrin Walter
Elisa Medina
Mary Dorn

ACCREDITATION LEADERSHIP TEAM

Steve Morissette
Mary Ruth
Teri O'Connor
Kathleen Fogarty



CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

A. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

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B. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The Self-Study leadership team was appointed in the spring of 2009, and the members met several times throughout that summer. In August 2009, the team designed a plan to introduce the self-study process to the school faculty and staff during the August in-service days the week before the opening of the 2009-2010 school year. The leadership team continued to meet throughout the school year, most Friday mornings before school as well as occasionally on the weekends. The team decided on the tasks that needed to be accomplished and presented these to the teaching staff during Monday afternoon faculty meetings and three in-service workdays planned during the school year.

When the planning began, the leadership team believed the self-study timeline to be one school year, with the goal of completing the self-study document in June 2010. However, during the year, the self-study protocol was changed and updated by the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA). These changes affected and lengthened the work on the process. In the spring of 2010, the leadership team was notified that the site visit, originally scheduled for fall 2010, had been re-scheduled for spring 2011. This change was welcomed, as the current principal was serving on an interim basis, and the parish was in the process of hiring a new permanent principal. The team was hopeful that the new principal could be involved in the self-study process for at least a few months before the site visit occurred. After the new principal was hired, he set the deadline of Dec. 16, 2010 for completing the self-study.

Although the team did not specifically invite parents to serve on the self-study committees, they were kept informed throughout the process. In addition, there are several members of the faculty and staff who are parents of current or former St. Philomena students, so there was a parent voice present. The team informed the School Commission, P.E.P. (Parents, Educators, Parishioners) Club Board, and P.E.P. Club about the status of the writing process as the report progressed. The team updated the board members each month on the progress on the self-study and invited the consultative boards to give input to the leadership team. The parents and boards were also invited and encouraged to complete the parent and board surveys, and approximately 65% of the executive board members did so.

The School Commission was directly involved in discussing and reviewing the work of the committees. Many of the members attended and participated in the shareholders' meeting. Once the mission statement, new philosophy statement, and new Schoolwide Learning Expectations were drafted, the commission members discussed, edited, and revised, and then approved them. Both the P.E.P. Club and School Commission board members completed the commission survey in the spring of 2010. The principal, vice principal, and leadership committee continued to update the consultative boards each month throughout the self-study process.

The self-study committees met several times throughout the process on in-service days designated for accreditation work as well as before and after school and on weekends if necessary.

St. Philomena School's accreditation self-study period, from 2009 through 2011, was filled with changes and transitions. These new opportunities, while positive in many ways, made the completion of the self-study somewhat challenging.

In June 2008, the principal, Sandra Barton Smith, was asked by the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, to consider the position of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum with the Archdiocese. Her decision to accept this offer at that late date in the school year resulted in the need to fill her vacated position with an interim principal. Mr. Joseph Budde accepted the one-year position, which later grew to a two-year term.

At the end of his first year at St. Philomena School, Mr. Budde appointed the accreditation leadership team. The team began working on the protocol it originally received during the summer and introduced the process to the school faculty and staff at the August in-service meetings. Partially through the 2009-2010 school year, the new protocol was updated and, after studying it, the leadership team found that it needed to change direction somewhat.

As one of the first schools to be required to implement the new protocol, there were no example reports from other schools to view or other leadership teams to ask for advice. In the midst of this year, a search was conducted to find a new principal, and Mr. Steve Morissette was hired in the spring of 2010. Although he was very familiar with the previous accreditation process, the new protocol was unfamiliar to him. In July 2010, Mr. Morissette began working as the new principal at St. Philomena, and although this was his first introduction to the new protocol, he quickly familiarized himself with it.

At this same time, changes were also occurring on the parish level. Fr. Thanh Dao was appointed priest administrator of St. Philomena Church in 2007, following a difficult time in this parish. Suddenly and unexpectedly, in November 2010, Fr. Thanh was reassigned to a new parish in Seattle, and Fr. Stephen Woodland was assigned priest administrator on November 19, 2010 by Archbishop Brunett as one of his last official duties before retiring.

With the self-study completed and our new school and parish leadership in place, the St. Philomena School community is looking to the future and is eager to continue building on the strong foundation of the past.



CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

B. INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION OF SHAREHOLDERS IN COMPLETING THE SELF STUDY

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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.

The St. Philomena School Administration and faculty work collaboratively with the parents, School Commission, P.E.P. Club and parishioners of St. Philomena Parish to ensure that school improvement is a major component of the school's mission. Information at St. Philomena School is communicated to shareholders through various avenues, including the school's website, the weekly parent Wednesday communication envelope, the St. Philomena School Family Handbook, School Commission meeting notes, P.E.P. Club meeting presentations, and the St. Philomena Parish bulletin. The sharing of information between school, home, and parish helps to build a good relationship, which in turn has a positive impact on students' learning.

School improvement plans and projects are reported to the faculty at faculty meetings through a School Commission report provided by the principal. There is a School Commission report at every P.E.P. Club Board meeting by the P.E.P. Club/School Commission liaison. This liaison also reports P.E.P. Club information to the School Commission at every meeting. The principal gives a report about school improvement at School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club Board meetings, and to the parent community at general P.E.P. Club meetings.

In relation to the development of the overall self-study, various shareholders (e.g. parents, students, school faculty and staff, P.E.P. Club Board, and School Commission members) were presented with opportunities to become involved in the process. The School Commission was directly involved in discussing and reviewing the work of the committees. Many of the members attended and participated in the shareholders' meeting. Once the mission statement, new philosophy statement, and new Schoolwide Learning Expectations were drafted, the commission members discussed, edited, revised, and then approved them. Both the P.E.P. Club Board and School Commission members completed the commission survey in the spring of 2010. The principal, vice principal, and leadership committee continued to update the consultative boards each month throughout the self-study process.

The major accomplishments, goals, and Action Plan were presented to the School Commission for their input and final thoughts. One of the School Commission's goals for 2011 is to help in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan. The School Commission is using the information from the self-study as the impetus to develop a five-year long range plan for St. Philomena School, which includes the implementation of the Action Plan goals.

The administration's goal is to present the information to the parents at the January and February 2011 P.E.P. Club meetings so that they can view the findings of the self-study.

The shareholders will be involved in the ongoing systematic analysis of the school effectiveness by continuing to be updated on the process through the avenues of communication and the committee work done at the various consultative boards.

Evidence

- St. Philomena School weekly newsletters
- P.E.P. Club Board meeting notes
- St. Philomena School Handbook
- School Commission minutes
- St. Philomena Parish bulletins
- Online survey results



CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

A. SCHOOL PROFILE (with supporting data)

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St. Philomena Catholic School opened in the fall of 1963 under the guidance of four Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur: Sister Francis Julie, Sister Raymond Francis, Sister Mary Christopher, and Sister Joseph, plus one lay teacher, Mrs. Mildred Downey. The charism of this order is “to make known God’s goodness”, and so they also dedicated themselves to the Christian education of the poor, especially girls. St. Philomena School opened with grades 1- 5, and the dedication of the school took place on April 19, 1964.

By 1969 the school had expanded to include grades six, seven, and eight. In 1973, during a period of economic decline both regionally and nationally, the sisters were called back to their mother house in Belmont, California. Despite the economic difficulties, the school’s parents decided they would do what was necessary to keep the school open. With the aid of the pastor, a lay-led faculty was hired and a School Commission was established. In 1986 the kindergarten program was instituted, and in 1996 the extended-day program, known as Kids’ Club, began. At the present time, the school is staffed by a dedicated, entirely lay, faculty.

St. Philomena School annually updates the school profile and school information and reports these findings to the Archdiocese of Seattle and the School Commission. The information is analyzed and then used to make important decisions about the need for changes and improvements to help the high achievement of students.

Situated in the city of Des Moines, which is located south of Seattle, Washington, St. Philomena School is a parish-based commuter school that draws students from approximately 13 zip codes that include the cities of Burien, Normandy Park, Des Moines, SeaTac, Federal Way, Auburn, Kent, Renton, Tacoma, Covington, Puyallup and Tukwila. Over the past five years, these towns have become much more culturally diverse and home to more single-parent families. St. Philomena School currently has a diversity rate of 30% students of color, which has steadily grown over the past five years. St. Philomena Parish was designated a parish for Hispanic Ministry since the last accreditation visit. There is a large and viable Hispanic population currently at St. Philomena Parish; however, this is not the case at St. Philomena School. For the 2010-2011 school year, the Hispanic diversity rate at St. Philomena School is 8.5%. While this rate is not reflective of the parish, it is reflective of the City of Des Moines, which is at 8.7%. The administration and School Commission are aware of this and are working with the Hispanic Ministry of the parish, the priest administrator, and with the Archdiocese to establish a recruitment plan to increase the Hispanic population in the school. With its strong academic reputation, the school has also drawn a small population of non-Catholic students, which currently is at 11%.

According to statistics from the City of Des Moines, 63.3% of the population of Des Moines is 44 years old and younger, and this is representational of the families that attend St. Philomena School. In 2008, the City of Des Moines reported a population rate of 6.9% of children under the age of five who live in the Des Moines area. Over the past five years, the kindergarten enrollment at St. Philomena School has been averaging 25 to 28 students. The current kindergarten policy states that 28 students is the maximum enrollment in that grade. St. Philomena School recognizes the need for a 4-year-old pre-kindergarten program and is focusing

on ways to implement such a program. It is believed that such a program would better prepare these students for St. Philomena's kindergarten program.

Despite the weak economy, St. Philomena School has experienced an overall enrollment increase of approximately 4% since 2006; however, there was a decrease of twelve students from the 2009-2010 school year to the current 2010-2011 school year. The School Commission, under the guidance and direction of the St. Philomena administrative staff has begun a marketing plan that includes a new school brochure, a new enrollment sign, an updated website, and an increased presence at parish activities for the means of recruitment.

Despite the transitions of two principals and two priests during the past six years, the St. Philomena teaching faculty and support staff has had little turnover. This consistency and longevity has provided much-needed stability for school students and their families. All instructional staff are Washington State certificated, and all religion teachers are working toward or have completed their Catechetical Certification requirement for religious instruction. The school administrative staff consists of a principal and part-time vice principal. The instructional staff is made up of eleven faculty members. The support staff includes the school secretary, a part-time bookkeeper, a full time instructional aide, a part-time kindergarten aide, a part-time library manager volunteer, the director of Kids' Club, and two part-time Kids' Club aides.

The staff and administration of St. Philomena School use the School Profile to track enrollment numbers, number of graduates attending Catholic high schools, trends in school-wide scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and mastery tests, and trends or changes reflected in the parent, student, and teacher surveys. Enrollment numbers directly affect the yearly budget, so they are watched very carefully. The School Commission, school, and school parents have increased their formal and word-of-mouth efforts to recruit new families to the school. In addition, the school has publicized the availability of Fulcrum Foundation aid to Catholic education and has become more visible in Fulcrum Foundation activities and publicity materials. The administration has established an active relationship with the local public school district, the Highline School District.

A noticeable trend over the last six years has been the enrollment of a greater number of applicants who scored poorly on the St. Philomena School entrance exam. This is reflected by the increased number of students who are achieving below grade level as measured by the ITBS test results and by the school's end-of-the-year mastery tests in reading/literature, math, and English/language arts. Approximately 68% of the students are achieving at grade level, as measured by these same tests. Because of concern for the progress of at-risk students, a part-time resource specialist was hired in August 2009 to implement Title I services for eligible students, and to provide additional reading support and math remediation for other students who scored below the fiftieth percentile on the reading and/or math sections of the ITBS. Additionally, the assistance of a full-time instructional aide was implemented in K-3 and a part-time instructional aide was hired in kindergarten to help with student achievement and classroom management. Parent volunteers are heavily recruited to help in the classroom to provide additional help.

The school staff has learned that some high-achieving students, especially in the middle-school grades, are bypassing St. Philomena School in favor of specific honors programs in the public schools. At the present time, the school has neither the budget nor the space for additional specialized staff or programs; however, an after-school Speech Club and Geo Club have been

added as a way to offer additional challenges for the high-achieving students, and one of the critical goals of the accreditation process includes adding a science lab based classroom to the existing school building.

The school has noted not only a decrease in the number of high-achieving applicants, but also a larger proportion of applicants with academic gaps or deficiencies in reading and/or math. In an effort to keep enrollment up, the school has admitted students who require more accommodation and individualized teacher attention and support than in previous years when there was full enrollment and waiting lists in many of the grades. In response to this trend, the school partnered with the Highline School District and hired a Title I teacher to service eligible students who live in that school district. During other hours which are paid for entirely by St. Philomena School, that same teacher is working with low-scoring students who reside in other school districts. Several teachers are also tutoring students from their own grade and others for no extra charge.

Based on anecdotal data, 90+% of graduates are accepted into Catholic high schools. While some of those graduates choose to attend John F. Kennedy Catholic High School in nearby Burien, others venture into Seattle to attend Holy Names Academy (all girls) or O'Dea Catholic High School (all boys), or into Tacoma to attend Bellarmine Preparatory School. The high schools report that our students are very well prepared. Currently, the high school grade point averages (GPAs) of St. Philomena graduates are not tracked because the high schools do not have a mechanism that would allow the elementary schools to do so. Periodically, St. Philomena receives newsletters from John F. Kennedy Catholic High School that lists members of the honor roll, but no such communication comes from the other three Catholic high schools that (our) St. Philomena graduates commonly attend.

