

REPORT OF FINDINGS

ST. PHILOMENA SCHOOL
1815 S 220TH ST
DES MOINES, WA 98198-7909
ARCHDIOCESE OF SEATTLE



WCEA *Western Catholic
Educational Association*

AND

PARTNERING ACCREDITING AGENCY

IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING

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

MARCH 28-30, 2011

REPORT OF FINDINGS

for
St. Philomena School
1815 S 220TH ST
DES MOINES, WA 98198-7909

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. How the Self Study was Conducted

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

In the spring of 2009, interim principal Mr. Joseph Budde appointed the accreditation leadership team for St. Philomena School. During the summer of 2009, the leadership team met and determined how to introduce and implement the self-study process for the faculty and staff. This team continued to meet during the 2009-2010 school year on most Friday mornings before school (and sometimes on the weekends) to further define its self-study process. Tasks for the faculty and staff were then presented at Monday afternoon faculty meetings and at three in-service workdays during the 2009-2010 school year. Self-study committees met before and after school, on some weekends, and during regularly scheduled accreditation in-service days. The original goal to finish the self-study was June 2010 (with a site visit scheduled for fall 2010). However, due to the newly updated protocol and the summer 2010 hiring of their new principal, the site visit was rescheduled for spring 2011. The self-study was presented in draft phase December 16, 2010.

The leadership team continued to update the School Commission and P.E.P. (Parents, Educators, Parishioners) Club Board regarding self-study content. Both groups completed the commission survey in spring of 2010. Included in the survey response were some faculty members who are also parents of St. Philomena students. The School Commission reviewed and discussed the work of the self-study committees and edited, revised, and approved the mission statement, new philosophy statement, and the redefined School-wide Learning Expectations.

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

St. Philomena School experienced a number of challenges during the self study process. First, the timeline for the self-study was originally scheduled for one school year. During St. Philomena's self study, the WCEA altered and updated its protocol, thereby requiring additional time to bring the study into compliance with the new expectations. Of even greater impact was the change in school administration. Interim principal Budde was to have served one year but this was extended into two. During his second year, the self-study process was initiated primarily at the behest of the existing faculty and its leadership team. With the arrival of current principal Steve Morissette in the summer of 2010, efforts were made to bring a sense of cohesiveness to the self-study process. Staff and administration took on the task of aligning the document with the new protocol and of rebuilding their own sense of unity and purpose as a faculty and staff. In addition, St. Philomena Parish has had three pastors/priest administrators during the past six years. During the last two, the parish and school have been served by Father Thanh who was then succeeded by Father Stephen Woodland in November of 2010. All together, these issues have created many problematic uncertainties throughout the course of this self-study.

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

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

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

In the area of data review and analysis, St. Philomena administration has provided continuing monthly updates to both the P.E.P. Club and the School Commission as evidenced by P.E.P. Club Board meeting notes and School Commission minutes. The School Commission also reviewed the work of the faculty accreditation committees and discussed, edited, revised, and approved the mission statement, School-wide Learning Expectations, and new philosophy statement. St. Philomena School also used the parish bulletin to communicate self-study process to the parish as a whole and the weekly newsletter to inform the school families. The School Commission also had the opportunity to review the Action Plan (along with the accompanying goals and accomplishments) for final input. They are now in the process of utilizing the self-study information to create a five-year plan for St. Philomena School. The Action Plan Goals will be an integral part of this process.

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

St. Philomena School plans to inform shareholders with the following forms of communication: School Commission and P.E.P Club meetings, the weekly Wednesday newsletter, the school website, the newly revised Science mastery tests, and the results of other formative assessments.

The data gathered from these venues will all be used in the process of creating the five-year plan. The school is aware of the value of keeping the parish community informed as well.

Chapter 2: Context of the School

A. School Profile

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

St. Philomena has used a variety of resources to track changes and trends since their last self study. The School Profile was used to keep track of their data and to observe trends in enrollment. One trend they witnessed was the increase in the enrollment of below grade level students and the decrease in the enrollment of high-achieving students. A larger portion of students have academic gaps and reading/math deficiencies. While striving to maintain enrollment numbers, students needing accommodations have added a new challenge for school staffing. An increased level of cultural diversity is a notable trend throughout the parish and school. Surveys were used with parents, students, faculty, and school commission to gather information about both the needs and strengths of the school. The parent surveys showed a desire for more school space which would allow for a more enriched academic program. This desire for space was also part of the previous self study. The pastor was then interviewed about his views towards the school and parish.

