

# WCEA: Improving Student Learning

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A Self Study for:

**St. Francis of Assisi School**  
15216 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue S.W.  
Burien, Washington 98166

2015

# Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

## Chapter I – Introduction

### A. HOW THE SELF STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

St. Francis of Assisi School engaged in a comprehensive, collaborative self-study process that lasted over a year and half. We gathered, developed, utilized and synthesized data from a variety of sources as well as input and feedback from all school community stakeholders.

In the spring of 2013, the principal and the chair of the leadership team met with Kay Purcell, Assistant Superintendent for Accreditation and Instructional Services and WCEA Commissioner to learn how to begin the self-study process. A leadership team, comprised of the accreditation chair, the principal, the vice principal, a teacher from each grade band k-2, 3-5, 6-8, as well one of our resource teachers who represented specialists was formed shortly after the meeting. The leadership team began meeting the spring of 2013 and continued to meet regularly throughout the process. Meetings were scheduled to plan for staff meetings and to synthesize completed work.

During an August 2013 pre-service day, all instructional staff attended a self-study training provided by Kay Purcell. All instructional staff members were given an overview of the 2012 edition of the Improving Student Learning (ISL) booklet and began familiarizing themselves with the incumbent protocols. The principal, vice-principal and office staff completed ISL appendices documents. Parents, students, staff, as well as our pastor and School commission were surveyed in order to provide the information necessary to begin Chapters 2 and 3.

Throughout the 2013-2014 school year at least two staff meetings a month were designated for accreditation. Led by our leadership team, the instructional staff spent time clarifying and updating our Mission, Vision, and Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) and then working in teams to reflect on, gather information for and discuss the ISL prompts. Each team created a first draft of the individual sections.

In the spring of 2014, Dr. Anne Fredrick, Director of Religious Education: Office of Catholic Faith Formation, visited our school and provided a report on our school's Catholic Identity. This was integrated into our self-study. There were then numerous opportunities for revision and feedback by the entire staff and the School Commission. The leadership team reviewed and approved the initial sections drafts. Chapters 2 and 3 were submitted for review to Kay Purcell and Eileen Ryan, our Accreditation chair. Their input led to further revisions of our document.

In the fall of 2014-2015, we continued our self-study and developed our goals. This was completed with much input and finalized by the leadership team, reviewed by our staff and the School Commission and then sent to Kay Purcell and Eileen Ryan. This led to the completion of our self-study report in January

2015.

Over the course of 2013- 2014 school year and the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, all stakeholders were given multiple formal and informal invitations to provide input. Inclusive in these efforts were parent, student, Commission, and staff surveys. Working copies of the documents were also shared and discussed in classrooms and at School Commission and Parent Association Board meetings. The School Commission was apprised of our work and given the opportunity for input at regularly scheduled Commission meetings. The input from the surveys and meetings were factored into the creation of our Action Plan. The updated SLE as well as the Mission and Philosophy statements were regularly published in our school newsletter, included in our Parent-Student Handbook, and posted throughout the school. The completed self-study will be shared with the School Commission and sections will be posted online. Involvement by stakeholders was welcomed and encouraged throughout the process.

This was the first time our principal and self-study chair participated in the Western Catholic Educational Association Accreditation process. With the help of our staff and the support of the Archdiocese and our Accreditation chair, this was truly a learning process and a community undertaking.

**Evidence**

- Committee meeting notes
- Staff meeting notes
- Tabulated parent survey, student survey, staff survey results

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

The St. Francis of Assisi School Self Study involved all shareholders. We began our Self Study by familiarizing the instructional staff with the process. We shared what we were doing with parents in our school bulletin and through Principal's letters. The Parish Council and students were also informed. We surveyed staff, students, our School Commission, pastor and parents. Survey results were reviewed by staff, discussed with the School Commission and emailed to parents. Data from the surveys helped direct our process.

In 2013, our instructional staff began our Self Study by reviewing and updating at our vision statement, philosophy and SLEs. We shared our new documents and asked for input from parents via our newsletter; and our School Commission, pastor and Parent Association Board at meetings. Teachers discussed the statements and SLEs and gathered input from students. We also solicited input from the Archdiocese. Our leadership synthesized the input and refined our documents. The final version was approved by the staff and the School Commission. Our newly revised documents were shared with parents, published in our handbooks, newsletter, and on our website, discussed with students and posted on our walls.

All leadership and instructional staff were involved in the discussion sections of the Self Study. We began by looking at the questions in chapters 2 and 3 as well as the information gathered in Appendices A and B. Staff meetings were designated for accreditation work. The faculty worked in teams on the different parts of chapter 3. Meetings were facilitated and devoted to discussions that provided the foundation for writing our Self Study. Notes from the discussions were shared on Google.docs. All staff members had the opportunity to add to or comment on each section both online and at staff meetings focused on the Self Study. Throughout the process, the principal kept the School Commission updated and informed at monthly meetings. Our bookkeeper helped with the *Resource Management and Development* section.

The staff collected, reviewed and analyzed data as part of our accreditation work. A review of our enrollment-steady at about 470 students/96% capacity- and financial data showed that both have remained strong since our last Self Study. We also examined student performance data from multiple assessments- both classroom and curriculum based as well as online and standardized- as well as their math placements over time. Assessment, financial and enrollment data was shared with our parents at our fall Information Night, and the principal provides the School Commission with monthly updates on the budget as well as data related to standardized testing. This information is reviewed and discussed. As part of the Archdiocese IOWA Form E consortium, we also share our performance data with the Archdiocese.

In the spring of 2014, Dr. Anne Fredrick, Director of Religious Education for the Office of Faith Formation, visited our school, observed our religion classes and met with our instructional staff and principal. The information she provided us in her School Visit Report and the feedback we received from staff, student, parent and School Commission surveys were shared with the staff and School Commission and reflected in our focus on the Catholic Identity Section of our Self Study.

Analysis of our assessment data showed that the majority of our students were at or above average on the ITBS. This was also true on the Catholic high school entrance tests and high school math class assignment. Both the staff and School Commission noted a drop in our standardized test scores as we moved from the ITBS to the Common Core State Standards based IOWA Form E this year. We believe that the adoption of a new test with new standards helped account for the dip. The staff and School Commission also noted that our students' math scores trend lower than our students' ELA scores on both the ITBS and IOWA Form E.

Our goals were created with input from staff, parents, students, the Archdiocese of Seattle and the School Commission. After completing Chapter 3, our staff created a list of our significant accomplishments and goals from each section. We completed our in-depth study and narrowed our list of possible goals. With the leadership team help refine the goals and narrowed them down to three. These were taken back to the staff for more discussion and approval. The goals were also shared with the Parent Association and approved by the School Commission. Our final goals were shared with parents in our newsletter.

Once the goals were approved, we developed our list of activities which were refined by our leadership team. We have created a time line for completion activities and a plan to share our progress with all stakeholders. The evaluation of our progress on Action Plan goals will be an agenda item at our School Commission meetings. Action Plan items will also be part of our weekly staff meetings. In addition, we will continue to use our weekly newsletters, website, and Parent Association meetings to communicate information on our progress and to invite participation and feedback on our school improvement goals. With a great deal of thought, input and collaboration, we have an Action Plan that will use to help all students learn.

## **Evidence**

- Survey data
- Staff meeting minutes
- Google.docs related to the Self-Study
- Action Plan that includes shareholders in monitoring and evaluation

# Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

## Chapter Two – Context of the School

### A. SCHOOL PROFILE

St. Francis of Assisi Parish was established August 1, 1929. The numbers of families grew steadily and with it, a desire for a parish school. In 1952, Fr. John Gibboney helped to establish a building fund which allowed for a 10 classroom school to be opened in the fall of 1953. It was staffed by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur (whose mission is to make known God's goodness, education of the poor, especially women & children, and creating peace & justice for all). Over 500 students were enrolled in grades 1-8. The school population continued to increase and in 1957, a four classroom wing was added allowing for two classes at each grade level.

In the late 1970's and early 80's, the population of elementary school children in Burien was at an all-time low. At this time, St. Francis cut its classes to one per grade level. The school took advantage of this turn of events and used the now extra space to incorporate new programs that would enhance the curriculum, namely computer classes, typing, French, art and a kindergarten. The reduction in religious vocations created a need for more lay staff and by 1978 all St. Francis of Assisi School teachers were lay.

By the mid 1980's, St. Francis of Assisi School was turning away many applicants and it became evident that once again, two grade levels classes were needed. Beginning in 1990, an additional class was added each year. By the fall of 2002, St. Francis had double classes from K-8<sup>th</sup> grades. Our student population has remained fairly stable during the last decade.

On paper, the five-year trend shows a very large increase in the amount of financial aid given. Some of this increase was due to a change in accounting practices. Several years ago, a barter system was used to allow parents to work off their outstanding tuition; this is no longer allowed. The current bookkeeping shows the actual dollar amounts of financial aid distributed. In the 2009-2010 school year, \$42,230 in financial aid was awarded. Each year since then, the dollar amount has increased. During the 2013-14, \$103,554 was given out.

St. Francis of Assisi School is a predominantly middle and upper middle class Caucasian Catholic school. In 2011, our student body was 74% white. In 2014, our student body was 75% white. As we work to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of our school community, additional financial aid will be required. The recent emphasis on all families paying some portion of their monthly tuition each and every month and the implementation of an automatic payment system has increased the number of families paying tuition on time. In 2013-14, we collected 99.7% of our tuition and fees.

St. Francis of Assisi School has served as a vital structure in the Seahurst/Burien neighborhoods. The school has gained a reputation for excellence in education, service to our community, and teaching the Catholic faith and traditions.

Student achievement trends have remained consistent as standardized test scores have been reviewed. Longitudinal reviews of cohort groups show stable achievement throughout the years. Our data shows fairly consistent scores grade to grade and year to year. The implementation of the Common Core State Standards has shifted our learning targets and now requires a deeper level of student understanding of math, English and language arts concepts. Spring 2014 was the only year St. Francis did not participate in standardized testing due to the shift in CCSS assessments. We joined the Archdiocesan cohort and administered the Iowa Form E (aligned with the Common Core) in October 2014. Because we took a different test, focused on assessing our students' understanding of the Common Core State Standards, we used the data from this assessment to both inform our instruction and to provide us with a baseline for this new test. As our teachers, students and parents become more familiar with the Common Core State Standards, we expect that our standardized test scores will continue to rise and meet or exceed our current scores.

Several years ago, St. Francis of Assisi School was blessed to have two priests. With the retirement of one priest, the regular presence of a priest inside the school has diminished. Our remaining parish priest leads our liturgies and supports our school. We are also fortunate to have several parish members who have regularly brought their deep faith to life for our Junior High School students in programs such as Finding Your Strengths.

Parent surveys showed the top three reasons for enrollment at St. Francis of Assisi School were academic excellence, Catholic values, and Catholic Faith Formation. Almost ninety percent of our parents agreed or strongly agreed that our school provides an atmosphere where Christian values are emphasized and practiced. Our parent surveys also showed that over ninety percent of our parents felt their children were receiving an effective or highly effective education in Religion, Math, English/Language Arts, and Reading/Language Arts.

The student surveys (grades k-3) were also very positive. Over ninety percent of our students reported that they liked this school, felt their teachers treated them with respect, and the teachers and principal cared about them; felt they were good students; believed their families want them to do well; and felt they have time to pray and learn about being Catholic.

The student surveys (grades 4-8) were also affirmative. Academically, the majority of our students- over eighty percent- reported doing well in school made them feel good about themselves; believed they were doing their best; said teachers set high standards for achievement in their classes; and felt the teachers encouraged them to assess their work. The vast majority- over ninety percent- believed their teachers expected them to do their best;

Overall, our parents and students expressed a high level of satisfaction with our school. However, last fall we moved from the traditional A, B, C grades to standard based grading in seventh and eighth grades. We did this as way to help all student master the Common Core State Standards. As a closer analysis of the data and a review of the comments made clear, this change in grading caused a great deal of concern in our seventh graders and their parents. This was apparent when looking at the 4-8 survey results. When the seventh graders' ratings were omitted in many areas the data was more positive. Because of the survey results and our belief that grades should communicate to parents and students how well students are doing in school, the decision

was made to return to traditional A, B,C grades in seventh grade.

Evidence:

- Completed staff/student/parent/school commission surveys
- Completed forms from Appendix A
- High school math class assignments for former St. Francis students at John F. Kennedy Catholic High School
- Parish Directory photo book, local enrollment data from nearby Catholic and public schools
- School Year-end Financial Reports 2009-2014
- Longitudinal financial data-- 7 year comparison

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

The critical goals identified in St. Francis of Assisi School's 2009 Action Plan were:

1. Develop standards & strategies for ensuring that the Student Learning Expectations (SLE's) are integrated into the school culture.
2. Continue to develop Professional Learning Communities (PLC) among the staff to allow for assessment analysis to improve instruction.
3. Explore methods and strategies for improving reading comprehension throughout the grade levels
4. Provide for the financial stability of St. Francis of Assisi School by developing further strategies to increase the endowment.

Although faith formation was part of our Previous Five Year Plan, it was not part of our Previous Action Plan.

Our first critical goal was narrowed from integrating all of our Student Learning Expectations to integrating those focused on academic excellence as we transitioned from St. Francis Standards to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The transition from St. Francis Standards to the CCSS has required a large investment in faculty time and energy so the decision to narrow our first critical goal was intentional. Teachers have spent many hours in professional development training to understand the CCSS, breaking down CCSS learning objectives, and creating lessons and assessments to insure student mastery. St. Francis teachers continue their work to identify the specific standard(s) in each lesson. The standard(s) is noted in lesson plans and written out on the board/visible space as a focal point of intent, reminder of destination and end result for both teachers and students. Lesson specific standards are evaluated for mastery. The result of this hard work has led to greater student mastery of the CCSS. This is evident in on going classroom assessments.

Our second critical goal involved continuing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) work. When reading through the blogs describing the work and listening to teachers talk about what was happening in many of the grade level meetings, it was clear that PLCs were being used more as common planning times than for the disaggregation of student assessment data and development of targeted teaching strategies. We moved PLC work from planning times to staff meetings. Many of our staff meetings provided time for grade level partners to look at student

assessment data and work together on becoming familiar with the CCSS at their grade and developing/finding lessons, assessments and rubrics to help meet the standards. Instead of blogging about this work, teachers discussed it at staff meetings. Last year, not all grade level planning times were aligned. This year, teachers at each grade level have at least one common planning time in order to collaborate. Classroom assessment data has shown that student mastery of the CCSS has improved as teachers work together to find ways to identify, teach and assess the standards. PLC work is ongoing.

Our third critical goal was to explore methods and strategies for improving reading comprehension. This has been a focus school-wide and is part of the Reading/English Language Arts CCSS. As a result of the Action Plan, a new reading series-*Journeys*-was adopted in the primary grades, and Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments are now given to all students in K-2 and Reading Resource students in K-6. The results of the assessments are used to drive instruction and identify students in need of additional support. When data showed that even with extra small group support we have students who continue to struggle, we purchased Lexia Core 6. Lexia Core 6 is an online, individualized program with emphasis on the mastery of the reading standards as well as fluency. Because our data indicated a need, we extended our Reading Resource support so we now work with our middle school students. We also provided them with access to Lexia Core 6. Our staff has worked on the reading standards in PLCs and at staff meetings. CCSS teaching rubrics better inform students of what is expected in various learning strands. The rubrics define what partial mastery versus mastery of a standard entails and the processes/steps necessary to reach or exceed a grade level standard. In many cases student expectations are much clearer for teachers, parents and students. Assessments are becoming more refined and specific. In the past five years, many teachers have attended trainings or purchased materials on teaching reading, including: AMLE Conference, the IRA Conference, BER Practical Reading Strategies CCSS K-2 & 3-5, the Dyslexia DVD training set, Solution Tree Formative Assessment, Text Complexity and Close Reading, Children's Literature, and kindergarten conferences, and Meeting the Rigorous CCSS K-5. As we continue to refine our reading program, our assessments- Fountas and Pinnell, *Journeys* story tests, Lexia Core data, as well as teacher created CCSS test- provide evidence of student learning.

