

The Report of an Evaluation of

Saint Peter Cathedral Center School
160 West 11 Street
Erie, PA 16501-1779

By

A Visiting Team of Evaluators appointed by the
Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools

December 4 - 7, 2007

The contents of this report represent the judgments of the members of the visiting team as interpreted and written by the chairperson. They do not necessarily represent opinions of the Middle States Association or the Commission on Elementary Schools.

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Introduction

St. Peter Cathedral Center School is a Catholic Elementary School located in Erie, Pennsylvania. They service children from three year old preschool through eighth grade. The enrollment for the 2007-2008 school year is 337 students. This includes preschool.

The planning group of fifteen individuals is comprised of parents, faculty, administration, and community members. All of the community members have a working relationship with the school. The group used both an internal and external scan to come up with the issues that were important. The internal scan was based on a S.W.O.T. Analysis completed by the faculty and administration which showed the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The external scan was conducted by using a mailed survey to the parents of all the students. This survey was sent to the parents before the Middle States process began. The return was approximately 25%

The hospitality extended to the team was exemplary. Our rooms at the Bed and Breakfast were very comfortable. Arrangements were made for us to have dinner each night at nearby restaurants. Snacks and drinks were provided for us both at the school and at the Bed and Breakfast. A conference room was available at both sites so that we could work undisturbed.

On the night of our arrival a reception was held at the school. Faculty and staff were in attendance as were members of the planning committee, Diocesan Officials, the priests from the parish, and parents. It was an informal way to meet and talk to everyone about the school and the process.

Summary of the Visiting Team

The school has a very long history of providing education in the Erie Diocese. Over the course of the years the name of the school has been changed a number of times. The team recommended that a consistent name be used when referring to the school. It was noted that the words “school” and “Catholic” do not appear in the school name.

It was evident that a good relationship exists between the school, Diocese, neighboring Catholic High Schools, and the community at large. Members of each of these entities served on the steering committee, attended the opening reception, and came to school in order to meet with members of the team.

The visiting team found the student body to be friendly, happy, and involved in all aspects of the school. They enjoy coming to school and enjoy learning. A good relationship exists between the students and faculty.

The Pastor is very involved in the school and has a good relationship with the administration, faculty/staff, and students. He meets with the preschool students daily since their classrooms are in the basement of the Cathedral. Since he has been at the school for a number of years he is very knowledgeable about the school and surrounding community.

Summary of the Oral Report

In the Oral Report the administration and faculty were thanked for their warm hospitality to the team during the visit. They made excellent arrangements for our accommodations and meals.

In the area of Planning the Visiting Team commended the administration and faculty of the school for assembling a steering committee that included people from various entities that have some connections to the school.

It was evident that the faculty and staff had spent a great deal of time, effort and energy working on the self-study. This meant that each of them understood and had a vested interest in all of the goals.

The following **commendations** were shared with the administration, faculty and staff during the oral report:

1. The team commends the school for its unique design and placement of its Library Media Center as a hub of educational activity.
2. We commend the faculty and administration for integrating technology in the form of electronic portfolios to serve their students better.
3. The team would like to commend the steering committee for agreeing to remain on as a long range planning committee that will meet on a yearly basis.

The **recommendations** that were shared with the group were:

1. That the Catholicity of the school be emphasized in everything that is done.
2. That the planning committee develops another survey for the parents that can be used on a regular basis to receive additional feedback.
3. That a foreign language program be reinstated as soon as funding can be secured.

It was also suggested that the group say more than less. It was difficult to understand some of the goals as they were written. During the meetings with the various groups the goals became clearer as they explained the meanings behind them and how they were planning to develop them.

Context of the School

The school was opened, as Cathedral Grade School, in 1897 and staffed by the Sisters of St. Joseph. Throughout its history it has been called St. Peter Grade School, St. Peter Cathedral School and St. Peter Cathedral Center School. It has a rich tradition and history.

Students continued to attend classes in the old building until 1972 when the new Cathedral Center was opened. In July of that year the name was, once again, changed from “Saint Peter Cathedral Grade School” to “Cathedral Center”.

