

**THE REPORT OF THE VISITING  
COMMITTEE**

**ST. CHARLES CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
929 18TH STREET  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92154**

**DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO**

**WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION  
AND  
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND  
COLLEGES**

**PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT  
MARCH 2 ~ 4, 2010**

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

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

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

May the Christ you serve bless you with every success.

## **Part I: Context of the School**

**Self study: Chapters 1 and 2**

### **School/Community Profile**

Comment on:

*To what extent have the school's major changes since its last Self study impacted the school's current Self study Process and influenced the current analysis of the status of the school?*

St. Charles Catholic School has compiled and analyzed data since its last self study. The data covered comparative enrollment of the students over the past six years, ethnicity and student population, and parish membership. Additional data included staff information such as teaching positions or roles at the school, along with the number of years staff members have been there. A noted change is the improvement of the teacher turnover rate in the last five years. Parent data included information on socioeconomic status, education levels, occupations, and involvement in the school community.

One significant and ongoing trend is that the school community is primarily Hispanic, and so many of the students are English Language Learners (ELL). A full-time inclusion coordinator was hired to assist teachers in meeting the needs of the students and to act as a liaison with the public schools to access funding such as Titles I and III for programs to aid the students.

A major change since the last self study has been the decline in enrollment. Causes include the downturn in the economy, the closure of nearby Marian Catholic High School in 2007, and the violence in Mexico, which caused families to move a distance from the school or across the border where their budgets could not accommodate tuition payments. It was indicated that the enrollment is beginning to rise due to efforts by the Development Committee and administration.

Lastly, based on observations of the Visiting Team and interviews with stakeholders, the improvement of the physical plant to accommodate advances in technology has been another major trend. LAN connections and Wireless Network coverage, SMARTBoards in all classrooms and the Research Study Center, laptops for teachers and eighth graders, along with other additions have enhanced student learning.

*To what extent is the Catholic identity of the school prominent and evidenced by healthy interactions among teachers, students, parents, stakeholders and the greater community?*

The Catholic identity of St. Charles Catholic School is prominent. The mission and philosophy statements emphasize the Catholicity of the school as a faith-centered environment, where the whole student is taught in partnership with the parents who are recognized as the primary educators of their children. Interviews with the various stakeholder groups indicate that this theory is carried out in practice, as a positive, communicative Catholic environment. Older

students mentor younger ones by attending Mass with them and by Friendship Circles made up of one student from every grade. The faculty expressed appreciation for a mentor teacher to whom they can turn for support and guidance and they indicated that the administration provides a policy of truly open access. St. Charles Catholic School truly represents a Christ-centered school.

Survey results stress the importance of the Catholic faith. Parents send their children to the school for its religious education and atmosphere. Based on interviews, parents choose St. Charles Catholic School because of the dedicated and professional administration, faculty and staff who drive the high academic expectations. A school Mass is celebrated twice per month, and students are encouraged to attend Mass once a week. Prayer experiences are provided, along with celebration of the sacraments, community service projects, and spiritual formation opportunities. Religious symbols and murals are evident throughout the school facility. Also, teachers attend workshops, retreats and conferences for professional and spiritual growth, and most have their religious certification or are in the process of completing it. St. Charles Catholic School recently joined the CSJ Network to provide on-going spiritual formation for the faculty and staff.

## **Progress Report**

Comment on:

*To what extent have the prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data been used to ensure high achievement of all students and has driven school improvement?*

The use of prior accreditation findings and other pertinent data is highly effective. They were first presented in the 2004 WCEA/WASC three day visit. In the past four years the administration, faculty, staff and parents have worked to address those recommendations. The Visiting Team offers the following considerations for each identified critical area for growth.

### **1: Develop and implement strategies for meeting the needs of students in mixed ability classrooms.**

The principal, faculty, and inclusion consultant, as well as surrounding public school district personnel, worked to implement this goal. The greatest need for St. Charles Catholic School was in the area of English Language Learners.

