



Faith, Family Spirit, Academic Excellence

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2028

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Introduction

At the outset of the 2022-23 school year, the Billings Catholic Schools (BCS) school board began the strategic planning process and determined that the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) provided the best platform for assessment and continued growth. By utilizing national benchmarks, BCS would be able to assess the system using research-based, well-defined performance indicators that characterize high-performing Catholic schools across the country. “The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) is intended to describe how the most mission-driven, program effective, well managed, and responsibly governed Catholic schools operate.”¹ These standards “serve as both a guide and assessment tool for PK-12 Catholic school effectiveness and sustainability. They include research-based school effectiveness criteria, as well as criteria unique to Catholic school mission and identity. The NSBECS rests on the conviction that adhering to these standards and benchmarks with fidelity will result in highly effective Catholic schools.”²

In utilizing these standards, BCS is beginning a 5-year process of continuous improvement whereby growth areas are identified, goals - and strategies for achieving those goals - are defined, and progress is tracked. In many ways, the data within this report represents a foundation; it is a snapshot of where we believe BCS is today. The growth plan represents the work we plan to take on over the next five years and where we want to be when we again use the benchmarks to assess our system.

The process of evaluation included input from a variety of stakeholder groups, including parents, students, faculty and staff, alumni, current and past school and BCS foundation board members, and parish priests. Beginning with surveys to all stakeholder groups, the school board assessed the results to determine patterns in responses and identify areas of focus and evidence to inform the assessment of the school system’s current performance. Areas of interest included Catholicity, communication, partnership with parents, academic excellence, and a desire to understand how the system operated.

Primarily, the lack of transparent, clear, and frequent communication seemed to create a sense of uncertainty within all stakeholder groups. Many parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the education of their children, but wanted to know more about what they were learning and how the teachers worked together for the betterment of the students. Parents and teachers expressed the desire to know how decisions are made and the organizational structure of the system. Students indicated that more inclusion of their parents in service and educational activities would be beneficial for the system. Better communication throughout the system would help to alleviate these issues.

Turning our attention to the benchmarks, various groups discussed each benchmark, indicators of performance, collected and shared evidence of current reality, and ultimately provided a number ranking for current performance. Rankings provided are from 1-4, with a 1 indicating that current performance does not meet benchmark and a 4 indicating current performance exceeds benchmark. The complete findings of these various groups are included in this report.

¹ https://www.ncea.org/NSBECS/NSBECS/Standards/The_Standards.aspx

² https://www.ncea.org/NSBECS/NSBECS_Home_Page.aspx?WebsiteKey=12a495f8-4001-4b01-b1cb-39edd8cec497

It is important to note that the rating is for the system as a whole. While all our schools do incredible things, one of the challenges is that there are areas where those things look different in each building or where a certain building does something very well, while it may not be as intentionally addressed at other locations. In those situations, the reviewing groups tried to determine an average across the system to provide the rating.

Upon the completion of the evidence gathering phase, various groups revised and confirmed the findings to increase validity. Representatives from various stakeholder groups convened to review the suggestions for improvement, prioritize needs, and devise growth strategies to address areas in need of attention over the course of the next five years. The result of this work is a 5-year plan with goals, strategies, expected outcomes, responsible parties, and expected completion dates included (see Appendix A).

Ultimately, this document provides a roadmap for BCS through the 2027-2028 school year. At that time, this process will begin anew, again using the NSBECS, to measure our growth, determine our progress, assess our current reality, and chart a course into the future for Billings Catholic Schools.

The completion and distribution of this report reflects the work and commitment of an incredibly diverse and talented group of stakeholders representing the BCS community. Particular thanks are due to the 2021-22 BCS School Board who encouraged, supported, and pushed for the completion of this strategic plan. The team of building administrators, Michelle Trafton, Deb Hayes, Jim Stanton, and Shel Hanser all deserve recognition for their contributions to the success of Billings Catholic Schools and for providing critical feedback and assisting in this process every step of the way. Leah Gibson, BCS Business Manager, was instrumental in providing thoughtful feedback and evidence as it related to drafts of the report, particularly regarding benchmarks assessing the financial health of the system. The staff at the Administration Office read countless drafts of this report, found, and provided background information/evidence/supporting documentation whenever requested, and have been champions of this process from day one. A sincere thanks, finally, to all the parents, students, and staff that submitted feedback, took surveys, and contributed to the development of this plan.

While this report represents the culmination of a significant undertaking, it is truly just the beginning. Within these pages are some of the hopes, dreams, and goals of our Billings Catholic Schools. It is our commitment to you, the stakeholders, that we will endeavor to achieve the specific goals outlined in our growth plan and that in five years' time we will look back on the many accomplishments of our system. Please continue to pray that all involved in the life of Billings Catholic Schools are informed and guided by the power of the Holy Spirit, inspired by the Good News of the Gospel, and recognize the many opportunities in front of us to invite our community into a deeper communion with Christ.

2022-2023 School Board

Rick McCann – Chair
Joe Sylvester – Vice Chair
Nate Haney
Lisa Bruno
Jenn Beckwith
Tyler Wiltgen
Brittanie Paquette
Mark DeBourg
Leslie Schaff
Fr. Steve Zabrocki
Bobby Beers
Toby Maack
Stella Zeigler
Angel Turoski

Contributing Groups/Individuals

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Nolan Trafton
Shel Hanser
Rachel McLain
Mary Lague
Krista Wahl
Michelle Trafton
John Pankratz
Jared Harris
Bobby Beers
Deb Hayes
Fr. Steve Zabrocki

Governance & Leadership Standards

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Jim Stanton
Shel Hanser
Michelle Trafton
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Nolan Trafton
Angel Turoski

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Rick McCann
Joe Sylvester
Adam Liberty
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Academic Excellence Standards

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Operational Vitality Standards

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Joe Clark
Toby Maack
Jared Harris
William Haynes
Mark Miller
Adam Liberty
Shel Hanser
Deb Hayes
Jim Stanton
Michelle Trafton
Nate Haney
Bobby Beers
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Mark DeBourg
Laurie Stergar
Leah Gibson
Alex McCready

Kathy Harris
Joanna Brailer
Clay Nottingham
Dale Rumph
Jason Muller
Jeff Watson
Levi Osborn
Brock Williams

Strategies For Growth

Kristin Kulaga
Lacey Weidman
Candace Carder
Leah Gibson
Shel Hanser
Deb Hayes
Nolan Trafton
Rick McCann
Bobby Beers
Nate Haney
Joe Sylvester
Adam Liberty
Angel Turoski

5-YEAR GROWTH PLAN

Mission & Catholic Identity: In our role as disciples, provide meaningful opportunities for all to encounter the transformative message of Christ to strengthen our partnership with parents in the education of their children, ensure teachers are prepared to evangelize through their teaching ministry, and unite in service to the wider Billings community.

