Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.1: *The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in non-profit management and funding.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.1 is about finding competent committee members to help with the financial components of the school. Experts are needed in budgeting, advancement, third source funding, cash flow, and understanding the dynamics of a school calendar year.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- What is the employment and experience of board members and those assigned to committees?

- Is there evidence of the school/parish finance office interaction with board and (arch)diocese?

- Who are the experts consulted and what are their qualifications?

- Does the financial plan span a minimum of five years? What does it address?

- What are the revenue sources? Are they listed and addressed in the plan?

- Is there a tuition plan including, proposed increases in tuition and the building of tuition assistance?

- What is the plan for salaries, compensation packages and other personnel costs?

- Do financial plans include planning for the costs associated with facilities maintenance and improvement, including technology hardware?

- Is the budget-planning mission driven with a focus on student learning and outcomes?

- Have the budget and financial planning included plans for enrollment management, advancement and marketing?

Benchmark 10.1 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.1: *The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in non-profit management and funding.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

> the leader/leadership team and governing body review the plan on a regular basis and make necessary adjustments in consultation with experts.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> the financial planning is an integral part of the operation of the school. All the components are working at a high level and documented. There are regularly scheduled meetings with the experts.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> a financial plan has been discussed, but there has been no formalization of the plan or consultation with experts.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> there is no financial planning process or any list of experts.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.1: *The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in non-profit management and funding.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Begin to develop a shared financial plan and develop a list of experts.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Develop implementation strategies with a leadership team.
- Implement plan with the advise of experts.
- Include the community as implementation progresses.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Monitor the implementation plan continuously.
- Schedule meetings with experts and share results.
- Include all stakeholders in the implementation strategies.
- Provide results to the various publics.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Financial Plan

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.2: *Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, diocese, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.2 is about finding and establishing partners to be committed to the school and willing to provide financial investments. Identifying these partners and developing formal shared agreements regarding the levels of involvement and the levels of corresponding financial assistance is the expectation of this benchmark.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Is there a current list of partners, delineating their relationship to the school?

- Is there a list of partners that have not been cultivated but are under review as probable or possible partners?

- What are the sources of current revenue?   What revenue do partners contribute?

- Are there signed formal agreements between the partners acknowledging the level and type of support beyond tuition?

- What are the different types and levels of revenue beyond tuition?

- Is there evidence of successful fundraising and what are the roles of the partners in these efforts?

- Is the school or parish a recipient or partial recipient of endowments?

- Does planned giving at the parish, partner parish or diocesan level or other partner levels contribute to the revenue for the school?

- What other sources of revenue exist?

Benchmark 10.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.2: *Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, diocese, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully meets Benchmark**,

> financial plans specify specific levels of financial investments and identify the different partners as their contributions relate to these investments.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> financial plans have diverse investments so that the assets are not all in one type of investment and the plans depend upon multiple partners, with designated expectations.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> the plan has been developed; however, not all resources have been committed. There are no formal agreements; the partnerships are based on a handshake or other informal arrangements.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> the plan does not exist or the plan is not diverse and relies on only one or two revenue sources, such as parish contribution and tuition. Partnerships are not part of the financial plan.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.2: *Financial plans include agreed-upon levels of financial investment determined by the partners involved who may include but are not limited to parishes, diocese, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Broaden the plan to include more sources of revenue.
- Establish the potential to secure partners.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Identify partner and begin to utilize partners as source of revenue and talent.
- Contact and seek commitments from multiple sources.
- Formalize the agreements with all partners and sources.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Look for more partners and opportunities beyond current commitments.
- Diversify assets through diversification of partnerships and new sources.
- Recognize alternative sources not traditionally approached to partner with catholic schools.

V. What are key terms for understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Educational foundations

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.3: *Financial plans define revenue sources that include but not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships, endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch)diocesan and/or religious communities' assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.3 is about finding third source funding beyond tuition and fundraisers and partner parishes and dioceses. These sources are committed to the school and the programs in this one school.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Does the current revenue stream include multiple sources of funding beyond the parish, the diocese and partnerships with schools etc.?

- What are the various sources and types of revenue beyond tuition?

- What mechanisms are employed by development staff and leadership team to raise funds? Are these traditional fundraisers or more innovative strategies?

- Are funds from fundraisers targeted for investments that will grow the school? Or

- Are funds from fundraisers targeted for specific "needs" which will not grow investment in the school?

- Are there plans that have been developed by the leadership team and board to increase the sources of revenue for the school?

- What are the plans?

Benchmark 10.3 Developed by CHESCS Guideline Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.3: *Financial plans define revenue sources that include but not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships, endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch)diocesan and/or religious communities' assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

> financial plan defines revenue sources and includes all revenue sources beyond tuition and parish support when appropriate.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> financial plan includes a diverse range of revenue sources beyond tuition and fundraising as well as researching best practices of successful schools to incorporate into the financial plan. Financial planning focuses on the cultivation of new sources of revenue with specific targeted goals.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> only the traditional sources of revenue are listed, tuition, parish support and fundraising.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> there is no analysis of revenue sources.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.3: *Financial plans define revenue sources that include but not limited to tuition, tuition assistance/scholarships, endowment funds, local and regional partnerships, public funding, regional cost sharing, (arch)diocesan and/or religious communities' assistance, foundation gifts, entrepreneurial options and other sources not listed.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Identify and analyze several new funding sources.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Identify and include diverse funding sources.
- Develop strategies to build relationships with new and diverse funding sources.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Research best practices from successful schools and other non-profit organizations.
- Work with development staff and board committee to prepare targeted proposals for submission to alternative funding sources.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.4: *Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.4 articulates the importance of school leadership teams having a full and complete understanding of the costs associated with fulfilling the school's mission. This means more than simply dividing all the obvious costs by the number of students and calling it a "cost per child" – it means being able to break out those costs into logical areas that can then be analyzed and compared. Schools that have a good handle on this level of data are able to use the information in a number of ways:

- A "real" cost per child can be calculated, incorporating costs that might be otherwise overlooked. For example, a school which operates in a building which is owned and maintained by an associated parish might well never have considered what the space costs—this is a real cost, even if it is borne by the parish rather than the school. Having a comprehensive outline of potential costs would highlight this "hole" in the school's budget, allowing for a robust conversation about the sustainability of the current model and the risks involved with being dependent on the parish's continued support.

- Breaking out costs by area allows the school leadership team to evaluate the level of spending in each, and ensure that the budget accords with the school's mission. For example, a school whose mission centers on academic excellence, but whose teachers are poorly paid or whose budget for professional development is very small might recognize, through this exercise, that their budget tells a different story than does their mission statement.

- Breaking out costs by area also allows the team to analyze each area independently to ascertain if there are better (or cheaper) ways to achieve the school's mission. Benchmarking can be an excellent tool here, which is one of the reasons the standards strongly recommend including experts in non-profit management in the financial planning process. If your school is spending 1.5% of the budget on academic technology, and local competitor schools are all spending 3.5%, it doesn't mean that they're right and you're wrong – but it does indicate that this is an area where further research could be very valuable.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.4: *Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.*

- Finally, being able to articulate a robust, detailed cost picture will allow the school to practice greater transparency. This information can be very effective when communicating with current and prospective families as well as other stakeholders. Donors, in particular, are increasingly interested in understanding how a school stewards donated resources, and being able to articulate the cost structure, in detail, indicates a high degree of financial control.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- How are the costs broken out for all budgets (current year and, if available, the past 3 years)?

- How are the costs broken out in financial plans (next year's plan and, if available, the long-term 3-5 year plan)?

- How frequently are those responsible for reading and using the budgets / plans updating and reporting their numbers? Did you interview those responsible?

- How does the leadership team use this information?

- Is the financial reporting considered trustworthy?

- Is the leadership team or if the team incorporating the information into both strategic and tactical decision making processes?

- Is the information updated and reviewed, in detail, at least quarterly?

- Is this information considered as the key element of important decision processes like budgeting, financial planning, establishing tuition and aid levels, determining annual raises, setting fundraising goals or engaging in capital projects?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.4: *Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.*

- Is the budget information useful, (presented at a reasonable level – that is, rolled up into categories that are detailed enough to be actionable, but not so detailed that the information is unwieldy)?

- Is the leadership team able to explain (or defend) the specific way cost information has been aggregated?

- How engaged is the leadership team in the process of designing the budget reports?

- Does the leadership team find the reports useful?

- Is the leadership team able to use the information to make better decisions for the school?