Students come from at least nine different school districts in the area. A number of the parents work in the downtown area and find it very convenient to have a school near where they work.

The atmosphere of the school is generally positive. The students were very friendly and welcoming.

Students score above the national norm on the Stanford Achievement tests. Each year students in grades 3-8 take the writing assessment in the Diocese. Some of the grades score low on this assessment so it has been decided that the faculty would work on writing as one of its goals for the next five years.

Day to day operations of the school are the responsibility of the school principal. She depends on her office staff and faculty to help her in performing her many tasks. She reports to the rector of the Cathedral. She is also accountable to the Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie. The business manager handles all financial matters.

The faculty are certified by the State of Pennsylvania and accredited by the Diocese of Erie. They must follow the State Guidelines for certification and must complete 180 hours of professional development every five years. Where needed aides are used in the classrooms.

The school has sufficient teaching personnel and staff to have an effective program. Textbooks are updated regularly and are available for the students. The rooms are bright and have sufficient space for the instruction.

Over the past few years the updating of technology has been a goal. Not only is the lab fully equipped but a mobile cart of laptops has been purchased for use by the students. Each teacher has a laptop that can be used in the classroom or taken home for additional work. Every classroom has a projector which can be connected to a computer for enhanced instruction.

The school is financially stable. A large fundraising is held every two years. However, the parents are charged an activity fee.

The faculty commented on the high degree of parent involvement and support in all aspects of the school program.

Planning Process

The school is to be commended on forming a planning committee that was composed of individuals from various entities such as the neighboring high schools, faculty, parents, and administration.

The administration of the school had a faculty in-service day and used the S.W.O.T. Analysis to come up with a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The planning committee and faculty took this information and developed goals around them.

The parents had received a survey two years ago with questions relating to the school. These were also looked at by the planning committee and used in developing the goals.

The pastor of the school, who is the only governing body other than the principal, was a member of the planning committee. The present principal, who at the time was a faculty member, was the chairperson of the planning committee.

The faculty was kept aware of the progress of the planning committee by reports from the faculty representatives on the committee. The parents were given information via the newsletters.

The planning committee will continue to meet yearly to assess the progress of their goals.

The visiting team commends:

1. The faculty, staff and administration of St. Peter Cathedral Center on assembling a planning committee that included people from various entities that have some connection to the school.
2. The administration for recognizing the importance of having the planning committee meet on a yearly basis to evaluate the progress of the goals.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the faculty continues to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses which were surfaced by the S.W.O.T. Analysis.
2. That the faculty receives updates on the progress of the goals on a regular basis.

Results of Internal and External Scanning Processes

The faculty did the S.W.O.T. analysis to surface strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the school program. In addition, each of the faculty members participated in the Middle States Standards Review Process.

A customer satisfaction survey was mailed to the families before the Middle States process was started. 50 responses were returned – about 25%. These five questions were open-ended and comprehensive.

The visiting team commends:

1. The faculty and administration for articulating their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
2. The planning committee for using the parent survey, even though it was not part of the original process, to help them develop their goals.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the planning committee develops another survey for the parents that can be used on a regular basis to get additional feedback.
2. That a survey be developed which can be used with the students to gather information from them regarding their feelings about the school.

Middle States Standards Review

Philosophy/Mission and Beliefs

The institution has clearly written statements of philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives that convey the general and specific purposes of the educational programs and that express expectations for quality. Stakeholders, including staff, parents, and governing body members, understand, accept, and give input into the development of the organization's philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives. These documents are appropriate for the groups served and are reviewed periodically.

Comments:

St. Peter Cathedral Center, located in Erie, Pennsylvania, is a parish elementary school located in the Erie Diocese. The school provides educational services for 337 students in grades Pre-K through 8. The school implements the diocesan curriculum.

The philosophy states that the purpose of the school "is to actively integrate the spiritual and intellectual development of each child consistent to his/her potential." An ongoing attempt is made to integrate the teachings of the Catholic Church into the curriculum.

The Director of Religious Education is very involved in the school. She teaches the eighth grade religion classes. In addition she plans days of prayer for the school, visits all of the religion classes on a regular basis to assess the teaching, and schedules times for the priests to visit the classrooms.