Our final critical goal was to increase our endowment as a way to ensure we would be able to provide our families in need with financial aid. The goal was \$1,000,000.00. This goal was met in 2012. In both the 2012-13 and the 2013-14 school years, we were able to provide \$50,000 in financial aid to our needy families using only interest from the endowment. In August 2014, our endowment balance was \$1,173,366.00. Because of our endowment, more families have access to financial assistance. St. Francis is better able to increase the diversity of its school population because we can now afford to give major assistance to families living below the poverty line. More students have access to a high quality, Catholic education.

Moving forward, St. Francis staff will continue with the integration and implementation of the CCSS, the development of CCSS assessments and the refinement of report cards reflecting the standards. PLC time will be used more effectively for student assessment data disaggregation and development of strategies for optimum instruction. Reading comprehension in a variety text types and informational formats continues to be a focus. The financial structure of the current budget allows St. Francis to maintain its high quality of facilities, include more financial assistance for

parish and non-parish families, and care for our current facilities. As was stated in the previous Accreditation team's findings, we continue to focus on improving our instruction and our programs in order to best provide high achievement for all of our students.

#### Evidence

- 2009 Action Plan and copies of annual updates
- Copies of Annual Reports to WCEA Elementary Commissioner
- Communications (newsletters, School Commission minutes, Information Night PowerPoints) informing school communities of progress toward accomplishment of the Action Plan
- ITBS, Fountas and Pinnell, Journey's Assessment results
- IOWA Form E Assessments results
- Schoolwide Learning Expectations, rubrics and assessments of SLEs

# Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

## Chapter Three – Quality of the School Program

### A. ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S CATHOLIC IDENTITY

At St. Francis of Assisi School, we are committed to students learning the teachings and living the values of the Catholic faith and traditions.

Working with our parish, pastor, and the Archdiocese of Seattle, our school provides our students with many opportunities to learn about and practice the values and teachings of the Catholic Church; know and participate in prayer and celebrate the Sacraments. Each morning, two seventh or eighth grade students lead the whole school in morning prayer and reflection over the intercom. All classes pray throughout the day. There are religious icons and banners in our hallways, classrooms and common spaces. Pictures of our Pope and Archbishop are hung on the wall in the main office. All homeroom classes have prayer tables. This year, on the suggestion of our Archdiocese Director of Faith Formation, each teacher now has a set of different colored prayer table cloths that are liturgically correct. Students celebrate all school Mass monthly, weekly Stations of the Cross during Lent, and Advent and Lenten Reconciliation services. Each October we celebrate the feast of our school's patron saint, St. Francis of Assisi, with a school Mass. On the Sunday following St. Francis's feast day, our pastor blesses parishioners' pets and many students bring their animals. During the months of October and May students in third through eighth grades take turns leading a parish Rosary following the daily parish Mass. During the Advent season each classroom has an Advent wreath and students participate daily in prayer and candle lighting.

For a number of years, our students only attended school Mass once a month. This year, in addition to our monthly all school Mass, every Friday two to four classes of students join parishioners at parish 9:00 AM Mass. Classes attend with their buddy grades- kindergarten with eighth grade, first with seventh, second with sixth- or by grade level. Parishioners have welcomed the students at Friday daily Masses. Our goal is to eventually have all of our students attend Mass once during each school week.

Our school's Catholic Identity is also apparent in our focus on service. Our SLE's state we are "Christ Centered Disciples... who provide service to others" and "Responsible Citizens... who care for each other and the environment...act locally to affect globally". School-wide, we raise money for, write letters to, and welcome visitors from our sister schools and parish in El Salvador. We also support our sister parish and school in Ndavaya, Kenya. We have raised money to help build and maintain a much needed well and to provide scholarships for four students who would not otherwise be able to attend high school. Several members of our staff have visited Ndavaya to help build our relationship with our sister school and bring school supplies. We have also welcomed visitors from Ndavaya to our school. With the help of staff, parents, and students we host a yearly dinner to raise awareness of the needs and money to support our efforts in Ndavaya.

There are many other examples of our service to others. In kindergarten and fourth grade students

send letters to veterans. Kindergarten, first and fifth graders make sandwiches for the Martin de Porres Shelter. Kindergarteners also visit Marra Farm to pick produce for the Providence Regina House and then collect clothing to donate to their clothing bank. They also compost snack and lunch leftovers and recycle plastic bottle caps which cannot be recycled by the municipal recycling service through a different recycling program.

Second grade students visit Franciscan House before Thanksgiving to decorate the halls and on St Patrick's Day to sing. Fourth graders collect items for youth in juvenile detention. They also collect juice pouches to recycle for the school and redeem points to buy animals through Heifer International.

The fifth grade classes coordinate an all school collection of coats and blankets for "Community Lunch on Capitol Hill". The coats and blankets are delivered by small groups of different 7th and 8th grade students who help serve the lunch each week. Our junior high serves at the Community Lunch on Capitol Hill as a result of one staff member's previous connection there.

In sixth through eighth grades, students are required to perform community service each month. Sixth graders complete a minimum of one hour per month and seventh and eighth graders complete a minimum of two hours of service per month. They volunteer in the community, after school tutoring and helping with our extended day program, at food banks and shelters and in many other places. Some ways students serve the parish are by volunteering at Knights of Columbus functions, Parish Bazaar, CYO sports functions, and organizing the St. Vincent de Paul food closet and as Altar servers.

Teachers at all grades levels tie the volunteering and giving our students do with our Catholic teachings and traditions. Classes discuss how we are called by God to serve others. Each month, students in sixth, seventh and eighth grades write a reflection on what they learned from volunteering and how the service they provided was connected to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Our school maintains an active partnership with parents to insure the spiritual and academic education of their children. The second Thursday of every school year, we hold an information night so that parents know our school goals, classroom expectations and how they can help their children succeed. The evening always begins with a prayer and message from our Pastor. This year at information night, we gave all families and our staff *The Best Way to Live* CD by Matthew Kelly put out by DynamicCatholic.com. We did this to provide our parents with information on being and raising happy, healthy and faith-filled people.

Last spring, with input from parents, we began providing parent information nights and bringing in speakers. All meetings and classes begin with prayer and in some way involve living and teaching our Catholic faith. This year, several of these classes were co-sponsored by the parish and focused on raising holy and healthy children. We will continue to offer parent information/adult education nights. Childcare is provided so more parents are able to attend.

We communicate with parents by posting information online and on Facebook and by emailing out a weekly newsletter which includes our Pastor's letter to parishioners, a weekly letter from our

principal that includes our Mission and Vision Statement and a bulletin provides parents with information on upcoming events/classes and school and parish volunteer opportunities. Dates and times of our school Masses and Stations of the Cross are posted online and in our school and classroom newsletters and the parish bulletin. Quite a few parents and parishioners attend our school liturgies.

Although the majority of our families are registered members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, our pastor and staff report many of them do not attend Sunday Mass. In order to increase our school families Mass and parish life participation, a school family-parish committee was formed last spring. The committee is chaired by our pastor and made up of parishioners including two of our teachers and several school parents. One of this committee's goals is to increase our students' participation in Sunday Masses by doing such things as having our kindergarten and fifth grade students learn a song which they sang together during Communion. When students attend Sunday Mass their parents do, too.

All families required to volunteer 30 hours a year at school/parish activities. This requirement encourages the adults in our community to model service to others and increases parental involvement in our school and parish. The great majority of our families volunteer more than required 30 hours.

We continue to look for ways to build our school faith community. Last spring we decided to provide a weekly opportunity for parents to gather in prayer. Wednesday mornings after drop off, parents and grandparents are invited to join in a principal led prayer. Parents come- some bringing preschool aged children- listen to a prayer, share their reflections and pray offer a prayer for our students, staff, families and community.

Last year, we also began a new way of sharing the comfort of our faith. Our reading resource teachers and their students send letters of encouragement, prayers and "prayer angels" to individuals or families in our school community who are undergoing hardship or have experienced the loss of a loved one. The reading resource teachers maintain a bulletin board with the names of the people and families who we have sent prayer angels and/or are remembering in our prayers.

Last August, the Archdiocese adopted new religion standards. Our teachers were introduced to the new standards document by the Archdiocese's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction at a staff meeting and are working to utilize the standards in their teaching. The Archdiocese is currently developing assessments and rubrics for the new standards. Rather than coming up with our own new assessments and using them for one year, our teachers will use the Archdiocese's assessments beginning next year. Until then, we will continue to use the religion tests we have.

Our adopted religion curriculum and religious instruction is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB. Our religion curricula have been approved by the Archdiocese of Seattle. Parent and School Commission Member surveys indicate satisfaction with the content of religious instruction and the amount of time given to it in the school. In grades 1-2, We Believe (Sadlier) is used as the text. In grades 3-5, Faith First Legacy (RCL Benzinger) is the classroom text. Moving forward, our plan is to adopt one program for our k-5 classes so that our materials are better aligned and more closely tied with the new Archdiocese

Religion Standards. This year, our middle-school adopted a new curriculum and middle school friendly bible from St. Mary's Press. At all grade levels, students work to memorize required prayers and to maintain mastery of prayers learned in previous grades.

In preparation for the start of the school year our staff comes together and celebrates their faith with an off-campus retreat. The retreat is led by one of our Junior High teachers who has a Masters of Arts in Pastoral Studies and provides assistance with liturgy planning, prayer and Reconciliation services throughout the year. Each day before school, the teachers and administration gather for faculty-led prayer. Staff meetings begin and end with prayer.

All teachers of religion are certified catechists or in the process of becoming certified. Eleven religion teachers and our assistant principal are fully certified. Currently, five teachers, our principal, our counselor and one of our reading resource teachers are all working toward earning their certification. Ten staff members have chosen to participate in Certification webinars offered by the Archdioceses. Staff members have also signed up for classes on prayer. All teachers and administrators attend the Archdiocese in-services held in September and March. The school supports the staff's spiritual development by advertising classes offered by the Archdiocese and paying for any staff members who chose to attend.

At St. Francis of Assisi School, we continue to find ways to improve the faith and spiritual formation of our students, parents, and staff. Attending the parish Mass on Fridays has not only increased the number of opportunities our students have to celebrate the Mass, it has also strengthened our Catholic Identity and parish/school connection. We have worked to increase our faith based outreach to parents by sending out letters of encouragement and prayer angels to our families in need of support; gathering parents to pray together, and offering opportunities for parents to learn more about our school, our faith and parenting. Providing our parents with chances to grow in their faith helps us better partner with them in the education of their children, build our community and increase our Catholic Identity.

This year, we adopted a new religion curriculum for our sixth through eighth grades. This includes a new, middle school bible. We are now looking at adopting one religion series for our kindergarten through fifth grades in order to better align our teaching and student learning. Our staff has been trained on using the Archdiocese of Seattle's new religion curriculum. We are looking forward to using the Archdiocese's new religion assessments and rubrics when they are developed. Clear assessments and rubrics will help teachers assess student progress towards mastery in their understanding of the Catholic faith and doctrines.

Our staff continues to model the values of our Catholic faith in the respect we show for each other and our students. We understand the importance of living our faith. During our last accreditation, one of our goals was to increase the number of religion teachers who had their Catechetical endorsement. All of our teachers of religion and some of our other staff members now have or are working towards their endorsement. As our staff's knowledge of the history, teachings and doctrine of the Catholic Church increases, we are better able to share what we know with our students and parents. Knowledge of our faith is imperative to our school's Catholic Identity.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Building our school/parish relationship and having classes attend Friday morning Mass
- Students participate in regular and frequent prayer experiences
- Increasing outreach to parents with the adoption of our prayer angel program and by providing more opportunities for prayer and adult learning around faith and parenting.
- New religion texts for grades 6-8 were adopted and implemented in the fall of 2014
- All teachers have or are working towards Catechetical endorsement

**Goals:**

- Continuing to increase the number of times students attend school Mass each month
- The adoption of one textbook series for grades K-5
- Becoming familiar with and using the Archdiocese's Religion assessments and rubrics when they are developed.

**Evidence:**

- Religion textbooks
- Best Life CD
- Example of letter and prayer angel
- School Mission, Philosophy, and SLE's
- Lesson plans that show how prayer is incorporated throughout the day
- School website
- Samples of morning school prayers/reflection shared over the intercom
- Staff schedules for morning prayer/samples of prayers that have been shared
- Staff meeting notes
- Advent program script
- Catholic identity surveys (C-6)
- School liturgy photos
- Class prayer tables on display in classrooms/picture of different colored cloths
- Teachers who have catechist certification according to Arch/diocesan norms
- Schedule of school masses, rosaries and confessions
- Pictures of student participation in Mass
- Photos of "saints" trophy case: October-St. Francis, May-Mary, etc.
- Documents pertaining to the Six Tasks of Catechesis
- Staff in-service records
- Lists of parent workshops/in-service/catechist formation opportunities

## **B. DEFINING THE SCHOOL PURPOSE**

### **School Philosophy and Mission**

During the 2013-14 school year the St. Francis of Assisi School administration, faculty, and staff began our self-study process by reviewing and updating our Mission Statement, Philosophy and Student Learning Expectations. We are deeply committed partnering with parents in the education and development of our students and understand that we are a mission of our Catholic parish.

#### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of St. Francis of Assisi School is to educate the whole person within a Christ-centered, Catholic community that fosters active faith, provides a balanced curriculum and promotes academic growth to prepare students for success.

#### **Philosophy:**

St. Francis of Assisi School is a mission of our Catholic Parish where families and educators work in partnership to teach and develop the whole child.

#### **Student Learning Expectations:**

At St. Francis of Assisi School, we CARE.

##### **Christ-Centered Disciples**

- learn and live by the Catholic teachings and traditions
- have a relationship with God by participating in prayer, liturgy and sacraments
- provide service to others
- make moral decisions

##### **Active Learners**

- understand the purpose of learning
- apply knowledge
- utilize resources
- use logical thinking and reasoning skills

##### **Responsible Citizens**

- care for each other and the environment
- understand and connect with other cultures
- act locally to affect globally
- recognize and respect our differences

##### **Effective Communicators**

- resolve conflicts
- collaborate successfully
- participate in the arts
- communicate ideas clearly and creatively

The mission and philosophy statements were developed with the collaborative efforts of staff, parents, students, the Parent Association, School Commission, and our parish community. Our staff began the process by asking the question, “What do we want our school to be?” At a series of staff meetings, through email and Google Docs, our staff reviewed the old mission and philosophy statements with our new focus. Through reflection, input and discussion, we developed a mission statement that better reflected the direction in which we wanted to take our school. One of the

changes we made was to add the word “Catholic” in recognition that this is at the core of what our school is.