> **III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?**

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the set of costs being considered is complete – no major categories are left out. Cost information is aggregated to the best level for decision making, and is presented in a set of well thought out reports. Cost data is reviewed regularly by the school leadership team, and is used to inform important decisions. School leaders are cognizant of the relationship between the budget and the school's mission, and are committed to ensuring that they are aligned. The community understands the true "cost per child" and how it relates to tuition.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.4: *Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.*

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

all costs are included in the analysis, including "replacement cost" (rather than operational cost) for any goods or services that are obtained at less than market rate (examples might include lower-than-market teacher salaries, parish-funded utilities or donated books). Cost data is available in near real time, and can be used for day-to-day management as well as longer term planning. School financial systems / personnel are able to present data at different levels of aggregation depending on the need, from broad rolled-up categories for public reporting to very detailed levels for comparative analysis. Cost information is trended over time and is compared to appropriate benchmark data to identify potential opportunities or weaknesses.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

all regular operational costs are considered, but the budget may be missing more complex elements like depreciation, shared services or an accounting for capital expenses .Cost information is presented to the school leadership team in a manner that does not support the kind of planning or decision making desired. Developing detailed cost information is an arduous or expensive process, and so may only be available infrequently (perhaps once a year during "budget season".) The school leadership team recognizes the importance of understanding costs, but does not always incorporate cost data into planning or decision making processes. Cost data, including the "cost per child", is not shared consistently with the community nor used to help school families recognize the value of the education they are receiving.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

the cost picture is incomplete; even some (or all) operational costs are not tracked or cannot be incorporated into financial plans. School leaders do not recognize (or agree with) the importance of considering costs when making decision or longer-term plans. The larger community has no knowledge of the true cost of education.

Benchmark 10.4 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.4: *Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2, the basics must be put in place:
- Capture and report a consistent system for costs and expenditures by category.
- Develop a process to ensure that the leadership team uses this information during financial planning and decision-making.
- Involve IT work if the current system's infrastructure is insufficient to support the school's budget work.
- Educate school leaders about budgets, including how to read financial reports.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Expand the set of costs being reported on to incorporate the more difficult items, probably assisted by someone with expertise in nonprofit finance.
- Commit to data-driven decision making as the norm for all school leaders.
- Provide additional training or coaching to be able to use financial information effectively.
- Make it the norm that the school's financial data is owned by the school's leadership team and creates a comfort level for modifying reports to ensure the reports have an accurate understanding of the school's financial health at all times.

To move from level 3 to 4, a very sophisticated data system
- Hire personnel capable of using it effectively—must be put into place.
- Incorporate historical data (for trend reporting).
- Create comfort level for the leadership team as it relates to financial topics and accounting norms.
- Establish trusted relationships with similar schools (perhaps schools far enough away that competition is not a concern).
- Exchange cost data regularly with partner school to allow for effective benchmarking.
- Complete market research to assess true "replacement costs" for all goods and services.
- Establish a more robust model for reporting the differences (for example, recording teachers' salaries at market cost and recognizing the difference an annual donation by the teacher under gift revenue).

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.4: *Financial plans include the delineation of costs for key target areas such as instruction, tuition assistance, administration, professional development, facilities, equipment, technology, program enhancement/expansion, capital projects and other planned projects.*

> **V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)**

Benchmark 10.4 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.5: *Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.5 speaks to the need for a complete picture of school revenues and for a robust understanding of the relationship between revenues and costs. Excellent Catholic schools understand that multiple revenue sources are typically necessary to fund schools' missions, and they take a "portfolio" approach to planning for and pursuing different types of revenue. The school is aware of the current "mix" – that is, the percentage of revenue that comes from each source – and they have established a target mix aimed at reducing overall risk and ensuring long-term revenue stability.

- For example, if a school's revenue is 75% tuition, 20% parish subsidy and 5% donations, the leadership team might set a long-term goal of reducing parish subsidies to 5% by increasing donations to 15% (recognizing that this implies a need to invest in an advancement function) and looking for opportunities to create a new income stream (5%) based on renting the building during non-school times.

Schools understand that neither revenue nor costs remain fixed over time, and have incorporated reasonable assumptions into the plan regarding growth, with particular attention paid to areas that are expected to grow most swiftly (e.g. healthcare costs).

They are careful to articulate how this portfolio relates to the aggregate cost per child, and are particularly attentive to the relationship between tuition and costs (see Benchmark 10.6).

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.5: *Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.*

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- First and foremost when you look at the actual financial plan and financial statements is the revenue categorized by type, and are multiple forms of revenue recognized appropriately?

- Are the revenue types described by some of the following suggested (but not limited to) categories: tuition, current-use donations (restricted and unrestricted), donations to endowment funds, payout from endowment funds, transfers from other linked organizations (parish funding), gifts in-kind, contributed services, fund-raising revenues (minus fundraiser costs), rental income, fees for non-core services provided (e.g. after-school care) and probably others?

- Is there evidence that these revenue sources are considered as a portfolio – that is, the leadership team is aware of the percentage of income that comes from each source, and has set a target "mix"?

- Are there established action plans to move the school towards that mix?

- Are these plans based on a robust understanding of the current situation, and take growth factors into account as well?

- What is the availability of this data? Is this data available in the financial plan or via interviews with key personnel?

- Is there indirect evidence that might include any records of actions taken to adjust the mix: increased or decreased reliance on tuition, investment in advancement/development resources, etc…

- Finally, is there evidence that revenue and cost information have been compared effectively, and that comparisons are being used to strengthen the entire community's awareness of the portion of costs covered by tuition.

Benchmark 10.5 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.5: *Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the school will recognize a portfolio of revenue sources in current and projected budgets, and will articulate these as a percentage of total revenue. In future projections, both revenue and cost information will be grown appropriately, taking particular note of the higher growth rates associated with healthcare and retirement benefit costs.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

in addition to a revenue portfolio, the school will have a "target mix" portfolio, and will have action plans in place to increase or decrease reliance on specific sources as required. Assumptions about growth / change in revenue or costs will have been developed by a comprehensive team, including experts in the field of nonprofit management.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the school recognizes multiple revenue sources, but does not consider them to be a portfolio that can be "rebalanced" to reduce risk and increase long-term sustainability. The school may be highly dependent on a single revenue source, such as tuition or a parish subsidy. Future projections do not take growth into account, or do not include a full accounting of costs and revenue sources

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

school leaders do not have a handle on school revenues, or revenue information is not incorporated into financial plans in any effective way. The school may be wholly dependent on a single source of revenue, such as tuition, with no awareness of the risks involved in such a model.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.5: *Current and projected budgets include a statement of the actual and projected revenue sources, indicating an appropriate balance among revenue sources, and a statement of actual and projected expenditures including the actual cost per child, benchmarked compensation/salary scales, and other health benefits and retirement costs.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Capture and report all revenue information in accordance with basic non-profit accounting principles.
- Utilize cost data (see benchmark 10.4) so that an effective comparison can take place.
- Use this data at the leadership team level for planning.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Report complete revenue data (regularly) as a portfolio whose relative percentages are analyzed.
- Project into the future in more sophisticated ways, taking into account economic growth factors.
- Seek and utilize assistance from an expert in nonprofit management or finance.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Work as school leaders with peers and experts in the field to establish short, medium and long-term goals for the revenue mix.
- Work as leaders to develop action and investment plans necessary to support movement towards those goals.
- Revisit and review the financial plan regularly, and cost / revenue growth projections should be updated based on the most current available economic data.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Benchmark 10.5 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.6: *Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

As with any goods or services, perceived value is one of the most important driving factors for families making enrollment decisions at Catholic schools. Benchmark 10.6 recognizes this reality, and directs school leaders to articulate a clear value proposition for current and prospective families based on the comprehensive cost and revenue information described in Benchmarks 10.4 and 10.5. Specifically, a comparison of total value received (the all-in "cost per child") and the amount of that cost that is covered by tuition can be extremely powerful in attracting and retaining families and students, since (at most schools) the difference is stark: even "full-pay" families are seldom covering the full cost, since tuition is most often set below the full cost per child.

Please note that this benchmark is highly dependent on Benchmark 10.4 (the full cost accounting necessary to develop a cost-per-child measure) and 10.5 (the full revenue picture necessary to show the portion of cost covered by tuition and explain what other sources make up the gap).

Of course, not all value can be calculated economically. In particular, the unique gifts and charism of most Catholic schools go beyond the school's cost structure, and when describing "value received" it's important not to lose sight of this, or to become so enamored of the calculations that we present them as the primary reason to choose a Catholic education. However, in a world where most public schools are available, safe, reasonably effective and <u>free</u>, this type of analysis is important to level the playing field and show families that the school is an excellent steward of their resources and is working hard to stretch those tuition dollars as far as possible.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.6: *Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.*

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- What are the scores for the school's performance on Benchmarks 10.4 and 10.5? (Assessment in this area will be different depending on the results for 10.4 and 10.5).