The mission statement is displayed in all of the classrooms and throughout the school. It can also be found on the new brochure and on the water bottles from a wrestling tournament.

The philosophy, mission statement, and beliefs are examined on a regular basis and changes are made as needed.

The visiting team commends:

1. The faculty for using the walkway as a visual reminder of various facets of their Catholic faith.
2. The faculty and administration for displaying the mission statement so predominately.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the word Catholic be more predominant in all publications from the school.
2. That the Mission Statement be written in the handbooks of the school.

The standard is met.

Governance

The governance and administration work in partnership to ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the organization through the establishment of policy and oversight of leadership. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. The administration of the organization provides a productive work environment, timely and open communication, and the leadership necessary to plan both day-to-day operations and the long-term future of the institution. The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or authority, which operates in the public interest.

Comments

Cathedral Center is a parish school in the Diocese of Erie. The curriculum guidelines are developed by the Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie. The principal is responsible for making sure that the curriculum guidelines are followed.

The pastor, although very involved with the students in the school, delegates the day to day operation of the school to the principal.

There is a Business Manager in the Parish who is responsible for the finances of the school. He makes the budget, sets tuition and ensures that the tuition is collected. The school contracts with FACTS to collect the tuition.

There is a new principal this year. She was a member of the faculty last year and also served as assistant principal. The faculty and parents feel that the transition has been very positive.

Announcements are made to the school daily. A monthly newsletter is mailed to the parents. In addition, the school uses ParentBroadcast for special announcements. The school has a website which contains additional information for the parents.

The school is in the process of forming a School Advisory Council although the exact responsibilities of this group have not been clearly defined.

The visiting team commends:

1. The pastor and principal for taking the initiative to form a School Advisory Council.
2. The pastor for being supportive of the principal and allowing her to run the school.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the principal look for ways to facilitate a means for parents to communicate their concerns regarding the school. One way might be to set up “Casual Conversations with the Principal” as a means to hear the concerns of the parents.
2. That the pastor and principal be pro-active in the set-up of the Advisory Council and emphasize that the group does not make policies but is only there to give input and advice.

The standard is met.

Organizational Design and Staff

The organizational structure of the institution provides the vehicle for carrying out the established philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives of the educational program and support services. A clearly defined set of reporting relationships exists and administrative, instructional, and support staff are qualified, competent and sufficient in number to allow the effective delivery of quality education to students. Staff assessment procedures are in place, are clear to all involved, and are collaborative. On-going professional development, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and collegial relationships among staff and administration are evident and conducive to cooperative action.

Comments:

The daily operation of the school is under the direction of the principal. Classes, organized by grade, are housed in two school buildings. The lower grade classes are self-contained except for specials. A limited departmental structure is used in the middle and upper grades.

Classroom teachers are responsible for instruction in all subjects except for the specials. The school is fortunate to have teachers for the following subjects: art, music, computer, library, and physical education. In addition, there are specialists in reading and math who meet with the students three times per week. A speech/language therapist is also at the school twice a week to meet with students.

The Director of Religious Education is very involved in the school. She teaches 8th grade religion and plans and implements activities for the youth ministry program for students in grades 6-8. She plans days of prayer for the students and coordinates the sacramental program. She also promotes the Catholic Identity of the school.

There is also a Youth Minister who plans and implements after school activities for students in grades 2-5.

The pre-school for 3 and 4 year olds is located in the basement of the building that houses the Cathedral, the High School and the Rectory. The students participate in programs with the high school students as well as with the students in the Cathedral Center.

The principal evaluates the teachers on a regular basis using the forms developed by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie. At the end of the year a formal evaluation form is used for each teacher. This form is the same form that is used by the Pennsylvania Department of Education for evaluation of teachers who are applying for Instructional II certification.

The visiting team commends:

1. The administration for seeing the importance of art, music, computer, library, and physical education by ensuring that these subjects are taught by certified teachers.
2. The director of Religious Education for her positive involvement in the school.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the school examines the facilities for the Pre-school program and determine if there is sufficient room for growth.
2. That the relationship with the neighboring Catholic high school be strengthened to include all grade levels.

The standard is met.