The school administration and staff have analyzed the demographics of the school and parish, the current culture, changes taking place in the school and parish, enrollment trends at the school, test results, and the overall satisfaction of parents, students, and faculty with the school. It is unclear whether the school used prior demographic studies for the sake of comparison.

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

Parent surveys indicate a majority of parents are very happy with the school community. They particularly appreciate the involvement of the staff, the safe environment of the school, and religious opportunities for students. Families have expressed a strong desire for a school gym, a certificated PE teacher, and an expansion of facilities. Student surveys show a high level of contentment and comfort with their school. They report feeling respected and safe while learning. Some expressed a desire to be challenged more, while 60% of students currently feel sufficiently challenged. The staff noted a strong sense of community between parents and faculty.

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

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

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

St. Philomena's number one goal from their last accreditation was to "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." Part of this goal was also to use "varied teaching methods." Staff has attended a conference on differentiated learning and continues to make this an important goal of the 2011 self study. An additional goal was to use "many types of assessment[s]." While staff and administration have focused on summative assessment, they are striving toward inclusion of more formative assessments. Additional training in this area has occurred with six faculty members attending the Educational Leadership Workshop in June of 2010. Ongoing discussion has continued at staff development meetings. There is continued focus on ensuring an appropriate balance of all types of assessment.

The school has put considerable effort into "tracking" student needs. Staff and administration have experienced greater success in this area through the use of data derived from ITBS, mastery tests, and STAR instruments. This information contributes towards identification of student skill needs, instructional methods, and textbook adoption. It is a matter of considerable importance that the mastery tests currently in use fully align with state and archdiocesan standards and reflect both validity and reliability as an instrument.

St. Philomena has made efforts to promote high achievement for all students by purposefully trying to strengthen all areas of the curriculum. Staff and administration have devoted much time to mapping the curriculum of each subject area to align with state standards and have focused on long-range planning. They continue toward this goal and will address both social studies and technology standards in the near future.

In the current self study there is little specific evidence as to how critical thinking skills in students have been improved over the past six years. However, alignment of curriculum standards and further attention to differentiated instructional practices will contribute to this extremely important educational outcome. Goal #3 of this current self study addresses the need for further staff development in the area of differentiated instruction. Addressing high achievement for all students along with an increase in teacher tools will be central to these important studies.

Faith formation for all St. Philomena students has traditionally been a strong point for the school as a whole. Their expressed desire to collaborate and better communicate with the parish program remains challenging due to repeated leadership changes. However, St. Philomena continues to work on strengthening the bond between the school and the parish community with the anticipation of a more robust parish adult education program.

The second goal was to implement “new and improved resource management tools.” St. Philomena has made effective progress in this area by improving student safety/security and implementing technological advancements. These include security cameras in both parish and school buildings, ELMO document cameras in every classroom, SMART boards in two classrooms, and additional computers for the lab. A technology committee has been formed to further study the present and future technological needs of the school and its students. The committee embraces the fact that access to appropriate technology has a clear impact on high achievement of all students.

Goal #3 addresses the need for increasing dedicated learner space and the possibility of a Pre-K program and gymnasium. While a 2008 feasibility study was conducted to this end, financial hardships within the parish and economy as a whole have made it impossible to realize these additions.

Goal #4 focused upon greater collaboration between parish and school to set themes and priorities. There have been significant leadership changes in both the parish and school over the past six years; three priests and three principals. These realities have made collaborative planning extremely difficult. With a new principal in place as well as a new priest administrator, this now-realistic goal will remain worthy of pursuit.

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

Despite numerous leadership changes of the past six years, St. Philomena School has made considerable efforts to align their curriculum with state/archdiocesan standards, all with the intent of improving student learning. Faculty has attended workshops on differentiated instruction and effective assessment techniques. Staff development meetings have regularly focused on the content of both those trainings. They recognize the need to continue those studies and to include a fuller array of assessment opportunities along with expanded teaching methods. All of these things will better serve each learner at his or her optimal level of achievement. Further study of the annual end-of-year mastery tests as to standards alignment and reliability/validity is deemed highly important. The use of normed ITBS and STAR reading assessments provides a broad range of data from which to make student-centered educational decisions. The noticeable emergence of underperforming new students needs to be fully addressed to insure their successful academic career at St. Philomena School.