The school profile also reflects the importance of the school facilities and their impact on creating a positive place of learning in order for the students to achieve their best results. The school plant is a two story, cement-block building with a covered play area, a play field across the street, and the church next door. The school and church buildings lie directly beneath the flight path of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. In 1995, a Port of Seattle Noise Abatement program retrofitted the school with noise-reducing windows to help minimize airplane noise. By reducing the noise from airplanes overhead, the number of interruptions to instruction was reduced as well. At the same time, codes required the school to make upgrades to meet current seismic requirements and comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations. In 2001, as a direct response to the 1998 Accreditation report that recommended an improvement in physical education facilities, a covered play area was constructed. In 2008, the main school entrance and main office were remodeled to provide better building security and a more modern and professional space. The male and female student restrooms were also remodeled to become more energy efficient and more attractive.

Space is at a premium and is definitely a limiting factor regarding curriculum at St. Philomena School. There is one classroom per grade; a music room that is shared by band, choir, and music classes; and a computer lab that has displaced half of the library. There are telephones in the classrooms, wireless Internet, and two SMART Board interactive white boards in the school. There is no gymnasium or science lab. The school utilizes the parish hall for student performances, its volunteer-run hot lunch program, and for parent meetings. The same space is heavily utilized by the parish as well, and there are frequent occasions when groups must change

plans or adapt on short notice. As evidenced in the parent and consultative board surveys, the school parents and School Commission support the school staff's desire for a science lab, music performance space, a dedicated technology area that does not conflict with library space, and a Pre-K center. To that end, an architectural firm has prepared preliminary plans for a potential addition to the school and the Archdiocese has approved a plan to study the feasibility of a building project. However, the distressed economic climate and parish indebtedness preclude initiating a major capital campaign at the present time.

Surveys

School parents were invited to complete an on-line survey, using *Survey Monkey* in February 2010, and approximately fifty percent of the families chose to participate. The parent surveys, both past and present, have indicated that (the) parents desire a gymnasium and a fully qualified physical education teacher, a science lab, an art room and more art instruction, a larger music room, continued updating of technology, and foreign language instruction; all without additional expense to themselves. New themes in this year's survey were for greater collaboration with the parish, sacramental preparation taught by the school instead of the parish, and more accurate accounting of who deserves the in-parish tuition rate based on their regular financial contributions to the parish and regular Sunday Mass attendance. Although there is a small group of highly conservative Catholic families in the school community who voiced some concerns about the religious instruction in the school, the majority of parents are quite happy with the high level of Catholicity and Christian values that permeate all aspects of the school.

In this year's survey, parents were asked to note the things that they like about the school. Several common themes emerged: the small size and family feeling of the school; the dedication and approachability of the teachers; the prayer and Mass opportunities for the students; the strong academic curriculum; that religious teachings and values are integrated into other school subjects; and that the school is a safe learning environment for their children. Parents also indicated that they appreciate how well the staff knows each child, the degree to which each child is encouraged to do his/her best work, and that rules and expectations are highly consistent from grade to grade.

Nearly 100% of the school students also took the on-line survey using *Survey Monkey*. The student survey this year revealed some of the same themes as the parent survey. Students of all ages overwhelmingly desire a gymnasium, a sports-centered physical education program, and a PE specialist to teach it. Students in kindergarten through 3rd grade regard their teachers highly, and they are very satisfied with their friends and the various activities in which they participate at school. In the area of student achievement, K-3 students indicate that the learning environment is a helpful and fun experience, and that they receive individual attention from their teacher when it is needed. They further express that they like having the ability to talk about God and religion at school. Students in grades 4 through 8 express the same high regard for their teachers as the younger students do. Over 60% of the 4th-8th grade students say they feel challenged at school. They also say that instruction is given using various methods; that curriculum standards are discussed; and that individual attention is given when needed. Students also clearly state that they feel respected by their peers and by the teachers and administration. If these students were allowed to implement some changes at St. Philomena, they would like to have additional days added to the hot lunch program, additional school-wide assemblies, and more non-uniform days.

When the School Commission was surveyed, the members indicated a strong contentment with the academic and religious instruction that is being offered at St. Philomena School. They gave high marks to the faculty and staff for their professionalism, flexibility, communication, and the respect and care they show towards the students. In the area of improvement, the Commission would like a stronger parish-school relationship, especially with the faith formation program. They also shared a desire for technology improvements and a new science lab.

The survey of the school staff, which included 16 staff members, identified three particular strengths of St. Philomena School: the solid, challenging academic and religious program; a strong parental community; and a communality and collegiality amongst the faculty and staff. Improvements suggested by the staff include an increase in safety awareness and more consistency in staff development and curriculum design.

In lieu of a written survey, the Priest Administrator of St. Philomena Parish, Father Thanh Dao, was interviewed by the school principal. Father Dao indicated he is very pleased with the religious formation of the students by the faculty and staff. He believes that the school provides the students with an excellent academic education, and he is extremely happy with the collaboration between himself and the school administration. Father is concerned about the number of school families who attend weekend Mass and would like to see an increase in this number. He further feels that a review of the financial assistance policy is in order so that clear criteria are established for helping parish families pay for school tuition. Father Dao hopes that efforts toward building a positive relationship between the school and the parish will continue.

Evidence

- Appendix A
- Parent, Student, School Commission/P.E.P. board surveys
- Demographic Data from the City of Des Moines website and the United States Census Bureau



CHAPTER 2 – CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

B. USE OF PRIOR ACCREDITATION FINDINGS TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

B. USE OF PRIOR ACCREDITATION FINDINGS TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

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.

St. Philomena School has used the findings of the previous accreditation process to drive student achievement and school improvement.

Goal #1

Students will improve critical thinking skills across all areas of the curriculum through the use of varied teaching methods, many types of assessment opportunities, and improved tracking of students' learning needs.

St. Philomena School used prior accreditation findings, including those of the Visiting Committee, and the revised Action Plan to steer school improvement efforts over the ensuing six years. The staff identified the Visiting Committee's finding that the school lacked a clearly articulated, spiral curriculum as its foremost priority for school improvement. To that end, the vice-principal devoted a major portion of the weekly faculty meeting, once a month, to educating the faculty on current best practices in curriculum development and design. A consensus was reached on the desirability of aligning our local curriculum with the Washington State standards and with the Archdiocesan curriculum benchmarks.

In the spring of 2006, after grade level groups had identified the feasibility of such an action, the staff committed to aligning the mathematics curriculum with those standards. Each grade-level teacher worked on his/her grade's mathematics curriculum, and then presented it to the entire staff. After checking the drafts for gaps and redundancies, the completed school-wide mathematics curriculum was approved and adopted. In the fall, the process was repeated with the Language Arts curriculum. The next spring (2007), the science curriculum was aligned. While this was being accomplished, the music specialist and the technology coordinator started to align those respective curricula. The technology curriculum proved to be particularly challenging because the state standards did not follow the same format as other subject areas. Minimal progress was made until the state released revised technology standards with a format similar to that used for other subjects.

Next, the religion curriculum was aligned with the revised Archdiocesan religion benchmarks. For the next year, all faculty members annotated their lesson plans with the state/Archdiocesan benchmarks that would be addressed in each lesson. In this way, they tracked the practicality of the long-range planning tool that had been developed for each of these subjects. The faculty was gratified to discover how helpful the long-range planning tool was in planning units and lessons, and in keeping them on track as the year progressed. Teachers new to the school have remarked that this type of planning not only makes their job easier, but it also gives them confidence that they are teaching all necessary elements of the curriculum. The long-range planning tool is not yet complete, as the social studies curriculum has not yet been aligned with the current standards and the technology curriculum is incomplete, but both are on target to be completed as part of the critical goals of this self-study process.

Faith-formation was not addressed in the previous Action Plan because it was, and continues to be, a major strength of the school. However, maintaining a strong faith-formation program that coordinates with the parish's program (as had been the case in the past) has been difficult—even challenging—because of changes in the school staff, parish staff, and parish priest. Communication with the parish and coordinating faith-formation with the parish continue to be goals for the St. Philomena School and Parish community. The school continues to work toward effective communication with the parish and toward unifying the entire faith-formation program.

The process of creating staff goals to direct school improvement efforts during the year was interrupted with the sudden resignation of the principal in June, 2008. Following this, the interim principal required the staff to create individual professional improvement goals, and he continued the efforts for ongoing, systematic improvement as well as efforts to accomplish the Action Plan. The new, current principal has made a concerted effort with the faculty and staff to focus on standards, curriculum mapping, curriculum alignment, and learning targets, and these areas of staff development will continue to be a focus in improving student learning.

The principal and vice principal made observations of all faculty members looking specifically for their use of varied teaching methods. Other information on this topic was gleaned from parent, staff, and student surveys. When all the information was compiled and studied, it was concluded that students at St. Philomena School would benefit from the incorporation of additional varied teaching methods into the faculty's current repertoire of instructional methods. To this end, the faculty attended workshops presented by differentiated instruction and assessment expert and internationally recognized speaker, Damien Cooper, which focused specifically on differentiated instruction. This began the concerted effort to truly meet the needs of all students. Staff development continues at the local level.

St. Philomena School has used traditional types of assessment that have been mainly in summative form. The results of the ITBS test, given each March at St. Philomena, have been the main measure of student achievement and the main source of data to justify curriculum changes. Near the end of each school year, all St. Philomena students take a series of mastery tests which were created by the faculty. These tests are an additional source of information that is used to measure students' progress and to help identify those students who are in need of remedial help or who may be candidates for various forms of modified or differentiated instruction or assessment.

In June of 2010, six St. Philomena School faculty members attended the Educational Leadership Workshop on formative assessment. The information was shared with the entire faculty and staff at the August in-service meetings. Formative assessment has been a regular topic of discussion at staff development meetings. Learning targets that focus on formative assessment were introduced to parents at a P.E.P. Club meeting via a PowerPoint presentation; the same presentation was made to faculty and staff a few days prior at a staff development meeting. St. Philomena School is moving forward to create a curriculum that has a balance of both summative and formative assessment components incorporated throughout the curriculum.

The extrapolated data from the ITBS scores and mastery tests was generally used in determining the need to make textbook changes and slight program changes. St. Philomena School has created a curriculum cycle that will incorporate the data from the ITBS and mastery

tests along with other data indicators to move the school from a textbook-based curriculum to that of a standards-based curriculum (*See Curriculum Cycle Appendix*).

Student learning needs have been assessed and recorded through the use of the STAR Reading Program, Grade-Pro electronic grading system, Accelerated Reader, and diagnostic testing of sight words and reading fluency. Using the data collected from these, the staff created a *Student Tracking Form* and a *Student Concern Form*. The St. Philomena School administration and faculty are now committed to gather the data from these two forms to track student needs and use the information to improve student learning, not just on an individual basis but also on a school-wide basis. The focus on student tracking will also be assimilated into the rationale for making curriculum changes and creating different assessment tools.

Goal #2

Students will be supported in their pursuit of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations by the implementation of new and improved resource management tools.

The SLEs were used as the driving force to help with securing new and improved resource management tools. This goal focused on student learning through student safety, security, and technological advancements. Procedures and guidelines were put into place to address school safety and crisis planning. Security cameras were added to the school entrance and parish hall and kitchen to address the security requirements. ELMO document cameras and projectors, SMART Board interactive whiteboards, and additional computers were purchased and added to the computer lab to enhance the students' learning through the use of technology. St. Philomena School is dedicated to updating the safety and crisis planning to ensure the well-being of the students and faculty. Technology is very important to the future of the students at St. Philomena School. To this end, a technology committee has been formed to look at the current state of the technology at St. Philomena School and to create a path for the future. The committee will look at data collected from current research on technology and its correlation to student achievement. They are also looking at grants and other funding sources to obtain additional technology for the school.

In order to assure high achievement by all students, the school has tracked the ITBS scores of individual students, classes, and the school as a whole. Students who have demonstrated limited progress or are performing in the lower quartile of the national percentile have been provided with the assistance of a staff resource teacher, usually in a small group setting. As the school has opened its doors to more students with learning disabilities, different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, different learning styles, and/or emotional difficulties, the ITBS scores have gone down in some areas. Due to the increase in numbers of such students and the dip in scores, the school hired a part-time Title I teacher this year. That teacher provides services to qualified Title I recipients and at other times provides intensified resource assistance to students who scored below the 25th percentile in the reading or math sections of the ITBS.

In addition to tracking ITBS scores, we track individual scores on our end-of-the-year mastery tests in reading/literature, math, and English/language arts. Students who score below 75% on a mastery test are referred for summer school, an alternate plan for summer study, and/or tutoring. Teachers who tutor students keep in touch with classroom teachers regarding special needs and progress of the students whom they tutor. All students in grades 1-8 (and kindergarteners as they are ready,) take a STAR Reading test each trimester in order to assess

their independent reading level. Teachers also do regular formal and informal assessment in each subject area in their classroom.

Goal #3

To improve student achievement and enhance student learning, the school leadership will explore options for increasing dedicated space in order to provide a more balanced curriculum, and to investigate a Pre-K program/center.

In 2008 a feasibility study was conducted to explore the possibility of acquiring additional space for a science lab, a Pre-Kindergarten class, and a gymnasium. When the study was completed, preliminary architectural plans were prepared. However, due to the economic recession and the financial hardships experienced by the school and parish, these plans have been placed on hold until financial circumstances improve.

Goal #4

In order to enhance student growth, help fulfill the mission of the parish school, and serve as good stewards of parish and school resources, the school community will work in collaboration with parish leadership on the themes and priorities.

St. Philomena School and Parish have undergone much turnover of leadership. In the past six years, we have had three different priests and three different school principals. These transitions have made it difficult to maintain a consistent collaboration between the school and the parish. The year before the last accreditation visit, an extensive parish model was developed that was based on the four pillars of the Catholic faith and the school established a goal to support the parish in this endeavor. However, when the next priest arrived, this model was not continued. At the present time, the School Commission has included in its long-range planning the goal of improving the collaborative relationship between the school and the parish.