Educational Program

The educational programs consist of both carefully planned and well executed curriculum programs that include appropriate standards, solid instructional pedagogy, and appropriate assessment based on research and best practices. The educational programs are sufficiently financed, periodically reviewed, and mission-appropriate. They are developed to meet and address the needs of students and are designed to produce student learning at all levels. Effective policies and practices are in place, along with instructional materials, technology, and equipment that are appropriate, functional, and well maintained.

Comments:

St. Peter Cathedral Center School (SPCCS) follows the curriculum guidelines established by the Diocese of Erie. The educational program is consistent with the school's philosophy and mission. SPCCS provides most of the programs that are generally expected in an elementary school. The school also offers a full and half day Pre-Kindergarten program for 4 year olds.

In addition to the core curriculum subjects, all students receive instruction in Computer Technology, Music, Art and Physical Education. The Library serves as a central hub in the learning process, literally and figuratively. Compensatory education services in Reading and Math are provided by the Erie Public School System through Act 89 funding.

Some of the students take classes at nearby Cathedral Erie Prep or Villa Maria Academy High School.

The visiting team commends:

1. The school for its efforts to integrate instruction in a multi-curricular approach.
2. The administration for ensuring that students are challenged academically by participating in classes at the nearby Catholic High Schools.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That a school-wide program be initiated to address needs indicated by test scores.
2. That a foreign language program be reinstated as soon as funding can be secured as indicated by responses submitted in the needs assessment survey.

The standard is met.

Learning Media Services and Technology

Learning media services and technology function as important tools to enhance classroom instruction and other school activities as grade level appropriate. Well-organized information resources reinforce knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in other program areas and broaden minds by providing opportunities to conduct research and interact with information.

Comments:

St. Peter Cathedral Central School is equipped with a 24 station computer lab augmented by an Integrate white Board. They also utilize a 28 laptop Mobile Computer Lab located in the Library Media Center. Classrooms are equipped with a video projector that may be linked to the classroom computer for whole group instruction. Wireless routers provider internet access in all classrooms. Software seems to be sufficient to provide ample support and reinforcement. Teachers are provided with laptops to utilize for writing lesson plans and instructional support.

The Library Media Center is centrally located and is staffed by a fulltime librarian. Classes are assigned specific times for library instruction. It is also utilized by teachers and unassigned classes throughout the day. The Computer lab is also available to teachers and their classes during open periods.

The visiting team commends:

1. The school for its unique design and placement of its Library Media Center as a hub of educational activity.
2. The school for recognizing the importance of technology in the learning process by providing a mobile computer lab and video projectors in each classroom.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the school's computers be networked for greater productivity and security.
2. That the school looks for ways to increase funding in order to equip all classrooms with SmartBoards.

The standard is met.

Student Services

The school provides services to students that optimize their preparation for learning. Chief among these services are health services and, at appropriate levels, guidance including academic and personal counseling. Preventative and emergency health care services are provided and health and safety policies are clear and well understood. Other services that may be provided include transportation, food services, services for special needs students, and admissions and placement.

Comments:

Cathedral Center is committed to serving the basic needs of each student. The school is fortunate to have a volunteer nurse come in three times per week. The volunteer nurse administers health care in a loving and responsible way.

Sharing nursing services with the public school system provides vision, hearing, speech and scoliosis screenings and identifies students in need of treatment or correction. Faculty and staff appear to be well informed about serious health problems within the student body.

The food service provides nutritious meals for students according to the guidelines set forth by the Federal Lunch Program and is well accepted by the student body.

Transportation services are adequate and there are no immediate safety concerns at this time. Busing by various school districts is provided. In addition, some students are car riders on a daily basis.

An after school daycare program is provided. Before and after school daycare programs are provided for pre-k as well.

The informational packet for new families is very comprehensive and includes policies, procedures, guidelines and expectations for both parents and students.

The visiting team commends:

1. The administration, faculty and staff for insuring that student data is comprehensive and up-to-date.
2. The nurse who volunteers her time to administer to the children and provide services in case of an emergency.

The visiting team recommends:

1. Giving consideration to increase guidance services by utilizing the services of Erie Cathedral Prep.
2. Providing opportunities for a career/vocation awareness day.