- Did the school score at a Level 1 – Does Not Meet Benchmark for either 10.4 or 10.5? If yes, this benchmark will automatically be Level 1 as well.

- Did the school score at least Level 2 in both 10.4 and 10.5?

- What do you find in the financial plan as well as financially related materials that have been distributed to the school community over the past 18 months? (To some extent, this is an "either it's there or it's not" situation)

- Does the school have a clear cost-per-child articulated and compared to existing tuition, or has it failed to do so?

- What are the responses of interviews with key leadership team members regarding the progress towards the goal, if evidence cannot be found?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.6: *Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.*

> **III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?**

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the school will have achieved a Level 3 rating in both 10.4 and 10.5 based on well-understood and comprehensively articulated sets of cost and revenue information. Cost per child is explicitly calculated, incorporated into the financial plan, and communicated clearly to parents and stakeholders. Revenue percentages are applied to the cost per child, showing the percentage covered by tuition and explaining where the remainder of the revenue comes from. This communication is updated at least annually, and is readily available to the community and to prospective parents (for example, published prominently on the school's website).

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the school will likely have achieved Level 4 in either 10.4 or 10.5, or perhaps both. In communication materials, the comparison of cost-per-child and tuition / other revenue is trended over time and projected into the future. The comparison with tuition takes the added step of incorporating tuition aid information. This information might be included as an average that reduces the effective tuition across the board, or might be done as a set of scenarios in which full-pay, partial scholarship and full scholarship (if applicable) examples are described. Future projections incorporate a sophisticated understanding of how costs and revenues are expected to change over time, and are informed by the school's plans regarding shifts in the revenue portfolio mix.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the school will have achieved a Level 2 rating in both 10.4 and 10.5, and may have achieved Level 3 in one of the two. Cost information is sufficient to create a provisional cost-per-child measure. Clear tuition data is available, such that the school can articulate the percentage of cost covered by tuition, even if it may not be able to explain precisely the mix of other revenue that makes up the gap between cost and tuition. The calculation may be out of date, or is not updated regularly. Even if the calculation is robust (Level 3), if it is not well articulated or is available only sporadically (annual mailing vs. continuously available on the web), the school should be considered Level 2.

Benchmark 10.6 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.6: *Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.*

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

the school is at Level 1 in either 10.4 or 10.5, indicating that either cost or revenue data is insufficient to be able to articulate the comparison between the two. Even if the calculation is relatively robust (Level 2 or even Level 3), if it lives only within the school's financial planning documents and is not communicated to parents, prospective families and other school stakeholder groups, the school should be considered Level 1. The essence of this benchmark is the word "distribution" – an excellent calculation that no one has seen might as well not exist. In this way, it is possible to achieve high evaluations on Benchmarks 10.4 and 10.5 and yet be level 1 on 10.6 if that great work is hidden under the proverbial bushel basket.

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Review the schools ratings on 10.4 and 10.5.
- Determine why the low ratings, if that is the case, and work on improving 10.4 and 10.5 so there is information to communicate.
- Demonstrate a commitment from the leadership team to communicate the data, if it exists. Commit to this level of transparency.
- Perform the necessary calculation (cost per child, percentage of cost paid for by tuition and remaining amount of cost) and produce a document for immediate transmission to the community (and, if possible, post on the school's web presence).

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Review the school's ratings on 10.4 and 10.
- Meet with stakeholder communities, if this information is available and determine how best to make this information continuously available to the stakeholders.
- Give extra consideration, in assessing options, to the opinions of families that have recently joined your community, as they are your best proxy for the prospective families out there that you haven't identified yet.

Benchmark 10.6 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.6: *Financial plans include educational materials for distribution to all members of the community explaining the total cost per child and how that cost is met by identifying the percentage of cost that is paid for by tuition and the remaining amount of cost that is supported by other sources of revenue.*

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Verify that the school is already committed to transparency and is working hard on communicating value to all stakeholders.
- Collaborate with your community members, especially parents, and allow them to drive how you continue to innovate.
- Consider working with an expert in enrollment management or academic marketing to evaluate the best way to present your unique school's situation.
- Utilize well, the value proposition embodied by the difference between effective tuition and actual cost. (Catholic identity and other unique cultural assets)
- A high degree of transparency is indicative of both confidence and humility on the part of the school's leadership team; it shows that you believe in your approach, but are open to hearing better ideas.

> **V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)**

Stakeholders
Effective tuition
Transparency
Revenue portfolio

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.7 recognizes that families pay to go to Catholic school and most need assistance on the possibilities available to support their vision. How do you pay? This requires the leadership team to work closely with families to ensure they all have access to comprehensive and practical information related to multiple sources for tuition assistance and how to seek out such funding, especially sources not directly related to the school. Also most family need to reflect and participate in guided discussions regarding how to plan to pay for tuition and all other expenses related to Catholic school education. Guided assistance in multiple formats, medium and languages is among some of the best practices.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

This topic requires the board, the leadership team and external reviewers to ask questions such as:

- Is there evidence of focused meetings with families at the time of application, acceptance and entry focused solely on the cost of one child and the expected contributions from the family?

- Is there evidence of focused meetings on how to develop plans to pay the expected tuition (family contribution) for Catholic education?

- What printed materials are provided on paper, on the web page, in workshops or on webinars hosted by the school?

- Are there experts working with the schools to craft and create documents that tell the good news story regarding alternative sources of funding?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

- Are all expenses associated with the education of one child carefully listed, with payment deadlines and school policies regarding payment and non-payment, especially if "fees" are charge for special items?

- Are there planning templates and instructional opportunities to assist families with the creation of planning documents for their families?

- Who are the experts that are providing counsel for families as they plan on how they will fund and pay for the education of their children?

- Is there a published calendar regarding these events?

- Are these events accessible to all families being scheduled for alternative times, rather than the obvious one night a week so often selected?

- What other creative strategies are employed to honestly assist families, rather than punitive measures?

- Are there any established relationships with external funders, or scholarship funders?

- Is there an assessment strategy to determine whether the process in place is effective and to allow for continuous improvement and adjustment?

- Are all materials bilingual and accessible to all populations seeking a Catholic school education?

- Who is monitoring the local environment for reputable information regarding new sources of funding, payment plans and tuition assistance?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

> **III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?**

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

> there is evidence of a clear communication strategy to provide the information to families regarding the costs, tuition expectations and planning strategies for providing the funding necessary to plan for the long term. This strategy is clear, concise and communications reach all constituents ensuring access to information about tuition assistance and planning for long-term education of their child through graduation.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> communications plans to reach out and serve all constituents are well established and well designed. Families are receptive and participating with school staff to gather information regarding tuition assistance, payment planning. Each family is individually packaged with a financial plan, clear delineation of costs and tuition assistance and tuition payment expectations. Families understand the policies and provide feedback on all facets on a regular basis. Evidence of collaborative relationships with donors, funders and dioceses demonstrate the openness to growth and change of all aspects of programming for this aspect of sustainability.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> the economic picture of the school is not shared with the families, where all understand the cost of educating one child and what the expectation is for payment from each participating family. Tuition assistance information is provided to those who ask or a narrow list of program is listed for all to investigate on their own using websites and other forms of guidance. Some form of arbitrary award system limits any local assistance. There is little or no active engagement or empowerment of families to learn and own the responsibilities of funding for Catholic education.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> There are no efforts by the governing board or the leadership team to provide tuition assistance information broadly to all families as well as instructional opportunities to understand how to manage these opportunities.   Each family is on its own to find the funding and in some cases will be assisted depending on who is contacted.

Benchmark 10.7 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Develop strategies to share information regarding available tuition assistance with information regarding how to apply.
- Publicize information regarding payment plans.
- Host opportunities to begin the conversation regarding the need to prepare plans to pay over the long term.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Develop a clear communication strategy/plan on the "financing" of a Catholic education at your school.
- Include opportunities for meetings, workshops, and print materials and online resources.
- Create lists of tuition assistance available from traditional sources and lists of opportunities not widely shared, and perhaps unique to your local community or the talents of your students.
- Ensure that all families are fully informed and individually packaged so that they understand all the facets of funding their children's education at this school.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Families are actively involved in the planning of their payments with school staff and consult on a regular basis.
- All communications are clear and in multiple languages allowing all who seek a Catholic education to apply.
- Directions are very well written and forms are easy and simple.
- Policies are well written, well publicized and widely accepted, known and understood.
- Plans to achieve level four are delineated by the board in collaboration with the staff and include the intentional review and revision on a yearly basis.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.7: *The governing body and leaders/leadership team provide families access to information about tuition assistance and long-term planning for tuition and Catholic school expenses.*

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Tuition assistance
Payment plans
Financial package

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.8: *The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 10.8 is focused on the responsibilities of the leadership to ensure the activation and utilization of financial plans and budgets. Assessing the quality of this implementation is key and the practices should be compared to or measured by the standards associated with effective business practices (profit and non profit) that are associated with successful, effective, responsible management of resources.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Evidence to be reviewed should include those documents (plans, meeting minutes, agendas, public communications etc.) and conversations that answer key questions such as:

- Is there a clear financial planning document with suggested strategies for implementation and monitoring?