Once we established our mission statement, we reviewed and updated our philosophy statement following the same process of reflection, input, and discussion. The Leadership Team shared the working document with the School Commission, our pastor and the Parent Association board to solicit their input, suggestions, and support. We included “...a mission of our Catholic Parish” to clarify why our school exists. Next, drafts were published in the school bulletin to obtain feedback from parents. We also solicited input from the Archdiocese.

The Leadership Team read through the input and incorporated some of the suggested changes. The revised school philosophy and mission statement were taken back to the staff for final discussion and approval. Next, the School Commission and our pastor reviewed and approved the document.

Once we had our new school philosophy and mission statement, we revised our Student Learning Expectations (SLEs). One of our goals was to strip down the previous SLE’s in order to create a succinct and accurate reflection of what we, as staff, truly expect of our students. We wanted to reflect our school’s focus on a strong Catholic identity, as well as academic and personal excellence. The staff looked at our previous SLEs and discussed what we would like to keep and change. Using this collective input, our leadership committee worked to create a cohesive, meaningful set of expectations for our student body. The working draft was brought to our whole staff, school commission and pastor for input and recommendations. Parents and students were also asked for their comments or recommendations. With this input, a final draft of our SLEs was composed.

The acronym “C.A.R.E” was meant to make our SLE’s memorable and accessible and an easy reminder to students to carry out a basic tenet of our common Christian values- to care for others. Each letter stands for a heading which sums up several related expectations. “Christ-Centered Disciples” as a primary heading is meant to remind all of us that the most important expectation is that we reflect Christ in our lives and actions. “Active Learners” refers to our expectation that students use their learning across many fields and in many disciplines. “Responsible Citizens” reflects our belief that our students should be active and thoughtful citizens of their communities and the world at large. The final piece of the acronym, “Effective Communicators,” refers to students communicating their thoughts and feelings effectively, not only through spoken and written word, but also in artistic and technological venues.

Our new SLE’s strongly adhere to our school’s purpose. We are a Catholic school. This is evident in the all aspects of our school life; the regular opportunities for our school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments; our teaching of the Catholic faith in religion classes and across the curriculum and our partnering with parents in the spiritual and academic education of their children.

We have high expectation for student learning. The results of our parent and student surveys confirm this. Our parents survey shows that majority of our parents feel their children are receiving an effective or highly effective education in Religion (90%), Math (89%), English/Language Arts (92%), and Reading/Language

Arts (96%). Our fourth through eighth grade student surveys show 94% believe their teachers expect them to do their best; 85% say teachers set high standards for achievement in their classes; and 83% feel the teachers encourage them to assess their work.

In 2010, our school began adopting the Math and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards (CCSS). For the last several years, many of our staff meetings have focused on becoming familiar with, teaching and assessing the CCSS. The CCSS have been approved by our Archdiocese and the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). Teachers include SLEs, CCSS and the new Archdiocesan religion standards in their lesson plans. The SLEs and CCSS are posted in classrooms and discussed daily. The staff reviews data from assessments in order to adjust teaching and better support learning for all students. We are committed to teaching and developing every child. We have shared the CCSS and SLEs with our parents in our newsletter, at our information night, and at grade level meetings. We have also developed new report cards based on the CCSS and our SLEs.

We continue to develop and adopt assessments and rubrics that help us track student progress towards mastery of the English/Language Arts CCSS. Last year, we adopted a new junior high math program and this year we adopted a new k-5 math program. The new math programs are aligned with the Math CCSS and teach math in a different way. The new way of teaching and learning math has been challenging for some of our staff, students, and parents- especially in third, fourth and fifth grades. Because the report cards are new and the Math CCSS teaches students to think about and solve math problems differently, one of our goals is to continue working with parents to help them understand and appreciate the new CCSS and standards based assessments.

Our school has begun adopting the newly approved Archdiocesan religion standards. Our teachers are becoming familiar with the document and beginning to use it to guide their instruction. The Archdiocese is currently developing assessments and rubrics to measure student progress towards meeting the new standards. Until the assessments have been adopted and approved, our staff will not be able to adequately assess these standards. Once the assessments and rubrics have been approved and shared, we will fully adopt and implement the standards.

The governing authority of our school consists of the pastor, principal, and School Commission. The School Commission is an advisory body. This body reviews existing governing policies annually and also makes adjustments throughout the year. New policies are developed to address new needs and concerns. The policies are shared in newsletters, posted on our website and updated in our Family, Staff and Student Handbooks.

The school philosophy, mission statement and SLEs are now posted on our website, on our classroom walls, in the school office and throughout the school. They are also quoted in our school/family/staff handbooks and shared with new families interested in joining our school community.

The thought and broad stakeholder input that was part of updating our school philosophy, mission statement and SLEs make them truly relevant and a reflection of what our school community believes and values. Our next steps include creating rubrics and/or assessments that measure student mastery of all of our newly adopted SLEs. Adopting the new CCSS has been an ongoing

process. Over the past four years, our staff and students have become familiar with them. With the adoption of our new math curriculum, teachers are better able to teach and assess the Math CCSS. The Math CCSS and our new textbooks focus on deepening student understanding of math concepts by teaching and practicing problem solving in a different ways. Feedback from parents lets us know that some parents are confused about the new way of teaching math concepts. One of our goals is to continue to help our parents understand the new way of teaching and learning so that our parents can better support their children.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- The involvement of many stakeholders in creating our updated and recently adopted Mission Statement, Philosophy and SLEs.
- Our staff's commitment to learning and teaching the CCSS/SLEs
- The adoption of new programs k-8 that are aligned with the Math CCSS
- The development of new report cards aligned to the CCSS and our SLEs.

**Goals:**

- Creating rubrics and/or assessments that measure student mastery of all of our new SLEs.
- Continuing to help our parents become familiar with and better understand the CCSS

**Evidence:**

- Survey data
- Staff meeting minutes
- Teacher lesson plans cross-referenced to curriculum standards and SLEs
- School displays of Mission and Philosophy statements and SLEs
- Report cards based on the CCSS
- Handbooks with new Mission and Philosophy statements and SLEs
- Standards based assessments

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

St. Francis of Assisi School is a mission of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. The Catholic Identity of our school is apparent in our Mission and Philosophy and found in our Student Learning Expectations (SLEs). Our Mission, Philosophy and SLEs have been affirmed and are supported by the School Commission and the administration. Our pastor is a member of the School Commission and our spiritual leader. He works with the school in celebrating liturgies such as Mass and Reconciliation.

The principal supports the Catholic Identity of our school. Each morning the staff meets to begin the day with prayer. All staff meetings begin and end with prayer. The staff also participates in yearly retreats that focus on prayer and spiritual development. Our eighth graders take part in two retreats- one at the beginning and one at the end of the year. The retreats focus on their strengths and growing in their relationship with God. This year we increased the number of times our students go to Mass each month by having several grades or classes attend the parish Mass on Friday mornings. The principal supports all of these activities by attending and, when necessary, budgeting for the expenses. The School Commission also

supports budgeting for these events.

The School Commission and the administration support the parent faith formation opportunities in a variety of ways. Contributing members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish pay a reduced, in-parish rate for their children to attend our school. This tuition is approved by the School Commission in order to encourage the continued participation in the sacraments and the faith formation of our families. Our pastor speaks to parents at both Information Night and during Catholic Schools Week Open House encouraging them to attend Mass with their children. Last year, after collecting feedback from parents, we began offering different evening parenting classes/information nights. Some of the classes were jointly sponsored by the school and parish and involve raising Catholic families. These classes were supported by the administration and School Commission. Each Wednesday after drop-off, the principal invites parents to come together in prayer before beginning their day. Our pastor's letter to the parishioners is published weekly in our school bulletin. All faith formation opportunities provided by the Parish are actively promoted in the school bulletin. The School's Catholic Identity is publicized in our brochures, on our website, in our classrooms and throughout the building.

St. Francis of Assisi School has an excellent reputation for its high academic standards. Student learning is important to all stakeholders. Our surveys of staff, students, and parents reflect this. Parent surveys show the top three reasons for enrollment at St. Francis of Assisi School are academic excellence, Catholic values, and Catholic Faith Formation. Because we understand the need to prepare our students for their future and to have high academic standards, our staff began adopting the English/Language Arts and Math Common Core State Standards (CCSS) five years ago. These standards are very rigorous and have been adopted by the Archdiocese of Seattle as well as the National Catholic Education Association. Curriculum and instruction is an agenda item and is discussed each month at the School Commission meetings. Commission members supported the adoption of new material such as the middle school Big Ideas Math program. This program is leveled to support high performing, on-grade level and struggling students. They also supported the adoption of our new K-5 Math Curriculum that is aligned with the new Math Common Core State Standards.

The administration supports the achievement of all students in a variety of ways. Our vice-principal works with a number of school districts to obtain Title 1 funds which provide support for students with low math/language arts test scores, teacher education and parent involvement. The principal supports the high achievement of all students. She encourages and provides professional development opportunities for all staff members. In addition to supporting the regular resource room activities, she has worked with classroom teachers and our resource teachers to develop specific plans to meet the needs of some of our most struggling students. The principal has worked with the staff on the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the development of the corresponding assessment tools and report cards/progress reports that will better reflect the CCSS. We moved from ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) to the new IOWA form E assessment, which is aligned with the CCSS. We joined the Archdiocese testing consortium in order to track and compare our students all the way through high school. Using the CCSS, the staff designs lessons that are both rigorous enough to challenge high achieving students and scaffolded to support students who need more help. The move to the Common Core State Standards was supported by the School Commission and the

pastor as a way to better prepare our students for their future.

Information about our students' achievement on Standardized tests such as the ITBS has been shared on our website, presented by the principal at our Fall Information Night, and sent home in newsletters. This fall, our third through eighth grade students took the new IOWA form E assessment for the first time. We spent several staff meetings reviewing the assessment data and discussing plans to support both our high and low achieving students. Teachers also spent time on their own and with their grade level partners looking and discussing data from the assessments. Parents received a report on their child's performance and how to read the report in their family envelopes. A parent meeting was held the following week to further explain and clarify any questions about the performance reports or the test. Classroom teachers share information about individual student's progress in a variety of ways. In the primary grades, completed work and scored tests and assignments are sent home weekly. In the upper grades, grades are posted on RenWeb and graded tests, papers, and projects with scored rubrics are sent home for parents to see. Parent/teacher conferences are held for all students in the fall, at teacher or parent request in the spring and throughout the year when necessary. In the 4th through 8th grades, students lead their conferences.

Our school continues to be blessed with the strong support of our pastor and School Commission. All of our stakeholders value our high academic standards and our Catholic values. The adoption of the new Math and Reading/English Language Arts CCSS has been challenging. The new standards require a deeper understanding of concepts and require students to explain and justify their answers. The focus is now on building understanding of concepts before teaching the algorithm. Math is taught in a different way. Feedback from parents has let us know that they are having trouble understanding the way of teaching math. One of our goals is to help parents understand the CCSS and provide them with resources to support their children's learning.

Our staff has worked hard to become familiar with the new standards and make the shift to a new way of teaching and assessing student learning. Our students' performance on classroom assessments continues to improve. We have adopted online programs such as Lexia Core 6 and IXL and extend our resource program in order to better support our struggling students. Our assessment data shows we still have students who need additional help. We also have students who exceed grade level standards. One of our goals is to differentiate our instruction and programs to support the high achievement of all students. These goals have been discussed and are supported by our School Commission.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Our pastor and the School Commission members' support of our school and its mission.
- The adoption of a Middle School math program aligned with the Math CCSS that allows for differentiation in instruction to support the high achievement of all students.
- The adoption of a new k-5 math program aligned with the Math CCSS that provides teachers with materials to teach and assess the new standards.
- Moving from the ITBS to the new IOWA form E assessment provides us with a way to track our students' progress on the CCSS and become part of the Archdiocese's assessment consortium.

**Goals:**

- We need to continue to help parents understand the CCSS and provide them with resources to support their children's learning.
- We need to develop a strategic plan to support the high achievement of all students

**Evidence:**

- Survey data
- School Commission meeting minutes
- Strategic plan document
- Fliers/school and church bulletins showing adult education/faith formation offerings
- Lexia Core 6 student performance data
- IXL usage data
- IOWA assessment data
- Teacher lesson plans
- Staff meeting minutes
- School brochure

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

While eighty percent of St. Francis of Assisi School families are registered members of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, our pastor reports and staff members who are St. Francis of Assisi Parishioners attest, many of our school families do not attend Sunday Mass. In order to increase our school families Sunday Mass attendance and parish life participation, a school family-parish committee was formed last spring. The committee is chaired by our pastor and made up of parishioners including two of our teachers and several school parents. One of this committee's goals is to find ways to increase our students' participation at Sunday Masses. To this end, our kindergarten and fifth grade teachers taught their students a song which the students sang together during Communion, and our fourth grade students have signed up to be greeters at Mass. When students attend Sunday Mass their parents do, too.

We also have students from non-Catholic families who have no background in the Catholic faith and traditions. To address this and the fact that not all of our students who identify as Catholic attend Mass with their families, our teachers provide instruction on appropriate Mass behavior and expectations. Non-Catholic students participate in liturgies to the extent allowed by Canon law. For example, non-Catholic students attend Mass and say responses said by the congregation. At Communion they are encouraged to come forward with arms crossed over their hearts to receive a blessing. Non-Catholic students also participate in communal Penance services and they are invited to ask the priest for a blessing when individual confessions are offered. All students are welcomed and respected in our school.

Catholic students in second grade receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation. Non-Catholic students receive the same instruction as the Catholics, but they do not receive the Sacraments. In 2014, 44 of our 50 second graders received the Sacraments. On average, about 80% of our second graders receive the Sacraments each year. They receive instruction from their

classroom teachers during the school day and the parish Children's Director of Faith formation and their families outside of the school day. Almost every year, several children in other grades and some of our parents are received into the Church through the RCIC program. We promote this by publishing our school newsletter and sending out fliers letting families know about the RCIC program and classes.

St. Francis of Assisi students are assessed in a variety of ways. In the past, ITBS tests were administered to students in first through eighth grade each year. The results of these assessments were analyzed and used to identify areas of strength and weakness in the curriculum as well as in individual grade levels. Review of each year's ITBS data resulted in changes to curriculum/instruction as needed to bolster weaknesses identified in individual grade levels and areas of curriculum. Individual students who might benefit from additional individualized instruction were also identified. The data from these tests was also used to see where St. Francis stood when compared to schools nationwide and to consider any adjustments that had to be made to the curriculum school-wide.

Five years ago, St. Francis of Assisi School began adopting the Math and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Our staff has worked hard to become familiar with and align their instruction and assessments to the new CCSS. We have moved from just teaching a standard to working to ensure all students have mastered the standard. This has required much more assessing, re-teaching in small groups and/or assigning online lessons that cover the concept and then re-assessing. This is a way of teaching that we continue to discuss, practice, and refine.

The CCSS have been adopted by our Archdiocese and the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA). The ITBS is not aligned to the CCSS. In order to better align our assessment with the Common Core State Standards and track our students' progress over time, we chose to no longer give the ITBS. Instead, we joined an Archdiocese's Consortium of schools giving the IOWA form E. In October 2014, our third through eighth grade students took the IOWA form E assessment for the first time. The results of the assessment have been shared with our staff and parents and are being used as a baseline for this new assessment of identifying school program and individual student's strengths and weaknesses. One of the trends we noticed was our standardized math scores were lower than they had been on the ITBS. Several staff meetings have been devoted to analyzing and disaggregating the data. As a result, teachers have identified students who need additional support and in which areas support is needed. They are helping these students by doing such things as providing additional individual or small group instruction and re-teaching concepts, providing materials to parents/volunteers/classroom aides to work with students one-on-one, and/or logging students on to programs such as Lexia Core 6 or MobyMax that teach and strengthen skills.