The standard is met.

Student Life and Student Activities

A healthy atmosphere exists for all students. At all levels, non-discriminatory, appropriate student activities that supplement classroom experiences or community life are provided. An appropriate student activities program fosters a positive intellectual, cultural, and social climate, promotes growth in student leadership and social interaction skills, and encourages students' special interest.

Comments:

The students at Cathedral Center are enthusiastic about the variety of extracurricular activities available to them. There are many opportunities for both academic and athletic activities.

In addition to the extracurricular activities the students also participate in theater and musical productions.

The youth minister offers after school activities and service projects for students in grades 2-5. Students in grades 6-8 participate in evening activities, with other youth of the parish, offered by the youth minister.

The visiting team commends:

1. The administration for making available ample opportunities for students to become involved in extracurricular activities at all age levels.
2. The faculty and administration for initiating extracurricular activities that are based on academic subjects.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the school continues and expands the existing programs.
2. That the faculty and administration be open to new opportunities to enhance student life.
3. That the school finds ways to increase financial support for these extra-curricular programs.

The standard has been met.

Finances

Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school's philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives. The business practices of the institution promote confidence in the organization's ability to manage fiscal and material resources in a responsible manner and to follow prescribed budgeting and accounting principles. The majority of resources raised for school purposes are dedicated to school operations.

Comments:

The school has a tuition scale based on the number of children in the family and whether or not the student is a member of the Parish. Non-Parishioners pay a higher rate while families pay a discounted rate for more than one child.

Fundraising is minimal with a large fundraiser being held every two years. The money from this large fundraiser is designated for a specific purpose – to fund technology or the arts program.

The parish subsidy is approximately 25% of the total expenses.

All financial matters are handled by the business manager which allows the principal to concentrate on curriculum and other academic matters.

The visiting team commends:

1. The pastor for hiring a business manager to handle the finances, thus allowing the principal to concentrate on academic and other day to day functions of the school.
2. The school community for sponsoring one large fundraiser every two years and allocating those funds to a specific program.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the faculty and parents be given a detailed financial report on a yearly basis so that they understand what the expenses are and how much the parish needs to subsidize the school.
2. That thought be given to having a yearly fundraiser to generate more funds for the operating budget of the school.

The standard is met.

Facilities

The school facilities, consisting of the site, buildings(s), and equipment, provide a safe, well-maintained physical environment that supports optimal student development and achievement. The school facilities are appropriate to implement the philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives of the school.

Comments:

Cathedral Center consists of two buildings. A covered walkway connects the two buildings. Pre-K is currently housed in the basement of the Cathedral adjacent to the cafeteria of the High School. Efforts to update and maintain the buildings are an on-going process. The 3rd floor of the older building is currently condemned due to asbestos.

The visiting team commends:

1. Cathedral Central on having inviting, clean and pleasant facilities.
2. The school for providing a safe atmosphere for students, faculty and staff.
3. The Pastor, the Erie Cathedral Prep teachers and the Pre-K teachers for developing a unique relationship that is beneficial to all concerned.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the newly formed advisory council undertakes a study for the utilization of the school's 3rd floor or looks for other space as enrollment increases.
2. That the advisory council studies the possibilities for integrating the Pre-K programs into the school facility.

The standard is met.

Health and Safety

A safe and healthy environment for teaching and learning is provided. Both preventive and emergency health and safety procedures are clear and well documented. The school environment is productive and orderly.

Comments:

The leadership at Cathedral Center shows genuine concern for the health and safety of the students, faculty and staff. A buzzer system and remote camera ensures safety at the school's main entrance. Student arrival and dismissal is conducted in a safe manner. Signs for fire drills are displayed in all classrooms and other appropriate gathering areas throughout the school.

A volunteer nurse is available three days per week and other medical services are shared with the public school system. The parent and student handbooks, distributed to each family, sets forth general rules and regulations for students and parents. There is a Diocesan Crisis Response Manual on file and each teacher has one as well.