- Provide ongoing training for all teaching staff to ensure our teachers are familiar with the unique responsibilities attached to educating students within the context of an authentically Catholic school in partnership with their parents.
- Expand the opportunity for the Billings Catholic Schools community to encounter Christ through faith-based retreats and educational opportunities available to staff, students, parents, and stakeholders.
- Begin a “Speaker Series” for the Billings Catholic Schools community to assist parents and others in the community as the primary educators of their children by providing relevant, timely, and critical information on a variety of topics and challenges encountered when raising children in a relativistic society.
- Unite BCS in service to our wider Billings community through partnerships with local parishes and organizations while leveraging the power of technology to connect to our global community.
- Reintroduce active, robust parent organization to support the operation of the schools and encourage parental involvement in the life of the school such as Booster Club and Home and School Organizations.

Academic Excellence: *Foster a culture of collaboration focused on enriching both the spiritual and academic formation of the BCS community. Recognizing that teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement among school-related factors,³ promoting professional development, collaboration, and spiritual growth among staff will directly translate to increased student growth and achievement.*

- Plan, design, and implement a vibrant and authentically Catholic system of Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to advance student achievement and formation through the continued professional development of our staff and their investment in the curriculum, personal spiritual development, and ownership of their personal growth and student’s success.
- Convene a BCS Leadership Team composed of teaching faculty, administration, and building leaders to participate in the mission of the schools through consensus building decision making processes in all aspects of Billings Catholic Schools while providing leadership opportunities and training to advance our most valuable resource – our staff.
- Institute a curriculum review process to ensure all BCS curricular offerings are current, informed by best practice and current research in education, relevant to the students, and steeped in a Catholic worldview.

³ <https://www.rand.org/education-and-labor/projects/measuring-teacher-effectiveness/teachers-matter.html>

- Plan and provide high-quality professional development and spiritual growth opportunities for all staff members, so nourished by relevant and timely advances in education and formed by Christ, they can continue to encourage academic excellence for our students and families.

Operational Sustainability: *Align organizational operations, policies, and procedures with the mission of Billings Catholic Schools recognizing our unique role as stewards of a school system in the service of the Church to increase transparency and ownership, clarify expectations, and prepare for the future.*

- Develop and adhere to a 5-year operations plan including funding levels, tuition, financial assistance, competitive compensation and benefits for employees, materials, facilities, technology, and infrastructure replacement schedules and expenses.
- Create and implement a standing Nominations/Governance committee of the school board to increase representation from all stakeholder groups on the school board and provide ongoing formation and reflection opportunities for board members to align their efforts with the mission of Billings Catholic Schools.
- Collect, standardize, revise, and/or develop needed policies to ensure operations are in accord with the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings and the system functions according to specific roles, functions, and priorities.
- Create and implement a Hiring Toolkit and Leadership Selection Process to ensure BCS is prepared to recruit, hire, and select teachers and leaders to carry out the mission of BCS when the time comes.
- Begin the process of determining how best to develop, leverage, and maximize the Colton Property considering economic, population, and demographic factors that will influence Billings Catholic Schools and all facility development.

Communications: *Recognizing the power of invitation and the beauty of what we offer to Billings area families, we must tell our story so that anyone that encounters Billings Catholic Schools knows what we are about.*

- Designate an individual/group responsible for the development and implementation of an intentional communications/marketing plan that highlights the many successes of the school system and alumni increasing transparency with stakeholders.
- Intentional, regularly scheduled communications steeped in the language of the vision and mission of the school that address all facets of the school program from academics and spiritual growth to operational and facilities management plans.
- Leverage digital media to demonstrate and promote the faith aspects and academic/extracurricular successes of the schools.

The Benchmarks

Below is the full report and an assessment of the current performance of Billings Catholic Schools. The benchmarks are divided into four sections: Mission & Catholic Identity, Governance & Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality. Each section is denoted with a heading as are individual benchmarks.

Each benchmark includes:

- The benchmark, as stated within the NSBECS in bold.
- The Performance rating, as determined by the various groups engaged in the assessment of that benchmark.
- The NSBECS characteristics of schools performing at that level are italicized.
- Evidence/Commentary if necessary to explain/contextualize findings.
- Suggestions for Improvement as recommended within the NSBECS.

Mission & Catholic Identity

Benchmark 1

Benchmark 1.1: The governing body and the leader/leadership team ensure that the mission statement includes the commitment to Catholic identity.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The governing body and leadership team reviews and crafts the mission statement so that it uses language that aligns it with the Catholic heritage of the school. In doing so it clearly identifies the reason for the school’s existence in the light of its Catholic tradition and the population it serves.”

Our Mission: Billings Catholic Schools will provide an exceptional Catholic education emphasizing formation in faith, family spirit, and academic excellence.

Evidence: The board recommitted themselves to the mission of the schools and realigned their mission to better support the administrators, staff, and community through their service as board members. All administrators discuss the mission at various times throughout the year with different groups of stakeholders including staff, students, and parents. Mission statements are posted in all schools.

Benchmark 1.2: The governing body and the leader/leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The mission statement serves as a goal that is distanced from operational use for the school for leadership for leadership team and governing body. For planning it is used as a corrective rather than as motivation for action.”

Suggestions for improvement:

- Utilize language and values from the mission statement in communicating the rationale and processes by which discussions are engaged and decisions are made by the governing body and leadership team.
- Communications are anchored in the mission and reference the mission whenever possible.
- Mission will be posted in the admin building and throughout board meetings as a reminder of the purpose of the schools and to help keep mission top of mind when engaged in decision making process.

Benchmark 1.3: The school leader/leadership team regularly calls together the school’s various constituencies (including but not limited to faculty and staff, parents, students, alumni(ae) to clarify, review and renew the school’s mission statement.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“There is a process in place that allows for all school constituencies to review the effectiveness of the mission statement. The process attempts to gather information on the effectiveness of the mission statement as the motivating factor behind the school’s activities and decisions. The process is engaged prior to major decisions affecting the total life of the school.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Establish an annual process of reviewing the mission statement with the school constituencies.
- While we have engaged the community through surveys this year, a more focused and targeted approach that directly deals with the mission and how it is being lived out by students could be helpful each year.
- The staff held a retreat this year to explore the mission of Billings Catholic Schools considering the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Education. This was a positive step, but the process needs to be continued on an annual basis and expanded to include parent and community stakeholders.