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment is used to assess students' oral reading accuracy, comprehension, and fluency in grades K-6. This assessment is given to students in our reading resource program three times each year to ensure students are making adequate progress. It is also given to any students whom classroom teachers have concerns about to see if these students might benefit from extra support in reading. The reading resource teachers also assess all first and second graders using this benchmark assessment twice a year. This allows teachers to create leveled groups for reading instruction within their classrooms and also to track student progress.

In addition, the Literacy First Phonics Assessment is given to all students in grades K-2. This determines their areas of phonological strength and weakness. This assessment, along with the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, and teacher recommendations, help to determine which students take part in the reading resource and our before school Sound and Word Partners programs.

Both standardized tests and informal classroom assessments have shown that students entering the upper grades do so with varied levels of reading proficiency. Teachers in those grades have large independent reading libraries for students in their classrooms. In the past several years, classroom assessments have made it clear that we have students in our sixth, seventh and eighth grades who are reading and writing below and even far below grade level. Some of these students came to our school in sixth or seventh grade. Because of this identified need, we have expanded our reading resource program so that it now serves students in all grades.

A new math program, aligned to the math CCSS, was adopted for our kindergarten through fifth grade this year. This program has allowed teachers to better align their instruction and assessments to the Math CCSS and provides them with more materials to reteach, reassess and extend standards. Teachers have taken advantage of these materials- both online and paper and pencil- to provide students with additional practice as well as individual and/or small group instruction. In kindergarten through third grade, all math instruction takes place in the classroom. In fourth grade, students identified as needing additional support in math by teacher recommendation and/or math test scores, receive small group instruction from our math resource teacher. In fifth grade, students are placed in three different math groups. They all use the same math book. The group that struggles is provided with more support in learning the concepts, and the more advance group is challenged with problems that extend their learning.

Previous math assessments and groups as well as teacher recommendations are used to determine math placement at the beginning of the year in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. A new middle school math program was adopted in 2013. We adopted this program because it was aligned with the CCSS and it answered a need we had to support our students who performed below grade level and challenge our students who scored above grade level on our math achievement tests. All students begin sixth grade working on sixth grade math standards. All students cover the sixth grade math CCSS. One group is given more support and scaffolded instruction. One group of students moves at a faster pace so that by the end of sixth grade they have covered the sixth grade and half of the seventh grade math standards.

In seventh grade, students are placed in three different books. Once again, this is accomplished by looking at assessment data and taking into account teacher recommendation. One book covers the seventh grade standards. The second group covers the seventh grade and half of the eighth grade standards. The third group covers the second half of the seventh and all of the eighth grade standards. Throughout the year, all of our sixth, seventh and eighth grade math teachers continually assess their students. These assessments allow teachers to reteach concepts and/or reassign students to a higher or lower math group based on the student's performance. These classroom-based assessments allow teachers to know when adjustments to students' math placement are needed during the school year.

Our eighth graders either cover the eighth grade standards; cover the second half of eighth grade and then the eighth grade algebra standards; or high school algebra. All placements are the result of assessment data and teacher recommendation and are changed when needed.

Title I eligibility data and results of standardized testing are both used to identify students who qualify for additional tutoring. In the primary grades these students receive individual reading remediation before and after school. Seventh and eighth grade students who qualify for additional services also work on improving their reading, writing and/or math skills individually or in small groups several times a week after school.

Adopting the CCSS has been a major undertaking for our teachers. Our staff has worked hard to understand, teach and assess the new standards. There has been a shift from focusing on whether a concept has been taught to whether a concept has been learned. Learning the new standards has been challenging for some of our students. Our classroom assessment data shows teachers and students are making progress. Our new math programs provide our teachers with more ways to teach and assess the Math CCSS. Teachers use the information they gain from Math assessments to better track student progress and really support student learning.

We need to find and adopt a new reading program that is better aligned to and provides assessments for the Reading/English Language Arts CCSS. Teachers spend a great deal of time looking at assessments and tracking progress towards mastery. This information also needs to be shared. Moving forward, we need a more efficient and effective way for our teachers to assess, track and share with students and their parents, individual student progress towards mastering the different standards.

Finally, now that we are better at collecting data and tracking progress, it is important that we start sharing the information with our colleagues. One of our goals is to use staff meeting time to begin looking at k-8 classroom assessment data, tracking trends and discuss curricular and/or instructional improvements suggested by the data.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Implementation of math and English/Language Arts CCSS school-wide
- Increase services for students in grades 7 and 8 in need of additional academic support
- The adoption of math programs k-5 and 6-8 that are aligned to the Math CCSS and provide ways to differentiate instruction.

**Goals:**

- Find and adopt a new reading program that is aligned to the Reading/ELA CCSS
- Find a program that will allow teachers to more easily track and share student's progress towards mastering the different standards.
- Spend at least one staff meeting a trimester disaggregating and analyzing data from our k-8 assessments to use as a basis for curricular/instructional improvements.

**Evidence:**

- IOWA form E school assessment data
- Lesson plans showing teaching aligned to CCSS
- ITBS data
- Samples of the new math series
- Kennedy math class data

- Literacy First Phonics Assessment data
- Lexia Core 6 data
- IXL data
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment data
- Textbook or teacher-made test results based on curriculum standards
- Appendix B-5

## **E. HIGH ACHIEVEMENT BY ALL STUDENTS TOWARD CLEARLY DEFINED SLES AND CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

All of our adopted religion curricula and religious instruction is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB. Our religion curricula have been approved by the Archdiocese of Seattle. Parent and School Commission Member surveys indicate satisfaction with the content of religious instruction and the amount of time given to it in the school. Our adopted text in first and second grades is *We Believe* (Sadlier). We use *Faith First Legacy* (RCL Benzinger) in third through fifth grades. Moving forward, our plan is to adopt one program for our k-5 classes so that our materials are better aligned and more closely tied with the new Archdiocese Religion Standards. This year, our middle-school adopted a new curriculum and middle school friendly bible from St. Mary's Press. At all grade levels, students work to memorize required prayers and to maintain mastery of prayers learned in previous grades.

Last August, our Archdiocese adopted new religion standards. Our teachers were introduced to the new standards document by the Archdiocese's Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction at a staff meeting and are working to utilize the standards in their teaching. The Archdiocese is currently developing assessments and rubrics for the new standards. Rather than coming up with our own new assessments and using them for one year, our teachers will use the Archdiocese's assessments beginning next year.

Last year, we created a new set of Student Learning Expectations (SLEs). We believe our new SLEs better align to our school's purpose which is explained in our Mission Statement and Philosophy. This year, we have taught and continue to reinforce for our students our SLEs. We have also added them in part to our newly created report cards. They are posted throughout the building, online and quoted in our school documents. Our teachers use the SLEs in their lesson planning and refer to them in their teaching.

Although we have rubrics and assessment for some of our SLEs- those tied to academic learning and speaking and knowledge of faith- we do not have rubrics for all of our SLEs. We believe some of the rubrics the Archdiocese is creating for the new religion standards will work well as tools for assessing our SLEs. Until the Archdiocese publishes its rubrics and assessments, we will use only the rubrics we have. Once we are able to look at and adopt the Archdiocese rubrics/assessments that measure some of our SLEs, we will work as a staff to insure we have rubrics/assessments for all of our SLEs.

Our teachers integrate our Catholic Identity into reading, writing, speaking, listening, art, PE, library/computer, math and science. They also integrate those same subjects into the teaching of

religion. Many of our teachers have developed rubrics that show the integration of religion into other areas of the curriculum. For example, our seventh grade students listen, read, reflect, and then write and submit online their thoughts on weekly Lectio Divinas. Our sixth, seventh and eighth grade students write a reflection after completing a service learning project. In both cases, students' direct focus is on faith and its foundation, their written work is also a language arts assignment with all the traditional emphasis on vocabulary and grammar.

Our school has adopted the Math and the Reading/English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The Seattle Catholic Archdiocese, the National Catholic Educators Association (NCEA) and Washington State have all adopted these curriculum standards. The CCSS are challenging, relevant, and create a continuum of learning from kindergarten to eighth grade and through high school.

For the last three years, many of our staff meetings have focused on becoming familiar with/planning to teach and assess student mastery of the CCSS. During these staff meetings, we have also looked closely at the continuum of learning k-8 provided by the Reading/English Language Arts CCSS and began to develop k-8 rubrics for speaking/presenting information. Our teachers continue to work with their grade level partners, other staff member and individually to develop, adapt, share and use rubrics and assessments to measure student progress towards mastery of the CCSS. The rubrics are shared with students and parents when the assignment is given and after the assignment is assessed. Our next steps include continuing to create and use rubrics and assessments to measure student progress, collect samples of student work as anchor papers for the rubrics, and meet as a staff to review and share both our assessments and rubrics as well as each grade level's expectations for and examples of grade level and exemplary student work.

We use multiple assessments to measure acceptable student progress towards mastery of curriculum standards. From ongoing, informal checks for understanding with things like thumbs up/thumbs down, turn and talk, individual student whiteboards, and exit slips to more formal formative assessments such as weekly reading tests adapted from *Journeys* in first through fifth grade; writing assignments, in-depth projects and performance-based activities where rubrics are used; online and paper quizzes and tests in math, spelling, science and social studies; student created assessment aids (such as reviews and posters), and class presentations.

A classroom assessment does not mark the end of learning a standard. With each test and/or assignment, student misconceptions and mistakes are identified and clarified. Because our goal is student mastery of standards, teachers no longer just send home student work with incorrect answers. In our younger grades, teachers, classroom aides and/or parent helpers often review work with students to reteach concepts and help the students answer correctly. In our seventh and eighth grades, students who perform poorly on an assessment are often given the opportunity to work with a teacher, log on to a website, and/or complete worksheets that reteach the assessed concepts. Once the students have completed the practice, they can retake a test, show mastery and receive a better grade.

A new math program, aligned to the math CCSS, was adopted for our kindergarten through fifth grade this year. This program has allowed teachers to better align their instruction and assessments to the Math CCSS and provides them with more materials to reteach, reassess and extend

standards. Teachers have taken advantage of these materials- both online and paper and pencil- to provide students with additional practice as well as individual and/or small group instruction.

A new middle school math program was adopted in 2013. We chose this program because it was aligned with the CCSS and it answered a need we had to support our students who performed below grade level and challenge our students who scored above grade level on our math achievement tests. Previous math assessments and groups as well as teacher recommendations are used to determine math placement at the beginning of the year in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. All students begin sixth grade working on sixth grade math standards. All students cover the sixth grade math CCSS. One group is given more support and scaffolded instruction. One group of students moves at a faster pace so that by the end of sixth grade they have covered the sixth grade and half of the seventh grade math standards.

In seventh grade, students are placed in three different books. Once again, this is accomplished by looking at assessment data and taking into account teacher recommendation. One book covers the seventh grade standards. The second group covers the seventh grade and half of the eighth grade standards. The third group covers the second half of the seventh and all of the eighth grade standards. Throughout the year, all of our sixth, seventh and eighth grade math teachers continually assess their students. These assessments allow teachers to reteach concepts and/or reassign students to a higher or lower math group based on the student's performance. These classroom-based assessments allow teachers to know when adjustments to students' math placement are needed during the school year.

Our eighth graders either cover the eighth grade standards; cover the second half of eighth grade and then the eighth grade algebra standards; or high school algebra. All placements are the result of assessment data and teacher recommendation and are changed when needed.

We also assess our students using a nationally normed standardized test. Until two years ago, we gave our students the ITBS test in the spring. In order to better align with the Common Core State Standards and track our students' progress over time, we joined an Archdiocese's Consortium of schools giving the IOWA Form E in the fall. In October 2014, our third through eighth grade students took the IOWA Form E assessment for the first time. The results of the assessment has been shared with our staff and parents and is being used as a baseline for this new assessment of identifying school program and individual student's strengths and weaknesses. One of the trends we noticed was our standardized math scores were lower than they had been on the ITBS. Several staff meetings and outside teacher time have been devoted to analyzing and disaggregating the data. As a result, teachers have identified students who need additional support and in which areas support is needed. They are helping these students by doing such as things providing additional individual or small group instruction and re-teaching concepts, providing materials to parents/volunteers/classroom aides to work with students one-on-one, and/or logging students on to programs such as Lexia Core 6 or MobyMax that teach and strengthen skills.

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Reading Assessment is used to assess students' oral reading accuracy, comprehension, and fluency in grades K-6. This assessment is given to students in our reading resource program three times each year to ensure students are making adequate progress. It is also given to any students whom classroom teachers have concerns about to see if these students

might benefit from extra support in reading. The reading resource teachers also assess all first and second graders using this benchmark assessment twice a year. This allows teachers to create leveled groups for reading instruction within their classrooms and also to track student progress.

In addition, the Literacy First Phonics Assessment is given to all students in grades K-2. This determines their areas of phonological strength and weakness. This assessment, along with the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, and teacher recommendations, help to determine which students take part in the reading resource and our before school Sound and Word Partners programs. Sound and Word Partners is a scripted program with 107 lessons. Assessment occurs after every ten lessons and progress is tracked and information shared with parents and classroom teachers.

Both standardized tests and informal classroom assessments have shown that students entering the upper grades do so with varied levels of reading proficiency. In the past several years, classroom assessments have made it clear that we have students in our sixth, seventh and eighth grades who are reading and writing below and even far below grade level. Some of these students came to our school in sixth or seventh grade. Because of this identified need, we have expanded our reading resource program so that it now serves students in all grades.

We have also developed special learning plans for students who have identified learning disabilities and/or are working far below grade level. In some cases, our psychologist or a Highline School District psychologist does further testing with our struggling students so that we have more information about their strengths and weaknesses. Classroom teachers, reading resource teachers, the principal, parents, and when relevant, a psychologist, school district special education coordinator, our math resource teacher and/or the student are also involved in writing the plan. The plan is monitored by our reading resource teacher and/or the classroom teacher.

Students use technology in a variety of ways. All classrooms have document cameras and most have Smartboards. Students at all grades use these to share work and present information. We have iPads available for checkout. Upstairs in our main building, carts of chromebooks are available for checkout to teachers in grades 3-8. There is also a half class set of 15 Mac laptops available and a full cart of PC laptops available. The sign out sheet on these carts show that the devices are constantly used. Downstairs, our first and second grades and reading resource have computer stations set up in their rooms. All grades k-8 are able to access the computer lab and teachers may sign up for times to bring in their class beyond their scheduled computer class time. A “bring your own device” policy was implemented in the year 2011-2012 to allow students in grades 5-8 to bring in their own laptops, kindles, nooks, and other devices to aid in the learning process. Students often complete and turn in assignments online so that they receive quicker feedback and papers are never lost or forgotten at home.

In alignment with the ISTE student standards, student learning with technology focuses on: 1) creativity and innovation, such as 3rd and 7th graders making Prezi presentations and book trailers for reports; 2) communication and collaboration, such as the Jr. High students using Google Apps to work together on common documents; 3) research and information fluency, such as 2nd graders researching an insect and writing sentences about what they find; 4) critical thinking and problem solving, such as 5th graders using apps to explore concepts, solve problems, and create re-teaching

videos for the next year's students; 5) digital citizenship, such as the counselor teaching internet safety to students in grades k-5 as part of the Steps to Respect program; and 6) technology operations, for example the computer teacher working on foundational skills such as typing practice and how to use iMovie with the students, so they will be ready to jump into projects with their homeroom teacher.