The visiting team commends:

1. The administration and teachers of Cathedral Center for having procedures and plans in place in the event of a crisis.
2. The administration and teachers for ensuring that these procedures and plans are clear, concise and up-to-date.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the school set forth a plan for continued maintenance to provide a healthy and safe environment.
2. That the faculty be made aware of the health and safety regulations set forth by the Diocese and State that apply to the school.
3. That the faculty handbook be updated to include information concerning the health care of students when they are away from the school premises, especially for a field trip.

The standard is met.

Assessment of Student Learning

The assessment of student learning outcomes enables students to monitor their own learning progress and allows teachers to adapt their instruction to the specific learning needs of students. The school's effectiveness is assessed by examining areas such as student learning and performance, program evaluation, performance results for support services, graduate success, and client satisfaction. Results are used to develop strategies for improving service and program quality. Assessment results are communicated appropriately to parents/guardians, students, staff, and school community.

Comments:

St. Peter Cathedral Center School utilizes standardized testing, teacher designed tests, quizzes and projects as essential elements in the assessment process. As the school moves into increased implementation of technology, they have initiated electronic portfolios as an alternative assessment method.

As one of their stated goals, increased student achievement would dictate that the school develops methods of analysis or tracking these improvements by utilizing their current technology. This can be performed for individual students and the school as a whole to remediate weaknesses and drive instruction for increased student learning.

The visiting team commends:

1. The faculty for integrating technology, in the form of electronic portfolios, to serve their students better.
2. The parents for raising the money in order to provide the equipment necessary to make the use of technology a reality.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That a process be developed to disaggregate the current data from the achievement tests and perform item analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses.
2. That the administration look for ways to challenge those students who obtain high scores on their achievement tests.

This standard has been met.

Planning

The school makes use of strategic, long-range, and operational planning to continuously improve its educational programs and services. Improvement plans focus on student performance and organizational growth and engender continuous improvement across all aspects of the school organization. Externally validated processes for evaluation, strategic planning, and school/district improvement are continuously maintained. Systematic analysis regarding student performance and organizational growth is coupled with analyses of instructional and organizational practices to ensure alignment with the school's philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives. Trends in outcomes and results are projected and goals of demonstrated strategic merit are identified.

Comments:

The faculty and administration participate in planning prior to the opening of school. The Faculty and Parent/Student Handbooks are reviewed and updated yearly. Faculty members are expected to set individual goals for professional improvement. Opportunities for professional improvement, especially the earning of Act 48 credits for the State of Pennsylvania, are provided by the school, the Schools Office of the Diocese of Erie, Gannon University and Mercyhurst College. Information on professional development is shared through the Diocesan website and passed on from administration to the staff at monthly faculty meetings.

The reaccreditation process gave birth to the formation of a Steering Committee comprised of faculty, parents administration and concerned professionals. This Committee has been able to lend vision and expertise to the planning process and will remain a functioning group after this project is completed.

The visiting team commends:

1. The administration for retaining and utilizing the reaccreditation Steering Committee to create long range planning and action plans for attaining this school's goals.
2. The administration for making sure that all handbooks are reviewed on a yearly basis and updated as needed.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the school expand on its connections with Cathedral Prep High School and Villa Maria High School and use these connections to promote the school.
2. That the school looks for ways to connect with Gannon University for enrichment courses for the students.

This standard has been met.

Strategic/Action Plans

The goals and action plans are not always specific enough. For instance, there is no mention made as to how a maintenance plan will increase enrollment.

The time lines do not always extend for five years. It is recommended that the action plans be more specific to the goal and include plans until 2011.

Goals

Goal 1

Each year through the year 2011, Cathedral Center (K-8) will have a net increase in enrollment.

Action Plan:

1. **Proactively develop a maintenance plan. (11/30/2007)**
2. **Form an advisory council. (12/31/2007)**
3. **Build a user-friendly web site. (09/2008)**
4. **Certified 3 & 4 year old, full-time development center. (09/2009)**

The goal of increasing enrollment is very broad. The goal needs to be much more specific.

The action plan states that developing a maintenance plan and opening a full-time 3 and 4 year old certified development center will help to increase enrollment but it is not stated why or how these will do so.

While the answers may be obvious to the writers of the goal, a more detailed explanation of the action plans and how they will help achieve the goal is needed.