Benchmark 1.4: The mission statement is visible in public places and contained in official documents.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The mission statement is a visible part of the school’s presence in the community via stationary, report cards, and all school publications. It is present throughout the school.”

Evidence: The mission is consistently displayed in our buildings and referenced in communications. While it needs to be called to as the normative reference for decision making, it is already present in many of the communications sent to stakeholders, including newsletters, quarterly reports, and other

documents. There is room for improvement across the SFC campus and we will use Central's approach of putting copies of the mission outside each classroom.

Benchmark 1.5: All constituents know and understand the mission.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“Some members of the school community understand and can explain the mission. There is no formal program orienting members to the mission, and those who are more fully involved in the life of the school seem to have a better sense of the mission than those who only attend classes at the school.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Training on Catholic education for all staff and the introduction of a provisional certificate and mentoring program that helps staff new to the system understand and embrace the mission of BCS.
- Ongoing staff retreats that focus on their spiritual development in addition to educational skill.
- Community feedback where stakeholders are asked to explain the mission as they see it lived by our students and system at large.

Benchmark 2

Benchmark 2.1: Religious education curriculum and instruction meets the religious education requirements and standards of the (arch)diocese.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“There is evidence that curriculum and instruction meet some of the requirements of the diocesan standards, but there is insufficient evidence that the religious education program is fully aligned with the requirements and standards of the diocese.”

Commentary: Part of the issue is the lack of formal K-8 standards from the diocese. In the absence of those standards and an approved curriculum, BCS has implemented standards approved and recommended by other dioceses. We are in the process of aligning standards across all K-12 and sourcing appropriate and diocesan approved materials to deliver the curriculum to students. Another issue is the lack of a formal catechetical certification process within BCS for religion teachers. This is an area of critical importance and will be addressed in the 23-24 school year.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Revise curriculum to be consistent and aligned.
- Provide learning resources including, but not limited to, textbooks, media, etc. that are aligned with the curriculum and support instruction.
- Develop a review system of the resources.
- Introduce a catechetical certification program for staff and ongoing training for all religion teachers.

Benchmark 2.2: Religion classes are an integral part of the academic program in the assignment of teachers, amount of class time and the selection of texts and other curricular materials.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“There is a regular, organized religious education program in place. It is not given the same attention as other subjects in the selection of qualified teachers and of instructional materials. Less instructional time is allocated for religious instruction in the schedule.”

Commentary: This is partly a result of not having aligned standards, materials, and training for teachers at the youngest grades. While both Upper SFC and BCCHS have dedicated classes for religion that are a part of the curriculum, having classroom teachers in the lower grades develop their own schedules and lacking training on delivering religious education results in less time being dedicated to religious instruction.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Review the qualification of religion teachers and makes changes as needed to assure that those who are teaching religion are qualified and have the support necessary to do so.
- Assign criteria consistent with other curricular areas when choosing textbooks and instructional materials for religion classes. The scheduling of religion classes is given the same priority as that of the other classes.

Benchmark 2.3: Faculty who teach religion meet (arch)diocesan requirements for academic and catechetical preparation and certification to provide effective religion curriculum and instruction.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“Not all of the teachers assigned to teach religion are qualified or in a preparation program to provide qualification.”

Commentary: See Benchmarks 2.1 & 2.2

Benchmark 2.4: The school’s Catholic identity requires excellence in academic and intellectual formation in all subjects including religious education.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The school demonstrates some standards and expectations of academic excellence for its students and faculty.”

Commentary: The significant differentiator between a school that scores a 2 and a school that scores a 3, is offering professional development to teachers for their spiritual formation and articulated standards in all disciplines.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop and implement clearly articulated standards and measurements of student progress.
- Develop performance expectations that demonstrate academic and intellectual development in all subjects including religion.
- Provide formation opportunities for staff to become better catechists for their students.

Benchmark 2.5: Faculty use the lenses of Scripture and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically and ethically about the world around them.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The curriculum does not provide evidence that faculty use the lenses of Scripture and/or Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects.”

Commentary: The current curriculum standards do not incorporate Catholic teaching or suggested Catholic connections as they are based solely on the state of Montana standards. As a private school we have the freedom to include Catholic teaching in our standards and are beginning a 5-year process of curriculum renewal which will include Catholic connections for all subjects.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Work with teaching teams across all subjects in a 5-year rolling review of all curricular subjects to include Catholic connections in all disciplines.
- Publish the BCS standards for parents and all staff to ensure that all stakeholders are informed as to how faith is being integrated into each subject.
- See Appendix A for the curriculum renewal schedule.

Benchmark 2.6: Catholic culture and faith are expressed in the school through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture.

Rating: 4 – Exceeds Benchmark

“The integration of Catholic symbols and expressions of Catholic culture and faith in the arts and architecture is expressed in a manner that distinguishes the school as Catholic to external observers. Students demonstrate a clear appreciation of the Catholic faith and culture through the arts. The arts programs and projects are designed to invite students into a deepening of their faith.”

Benchmark 2.7: The theory and practice of the Church’s social teachings are essential elements of the curriculum.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The Church’s social teachings are not consistently infused into the curriculum or instruction but may be addresses less systematically from time to time or from teacher to teacher.”

Commentary: While the schools all engage in service projects, this committee wonders if we reflect on the “why” behind the projects themselves and provide time for our students to do the same. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is evident within our schools, but we can strengthen this area by asking our students to make connections between their learning and CST.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Design and implement a CST instructional program to assure every student is involved.
- Assess what students are gaining from the service projects and adjust these projects so they are more intimately linked to student’s understanding of CST.

Benchmark 3

Benchmark 3.1: Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Students encounter relevant opportunities to learn about prayer and its relationship to the Eucharistic and larger liturgical life of the Church.”

Evidence: Weekly/bi-weekly attendance at Mass, regular opportunities to participate in the sacraments, celebration of the different liturgical seasons (Advent, Lent, Stations of the Cross, penance services, communal rosary), students assist with preparation for mass and as liturgists.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop a shared understanding of the purpose of prayer and invite students to create prayer booklets or online archive of prayers.
- Leverage media to demonstrate and promote faith aspects of the schools.