Chapter 3: Quality of the School Program

A. Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity:

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

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

The entire St. Philomena School community has reviewed and worked on both the school's mission statement and philosophy statement with the purpose of integrating the Roman Catholic faith into all aspects of school life. The mission statement has been used for well over twenty years and, after careful review by the shareholders, it remains the same. It is posted throughout the school as well as other parish and church buildings. Every classroom has a large, laminated, and colorful poster that has the mission and philosophy. The mission statement appears on all printed materials of the school and clearly affirms that Christ and His teachings are the focus in all of the school's endeavors. Christ and the Gospel values are the focus and reference point of all that is taught throughout the curriculum. The philosophy statement was updated to more clearly define and reflect the school's commitment to assuring that the school is Catholic first and that the faith is integrated into all academic subjects and all aspects of school life.

The St. Philomena School staff and leadership are committed to providing many opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments. This is done with daily morning faculty prayer, prayer at faculty meetings, parent meetings, monthly prayer services, quarterly all-school rosaries, daily classroom prayers, prayers at meals, and religion class prayer. The Sacraments are practiced with Friday Masses, monthly Eucharistic Adoration services, and reconciliation services. Not only are students and staff present but parents and parishioners are also welcomed at these liturgical and prayer services.

The religion standards established by the Archdiocese of Seattle and the United States Conference of Catholic bishops (USCCB) are the base for St. Philomena's religion curriculum. The staff has aligned lesson and unit plans to these requirements. Periodically the faculty follows a plan to undergo a comprehensive religion textbook adoption process, curriculum mapping, standards-based instruction, and assessment of students as to mastery of the religion program.

All teachers have either earned or are working towards their Catechetical Certification. This has been set as a requirement for teaching religion at St. Philomena. Teachers have been working on Year One, Year Two, and Year Three Catechetical Certification classes.

As evidenced in the school mission statement and new philosophy statement, St. Philomena School has effectively improved the faith formation of not only its students but the administration, staff, and parents. St. Philomena School provides a strong Catholic education to all who seek one.

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

The St. Philomena School community has worked hard to maintain and improve its commitment to Catholic identity. The school has strengthened their already strong Catholic identity in a number of ways. The philosophy statement has been updated and improved. The school has 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 teachers, even those who do not teach religion, have earned their catechetical certification; continued to welcome parents, parishioners, and community members to liturgical celebrations; added numerous, worthy service projects to previous ones; and added monthly prayer service assemblies. The community raised funds to commission a beautiful, permanent stained glass window in remembrance of a deceased student, Gloria Strauss. At the time of her death, the story of parishioner involvement became a great tool of evangelization and an instrument to uplift spirituality in the school. The school excels in engaging the full range of Christ’s Paschal Mystery.

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

St. Philomena has maintained a strong Catholic identity, responding to emergent needs in the near and global community, involving students in service and in providing for enhanced prayer and liturgical opportunities. They have appointed a liturgical coordinator, created developmentally appropriate worship, and emphasized the knowledge of traditional Catholic prayers. They also addressed a need for improved catechization for parents and staff, in response to the perception that there is a diminished knowledge of the Mass, prayers, and general faith understanding.

B. Defining the School’s Purpose

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

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

St. Philomena School’s mission and philosophy is highly effective in reflecting the Catholic nature of the school. The mission statement has not changed in over 20 years because the shareholders agree that it remains as much a true reflection of the school’s purpose as when first

created. Their mission centers upon the teachings of Christ through Gospel values with Christ as the constant point of reference. The philosophy statement, recently updated as part of the self-study, now focuses upon teaching, modeling, and promoting the Catholic faith through an academic curriculum infused with the Gospel message of Christ and the traditions of the Catholic Church. The philosophy further reflects the Catholic nature of the school in its statement that students are being prepared to live their faith each day as reflective, contributing citizens in service to their church and to their communities.

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

The school has integrated their mission, SLEs, and standards into the total reality of the school. Each classroom teacher purposely identifies in an age-appropriate manner the objective of each lesson through visual display and discussion of the learning target. In the primary grades each student has an SLE card displayed on their desk showing symbols to represent each of those three main areas. The pictures include a cross, to represent “a student of Catholic faith,” a book, which represents “an active learner,” and a globe, to represent “a servant leader.” Following each lesson students in the various primary grades use these visual clues to help them understand which SLE they have just met. Other classes use journals, discussion, or SLE binders to help them understand which SLEs have been addressed throughout the year. The school has implemented an SLE award, received by one student in each grade for each trimester. It would be beneficial for the school to develop further assessment tools to make sure that students not only understand what SLE they are learning, but to make sure the application of each SLE is retained. They aspire to align all curriculum areas with the state standards.