A Student Success Team (SST), a reading intervention program, Read Now, Accelerated Math (AM), and English in a Flash were developed. In addition, a formal process to follow special needs students was started. Professional growth in differentiated instruction and inclusion has become a priority. A new policy for the use of Spanish and other languages on campus was developed.

Stakeholders went through a process to revise the SLEs, reducing them from six to four, more focused, goals.

The teacher evaluation process (a checklist and a self-evaluation) has become more focused on inclusion of the diverse student population that includes the English Language Learners and special needs children.

The revision of the School Philosophy, Mission Statement and SLEs has helped to redefine expectations of students in a more concise, assessable manner.

**2: Update and review all curricular areas with purchase of needed/additional materials along with providing teachers with needed/additional training.**

Collaboration has been the focus in working on this goal. In-depth studies have been completed by the entire faculty as completion is required by the diocesan Curriculum Review Cycle. The principal and/or his designee also collaborated with public school district personnel to see what training was available and how Title II funds could be used to fund training. Other Title funds have also been used to purchase supplemental materials.

A new social studies series was purchased and implemented in grades K-8 during the 2006-07 school year. Informal in-depth review of the religion/family life program occurs annually, and formal review occurs approximately every three years. ACRE test results are reviewed annually by the entire faculty to assist in making decisions regarding religion curriculum.

Title II and school funds have paid for professional growth in the area of curriculum. All teachers now have their own laptop computer since the last visit, bringing visual and tactile resources to the classroom. SMART Boards in every classroom and teacher laptops have opened the door to a multitude of resources via the Internet. In-depth studies of health, technology, fine arts and mathematics have been completed in accordance with Diocesan Office for Schools. In response to teacher articulation, adjustments were made to the Math Facts in a Flash and Accelerated Math programs. The process of evaluating Language Arts began in fall of 2009. Due to the large number of English Language Learners that attend St. Charles Catholic School, much discussion concentrated on this subject area. The school is in the process of evaluating the need for a more comprehensive phonics program in grades K-2 and grammar/writing materials in grades 3-8.

**3: Update current six-year finance and maintenance plan to include years through 2010.**

The pastor, principal, leadership team, faculty/staff, Advisory Council, PTG Board and parish were all involved in the work on Goal 3.

The PTG Board, parish, and the school have been the major funding sources for the primary capital improvements. The parish has paid for other projects not listed in the original plan (e.g. resurfacing of blacktop, replacement of air-conditioners in the classrooms in the parish center, carpeting in the parish center rooms and half of the cost of the walkway to the playground equipment).

The PTG Board raised the funds necessary to install new playground equipment, and most of the work in the renovation of the main school building restrooms was completed by the custodians and principal. The PTG paid for the sandblasting, re-stuccoing, painting and the replacement of drinking fountains on the exterior of the main school building.

In addition to the major improvements, many small improvements, as well as other expenditures (i.e. employee pay increases, update of textbooks, etc.) were identified in the plan. All of these goals have been met on time or before originally planned.

The improvements made to the school have had a positive impact the students' learning process. By purchasing and installing new playground equipment, students have been able to tap into their kinesthetic learning abilities and express their ability to work as a team. The installation of ceiling fans and air conditioning has made students more comfortable during warm months. Through the installation of new carpet and tile, teachers have a more usable, child-friendly environment. These renovations have created a sense of pride in the students that is translated in the quality of their work.

*To what extent has the school displayed their ability to implement and monitor the Schoolwide Action Plans?*

St. Charles Catholic School has demonstrated consistent effort in the implementation and monitoring of the Schoolwide Action Plan. Despite a high turnover of pastors and the need to adapt to changing priorities, the school has demonstrated commendable, sustained progress toward the achievement of all goals identified in the previous accreditation visit. The administration, faculty and staff of St. Charles Catholic School have been highly effective in demonstrating the capacity to implement and monitor the Schoolwide Action Plan as evidenced by the findings of the self study as well as through observations, displays and interviews with stakeholders.