Technology is also used to support student learning by differentiating instruction. Both of our new math series as well as our recently adopted science program have online components that review and reteach concepts and give students opportunities to practice what has been taught. Our first graders spend time daily online reading text and answering questions at their individual reading levels. Spelling and grammar lessons are personalized online. Using several online programs, we have been able to provide our kindergarteners and first through fourth graders, reading resource students, struggling math students with extra individualized support and enrichment activities. Using these online programs not only provides students with extra help, it also allows teachers, parents and school administration to track the amount of time students are practicing at home and the growth they are making in mastering concepts.

With the development of our new SLEs, the adoption of the Math and English/Language Arts CCSS as well as new math and science programs, and the introduction of the new Archdiocese religion standards, St. Francis students actively learn from a curriculum that is research-based, current, and challenging. Moving forward, we need to create rubrics and assessments for all of our SLEs. Although our teachers work hard to track student progress in their classes or programs, we need to develop a means of looking at student progress school-wide in order to track trends and better serve all of our students.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- The development of our SLEs and our adoption of the Math and Reading/ELA CCSS
- The adoption of our new math programs are aligned with the Math CCSS and allow for better differentiation of instruction.
- Rubrics have been and are being developed in all grades to show students what they need to do to improve, and opportunities are given for improvement.
- Identification, extra support and instruction, and ongoing assessment of students not meeting reading standards in all grades

**Goals:**

- The creation of rubrics/assessments and the collection of anchor papers for our SLEs and CCSS
- The full adoption of the newly created Archdiocesan Religion Standards
- The development of develop a means of looking at student progress school-wide in order to track trends and better serve all of our students.

**. Evidence:**

- Survey data
- Lesson plans that include SLEs and CCSS
- Samples of math text books/over view of programs
- Student explanations of how a given assignment helped them to accomplish an SLE

- Student Learning Plan
- Data from IOWA Form E assessment
- Data from Fountas and Pennell assessments
- Sound Partners list/samples
- Samples of student work
- Rubrics from different grade level
- Classroom assessments/reassessments
- Data from Lexia Core 6 and other online programs

## **F. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY TO SUPPORT HIGH ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS**

St. Francis of Assisi School is first and foremost a Catholic school, and our faculty and staff model that in their daily dealings with the students and families. Our faculty meets every morning before the school day begins for devotions. The school day for the students starts with devotions being read over the school intercom; teachers in their classrooms make sure that students come to quiet attention during this time – many standing and folding their hands – and then others follow the school devotions with prayers or devotions of their own. Individual classrooms pray in the morning, at lunch, and at the end of the day. In addition, all school assemblies, parent meetings and all-school gatherings start with prayer. Every Wednesday, the school day ends one hour early for a faculty meeting; these meetings, too, all begin and end with prayer. Our principal leads Wednesday morning prayer with school parents who wish to attend. Each class is responsible for planning and leading a school Mass. School-wide annual traditions include such events as weekly Advent devotions, an Advent program, Stations of the Cross, Holy Week activities, and a May Crowning and Grandparents’ Day Mass. During October and May, many classes lead the parish Rosary. In order to increase our school Mass participation and better connect with our parish, two or four of our classes now attend Friday morning Mass.

Of paramount importance are the formal religion classes taught in kindergarten through eighth grade. Following Archdiocesan guidelines, each grade level has specific learning expectations that form the basis of religious instruction. Teachers focus on Catholic beliefs, teachings, rituals, and traditions. Religion classes include a mix of Bible stories, church history and teachings, prayer, and guided meditation. Instilling in students a sense of responsibility for one’s choices is an important facet of moral development our school. Catholic moral choices are specifically taught and modeled by staff in accordance with Archdiocesan policy guidelines. Peace circles and peer problem-solving are used by teachers as examples of ways students learn to show respect for others.

Recognizing that Jesus is the foundation of all Catholic Christian development, students are taught to exemplify Jesus’ life as a model of faith, compassion, and service to others. As St. Francis of Assisi showed his respect toward all, our students are taught to respect all of God’s creation. Students participate in school-sponsored and teacher-led outreach activities such as conducting food and clothing drives for the needy, helping to support the sister parish in El Salvador, earning

money to build and maintain a well in Ndavaya, Kenya, and conducting a candy cane sale in order to provide scholarships for high school girls in Ndavaya. In sixth grade, students are expected to complete one hour of community service per month. In the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade two hours per month are required. Teachers encourage students to express their faith and values through writing about their community service experiences and relating them to the Corporal Acts of Mercy or Catholic Social Teachings.

In the past five years teachers have attended diverse workshops in math, writing and reading to support student achievement. Classes were presented to the faculty teaching the application and use of various practices and programs throughout the curriculum - these practices were then incorporated into the ELA Common Core Standards as well as basic areas of the curriculum i.e., science, social studies, religion as well as language arts. A new middle school math curriculum, which provides multi-level learning and/or advancement, was adopted based on professional development. This is also true of the k-5 math program adopted this year. In the past few years the school has provided the opportunity for the reading resource teachers and several classroom teachers to attend the International Reading Association Conference to take classes on research-based instructional methods. Seminars were provided by top reading specialists such as Richard Allington, Gay Sue Pinnell and Irene Fountas. Junior high teachers' attendance at American Middle Level Educators' conference led to changes in class schedules to accommodate block instructional time and improved use of digital technologies. Our third grade teacher led technology in-service sessions during the 2012-2013 school year ranging in topics from movie making to digital citizenship.

Our teachers stay abreast of current and effective evaluation methods through books, webinars, workshops and classes, gaining a thorough understanding of the importance of assessment in the curriculum. Continuing education provides the knowledge needed to improve current assessment methods and determine the best teaching and testing strategies. A number of teachers have regularly attended the Northwest Catholic Leadership Institute at Seattle University which has focused on the latest research in assessments.

Assessment is a regular, integrated part of our curriculum. Grade-level readiness testing is administered to incoming students. Teachers use a wide range of evaluation methods appropriately matched to the subject and student. These methods include: standardized testing, oral presentations, essays, textbook tests, weekly *Journeys* benchmark and units tests (k-5), oral prayers, and teacher-made tests. In addition, other methods of informal evaluation include performance assessment, student self-reflection, show of hands, whiteboards, exit slips, and rubric evaluations.

Our assessments are matched to the learning style of the students. Teachers use a variety of methods such as reading the test question to the student(s), small group testing, one-on-one testing (with para-educator or parent volunteer), oral testing, and scribes.

Parents are seen as an integral part of the educational process; teachers keep both students and parents well-informed of assessment results. The staff uses a variety of communication methods including e-mails, parent/teacher conferences, modified plans, goal-setting, report cards, progress reports and results from standardized and end-of-the-year tests.

Our instructional methodology is varied in type and form based on the objective being taught, curriculum standards, and student needs. Oral and written demonstration, direct instruction, cooperative learning and student inquiry/discovery form the basis for most classroom teaching. Instruction is also enhanced with the use of technology, art, music, drama, classroom blogs, games, field trips, and guest speakers. Teachers analyze curriculum and student needs to effectively choose an appropriate method of instruction. Students with special needs are also given consideration in instructional planning. Necessary accommodations are made including shortened and modified assignments, adjusted lessons, use of Chromebooks or laptops, study buddies, and individualized testing. Each classroom has been equipped with Promethean or SmartBoards as well as document cameras and projectors to help with instruction. A Reading Resource program is available for students in all grades to provide additional assistance in a small group setting.

We have adopted the Math and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards and will fully adopt the Archdiocesan Religion standards when the assessments and rubrics for the new religion standards are available. Teachers are matching the curriculum to the Common Core State Standards and developing lessons, rubrics, and assessments. We created new report cards aligned to these standards. Common Core standards are posted in each classroom and our students are taught the statements in the form of “I can” statements. At the end of lessons, learning targets are revisited and teachers can assess mastery through the use of discussion or exit tickets. Staff meetings have been devoted to teachers becoming familiar with the Common Core Standards as well as new instructional techniques and strategies from books such as *Teach Like a Champion* and *Core Six*.

The use of technology, while previously embedded in the curriculum, has steadily increased since our last accreditation. One member of the staff, who is very knowledgeable in the use of technology in the classroom, presented a series of in-services during the 2012-13 school year. This enabled our teachers to understand and practice all six components of NET-S National Technology Standards so that they can utilize them to plan and assess lessons. Although this teacher is no longer at our school, others on staff continue to be resources. Teachers have also availed themselves of a variety of workshops.

Technology is used across the curriculum – ELA, math, science, social studies, and religion. Online textbooks in a variety of grades and subjects, interactive activities, quizzes and tests, teacher and student blogs, and remediation all enhance the teaching/learning process. Interactive communication takes place via Google Drive programs as well as others such as Edmodo; this allows students to communicate with each other and their teachers about assignments and to submit computer-generated work. Teachers can give immediate feedback to students that can be accessed via any computer. Assignments for all grades are posted online.

The most significant difference in use of technology is the shift from teacher-directed to student-centered lessons. A cart of Chromebooks was purchased in 2013 and used across grades three through eight and allows each student to log on to his or her own Google Apps with a designated Chromebook. The demand for Chromebooks was so great that a second cart was purchased for the 2014-15 school year. Teachers help students to seek out viable websites that provide information for research. Google presentations, Prezis, and PowerPoints enrich individual and collaborative

projects.

In analyzing our data around our school's instructional methodology, we learned that our staff uses many different methods to teach information and assess learning. The data that supports this is found in teacher lesson plans, classroom observations, samples of student work, varied assessment, as well as staff and student presentations. Moving forward, more time needs to be given to teachers to work together on analyzing, sharing and consistently tracking student data. There also needs to be more opportunities for our teachers to learn from each other by observing the instructional methodologies of other teachers (both in and outside our building)

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- New and variety of technology and instructional methodologies
- Professional development opportunities and administration encouragement to take advantage of them
- Enthusiasm for and the implementation of Math and English/Language Arts CCSS
- The adoption of a new Math curriculum k-5 and in Middle School aligned to CCSS
- Reading/Language Arts Resource program being expanded through 8<sup>th</sup> grade

**Goals:**

- Time given for teachers to consistently analyze and share student data building wide.
- Opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues instructional methodologies (both in and outside of the building).

**Evidence:**

- Student work aligned to standards and/or SLEs
- Samples of summative and formative assessments aligned to the standards
- Teacher lesson plans
- Staff Development Program
- Use of Federal Program funds for staff development
- Integration of technology into the instructional process
- Samples of student work

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

As part of our mission to create a Christ-centered community at St. Francis, the students' day begins with an all-school prayer, led by junior high students. This is followed by prayer intentions and the Pledge of Allegiance in individual classrooms. Students and teachers pray before lunch, throughout the day and at the end of the day. Teachers not only teach our Catholic faith and traditions during religion classes, they weave faith and traditions into other subject areas. Our students have the opportunity to participate in the Sacraments and prayer services. Each month, we celebrate an all school Mass. On Fridays, two to four classes attend the parish morning Mass.

A variety of community service opportunities provide students the opportunity to practice the Catholic principles of social justice. We collect canned food at every school Mass and hold a food

drive for Northwest Harvest every year. Students donate money to our sister parish in El Salvador and our sister school in Ndavaya, Kenya. Fifth grade students collect warm clothing and supplies for the homeless throughout the year and donate these items to the Community Lunch program on Capitol Hill. Fourth grade students collect gifts for youth in Juvenile Detention. Required community service hours are part of the sixth through eighth grade religion curriculum. Our sixth through eighth graders have the opportunity to be altar servers. All of these activities contribute to the spiritual growth of our students.

School Mass times are published in our bulletin and online and all parents are invited. Information about the parish RCIA program as well as opportunities to participate in parish life is also shared. In conjunction with the parish, we offer adult classes on different topics including raising a holy family and living our faith. We handed out a copy the *Living Your Best Life* CD to all of our families at our Information Night in September. Parents of our second graders participate in their children's preparation for the sacraments of Communion and Reconciliation. The spiritual growth of our parents is very important to us.

Students learn sportsmanship in the classroom, on the playground, and in PE classes. Students are instructed to "play fair" and be responsible. Before games in PE, examples of good sportsmanship are modeled and practiced. When classes have difficulty playing together at recess, our principal works with the students in those classes to come up with a set of agreed upon rules for games. The rules always include treating each other with respect. On Field Day, students compete for the coveted Spirit Sticks awarded by our parent volunteers to the teams that demonstrate the best sportsmanship towards other teams and give the most encouragement and help to students on their own team.

Many of our students play on our CYO teams. All players and their parents and the coaches are required to sign a code of conduct that includes respecting your opponent and playing fair. All games begin with a reading of the code of conduct and a prayer. The code is also published in our school bulletin each week.

We offer a variety of curricular and co-curricular programs to support students. Music class for grades k-4 provide students with the opportunity to express themselves through song, learn about tempo, rhythm, and meter, and practice songs for Mass, the Advent Program, the musical, and Grandparents' Day. Students in fifth through eighth grades may join the choir or participate in band. All students attend art class once a week, learning everything from basic art elements of shape, line, and texture to more advanced principles such as balance and symmetry. They learn art history and incorporate aspects of this into their own projects. Art projects also reinforce math, science, religion topics. Students gain cultural awareness by observing art work from other cultures and bringing those cultural aspects into their own art projects. Through the Second Step and Steps to Respect programs, students learn to manage their feelings, deal assertively with their peers, and employ conflict resolution skills. Each year, junior high students have the opportunity to participate in a big musical production. This year, almost 50 students will perform. Students in all grades receive Spanish instruction, preparing them for high school and beyond. They learn not only the language, but the culture and customs as well. After school opportunities include art classes and Lego-Robotics. Each trimester, students have the opportunity to contribute to a school

newspaper.

We have a reading resource program to work with our students who need extra help. The goal of the program is to strengthen students reading and comprehension skills to bring them up to grade level. Our newly adopted middle school math program is aligned to the math Common Core State Standards and provides three different instructional paths- one for students who need more support, one for students who are on grade level and a third for students with a greater math aptitude.

Regular emergency drills are practiced throughout the year. Emergency procedures notebooks are given to every teacher with specific steps to be followed in emergency situations. Staff and students routinely review procedures during drills. Yearly AED/CPR training is provided for teachers, staff and volunteers. One AED (Automated External Defibrillator) is located near the front door to our school and another is near the gym entrance. All exterior doors, excluding the front door, remain locked. Visitors must check in at a window in the front office to be let into the building. Security doors near the office ensure that only approved visitors are admitted. Visitors, active playground monitors and volunteers are required to wear a badge when in the building. Safe environment trainings ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of proper procedures in everyday situations.

Students in all grades use technology in a variety of ways, appropriate to their grade level. Teachers in primary grades provide differentiated reading instruction in small groups and through the use of online programs such as RAZ Kids, Think Central, Reader Rabbit, and Lexia. The data we have collected has shown that students who are using programs such as Lexia consistently are showing growth in reading. Students at many grades work on fluency by recording themselves reading and then listening to the recording for self-assessment and improvement. Our adopted math and science programs as well as online programs such as Splash Math offer both support to students who are struggling and opportunities to more capable students to move at a faster pace.