Evidence

- Previous Self Study and Report of Findings
- Previous Action Plan
- Annual reports to WCEA Elementary Commissioner
- St. Philomena School weekly newsletters
- ITBS scores
- Curriculum outlines
- Feasibility Study
- School Commission meeting minutes
- Schoolwide Learning Expectations



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

A. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL’S CATHOLIC IDENTITY

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

For many years, the St. Philomena School community has maintained an excellent reputation for and prided itself on its Catholic identity. However, since the previous self-study and accreditation visit, the school’s leadership and staff have sensed a decline in Mass attendance by school families as well as a diminished knowledge of the Mass, prayers, and general understanding of the faith by our students. In addition, fewer current faculty members are members of the St. Philomena Parish and more school families are non-Catholic. Due to these factors and findings, the school staff has felt a need to make improvements in the faith and spiritual formation of our students, staff, and parent communities. Since our previous accreditation, the school has implemented several changes that have enhanced the Catholic identity of our school.

Catholic Identity Standard #1: Mission and Philosophy

(Standard: The school has a mission statement and a philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.)

The entire St. Philomena School community (including the faculty, staff, administration, students, parent leadership boards, and other shareholders) has reviewed, discerned, and worked on both our mission and philosophy statements in order to clearly integrate the Roman Catholic faith into all aspects of school life. After careful review, our mission statement, which has been in place for well over twenty years and has stood the test of time, was intentionally left unchanged. The mission statement, which is posted throughout the school building as well as in the church and parish hall, reads:

Our mission is to teach, model, and promote Gospel values in all areas of a balanced curriculum so that the teachings of Christ become our focus and Christ Himself, our constant point of reference.

This mission statement clearly affirms that Christ and His teachings are our focus in everything that we do. All shareholders agreed that this has always been and will always remain our mission. Because of this, we had no reason to make any changes or corrections to this statement. We did choose, however, to update our philosophy statement during this period of self-study, in order to more clearly define and reflect our commitment to assuring that our school is Catholic first and that the faith is integrated into all academic subjects and all aspects of school life. The philosophy statement, also prominently posted throughout the school and parish buildings, is as follows:

The St. Philomena Parish School community is committed to teaching, modeling, and promoting the Catholic faith in addition to providing a challenging and contemporary academic curriculum infused with the Gospel message of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church.

- *We nurture the growth of each child, recognizing their diverse gifts and talents.*
- *We encourage all students to explore and take academic risks as they prepare to meet the needs of an ever-changing world.*
- *We prepare our students to live their faith daily as reflective, contributing citizens in service to their church and to their communities.*

Catholic Identity Standard #2: Prayer and Sacraments

(Standard: The school provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments.)

The St. Philomena School staff and leadership are committed to providing many opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments. Each teaching day begins with the teachers gathering together for prayer and reflection. Teachers take turns leading a week of morning prayer time in the faculty room each morning at 8:15. Additionally, each faculty meeting and each parent meeting begin in prayer. Throughout the school year, all parents and community members are invited to join school students and staff at Friday Masses, monthly Eucharistic Adoration services, monthly Monday morning prayer services, quarterly all-school rosaries, and other special liturgical celebrations. Some of these sacramental and prayer experiences have been a part of the St. Philomena way of life for many decades, but in addition to these, we have implemented a few changes since our last self-study.

(Standard: Teachers pray with their students during the day, and students experience a variety of prayer forms including memorized and spontaneous prayer.)

Students participate in prayer and Sacramental experiences on a daily, weekly, monthly, and annual basis. Each school day begins and ends in prayer, led by the student council as part of the morning and afternoon announcements on the public address system. Additionally, each individual class begins and ends their day of learning with classroom prayer, led by teachers, individual students, or small groups. Students pray together before meals as well as during classroom prayer services during religion classes. Although students are given many opportunities to pray, the teaching staff had not been consistently teaching and assessing the students on the Archdiocesan required Catholic prayers each year. At the beginning of the 2010--2011 school year, the staff made a commitment to teaching and assessing these prayers consistently.

(Standard: The staff celebrates Mass with the students.)

All students attend Mass on Fridays at 9:00 AM, three or four weeks each month. Individual classes take turns planning these Masses and serving as liturgical ministers under the direction of their homeroom/religion teacher and Mrs. Merlich, the school's liturgical coordinator and music director. In the past, preparation for Mass ministry was done solely by the classroom religion teacher, but in September 2009, Mrs. Merlich took on the added responsibility of assisting the religion teacher in preparing the students for Mass leadership. This has greatly improved our students' understanding of the Mass and their reverence on the altar.

(Standard: Students experience a variety of prayer forms, and special attention is paid to the liturgical cycle of the Church.)

On the second Friday of each month, a Eucharistic Adoration prayer service is held in place of Friday Mass. Grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 take turns serving as ministers for this celebration. Four times each school year, the entire student body gathers in the church to pray one of the four

mysteries of the holy rosary. Two or three classes join together to plan, practice, and lead these devotionals. Annual liturgical celebrations at St. Philomena School include: Advent prayer services (one a week for three weeks), holy day Masses (Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.), classroom remembrances of the Lord's Last Supper (Seder Meal), a dramatization of the Stations of the Cross (grade 8), May Crowning of the Blessed Virgin Mary, class retreats, and various other opportunities for prayer and reception of the Sacraments.

The Eucharist Adoration prayer service is another example of an implemented change that has come about since the previous accreditation site visit. The pastor at that time, Fr. Bryan Hersey, began implementing Eucharistic Adoration as part of the First Friday liturgy each month. The service lengthened the Mass by 30 minutes and was difficult for the children to understand. The staff did some work on this service, revising it several times over a year's time, but still was not fully pleased with the result. In 2008, Sr. Liz Tiernan, a Catholic school educator, was invited to visit our school and help create a plan for age appropriate adoration service. With her input and inspiration, a meaningful, reverent, and hands-on service is now in place that is helping St. Philomena students and their families to understand the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Additional opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth include: reconciliation services during Advent and Lent, altar server training for all interested students who have made their First Communion, parish-led sacramental preparation classes in 2nd grade, classroom and school-wide service projects, and attendance and liturgical service opportunities at funerals of community members. The loss of one of our beloved students, Gloria Strauss, to cancer in September 2007, was devastating for her family, classmates, teachers, and school and parish communities, but we found strength in our sorrow as well. Serving her family in their grief helped us learn how to help others in a similar situation, and we have made funeral and grief ministry a focus in the last few years. Another recent addition to the St. Philomena experience has been a monthly all-school prayer service and assembly, led by individual classes, and focused on a theme from the "God with Skin" program, one of the archdiocesan "Gardens of Stewardship," a special holiday, or the liturgical season. Those themes are also reflected in a monthly bulletin board displayed in the front hallway and a cross-age "family" meeting activity directed by the 8th grade leaders each month.

Catholic Identity Standard #3: Curriculum

(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.)

At St. Philomena, the religion teachers adhere to a curriculum that meets the religion standards established by the Archdiocese of Seattle and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). As an outcome of the previous accreditation and goals, the staff has aligned lesson and unit plans to these requirements and they teach using textbooks that are in compliance with these guidelines and approved by the archbishop. They have created long-range plans, which are a simplified curriculum map, to use as a guide for yearly lesson and unit planning. The curriculum focus of the 2011-2012 school year will be on religion. At this time, the plan is to undergo a comprehensive textbook adoption process and to devote one faculty meeting each month to curriculum mapping, standards-based instruction, the possible use of the ACRE test to assess students' mastery of this subject, and the use of other varied assessments in the teaching of religion.

Catholic Identity Standard #4: Catechist Certification

(Standard: The formation of teachers for catechetical and instructional competence is ongoing.)

All of the religion teachers are Washington State certified teachers and have either earned, or are working toward, their Catechetical Certification. Until recently, this certification was not a requirement for teaching religion at St. Philomena, but it has been set as a goal for all Catholic teachers as part of this accreditation process. During the summer of 2010, several staff members participated in the Catechetical Certification training process, taking Year One, Year Two, or Year Three classes, and completing the required coursework for these classes. Those who have finished the Year Three coursework will now begin working on renewing that certification in compliance with the Archdiocese of Seattle standards.

Catholic Identity Standard #5: Parents as the Primary Educators

(Standard: The school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children.)

St. Philomena's teachers are committed to maintaining an active and positive partnership with the parents and guardians of the students, because it is believed that they are the primary educators of their children. This active partnership is promoted through weekly newsletters, monthly Parent Club meetings, e-mails, phone calls, notes home, annual and bi-annual parent/student/teacher conferences, and social gatherings. In addition, the staff teaches, models, and promotes its commitment to Catholic education and the Catholic faith, and encourages parent attendance and participation at school and Sunday Masses and other school-led liturgies, services, and programs.

Catholic Identity Standard #6: Service

(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)

Students at St. Philomena participate in a wide range of service projects and activities based on the Gospel value of Servant Leadership set forth by Christ in John 13 (*If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.*) Each class aims to lead and promote one to three service projects each school year. In addition, the 8th grade student council initiates several school-wide projects each year. Some of the many projects in which students, teachers, and families of St. Philomena School have recently participated include: Operation Smile (facial deformity surgeries), Relay for Life (American Cancer Society), Des Moines Pregnancy Aid (food, clothing, and blanket drives), Des Moines Food Bank (weekly food collection at Mass, Thanksgiving food drives, and Backpacks for Kids (weekend food supplies for needy kids), Jump Rope for Heart (American Heart Association), Adopt a Village (aid for the children of our sister school in Guatemala), funeral ministry at St. Philomena Church, Mass ministers (Friday and weekend Masses), Oktoberfest Dinner and Italian Dinner servers (St. Philomena Knights of Columbus), dramatization of the Stations of the Cross (prayer service for the parish community), P.E.P. Club babysitters, pet food collection, Coats for Kids collection, Children's Hospital donations, St. Vincent de Paul Thanksgiving food basket collections, and "adopting" needy families for Christmas.

Catholic Identity Standard #7: Signs and Sacramentals

(Standard: There is widespread use of signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the school.)

The use of Catholic signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals are one of the aspects that set the Catholic faith apart from that of other Christian and non-Christian faith traditions. St. Philomena School takes great pride in including these wonderful parts of the Catholic faith in the daily lives of its students. On the outside of our building a cross is clearly visible and visitors are greeted by our “Garden of Angels” in remembrance of school and community members who have died. Upon entering the building, a crucifix and other holy pictures and signs are evident. Near the front hallway is a beautiful, modern stained glass window commissioned in memory of Gloria Strauss, a St. Philomena sixth grader who lost her battle with cancer in September 2007. The window includes a representation of a rosary and a portion of a prayer that Gloria prayed spontaneously from her hospital bed shortly before she died. Each classroom displays a prayer table, decorated with sacramentals such as a Bible, a crucifix, a rosary, statues of Mary and St. Philomena, candles, holy books and cards, and other liturgical symbols. These classrooms also display a large crucifix, a large statue of the Virgin Mary, bulletin boards displaying the current year’s Gospel value theme or other faith message and posters of other themes such as Catholic prayers, the 10 Commandments, The Beatitudes, the Stations of the Cross, a liturgical calendar, holy pictures, and the Mysteries of the Rosary, in addition to many others. A closer look and listen will reveal shelves containing books, videos, music CDs and DVDs about saints, the Mass, and the liturgical year. During Advent, an Advent wreath and Nativity scene will be present, and during Lent, you may see a cross draped in purple, a crown of thorns, and a Rice Bowl donation box, as well as large, outdoor Stations of the Cross lining the hallways.

Catholic Identity Standard #8: Evangelization

(Standard: All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.)

As evidenced in our school mission statement, which has stood the test of time for more than a quarter century, the St. Philomena School administration, faculty, staff, parish leadership and community, and parent leadership and community are committed to providing a Catholic education to all who want one. First and foremost, we are a Catholic school, with Christ as our constant point of reference in all that we do and teach. This has been and remains our mission.

In the past six years the St. Philomena School community has worked hard to maintain and improve its commitment to Catholic identity. In the past six years, we have strengthened our already strong Catholic identity in a number of ways. We have updated and improved our philosophy statement; made a commitment to teaching and assessing the required Catholic prayers in each grade level; added a hands-on, age-appropriate, reverent, and meaningful monthly Eucharistic Adoration prayer service; appointed a staff member to serve as liturgical coordinator; begun taking a more active role in funeral and grief ministry; implemented the “God with Skin program and the Archdiocesan “Gardens of Stewardship,” set a goal to assure that all of our teachers, even those who do not teach religion, have earned their catechetical certification; continued to welcome parents, parishioners, and community members to our liturgical celebrations; added numerous, worthy service projects to our previous ones; added monthly prayer service assemblies; and raised funds and commissioned a beautiful and permanent stained glass window to our building.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Age-appropriate and meaningful adoration service
- Catechetical Certification requirement for all teachers
- Religion curriculum standards long-range planning and alignment

Goals:

- Continued catechization of teachers
- Improved catechization of parents
- Teaching the Mass and new missal
- Curriculum focus on religion and new textbook adoption

Evidence

- Sacramentals and prayer corners on display in the classrooms
- School routines that incorporate prayer throughout the day
- Teachers who have catechist certification according to diocesan norms
- Parent component in the religion program in place
- Student service records
- Staff in-service records



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

B. DEFINING THE SCHOOL’S PURPOSE

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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.

The school staff set out to update the school's mission and philosophy statements in August 2009. After careful consideration of the over 20-year-old mission statement, it was decided that this statement was still a true reflection of the school's commitment to its Catholic identity and the teaching of the Gospel values, and so the decision was made to keep it intact and unchanged. The philosophy statement, however, wasn't reflective of current educational philosophies and practices. In addition, the creation of the previous philosophy statement was not a collaborative effort that involved all shareholders.