## **Part II: Self study Process**

### **Self study: Chapters 3 and 4**

*To what extent does the involvement and collaboration of stakeholders in doing the self study accomplish the five key outcomes of the self study?*

The involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders on the self study was highly effective. The advisory council shared that they were fully included in the development of the self study and continue to be involved in discussions about implementation of the action plan. The mission statement and philosophy were reviewed and revised by the faculty and staff with input from parents. The pastor and advisory council approved revisions, which were then shared with the school community. In 2007, the stakeholders held a meeting to revise the SLEs. They streamlined the SLEs to make them more relevant and applicable to all students. In the spring of 2008, the SLEs were completed and adopted. Focus groups were formed to address the key areas of the self study. They worked on drafts of the document and compiled areas of strength and growth. Surveys by parents, students, clergy, administration, faculty and staff were completed and tabulated to gain valuable information about the school program.

The school program is constantly being assessed using standardized test scores, teacher and publisher-made assessments, observations of students, homework, and other evaluation tools. Teachers meet in grade level articulation groups to provide continuity of instruction, discuss strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, and to review any topics of concern (e.g. teaching strategies for students who have difficulties).

The action plan identifies areas for growth. Clearly made charts indicate goals, rationales, timelines, resources needed, and stakeholders who are responsible for the various tasks. A well-defined monitoring program is also included to ensure accountability and the success of the action plan.

*To what extent are the SLEs an extension of the school's mission and philosophy and to what extent do the developed indicators assist in the measurability of the attainment of SLEs and the attainment of academic standards?*

The Mission Statement and Philosophy of St. Charles Catholic School reflect a strong Catholic identity, challenging and supportive expectations of students and a commitment to Christian values that flow comprehensively into the schoolwide learning expectations. Revised and refined in a process that included stakeholders, the SLEs were finally adopted in 2008. The Mission Statement includes the phrase, "... strives to educate and develop the whole student so they may reach their potential as Catholic individuals." This identification of the mission for St. Charles Catholic School is clearly found in the SLEs, which expect students to become faith-centered, respectful and responsible, and compassionate individuals who are motivated learners.

The entire staff has embraced the focus upon SLEs with the faculty, in particular, organizing lesson plans, instructional methodology and curriculum toward their attainment by all students. The SLEs are clearly evident on campus and in classrooms and all members are aware of the expectations as noted during interviews with various groups.

The self study describes a wide variety of ways in which students meet these expectations. Students shared that they regularly pray on their own and attend Mass, read the Bible and share their understanding with others in an effort to develop a personal relationship with Jesus. St. Charles Catholic School students are challenged to respect themselves as well as the differences in people they meet. The Visiting committee found them to be polite and accepting responsibility for their actions.

The entire school community recognizes the need for establishing a rubric to measure the criteria upon which to insure student attainment of the SLEs. This has been identified as an area for growth included in the school's Action Plan. Currently, students in the eighth grade develop a portfolio based upon samples of work specifically addressing attainment of the SLEs and present these to the school community at the end of the year.

*To what extent is a professionally acceptable assessment process used to collect, disaggregate and analyze student performance data so as to improve student achievement?*

Evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction are a priority through the analysis of individual and class assessment results. Schoolwide academic results are not available. Teachers use informal assessments such as observations, classroom participation, student self assessments, pre-tests, and teacher-student conferences. Publisher-made chapter tests, teacher-made tests, projects, portfolios, and presentations are also used. Technological assessment tools are integrated throughout the curriculum in the form of STAR Math, STAR Reader, STAR Early Literacy, and the use of Neo2 and Senteo remotes. Incoming students are given a battery of tests, including STAR Math and STAR Reading, as well as the Gesell Developmental assessment.