The visiting team commends:

1. The principal, technology faculty and parents for the development of the school's user-friendly and informative website.
2. The pastor, principal, and parents for the perspective development of an advisory council.

The visiting team recommends:

1. Setting a specific percentage rate or target number of students for increased enrollment each year.
2. That a strategic planning committee might be more effective than an advisory council.
3. Clearly stating how the action plan steps affect the goal.

Goal 2

By the year 2011, 85% of students in grades 3-8 will achieve a score of Proficient (9-7) on the Diocesan Spring Writing Assessment.

Action Plan:

- 1. Training on the diocesan scoring procedure. (Fall, 2007)**
- 2. Keep writing folders up to date for all students K-8. (2007 – 2011)**
- 3. Non-scored writing prompts are administered in grades K, 1, and 2. (2007-08 school year)**
- 4. Implement uniform method of writing instruction from grades K-8 (Fall, 2008)**
- 5. Submit monthly samples of student writing by teaching teams to the principal. (2008 – 2011)**
- 6. Incorporate writing across the curriculum. (2008 school year)**

When doing the S.W.O.T. Analysis the faculty identified a “Universal Writing Program” as one of its weaknesses. To correct the weakness they chose the above goal.

The Diocese only scores writings of students in grades 3-8 so only those grades are listed as part of the goal.

To achieve this goal the faculty needs to be trained on the diocesan scoring procedure, they need to keep portfolios of the students work, and they need to develop a uniform method of writing instruction in grades K-8.

The visiting team commends:

1. The faculty for recognizing that the writing skills of the students are not up to their standards and wanting to correct this problem.
2. The administration for supporting this effort by planning in-service days to address the issue.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the faculty considers rewording the goal so that those classes who are already at 85% will have something to reach for.
2. That a sample writing prompt be given to the students in the fall and that the faculty scores the writing assessment from a class other than their own.
3. That the faculty utilizes the results of the sample prompt in order to improve the writing of the students.

GOAL 3

By the year 2011, all students in Preschool-8 will acquire a continuum of technological knowledge and skills and develop an electronic portfolio.

Action Plan:

- 1. All faculty and staff will be in-serviced on the use of the interactive SMART board and portable projector. (09/2007)**
- 2. All faculty and staff will be in-serviced on the use of the Microsoft Office Suite and internet resources. (11/2007)**
- 3. All faculty and staff will be in-serviced on the use of the additional software and peripherals (ex. Digital cameras, scanners, and Power Grade). (12/2007)**
- 4. All students in PreK-8 will begin to formulate their electronic portfolios which will include major projects and presentations as required by the curriculum. (01/2008 – 2011)**
- 5. The development of a committee to determine the rubric for the student portfolio assessment. (08/2008 – 11/2008)**
- 6. First formal assessment of electronic portfolio using the developed criteria. (2010 – 2011)**
- 7. Reevaluation of the assessment process and adjustments. (2010 – 2011)**

The faculty and administration are aware of the importance of technology in the educational process. At the same time they are aware that in order to use technology effectively they must first develop their own skills.

They are fortunate to have much of the equipment that is needed. Now it is important to use the equipment on a regular basis.

The visiting team commends:

1. The Goals Committee for their cutting edge effort to meld the use of technology with the use of portfolio assessments to serve as a medium for fleshing out student achievement. It answers the long standing problem of storage of information in the collection of samples for these portfolios.
2. The Goals Committee for developing a comprehensive plan for the collection, storage and evaluation of these portfolios.
3. The Administration for hiring a technology coordinator who is available to work with the faculty.

The visiting team recommends:

1. That the timeline be revamped to be much more aggressive than stated in its Action Plan. Some activities should be running concurrently not sequentially. The entire goal could be accomplished in less than two years. The caveat would be that time may mitigate the enthusiasm.

2. That, if SmartBoards are critical to this goal, then the acquisition of one per classroom would be in order. The use of only one SmartBoard for the entire school is not a reasonable expectation.
3. That, if central storage is to be done with the use of a server, all classroom computers need to be networked.
4. That, in terms of storage, it may be wise for each student to have their own flash drive.