The accreditation leadership team began the process of updating the philosophy statement by looking at other schools' philosophy statements and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The findings were shared with the school staff during the August in-service meetings. The group analyzed the previous philosophy statement, the philosophies of other schools, and the archdiocesan philosophy statement to create a statement that better reflected St. Philomena School's commitment to its Catholic identity, challenging academic curriculum, and the development of servant leaders.

In November 2009, a shareholders' meeting (including school faculty, staff, and leadership; school parents and students; parishioners; and school graduates and their parents) was held to review this proposed new philosophy statement and gather input on the creation of the new SLEs. Data collected from the shareholders at this meeting helped finalize the modifications for the new philosophy statement. The final version of the new philosophy statement was the impetus for our updated Schoolwide Learning Expectations.

The faculty and staff collected input, feedback, and observations from the shareholders' meeting, and used this as the criteria to develop the framework for the new SLEs. The SLEs were composed to incorporate our mission and philosophy statements and to steer student achievement. In January 2010, the mission statement, the philosophy statement, and the SLEs were presented to the parish and school collaborative boards for final revisions and approval.

In the spring of 2010, the new SLEs were communicated to the school community via teacher newsletters, P.E.P. (Parents, Educators, and Parishioners) Club meetings, the school newsletter, and a presentation at eighth grade graduation. Parents were informed that the 2010-2011 school year would mark the implementation of the new SLEs. The implementation began with the creation of posters displayed in every classroom, in the school hallways, and in the church.

The SLEs are the driving force in the creation of teacher lesson plans to support student learning. There is a concerted effort by the faculty to identify the SLEs that are targeted in each lesson. Teachers are intentionally identifying the objective of each lesson by visually displaying and discussing the learning target, so that the children understand what they are learning. Some of the ways the SLEs are coming alive in each classroom are as follows:

K - In kindergarten, after a lesson has been completed, students are asked to indicate which one of three SLEs was met in that lesson. The student can point to a cross, which represents “a student of the Catholic Faith,” a book, which represents “an active learner,” or a heart which represents “a servant leader.”

1 - First-grade students were asked to brainstorm their ideas about the meaning of each SLE; from these ideas, three posters were created which are now displayed in the classroom. At the beginning of some lessons, the teacher will tell the students which SLE they will be meeting and she will post that under the target skill on the board. At other times, at the end of a lesson, the teacher will ask the students to identify the appropriate SLE, which they do in the same manner as the kindergarteners, choosing either the cross, the book, or the heart symbols that are affixed to their desks.

2 – In second grade, students are often asked at the end of a lesson to identify the SLE that was addressed. Sometimes they are asked to identify the SLE in a lesson by completing an exit slip when the lesson is finished. Second graders also have an SLE card (similar to kindergarten and first grade) affixed to their desks, and a copy of the SLEs that stays in their homework folders.

3 – One of the ways that third graders identify the SLEs they have covered is through a weekly reflection that they complete when they receive their Friday corrected work packets. Like kindergarten, first grade, and second grade, third grade students also have an SLE card on their desks.

4 – In fourth grade, students are asked at the end of each lesson to identify the SLE that was covered. They also use a journal to keep track of the SLEs they have met.

5 – After each lesson in fifth grade, students discuss the target skill and identify the SLE(s) that were addressed in the lesson.

6 – In sixth grade, before a lesson begins, students ask their teacher what the target skill is, and when the lesson is over, the students tell their teacher what SLE was met and how. There has been a conscious effort made in sixth grade to be sure that Catholic identity is a core value that is integrated into all academic areas, including science and history.

7 – In seventh grade, students identify the SLEs for each lesson and are often asked the question, “How did it play out in the lesson?” or “What other SLEs did we hit?” At the end of the school year students are assigned a written reflection to identify and explain how the SLEs have helped achieve academic goals and which projects have been a significant part of their academic learning.

8 – Each student in eighth grade maintains an SLE binder in which they list activities that address each SLE. This binder will be a valuable resource for the eighth graders when they write their SLE speeches for eighth grade graduation.

Music Classes – As part of the music classes which are taught twice weekly for kindergarten through fifth grades, and in which students prepare for Friday Mass, the students are asked to reflect on the week’s readings and then discuss how the readings connect with the SLEs of servant leader and Catholic faith.

One of the new tools that have been developed to measure student progress in achieving the SLEs is the newly created SLE Award. Each trimester, a total of twenty-seven students are selected and recognized for having demonstrated the characteristics of “A student of the Catholic faith,” “An active learner,” or “A servant leader.” One student from each grade is selected for each of the three SLEs and they are presented with a certificate at a prayer service. Teachers continually observe students and keep running records of which SLEs have been addressed and met.

SLEs and Washington State Standards are identified in most teachers’ long range plans. Each teacher has been asked to post, or have their students post, each lesson’s target skill on the board. Based on teacher observations and students’ performance on assessments and daily work, it is sometimes determined that modified assessments are needed for a particular student to meet his/her specific learning need. Many teachers also used tiered lessons and assessments to help meet the needs of all students. Although the faculty is committed to differentiated instruction and assessment, it continues to be a goal of the faculty to improve on what is already being done.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Reaffirmed existing mission statement
- Created a new philosophy statement
- Developed new, current, and measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations
- Implemented new SLEs with buy-in from teachers, students, and parents, and the community

Goals:

- Develop and implement additional tools that will measure students' achievement of SLEs.
- Make parents, students, and parish-community members fully aware of the governing-authority expectations for our school, as well as the implications of those expectations.

Evidence

- Mission and philosophy statements
- Washington State standards and standards-based assessments
- SLEs
- SLE binders
- Learning Target goals
- Student and parent knowledge of SLEs



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

C. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

C. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

The St. Philomena School mission statement is used as the basis to support the high achievement of all students, and the people and groups within the organizational structure work collaboratively toward this end. The faculty and staff, the administration, the School Commission, and the priest work in harmony to create an environment of positive learning in which the morals and values of the Catholic Church are intertwined with a solid and challenging academic curriculum.

The teaching faculty and support staff are dedicated to supporting high achievement by implementing various teaching strategies, differentiated learning structures, best teaching practices, and summative and formative assessments. Further, they are committed to having a positive home/school partnership that is built on effective communication and mutual trust and respect. The school's faculty and staff are professionals who keep current with up-to-date staff development in academics, religion, and annual Safe Environment refresher courses, and yearly First Aid/CPR training.

Professional staff development has been, and will continue to be, a priority at St. Philomena School. Teachers have attended National Catholic Educational Association conventions; an assessment workshop presented by internationally recognized differentiated learning expert, Damien Cooper; the Formative Assessment Institute; and math differentiated instruction workshops. They have also joined professional learning communities, focusing on learning targets and various forms of instruction and assessments. The professional development of the faculty and staff is intentionally designed to support high achievement by all students.

The faculty and staff see themselves as facilitators, as well as role models, in guiding religious education and developing the desire for learning within the students. Members of the faculty recently reviewed their own level of catechetical training and renewed their commitment to certification in that program. Most have completed at least one year of the program during the summer of 2010, with several teachers finishing their third year. Faculty and staff members share in school governance through attendance and input at grade level meetings and weekly staff meetings. Faculty meetings focus on curriculum development; planning of school events, particularly ones which promote our Catholic identity; and assessing the effectiveness of existing programs. Effective communication, planning, and community-building result from these meetings. The faculty and staff have an active voice in curriculum and building management decisions. Overall, the faculty and staff feel empowered to be effective instructional leaders. Faculty and staff perform their duties in an atmosphere that is ripe with trust, cooperation and respect. They interact with each other daily, seeking advice or sharing ideas. The faculty and staff exhibit a level of professionalism that is commendable, and are very respectful of family privacy and of issues that require confidentiality.

St. Philomena's administrative staff supports the teaching staff in many ways as they together seek to attain high achievement by all students. Many opportunities are provided for effective staff development; classroom observations and teacher evaluations are done regularly

and constructively; and consistent discipline and intervention policies are in place. There is high awareness of the need for safety for everyone and this is supported by the existence and practice of emergency drills and procedures. Members of the administration help with the continual improvements to curriculum and assessment. Financial stability that comes from sound fiscal budgeting procedures helps sustain this support.

The administration recognizes the importance of involving the entire learning community when considering school policy and addressing student needs. The administration seeks input from archdiocesan resources, and it gathers information from other school principals by attending the annual principal's retreat, periodic archdiocesan and deanery principal meetings, and during frequent informal contact with other principals throughout the year. The administrative team is available to, and frequently visits with, the pastor, parents, students, staff, and parishioners at school and during social and sporting events. Written school and archdiocesan policies assist the major school/parish groups in defining their responsibilities, operational practices, decision-making processes, and relationships of leadership and staff. Examples of these include the Faculty Handbook, the Archdiocesan Policy Handbook, and the newly revised P.E.P Club Constitution and By-Laws.

The main focus of the School Commission is the reviewing of new and existing policies and procedures in order to help ensure a positive and effective learning environment for St. Philomena students. Several members have expertise in the management of sound fiscal practices and give much assistance during the budgeting process. The Commission has taken on the task of marketing the school through advertisement, promotional materials and internet exposure. They work as a liaison between the school and parish communities, establishing a common bond of mutual support. The School Commission has invested itself into the long-term success and viability of the school by creating long-range plans that address the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, faculty and staff, family spiritual life, development, and facilities.

The priest administrator at St. Philomena Parish and School supports the mission of the school and the high achievement of students with his main focus being on the formation and development of the students' faith lives. He provides ample opportunities for students to attend Masses, Eucharistic adoration services, receive the Sacrament of reconciliation; he visits with students in their classrooms; and he is a fine role model of Catholic values and morals. Father is taking a very active role in the fiscal management of the school and parish and is beginning to rebuild the bond between the parish and school. He frequently speaks positively about the school at weekend Masses.

The key advisory and support groups within the school/parish structure include the School Commission, P.E.P. Club, Pastoral Council, and the Finance Council. Monthly meetings are held to keep these shareholders advised of the progress toward attaining school goals, student progress, and how we are maintaining our Catholic identity. The priest administrator is the spiritual leader of the parish and is supportive of the school's ministry. Two members of the School Commission are also reciprocal members of the Pastoral Council or Finance Council. Their task is to attend the meetings of both of their respective groups and then report back to the other. Every January, a subcommittee of the School Commission works with the principal to establish the budget for the next school year. The Pastoral Council and Finance Council are involved in the process by establishing the dollar amount of the parish subsidy that will be

included in the school budget. These parish groups are kept informed as the budget is established. In March, parents are required to attend a budget meeting where the current process is explained, questions are answered, and new tuition contracts are distributed. A second meeting is held in April for those parents unable to attend the first meeting.

Communication is very important to the support of student learning. The church bulletin includes school announcements in order to notify parishioners of school news and upcoming events. School parents receive a weekly school newsletter that includes a principal's note and school-wide information such as CYO, library, and other special events. They also receive a weekly, comprehensive newsletter from their child's teacher(s) that includes information on curriculum issues for the week, SLEs, and upcoming classroom events. The school website has just been revamped in order to better provide up-to-date information about the school to current and prospective parents. In addition, parents are able to communicate with the principal and staff via email.

While we offer a safe environment for our students, an area to address is the internal directions faculty and staff follows in the event of an emergency. It has been several years since the emergency manual was revised. The current administration has formed a safety committee to take on the task of the revision of the safety policies and procedure manual.

Significant Accomplishments:

- The mission and philosophy statements reflect a commitment to Catholic identity, quality education and education of the whole child.
- Administration, faculty, staff and parents work collaboratively to ensure that the mission and philosophy are put into effective practice.
- The administration is visible and supportive and involves the faculty and staff in decision-making and shares accountability for student achievement.
- The administration, faculty, and staff demonstrate a strong commitment for ongoing professional development by participating in a variety of educational opportunities.
- Every effort is made to provide emotional, spiritual, and physical safety for the students at St. Philomena School.
- The administration, faculty, and staff involve the school parents as the primary educators through a variety of communication methods.

Goals:

- Complete revisions of safety policies and procedures; implement the revisions and purchase additional safety equipment and materials.
- Monitor and make revisions to the school's new website for more effective communication methods.
- Complete and implement the new five-year plan.

Evidence

- St. Philomena School weekly newsletter
- School Commission minutes
- St. Philomena School faculty meeting agenda/minutes
- P.E.P. Club minutes and reports, P.E.P. Club Constitution and By-Laws
- St. Philomena parish bulletins
- Faculty Handbook, the Archdiocesan Policy Handbook



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

D. DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTION TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

D. DATA ANALYSIS AND ACTION TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

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.

St. Philomena uses a variety of assessments to track (our) students' progress and make decisions on how to aid those that need assistance, challenge students who need more, and determine if the curriculum and teaching methods are satisfying Washington State requirements and helping students improve upon their overall learning. The school staff is committed to finding and using new ways to help all students learn to the best of their ability. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is used to determine how St. Philomena students' progress compares to national trends. At the conclusion of each academic year students take mastery tests in English, math, and reading. The school has also adopted the Accelerated Reader (AR) program and STAR Reading diagnostic tool to assess students' proficiency in reading.

The ITBS test is given annually in the spring to all students from third grade through eighth grade. Approximately six years ago a parent volunteer developed an Excel program that allows the tracking and graphing of the ITBS data. Students, parents, and teachers have been able to view individual progress in the areas of reading, writing, and math from year to year. The up-to-date data is shared each year at the fall parent-student-teacher conferences. Along with tracking an individual student's data, their individual growth, and their growth in comparison to the average growth of the class, teachers are also able to track the progress of entire classes with this assessment. This data is used to guide the decisions for curriculum changes. The data is also used to improve student learning by identifying students who qualify for Title I assistance and those who could benefit from support from a resource assistance program.

