

Five Hallmarks of Catholic Schools *Making it Real for Springfield Diocese*

Inspired by a Supernatural Vision

- The school has a mission and vision statement that aligns with *Higher Calling, Higher Standards*, as well as the mission of the Department for Catholic Education for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois. Faculty, staff, parents, Pastor, students and Advisory Council or Board Members are able to articulate how those core documents come to life in their institution. A team of people are designated for evaluating how well the institution is living up to the hallmarks and goals of these core documents at regular intervals, perhaps annually.
- Nicene Creed regularly recited.
- Lord's Prayer regularly prayed together.
- Students and faculty are able to articulate how creed and prayer shape school culture.
- Students are able to state aims of education that go above and beyond utilitarian ends.
- Students taught that their destiny is to become saints.
- The school has a motto that focuses the whole community on a supernatural calling (e.g., "Growing in Wisdom and Grace" or "Forming Today's Saints").
- Annual theme for the year with a supernatural focus. Teachers integrate motto and themes into documents and activities (e.g., on handbook cover, calendar, documents, programs for school assemblies, back-to-school kickoff, daily announcements, with a focus on key Bible verses).

Founded on a Christian Anthropology

- Servant leadership is modelled and promoted among faculty, staff, and students.
- Students are taught the hierarchy of happiness and goods, and can recite them.
- Dignity of the human person is emphasized through Theology of the Body lessons.
- The Beatitudes are studied and referenced as hallmarks for service and true happiness.
- The students can name and they practice the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Human relationality, kindness, civility, and mutual encouragement are charisms of the school's culture.
- Servant leadership is an explicit focus for all extra-curricular activities, including athletics, with coaches formed to understand and model a Christian anthropology.

Animated by Community and Communion

- Mass is at the center of the school's culture, in appropriate and decorous worship space.
- Students are able to articulate well how Communion is the "source and summit" of the community.
- Principal and faculty are personally present to students; students personally present to each other, with technology pruned back to proper space and use to facilitate genuine human relationality.
- Regular review of enrollment data to foster and view growth of number of active Christian families; enrollment pitched to these families, with incentives.

- A calendar of events with activities that every school could use to foster family faith life and engagement. This could include inviting families to participate in faith-based activities at the school, in the parish, and overall community, to build a sense of cooperation, interaction, and teamwork.
- Messages to families emphasize the school as a community of faith, not merely an institution of learning.
- Consecrated Religious actively involved and visible within the school. These interactions tracked as to the kind (e.g. presentation, blessing, teaching) and frequency (e.g. weekly, monthly, annually)
- School space is immediately recognizable as Catholic--develop a rating scale to assess the Catholic dimension of art and architecture:
 - Art on display in the building
 - Celebration of institution's patron saint
 - Images of Jesus in the hallways and classrooms
 - Prayer space of the school is of adequate size, dignified and decorous.
- The institution sets and re-evaluates objectives for a long-range strategic plan, and the norms of *Higher Calling, Higher Standards* are prominently integrated into the plan.

Imbued with a Catholic Worldview throughout the Curriculum

- Curriculum is clearly and explicitly Catholic. Catholic Schools Office works with Catholic publishers to leverage affordable prices by supporting multiple schools.
- Catholic content embedded in all subjects weekly.
- Faculty engaged in regular horizontal and vertical integration (inter-disciplinary, and Catholic concepts)
- Faculty and staff are predominantly committed Catholics.
- Curricular resources consistently promote Catholic values.
- Students are assessed at least annually on their understanding of the faith, and are given specific means for growing ever deeper in it.
- Initiatives are in place to communicate and form parents in the sacramental and Catholic worldview that is characteristic of the school's culture.

Sustained by Gospel Witness

- Scripture is a central part of study at all grade levels; focus on internalizing and living it out in the world.
- Sick, dead, suffering, newly born regularly honored in prayer; whole community shares petitions for support in grace.
- Service Learning and ministry – ongoing, engaged, with specific groups who need support – personal presence, not “drive-by altruism.”
- Serious assessment of viability, ensuring that the schools that remain open are strong, vibrant, and are truly sustained by gospel witness.
- Provide opportunities for (or recognition for when) faculty and administrators model and witnesses to Gospel values.
- Principals should:
 - Have an opening meeting with teachers each year with a focus on faculty vocations – teaching in a Catholic school is not a job – it is a mission.

- Focus faculty discussion of teaching and learning on the norms of “Higher Calling, Higher Standards.”
- Encourage staff to participate in parish Masses (as Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Cantor, etc.). If they attend normally another parish, ask for staff to attend Mass at the school parish once a month to be visible to students.