Benchmark 3.2: Every student is offered timely, regular, and age appropriate opportunities to reflect on their life experiences and faith through retreats and other spiritual experiences.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Students are presented with at least one organized opportunity to engage in a retreat experience under the direction of qualified personnel. Students play a role in the planning of the retreat so it deals with their life experiences in the larger context of faith.”

Evidence: SEARCH retreat, Senior retreat, Saints groups, 8th grade retreat, are all strong opportunities that present age-appropriate opportunities for students to encounter faith through their life experiences. Covid presented challenges to an otherwise strong retreat program that should be rekindled in the coming years with both Freshman and Sophomore retreats. Opportunities could be added at key transition areas (5th grade).

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Rekindle retreat offering for all grades 9-12.
- Introduce a 5th grade retreat as students transition upstairs at SFC.

- Collaborate with students and faculty to identify retreat themes for the year to tie both staff and student retreats together.
- Partner with parishes to find alternative spaces and speakers.

Benchmark 3.3: Every student participates in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

Rating: 2.5 – Partially/Meets Benchmark

“Some students participate in service programs that are tied into the liturgical year. Opportunities to reflect on the experience in the light of the Gospel are sporadic.”

To fully reach level 3: “Matching their talents and needs of the community students reflect on their experiences in light of the Gospel values that animate the school’s mission. Students indicate how their experiences have broadened and deepened their understanding of faith in action.”

Commentary: BCS offers many opportunities to engage however the critical and theological reflection is not always explicitly presented to the students and families. The review team questioned if students understand the “why” behind what we are doing. More should be done to fully meet level 3 standards regarding critical reflection and connection to the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. A redefinition of service to include the idea that it requires leaving students’ comfort zone (not mowing grandparent’s lawn or donating funds, but actually being present and serving) is needed.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Senior level course on Catholic social teaching introduced for advanced religion offerings.
- Service fair at the beginning of the year for 9-12 students to see the opportunities available in the community.
- Introduce a reflective practice with all service projects where the connections between service and Catholic social teaching are directly addressed by staff.
- Assess the “quality over quantity” challenges with the current system requiring a certain number of hours. Does this result in students finding multiple “low-level” opportunities to fill hours and would changing this requirement make it more meaningful?
- Introduce a Day of Service for BCS where all members of the community are encouraged to spread throughout the community in the service of others.

Benchmark 3.4: Every student experiences role models of faith and service for social justice among the administrators, faculty and staff.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“All students have active relationships with school personnel that model a commitment to faithful service. The school emphasizes its commitment to teaching and practicing social justice in multiple ways. Hiring practices reflect this commitment.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Hiring toolkit and explicit connections between the role of teachers and leaders in the faith formation of the students.

- Support and training for staff so there is a clear understanding of the role of educators within the Catholic school as faith formators.

Benchmark 4

Benchmark 4.1: The leader/leadership team provides retreats and other spiritual experiences for the faculty and staff on a regular and timely basis.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The leadership team takes responsibility for setting a yearly course for faculty and staff’s spiritual enrichment. Both individual and communal experiences are offered throughout the year.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Can do a better job of communicating intentionality of these retreats to the wider community.
- Theme retreats to address community/staff needs over the course of the year.
- Focus on utilizing outside speakers when needed or they will add value to the retreat theme/intent.

Benchmark 4.2: The leader/leadership team and faculty assist parents/ guardians in their role as the primary educators of their children in faith.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The school offers non-programmatic support for parents in their roles as religious educators of their children. The support is generally offered on an “as needed basis” or by request.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Utilize social media presence to highlight Catholic identity of BCS.
- Speaker series offered to parents addressing needs within the parent community in regard to parenting, faith formation, education of their children.

Benchmark 4.3: The leader/leadership team collaborates with other institutions (for example, Catholic Charities, Catholic higher education, religious congregation-sponsored programs) to provide opportunities for parents/ guardians to grow in the knowledge and practice of the faith.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The school has established a relationship with a Catholic institution in order to broaden the understanding of the Church within the context of the school. The offerings are sporadic, and help parents to deepen their understanding of the faith.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Collaborate regularly with the local parishes and other Catholic institutions to provide opportunities for parents to grow in their faith.
- Intentionally promote parish events and activities in newsletters and across social media.

Benchmark: 4.4: All adults in the school community are invited to participate in Christian service programs to promote the lived reality of action in service of social justice.

Rating: 2- Partially Meets Benchmark

“Programs are made known to adults in the community inviting them to participate in service programs that operate according to Christian service and Catholic social justice principles.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Day of service planned and implemented for all members of the BCS community.
- See benchmark 3.3

Benchmark 4.5: Every administrator, faculty, and staff member visibly supports the faith life of the school community.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“Some administrators, faculty and staff are a visible presence at school events witnessing the Catholic identity of the school. The faculty and staff sporadically participate in the full array of religious events at the school.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Hiring practices, teacher/staff training, certifications, and evaluation need to have an integrated religious component.
- Expectations for staff should be communicated throughout the interview and hiring practices, then should be followed up for training for all staff new to BCS.

Governance & Leadership

Benchmark 5

Benchmark 5.1: The governing body, representing the diversity of stakeholders, functions according to its approved constitution and by-laws.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The administrators, in collaboration with the board, attempt to recruit prospective members, representing the targeted gender, cultural and ethnic diversity, and needed skillsets with some success but not consistently as evidenced by the lack of a standing Nominating/Governance Committee and current roster. From observable evidence of both attendance at a meeting and board minutes, the governing body appears to function according to its approved bylaws, but it is not held accountable for carrying out its responsibilities as listed in the governing document. In particular, committees are not held accountable to the administrators and the board chair for completing their assigned goals or tasks.”