Student progress has also been measured by school mastery tests which are given to all students at the end of the academic school year. These are cumulative tests based on local standards in reading, writing, and math. The scores are used to determine students' areas of strength and weakness. The tests help teachers to identify which students may need to attend summer school sessions for extra support, or who need to brush up on skills to be ready for the next grade in the fall. The tests have also identified students who were ready for an accelerated math program in middle school. It is a goal of the administration and of each teacher to update mastery tests so that they directly reflect the grade level standards and expectations of the state/Archdiocese/nation and that the outcomes of the mastery tests reflect the learning growth of each student.

All students participate to some degree in the STAR Reading and AR programs. STAR Reading tests are given at least once each trimester. Student scores from the test are used to help establish the student's reading level. An analysis of the seventh grade student grade equivalencies compared to the grade equivalencies provided by the ITBS Total Reading test found that for 19 out of 24 student reports surveyed, the scores between the two assessments were in agreement – the ITBS grade equivalency scores fell within the range that STAR Reading provided for the student.

The data that was collected from the assessments the school uses revealed many things. In the ITBS data, it appeared that every student who took the test continued to make positive progress in all subject areas throughout his/her years at St. Philomena School. 68.2% of the students tested were consistently scoring at or above grade level, while 31.8% of the students, though below grade level in some areas, continued to make positive progress in each test annually. Over the course of the last six years, St. Philomena's overall rate of growth in the ITBS scores has increased with fewer students in the bottom quartile by 8th grade. Due to the fluctuations observed in some of the ITBS scores, the faculty understands that there is a need to help the struggling students by focusing on the individual student and his/her needs. In addition, the faculty also recognizes that differentiated instruction is one way to put the focus on student learning and on students as individuals.

As part of this self-study, the staff noted that the mastery tests were in need of better alignment with state standards and with normed assessments such as the ITBS. For example, the staff noted that the difference between the number of students who achieved a National Percentile Rank (NPR) score of over 50 on the ITBS total math battery in 2009 and the number of students who passed their overall math mastery tests in 2009 were not in agreement: more students passed the mastery tests than reached the 50th percentile on the ITBS. As a result, the staff has begun to rewrite the math mastery tests, and in the process is labeling each section to show how they align with the state standards and assess the growth in student learning.

A subsequent analysis shed additional light on this issue. Of the 49 students who did not receive an NPR (National Percentile Rank) NPR of 50 on the ITBS, 19 students passed their math mastery tests. However, when the math-fact timed tests in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division (given with the mastery tests) were included with the data, the findings showed that only 12 of those students passed each timing. The other 37 students, over 75 percent of the total, did not achieve a passing score on the mastery test and the timings. In summary, the analysis found that a student who did not pass the math mastery test and every one of the timings was not likely to achieve an NPR of 50 on the ITBS.

The St. Philomena staff has noticed correlations between the various assessments. For instance, a data analysis of individual mastery test scores found that students who struggled on multiple tests also struggled on the ITBS and on class work. These students became the primary candidates for the resource and Title I programs. Another noticeable trend was that scores across ITBS tests were consistently higher for students who had attended St. Philomena since kindergarten versus students who entered St. Philomena in a later grade. The only exception was in sixth grade. For the other grades, the averages of the National Percentile Ranks for students who attended St. Philomena since kindergarten were at least seven points higher than those who transferred in later.

The St. Philomena School faculty and staff recognize that the preceding assessments are teacher-driven and there is still a need to create additional assessments that focus on the student as the learner. The faculty has done some limited work in the area of differentiated instruction and understands that there is a need to do more. Research shows that differentiated instruction presents an effective means to address learner variance. It provides a crucial platform for all teachers of inclusive classrooms to create opportunities for success for all students. Differentiation forces teachers to shift their thinking from "completing the curriculum" and compels them to move closer to more effectively meeting individual student needs. It allows the

teacher to focus on the same key principles for all students; however, the instructional process and the pace and rate toward understanding these concepts vary. A goal in this area is to receive additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction. This will provide the teaching staff with more tools for the broad range of learning needs within their classrooms and will provide opportunities for increased learning and learner success for all St. Philomena students.

St. Philomena has sought to assist struggling students in a variety of ways over the last few school years. Assistance has been offered to students during and after the school day through study halls, peer mentoring, modified assignments and grading programs, variations in formative and summative assessments, in-class accommodations, and dedicated resource educators. Teachers are continually trying to improve the aid given to those students that are in need of help. In 2009-2010, the principal acquired funds from the Highline Public School District to implement a Title I program. Currently, a retired teacher, Theresa Parson, has been hired using Title funds to assist students who qualify for Title 1. She is using the Sound Partners phonetics-based reading program. A goal for the future is to have a full-time resource teacher in the building.

St. Philomena also offers support for high-achieving students. Math classes in the middle school are leveled to challenge all students. Eighth graders who qualify take a high school-level Algebra 1 course, and seventh graders who qualify attend eighth grade math class. Other opportunities such as enrichment assignments and projects are included to better meet the needs and abilities of the highest achievers in all grade levels.

In order to better support the teachers in the classroom, St. Philomena has provided and encouraged on- and off-campus professional development. The staff has taken a variety of classes and workshops, attended conferences for educators in both general and specific curricular areas, and heard many different speakers and mentors in the educational field, especially in the areas of assessment and meeting the needs of all learners. Over the years, however, there was not a clear plan for providing school-wide professional development that focused on the student as the learner. There was some work done in the area of differentiated instruction and student assessment. The faculty attended workshops that related to differentiated instruction presented by internationally recognized differentiated instruction and assessment expert, Damien Cooper; thus beginning the concerted effort to realize that all students need different forms of instruction to best reach their individual potential. The administration at St. Philomena School is currently making a concerted effort to make professional development a school-wide process that puts the focus on student learning; this includes the establishment of professional learning communities to read and discuss a particular professional-development book. The additional professional development in differentiated instruction will help all students at any level of learning to acquire a solid academic foundation through a standards-based, balanced curriculum; acquire knowledge of faith, traditions, and authentic teachings of the Catholic Church; and practice academic risk-taking through critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and working cooperatively.

An analysis of the school enrollment, finances, and student population enabled the school to determine a number of emerging trends. Enrollment numbers have remained fairly steady over the past few years. Like any school, some students leave before their class graduates due to family moves or economic circumstances. There are also students who join the school at the

beginning of each year. In-year departures and arrivals do happen, but they are rare. This trend is not expected to change significantly in the near future.

The staff has also noticed an increase in the need for tuition assistance in recent years as the national and local economy has suffered. This is not only true for many schools in the local deanery, but also throughout the diocese and the nation. Surrounding public school districts have seen an increase in the numbers of students who receive free or reduced-priced meals. With the economy in mind, St. Philomena has tried to keep tuition increases and spending increases to a minimum, not outstripping the rate of inflation. The need for financial assistance may not decrease for a few years while the economy attempts to recover. Economic factors have forced the school to make decisions regarding curricular offerings. These factors also demonstrate the need for differentiated instruction with the focus on student learning as a way to meet the changes in our student population.

St. Philomena School has seen an increase in the number of students who have special needs. The school's philosophy is that it should be open to as many students as can reasonably be served, especially for parish families and students baptized and brought up in the Catholic faith. The school policy is not to exclude a student simply because his or her test scores may be lower than desired. St. Philomena tries to help every student as much as possible. Because there are more students with special needs among the school population, the staff as a whole continues to try to find ways to deliver targeted instruction by trained professionals to small groups of students who need extra assistance. It is not expected that the number of students who require more academic help will decrease. Because of this, the school recognizes the significant need for additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction and the continued need to place the focus on student learning.

Significant Accomplishments:

- ITBS scores were put into an Excel program to chart yearly progress and comparison to class averages each year. This information is used to identify areas of curriculum improvement and adoption of new textbooks. Data is shared with students and their parents at fall conferences to show their growth and abilities. The families are able to see how their child's test scores have changed from year to year, and how their student compares to the rest of his/her class. This data tends to correlate with report card scores to show students and parents what progress has been made. This data also helps to reveal the students in the top and bottom quartiles of the classes in order to give them support and/or challenges to further their growth.
- Based on observations of the data, the school has adopted new curriculum in the following areas:
 1. Science program –in a kit-based format that will encourage hands-on experiences and detailed journaling of activities and findings for the elementary grades.
 2. Math program –continued basic facts and foundational skills along with increased problem solving and writing in math. It was also decided to move 6th grade into a middle-school-level series to better match the standards and flow into 7th & 8th grade math.

- Long-range plans have been created by every teacher to match state standards and SLEs with curriculum that is being taught in the classroom. In the past, teachers relied heavily on the textbooks that had been purchased, but the plans have been instituted to improve the alignment of the school's curriculum to the state expectations and the standardized test content. St. Philomena continues to adapt the mastery tests to reflect changes that have been made in the long-range plans

Goals:

- St. Philomena School will increase the process of disaggregation of ITBS scores in particular, and in other assessments as appropriate, to identify trends and further refine curriculum and teaching methods. The staff will continue to investigate which tests and which academic areas cause difficulties for the students, how well newly transferred students are achieving on tests and other assessments, and how its lowest-achieving students can best be assisted.
- The school will refine and revise its mastery tests to better align with Washington State standards, with the goal of ensuring that what is tested is also what is taught. The staff also plans to increase uniformity between type and number of test questions in reading, math, and English.

Evidence

- Completed charts/graphs from Appendix B
- STAR Reading/AR records
- Diocesan/Deanery data
- ITBS test results
- Mastery tests & results: reading, English/writing, math
- Long-range plans
- Community trends: surrounding school district data of WASL passing rates & free/reduced lunch



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

E. SLES AND STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

E. SLES AND STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

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

The faculty and staff at St. Philomena are focused on helping all students make acceptable progress toward its new, clearly defined and measurable SLEs, and toward the curriculum standards set forth by the State of Washington and the Seattle Archdiocese, preparing the students to live their faith daily as reflective, contributing citizens in service to their church and their global community.

St. Philomena School has begun building a curriculum continuum that is based on the Seattle Archdiocesan benchmarks for religion and on Washington State Grade Level Standards for all other subject areas. Using these learning standards, teachers have begun creating long range plans for each subject in each grade level for the entire school year. These are mapped out onto a calendar template where the State and Archdiocesan standards are listed for each concept taught in each grade. Once the plans are in place and the school year is underway, teachers make any necessary curriculum adjustments based on the needs of a particular class. Some teachers have found that the long range plans make it easier for them to plan further in advance, as well as pace their teaching throughout the year and create a spiral curriculum while being assured that all standards are being met. At the end of the school year, students take a series of mastery tests in the core subjects of math, English, and reading in order to demonstrate what they have learned and retained. The entire staff plans to review and update these tests to be certain that they directly reflect the grade level standards.

Assessment is a necessary and on-going part of the learning process. St. Philomena teachers use a variety of tools, both summative and formative, to continually and adequately assess every student's learning. The school calendar is built around three 12-week trimesters. Progress reports are prepared and sent home at the midway point of each trimester, and report cards are prepared and sent home at the end. These documents report academic progress, work habits, and personal development. In addition to these more formal reports, corrected student work is sent home frequently in order that parents or guardians are fully aware of the successes and challenges their student is having in the classroom. Teachers are constantly observing their students and taking note of whether the teaching techniques being used are having the desired effect. In some grades, students are given the opportunity on some assignments to compose a written reflection that assesses their own work. Most teachers also use rubrics to assess students' writing and projects.

The teachers at St. Philomena School use multiple assessments to measure student progress. To assess long-term retention of skills, a cumulative mastery test is given yearly in all grades on the core subjects, math, English, and reading. Students in K through 8th grade are required to earn a 75% on these core tests. If they do not pass the mastery test with this percentage, the

student, his/her parents, and the classroom teacher will develop a plan to bring his/her skills up to grade level and re-take the mastery test before the start of the next school year. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is given to each student in grades 3 through 8 each March and the results of the test are shared with parents and tracked electronically. A variety of other formative and summative assessments are also used in each classroom. These include teacher-made tests, textbook and chapter tests, quizzes, and projects.

Many teachers use project-based assessments that accommodate and celebrate many different types of learning styles. Most teachers use tiered assignments and assessment to best fit the learning needs of the students in their class. For example, teachers may use verbal interviews to assess a student's understanding of a specific concept or idea in areas across the curriculum. They also use traditional forms of assessment such as textbook tests, class assignments, and homework.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is given in grades 3-8 in order to gather information about the individual student's academic growth and areas of strength and weakness. In addition, this commonly-used standardized assessment helps identify trends that steer curriculum development, staff development, and textbook adoptions.

St. Philomena works to provide support for students with difficulties; specifically, those who have been identified as not making acceptable progress in one or more areas of the curriculum. Some of these students have been diagnosed by their doctor or the local public school district with specific learning disabilities. Others are identified by teachers or parent observation as working below grade level for a variety of reasons.

Students who do not pass the end of the year mastery test are identified as needing extra support and may be placed on academic probation. Families then have some choice in how to best support their child's learning needs and prepare them for re-testing in late summer. These options include: summer school at St. Philomena School taught by St. Philomena teachers, private tutoring, or another plan decided on by the parents and teacher. The purpose of St. Philomena summer school is to provide extra academic support for students who do not pass the end of the year mastery tests, who are new to St. Philomena, or who desire more practice with core learning concepts and skills during the summer break.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is another way teachers determine whether or not a student is making acceptable progress or academic growth over a period of years. At St. Philomena, each student's test results have been charted electronically since 1996. The staff has used these charts to help determine the academic growth of individual students, groups of students, and entire classes.