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

St. Philomena School has clearly communicated their mission and purpose to their shareholders. They reaffirmed their 20-year-old mission statement as a true reflection of the school’s commitment to its Catholic identity and changed their philosophy statement to better reflect their educational philosophies. Following these efforts, a shareholders’ meeting was scheduled. Attendance at this meeting included school faculty, staff and leaders, school parents and students, parishioners, as well as past graduates and their parents. All in attendance were encouraged to provide input. After collecting feedback from the meeting, the faculty and staff then developed the framework for their new SLEs. Once the mission, philosophy, and SLEs were finalized and displayed throughout the school campus, further communication has occurred through individual classroom newsletters, P.E.P. Club meetings, the weekly school newsletter, and the eighth grade graduation ceremony. Although St. Philomena School has effectively communicated their mission and purpose to all shareholders, governing authority expectations still need to be presented, as well as the implications of those expectations. Parents report great satisfaction with the quantity and quality of communication they receive from the school.

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

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

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

The organizational structures of the school effectively support an environment of student high-achievement. There is a verifiable, strong parent-teacher-student relationship. This partnership of trust is supported by the school's effective use of communication tools. These include meetings, letters, website, teacher and school newsletters. The School Commission and P.E.P organizations work to identify and respond to the needs of the school. The Commission involves itself directly in the budgetary process of the school and its long-range planning. The administration is committed to providing for professional development. The faculty avails itself of current methodology and strives to better serve their students.

In an effort to address the broadening range of student learning needs, the school administration has added a Title I resource specialist to work with underperforming students. The school is making efforts to identify and respond to the learning needs of all students, regardless of performance level.

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

Communication among shareholders is a strength at St. Philomena School. Administration and staff provide regular newsletters, include information in the parish bulletin, utilize the website for all points of interest, and share appropriate learning data with families at fall conference time. Parents report strong communication avenues with administration and staff. Students share information with their families because they too have been informed of pertinent information.

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

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

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

St. Philomena has effectively used the yearly ITBS test to collect and analyze data. The test is given annually in grades three through eight with the results tracked through a parent-made Excel program. This tracking allows for results of individual, whole class, and entire school progress. This data is used to decide if students need additional support in certain areas. If students need more support, they work with the Title I resource teacher.

St. Philomena has developed a mastery grade level test in reading, English and math. The intent of these tests is to determine which students would benefit from additional academic instruction in the summer in order to be prepared for the following year. These instruments have been teacher created without certainty as to their reliability/validity. The school recognizes the need to align their content with that of state/archdiocesan standards. Additional data is gathered from the STAR Reading and Accelerated reader programs. This data is recorded on Student Tracking/Student Concern forms. Curriculum changes are made while considering the sum total of all the gathered data.

How effectively has the school assessed SLEs and academic standards?

St. Philomena SLEs have been reworded for developmentally appropriate content. An intensified effort has been made to promote, display, and focus on their understanding at every grade level. Staff has tried to identify ways to measure progress for each student, and the process has been communicated throughout the school community. The SLEs are incorporated into daily lessons, and students are asked to identify the SLEs in the context of the lesson being studied and to self-assess throughout the school year. Eighth graders develop an SLE binder which reflects their growing understanding over the duration of their St. Philomena years.

The administration and staff continue to exert time and energy to align their curriculum with state standards across all subject areas. They are mapping the content for all grade levels in order to provide for greater continuity of learning for their students and have done so for most subjects.

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

St. Philomena has used a variety of assessment results as a way to modify curriculum for students with additional learning needs. These include grade-level mastery tests, standards-based textbooks, teacher-created chapter tests, periodic quizzes, Star and Accelerated Reader programs, and Fry assessment tool for emerging readers. They have used ITBS scores to identify students in need of intervention as well as overall learning trends throughout the school. These trends inform textbook adoption. They use assessment data to provide for advanced math class in the middle school. It is unclear how higher achieving students are being challenged.

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

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

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

The faculty and staff at St. Philomena School 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. Using these learning standards, teachers have begun creating long range plans for each subject at every grade level for the duration of each school year. These are mapped out onto a calendar template with the State and Archdiocesan standards listed for each concept taught in each grade. Eighth grade students would benefit from the school's use of the Core 24 standards for math/science in preparation for their high school studies.