At this level, the administrators and board members have limited knowledge about the content of the governing documents. This is evidenced through conversations with both administrators and board members.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Recruit new members to maximize the gender, cultural, ethnic, skillset, and parish diversity to advance the goals of the board, aligned to the mission and needs of the schools.
- Understand and commit to the roles and responsibilities defined in the bylaws. The board conducts regularly scheduled meetings and organizes its committees to optimize its productivity for the benefit of the school’s performance and operational viability.
- Annual board planning retreat and at least two in-service sessions to provide the board time to better understand its purpose as well as to identify goals/activities for the coming year.
 - Joint session at least once per year with the Foundation board to better develop relationships and joint planning.
- Revise bylaws

Benchmark 5.2: The governing body systematizes the policies of the school’s operations to ensure fidelity to mission, and continuity and sustainability through leadership successions.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The governing body and school leadership have put some systems in place that attempt to ensure the ability of the school to operationalize the school’s mission through its policies. Only some of the needed systems are present, functional, and provided to all stakeholders. There is clear evidence that some policies are not implemented in the school’s operations and program. The school’s governing body and leadership have started the process for measuring policy implementation and alignment to mission but are still in the formative stages. Leadership succession planning is not a priority.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Operationalize and systematize all policies in alignment with the school’s mission.
 - Business Office Handbook
 - Faculty/Staff Handbook
 - Update all Student Handbooks
 - Develop new policies as needed
- Establish a process for accountability of stakeholders in meeting implementation goals of policies. Gather and analyze evidence that improvements have been made.
- Establish a process for leadership succession planning and hiring in the event a new school leader is needed.

Benchmark 5.3: The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, maintains a relationship with the Bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the Bishop’s legitimate authority.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/leadership team, recognizes, understands and respects the reserved powers of the bishop or those who report directly to him, and can demonstrate how each – in their appropriate roles (board, leadership, bishop) – works to build and maintain a relationship with the bishop marked by mutual trust, close cooperation, continuing dialogue, and respect for the bishop’s legitimate authority.”

Evidence: This relationship and collaboration are evidenced in the bylaws of the school board, ongoing communication with the Superintendent – the bishop’s appointed representative – and the enforcement of diocesan policies throughout the school system. Invitations to the bishop to speak and celebrate with the staff and students are frequent. BCS is supporting the diocese in creating and revising curriculum standards that will be shared with other schools across the diocese.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Maintain a strong, positive and visible relationship to the bishop, communicating this relationship to all stakeholders of the school.
- Invite the bishop to not only celebrate Mass, but also be present at significant school occasions.

Benchmark 5.4: The governing body, in collaboration with or through the actions of the leader/ leadership team, maintains a constructive and beneficial relationship with the (arch) diocesan Education Office consistent with (arch)diocesan policy pertaining to the recognition of Catholic schools by the Bishop.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The governing body and school leader put policies in place that are aligned with the policies of the diocese. Further, the school policies are implemented in accordance with the guidelines of the diocesan policies and are regularly monitored or alignment.”

Evidence: Policy manuals from the diocese are housed with each administrator and referenced frequently. The diocesan policies inform local policies and questions are frequently directed to the superintendent.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Align all policies of the school and the diocese and regularly monitor implementation.
- Continuously foster productive relationships between other schools of the diocese, the office of education, and themselves for the purpose of promoting solidarity.
- Host regular gatherings of the schools of the diocese for the cultivation of initiatives, programs, and professional development.

Benchmark 5.6: The governing body engages in formation and on-going training and self-evaluation for itself and the leadership team to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.

Rating: 1 – Does Not Meet Benchmark

“The governing body and the leadership team do not engage in formation and on-going training. Neither group has a plan in place to do so. Furthermore, the two groups do not support the concept of assessment and accountability. This negatively impacts the governing body’s faithful execution of their respective responsibilities as informed stewards of the mission. No Nominating/Governance Committee exists.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Form a standing Nominating/Governance Committee of the School Board.
- Provide oversight for the formation, education, and self-evaluation of the governing body as a responsibility of the Nominating/Governance Committee.
- Plan focused and on-going training activities for prospective members, newcomers, and veteran school board members sponsored by the Nomination/Governance Committee
- Organize and provide an annual self-assessment process that includes a retreat to engage in ongoing governing body improvement and ensure the faithful execution of their responsibilities.

Benchmark 6

Benchmark 6.1: The leader/leadership team meets national, state and/or (arch)diocesan requirements for school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leader(s) of the school.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The leader/leadership team possesses the national, state, and/or diocesan professional credentials that indicate school leadership preparation and licensing to serve as the faith and instructional leaders of the school. The leader/leadership team renews these credentials as required in a timely manner.”

Evidence: Fully licensed building administrators with certificates on file.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Maintain and regularly renew the appropriate national, state, and or/diocesan professional credentials and engage in ongoing professional development to strengthen professional expertise and faith-based leadership skills beyond minimum requirements for maintaining the credentials.

Benchmark 6.2: The leader/leadership team articulates a clear mission and vision for the school, and engages the school community to ensure a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The leader/leadership team fully understands the vision and mission and uses this knowledge to guide their efforts within the school. The leader/leadership team provides consistent communication to the community about these issues. The leader/leadership team uses their vision and mission to guide

decisions, and welcomes and includes the school community in making sure the vision and mission are lived.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop a clear and articulate understanding of the school’s vision and mission by all stakeholders.
- Relate the actions of the leader/leadership team directly to the vision and mission.
- Communicate to all stakeholders how mission and vision connects to their experiences of the school, using multiple available resources.
- Create opportunities for stakeholders such as the school board, faculty, and students to contribute to the vision and mission.
- Integrate the vision and mission into every action and decision of all school programs through the work of all stakeholders. The entire school community recognizes and uses the school’s vision and mission as a guidepost for planning and decision-making.

Benchmark 6.3: The leader/leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of personnel, including recruitment, professional growth, faith formation, and formal assessment of faculty and staff in compliance with (arch)diocesan policies and/or religious congregation sponsorship policies.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The leader/leadership team’s plan for recruiting and attracting faculty and staff is limited and inconsistent. The school-wide professional growth plan is not clearly articulated. An inordinate amount of professional development time for teachers is spent working on operational and organizational tasks such as entering grades or preparing for parent-teacher conferences. Teachers inconsistently relate information from professional development topics and activities to student learning and ongoing school improvement. Little, if any, reflection of professional development topics and activities takes place among the faculty within learning teams or departments for the benefit of student learning and program improvement. Faith formation topics and activities for faculty and staff may occur occasionally but are not part of an annual spiritual growth plan. The leader/leadership team has a limited understanding of the goals and methods appropriate for an effective professional performance review process of both faculty and staff. Professional performance reviews of faculty and staff occur infrequently and tend to use only formal summative evaluation methods that do not ask faculty and staff to reflect on their professional practice.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop a wide range of contacts and networks to attract well-qualified candidates for position openings.
- Create professional development topics that reflect documented student needs so that teachers have resources to implement strategies to improve student learning.
- Assess and provide feedback for faculty and staff through both formal and informal tools on a regular basis.
- Demonstrate reflective personal practice.