The Accelerated Reader and the STAR Reading programs are two more ways that St. Philomena identifies students who may be reading below grade level. They are used in combination with the ITBS results, mastery test results, and teacher/parent anecdotal information and observation.

In the six years since the previous accreditation self-study, the St. Philomena faculty and administration have tried several intervention programs to support students who were not making acceptable progress. An after school program, which operated under various names and was

organized in a variety of ways, was attempted over the period of several years. Faculty evaluation of these programs determined that while some participating students made progress, it was not significant and the programs were not highly successful. During the 2009-2010 school year, a new program to serve at-risk students was implemented. A part-time resource teacher worked in all grades to provide support for the students who needed it. These students received in-class support and/or small group instruction outside of the classroom. Title I funds were used to supplement the program, and students who live in the Highline School District and scored below 50% on the reading, language, or math sections of the ITBS test were served. Additionally, some other students were served who had either not passed mastery tests or had academic concerns documented by current teachers on report cards or on teacher anecdotal records (i.e. student concern forms) from the previous school year. This group of students met with the Title I teacher once a week for thirty minutes. Within the classroom, teachers also made modifications to assignments and to grading reports (known at St. Philomena as a “modified plan”). The modifications included shortening assignments or creating tiered assignments and other assessment options.

Title I funds have helped create a new and more structured resource program at St. Philomena School. This program has been assessed through teacher feedback and through conferences that include parents, teachers, and specialists. Over the past six years, several forms of resource support have been tried, and all throughout, the staff discussed, monitored, and assessed the progress of the students who participated in the programs. While admittedly, some of the programs brought only limited success, the St. Philomena School staff is very hopeful that the model now in place will bring the results they have sought for their students.

Early in the 2010-2011 school year, a well-qualified and highly respected retired Catholic school teacher was hired to begin working as the part time Title I tutor at St. Philomena. She currently assists students in grades 1-3 who are struggling with reading and with phonetic awareness, and with students in grade 8 who are below grade level in language and math. Kindergarteners and students of other ages will be served as concerns are identified. This teacher, Mrs. Theresa Parson, is using a program called Sound Partners (which is a phonemic-based awareness program that helps students relearn their phonetic sounds) with the 1st through 3rd graders in order to improve their reading skills. With the 8th graders, she uses the regular spelling text and a remedial math workbook to sharpen their skills.

When developing the SLEs during the last self-study, the staff was not completely focused on making them measurable for every grade level. They focused on the phrase, ‘A St. Philomena Graduate is...’ The staff used the language of the SLEs at all levels; however, some SLEs were much easier to explain and measure in all grades, while others were better matched to the upper grade students. In creating the new SLEs, the shareholders and teachers used the old SLEs as a guide, but focused on measurable goals for every student in our school, using language that was easily adaptable and teachable at all levels. The staff was very intentional in its focus on the whole student and on every student. There are some commonalities between the new and the old SLEs, but the new SLEs seem to be a better fit for the whole St. Philomena School community today.

One of the challenges of the last accreditation process was that the St. Philomena teaching staff was not adequately aware, or intentional in the use, of state standards. Consequently, some members of the visiting team concluded that St. Philomena was a textbook-

based school, not a standards-based school. The administration and teachers have subsequently made great efforts to become more familiar with state and archdiocesan standards and much more intentional in their use. All teachers are working to achieve this goal by creating long range plans across the curriculum and in all grades which clearly identify the standards to be met in any given week's lessons. In addition, during the textbook adoption process, only those which are aligned with the state standards and approved by the Archdiocese are considered. The increased use and awareness of the standards is making the assessment process more clear for both teachers and students.

St. Philomena School has worked to provide a challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum for all students in many ways. Class instruction is based on the multiple intelligences of learning (oral, visual, kinesthetic, experiential, music, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, and linguistic). Classroom opportunities often incorporate individual, small group, and whole class discussions. Teaching occurs through a variety of intentional instructional techniques that include guided instruction and discussion, direct instruction, modeling, lecture, call and response, one-on-one partnering, guided and silent reading, drills, textbook reading, exploratory learning, and oral presentations, and others.

Many different tools are used when teaching to create varied and challenging learning opportunities. Some examples are using challenge work for fast finishers and advanced students, hands-on manipulatives, graphic organizers, science kits, games, music, and technology such as SMART Board interactive white boards, ELMO document cameras and projectors, and computers to create Word and PowerPoint documents. Field trips are also utilized to make learning fun and relevant. The school provides several different extracurricular opportunities to enhance learning skills including choir, band, Geo Club (geography focus) and Speech Club.

Teachers are integrating student achievement of the SLEs into the teaching and learning process by identifying state and archdiocesan standards in their long-range plans and by having students evaluate learning through reflections. Learning targets are detailed in newsletters that go home weekly for both parents' and students' benefit. Key vocabulary of the SLEs is used in newsletters to promote common language among families and faculty. Assessments vary according to different learning styles as evidenced through tiered assessment, choosing projects for varied assessment, needed modifications, reports, oral presentations, choice activities, and using questions to check for understanding for both group and individual situations.

The format of the school curriculum provides comprehensive, non-repetitive, learning through the use of spiral curriculum and long range planning. Grade level and subject area teachers meet regularly to communicate content being covered. Similar benchmarks are used in various grades, and the communication between teachers during grade level meetings reduces the repetition in taught content. When textbook adoption occurs, state curriculum standards and archdiocesan standards are at the heart of the process.

As stated previously in this chapter, the St. Philomena administration and faculty are confident in their ability to accurately identify the students who are not making acceptable progress each year. In the past, it has not been the school's practice to collect data, and/or evaluate data, for the purpose of evaluating the different programs that have been implemented for the purpose of assisting students who are struggling. This has been an area of concern, and

for that reason, the school has set a goal to develop a plan for collecting and interpreting data so that improvement of its programs and student learning can occur.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Long range planning and increased use and awareness of state standards
- Implementation of a Title I program
- A more intentional focus on the target skills by both teacher and students
- Varied forms of assessment

Goals:

- Measure the effectiveness of the Title I and resource program for the students involved.
- Continue to complete and update long range plans
- Update and improve the mastery tests, and align them to state standards
- Establish a comprehensive process for tracking and improving learning for students not making acceptable process.

Evidence

- A copy of the school's curriculum standards incorporating Catholic values
- Curriculum maps or other methods used to track curriculum across the grades
- Student explanations of how a given assignment helped them to accomplish an SLE
- Analysis of data collected by the school addressing SLEs, standards, and expectations
- Rubrics used to measure SLEs
- Long-range planning binders
- Student SLE reflections, notebooks, etc.
- Photos of SLE display boards with student work



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

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

St. Philomena has a long-standing tradition of integrating Catholic values throughout both the entire required curriculum and the offered co-curricular activities. Students and teachers pray in the morning and afternoon of each school day, before CYO games, at P.E.P. Club meetings, and in staff meetings. Classes participate in a variety of liturgical experiences and service-related field trips. Sixth grade students spend four days at CYO Camp Hamilton for Catholic Environmental Education every spring. In grades three through eight, Family Life classes focus on positive, Christian family relationships and friendships, as well as on the sanctity of life. The social studies curriculum integrates Catholic social justice issues, global religion comparisons, geography awareness in relation to the Church, and Church history. The language arts curriculum incorporates literature with Christian themes, and eighth graders research, write, and present reports based on Catholic social justice and life issues. In the music curriculum, students learn hymns and Mass music and perform in the primary grades' Christmas musicals and the eighth grade's dramatization of the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Fourth grade students participate in a May crowning celebration by performing on recorders that they have been learning to play throughout the year. Each class participates in a "Seder Meal" Remembrance of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday every year. Character education and cooperative learning is integral to the foundation of St. Philomena, and the school uses the *Bible* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as the primary sources and references of study for these skills and beliefs. Service projects are required for each grade, and service hours are required in fifth through eighth grade.

St. Philomena School has met the governing authority's expectations of teaching and learning in various aspects. All teachers are Washington State Certified, with many holding Master's Degrees in curriculum and instruction. The structure of the curriculum is based on the SLEs and state standards. The curriculum has been aligned to the standards, and the standards are present in long range plans which are the beginning of complete curriculum mapping, a goal for St. Philomena School. The Archdiocese requires that teachers attend and complete Catechetical Certification classes. Teachers are currently working on completing this requirement.

The staff regularly attends and participates in various professional development trainings in an effort to remain updated on current teaching strategies, methods, and curriculum developments. Most teachers currently hold Professional Certification or Masters Degrees or both or are working toward the completion of these programs, and regularly review educational theory books and journals that are made available. Teachers also attend FOSS science workshops, teaching strategies workshops, technology access learning workshops, theological updates, National Catholic Educational Association conferences, and participate in teacher-to-teacher communication and mentorship programs either as facilitators or participants, earning clock hours and keeping their certification current. Based on specific student needs, teachers have also attended specific functional behavior analysis workshops. Teachers continue to learn how to teach to different learning styles and abilities, as well as how to differentiate instruction and assessment. Specific examples of this are learning new functional behavior teaching

approaches for the Autism spectrum, differentiated assessment, teaching more hands-on science with FOSS, and teaching through available technology with a full computer lab, SMART Board interactive white boards, and ELMO document cameras and projection systems. Teachers meet weekly for staff meetings as well as in smaller grade level meetings for local professional development.

Various formative and summative assessments are used throughout the teaching process to enhance student learning. These assessments have been used in numerous ways to help measure student achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards.

Examples of summative assessments used at St. Philomena to measure student achievement include the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), grade-level mastery tests, standards-based textbook and teacher-created chapter tests, and periodic quizzes on recently taught skills. Summative assessments are used by the school for the purpose of viewing the progress of individual students, the progress of entire classes, and emerging trends throughout grade progressions. They are also a useful tool for assessing areas of special need and opportunities for enrichment.

Formative assessments are non-traditional ways used to measure students' progress, ensure student voice, differentiate assessment, guide teachers in planning future lessons, and accommodate a variety of learners. Formative assessments include presentations, reports, exit slips, anecdotal observations, self and peer assessments, and self-reflection. Rubrics are one tool to evaluate student performance on formative assessments. Data gleaned from various forms of formative assessment helps the teacher monitor student performance during lessons and units, make necessary adjustments during instruction, and check for prior knowledge.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Some of the teaching staff have had training in using formative assessment
- Increased awareness of the importance of differentiated instruction and a more intentional effort to address needs of all students
- Educational tools have been added to all classrooms (SMART Board interactive white boards, ELMO document cameras, FOSS science kits, etc.)

Goals:

- Curriculum mapping/alignment
- Continued professional development for teachers in the area of formative assessment
- Creation of SLE assessment tools

Evidence

- Long range plans, state standards, Archdiocesan benchmarks, mastery tests
- Textbook adoptions, SLEs
- ITBS tests and results binders, mastery tests, examples of chapter tests, reports, projects



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

G. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

G. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND ACADEMIC GROWTH

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.

St. Philomena School is committed to providing a variety of services to promote the spiritual, personal, and academic growth of each student. Currently the school offers academic support programs funded by Title I via Highline School District. In addition, athletic programs are offered through the parish Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). Parent volunteers also play a vital role in and out of the school building as a resource for students. All students have weekly access to the computer lab to allow teachers to teach technology skills integrate technology throughout the other of the curricular subject areas. Some of extracurricular activities that are offered are Speech Club, Geo Club, Band, Choir, Boy Scouts, and a variety of CYO sports.

Athletics and physical health are a strong focus at St. Philomena School. The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) program is offered through the parish. During the 2009—2010 school year, (the St. Philomena CYO basketball program registered over 90 players on nine separate teams. This was accomplished despite not having our own gymnasium. UK Elite Soccer provided a week-long camp in the summer for some of the 75 registered players to prepare them for their fall season. All home games were played on site at "Gloria's Angels Playfield." The volleyball program included five teams and over 45 players. CYO track and field is a joint effort with a neighboring Catholic school, St. Bernadette, to form the "South End Saints." Finally, the short season of cross country included 15 plus athletes who successfully raced against the clock.

During school hours students in kindergarten through eighth grade have physical education classes twice weekly for 30 minutes. The third trimester of the school year is devoted to the Presidential Fitness Challenge.

Band and choir are only two of the non-sport activities that are available to students. Both of these groups meet twice weekly before school. Students who participate in these demonstrate their skills and talent through a variety of concerts and events throughout the year. The Christmas Band and Choir Concert has been an annual event for over 20 years, and the Fine Arts Festival (formerly known as the Spring Concert) has been in place for almost that long. Students are also fortunate to be able to perform in the parent-sponsored Variety Show, held during Catholic Schools Week, as well. The 40-plus members of the middle school choir serve as the music ministers during all Friday school Masses. Speech Club, Family Geography Night, Geo Club, Speech, 8th grade student council, and the Washington D.C. trip are also non-sport activities offered to students.

Catholic values permeate the co-curricular activities, through the sacred texts and pieces that are chosen for the Masses and choir performances, prayer before all musical rehearsals, the good sportsmanship oath recited by the teams before each CYO game or event, and positive student and family activities.

The school offers academic support, funded by Title I, to students in grades 1 through 3 who struggle in reading. A retired and well-respected Catholic school teacher was hired this school year and began working as the part-time Title 1 tutor. The teacher, Mrs. Theresa Parson, is using a program called Sound Partners, which is a phonemic based awareness program that helps students relearn their phonetic sounds and help improve their reading skills. Recently, she also began working with 8th grade students who have been identified by their teachers as needing extra support in math and language skills. Kindergarteners and other age groups will be served as concerns are identified.