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

In creating the new SLEs, the shareholders and teachers effectively used the old SLEs as a foundational guide. They focused on measurable goals for every student in the school, using language that was easily adaptable and teachable for all levels. 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. Key vocabulary of the SLEs is used in newsletters to promote common language among families and faculty. The school has identified the need for continuous, consistent emphasis on the SLEs, providing a well defined rubric for measuring student progress. As part of their action plan, they will imbed the SLEs in their report cards.

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

The teachers at St. Philomena School effectively 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 assessments, chapter tests, quizzes, projects, and tiered assignments. The Accelerated Reader and the STAR Reading programs are additional ways that St. Philomena identifies students who may be reading below grade level. They are used in combination with the ITBS results, mastery tests results, and teacher/parent anecdotal information and observation.

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

St. Philomena School is dedicated to ensuring that each student is making acceptable progress toward the achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards by the use of their mastery tests and re-taking of the mastery tests, the ITBS achievement test data, the STAR reading data, and the other formative and summative assessment tool data to identify students needing more instruction. Intervention programs such as the presence of a part-time Title 1 resource teacher, “modified plans,” the “Sound Partners” program, together with prescriptive work for identified students, all help students experience learning success.

F. Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students

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

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

The following are examples of the integration of Catholic values in the St. Philomena School curriculum: Students pray at the beginning and end of each school day, and it is a requirement that students in grades 5-8 complete service hours. In science, 6th grade students spend four days at CYO Camp Hamilton for Catholic Environmental Education. The social studies curriculum incorporates Catholic social justice issues, geography awareness in relation to the Church, Church history, and global religion comparisons. The language arts curriculum incorporates literature with Christian themes. Third through eighth graders also write and give reports that relate to life issues and Catholic social justice. In music, the students learn hymns and Mass music, participate in the 8th grade Stations of the Cross reenactment, and participate in Christmas musicals. Music students also perform for the May crowning. Every class participates in a Seder meal on Holy Thursday.

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

St. Philomena School uses instructional techniques, such as teaching approaches specifically for the Autism spectrum, utilizing FOSS kits (interactive, inquiry-based science), and integrating technology with SMART interactive whiteboards, ELMO document cameras and projectors, and a full computer lab. Teachers have attended workshops on the following topics: differentiated instruction, use of FOSS science kits, broadening teaching strategies, technological access, and functional behavioral analysis.

Although these examples may be research-based, more specific examples are needed in relation to research-based instructional techniques and how they have improved student learning at St. Philomena School.

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

St. Philomena School uses its library jointly with a computer lab. Other technology includes SMART Board interactive white boards in two grades, and ELMO document cameras and projection systems in all classrooms. The faculty has attended technology access learning workshops in order to more fully utilize these capabilities.

ELMO document cameras and projectors are available for daily use. They project information from textbooks and allow students to view the internet during lessons. All teachers may use the computer lab which provides wireless Internet, printers, and laptop computers that can be used in the classrooms. Teachers have integrated technology use within student assignments in various academic areas such as social studies, science, and English. The interactive whiteboards are located in the 2nd and 6th grades. The whiteboards allow students to research, use online tutorials, create presentations, and prepare Word documents. Computers and Internet are available in all classrooms. This access allows teachers and students to use 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 Reader program in order to build their reading skills.

While St. Philomena School is addressing the need for greater technology integration for all learners, administration and faculty also see room for improvement. A technology committee has been appointed to help teachers meet and integrate the state technology standards and to assess how to provide a greater technology presence within the school.

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

St. Philomena School uses a variety of formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments include: presentations, reports, exit slips, anecdotal observations, self and peer assessments, and rubrics. As stated in the document, the purpose of the formative assessments is to monitor student performance during lessons and units, to make necessary adjustments during instruction, and to check for prior knowledge. Summative assessments include: the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, grade-level mastery tests, standards-based textbook and teacher-created chapter tests, and periodic quizzes. Also stated in the document, the purpose of the summative assessments is to view the progress of both individual students and the class as a whole, to monitor and analyze emerging trends throughout grade progressions, to assess areas of special need, and to discover opportunities for enrichment. The purpose of the formative and summative assessments is to measure student achievement of the SLEs and curriculum standards.

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

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

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

St. Philomena School offers intervention services through the Highline School District's Title I program. These services are currently offered for grades one through three. A part-time resource teacher uses the Sound Partners program (a phonemic based awareness program) to work with these students. The instructor also works with 8th grade students who need extra support. This resource has been utilized since 2009. The school will be analyzing student need at additional grade levels. Serving high achieving students is an area where St. Philomena will be exerting additional effort.