Other formal assessments utilized are ITBS/CogAT, ACRE, and publisher made chapter tests, teacher-made tests, projects, portfolios, and presentations.

After the staff looked at recent ACRE scores, they noticed that, overall, the percentages have dropped in most areas. A curriculum committee has recently been developed to examine areas of strengths and weaknesses in students' religious learning.

Based on assessment results, teachers implement new strategies to attempt to improve student learning. Each teacher determines five main areas for growth and completes an item analysis for improving student growth. On the school level, the administration analyzes school results and shares them with the faculty/staff and parents.

Students use the feedback from formal and informal assessments to become more aware of their academic standing and enhance their academic growth. Teachers conference with students about their academic and behavioral progress on a regular basis. Students and parents are able to monitor their progress utilizing Gradelink, thus enabling them to become motivated and responsible for their own learning.

Students at all grade levels are involved in the assessment of their own learning. Students evaluate their learning by participation in class discussions and skits. In the classroom, teacher

and publisher created tests and quizzes are used to assess student understanding of the curriculum.

Resources are allocated on the basis of grade level articulation, faculty/staff meetings, and input from the curriculum committee. The principal prioritizes when and how textbooks and curricular resources are purchased.

### **Part III: Quality of School Program**

#### **Self study: Chapter 4**

Comment on:

*To what extent is there evidence of acceptable progress by all students to attain SLEs, academic standards and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations?*

Evidence of acceptable student progress or measurement of such progress in the area of the SLEs is highly effective. The SLEs of St. Charles School reflect the goals of its Mission Statement and school philosophy of educating and developing the whole student. This has been achieved in a faith-centered environment that reflects the Gospel message of Jesus. At this time there is no formal tool for assessing mastery of the SLEs. Developing rubrics to measure the achievement of SLEs is identified as an area of growth. However, discussion with the leadership team, as well as classroom observations and displayed evidence indicate that informal assessment based on teacher observation and student reflection has been realized.

The principal is directly involved in the assessment of student achievement of the SLEs. This is accomplished as he reviews lesson plans and grades, conducts formal/informal classroom observations, and in discussion with the teachers. Teachers develop lesson plans to support knowledge and understanding of the SLEs and identify each SLE in their plans. The SLEs are posted in every classroom and throughout the school. A specific SLE is focused on monthly and integrated into the curriculum through discussion and activities. Student recognition is given to those students who exemplify this SLE at the monthly awards assembly and their names are published in the weekly school newsletter.

The 8th grade students, as part of their graduation requirement, present portfolios which demonstrate the mastery of each SLE, supported by their work samples. Each student receives a portfolio rubric which provides feedback and allows the student to be more aware of his/her strengths and areas of growth. Scholarships are awarded to 8th graders who best exemplify a specific SLE. A Principal's Award goes to the graduate who best exemplifies all four SLEs.

Standardized test results, including ITBS, CogAT, ACRE, STAR Reader, STAR Math, and STAR Early Literacy are sent home throughout the year to inform parents of student progress and achievement. Gradelink also provides parents an opportunity to monitor their child's academic progress. Students can monitor their progress as well, and become motivated and responsible for their own learning. ACRE, ITBS, and CogAT test results are reviewed annually. ACRE results are analyzed and presented to the entire faculty annually. In 2008 the principal did an extensive analysis comparing the ACRE results for the last seven years.

Grade level articulation occurs and, based on findings, teachers implement new strategies to improve results. The teacher targets five main areas for growth and completes an item analysis for improving student growth.