- Do the position descriptions of the leadership team include the expectation to activate and utilize all financial plans prepared in collaboration with the governing board?

- Are the financial plans inclusive of all facets of school life, with notations regarding the multiple kinds of resources necessary to manage?

- What governance board documents describe board expectations for committee oversight and assessment of leadership's implementation of financial plans?

- Is there documentation of leadership's management strategies and assessments of outcomes?

Benchmark 10.8 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.8: *The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.*

- What are the key business practices that are employed and why?

- What are the benchmarked best practices of other (nonprofit and for profit) businesses? Where can they be found?

- What businesses are selected and used as benchmark businesses? Do they make sense?

- Who is responsible for developing and executing the financial plans and how involved is the school leadership team?

- Is the information regarding the financial plans, the budget and the allocation of budget shared with key constituents and staff? How?

- Are there examples of assessments regarding practices that have generated a change in the approach to managing the financials for the school?

- What are the strategies for revising and redrawing planning documents over designated periods of time?

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully meets Benchmark**,

> the leadership team is managing the resources of the school, utilizing best business practices as recommended and provided for by the governing board. There is documentation that verifies the implementation process is evaluated and assessed on a regular basis as part of the annual review of the leadership team and as part of the oversight provided by the board finance committee. Finally, all assessments of the practices focus on the quality of work as well as the effectiveness of the realization of the financial plan to provide the necessary resources to support the effective articulation of mission and vision.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.8: *The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.*

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the plan that is executed is mature, and effective and based on best practices as demonstrated by the benchmark institutions chose to be points of reference of assessment and evaluation. The planning process, over time, is evaluated and adjusted to better provide for the changing vision and context of the school. This is a flexible, adaptive and creative planning process. All constituents are included in the larger planning process which is informed by mission and allows for the continuous changing nature of the vision – what the school does and how they will do it. The financial plans are tied to the vision and not stand alone documents but rather integral to the planning of curriculum, instruction and all services provided to families and staff.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

The board and the leadership team engage in financial planning and budgeting, but it is not based on school planning and all stakeholders do not inform this financial plan. The plans are not developed in collaboration with school leaders and usually not tied to the planned curriculum and instructional outcomes associated with the primary work of the school. Or there is no continuous planning process, rather it is a once a year static event. Or there are well-developed plans, but there is no mechanism to ensure that the leadership is implementing the plan and no mechanism to gather feedback once it is implemented.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

There is no evidence of a continuous structured planning process, with multiple stakeholders and communications with all participants. Planning is ad hoc and done by a few who are either on the board or comprise the leadership team, or are parish finance persons. There is no reference to non-profit best business practices, but rather an adherence to "our" way.

Benchmark 10.8 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.8: *The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Develop a process for continuous financial planning with work focused on budgets, oversight of implementation, continuous accounting by all parties and revisions.
- Research and find the best practices to use as benchmarks and models for planning. Look at other schools, systems, or nonprofits for models.
- Find experts to consult and with who can instruct and assist with the work.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Incorporate industry best practices for the planning models created and implemented, including best practices for assessment and oversight.
- Develop and post target dates and calendars for all planning steps for approval by board members.
- Delineate and share clear assessment of leadership team's activities related to budget oversight and implementation. Share with all members of the leadership team. No surprises.
- Seek out the support and consultative advice of industry experts.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Develop a flexible, robust planning process that is adaptive to change in environment.
- Insure an ongoing planning process which is continuously evaluated.
- Continuously evaluate the efficacy and feasibility of all planning documents.
- Include all stakeholders in the planning process.
- Include the leadership team as significant leaders and integral to the success of the planning process.
- Integrate all members of the leadership team into all facets of the planning process.
- Inform the leadership team at all levels regarding finances, especially those items related to department budgets, including personnel and resources.

Benchmark 10.8 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

10.8: *The governing body and leader/leadership team ensure that appropriately developed financial plans and budgets are implemented using current and effective business practices as a means of providing good stewardship of resources.*

> **V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)**

Financial plans
Budgets
Non-profit organization
For profit businesses
Resources

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmark

11.1: *Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e. central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 11.1 is about the staffing of the human resource functions at the appropriate level in the central office and at the school level. Appropriately trained human resources personnel ensure that human resource policies are effectively carried out in a spirit of justice and fairness. The most significant investment and resource in a school is personnel so it is essential that human resources staff be professional and recruit and retain the best faculty and staff possible. Where a central office exists, diocesan-wide policies and procedures can be developed and promulgated using expertise not available at the school level.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- What is the background and credentials of the human resources staff at the central office? Do these colleagues have professional certifications, such as from SHRM? What are the criteria for selection of human resources staff?

- Does human resources staff at the CSO have access to contemporary management tools to support required HR functions?

- Are staffs at the CSO knowledgeable about human resource policies?

- Does staff at the school level have appropriate information regarding human resource policies and ways to receive just-in-time and ongoing information?

- How are new employees oriented about the specific mission and policies?

- Are staffing levels appropriate to the number of schools under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Schools Office?

- Is compliance with HR policies included as one of the factors in performance evaluations for school leaders?

Benchmark 11.1 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmark

11.1: *Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e. central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

> there are professional staffs, which are consulted or have been hired, who ascertain and insure the implementation of policies. All programs are professionally staffed based on required credentials, and training is offered for all program staff. Policies exist and are complied with and regularly updated or communicated.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> there are clear definitive policies that are clearly communicated online and updates are regular and shared with all employees. These policies extend to paid and volunteer staff. There is semi-annual training for school-based administrators and staff. And there is widespread awareness of the rationale for effective human resources policies that are consistent with the mission and vision of the Catholic schools at all levels of the school community, including, board members, administrators, leadership team, staff and other supporting stakeholder groups, such as parent organizations etc.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> Policies exist but are not fully complied with due to a lack of staffing and training. The training is infrequent and not universal and the communication regarding human resource policies is limited and not effective. Overall the infrastructure does not support compliance with the human resource policies.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> A knowledge or understanding of human resource policies is absent due to lack of communication, staff lacking professional expertise or they do not exist. Usually policies are not formally formed, written and accessible in print and online. Often there is inadequate staffing, locally or at the diocesan level, for the size and scope of the school's human resource needs.

Benchmark 11.1 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmark

11.1: *Human resource programs are professionally staffed at the appropriate level (i.e. central office, school office) and ensure full compliance with human resource policies.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Develop and publicize policies.
- Train personnel.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Develop, regularly review and update policies.
- Routinely train personnel.
- Use a variety of strategies to communicate with constituents.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Ensure certification of HR personnel staff according to industry standards.
- Conduct bi-annual employee satisfaction surveys and share results.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Human resource programs
Human resource policies
SHRM – Society for Human Resource Management www.shrm.org

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.2: *Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 11.2 is about ensuring that Catholic Schools are well managed from the perspective of human resource functions. This benchmark addresses the major human resource functions that are essential to any well-functioning organization. The ability to effectively recruit, hire, train, retain, evaluate employees relates directly to the overall health and success of the school. The quality of the compensation and benefits affects the ability to recruit and retain appropriate personnel and should be just and competitive within the local market. Committing resources to ongoing professional development communicates that faculty and staff are valued and that they are lifelong learners. There are standards for accountability for all staff and these standards ensure that obligations are met. Addressing succession and retirement planning acknowledges the reality of employee career stages and the implications for the school as well as the individual employees.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are human resource policies clearly written and do they address the standards for position descriptions, recruitment and selection processes and performance evaluations?

- Are job descriptions clearly written, accessible and updated regularly? Do all job descriptions comply with legal requirements?

- Do salary scales identify skills, market factors, longevity, performance and other factors?

- Are benefit packages customary for the school community and are they benchmarked regularly to ensure currency?

- Is ongoing professional development seen as an expectation and are resources available to support individual and team development?

- Are mentoring and leadership development programs supported and related to succession planning?