In every classroom, the curriculum is infused with technology. In all grades, as well as the library and music room, there is an ELMO document camera and projector that teachers use to support their daily instruction. Not only are these used to project information from textbooks, they also allow teachers to easily incorporate the Internet into various lessons. All teachers and students have access to the computer lab which is equipped with printers and wireless Internet, as well as a class set of laptop computers that can be used in the classrooms. Currently these computers are used mainly by the 7th and 8th grade students. The 2nd grade and 6th grade classrooms are equipped with SMART Board interactive white boards that are used throughout the day. This technology makes it possible for students to prepare Word documents, research information for report writing, use online tutors, and create presentations. The presence of computers and Internet in the classrooms makes it convenient for teachers and students alike to access the STAR Reading and Accelerated Reader programs. As part of the STAR Reading program, all students take a diagnostic reading test three times per year to measure vocabulary and comprehension skills. In addition, students in the primary and intermediate grades are required to make use of the Accelerated Program in order to build their reading skills.

Each year St. Philomena School requires its parents to complete 40 hours (per family) of service to the school and/or parish. Many opportunities are readily available. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms to assist with individual and small-group instruction. In primary classrooms, they help with art projects and flash-card drills, and they assist students with unfinished work. Parents' assistance is utilized on field trips, 6th grade camp, playground supervision, grounds maintenance, and the hot lunch program. Parents are the backbone of the CYO program; they coach the teams, organize the game schedules, rent the gyms, procure the uniforms, maintain the parish's soccer field, and a multitude of other, smaller chores. They can serve on the School Commission, P.E.P. Board, parish Finance Council, or Pastoral Council. Parents contribute to the financial well-being of the school by organizing and participating in various fund-raising events, the largest one being the annual auction. Additionally, they staff the SCRIP program, the second largest fundraiser at St. Philomena. At the parish, parents may serve at Mass as greeters, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, or musicians, as well as at a number of other parish events.

After analyzing all the data, the staff recognizes the need to develop enrichment programs to serve highly capable students.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Implementation of Title I Program
- Increased participation in CYO sports
- Addition of Geo Club

- Resurrected Speech Club

Goals:

- Enrichment program to target high achieving students
- Additional facilities for practice and performance of academic/athletic/music activities
- Resurrect art program
- Technology standards incorporated into the curriculum

Evidence

- Parent letter for Title I
- Title I contract
- CYO mission statement, annual report and general information
- Choir roster, parent letter
- Band roster, parent letter
- Speech tournament rosters
- Geography Bee award



CHAPTER 3 – QUALITY OF THE SCHOOL’S PROGRAM

H. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

H. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

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.

The Schoolwide Learning Expectations (SLEs) for St. Philomena School are the driving force for resource management and development. The SLEs direct St. Philomena School to provide an excellent academic and Catholic program that educates the whole child and shapes students who are engaged in their own education. Therefore, all resources of time, talent, and treasure are directed toward creating an environment where opportunities for intellectual, spiritual, emotional, physical and social growth are provided.

The administrative staff, working in conjunction with the School Commission, develops a financial budget plan that focuses on predicted enrollment, funding, salaries, benefits, and operating expenses. St. Philomena School's operating budget is supported primarily by tuition and fees, which represent 72% of the total income; the St. Philomena Parish subsidy represents about 10% of the budget; fundraising activities comprise 9% of the budget and include such activities as the SPLASH (St. Philomena: Leadership, Action, Scholarship, Heritage) Auction and SCRIP; 5% of the budget is generated from Kids' Club fees; and the final 4% of the budget comes from interest, donations, and the 2 days-a-week hot lunch program.

The ever-expanding development efforts are extremely important to the financial viability of St. Philomena School. Fundraising activities represent a significant percentage of the total budget (approximately 10%). Each year at the SPLASH Auction there is a separate paddle raise to support a special project, which is designated for a specific need and a Book-A-Thon to fund the purchase of new textbooks. Since the last accreditation, the paddle raise has allowed the school to purchase a remodel of the front office including improved security measures, technology such as computers; hardware and software upgrades; document cameras; new phone system, including clocks, bells, and public address system; white boards; and student furniture. New textbook purchases include: FOSS science kits, social studies, K-5 reading, 6-8 grammar and writing, and K-8 math texts.

In addition to the auction, St. Philomena School has a very successful SCRIP Program, which generates nearly \$1,000,000 in sales and earns between \$35,000 and \$45,000 annually for the school budget.

The St. Philomena School Endowment Fund was established to help insure the future financial viability of the school. The Endowment Fund is monitored by the Endowment Committee which is a subcommittee of the School Commission. The Committee meets quarterly to make any necessary decisions regarding reallocation of funds. Currently the Endowment Fund is valued at \$750,000. The goal is to grow the Endowment Fund to \$1,000,000 by 2014, which is St. Philomena School's fiftieth birthday.

A marketing campaign has been established under the guidance of the principal and the School Commission to help increase enrollment and secure the viability of St. Philomena School.

The campaign includes a new school brochure, advertisements in the local newspaper and the Catholic Northwest Progress, and an enrollment banner that is visible outside the school and parish. The St. Philomena School website has been given a complete overhaul to include marketing and promotional possibilities.

The St. Philomena School leadership is committed to exercising responsible stewardship and following sound financial practices, and the school implements proper bookkeeping and accounting procedures to monitor and report the financial position of the school. The principal and a School Commission Budgeting Team create an annual budget and itemize a general ledger account. This information is contained in an accounting software program (PDS) which is supported by the archdiocese and is overseen by an archdiocesan-approved bookkeeper who follows generally accepted accounting practices. The annual budgeting process begins in December and is finalized in February, after it is presented to and approved by the Parish Finance Council. The parish provides monthly financial data to the principal, and the principal distributes that information to the budget team. The budget is reviewed monthly by the School Commission and adjustments on future expenses are made as needed. This past fall, the School Commission revised and created new tuition policies and financial assistance policies to help with the sound financial viability of St. Philomena School.

The parish bookkeeper closes each school year and reports the financial results. The parish also produces an annual report for the Archdiocese, and this report is shared with the parish community. During the 2009 – 2010 school year, the SCRIP program was audited by the parish bookkeeper, and her recommendations have resulted in the establishment and implementation of better and improved security for the SCRIP funds.

School leadership teams (including school administration, School Commission, and P.E.P Board) help to identify areas of need which meet the criteria of the school's purpose (as defined by the school's mission and philosophy statements and the SLEs) and work to support those needs through the allocation of available resources. For example, the School Commission made funds available for an architectural feasibility study that explored the possibility of building an addition to the school to provide space for a hands-on science lab and a Pre-K classroom. The leadership also supports changes in curriculum and staffing based on the recommendations of school staff, as well as formative and summative assessment data (which include ITBS results, parent surveys, and other informal input from parents). For financial stability, the school maintains a "rainy day" fund which is capped at \$40,000. This proactive approach to budgeting and planning reduces the likelihood of financial emergencies, and helps to insure that financial resources are available to be allocated as needs arise.

The school has made acceptable progress on the goals of the previous accreditation self-study (School Improvement Plan—SIP), and has assessed the progress and adjusted the direction of the SIP each year. A feasibility study to evaluate the achievability of a building project to expand the school has been conducted. The parish is currently discussing possible expansion of parish buildings in conjunction with the goals of the school. Under the guidance of the principal and vice-principal, the School Commission, along with input from the faculty, staff and P.E.P. Club Board, are working on the creation of a five-year plan. The components of the plan include goals for: family and spiritual life, faculty and staff, development, stability, facilities, and curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Significant Accomplishments:

- A collaborative annual budgeting process that involves both the School Commission and the parish
- An active School Commission that is committed to sound financial practices and policies
- An effective P.E.P. Club, SPLASH Auction, and SCRIP program which generates financial support of the school
- Establishment of new marketing campaign and new school website

Goals:

- P.E.P. Club and SCRIP should be audited yearly
- School financial books should be audited regularly
- Completion of an alumni database
- Increased funding sources to provide for updated technology, science lab, Pre-K
- Assure accounting best practices
- Merge parish and school feasibility studies
- Completion and implementation of the five-year plan.
- Continued growth and monitoring of Endowment Fund

Evidence

- School budgets
- Parish and School financial reports
- School Commission minutes
- P.E.P. Club minutes
- SCRIP reports



CHAPTER 4 –ACTION PLAN

A. DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN WITH THE SELF STUDY FINDINGS

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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 governing authority expectations.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Age-appropriate adoration service
- Catechetical Certification requirement for all teachers
- Religion curriculum standards long-range planning and alignment
- Mission statement reaffirmed
- New Philosophy Statement created
- New, current, and measurable School-wide Learning Expectations developed
- New SLEs with buy-in from teachers, students, parents, and the community implemented
- Mission and philosophy statements reflect a commitment to Catholic identity, quality education, and education of the whole child.
- Administration, faculty, staff, and parents work collaboratively to ensure that the mission and philosophy is put into effective practice.
- Administration is visible and supportive and involves the faculty and staff in decision-making and shares accountability for student achievement.
- Administration, faculty, and staff demonstrate a strong commitment for ongoing professional development by participating in a variety of educational opportunities.
- Every effort is made to provide emotional, spiritual, and physical safety for the students at St. Philomena School.
- Administration, faculty, and staff involve the school parents as the primary educators through a variety of communication methods.
- ITBS scores tracked by use of an Excel program to chart yearly student progress and class averages each year.
- Science program implemented in the elementary grades (in a kit-based format that encourages hands-on experiences and detailed journaling of activities and findings)
- Math program strengthened (continued basic facts and foundational skills along with increased problem solving and writing in math; decision made to move 6th grade into a middle school level series to better match the standards and flow into 7th & 8th grade math)
- Long-range plans created by every teacher to match state standards and SLEs with curriculum that is taught in the classroom
- Some teaching staff trained in using formative assessment
- Increased awareness of importance differentiated instruction and intentional effort to address needs of all students
- Addition of educational tools in the classroom (SMART Board interactive white boards, ELMO document cameras and projectors, FOSS science kits, and new white boards)

- Title I Program implemented
- Increased participation in CYO sports
- Geo Club added, Speech Club resurrected
- Annual budgeting process which incorporates collaboration between the School Commission and St. Philomena Parish
- Active, committed, and conscientious School Commission that is committed to sound financial practices and policies
- Effective P.E.P. Club and SPLASH Auction which generates financial support to the school
- New marketing campaign and new school website established

Significant Goals:

- Continued catechization of teachers
- Improved catechization of parents
- Teaching the Mass and new missal
- Curriculum focus on religion and new textbook adoption
- Development and implementation of additional tools to measure students' achievement of SLEs.
- Make parents, students, and parish-community members fully aware of the governing-authority expectations for our school, as well as the implications of those expectations
- Finalize revisions of safety policies and procedures, implement the revisions, and purchase additional safety equipment and materials
- Monitor and make revisions to the school's new website for more effective communication methods
- Complete and implement the new five-year plan
- Enhance the process of desegregation of ITBS scores in particular, and other assessments as appropriate, to identify trends and further refine curriculum and teaching methods
- Continue to investigate assessments and areas for growth for students at all levels, progress of transfer students, and how to better assist our lowest-achieving students
- Update, refine, and revise local mastery tests to better align with Washington State standards, with the goal of ensuring that what is being assessed is also what is being taught
- Increase uniformity between type and number of test questions in reading, math, and English mastery tests
- Assessment, measurement, and consistent tracking of the effectiveness of the Title I and resource program have had on the students involved
- **Continue to complete and update long range plans**
- Comprehensive process for tracking and improvement of learning for students not making acceptable process.
- Intentional focus on curriculum mapping/alignment
- Continued teacher professional development on formative assessment
- Creation of SLE assessment tools
- Enrichment program to target high achieving students
- Additional facilities for practice and performance of academic/athletic/music activities
- **Resurrect art program**

- Technology standards incorporated into the curriculum
- Yearly audit of P.E.P. Club and SCRIP
- Regularly scheduled audit of school financial books
- Completion of an alumni database
- Increase funding sources to provide for updated technology, science lab, Pre-K
- Assure accounting best practices
- Link parish and school feasibility studies
- Completion and implementation of the five-year plan
- Continued growth and monitoring of Endowment Fund

List of Critical Goals:

Goal #1: To complete the curriculum continuum document in the subject area of science and to strengthen the science curriculum.

Rationale for this Goal: By completing the curriculum continuum for science, teachers will create long range curriculum plans that detail the learning in the subject area of science for each grade level for the school year. Long range plans will be based on a calendar template, and will identify the state standards for each concept. These long range curriculum plans will be set, and teachers will adjust curriculum as needed to meet the specific needs of the class. The curriculum plans will allow new teachers to prepare further in advance and have a schedule of the science curriculum for the school year. These plans will also allow the teachers to create a spiral curriculum, pace throughout the year, and make sure that all standards are being met. The long range curriculum plans will be the starting point to strengthen the science curriculum through the implementation of additional Foss kits and Foss science textbooks, additional Foss kit training for teachers, a school-wide development of summative and formative science assessment tools, science mastery tests for all grade levels, and the creation of a lab-based science classroom.

Goal #2: To revise and update the St. Philomena School report cards to reflect and incorporate the St. Philomena School Student Learning Expectations.

Rationale for this Goal: The report cards will reflect students' progress toward mastery of the SLEs. This tool will help parents and teachers identify the child's strengths and needs. Parents will know in which area to provide review and practice at home and teachers will be able to prepare targeted assistance in the classroom. Learner growth in the SLEs as well as in pure academics will more accurately present the fullest picture of progress of St. Philomena students and will further enhance and unify the purpose of the entire school community.

Goal #3: To provide the faculty and staff with additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.