Benchmark 6.4: The leader/leadership team establishes and supports networks of collaboration at all levels within the school community to advance excellence.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The leaders/leadership team has established some structure or collaboration but structure for networks remains in a formative stage. Although the leader/leadership team supports networks of collaboration at all levels of the school community, there exists a cultural debate as to the value of full collaboration. These collaborative networks are only partially present, somewhat functional, and infrequently engaged in communication. Stakeholders are in agreement to support program excellence but the direction to follow is not commonly understood or accepted. The leader/leadership team struggles to ensure that the schools schedule, budget, goals, and objectives support a culture of community and collaboration.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Implement a process of regular meetings and communication for the various network groups that supports and links the ideas and results of their work with ideas and results of other groups.
- Work to address feelings of autonomy and individual private agendas that may impede progress in focusing on the common goals that support program excellence.
- Develop and implement a method of assessing progress in implementing this collaborative model.
- Develop schedules and design the school’s budget to support a culture of collaboration.
- Focus on the art of consensus building as a practice of decision-making for all network groups.

Benchmark 6.5: The leader/leadership team directs the development and continuous improvement of curriculum and instruction, and utilizes school-wide data to plan for continued and sustained academic excellence and growth.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The leader/leadership team adopts a curriculum but are not yet able to link the curriculum to specific teaching philosophies and strategies. Few intentional connections are made between the curriculum and assessment.”

Connections across all grade levels need to be deepened and strengthened so there is more vertical alignment in how subjects are taught and core content is assessed. Assessment data should be reviewed in teams to determine the best strategies for instruction and to review curriculum materials for weaknesses that can be supplemented.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Link curriculum, teaching strategies, and student learning in order to provide assessment data to support or revise curriculum based on student needs.

- Design and implement a professional development plan for teachers that responds to student needs based on the assessment data.

Benchmark 6.6: The leader/leadership team works in collaboration with the governing body to provide an infrastructure of programs and services that ensures the operational vitality of the school.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“All stakeholders recognize that the collaborative functioning of the school’s basic framework produces strong and dynamic program and services. Sufficient personnel and financial capacity are present to effectively implement policies, programs, and procedures.”

Goals:

- Work collaboratively in an environment of transparency engaging all stakeholders in the responsibility of ensuring operational vitality.

Benchmark 6.7: The leader/leadership team assumes responsibility for communicating new initiatives and/or changes to school programs to all constituents.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The leader/leadership team clearly demonstrates that communication is very important and regularly puts out communication about specific initiatives prior to, during, and after implementation. Many communication tools such as newsletter, bulletins, emails, social media, etc. are used; the communication tools are matched to targeted audiences. The communications are linked back to the school’s mission and vision.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Identify all target audiences and match them with specific communication tools for greatest effect.
- Relate initiatives back to the school’s vision and mission routinely and consistently.
- Implement a communication plan that incorporates procedures on how often to communicate, with whom to communicate, and why communication is essential.
- Emphasize and implement the process for annual monitoring, assessing, and revising of the appropriate strategies to achieve maximum effectiveness in communication with all constituents.

Academic Excellence

Benchmark 7

Benchmark 7.1: The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards, and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student successfully completes a rigorous and coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Catholic values.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The school’s written curriculum includes references to standards being addressed across subjects and courses/grade levels. There is little or no evidence that the courses have been aligned to the standards and sequenced in order to intentionally focus on specified growth in learning from year to year. Written curriculum for some classes shows integration of Catholic values.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Provide time and support for faculty to research standards. Provide appropriate instructional materials and training to implement a deep understanding of standards as the foundation for the written curriculum.
- Use the delineated standards to vertically align courses.
- Provide continuing professional development relating to standards-based, backward-designed curriculum.
- Develop curricular teams of faculty to revise standards and curricula on a 5-year cycle to provide updated, written curricula across all subject areas and incorporate Catholic values.

Benchmark 7.2: Standards are adopted across the curriculum, and include integration of the religious, spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions of learning in all subjects.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“One can identify specific, valid, outside academic standards (national, state, or diocesan) in only parts of the written curriculum. Similarly, one can find Catholic identity elements in only some of the written, standards-based curricula in every subject across all grade levels.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Initiate a curriculum development/review process in which teachers write curricula for all subjects and across grades that clearly identify both academic standards and integration of Catholic identity elements.
- Set clear expectations that every teacher will actually teach this agreed upon curriculum.
- Provide training and time for teachers to collaborate in PLCs to vertically align curriculum and discuss implementation of standards.

Benchmark 7.3: Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning provide students with the knowledge, understanding and skills to become creative, reflective, literate, critical, and moral evaluators, problem solvers, decision makers, and socially responsible global citizens.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The written curriculum states and student work shows that this kind of learning is expected and taught regularly and across the entire school. Integrating problem solving, reflecting, evaluating, creating, etc. into curriculum and instruction is intentional and ongoing. Integration of technology as a tool is evident in student learning.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Make student demonstration of 21st century skills a priority for continuous improvement in the work of professional learning communities.
- Increase intentionality of incorporating 21st century skills into all curricular areas.
- Market and communicate success.

Benchmark 7.4: Curriculum and instruction for 21st century learning prepares students to become expert users of technology, able to create, publish, and critique digital products that reflect their understanding of the content and their technological skills.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“There is evidence that some students [some grade levels more than others] are involved in creating or using one or more of the following: blogs, wikis, student-created websites, podcasts, and digital media presentations. Projects are content-specific and teacher directed. The use of technology is dependent upon the dispositions and abilities of individual teachers.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Move from projects to project-based learning that allows students to tackle realistic problems as they would be solved in the real world.
- Connect content to promote interdisciplinary learning and assessment that makes use of technology.
- Provide more training for all staff on the integration of technology along with increased support from BCS Technology personnel.

Benchmark 7.5: Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Students are eager to share ideas and ask questions. Activities and assessments address critical thinking and the diverse needs of their students. [Teachers] help students understand how to evaluate their own work and give them opportunities to do so. Gospel values permeate all aspects of the classroom experience.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Clearly define dispositions in a Catholic context and describe their place in the curriculum.
- Make sure that assessments for dispositional growth are done intentionally at all grade levels.
- Formally assess the culture, climate, and environment to further a caring, faith-filled community for all students.
- Conduct surveys to assure a match between student and teacher perceptions of the learning environment.