- Are pre-retirement planning sessions available?

Benchmark 11.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.2: *Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the policies are established and available to the staff. Training is provided for all managers engaged in hiring and salary scales are published and regularly reviewed. Professional development resources are available and expectations for ongoing professional development are clearly understood.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

contemporary, web-based tools to support recruitment and hiring practices are available and used regularly. There is a performance management system in place and individual goals are linked to the organization's goals and staff evaluations. H. R professionals conduct compensation studies biannually and benefit packages are negotiated regularly for the school and these packages leverage the benefits of size and scale. There is school community wide commitment to share professional development goals supported by the central diocesan office. The Catholic Schools Office provides leadership in obtaining and resourcing technology solutions to support recruitment, evaluation, etc.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

policies are available but they are not reviewed and consequently are not routinely updated. There is a performance appraisal process yet it is limited, not continuous and not effective. Variability in recruiting, hiring, and evaluating staff continues to exist. The effectiveness of the program seems to depend on the effectiveness of the local administrator, given the lack of policy and direction at the institutional level.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

overall, human resource policies are not available to the full community either because they do not exist or if they exist are not communicated. Salary scales do not exist or if they do they are outdated and are not benchmarked. There are very limited benefits packages and information is not readily available. Financial planning and budgeting does not account for professional development. Hiring policies and practices do not generate sufficient or adequate numbers of qualified candidates.

Benchmark 11.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.2: *Human resource policies delineate standards for position descriptions including staff responsibilities and qualifications, hiring, compensation, benefits, as well as standards for professional development, accountability, succession planning and retirement.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Establish policies or adopt and implement policies that do exist and share with constituents.
- Determine priorities for policy improvements and develop a plan for going forward.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Implement and improve the rigor and commitment of all stakeholders to the performance appraisal process.
- Publish salary scales for the appropriate stakeholders and the scheduled review process, as well as the benchmarks to be employed.
- Develop a strategy and commitment to ongoing professional development that aligns with the strategic goals and is recognized in the budgeting process.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Expand awareness of organizational commitment to excellence and growth for all staff and the necessary ongoing professional development.
- Maximize the benefits of cooperative agreements for the acquisition of benefits and other services, particularly in areas such as technology, management systems and recruitment.
- Share information regarding standards for accountability and ensure that these standards are well understood.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Compensation
Professional development

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.3: *Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 11.3 is about ensuring that the best faculty and staff are hired and retained by the school and provided appropriate, competitive and just wages and benefits and ongoing professional development. Schools that are able to provide appropriate salary and benefits packages are likely to have fewer turnovers of employees and these employees experience greater job satisfaction. While salary alone does not determine employee satisfaction and retention, fair compensation does impact morale. Schools require faculty and staff who can provide an excellent education. This requires that faculty remain current in their discipline and acquire new skills to effectively use technology and other resources as well as classroom management and student development strategies for today's learners. A school that invests in the professional development of its faculty and staff demonstrates its commitment to lifelong learning and excellence.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are salary scales and salary information clearly prepared, written and posted for appropriate review?

- Does the salary scale construction process benchmark and address the requirements and accountability standards for position?

- Do salary scales identify skills, market factors, longevity, performance and other factors?

- Are benefit packages prepared and documented with appropriate materials on line and in print to inform and direct all employees? (Review these materials for accessibility, comprehension and market status as well as acceptance.)

- Are the benefits packages benchmarked with reputable sources?

Benchmark 11.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.3: Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.

- Does the benchmarking occur yearly?

- Is professional development scheduled, attended and evaluated by all staff in the school?

- Are there clear documented examples of outcomes associated with all professional development planning?

- Does each individual include professional development as integral to their individual growth plan and view this as a resource and expectation?

- Are resources available to support individual and team growth in multiple areas related to school mission and vision?

- Are the social justice teachings of the Church reflected in all salary scales, professional development and benefits?

- Is there mentoring provided for ongoing career and leadership development which is supported and related to succession planning at all levels, not simply the leadership?

- What is the availability of workshops and sessions on retirement planning? Are they available at least twice yearly?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.3: Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

> compensation policies are developed and salary scales are benchmarked to known selected competitors. There is a biannual review of all salary scales with recommendations for changes. A variety of benefits packages are available to employees and include health, vision, dental, life insurance and retirement contributions. Professional development funds are available to support degree completion and ongoing professional development training.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> compensation and benefits packages exceed local competitors, in presentation, review and competitiveness. Employees are incentivized to engage in meaningful professional development that supports the strategic goals of the school. Systematic training is provided on new technologies and other management protocols. Retirement planning sessions and resources are regularly available to all employees and evaluated by the staff. Benefits packages and HR policies reward healthy lifestyles and employee contributions to retirement.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> salary scales are developed but not regularly benchmarked with appropriate entities. Also these scales are not widely shared. Benefits packages are not competitive with the local market and are not wholly understood by staff. Policies on professional development are unclear and institutional support is limited. Training to support new initiatives and technologies is limited.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> benefits are limited and in some areas not offered to all employees, with discrepancies regarding policies. Salary scale is not competitive with the local market. Professional development is not encouraged.

Benchmark 11.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.3: *Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all staff.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Offer benefit packages to all employees.
- Provide information and access regarding benefit packages.
- Ensure a salary scale that is benchmarked to the local market.
- Create a climate of support for professional development and growth for all staff.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Review and benchmark salary scale to local and/or other professionals' salary scale standards (regional, national) biannually.
- Review all benefits packages biannually and develop a plan to improve attractiveness of benefits.
- Clarify institutional commitment to professional development. Include intentional budgeting in the financial planning.
- Develop a training plan that addresses institution-wide training and development needs as well as individual professional development.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Review current benefit packages and revise to increase attractiveness and competitiveness with other educational and comparable professions.
- Develop a strategic plan for professional development that aligns individual goals with institutional strategic priorities. Include in the regular budget.
- Establish the role of the administrators and leaders in creating a culture of excellence supported by ongoing professional development.
- Provide opportunities for health and wellness and financial planning education for all employees
- Build a culture of expectation regarding excellence and healthy life styles.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Benchmark 11.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.4: *Human resources policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care and retirement.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 11.4 is focused on school and diocesan policies that direct decision makers to focus on personnel issues when designing and adopting institutional level plans. School wide plans (long and short term) should include clearly delineated investment strategies for personnel growth, health care and retirement for all employees.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

The Board, the leadership team and outside reviewers should seek out the following:

- Are there planning documents, which include sections on personnel?

- Do documents specifically delineate plans for succession planning and personnel growth, both capacity building for current staff and expansion plans for new staff?

- Is health care addressed with clear options that reflect principals of catholic social justice and the need for insurance options for all?

- What is the retirement policy? How is the long-term support of the plan explained?

- Do the documents indicate how these plans will be funded and supported?

- If this information exists is it widely shared?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.4: *Human resources policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care and retirement.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully meets Benchmark**,

> policy, planning and budget documents demonstrate the policies, intentional plans and budget allocations to support the capacity enhancement of current staff, with professional development, and the possible expansion of staff for growth as well as clear policies and guidelines for health care benefits and retirement benefits as well as costs associated with those benefits.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

> based on the policies, the budget allocations and health programming is integrated and clearly part of the salary and benefits package provided as total compensation for all employees. There is review of these packages and benchmarked data regarding health care plans, health and life insurance programs and retirement options are collected from benchmarked entities and used to evaluate the plans and inform adjustments when necessary. This information is freely shared with all employees.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> there is evidence of human resource policies at either the diocesan or school level. The policies apply to only one or two of the areas cited and are not fully budgeted or supported with staff for adoption and implementation.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> There are no HR policies at either the diocesan or school levels related to these wellness areas (personnel growth, health care and retirement). If there are policies they have not been adopted or implemented.

Benchmark 11.4 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

11.4: *Human resources policies ensure that institutional planning includes investment in personnel growth, health care and retirement.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Develop human resource policies for personnel, including growth and expansion, health plans and programming and retirement at school level.
- Adapt and adopt for the school diocesan policies (if diocesan policies do exist) and begin implementing.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Fully adopt policies that exist at either the diocesan or school level.
- Assure the successful implementation by securing the budget lines to fund the programs.
- Staff to administer, maintain database and evaluate the program.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Develop compensation packages for all levels of employees.
- Share all professional development options for all staff.
- Compare and evaluate all practices in these areas, with other school systems, Catholic schools, other dioceses or comparable non-profit organizations.
- Share information with all employees, highlighting the full cost of staff compensation packages and the total percentage of school's cost associated with packages.
- Retirement options should be carefully delineated to include definitions and explanations of such things as, but not limited to: retirement funding (401K or 403 B etc.) pensions, early retirement, severance pay, investment funding, and other terms.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for terms listed below.)