*To what extent does the school act as an instrument for evangelization through the above?*

St. Charles Catholic School acts as an instrument of evangelization. The Mission Statement emphasizes that students will live as children of the light in a Christian educational environment. In addition, three of the four SLEs are directly related to evangelization, setting expectations for students to become faith-filled, respectful and responsible, and compassionate individuals. This is facilitated by the administration, faculty, staff and volunteers who model their faith. During interviews with the faculty and staff they frequently referred to their responsibility to witness Christ in their interactions with students and parents. They aid students in leading class prayers, planning prayer services and liturgies, preparing for the sacraments and stations of the cross, attending Masses, building a Christ-centered community, and creating a classroom environment that stresses the Catholic faith. By encouraging students to be motivated learners, the fourth SLE, teachers and administrators inspire students to seek happiness by using the talents God has given them. Faculty members, themselves, take advantage of opportunities to develop their spiritual growth and faith formation through workshops, retreats and conferences.

*To what extent do all structures focus on facilitating achievement for all students?*

There is clear and comprehensive evidence from the self study, from interviews and from observations that every aspect of the St. Charles Catholic School organization has been highly effective in providing resources and support to facilitate learning for all students.

The principal has allocated the necessary resources to provide for staff development in a wide variety of areas, all focused on meeting the needs of students with a range of abilities. During interviews with the instructional aides, the visiting committee learned that the administration frequently encourages and supports professional development for paraprofessionals as well as certificated teachers. The specialized needs of English-Language Learners, students with learning disabilities requiring individualized service plans, and gifted and talented students have all been addressed. St. Charles Catholic School has hired an inclusion coordinator who is responsible for monitoring all the federal funds the school receives under the various Title programs and these funds specifically address the needs of students who face learning difficulties. The faculty works closely with parents to provide regular feedback about student academic progress and the achievement of schoolwide learning expectations. During the interview with the advisory council, they communicated a clear understanding of the need for supporting learning for all students at the school. All members of the council expressed a sense of ownership and responsibility for meeting the challenges and goals of the school, and described the culture of the school as the reason for choosing to become more fully involved. It was evident that the council and the principal share a close working relationship with one another.

A process of reviewing and revising the mission statement and the schoolwide learning expectations included all stakeholder groups and was completed during the 2007-2008 school year. The administration and staff have identified the need to establish a tool for assessing mastery of the SLEs by all students. The consistent maintenance and upgrading of the school facilities has provided an environment which is safe and conducive to learning.

While the relatively high turnover of pastors has shifted the primary responsibility for consistent governance to the principal, the support of the current pastor is evident. During an interview, the pastor expressed his desire to continue and expand support for the school by increasing his presence on campus, meeting with the entire faculty and inviting students to participate more often in the various liturgical opportunities available in the parish. Overall, the organization of St. Charles Catholic School is highly effective in facilitating achievement for all students.

*To what extent does the curricular content, methodology and student instruction support high achievement for all students?*

Curriculum and instruction is highly effective. St. Charles Catholic School follows National, State and Diocesan Standards. The goal is to educate the whole child spiritually and academically through the implementation of the curriculum. As the teachers go through the process of unpacking the standards, they determine what is essential and what is supplemental.

The grade level Religion/Family Life Curriculum follows the Diocesan Curriculum Course Content. Religious truths and values are integrated throughout the curriculum and provide many opportunities to strengthen Catholic identity. The mission statement and philosophy at Saint Charles Catholic School have been continually evaluated and revised to align with the diocesan curriculum expectations. Schoolwide learning expectations were revised with objectives that matched with grade-level standards.

Students participate in grade-level service projects to emphasize responsibility to the parish and community. The entire school attends Mass twice a month. Each grade level has an opportunity to prepare a liturgy twice a year, thus making the liturgy more accessible and more relevant.

Curriculum is articulated through the grade levels and with the local high schools. Teachers consult with their students' former and future instructors regarding strengths and areas for growth in math and reading. A curriculum committee has begun to map content areas beginning with the religion curriculum. Eventually, the goal is to map out each curricular area.

Instructional resources in addition to textbooks include Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reader, and Math Facts in a Flash. Students who need additional support utilize the Power-Up and English in a Flash programs.