Benchmark 7.6: Classroom instruction is designed to engage and motivate all students, addressing the diverse needs and capabilities of each student, and accommodating students with special needs as fully as possible.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“There is evidence of significant student involvement in meaningful learning processes. Students sometimes have learning choices and a voice in demonstrating how they learn. There is some evidence that assignments are differentiated and differentiated instructional methods are observed in most classrooms, most of the time. Students frequently demonstrate an ability to evaluate information and analyze it for truth, accuracy, and relevance.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Put policies, practices, and procedures in place to support increased and consistent differentiated learning to make it the norm.
- Provide resources to assist teachers in developing engaging interdisciplinary units that meet the individual needs of learners.
- Provide teachers with training and best-practices to increase teacher driven differentiation rather than relying on pull-out intervention.
- Leverage technology to better support all learning styles and the needs of various learners.

Benchmark 7.7: Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to develop, implement and continuously improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction to result in high levels of student achievement.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The school recognizes that students benefit when teachers work together and it is beginning to find concrete ways to support teacher teams, although the teams may be ad hoc and/or voluntary. Teachers generally value working together, but do not yet feel accountable to adjust their own curriculum and instruction in light of their collaboration. The teams that do exist may look more at school-wide issues rather than setting measurable goals for increasing student achievement in their classes.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Organize all teachers into PLCs and provide time for the various groups to meet regularly throughout the year.
- Build in time for teacher training and PLC work during the annual calendaring process.
- Provide professional development about the work of PLCs and monitor and support their work.

Benchmark 7.8: The faculty and professional support staff meet (arch) diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for academic preparation and licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum and instruction.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The faculty and professional support staff meet all diocesan, state, and/or national requirements for academic preparation and licensing to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum and instruction. Compliance with these requirements is factored into all employment decisions.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Encourage faculty and staff to share their knowledge and skills with others via a variety of formats, including presenting at workshops, publishing articles and facilitating workshops, etc.
- Financially support continued professional development for all staff.

Benchmark 7.9: Faculty and professional support staff demonstrate and continuously improve knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“Some faculty and professional support staff demonstrate growth in their knowledge and skills necessary for effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and the modeling of Gospel values. A few faculty members write professional goals and intentionally review their own progress and improvement in effective instruction, cultural sensitivity, and modeling of Gospel values. Evidence of these goals is visible in the school climate.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Formalize an annual goals process for all teaching and professional support staff tied to annual evaluations by their supervisor.
- Provide time necessary for professional development and plan meaningful PD around focused school/system-wide goals.

Benchmark 7.10: Faculty and staff engage in high quality professional development, including religious formation, and are accountable for implementation that supports student learning.

Rating: 2- Partially Meets Benchmark

“Faculty and staff have or are working on attaining the required levels of religious education certification, but certification is pursued individually. Some teachers effectively integrate Catholic teachings and dispositions into the teaching of content areas.”

Commentary: The diocese requires catechetical certification for all religions teachers, however, they do not yet have an approved course to offer the required training. As a system, BCS has been working through the Mission and Catholic Identity committee of the school board to develop an internal program that we plan to roll out during the 23-24 school year for all faculty and staff. Beginning with the 25-26 school year, the program will act as an introduction to BCS and will be a part of new staff orientation.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Design and implement a religious education certification program for all staff.
- Integrate religious certification into the onboarding process for all newly hired faculty.
- Provide annual, faith-focused retreat opportunities for all staff within BCS.

Benchmark 8

Benchmark 8.1: School-wide and student data generated by a variety of tools are used to monitor, review, and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs; to plan for continued and sustained student growth; and to monitor and assess faculty performance.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The use of data is minimal or inconsistent when monitoring, reviewing, or evaluating curriculum and co-curricular program.”

Commentary: Data is collected across the system but is not widely shared or discussed by staff, especially across buildings. More intentional use of data and data discussions can result in a better picture of student growth and achievement across the system. Part of the reason for the challenge in this area relates to time set aside for teacher development/data conversations. Planning and scheduling must allow time for teachers and staff to collaborate, analyze, and utilize data in planning instruction and vertically aligning curriculum and assessments.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Incorporate a greater variety of tools for generating school-wide and assessment data for curriculum and co-curricular programs.
- Set expectations and provide time for faculty to use data to monitor, review, and evaluate curriculum and co-curricular programs and plan for continued and sustained growth.
- Identify valid ways to measure student growth and provide professional development on assessing for growth.

Benchmark 8.2: School-wide and aggregated student data are normed to appropriate populations and are shared with all stakeholders.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“School-wide, aggregated data acquired from standardized tests is normed to populations that represent the school’s students. The data is clear and readily accessible and is communicated to stakeholders.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Ensure quality and consistency of communication of normed data via an annual report or state of the school.
- Increase distribution of data to include alumni and parish communities.

Benchmark 8.3: Faculty use a variety of curriculum-based assessments aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to assess student learning, including formative, summative, authentic performance, and student self-assessment.

Rating: 2- Partially Meets Benchmark

Commentary: Rather than point to specifics of the definition of a 2 within the standards, it is more helpful to point out what would make BCS a 3 according to their definition. "Teachers use formative assessment to adjust instruction quickly, while learning is in progress...The feedback provided to students gives them information as to where they are and what they have to do next. Students have options in how they will demonstrate their learning. The curriculum, not the textbook, guides instruction and assessment decisions." One of the more significant reasons BCS cannot score a three is the lack of a written curriculum that operationalizes the state standards which are used to guide instruction.

"Teachers are expected to vary the types of assessment used in their classroom and they are given the time and support needed to become proficient in using them." As is evident throughout this report, BCS has not devoted the time necessary toward professional development and ensuring teachers have the necessary training, exposure to best practices, resources required, and time to implement collaborative, cross-curricular assessments. Time must be devoted to teacher development and collaboration to improve scores in several key areas.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop a BCS philosophy of assessment and develop grading practices school-wide that support teachers in designing assessments based on curriculum and student learning needs.
- Provide time and training to establish a culture of using assessment results to inform instruction practices.
- Work collaboratively to plan authentic performance tasks that are interdisciplinary and require the appropriate use of formative and summative assessments.