Human resources programs
Human resource policies
Health care programs – market definitions
Retirement plan
Personnel growth

Benchmark 11.4 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Task Force 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.1 *The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 12.1 is about developing and maintaining the school's facilities, equipment and technology plan, which supports the educational mission of the school. One would find specific examples of this benchmark in plan documents, the school's mission and vision statements, current and future curriculum maps and plans, student accessibility needs assessments, school financial assessments and actual aid programs. When evaluating this benchmark, look for the degree to which the plan is integrated with all aspects of school planning.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Are facilities, equipment and technology plan documents available and used for planning?

- Is planning for future needs included and demonstrated in the document?

- Is the plan fully aligned with and integrated with the vision and mission of the school for the current priorities?

- Does the plan refer to the school's mission and vision statement?

- Does the plan include a variety of approaches to accessibility?

- How fully does the plan support the educational program's future needs?

Benchmark 12.1 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.1 *The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark,**

> the facilities, equipment and technology plan is readily available and supports the delivery of the educational program. The plan consists of one, two or three interrelated documents. The objectives are aligned to the mission of the school. However, it does not include comprehensive and integrated planning for the future.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

> the school has a written plan that is fully comprehensive and integrated covering all aspects of the facilities, equipment and technology. The plan supports the current needs but also takes future needs into consideration. The plan relates to all areas of school's planning including: academic, physical, social and financial needs.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> the school has a plan but it is partial or incomplete. The plan relates to only one or two of the three areas: facilities, equipment and technology or the plan only partially is aligned to supporting the delivery of the programs.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> there is no plan evident in writing or shared among the community. There may be a plan that exists only in the mind of one person. If there is a plan, it is vague and not clearly shared. It does not adequately and clearly provide for addressing the current and future needs in the following areas:
> 1. Facilities, equipment and technology management.
> 2. Alignment with the mission and goals associated with supporting the delivery of education program
> 3. Alignment of all physical facilities with good stewardship and being accessible to the needs of the students

NOTE: Look at the plan and how it relates to the current and future needs of the school.

Benchmark 12.1 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.1 *The school's facilities, equipment, and technology management plan includes objectives to support the delivery of the educational program of the school and accessibility for all students.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Form a leadership team to create or revisit the current plan.
- Look to other schools that have examples of exceptional plans to model.
- Begin aligning the plan to support the delivery of educational programs.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Revisit the original plan.
- Align the facilities, equipment and technology plan to better support the delivery of the school's educational mission.
- Evaluate and monitor what portions of the plan are working successfully and what needs to be revisited.
- Ensure that the objectives of the plan are tied to the mission of the school and are accessible for all students.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Revisit the current working document or documents to create a more comprehensive and integrated plan that meets the current needs as well as future priorities.
- Ensure that the current plan is forward thinking and ensures accessibility to academic, physical, social and financial objectives.
- Work to create a plan that is integrated with all aspects of the school planning.
- Include more than one way to approach accessibility to academic, physical, social and financial objectives to reach a level 4.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to the NCEA Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Needs Assessments
Accessibility Plan

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.2 *The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacements.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 12.2 is about budget planning that is detailed and integrated, using generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and making sure it is developed to support the mission of the school. It takes into account appropriate use depreciation of equipment and accurately projects future costs. The budget gives all stakeholders an understanding of current and future costs associated with school assets and capital fund improvements. The budget enables long term planning to prevent sudden, unplanned expenses. This plan is compared to other similar schools to ensure best practices and comprehensiveness.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- What does the budget look like? What did last year's budget look like?

- Are line items for the current and future budget clearly detailed?

- Has future planning been reflected in the budget?

- Does the budget match the educational mission of school?

- What other similar plans have been taken into account when making the budget?

- What are the current assessments for school assets?

- What capital improvements will need to take place in the near future?

- What improvements will the school face in the future? What has been budgeted?

- What is the state of the current technology at the school?

Benchmark 12.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.2 *The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacements.*

- What are the budgeted lines for depreciation and replacement for technology and all facilities?

- Are the planning documents for facilities aligned with the plans for curriculum and instruction and all associated costs?

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the budget is clear and supports the facilities, equipment and technology. There are specific funds marked for capital improvement, depreciation and replacement. Line items are clearly marked and easy to read. It is not a level because 4 because the plans have not been compared to other schools to ensure best practices and completeness or they have not given all stakeholders a realistic and comprehensive understanding of costs that may occur in the future.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

the budget is fully integrated and detailed. The budget has been designed following the principles of GAAP. School leaders have studied and reviewed other similar plans to ensure best practices. The budget allows all stakeholders to have a real understanding of the current and future values of the school's assets. The budget reflects depreciation and use of assets in addition to long term planning that will prevent sudden, unplanned expenses. Future capital expenditures are detailed and outlined in the budget. It is comprehensive and all stakeholders understand the realistic current and future values and costs associated with the school.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the existing budget supports facilities, equipment and technology in a loosely tied manner. The budget may include something for unexpected costs but it is not aligned to specific capital improvements or related costs. The budget does allow for some unexpected costs but they have not been specifically identified. For example, a school may indicate facilities improvement in the budget but may not specify the exact need. An example of this is a school with an old heating system that has not been replaced in 50 years. The budget should reflect that at some point this will need to be fixed and is quite costly.

Benchmark 12.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.2 *The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacements.*

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

> the school does not have a budget. If the school has a budget it does not include line items to support facilities, equipment or technology nor does it include funds for future capital improvements or depreciation.

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- If there is no budget:
    - Begin developing a budget with school accounting experts immediately.
    - Seek out examples of similar school budgets.
- If the school has a budget:
    - Look at the line items to ensure that there is support for future capital expenditures that relate to the mission of the school.
    - Complete a school asset survey to determine which items will need replacing or repair.
    - Use the results of the asset survey to determine priorities for budget planning.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Align and identify funds to specific capital improvements, depreciation and replacements.
- Ensure that the budget reflects specific items.
- Review the current and future needs to clearly identify costs to support the articulation and implementation of the vision based on school's mission.
- Develop and include plans to avoid unnecessary and sudden costs.
- Ensure the expenditures in the budget reflect the educational priorities of the school. (For example, if a school states in the mission that they are going to provide the most up to date, integrative technology program, the budget should reflect clearly how this will be accomplished.)

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Incorporate best practices that ensure proper long term planning that prevents any sudden, unexpected expenses.
- Integrate and itemize the budget.

Benchmark 12.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.2 *The school's budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacements.*

- Offer and share with all stakeholders a realistic understanding of current and future costs associated with the school.
- Include in the budget appropriate use depreciation and equipment costs given accurate values of costs associated with the school's assets.
- Utilize the Asset Survey to clearly identify areas that will need improvement on the school grounds.
- Compare the plan with other schools' plans.
- Accurately budget for costs associated with school assets.

> **V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)**

GAAP – Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
School Asset
School Asset Assessment
Depreciation Costs

Benchmark 12.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.3 *The school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals and consistent with environment stewardship.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 12.3 is about physical and technological improvements in the school being consistent with mission of the school. It is also about being environmentally appropriate. Purchasing for improvements should be clearly calculated and planned with the school's mission in mind. Purchasing and planning should also reflect best practices of environmental stewardship. Schools can seek certification from an external, independent review called LEED certification to ensure their planning reflects best practices for an external source.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Does the purchasing plan for school improvements align with the mission and vision statements?

- Are there records of recent purchasing decisions?

- Is there an analysis describing environmental impact of these purchases?

- Do the records of planning meetings indicate an environmental impact analysis?

- Are there copies of energy audits? Are there records of energy savings initiatives?

- What types of analyses have been done in the past?

- Should any new impact analyses be performed to properly prepare future budgets?

Benchmark 12.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.3 *The school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals and consistent with environment stewardship.*

- How is environmental stewardess reflected in purchasing or improvements at the school?

- Is there an external audit available to verify current budgeting practices?

> **III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?**

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

the physical and technological improvements are planned and consistent with the mission of the school. Environmental stewardship is visible and consistent with the school's curricular goals. However, at this level, one may not see a larger integrated system or an independent review.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

purchasing for physical/technological improvements is fully integrated in all areas of the school and driven by the school's mission and curricular goals. Environmental stewardship is reflected in all purchasing decisions. Additionally, environmental stewardship is also reflected in the mission and vision of the school. The school follows best practices and may seek an external and independent review such as a LEED certification.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are sometimes aligned to the mission and curricular goals but not always. Decisions are made with some understanding of environmental stewardship but not full understanding or consistency.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark**,

purchases are not planned or are made in reactionary mode to crisis. There is little or no regard to the school's mission with purchasing or making improvements. Environmental stewardship is not taken into consideration when making decisions or purchasing. There is no evidence of improvement design aligned to the school's planning and curricular goals.