Teachers keep up with the latest research-based knowledge by attending professional growth seminars/workshops in instructional planning and methodologies, differentiated instruction, reading, writing, best practices, bilingual education, inclusion, and technology. A variety of teaching strategies help to engage students using all learning styles. Both observations from the Visiting committee and comments from the students support the finding that teachers utilize a wide variety of instructional methodologies in the presentation of curriculum. Students identify their own learning styles in the primary grades and are encouraged to match their learning

strategies with their strengths throughout their years at St. Charles Catholic School. At the same time, they are challenged to develop the learning styles that are less comfortable for them.

Technology is incorporated into the curriculum through the use of SMARTBoards, document projection cameras, laptops, and Senteo remotes. The Joan B. Kroc Technology Center is used by all students weekly. The Research Study Center, Library, Reading Lab and the Video Library serve as additional support. Field trips, an American Revolution overnight boat trip, sixth grade camp, and eighth grade retreat extend the curriculum. Periodicals are provided to expand students' awareness of scripture and current events.

Students learn the religion curriculum through whole class discussion, small groups, presentations, role playing and class projects. These activities allow students at all ability levels the opportunity to be successful. Students are encouraged to participate in their faith and share their faith with their classmates through various prayer services and activities.

One way in which students reflect on and take responsibility for their learning experiences is to guide and participate in student/parent/teacher conferences. By participating in conferences, students take an active role in communicating with their parents and hone their self-assessment abilities.

The curriculum committee is working to set a standard practice for how all teachers can establish classroom expectations and to ensure that students are building upon previous knowledge. The faculty incorporates the religious beliefs and values in all subject areas to create a more complete foundation of their faith and understanding of the Catholic Church. The staff thinks that more family-based projects and activities are needed.

*To what extent is there support for student personal, spiritual and academic growth that supports high achievement for all students?*

St. Charles Catholic School is effective in offering an array of support for student personal, spiritual, and academic growth. In order to accomplish this, support is received from the pastor, principal, faculty, staff, volunteers, and Catholic Charities, along with other local organizations.

For support in faith development, the students are encouraged to participate in Masses twice a month by being ushers and having parts in the liturgy. Eighth graders attend a two-day retreat and upper grades assist in the supervision of the younger grades during Masses. Fifth grade is responsible for presenting the living Stations of the Cross for the school and the parish. Daily classroom prayer, prayer services, the presence of religious symbols throughout the school, and sacramental preparation classes also indicate support for the students' spiritual growth. In addition, the students are offered a family-life program with age appropriate content, along with programs like "Too Good for Drugs" and "Too Good for Violence." The faculty, staff and the pastor expressed the need to encourage more parental involvement in the faith formation of their children, particularly with reference to attendance at Sunday Mass and reception of the sacraments.

The personal development of students is supported through the provision of leadership opportunities including the Associated Student Council and extra curricular programs. These programs include seasonal sports, yearbook, and various clubs moderated by faculty, staff, and volunteers. Counselors are provided through Catholic Charities. Monthly and quarterly awards are given based on the academic as well as spiritual progress.

Students are provided with before, during, and after school tutoring, extra-curricular activities, and community involvement opportunities. The school's Technology Center is open three days a week to provide support in homework completion, technology, labs, and other learning based programs. The school keeps a close relationship with the public school system. St. Charles Catholic School was able to hire an inclusion coordinator who serves as a liaison between the two institutions. The inclusion coordinator is also able to work with the students who are learning English as a second language. This relationship has allowed St. Charles Catholic School to qualify for title funds, which in turn are used for professional growth, materials, and programs needed to support student learning.

*To what extent is an understanding of Church doctrine, Catholic social teaching, and service encouraged and valued?*

The students at St. Charles Catholic School reflect Catholic values through their helpfulness and mercy in all their activities. Each class takes on a community service project, which promotes and encourages empathy and service. The Associated Student Council organizes spiritual activities throughout the year, such as Marian devotions and school-wide outreach to those in need. The school also offers a Sacramental preparation program which focuses on the 2nd graders receiving First Reconciliation and First Communion. Other spiritual growth activities that are encouraged are Friendship Circles, First Friday Adoration, retreats, reciting daily prayers, and preparing liturgies.