St. Philomena utilizes parent volunteers and technology to increase student achievement. Families are required to serve the school through 40 hours of service to the parish or school. Parent volunteers assist in the classroom, attend field trips, help with playground supervision and hot lunch, coach teams and arrange game schedules through the CYO program. Volunteers also serve on School Commission, P.E.P. Board, Parish Finance Council, and Pastoral Council. Parents assist with major fundraising efforts for the school.

In reference to technology, St. Philomena School uses ELMO document cameras and projectors to support daily instruction. A library/computer lab is available and provides wireless Internet, printers, and laptop computers that can be used in the classrooms. The school recognizes the need to provide computer lab access that does not interfere with library usage. Interactive whiteboards are located in the 2nd and 6th grade classrooms.

In addition, St. Philomena School provides activities to help students achieve at high levels. The school offers physical education, band, choir, speech club, family geography night, Geo Club, 8th grade student council, and a Washington D.C. trip. The school has identified that it would like to reinstitute an art program previously withdrawn because of budget cuts. Included in their action plan is their wish to address the need for a lab-based science classroom that would serve all students. They are investigating the possibility of a pre-K program for four-year olds.

St. Philomena School provides resources, services, and activities to assist students in achieving at high levels. Strengths include the implementation of the Title I Program, increased participation in CYO sports, the addition of Geo Club, and restarting the speech club. St. Philomena's goals for all students include: starting an enrichment program to assist higher achieving students, reinstituting the art program, and incorporating technology standards into the curriculum. The accomplishments and goals stated by St. Philomena School support higher student achievement.

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

St. Philomena School uses parents and community resources to assist students. As mentioned earlier, families are required to serve the school through 40 hours of service to the parish or school. Parent volunteers assist in the classroom, attend field trips, help with playground supervision and hot lunch, coach teams and arrange game schedules through the CYO program. Volunteers also serve on School Commission, P.E.P. Board, Parish Finance Council, and Pastoral Council. Parents assist with all fundraising events for the school. St. Philomena School lists CYO as a community resource for an extra-curricular athletics program. The school also uses federal funding through the Title I and IIA programs. St. Philomena School has extraordinary parent participation and support.

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

References:

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

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

St. Philomena School has been highly effective in using its Schoolwide Learning Expectations as the driving force behind all budgetary decision making and, in so doing, exercises notable effort to support high achievement of all students. The school has effectively committed itself to utilizing responsible stewardship and following sound financial practices. St. Philomena has implemented appropriate bookkeeping and accounting procedures to monitor and report the financial position of the school. The principal and School Commission create an annual budget and itemize a general ledger account. This information is data-based in the PDS accounting software program, which is supported and overseen by the Archdiocese of Seattle as part of their generally accepted accounting practices. The annual budgeting process begins each December and concludes in February with the Parish Finance Council exercising oversight. The parish provides monthly financial data to the principal which is then studied by the budget team. Monthly review by the School Commission and administration helps to determine the school is in line with its goals and spending capabilities. The school recognizes its need to ensure regular auditing of its financial books.

In the fall of 2010, the School Commission newly created both tuition and financial assistance policies to ensure sound financial viability of St. Philomena School. The establishment of tuition rates and the collection thereof will now be clearly understood by the entire school community.

The parish bookkeeper closes each school year and reports that financial data. The parish also produces an annual report for the Seattle Archdiocese as well as to the parish community. The SCRIP program was audited by the parish bookkeeper during the 2009-2010 school year. This included a recommendation to better insure the security of all collected SCRIP funds. St.

Philomena School has defined its goal to have both P.E.P. Club and SCRIP programs audited on a yearly basis to ensure that all receipts are identified and tracked.

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

St. Philomena School is embarking upon a viable marketing program to present itself more prominently to the greater geographical community. Included in this effort are: a new school brochure, advertisements in local and archdiocesan newspapers, a highly visible enrollment banner, and a completely updated website. In this effort to enhance its community presence, St. Philomena has taken important beginning steps towards marketing itself to a broader population seeking an excellent Catholic education.