Rationale for this Goal: Over the past several years, St. Philomena School has seen a steady increase in the number of students with special learning needs, and it is anticipated that this trend

will continue. To this end, a Title I teacher has been hired. However, in addition to Title I, all faculty members must continue to broaden their skills in order to work with children of all abilities and learning styles. To this end, the goal is for all teaching staff to receive additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction. This will provide staff with additional tools for the broad range of learning needs within their classrooms and will provide opportunities for increased learner success for all St. Philomena students.

Goal #4: Updating, improvement of, alignment to state standards of mastery tests.

At the end of each school year, students are required to demonstrate their knowledge of concepts learned during the year by taking mastery tests in the core subjects of math, English, and reading. Tests are developed to reflect the learning expectations for that grade level. It is a goal of each teacher to create and update mastery tests that directly reflect the grade level standards of the state/Archdiocese.

Goal #5: Complete and implement the new five-year plan.

Reviewing policies and procedures that ensure a positive and effective learning environment is a main focus of the School Commission. The School Commission is invested into the long term success and viability of higher student achievement by creating long-range plans that address the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, faculty and staff, family spiritual life, development, and facilities.

Action Plan for St. Philomena School:

**Improving Student
Learning for Catholic
Schools**

**Appendix G-1
Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action
Plan**

Action Plan for St. Philomena School:

Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

Appendix G-1

Action Plan Template: Used for Every Action Plan

Action Plan for St. Philomena School

Goal #1: To complete the curriculum continuum document in the subject area of science and to strengthen the science curriculum.

Rationale for this Goal: By completing the curriculum continuum for science, teachers will create long range curriculum plans that detail the learning in the subject area of science for each grade level for the school year. Long range plans will be based on a calendar template, and will identify the state standards for each concept. These long range curriculum plans will be set, and teachers will adjust curriculum as needed to meet the specific needs of the class. The curriculum plans will allow new teachers to prepare further in advance and have a schedule of the science curriculum. These plans will also allow the teachers to create a spiral curriculum, pace throughout the year, and make sure that all standards are being met. The long range curriculum plans will be the starting point to strengthen the science curriculum through the implementation of additional Foss kits and Foss science textbooks, additional Foss kit training for teachers, a school-wide development of summative and formative science assessment tools, science mastery tests for all grade levels, and the creation of a lab-based science classroom.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: Completing the curriculum continuum document will help the students acquire a solid academic foundation through a standards-based, balanced curriculum. The creation of a strengthened science curriculum will help the students acquire a solid academic foundation through a standards-based, balanced curriculum;

Strategy # 1	To finish the subject of science for the curriculum continuum document.
Activity #1	Map out the subject of science using the standards and current curriculum information.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Needed resources include: WA State science standards, books on curriculum mapping from Heidi Hayes Jacob, and binders for the completion of the curriculum document.

Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and Faculty
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure the continuum is completed through on-going faculty meetings, in-services, and observations.
Baseline Assessment	The use of the current curriculum document will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the document.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages have already been started with a complete document to be finished by June 2011. Additions and changes will be made to reflect revisions accomplished in correlation with the curriculum cycle.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. Communication between students, families, staff, and administration will be further enhanced by full usage of the newly created science curriculum continuum beginning fall of 2012. The St. Philomena School website will also be used as a communication tool.

Strategy # 2	To strengthen the science curriculum.
Activity #1	To provide additional training for the implementation of the Foss science kits.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Needed resources include: Foss kits, trainer for Foss kits, additional science teacher resources.
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty, Science committee
Process for Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure the training is provided and that the teachers are effectively using the kits in their classrooms.
Baseline Assessment	The use of the Foss kits will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the implementation of the Foss kits.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages of completion will be started in the spring of 2011 with a complete implementation to be finished by June 2012.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. Communication between students, families, staff, and administration will be further enhanced by full implementation of the newly created science FOSS

	kits beginning fall of 2012. The St. Philomena School website will also be used as a communication tool.
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Strategy # 2	To strengthen the science curriculum.
Activity #2	To create a schoolwide development of summative and formative science assessment tools.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Needed resources include: WA State math standards, resources of formative and summative assessment, additional teacher science resources
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty, Science committee
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure that formative and summative assessment tools are being used intentionally and effectively through on-going faculty meetings, in-services, and observations.
Baseline Assessment	The use of the current formative and summative assessments will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the document.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages of completion will be started in the fall of 2011 with a complete document to be completed by June 2013.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. Communication between students, families, staff, and administration will be further enhanced by full usage of the newly created summative and formative science assessment tools beginning fall of 2013.

Strategy # 2	To strengthen the science curriculum.
Activity #3	To create a science mastery tests for all grade levels.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Needed resources include: WA State math standards, resources of formative and summative assessment, additional teacher science resources
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty, Science committee

Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure that science mastery test is completed through on-going faculty meetings, in-services, and observations.
Baseline Assessment	The use of the current mastery tests in other subject areas will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the document.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages of completion will be started in the fall of 2011 with a complete document to be done by May 2013. The goal is to administer the new Science mastery test in June of 2013.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. Communication between students, families, staff, and administration will be further enhanced by full usage of the newly created science mastery tests being administered in June of 2013. The St. Philomena School website will also be used as a communication tool.

Strategy # 2	To strengthen the science curriculum.
Activity #4	To create a lab-based science classroom.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Needed resources include: science tables, digital microscopes, scientific calculators, and other scientific supplies and items for the lab-based classroom.
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty, Science committee, paddle raise (“fund-an-item”) at the 2011 SPLASH Auction.
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure the science lab-based classroom is completed through on-going faculty meetings, in-services, and observations, School Commission meetings, and P.E.P. Club meetings.
Baseline Assessment	The use of the current science classroom teaching model will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the lab-based classroom.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages of completion will be started in the spring of 2011 with project completion by June 2012.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, through the weekly Wednesday newsletter, and via the St. Philomena website. Communication between students, families, staff, and administration will be further enhanced by full usage of the newly created science lab classroom beginning fall of 2013.

Goal #2: To revise and update the St. Philomena School report cards to reflect and incorporate the St. Philomena School Student Learning Expectations.

Rationale for this Goal: The revised and updated report cards will report on students' progress toward mastery of the SLEs. This will help parents and teachers identify the child's strengths and needs. Parents will know in which area to provide review and practice at home and teachers will be able to prepare targeted assistance in the classroom. Reflecting upon learner growth in the area of our SLEs as well as in pure academics will more accurately present the fullest picture of progress of St. Philomena students. It will further enhance our unity of purpose as an entire school community.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: The creation of a revised report card that reflects the SLEs will help the students acquire a solid academic foundation through a standards-based, balanced curriculum; acquire knowledge of faith, traditions, and authentic teachings of the Catholic Church; and practice academic risk-taking through critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and working cooperatively.

Strategy # 1	To revise and update the St. Philomena School report cards to reflect and incorporate the Student Learning Expectations.
Activity #1	Collect samples of report cards, hold faculty meeting to discuss grading philosophy and methodology, begin process of developing new report cards.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Resources will include sample report cards, meeting times
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure the report cards are completed through on-going faculty meetings and in-services.
Baseline Assessment	The use of the current report cards will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the document.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages of completion will be started in the winter of 2011 with a complete document to be finished by June 2011 and to be implemented for the 2011-2012 school year.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter.

Strategy # 2	Implement a revised report card for grades K-8.
Activity #2	Present new report cards to shareholders.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Printing materials and paper.
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for making sure the report cards are completed through on-going faculty meetings and in-services. .
Baseline Assessment	The use of the current report cards will give St. Philomena School a starting point that will be built upon until completion of the project.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment of goal setting, planning, and evaluating.
Timeline Start/Stop	The initial stages of completion will be started in the winter of 2011 with revised report cards to be completed by June 2011 and to be implemented for the 2011-2012 school year.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. Communication between students, families, staff, and administration will be further enhanced by full usage of the newly revised report card beginning fall of 2011.

Goal #3: To provide the faculty and staff with additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.

Rationale for this Goal: St. Philomena School has over the past several years seen a steady increase in the number of students with special learning needs. We anticipate this trend will continue. To this end we have added a Title I teacher. Parallel to this however, we must ensure that all faculty members continue to broaden their skills in order to work with children of all abilities and learning styles. To this end, our goal is to receive additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction. This will provide staff with additional tools for the broad range of learning needs within their classrooms and will provide opportunities for increased learner success for all St. Philomena students.

Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs: The additional professional development in differentiated instruction will help all students at any level of learning to acquire a solid academic foundation through a standards-based, balanced curriculum; acquire knowledge of faith, traditions, and authentic teachings of the Catholic Church; and practice academic risk-taking through critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and working cooperatively.

Strategy # 1	Providing additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.
Activity #1	Begin a faculty book read on differentiated instruction.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Purchasing the books.
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for setting up the faculty meetings and PLC's (Professional Learning Communities) to discuss the contents of the book.
Baseline Assessment	Beginning discussions at faculty meetings to gather information and brainstorm to assess the faculty's current level of expertise and knowledge in this area.
Ongoing Assessment	Periodic assessment through discussions and interactions at faculty meetings.
Timeline Start/Stop	Purchase the books in June 2012; Start reading at faculty meetings in the fall of 2012; to be completed by June 2013.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. The St. Philomena School website will also be used as a communication tool.

Strategy # 1	Providing additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.
Activity #2	Provide authentic training for St. Philomena faculty in the area of differentiated instruction by attending training or bringing in a trainer to St. Philomena School.
Cost or Resources & Sources	The cost of the training or trainer. Title II funds can be used to help pay for the cost of the training.
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for organizing and planning the training for the faculty and staff.
Baseline Assessment	The knowledge obtained from the book read on differentiated instruction will serve as the baseline assessment. Create lists of needs compiled during Strategy 1 and compare it with teacher knowledge and skills to create a baseline of assessment. Additional teachers would share their strategies with each other during faculty meetings.
Ongoing Assessment	Ongoing assessment will occur through the implementation of differentiated skills and strategies into classroom teaching and with the students' access to learning through use of these new teacher implemented strategies.
Timeline Start/Stop	Training to occur in the summer of 2013.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. The St. Philomena School website will also be used as a communication tool.

Strategy # 1	Providing additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.
Activity #3	The implementation of differentiated skills and strategies into classroom teaching.
Cost or Resources & Sources	Updated and current information about differentiated learning through professional journal articles.
Person(s) Responsible For Implementation	Administration and faculty
Process For Monitoring	The administration will be responsible for ensuring that the faculty and staff are implementing the differentiated learning strategies and skills into their classroom teaching through discussion, observations, and evaluations.

Baseline Assessment	The knowledge gained through the differentiated learning training will be used as a baseline assessment.
Ongoing Assessment	Ongoing assessment will be monitored by administration through observation and evaluations, improved student learning, and ongoing classroom assessments. Ongoing assessment of the students' improved access to learning through use of these new teacher implemented strategies.
Timeline Start/Stop	Start implementing strategies and skills into classroom instruction in the fall of 2012; the process is continual.
Process for Communicating to Shareholders	The communication will be through School Commission meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and through the weekly Wednesday newsletter. Use of new teaching strategies can also be shared between homeroom teachers and their students' families by use of weekly teacher newsletters. The St. Philomena Schools website will also be used as a communication tool.

Evidence

- List of Significant Accomplishment
- List of Significant Goals
- List of Critical Goals
- Action Plan with three goals and strategies



CHAPTER 4 –ACTION PLAN

B. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN

B. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN

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.

St. Philomena School used prior accreditation findings, including those of the Visiting Committee, and the revised Action Plan to steer school improvement efforts over the ensuing six years. The staff identified the Visiting Committee's finding that the school lacked a clearly articulated, spiral curriculum as its foremost priority for school improvement. To that end, the vice-principal devoted a major portion of the weekly faculty meeting, once a month, to educating the faculty on current best practices in curriculum development and design. A consensus agreement was reached on the desirability of aligning our local curriculum with the Washington State standards and with the Archdiocesan curriculum benchmarks. This work was used as the baseline assessment for the creation of our current Action Plan.

The administration will be responsible for making sure the Action Plan is implemented and completed through on-going faculty meetings, in-services, observations, School Commission meetings, and P.E.P. Club meetings. This will be done through a process of continual planning, organization, and follow-through. Faculty meetings, in-service days, and professional staff development opportunities will be utilized as a way of keeping the Action Plan on target.

The shareholders will be involved in the Action Plan implementation through discussions and strategizing sessions at School Commission meetings P.E.P. Club Board meetings, P.E.P. Club meetings, and St. Philomena Parish staff meetings. The School Commission will use the significant goals to create the baseline for the start of the five-year long range planning. The Wednesday parent communication envelope, the St. Philomena School website, and the St. Philomena Parish bulletin will be used as a way to communicate the Action Plan and the progress of the Action plan to all the shareholders.

The evaluation of the impact of the Action Plan as it relates to student achievement will come in the form of different evaluation methods. Progression interim reports and executive summaries will be created to collect data, analyze the data, and answer the questions about the Action Plan itself. The data will then be examined to find how the results will create a correlation between the completion of the Action Plan and that of student achievement. Creating a document that is data-driven to show the progress of the Action Plan can give insight into the correlation of the completed items and student achievement. These evaluation methods will determine whether the components identified as critical to the success of the program are being implemented, especially in the area of student achievement.

Results stemming from the evaluation methods will be used to identify the school's priorities and identify what further action needs to be taken for school improvement as it relates to student achievement. The administration, faculty, and School Commission will work in collaboration to review the results of the evaluations and decide how to make additional improvements to increase student achievement. Any additional resources needed to complete the Action Plan and move the Action Plan forward will be determined through the evaluation results and will then be decided upon by the collaborative boards and shareholders. The school's

administration, faculty and staff, and consultative boards do not currently see or foresee any impediments to implementing the Action Plan and are very confident that the Action Plan will be completed and the critical goals achieved.