*To what extent do resource management and development support high achievement for all students?*

The resources available to St. Charles Catholic school, and the management of those resources for meeting the needs of all students has been highly effective. Generally accepted accounting principles have been followed since the last visit and an audit conducted by the Diocese of San Diego in the summer of 2007 resulted in a confirmation of sound financial practices. St. Charles Catholic School has, in fact, been referred to as an exemplar for other schools in the diocese.

The administration and advisory council, with the dedication and commitment of the PTG, have followed a financial plan for the past six years that has resulted in the accomplishment of most of the objectives outlined in the plan. Elements of the plan included many maintenance and renovation projects, the results of which are clearly evident on campus. Facilities and technology at St. Charles Catholic School are fully adequate to meet the needs of all students in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

Another area of focus has been on the retention of teachers by the continued funding of a salary scale that is higher than the diocesan suggested scale. The result of this effort has been a significant reduction in the turnover rate of staff as noted in the self study. The allocation of funds for the professional development of staff is also noted throughout the self study and many of these opportunities specifically target student populations such as English-Language Learners, which directly supports achievement for all students. While recent economic conditions have placed limitations on support staff, St. Charles Catholic School continues to employ instructional aides for three grades as well as a resource aide. Additional teachers are on staff to support achievement in the areas of the library, physical education, computer literacy and maintenance and music. The school also has an inclusion coordinator on staff responsible for monitoring all funds the school receives from federal sources, Title I, II, III and IV. These funds are specifically targeted toward diverse learning styles, different cultures and the attainment of SLEs.

Current economic conditions and other factors such as the closing of nearby Marian High School have resulted in a significant decrease in enrollment, which poses difficult challenges for St. Charles Catholic School both currently and in the immediate future. Strong financial practices in the past had reserved adequate funds to provide the necessary resources to address budgetary deficits during the 2008-2009 school year. This year the school anticipates operating with a deficit which will, again, be met with funds from savings.

In 2006 a development director was added to the staff to assist the principal in addressing revenue from fundraising as well as increasing enrollment. A development team was formed to assist the director. During interviews with the Visiting committee, they expressed a sincere desire to help overcome the challenges faced by St. Charles Catholic School. The development team has initiated outreach to neighboring parishes, including an outreach to families living in Mexico, to recruit more students for the school. In addition, they have updated the school's website to accommodate Spanish-speaking accessibility. The visiting committee commends the pastor and the principal for identifying resource management and development as an area for growth in the Action Plan.

## **Part IV: Summary and Recommendations**

### **Self study: Chapter 5**

#### **Schoolwide Strengths/Critical Areas for Growth and Action Plan**

St. Charles Catholic School has identified the following schoolwide strengths, which the Visiting committee validated and affirmed:

1. The students strengthen their God-given talents through a variety of opportunities to participate in prayer and worship.
2. The school community support for the less fortunate is outstanding.
3. St. Charles Catholic School has a highly qualified faculty/staff who utilize an abundant variety of strategies and methodologies and continue to grow professionally.
4. Faculty and staff are given many opportunities and resources for professional and spiritual growth.
5. The faculty/staff, parents and students communicate frequently and consistently.
6. The administration and school community employs responsible stewardship and sound financial practices.
7. There are many opportunities for students to utilize technology which enhances learning.
8. The administration promotes school commitment and involvement by obtaining input and assistance from all stakeholders through the use of multiple committees, councils and teams.
9. The faculty administers and analyzes a variety of assessments which are utilized to promote student growth.
10. The Inclusion Program is in place to further support the needs of the students and their parents.
11. Faculty, students and parents are supported by a School Psychologist, Technology Coordinator, Athletic Director, Inclusion Coordinator and paraprofessionals.
12. The development, implementation and completion of the 5-year Finance and Maintenance Plan have brought about many school improvements.
13. The school plant is well maintained by our custodial staff which creates a safe and clean environment for the school community.
14. A Curriculum Committee has been formed and has begun the process of unpacking and mapping the curriculum.
15. Marketing and recruitment strategies have been implemented.
16. The parents and students are provided the opportunity to monitor progress through the use of Gradelink.com.