Tuition and fees represent 72% of the annual school budget. The remaining percentages include a parish subsidy equaling 10% of the budget, fundraising activities comprising 9%, 5% from Kids' Club (before and after school care) fees, 4% from interest, donations, and the two-day per week hot lunch program. The annual SPLASH auction, which is open to the greater community, provides nearly 10% of the budget and earmarks specific funds for textbook purchases and improvements to the school facility. These have included many technology additions, school security updates, white boards, student furniture, public address and phone systems to name a few. Another vital fundraising tool is the SCRIP program which generates nearly \$1,000,000 in annual sales with a \$35,000 to \$45,000 profit to the school. This program too is open to the general public.

In order to make itself better known, the principal and School Commission are working toward the enhancement of a comprehensive alumni data base. When expanded from its original state of some four years ago, this will provide valuable contacts for outreach and networking. St. Philomena School recognizes its need to increase funding sources to continue its plan for updated technology, science lab, and Pre-K facilities. The school is working toward increasing external resources and searching for potential grant opportunities to support its ongoing efforts.

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

St. Philomena School is making an effort to address the changing needs of its community by developing a five-year plan with input from administration, School Commission, faculty and staff, and P.E.P. board. The plan includes components of family and spiritual life, faculty and staff, development, stability, facilities, and curriculum/instruction/assessment. The school recognizes the positive impact that can be made by combining both parish and school goals. When the economy begins an upturn, this could include acting upon the 2008 feasibility plan that addresses school expansion as part of enhancing the entire campus. The school recognizes its need to continually monitor and elaborate upon its five-year plan, actively engaging the parish in its creation. They further identify their student learning expectations as the driving force for

overall resource management and development. 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 school will benefit from further exploration of existing grant opportunities as well as the development of an annual fund. Through dedicated effort, such possibilities can yield important funding resources and enhanced community standing for the school and parish thus improving the learning environment for all its students.

The St. Philomena School Endowment Fund was established to insure financial stability for the school. It is monitored by the Endowment Committee as a subcommittee of the School Commission. The committee meets quarterly to make necessary decisions regarding reallocation of funds. Its assets currently total \$750,000 with a goal to grow it to \$1,000,000 by 2014, at which time St. Philomena School will celebrate its 50th birthday. In addition to maintaining careful fiscal planning, the school maintains a “rainy day” fund capped at \$40,000 to be used in the event of untimely emergencies. This vital fiscal support is the result of careful planning on the parts of all shareholders and demonstrates effective positioning for the school’s long-term viability.

Chapter 4: The Action Plan

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

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

Schoolwide Lists of Significant Accomplishments and Critical Goals

Schoolwide Significant Accomplishments (the eight most significant)

1. Administration, priest administrator, faculty and staff are dedicated to the daily practice of the school’s strong Catholic identity.
2. Administration, faculty, and staff involve the school parents as the primary educators through a variety of communication methods.
3. Administration is visible and supportive and involves the faculty and staff in decision making and shares accountability for student achievement.
4. Every effort is made to provide emotional, spiritual, and physical safety for the students at St. Philomena School.
5. Active, committed, and conscientious School Commission and P.E.P Club are dedicated to full support of the school and its mission.
6. Long-range plans are currently being created by every teacher to match state standards and SLEs with curriculum that is taught in the classroom.
7. Staff and community have developed and maintained a cohesive and dedicated sense of unity and purpose despite the number of challenges incurred over the past six years.

8. The administration, staff, and parents form a strong community where all are supported.

Critical Goals (as identified and written by school)

1. To complete the curriculum continuum document in the subject area of science and to strengthen the science curriculum.
2. To revise and update the St. Philomena School report cards to reflect and incorporate the St. Philomena School Student Learning Expectations
3. To provide the faculty and staff with additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction.
4. Updating, improvement of, alignment to state standards of mastery tests.
5. Complete and implement the new five-year plan.

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

St. Philomena School has analyzed the student population and their performance levels, the recognized need for continual improvement, and the reality of existing resources to determine how best to ensure desired achievement for the children they serve. The school is engaged in in-depth study of subject matter in order to map the curriculum flow in accordance with both State and Archdiocesan standards. With each teacher working tightly as a member of the curriculum team, students will be the primary beneficiaries. This also provides appropriate foundation for the adoption of new materials within a consistent and predictable timetable.

The goal to strengthen the science curriculum impacts every student and is supported by all shareholders. It seeks to increase student understanding as measured by the ITBS assessment tool and is in alignment with the new Core 24 which implies that key math and science skills should be in place by 8th grade.