Benchmark 12.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

12.3 *The school's purchasing and physical and technological improvements are by design, done in alignment with the mission and the school's planning and curricular goals and consistent with environment stewardship.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Align improvements with the vision which articulates the mission.
- Align improvements with the school's curricular goals.
- Demonstrate a conscious understanding of the environmental impact of all purchasing decisions for improvements.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Carefully align the school's purchasing regarding physical and technological upgrades with the mission/vision of the school.
- Connect and describe all improvements as they directly support the curricular goals.
- Consider and include environmental stewardship when planning purchases.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Design the school's improvements and purchasing to be a part of a larger and integrated system.
- Intentionally address the need for environmental decision-making not only when considering purchases but in other decisions as well.
- Revisit the mission and the vision on what the school does, to ensure that it is fully addressed at this level.
- Seek an external and independent review of purchasing decisions, especially those over a certain limit.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

LEED Certification
Environmental stewardship

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.1 *The communications/marketing plan requires the school leader/leadership team and staff to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach target audiences and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.*

I.   What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

The leadership team is accountable for institutional development, which includes a coherent, shared communications marketing plan for advancing the name, identity, message, and good news of the school. This plan recognizes multiple audiences including donors, families, students, alumni and local community leaders. This plan is reviewed and critiqued with others to be certain the plan is timely, relevant, and has clearly delineated the targets for all communications. The plan reflects the mission of the school and make sure that this mission is central to the communications/marketing message. This requires the oversight of a database, which includes each target audience outreach, response and a strategy for sharing this data with investors, parents, board members, and other stakeholders.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Is there a detailed, clearly understood plan?

- Is there evidence of an intentional design for the advancement of the school's mission and message?

- Does the plan include the creation and maintenance of research and data to monitor communications?

- How are the targeted audiences determined and delineated for communication? Is this part of a plan?

- Are the requirements for technology and media included in the planning?

- Is there a time line for implementation and costs associated with this plan?

- Are there reports or summary reports that are shared with stakeholders and demonstrate the accountability of all school leaders?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.1 *The communications/marketing plan requires the school leader/leadership team and staff to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach target audiences and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.*

III.   What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark,**

the marketing/communications plan exists and clearly delineates the staff person responsible and measures of accountability. This can be found in documents/tapes/videos, which provide examples of products used by the schools. (Look at samples of communications to stakeholders and be certain they are effective.)

The technology plan is precise and technologies selected are designed to reach target audiences with explicitly stated expected outcomes. Analysis of data, by target audience, is clearly available. Samples of databases are present and clearly articulated and all evidence is timely and demonstrates professional preparation of materials.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

The items listed in level 3 above are clearly delineated in a strategic plan with timelines, scenarios for outputs, and costs associated with each step. The plan includes timelines for revision, review, critique and updates. New communication strategies are synchronized with the advent of new populations arriving in the neighborhood and waiting to be served by the school.

Dashboards for quick and efficient reporting and upkeep of data are provided with summaries able to be reviewed by the leadership team as well as strategies for change. Work on all of the above is marked by collaboration above and beyond simple cooperation.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark**,

The plan exists but is not fully vetted or supported by the community, either financially or verbally and often is not connected or articulates the mission, which is disconnected from the message. This makes it difficult for staff and community members to capture a unique and unified message about the school.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.1 *The communications/marketing plan requires the school leader/leadership team and staff to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach target audiences and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.*

> Technology/media strategies are "yesterday" and not reaching today's targets. (Look at what local businesses are doing to see what is contemporary.) Data collection is weak and/or not reliable, as no one person has ownership or one person has ownership and does not share or collaborate. The accountability to stake holders ends in the principal's office or at the board level; it is not shared with the community. For all practical purposes the analysis of outcomes is not based on real data.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

> there is no plan, or no one knows about the plan and it is not used or is viewed as having little connection to the mission of the school. Current leadership is not sure who created it or why.

> Technology resources are weak and no person or team is accountable for creating and implementing a marketing/communications plan. Enrollment is down, morale is poor and most people in the neighborhood do not know about the school; new populations have no idea there is a school or think it is a private/independent school.

NOTE: It is very important to carefully ascertain that the school's mission is central to the marketing message and that all who learn about the school learn as well about <u>why</u> the school is there and <u>whom</u> the school will serve. Effective marketing and communications campaigns sell the heart and soul of the school and the face of the kids. Without a shared and embraced MISSION driven message, no advancement or enrollment/marketing plan will succeed.

IV.   What are some key suggestions for improvement?

In general, for any of these areas,
- Use your assessment data based on the scoring above
- Delineate what you have to do (and what you can do), and carefully plan your steps to move forward.
- Do not try to do it all at once. Make all of this part of your strategic plan for change and transformation.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.1 *The communications/marketing plan requires the school leader/leadership team and staff to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach target audiences and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.*

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Designate leadership responsibility to a team or person to create a plan with all facets clearly delineated, including cost, time, target etc.
- Review plan, critique, refined and adopted for implementation.
- Ensure the knowledge and skill sets necessary are in place to implement the media strategies required as well as the technology tools for data management.
- Implement any training required.
- Hire, if necessary, a person with these specific talents and experiences.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Move to a level of analysis of the target data.
- Use multiple information technologies that are intentionally designed by the leadership team to reach multiple audiences.
- Work to establish databases that are secure and can be used by the team as well as the person designing the database.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Ensure that a person or team of persons is truly responsible and accountable as part of their position expectation.
- Make this communication plan a part of the strategic plan.
- Build a timeline to plan for the future expansion of the marketing plan as new populations or new communication channels present themselves.

V.	What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Target Audience
Marketing/Communications Plan
Institutional Advancement

Benchmark 13.1 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.2 *The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.*

> ## I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 13.2 is about leadership, supervision, accountability, enrollment data and students. This requires data and knowledge of how to collect data on enrollment, how to measure and analyze the data, and more importantly how to plan based on the data analysis. The governing body holds the leadership team accountable for providing the data and the governing body reviews, analyzes, and advises with support. The leadership team works with an analytical team that is continuously measuring enrollment data and patterns based on very specific criteria for the measurement of the data that is based on enrollment management research and best practices, and found in professional publications and professional development opportunities.

> ## II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Does this plan reflect the mission, with a focus on who the school serves as well as why the school exists?

- Is there a formal communication agreement between the board, leadership team and enrollment management team?

- How do they communicate, how frequently, when, why, and what are the results? Is there evidence of this collaboration?

- Who leads and how is the collaboration fostered for the creation of strategy etc.?

- Are there guides to measurement, timing of measures and how measures are used?

- Are there guidelines regarding where and when data is collected?

Benchmark 13.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.2 *The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.*

- Do data sources include multiple audiences such as: current school populations, alumni, those who chose not to attend the school, realtors, shop owners, donors, and opinion leaders in the community?

- What data is collected and how is it used?

- Who is gathering the data and using it to analyze retention?

- What challenges are listed as needing to be addressed?

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark,**

> the plan reflects a serious articulation of the mission with a strong focus on WHO the school serves and a plan to target that population. The review team sees and reviews the plan and the schedule used by the governing body to review the leadership team and supervise annual measurement and analysis. The work is focused on both enrollment (including all pertinent variables and their measures) <u>and</u> retention, and includes demonstrated use of pattern and prediction analysis – for example, statements like "If X continues then we can expect Y" should be common. The assessment is timely and is executed on schedule, and those in charge are accountable to deliver the data for timely decision making by the board and the leadership team. All decisions regarding tuition, tuition assistance, development/marketing strategies and community outreach and involvement are informed intentionally by this data.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

> the above listed items are enhanced by a more focused and analytical approach. For example: Where are the students the mission statement claims are served by the school? Are these students represented and where might one find more? All operations planning – including technology, physical plant, etc… - are informed by the data. The governing body reviews the data and actively assists with the development of data and its analysis. Reviewers should find evidence of this in documents provided by the board, including board meeting minutes, committee assignments, plans, and

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.2 *The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.*

implementation strategies. State of the art techniques are used to gather past and current demographic data and this data informs future predictions for the parish, community, diocese, and any "benchmark" schools with which one competes. Any diocesan planning or policies for planning are carefully reviewed and related to the work. Most importantly, the review team finds data in the evidence that demonstrates serious and sustained analysis, which is integrated and continually generates new questions, which drive new analyses. All of this work is based on the school's mission.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

the plan exists but is not fully articulated or vetted by the community and is not completely informed by the mission. Recruitment strategies are based on "needing to increase the numbers" rather than on the school's mission. Data collection and analysis are not planned and there is no evidence of professional data collection or analysis. The limited data gathered is used by a few leaders in the school, and there would be evidence of this in planning documents provided by those few staff who use the "numbers" provided.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

there is no plan and no clearly defined measures for developing criteria for measurement, analysis or planning. No one is accountable to the governing body or the school leadership team and there is no understanding of the critical role such a plan fulfills for the operational sustainability of a school. Strong indicators may include: low enrollment (or a recent negative change in enrollment that is not well-understood by school leaders) and low morale. Leadership behavior has become membership driven (that is, focused on keeping current families happy and enrolled regardless of how this impacts the school's mission). The community has accepted lower curriculum standards or lowered requirements for entry into the school.