In our intermediate classrooms, online programs such as Think Central (math, reading and science), TCI (social studies), and Spelling City (spelling and vocabulary) are used both as a means of supporting learning and as tools to enhance curriculum.

Students in third through eighth grades have ePal accounts in order to assess Google Documents. This resource is utilized by the technology instructor and classroom teachers to incorporate technology in instruction. This allows students to collaborate, both at school and from home computers, with their peers for projects. Students complete projects involving research and performance activities using tools such as PowerPoint, Prezi, Photo Story, Movie Maker, and iMovie to show understanding and highlight presentation skills. Students use computers for word processing assignments for final products in writing. Moving forward, we need to map the use of technology applications across grade levels to provide greater continuity and progression of skills

Our Mission Statement and Philosophy focus on our Catholic Identity, educating the whole child and partnering with parents. Every part of our students' day and all parts of our building make it clear that we are a Catholic school. Our rigorous academic standards and differentiated support reflects our desire to provide every student with an excellent education. The programs we offer

support the whole child. We understand that parents are the primary teachers of their children and are committed to supporting them in their spiritual growth and partnering with them in the education of their children.

Finally, examining our assessment data shows that although we have put in place new programs to help differentiate our instruction to help all students learn, we still have work to do. Moving forward, we will continue to look for ways to support all of our learners-especially those in the first and fourth quartiles.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Variety of community service activities to help students live their faith
- Wide variety of programs that address the needs of the whole child
- Updating math textbooks to support CCSS and provide for more differentiated instruction
- Using technology to strengthen all subject areas and showcase understanding

**Goals:**

- Mapping the use of technology applications across grade levels to provide greater continuity and progression of skills.
- Continuing finding ways to differentiate instruction to better support all learners.

**Evidence:**

- A list of co- and extra-curricular activities available to our students
- Pictures of students participating in different activities
- The staff development goals listed on our Title II form
- New math materials
- Data from Lexia Core 6
- The school's emergency plan
- The school's Title I documents

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

St. Francis of Assisi School's resource management and development is focused on supporting the high achievement of all students and the Catholic Identity of our school. Our budget reflects this. Money is budgeted and spent on items such as Religion textbooks, bibles, pictures of our church leaders, religious icons that are displayed in every part of our school, parent education, teacher Archdiocesan catechist certification classes; and staff and eighth grade retreats. As part of our call to serve others, our school community raises money and collects goods to support people both locally and globally. For example, canned food is collected for the food bank at every school Mass, and at different times of the year, money is raised for our sister schools in Kenya and El Salvador.

We believe our school should be affordable. Our in-parish tuition is one of the lowest in the Archdiocese. We have an endowment of over one million dollars which was created because of our

school community's belief that all students should have access to a high quality, Catholic education. Our school policy states that money from the endowment should only be used for financial aid. Since the endowment reached a million dollars three years ago, we have drawn on a portion of the interest each year to provide over \$100,000 in financial aid to families in need.

Proper bookkeeping and accounting procedures are used to create and implement our budget and monitor the financial position of our school. We start our budget cycle on July 1st. We begin planning for our new fiscal year in January. Our bookkeeper completes a first draft of the budget based on the current year figures, historical data, and our knowledge of expenses we will incur the following year. Our principal and our bookkeeper review the numbers, compile tuition rates for the next school year, and work with the numbers until the budget is balanced. The preliminary budget is shared with the budget committee (a subgroup of the School Commission) and with their input, revisions are made. The new tuition rates and the budget are then taken to the School Commission where it is discussed and approved. The new tuition rates are sent out to school families in March. Financial reports are created every month and reviewed first by our principal with the bookkeeper and then shared with the School Commission by email prior to the monthly School Commission meeting. Financial reports include the Balance Sheet, Income Statement and Summary Sheet. An Archdiocesan audit of our books in September 2013 found them in good order.

Because we realize the importance of keeping our facilities in good repair, we commissioned a School Capital Projects study in January 2014. This study looked at our Building Systems, Exterior, Interior and Commercial Kitchen, analyzed the useful life remaining for each of the items in each, estimated the replacement cost, and created a Capital Projects plan for the next 25 years. Using this, we will be able to set aside funds and make sure that all work is completed in a timely manner. We also budget for textbooks adoptions and technology acquisition, maintenance and replacement. We have operated in the black for many years.

Since our last Accreditation, we have added a beautiful new library and computer lab to our building, replaced all of the windows in our school, and hit the million dollar mark on our endowment. We have \$270,000 set aside in an interest earning account for emergencies. Each month, we share our financial status with the School Commission. Parents are informed about the school's finances, our financial aid distribution, and any plans for major facility upgrades or repairs at our Information Night in September. Because we value our staff, over the last few years we have increased salaries in order to better compensate and retain our employees. By the 2015-16 school year, we plan to pay our teachers 100% of the state teachers' salary schedule.

Since our last Accreditation, we contacted the Highline School District and other surrounding school districts where our students live to obtain our school's share of their Federal Title 1 and Title IIA funds. During the 2013-14 school year, our vice-principal obtained almost \$20,000 in Title IIA to support staff development for our teachers and administrators.

Right now, our resources are sufficient to sustain and continue to improve our school's program and carry out the school's purpose and student achievement of the Student Learning Expectations. Looking long-term, we are working to insure this will continue to be the case.

First, we are connecting with our school alumni. St. Francis of Assisi School has been around for

over 50 years and has graduated thousands of students. According to the feedback we get from families, parishioners and graduates who visit our school, most have positive feelings about our school. We have no alumni organization. Our goal is to create an alumni organization to tap into our large alumni base in order to increase both our sense of community and our fundraising base. Our principal and office manager have met with the Archdiocese's Director of Fundraising and come up with a plan to establish an alumni association.

Second, we are looking at starting a preschool. Although our student population has been stable for a number of years- between 465 and 475 students- we believe that as the competition for students and tuition dollars increases this might not always be the case. We believe that establishing a preschool will help us long term. Families who bring their children to St. Francis of Assisi Preschool are likely to continue on to St. Francis of Assisi School. Our parish owns a house adjacent to our parish/school parking lot that it would like to sell. We have talked with our Pastor, parish administrator, the parish finance committee, the school commission and the Archdiocese and have their support.

**Significant Accomplishments:**

- Sound financial practices that have allowed us to focus on the high achievement of all students
- The addition of a new library and computer lab, as well as reaching one million dollars in our endowment fund in the last four years
- A 25 year capital projects plan
- The acquisition and use of Federal Title IIA funds to support staff development

**Goals:**

- Tap into our large alumni base as a way to increase our fundraising base and our sense of community.
- Establish a preschool program to support the long term viability of our school

**Evidence:**

- Five years of budgets, financial reports, tuition schedules
- Strategic plan for the school/parish
- Endowment statements
- Salary schedules
- Title I and Title IIA fund budgets
- Plan to create alumni association
- Copy of City of Burien permit request
- School bulletins
- School Commission meeting minutes

# Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

## Chapter Four – Action Plan

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

#### Significant Accomplishments:

- Building our school/parish relationship and having classes attend Friday morning Mass
- Students participate in regular and frequent prayer experiences
- Increasing outreach to parents with the adoption of our prayer angel program and by providing more opportunities for prayer and adult learning around faith and parenting.
- New religion texts for grades 6-8 were adopted and implemented in the fall of 2014
- All teachers have or are working towards Catechetical endorsement
- The involvement of many stakeholders in creating our updated and recently adopted Mission Statement, Philosophy and SLEs.
- Our staff's commitment to learning and teaching the CCSS/SLEs
- The adoption of new programs k-8 that are aligned with the Math CCSS
- The development of new report cards aligned to the CCSS and our SLEs.
- Our pastor and the School Commission members' support of our school and its mission.
- The adoption of a Middle School math program aligned with the Math CCSS that allows for differentiation in instruction to support the high achievement of all students.
- The adoption of a new k-5 math program aligned with the Math CCSS that provides teachers with materials to teach and assess the new standards.
- Moving from the ITBS to the new IOWA form E assessment provides us with a way to track our students' progress on the CCSS and become part of the Archdiocese's assessment consortium.
- Implementation of math and English/Language Arts CCSS school-wide
- Increase services for students in grades 7 and 8 in need of additional academic support
- The adoption of math programs k-5 and 6-8 that are aligned to the Math CCSS and provide ways to differentiate instruction.
- The development of our SLEs and our adoption of the Math and Reading/ELA CCSS
- The adoption of our new math programs are aligned with the Math CCSS and allow for better differentiation of instruction.
- Rubrics have been and are being developed in all grades to show students what they need to do to improve, and opportunities are given for improvement.
- Identification, extra support and instruction, and ongoing assessment of students not meeting reading standards in all grades
- New and variety of technology and instructional methodologies
- Professional development opportunities and administration encouragement to take advantage of them
- Enthusiasm for and the implementation of Math and English/Language Arts CCSS
- The adoption of a new Math curriculum k-5 and in Middle School aligned to CCSS
- Reading/Language Arts Resource program being expanded through 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- Variety of community service activities to help students live their faith
- Wide variety of programs that address the needs of the whole child

- Updating math textbooks to support CCSS and provide for more differentiated instruction
- Using technology to strengthen all subject areas and showcase understanding
- Sound financial practices that have allowed us to focus on the high achievement of all students
- The addition of a new library and computer lab, as well as reaching one million dollars in our endowment fund in the last four years
- A 25 year capital projects plan
- The acquisition and use of Federal Title IIA funds to support staff development

We believe the following eight accomplishments have had the greatest impact on student learning:

1. Building our school/parish relationship and having classes attend Friday morning Mass
2. The involvement of many stakeholders in creating our updated and recently adopted Mission Statement, Philosophy and SLEs.
3. Our staff's commitment to learning and teaching the CCSS/SLEs
4. The development of new report cards aligned to the CCSS and our SLEs.
5. The adoption of math programs k-5 and 6-8 that are aligned to the Math CCSS and provide ways to differentiate instruction.
6. Using technology to strengthen all subject areas and showcase understanding
7. The addition of a new library and computer lab, as well as reaching one million dollars in our endowment fund in the last four years
8. Identification, extra support and instruction, and ongoing assessment of students not meeting reading standards in all grades

#### **Goals:**

- Continuing to increase the number of times students attend school Mass each month
- The adoption of one textbook series for grades K-5
- Becoming familiar with and using the Archdiocese's Religion assessments and rubrics when they are developed.
- Creating rubrics and/or assessments that measure student mastery of all of our new SLEs.
- Continuing to help our parents become familiar with and better understand the CCSS
- We need to continue to help parents understand the CCSS and provide them with resources to support their children's learning.
- We need to develop a strategic plan to support the high achievement of all students
- Find and adopt a new reading program that is aligned to the Reading/ELA CCSS
- Find a program that will allow teachers to more easily track and share student's progress towards mastering the different standards.
- The creation of rubrics/assessments and the collection of anchor papers for our SLEs and CCSS
- The full adoption of the newly created Archdiocesan Religion Standards
- The development of develop a means of looking at student progress school-wide in order to track trends and better serve all of our students.
- Spend at least one staff meeting a trimester disaggregating and analyzing data from our k-8 assessments to use as a basis for curricular/instructional improvements.
- Time given for teachers to consistently analyze and share student data building wide.
- Opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues instructional methodologies (both in and outside of the building).

- Mapping the use of technology applications across grade levels to provide greater continuity and progression of skills.
- Continuing finding ways to differentiate instruction to better support all learners.
- Tap into our large alumni base as a way to increase our fundraising base and our sense of community.
- Establish a preschool program to support the long term viability of our school

We believe the five goals that will have the greatest impact on student learning are:

1. The full adoption and implementation of the newly created Archdiocesan Religion Standards
2. The development (and implantation) of a strategic plan to support the high achievement of all students
3. Creating rubrics and/or assessments that measure student mastery of all of our new SLEs.
4. Continuing to help parents understand the CCSS and provide them with resources to support their children's learning.
5. The development of develop a means of looking at student progress school-wide in order to track trends and better serve all of our students.

The reason we believe each of these will significantly improve student achievement:

1. **Goal:** The full adoption and implementation of the newly created Archdiocesan Religion Standards

**Rationale for this Goal:** The Archdiocese recently adopted new religion standards based on the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Fully adopting and teaching these new religion standards will help insure all students meet our SLE we are Christ-centered disciples who learn and live by the Catholic teachings and traditions.

2. **Goal:** Develop and implement a strategic plan to support the achievement of all students:

**Rationale for this Goal:** The development of a strategic plan will support continued growth of all students. If we implement this plan across all grade levels, the result will be increased student learning and have a positive effect on student achievement. This plan will help us to utilize our teaching staff and Title I allocations for K-8 reading resource as well as provide learning materials. Additional math support has begun. Opportunities for small group and one-on-one instruction helps students understand the purpose of learning, apply knowledge, utilize resources, and use logical thinking and reasoning skills.

3. **Goal:** Creating rubrics and/or assessments that measure student mastery of all of our new SLEs.

**Rationale for this Goal:** The creation of rubrics and/or assessments that measure mastery of all our new SLEs will provide teachers and students with clearer learning/behavior targets and help clarify our expectations for student behavior. The rubrics would allow help students measure their progress towards meeting and/or exceeding our SLE. With clearer expectations and the means to objectively measure and assess those expectations, we believe that student achievement would significantly improve.

4. **Goal:** To increase student mastery of the Math Common Core State Standards

**Rationale for this Goal:** Based on standardized testing data and text- and teacher-created criterion referenced tests, we have identified improving student mastery of the Math Common Core State Standards as a critical goal. The most recent standardized test results showed a significant drop in the mastery of math concepts with the adoption of the more rigorous Common Core State Standards.

**5. Goal:** The development of develop a means of looking at student progress school-wide in order to track trends and better serve all of our students.

**Rationale for this Goal:** In working on our self-study we realized that although individual teachers all tracked student progress, we did not have a way to look at student progress school-wide and to track both individual and cohort groups gains over time. The more information we have on student progress, the better able teachers will be to target their instruction. The information will also help us better utilize our support staff to provide both support for struggling students and enrichment for students in need of more challenges. Doing this would significantly improve student achievement.

**Action Plan for St. Francis of Assisi School**

**Goal #1:** Develop/implement a plan to support the academic achievement of all students

**Rationale for this Goal:** Based on teacher assessment, standardized testing and parent surveys, we have identified the need to develop a plan which will address the academic achievement of all students. This plan will facilitate differentiation of instruction so every St. Francis of Assisi student will have a fair opportunity to attain mastery of the CCSS, the Archdiocesan Religion Standards, and the NGSS.

**Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs:** As stated in our SLEs, St. Francis of Assisi students are active learners who understand the purpose of learning.