Its decision to imbed SLEs within the report card system is an excellent way to broadcast the learning community's expectations in a clear and viable manner. It lends strength to the school's mission and philosophy and ties together its active learning team of administration, staff and faculty, parent, and student. The creation of a measurable rubric to accurately assess each student's progress throughout their St. Philomena years will further enhance this valuable process.

Due to the changing enrollment population with an apparent need for further skill intervention, St. Philomena has wisely chosen to invest in professional development of its teachers. Their acquisition and understanding of differentiated instruction practices will make vast inroads towards ensuring all members of their diverse population will attain high individual levels of achievement. Continuation of this long-term goal will help every student regardless of learning need. Utilized in tandem with the efforts of an in-house learning specialist, students will have a much clearer path toward learning success.

While not part of the action plan, the school is working on the reliability/validity of the teacher-made mastery tests as identified in critical goal #4. Among the data-gathering tools used at St. Philomena, both formative and summative assessments must be accurate in their portrayal of

student achievement. This is an important goal as it highlights the accuracy with which all student growth is depicted and communicated.

The fifth critical goal is the umbrella for all other goals in that it determines the strength and unity of purpose within the entire school as a member of the total parish community. It determines responsiveness to identified needs, both present and in the future. With the multiple leadership changes that have occurred both in the parish and the school, it has been difficult to provide cohesive direction for the community as a whole. Now with renewed hope of greater administrative and pastoral stability, identifying a well-articulated five-year plan will provide direction and motivation for improving all efforts of the school, including an assessment of the campus facilities. It aims to positively impact every stakeholder within and shores up support for ensuring future viability of St. Philomena School.

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

The Action Plan is highly effective in its alignment with the school's critical goals in support of the high achievement of all students. Through curriculum alignment, professional development, and enhanced report cards which include measurement of the SLEs, the Action Plan provides three critical goals that directly support the high achievement of all students. By providing each student with a challenging curriculum, based on their diverse learning needs, and then reporting their progress in the most effective way, students at St. Philomena School will meet more achievement expectations. The steps presented in the Action Plan provide clear processes to achieve the goals identified by the school and focus on actions that will support high achievement for all students.

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

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

N/A

OPTION B: Critical Goal Identified by the Visiting Committee:

1.

If the finding of the Visiting Committee is to replace a school's critical goal in the school's Action Plan, the Visiting Committee should identify which goal is to be replaced, and write a brief rationale for the school to use in incorporating this new critical goal identified by the Visiting Committee into the school's Action Plan. NOTE: Because there can be no more than

two critical goals from the Self Study incorporated into the School's Action Plan, the Visiting Committee recommendation will replace one of the school's two critical goals.

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

N/A

B. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan

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

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

The school has chosen three very achievable goals in support of their students' learning. Strengthening of their science program will allow teachers to make and utilize yearly long-range science plans for each grade level. These plans will be set, and teachers will adjust to meet the specific needs of the class. The curriculum plans will allow new teachers to prepare in advance and have a workable schedule. Administration will be responsible for making sure the curriculum continuum is completed through ongoing faculty meetings, in-services, and observations. Further monitoring will occur in relation to additional training, effective use of science materials, and development of summative and formative assessment tools. The administration will be responsible for ensuring that the lab-based science classroom is completed within the given timeline.

The second goal is to revise the existing report card to imbed the SLEs. This will help the students acquire solid academic foundation, identify their strengths and needs, and to present a full picture of the students' growth. Administration and faculty are responsible for the creation and implementation as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the revised card itself. Administration will monitor the process and completion.

The third goal is to provide faculty and staff with additional professional development in the area of differentiated instruction. The process will include a book study in a professional learning community, attending training sessions, and concurrent implementation in the classroom. Administration and faculty will dedicate meeting time to collaborate on this process. 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.

Communication for all three goals will be through School Commission and P.E.P. club meetings, weekly school and teacher newsletters, and website.

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

Evaluation of the impact of the Action Plan as it relates to student achievement will come in the form of varying evaluation methods. Interim reports and executive summaries will be created to collect and analyze data, and answer questions which may arise. The data will be examined to determine how student achievement is impacted. The administration, faculty, and the School Commission will work in collaboration to review the results of the evaluations and decide how to adjust or improve to increase student achievement.

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

The administration, faculty, staff, and consultative boards do not currently see any impediments to implementing the action plan. They are very confident that the plan will be completed and critical goals achieved. In support of their convictions, for action plan #1, strengthening the science curriculum, an in-depth study has been created and money has been raised to complete the renovated lab-based science classroom.