In addition, the Visiting committee recognizes and commends St. Charles Catholic School for the following:

- The Visiting committee commends the faculty and staff for their cohesiveness and their Christ-like approach to their ministry.
- The principal provides vision and focus on the academic standards, the SLEs, and the spiritual lives of the students.

- The highly qualified faculty utilize strategies and methodologies which engage all learners in meeting high academic expectations.
- The involvement of the dedicated support staff in all aspects of the school demonstrates a family atmosphere evident to students and parents.
- Active parent participation, as seen in the Advisory Council, the PTG and the Development team, clearly supports school policies, programs and a shared vision for the school's future.
- The faculty and staff consistently take advantage of the wide variety of professional development opportunities provided, which help improve student learning.
- Student learning is greatly enhanced by many opportunities to utilize technology and supplemental programs.
- The administration developed, implemented and completed the five-year plan for finance and maintenance, which has resulted in many school improvements.
- The school provides a safe, nurturing environment where students display respect for one another and a love of learning.

St. Charles Catholic School identified the following Critical Areas for Growth:

1. Update and review curricular areas in conjunction with the diocesan Curriculum Review Cycle. Additionally, the Curriculum Committee needs to guide the faculty in the unpacking and mapping of the curriculum following the Curriculum Review Cycle.
2. Create rubrics to assess the achievement of the School-wide Learning Expectations at the primary, intermediate and junior high levels.
3. Implement the Schools Attuned for All Kinds of Minds program.
4. Develop a long-term budgetary and fiscal plan that fits the current enrollment and includes the development of marketing and recruitment strategies in order to stabilize school enrollment.

The Visiting committee affirms the schools self-identified critical areas for growth and has no further recommendations for St. Charles Catholic School to consider.

Comment on:

*To what extent does the long-range Schoolwide Action plan align with and address the school's identified critical areas for growth in order to support high achievement of all students?*

St. Charles Catholic School has been effective in the alignment of the Schoolwide Action Plan with their self-identified critical areas for growth, particularly with respect to the support of high achievement for all students. Three of the four goals (Goals 1, 2 and 3) are focused upon evaluation of curriculum, monitoring and measuring student attainment of SLEs and upon staff development addressing the need for implementing strategies to target multiple learning styles

(Schools Attuned To All Kinds Of Minds program). The fourth goal targets what the Visiting committee considers to be the primary challenge of a decreasing enrollment trend and the necessity of developing a long-term fiscal plan to ensure financial stability. The current schoolwide action plan emerges as a natural continuity from the plan developed for the previous accreditation visit. The Catholic identity of the school and the support for a challenging academic program is clearly evident from the self study and from interviews and observations during the visit. The pastor, administration, faculty and parents are to be commended for their identification of four critical areas for growth that have been detailed in the action plan.

*To what extent has the school demonstrated their capacity to implement and monitor their Schoolwide Action Plan?*

St. Charles Catholic School has been highly effective in demonstrating their ability to implement and monitor their action plan. Past history of success in meeting goals and objectives of their action plans is clearly evident. The Visiting committee considers that St. Charles Catholic School is in a strong position to implement the goals and strategies outlined in the action plan, securing excellent student learning into the future. The major factor that may impede obtaining these goals is the unstable economic environment and the impact that has on student enrollment. In so far as this is an identified goal, success toward attainment of the action plan is still considered to be reasonably acceptable.