<b>Strategy #1</b>	Collect baseline assessment data.
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use standardized testing for 3-8.</li> <li>2. Create rubrics to measure progress on the CCSS</li> <li>3. Collect data from curriculum based testing</li> <li>4. Track student use and progress with online academic assessment programs (IXL, Go Math!, Moby Max)</li> <li>5. Investigate the potential use of Archdiocesan-created ELA Curriculum units and standards assessment tracking system</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cost of IOWA testing materials (purchased- cost of giving assessment \$5,000)</li> <li>2. Time allocated to staff during staff meetings to create rubrics and/or be provided professional development opportunities.</li> <li>3. Costs have been covered by curriculum costs.</li> <li>4. Cost of supplemental tech materials (Think Central K-8,</li> </ol>

	Edmodo Snapshot 3-8, Moby Max 4th [\$99 per class], IXL 6-8, Lexia [\$3,000], Duolingo [no cost], Birdbrain [\$600], Science for grades 7-8 [no cost]). 5. No costs.
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	1-5. Administration and staff
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	1-5. Annual review of collection methods by staff.
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	The collective staff feedback suggesting a need for differentiated instruction.
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	Annual staff review of quality of baseline assessments collected.
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	October--Iowa Form E (grades 3-8) September--Assessments with Literacy First Phonics Assessment (grades 1-3), Fountas and Pinnell Assessments for reading resource students (grades 1-6 and all students 1-2) Beginning of the year--testing in math to establish competencies. September--Assessments in Kindergarten of letter names, sounds and sight words, counting to 100 and number recognition
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Iowa Form E test results, reading resource reports, Lexia reports, and Go Math! beginning of the year test results can all be sent home to parents by teachers and staff so that they can see the baseline levels for their student.

<b>Strategy #2</b>	Analyze data from baseline assessments
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze data from IOWA Form E test on Data Manager</li> <li>2. Analyze Assessments with Literacy First Phonics Assessment (grades 1-3), Fountas and Pinnell Assessments for reading resource students (grades 1-6 and all students 1-2)</li> <li>3. Review data from summative tests.</li> <li>4. Use Lexia to determine baseline skill level and assign students the number of minutes to be completed each week in order to achieve mastery of ELA skills.</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp;</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access to Data Manager is included in IOWA consortium materials.</li> </ol>

<b>Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Time for work during the school day. Already accounted for. No additional costs.</li> <li>3. No cost</li> <li>4. Cost of Lexia (\$3,000)</li> </ol>
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	1-4. Administration and staff
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff time allocated for analysis and disaggregation of data</li> <li>2. Reading resource teachers confer with teachers and parents to share information.</li> <li>3. Staff will analyze baseline test results.</li> <li>4. Online program offers thorough data sets explaining student baseline skill level. Parent who is a trainer meets with principal/teachers each quarter to go over student use/progress data</li> </ol>
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	Assessments used in Strategy #1
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	Formative and curriculum based testing at regular intervals to assess progress from baseline.
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	<p>October--Iowa Form E (grades 3-8)</p> <p>September, January, and May--Assessments with Literacy First Phonics Assessment (grades 1-3), Fountas and Pinnell Assessments for reading resource students (grades 1-6 and all students 1-2)</p> <p>Beginning of the year--testing in math to establish competencies.</p>
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Standardized tests scores are sent to parents. Further analysis can be used to address areas of strengths and weaknesses.

<b>Strategy #3</b>	Differentiate Instruction
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide professional training/development in differentiation</li> <li>2. Academic support and enrichment through after-school groups, studying sessions and tutoring, as well as several online academic programs.</li> <li>3. Design lessons to accommodate varying student learning needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cost of trainers and/or materials (\$3000)</li> <li>2. After school programs are covered in school budget and/or program costs. Online program costs (See Strategy #1 costs).</li> </ol>

	3. Time for work. School day or after school. No cost.
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	1-3. Administration and staff.
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	1-3. Trimester analysis of specific data at staff meetings to assess the efficacy of differentiation efforts.
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	1-3. Yearly pre-assessment of CCSS skill
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	1-3. Regular monitoring of data and assessing how differentiation efforts have been used and how effective those efforts have been.
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	<p>1. Begin with training on how to differentiate with small group math instruction 3/2015 and expand to more focused differentiation instruction beginning with staff training 3/2016 and be ongoing at staff meetings.</p> <p>2. After-school tutoring for students performing below grade level is ongoing, online academic programs to provide differentiated instruction implemented 10/14 and are ongoing, after school academic enrichment program implemented 10/16 and will be ongoing.</p> <p>3. Teacher lesson plans will indicate differentiation in math beginning math 9/15 and other core subjects 9/16.</p>
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	The strategies to be used will be communicated to the school commission. Further information will be shared with parents in school and classroom newsletters and at informational meetings. Our goals will also be posted on our website.

# Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

**Action Plan for St. Francis of Assisi School**

**Goal #2** (from Chapter 3-E): Students will explore and study the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**Rationale for this Goal:** The result of our staff and student surveys indicate a need to increase the Catholicity of our school. In order to meet this demand, St. Francis of Assisi School will implement the Archdiocesan newly adopted religion framework, teach more intentionally our Catholic faith and traditions, and increase the opportunities for liturgical and faith-based expressions of service.

**Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs:** As stated in our SLEs, students at St. Francis of Assisi School are Christ-Centered Disciples who learn and live by the Catholic teachings and traditions. Our Mission statement communicates that students foster an active faith. Our Philosophy states that at St. Francis of Assisi School we are committed to learning and living the values of our Catholic faith and traditions.

<b>Strategy #1</b>	Each grade will administer a pre-test to determine student knowledge of prior grade’s Seattle Archdiocesan Religion curriculum and the Four Pillars of the Catholic Church.
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Obtain tests from Archdiocese</li> <li>2. Administer tests to assess baseline understanding and knowledge</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-2. No cost</li> <li>1-2. Tests from the Archdiocese--cost of printing</li> </ol>
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	Administration will gather every grade level pre-test by September 2015 (provided they are developed).
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	Beginning of the year pre-test
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	Teachers will give cumulative assessments throughout the entire year.
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	The first test will be administered in the Fall of 2015 (provided they are developed).
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Parents will be informed of this process through school classroom newsletters. Test results can be shared with parents as well.

<b>Strategy #2</b>	Become familiar with and utilize the Archdiocesan-provided curricula and materials.
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase teachers' familiarity with their grade's required prayers, vocabulary, Bible Stories, etc.</li> <li>2. Utilize Archdiocesan rubrics to communicate student learning with families and teachers.</li> <li>3. Collect evidence of student learning to better guide instruction</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	1-3. No costs
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	1-3. Teachers of religion, and administration to acquire materials
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	1-3. Periodic analysis of progress in area of religion instruction
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	1-3. Beginning of the year pre-test.
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	1-3. Religion instruction will be evaluated on a yearly basis to better focus instruction year to year.
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	1-3. 2015-Pre-test will provide a baseline.
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Parents are informed of instructional strategies and changes through school newsletters, and through updates on classroom lessons and materials.

<b>Strategy #3</b>	Increase the opportunities for liturgical and faith-based expressions of service.
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family Group year-long study of the Mass</li> <li>2. Newly formed Student Council creates and posts various service opportunities</li> <li>3. The addition of grade level attendance at daily Mass on Fridays</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	1-3. No costs
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	Religion Coordinator Pastor Student Council and their advisors Classroom Teachers Administration
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Family Group lesson plans</li> <li>2. Student Council Meeting Minutes and volunteer opportunities posted on their bulletin board</li> <li>3. Grade level Mass attendance on Friday</li> </ol>
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	None
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scheduled staff review of activities</li> <li>2. Yearly survey of Student Council and Middle School students of volunteer opportunities</li> </ol>
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. September 2014 - April 2015</li> <li>2. October 2014 - ongoing</li> <li>3. September 2014 - ongoing (staff review during Fall 2015 retreat)</li> </ol>
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Classroom and school newsletters, student council bulletin board updates, school and classroom websites

# Improving Student Learning for Catholic Schools

## Action Plan for St. Francis of Assisi School

**Goal #3 (from In-depth Study):** To increase student mastery of the Math Common Core State Standards

**Rationale for this Goal:** Based on standardized testing data and text- and teacher-created criterion referenced tests, we have identified improving student mastery of the Math Common Core State Standards as a critical goal. The most recent standardized test results showed a significant drop in the mastery of math concepts with the adoption of the more rigorous Common Core State Standards.

**Alignment with mission, philosophy, SLEs:** St. Francis of Assisi students are active learners who understand the purpose of learning.

<b>Strategy #1</b>	Increased staff understanding and use of math CCSS and curricula
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide professional development for 2015 Edition of Go Math! Curriculum for teachers in grades K-5</li> <li>2. Provide time for teachers to explore resources</li> <li>3. Teachers will track the Math CCSS taught</li> <li>4. Recommend to Archdiocese that it provide for all teachers! Professional Development for a different way to see math understandings (Greg Tang, Kim Sutton)</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professional development in Go Math! included in program cost. Additional training will require further funds. \$5,000.00</li> <li>2. Staff meeting time or additional professional development time. No cost.</li> <li>3. Provided and completed via teacher lesson plans. No cost.</li> <li>4. Cost could be deferred to Archdiocesan funds. Title II-A funds also available.</li> </ol>
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-3. All teachers of math, as well as administration.</li> <li>4. Archdiocese</li> </ol>
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Administration tracking of staff participation in trainings/tutorials.</li> <li>2. Attendance at meetings.</li> <li>3. Teacher lesson plans/gradebooks, CCSS assessments</li> <li>4. Archdiocesan records.</li> </ol>
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	1-4. Feedback from teachers at staff meetings regarding lack of understanding of math CCSS, materials, and implementation of resources applicable to math CCSS
<b>Ongoing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking at lesson plans.</li> </ul>

<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of CCSS based curricula</li> <li>• Monitoring general level of understanding in CCSS discussion</li> <li>• Teacher surveys to probe for understanding</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Began in August of 2014, but will be ongoing.</li> <li>2. Began Spring of 2014, ongoing process.</li> <li>3. Began January 2014, ongoing process.</li> <li>4. This is an ongoing process.</li> </ol>
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Information about the shift to the Math CCSS and student achievement on the new standards is shared at Information Night, conferences, on report cards, progress reports, Parent Move Up Meetings, School Commission meetings, open Parent Association meetings, kindergarten orientation, and weekly school and class newsletters.

<b>Strategy #2</b>	Differentiated Instruction
<b>Activities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate how to use small group work to effectively differentiate instruction in the classroom.</li> <li>2. Provide opportunities for after school tutoring for students who are truly struggling to meet grade-level standards.</li> <li>3. Provide enrichment for students meeting standards earlier in the school year.</li> <li>4. After school homework club for fourth grade students</li> <li>5. After school study skills group for junior high students</li> <li>6. Pilot the use of specialist teachers in supporting levelled math groups and judging its efficacy.</li> <li>7. Provide student access to IXL for skills practice</li> </ol>
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Costs related to investigating effective programs may include costs of substitute teachers, as well as teacher time spent in the process. The cost would vary according to number of teachers and time. (\$150.00 per day x an estimate of 10 days for an estimated total of \$1,500)</li> <li>2. The school is able to provide space for, and contacts to, third-party tutors.</li> <li>3. Cost of resources provided by: IXL, Think Central/Go Math!</li> <li>4. Cost is tutoring is approximately \$4,000</li> <li>5. Title I funds have been made available to cover minimal costs.</li> <li>6. Current employee--no additional cost</li> <li>7. Cost of program license: IXL: \$1,485.00</li> </ol>
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	1-7. Administration, classroom teachers, and math specialists

<p><b>Process For Monitoring</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Feedback from teachers investigating ways of differentiating instruction shared at staff meetings</li> <li>2, 4-5. Sign-in sheets for students receiving after school tutoring/homework help at school</li> <li>6. Administration consistently reviews progress of program.</li> <li>3, 7. Teachers/administration track student online use of IXL/ThinkCentral; lesson plans reflecting differentiation</li> </ol>
<p><b>Baseline Assessment</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pre-test at beginning of year.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Ongoing Assessment</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-7. Formative assessments, benchmark assessments, standardized testing.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Timeline Start/Stop</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 04/15: Begin discussion and continue ongoing investigation</li> <li>2. 09/14: Began and will be ongoing</li> <li>3. 01/16: Begin to provide enrichment opportunities</li> <li>4. 10/14: Program began and will be continued as needs are evaluated</li> <li>5. 09/14: Program began and will be ongoing</li> <li>6. Program has been in place, and will be reassessed at the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year.</li> <li>7. 09/14: Began and will be ongoing</li> </ol>
<p><b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b></p>	<p>Parents would potentially receive communications regarding ongoing growth in programs that will provide differentiated instruction for students. In addition to this, parents will be provided with periodical reports from IXL or Go Math! to specifically communicate their students' needs in math. Parents of students with more particular needs will be provided with more detailed accommodation plans that will better delineate differentiation options for that particular case.</p>

<b>Strategy #3</b>	1. Utilize existing online tracking systems for student mastery of the math CCSS
<b>Activities</b>	1. Use the IXL program to track students in grades 6-8 2. Use the Think Central: GO Math! Personal Trainer for grades K-5
<b>Cost or Resources &amp; Sources</b>	1-2. Costs covered by operating budget for curricular materials and licensing. Staff time will be allocated for analyzing data and communicating results to parents.
<b>Person(s) Responsible For Implementation</b>	1-2. Administration and staff
<b>Process For Monitoring</b>	1-2. Teachers access online-generated reports on student usage and improvement.
<b>Baseline Assessment</b>	1-2. Staff feedback regarding inability to adequately track mastery of the math CCSS
<b>Ongoing Assessment</b>	1-2. Staff given time to assess mastery on a trimester based time schedule.
<b>Timeline Start/Stop</b>	1-2. Online programs began in September 2014 and will be ongoing.
<b>Process for Communicating to Shareholders</b>	Parents will be provided with periodical reports from IXL or Go Math! to specifically communicate their students' needs in math, in addition to the information provided on report cards and progress reports. Information on how and why these programs are implemented will be offered to parents during conferences and Information Nights scheduled throughout the year.

## **B. CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE ACTION PLAN**

We believe our school has the capacity to carry out and implement our action plan. The Action Plan derived from our last self-study had three critical goals. We were able to implement all of them to some extent. The first goal was narrowed from integrating all of our Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) to integrating those focused on academic excellence as we transitioned from St. Francis Standards to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The transition from St. Francis Standards to the CCSS has required a large investment in faculty time and energy so the

decision to narrow our first critical goal was intentional. The result of this hard work has led to greater student mastery of the CCSS. This is evident in on going classroom assessments and in student achievement tracked on online programs such as Lexia Core 6.

Our second critical goal involved continuing Professional Learning Communities (PLC) work. When reading through the blogs describing the work and listening to teachers talk about what was happening in many of the grade level meetings, it was clear that PLCs were being used more as a common planning time than for the disaggregation of student assessment data and development of targeted teaching strategies. Grade level planning times were not all aligned last year, and teachers no longer blogged about working together. However, many of our staff meetings provided time for grade level partners to work together on becoming familiar with the CCSS at their grade and developing/finding lessons, assessments and rubrics to help meet the standards. This year, teachers at each grade level have at least one common planning time in order to collaborate. Student mastery of the CCSS has improved as teachers have worked together to find ways to identify, teach and assess the standards. PLC work is ongoing.

Our third critical goal was to explore methods and strategies for improving reading comprehension. This has been a focus school-wide and is part of the Reading/ English Language Arts CCSS. As a result of the Action Plan, a new reading series, *Journeys*, was adopted in the primary grades, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments are now given to all students in k-2 and Reading Resource students in k-6. The results of the assessments are used to drive instruction and identify students in need of additional support. When data showed that even with extra small group support we have students who continue to struggle, we purchased Lexia Core 6. Lexia Core 6 is an online, individualized program with emphasis on the mastery of the reading standards as well as fluency. Because our data indicated a need, we extended our Reading Resource support so we now work with our middle school students. We also provided them with access to Lexia Core 6. As we continue to refine our reading program, our assessments- Fountas and Pinnell, *Journeys* story tests, Lexia Core 6, as well as teacher created CCSS tests- provide evidence of student learning.