NOTE: It is very important for all involved in the development of a recruitment and retention plan to start with the "who" in the school's mission statement. If the statement is long, not clear or confusing, it must be redone before there can be an effective enrollment, recruiting or retention plan.

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.2 *The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.*

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

In general, for any of these areas,
- Use your assessment data based on the scoring above
- Delineate what you have to do (and what you can do)
- Carefully plan your steps to move forward.
- Do not try to do it all at once.
- Make these steps part of your strategic plan for change and transformation.

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Review, with the leadership team and the governing board, the mission statement and be certain it is clear, concise and answers the questions "why" and "who".
- Initiate the development of an enrollment and retention plan as well as listing the data necessary based on this review.
- Include in the process of developing an enrollment plan, a listing of the staff, students, families, donors and community leaders
- Address how the school will continue to keep each of these groups engaged beyond the initial planning development period and into the (much more difficult) data collection, analysis, integration and implementation phases.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Review the current enrollment/retention plan in light of the school's mission statement and revise and reform as necessary. (Often, issues with implementation stem from a lack of clarity in the plan itself, or in a lack of alignment between the plan and the school's mission.)
- Define the criteria and measurements that will be used to "mark" progress and status.
- Determine agreement among all stakeholders regarding the markers and the measures.
- Define a time line for improvement/execution, be clear about how much it will cost, and start simply.
- Delineate the two parts (retention and recruitment/enrollment) – both are essential and will require planning with the finance committee as well as those involved in student management and oversight.
- Include in the process a healthy discussion of the mission and how it drives the enrollment and retention strategies.

Benchmark 13.2 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.2 *The enrollment management plan requires the governing body to review and the school leader/leadership team to supervise annual and continuous measurement and analysis of both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.*

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Verify that you have an overall operations plan. This is where the retention and enrollment recruitment planning has to become real.
- Work to educate everyone – board members as well as staff and faculty – regarding what a good enrollment and retention plan looks like. (This is both an art and a science)
- Hire a consultant or expert in this area to guide those in charge (consider reaching out to colleges and universities, whose internal admissions departments may contain or have access to such experts).
- Create a culture of continuous improvement for those involved in the planning and execution of the plan.
- Adhere to your measurement rules. Do not change the measures without careful consideration of how that will affect the data and long-term analysis (remember that changes may make comparisons to prior years unworkable).
- Stress analysis followed by decision-making based on that analysis.
- Show respect for the work and the numbers, even if involved persons do not like what they summarize.

IV. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Measurement
Analysis
Retention
Tuition
Cost per Child

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.3 *The development plan requires the school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni/ae, over time and when appropriate*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

Benchmark 13.3 is about people as funding prospects. School leaders and leadership teams should be able to develop "friends" who become funding prospects and soon donors and supporters of the school. This requires strategic analysis of current community members, alumni and community leaders, as well as parents and grandparents. Who are they, where are they, and what are their relationships to the school? Planning includes strategies to develop these friendships, from the obvious to the unusual through personal approaches. These are the people who will support the school for years to come. This is also about recognizing all potential supporters, including the current students.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are some fundamental guiding questions which will help frame this item:

- Do the mission and vision statements inform the development of who to reach out to as friends to become supporters?

- Is there an analysis of who else is serving the population served by the school or of those who support endeavors that support this population?

- Is there evidence of who might be a school colleague in the field?

- Is there evidence of communication demonstrating collaboration or cooperation on planning to cultivate donors over time?

- Does the data demonstrate a "growth" in the number of friends and donors?

- Is the data analyzed with a focus on the growth in numbers – and how that correlates to a growth in contributions?

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.3 *The development plan requires the school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni/ae, over time and when appropriate*

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark,**

> key strategies are in place to develop the plan to grow and maintain a donor base. These strategies are related to an operations plan and the marketing/ communications plan. These strategies are integral to those plans and key to the funding strategies of the governing board finance committee

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark,**

> key strategies are more than just *related* to "other plans" - they are critical to the success of other plans. School leaders and those responsible hold themselves accountable for adopting new practices and strategies for the development of new friends and new donor accounts. K-8 schools look at high school strategies and high schools look at college and university practices. Guides to philanthropy and foundations are the tools used and referred to by this team. Board members engage in introductions and invite experts from industry to meet, coach and share ideas with staff and the leadership team. Most importantly, everyone is held accountable as results are measured, accounted for and studied over time with course corrections a common strategy. Everyone in most categories is considered always to be a potential friend and then a potential donor. Measures are in place which allow assessment of potential donors, foundations and the management of prospect possibilities.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

> the plan exists but is not fully vetted or supported by the community, either financially or verbally and often is not connected to or does not articulate the mission; as a result, funding is trapped in the same, old funding options, most of which are NOT appealing to today's parent-funder population. The plan is usually not well designed, nor is it shared with the full community. Transparency is not a hallmark of planning and all potential donors are left out of the plan. The plan is not aligned with the communications/marketing plan and the message is muddled. The lack of integration across all plans is sorely obvious and consequently pushes potential donors away, instead of welcoming the donors.

Benchmark 13.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.3 *The development plan requires the school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni/ae, over time and when appropriate*

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

> Usually the concept of development is not established. School leaders and others view development as a series of distinct and unrelated events, which are not supported by the mission and which simply raise money for things, not for a plan. Small funds are literally raised by using students to sell items, such as candy and wrapping paper. There is no clear explanation of the role of students in development planning. These elements should not be identified as a plan in place.

NOTE: Development hinges on mission. Foundations give to support programs, which articulate mission. Donors give to support the mission, which is clear and demonstrates outcomes for people. Development plans should be so irresistible that many donors want to be recognized members of the effort.

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

For any of these areas, use your assessment data based on the scoring above, delineate what you have to do and what you can do, and carefully plan your steps to move forward. Make all of this part of your strategic plan for change and transformation and try not to do it all at once.

To move from level 1 to level 2,
- Share and build community support for the mission and the outcomes associated with the mission.
- Develop a plan to fund the achievement of the outcomes (strategic plan) and as part of this plan develop a plan with funding outcomes and strategies.
- Define the funding options and begin slowly but very carefully marking and measuring all strategies and successes.

To move from level 2 to level 3,
- Plan to move beyond limited funding strategies and opportunities and expand the options.
- Plan for this to become an iterative process, with a constant review and update of a highly flexible and adaptive plan.

Benchmark 13.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

13.3 *The development plan requires the school leader/leadership team, in collaboration with the governing body, to ensure that key strategies are in place to identify, grow and maintain significant funding prospects, including alumni/ae, over time and when appropriate*

- Include the development of a communications plan, as it is integral to the development plan.
- Ensure that all messaging is managed internally to be consistent and attractive.
- Make certain that the plan is focused on key elements
- Employ all school leaders to effectively implement the plan.

To move from level 3 to 4,
- Continuously evolve the plan so that it becomes fully integrated with communications and enrollment planning.
- Ensure that all plans are synchronized and share message, marketing materials and strategies for bringing more people into the community.
- Commit across school leadership to convert everyone in the community to value the school and its key role in building the larger community.
- Recognize that potential donors represent all sectors, all faiths and all walks of life.
- Pursue foundations to create innovative partnerships in areas such as higher education, other Catholic schools, and other schools in the community.
- Viewing funding opportunities as funding for the children of the community, not the children of just one school.
- Recognize that "reach" is key and expansion of school's reach with success moves one to level 4.
- Assess all results to allow for critical refinement of plans
- Utilize effective advice from experts in the field.

IV. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Advancement
Mission statement
Marketing/ Communications Plan

Benchmark 13.3 Developed by CHESCS Guidelines Taskforce 2014