Our final critical goal was to increase our endowment as a way to ensure we would be able to provide our families in need with financial aid. The goal was \$1,000,000.00. This goal was met in 2012. In both the 2012-13 and the 2013-14 school years, we were able to provide \$50,000 in financial aid to our needy families using only interest from the endowment. In August 2014, our endowment balance was \$1,173,366.00. Sound financial planning and stable enrollment allow us fully fund our Action Plan.

Our current Action Plan was written with input and support from the entire staff, School Commission, our Pastor, and our school community. Much thought and discussion went into each goal. The involvement of so many shareholders in our plan will help insure its implementation. We have merged our three goals on to one calendar, assuring that we have our activities are reasonable and rigorous and not overwhelming.

We will monitor the implementation of our action plan several ways. The administration and leadership team will continue to meet monthly to review and monitor the implementation of activities on our Action Plan. Progress and next steps on our Action Plan will be discussed at the first staff meeting of each month. Teachers will continue to assess student progress with classroom

and textbook assessments and rubrics as well as the data collected from online learning programs such as Lexia Core 6 and MobyMax. This data, along with data collected from various reading assessments will be shared at staff meetings the week after report cards go home. This will happen three times a year. We will also track student and school progress on the yearly IOWA Form E. We will use the data we gather to assess the impact of our Action Plan on student learning. The data from the different assessments will help us modify and adjust our Plan.

The progress on our Action Plan will be a standing item on our monthly School Commission agenda. We will inform our parent community of the progress made at our Information Meeting in September shareholders and in our newsletters.

The goals listed on our Action Plan are only some of the goals our staff identified during our self-study. Because we will continually monitor our Action Plan, we will know when our current goals are met. As the current goals are achieved, we will work together as a staff to identify which new goals should be incorporated into our Action Plan. Because we believe our Action Plan is a working document, it will be continually reviewed and revised.

Our work on past Action Plans, a reasonable timeline for starting new activities, the resources to implement our activities, and plans to share and analyze assessment data and monitor progress on our goals at staff meetings progress speak to our school's capacity to implement and monitor our Action Plan. Sharing our progress on our Action Plan with our School Commission monthly and our entire school community yearly, is another way we will hold ourselves accountable for the implementation of our Action Plan.

After analyzing the results of our last Action Plan, we discovered that we needed to do a better job of collecting, sharing and tracking student assessment data. We have included this in our Action Plan activities and already implemented new programs and assessments to better monitor student progress. Our last Action Plan called for creation of assessments and rubrics to monitor student progress in meeting our SLEs. This still needs to be completed. We have CCSS rubrics and assessments to measure student progress as Active Learners. With the help of the newly adopted Archdiocese Religion Standards and the soon to be created assessments, we will finish identifying and creating assessments and rubrics to measure student progress towards meeting all of our SLEs. We believe our Action Plan goals are rigorous, obtainable and will help students learn.

# **In-Depth Study**

**An In-Depth Study in Mathematics**

**by:**

**St. Francis of Assisi School  
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Continuous School Improvement Focused On High Achievement of All Students  
**2014-2015**

## Preface

At St. Francis of Assisi School, we are committed to facilitating academic excellence. Our students perform well on standardized tests and in high school. When we adopted the Math and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards, we dedicated ourselves to helping all of our students meet or exceed these very rigorous standards. An in-depth study of our student progress and assessment data revealed a need to focus on helping all of our students master the Math Common Core State Standards.

## TASK 1 – ANALYZING CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT DATA

For a number of years, St. Francis of Assisi School used the ITBS assessment to track our students' progress over time. Our data shows our students have performed fairly well on the math portion of the ITBS. With our adoption of the Math CCSS and our move to the IOWA Form E assessment, we have seen a drop in our students' performance on the math portion of the assessment. This is not the case for ELA assessment data. Analysis of our IOWA Form E math testing data from grades 3-8, indicates 43% of our students' performances were in the top quartile and 6% in the bottom. In Language-ELA, 62% of our students performances were in the top quartile and only 2% were in the bottom. This data confirms what teachers are seeing in the classrooms and on chapter assessments. Our students seem to have a better mastery of the ELA CCSS than the Math CCSS.

	ITBS Core Totals 2010-2014				Spring	(National Student Norms)
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
1st Grade	85	78	82	N/A	N/A	
2nd Grade	80	80	79	77	N/A	
3rd Grade	81	77	84	81	N/A	
4th Grade	79	84	85	87	N/A	
5th Grade	80	84	86	86	N/A	
6th Grade	79	78	84	79	N/A	
7th Grade	86	79	82	81	N/A	
8th Grade	83	86	80	N/A	N/A	

	ITBS Reading Totals 2010-2014			Spring	(National Student Norms)
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1st Grade	89	87	86	N/A	N/A
2nd Grade	78	80	81	80	N/A
3rd Grade	79	78	80	77	N/A
4th Grade	77	82	82	83	N/A
5th Grade	78	80	83	82	N/A
6th Grade	76	74	77	76	N/A
7th Grade	81	74	78	78	N/A
8th Grade	79	84	77	N/A	N/A

	ITBS Language Totals 2010-2014			Spring	(National Student Norms)
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1st Grade	93	80	91	N/A	N/A
2nd Grade	82	81	77	76	N/A
3rd Grade	83	79	88	84	N/A
4th Grade	80	81	84	89	N/A
5th Grade	78	82	84	86	N/A
6th Grade	78	79	84	80	N/A
7th Grade	83	77	80	80	N/A
8th Grade	82	84	79	N/A	N/A

	ITBS Math Totals 2010-2014			Spring	(National Student Norms)
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1st Grade	83	75	78	N/A	N/A
2nd Grade	77	76	78	73	N/A
3rd Grade	78	73	78	76	N/A
4th Grade	76	85	85	81	N/A
5th Grade	80	84	88	84	N/A
6th Grade	78	77	83	76	N/A
7th Grade	87	82	82	80	N/A
8th Grade	82	85	80	N/A	N/A

Cohort analysis also indicates a concerning trend that in math, the bottom quartile of a given class does not seem to change over time. 77% of students remained in the lower math group for two or more years.

Of the 62 students who have been in low math class grouping from 2009-2010 to 2014-2015, 48 (77.4%) have stayed in the lower math class for two or more years.					
Student:	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade
	4	5			8
	4	5			8
	4	5			8
	4	5			
	4	5			8
		5		7	8
		5		7	8
		5		7	8
		5		7	8
		5		7	8
				7	8
				7	8
				7	8
				7	8
	4	5		7	
	4	5		7	
	4	5			
	4	5		7	8
	4	5		7	8
	4	5		7	
	4	5		7	8
		5			8
				7	8
				7	8
				7	8
				7	8
	4	5	6	7	
		5	6		
	4	5			

<b>Student:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>
	4	5			
				7	8
	4	5			
	4	5			
	4	5			
	4	5			
	4	5			
	4	5			
	4	5			
	4	5			
		5	6		
		5	6		
		5	6		
	4	5	6		
	4	5	6		
	4	5			
		5	6	7	

### Kennedy Math Placement

Year	Honors Geometry		Geometry		Honors Algebra		Algebra		Total
	# Students	%	#Students	%	#Students	%	#Student	%	
2010	3	12	13	52	6	24	3	12	25
2011	10	36	11	39	5	18	3	10	29
2012	4	14	13	46	8	29	3	11	28
2013	10	29	14	40	7	20	4	11	35
2014	15	38	11	29	8	21	5	13	39

Data from Kennedy Catholic High School (the school most St. Francis graduates choose to attend) shows that last year 13% of applicants were placed in Algebra I and 21% are placed in Honors Algebra. The rest are placed 29% in Geometry and 38% in Honors Geometry. This placement has been fairly consistent over time. Students placed in Algebra I usually need additional support. Our goal is to have at least 95% of our students place into Honors Algebra or higher. We believe that by focusing on student mastery of the Math CCSS, we will achieve this goal.

### Significant Accomplishments:

- The majority of our students' score in the upper two quartiles in both ELA and math on standardized tests.
- Over 70% of our students taking the Kennedy Catholic High School placement test are placed in Geometry or Honors Geometry.
- The adoption of our new, more rigorous ELA and Math CCSS

### Goal:

- To increase student mastery of the Math Common Core State Standards.

## **TASK 2 – USING CURRICULUM STANDARDS**

Our school has adopted the Math and English/Language Arts Common Core State Standards as our curriculum standards for these subjects. Over the past five years, we have moved to align our teaching and assessments with these standards. For the last three years, understanding, teaching and assessing the CCSS has been one of our primary staff development goals. Last year, we updated, clarified and revised our Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) to better reflect what we truly do and expect our students to do. One of our SLEs is “At St. Francis of Assisi School we (are)...Active Learners.” As active learners, we expect that our students will apply knowledge. This will lead to meeting or exceeding the Math and ELA CCSS.

We believe all of our students should either meet or exceed the CCSS for their grade level OR make at least one year's growth towards meeting those standards each year. Our goal is that all of our students leave our school ready for high school and with a strong understanding and mastery of both the Math and ELA CCSS.

Longitudinal data from our ITBS data shows that our students do not perform as well on the math portion of the assessment. This was also true when our students took the IOWA Form E assessment last fall. Our test results showed that 6% of our 3rd-8th grade students scored in the lowest quartile in math while only 2% of our 3rd-8th graders scored in the lowest quartile in English/Language Arts. Conversely, 43% of the students scored in the top quartile in Math, while 62% scored in the top quartile in English/Language Arts. Math is our area of greater concern.

Last summer, we adopted a new k-5 math series that is aligned to the Math CCSS. In 2013-2014 we adopted a 6-8 grade math series aligned to the Math CCSS. In 2012-2013, we adopted a high school math text aligned to the High School Algebra Math CCSS. These new adoptions have provided us with a curriculum map for teaching the Math CCSS. The scope and sequence provided by the series not only lets us know which standard is taught when, it also relates new standards to ones taught in previous grades.

Our standardize testing data and the data we receive from high school shows us that although most of our students perform well in both English/Language Arts and math, we have room for improvement, especially in math. Because of this, we have committed to using our new math curriculum to help us assess and track student progress towards meeting the Math CCSS. When students do not show mastery of a standard, we are now re-teaching and reassessing that standard.

### Significant Accomplishments:

- The adoption of both the Math and English/Language Arts CCSS.
- The work teachers have put into understanding and aligning their teaching and assessments to the Math CCSS.
- The adoption of new math materials explicitly aligned to the CCSS.
- The teachers' commitment to re-teaching and reassessing CCSS that students do not initially master.

### Goal:

- To better support students who struggle to meet grade level standards in Math.

## **TASK 3 – INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY**

Over the past three years, our teachers have worked not only on better understanding the Math and English/Language Arts CCSS, but also on how best to teach and assess the standards. Much of our professional development has been focused on this. We first began looking at the ELA CCSS as a staff three years ago. After an overview of the entire document, our teachers and support staff worked with their grade level partners to become familiar with their grade level standards. Teachers then met in grade bands and finally as a whole staff to become familiar with what standards students should have mastered in previous grades and what standards they would need to master in the next grades. After becoming familiar with the ELA CCSS, we used the same process to examine the Math CCSS.

Doing this helped our teachers become more familiar with the scope and sequence of the standards. Teachers reported changing the way that they taught some concepts to better capitalize on prior learning or better lay the ground work for future learning. It also stressed for teachers the importance of teaching to mastery their grade level standards. This focus on mastery has led to improved results on classroom based assessments.

In the summer of 2013, most of our staff took part in a three-day training on teaching and implementing the CCSS. Last year, we did a book study on Mike Schmoker's *Focus* and learned many of the techniques taught in Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*. Teachers took what they learned back to their classrooms. We discussed at staff meetings and on Google.docs what we had tried and/or were now using in our classroom. Teachers also attended different learning conventions and classes and brought back new ideas to share with the staff.

After becoming familiar with the grade level standards, our staff looked to both teach and measure student progress towards mastery of the standards. One of our teachers researched and became very familiar with how to create rubrics. He led us as we looked at different rubrics aligned with different CCSS and read books on how to create our own rubrics. Teachers brought samples of rubrics they had created or adopted to assess assignments or tests. These were shared and often adapted to fit the needs of other teachers. Now, students are often given the rubric by which an assignment will be assessed when they are given the assignment. This has improved student learning by making the learning targets clear. This year, teachers are gathering anchor papers to go along with the different rubrics. Showing students an example of "4" or "A" works helps clarify questions students might have about a rubric. Anchor papers provide students with an even better understanding of the level of rigor expected of them.

After beginning to develop rubrics, last spring we also started working on new report cards that were aligned to the CCSS. Although teachers were still becoming familiar with new standards when we began this process, we realized that it was important that we had report cards that were aligned to what we were teaching. A small group of teachers and the principal and vice-principal met during the summer to continue the work. Teachers were paid for their time. Last fall, the report cards developed by the small group were shared with the staff. We then worked first in grade level bands and then as a staff and finalized our new report cards. Teachers explained the new report cards to parents at Parent-Teacher conferences in October. The report cards were first used in November. Having report cards that are aligned to the CCSS allowed teachers to be more focused on and improved students learning of those standards.

Last year, most of our Professional Learning Community time happened in when grade level partners met in breakout sessions at staff meetings. This year, the two teachers at each grade have at least one common planning time in order to facilitate their small Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Teachers report using this time to: discuss and plan how they will teach and assess the different standards; examine student work; and to create rubrics and our new report cards. We are expanding our PLCs. This year, we have also set aside several of our Wednesday staff meeting to allow teachers in the different grade bands the opportunity to work together on such things as report cards, assessments, and to share student work and discuss how they defined mastery of a grade level standard.

Significant Accomplishments:

- Our adoption and implementation of the Math and ELA CCSS.
- Developing/adapting rubrics and assessments aligned to CCSS
- Professional learning by the staff that increased our understanding of the CCSS and how to better teach them.
- The addition of grade band PLC time.
- The creation and adoption of new report cards aligned to the CCSS

Goal:

- Gathering examples of student work to use as anchor papers for rubrics

## **TASK 4 – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Standardized test data, classroom assessments, and reports from the Catholic high schools our graduates attend make it clear that our students read and write well. Our students understand what they read and are able to articulate what they know. In the past six years, we have seen growth in this area.

Before moving to the IOWA Form E assessment this year, St. Francis School collected and analyzed data from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for many years and used the data as a basis for curricular change. During our last accreditation, our data showed we needed to improve our reading instruction. In 2009-2010, a reading specialist was hired by the school and worked with our teachers at whole staff trainings and in individual classrooms. Teacher instruction around the reading standards was better aligned school-wide. Staff members also attended the International Reading Association Convention and spent staff meetings learning and practicing on each other best practices for reading. We also adopted a new reading curriculum that better aligned to the

standards we were teaching. Our ITBS data showed student learning improved, and our most recent IOWA form E testing data for grades 3-8 continues to bare out this trend with 84% of students in the upper quartiles in ELA.

We believe that we can adapt what we did to improve student learning around reading to improve student learning around math. With the creation of our new report cards and the adoption of our new math series k-5 and the second year of use of our new math series 6-8, we have already seen an increase in student mastery of the Math CCSS. We believe that continued professional development focused on best practices in teaching the Math CCSS, increased alignment of the teaching of the math standards k-8, and better implementation of our new math series will have an even greater positive impact on student learning. Our goal is to improve student mastery of the Math CCSS.