Benchmark 8.4: Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are valid, consistent, transparent, and justly administered.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

"Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are sometimes aligned with curriculum. How learning will be measured is occasionally articulated at the outset of assignments so that some students have an understanding of learning expectations. The faculty sometimes meets to ensure validity of assessments, but this too, is inconsistent."

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Provide regular opportunities for faculty to validate assessments for reliability.
- Provide professional development for faculty and professional staff on how to differentiate assessments to measure learning.

Benchmark 8.5: Faculty collaborate in professional learning communities to monitor individual and class-wide student learning through methods such as common assessments and rubrics.

Rating: 1- Does Not Meet Benchmark

“Teachers are not working together to assess student performance.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Form professional learning communities.
- Set an agenda for them to begin to examine student performance and determine how to improve achievement.
- Provide professional development and coaching for teachers in PLCs to be able to set SMART goals, design common formative assessments, collect and analyze results which they use to adjust teaching in order to improve learning.

Benchmark 9

Benchmark 9.1: School-wide programs for parents/guardians provide opportunities for parents/guardians to partner with school leaders, faculty, and other parents/guardians to enhance the educational experiences for the school community.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

Commentary: Parent and student surveys indicate a desire for more opportunities to partner with the schools, particularly in areas of service and faith formation. While there are some programs in place, there is not a unified strategy behind what is offered, when, and the goals of those offerings. There is a significant opportunity to target programming at certain groups and develop more opportunities to incorporate parents through focused offerings. Specifically, a Parent/Teacher or Home/School Organization would be beneficial. (See Mission & Catholic Identity Benchmarks 3.3, 4.2, & 4.3)

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Establish a Parent/Teacher organization for the PS-8 levels (booster club and team activities help provide community opportunities at the high school level).
- Consistently offer programs, activities, and opportunities for parents/guardians to stimulate their interest in and opportunity for enhancing the school community.
- Provide professional development for faculty and staff about productive ways to partner with parents/guardians.

Benchmark 9.2: Guidance services, wellness programs, behavior management programs, and ancillary services provide the necessary support for students to successfully complete the school program.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Guidance and ancillary services and wellness and behavior management programs are tied to student success.”

Commentary: Communication of the services and programs offered can be clearer and more frequent. Not everyone is aware of the variety of services offered and the ways in which these services support student learning and academic/spiritual growth. Communication about these programs lacks consistency from a system-wide level and outcomes of participation in these programs is not always clearly communicated to parents/guardians.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Communicate to parents/families consistently, clearly, and frequently.

Benchmark 9.3: Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to further identify and develop their gifts and talents and to enhance their creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual capabilities.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are available for all students. The purpose and intended outcomes of these activities are aligned with the curriculum and/or highlight and grow student’s gifts and talents and enhance creative, aesthetic, social/emotional, physical, and spiritual capabilities. At this level student, parents/guardians, and school personnel describe these activities as fully integrated into the life of the school.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Communicate about these activities to all members of the school community and the broader community in a systematic, planned, pervasive manner.

Operational Vitality

Benchmark 10

Benchmark 10.1: The governing body and leader/leadership team engage in financial planning in collaboration with experts in nonprofit management and funding.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“A financial plan has been discussed, but there has been no formalization of the plan or consultation with experts.”

Commentary: While we have moved to a cost-to-educate funding model, we are still in a year-to-year basis and struggle to have audits completed in a timely fashion.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop implementation strategies with a leadership team.
- Implement a plan with the advice of experts.

- Include the community as implementation progresses and communicate with all stakeholders on the goals and objectives of the plan.

Benchmark 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, dioceses, religious orders, educational foundations, the larger Catholic community, and responsible boards.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

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

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Plan for three-five years with preliminary budgets, enrollment numbers, and financial assistance projections.
- Look for more partners through the Foundation beyond current commitments.
- Diversify assets through diversification of partnerships and new sources.
- Recognize alternative sources not traditionally approached to partner with catholic schools.

Benchmark 10.3: Financial plans define revenue sources that include but are 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.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Financial plan defines revenue sources and includes all revenue sources beyond tuition and parish support when appropriate.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Identify and include diverse funding sources.
- Develop strategies to build relationships with new diverse funding sources.
- Research best practices from successful schools and other non-profit organizations.
- Work with Foundation staff and board to prepare targeted proposals for submission to alternative funding sources.

Benchmark 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.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“All regular operational costs are considered, but the budget may be missing more complex elements like depreciation, shared services, or 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. The school leadership team recognizes the importance of understanding costs, but does not always incorporate cost data into planning or decision making processes.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Timely reports are provided to each school leader to help them track local level spending and adherence to budgets.
- 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 create a comfort level for modifying reports to ensure the reports have an accurate understanding of the school’s financial health at all times.

Benchmark 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.

Rating: 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Build a longer term (3-5 year) financial plan with projections for enrollment, tuition increases, financial assistance, and Parish/Foundation support.
- Report complete revenue data as a portfolio whose relative percentages are analyzed.
 - Adjust the portfolio as needed to ensure future sustainability.
- Return to a cycle that allows the Foundation to project assistance rather than fundraising in the year in which the funds are needed.

Benchmark 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.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Increase the school’s rating on 10.4 & 10.5 to level 3.
- Meet with stakeholder communities to disseminate information about the costs and expense associated with education in the system.

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

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The economic picture of the school is not shared with 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 programs 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop a clear communication strategy/plan on the “financing” of a Catholic education at your school.
- Include opportunities for meetings, workshops, print materials, and online resources.
 - Financial Assistance events at local parishes – parent testimonials, ACE guidelines, Foundation representation, Priest discussion, etc.
- Create lists of tuition assistance available from traditional sources and lists of opportunities not widely shared.
- Ensure that all families are fully informed and individually packaged so that they understand all the facets of funding their children’s education in BCS.

Benchmark 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.

Rating: 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop and post target dates and calendars for all planning steps for approval by board members.
- Ongoing evaluation of the plan based on actual numbers throughout the year with budgets distributed and tracked by school leaders.
- Curriculum renewal schedule with funds delineated for a refresh of materials.
- Plans developed with a further horizon than the school year in which the plan is created.

Benchmark 11

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.

Rating: 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 human resource policies.”

Commentary: Part of the reason for this is the change in personnel in the Administration Office and training/access provided by the diocese. BCS is currently revising and publishing an employee handbook and conducting a full policy review to ensure compliance with diocesan policies and the integration of any pertinent local level policies. A more thorough review schedule, once per year, is needed to ensure we remain current and comply with all policies. The single most challenging aspect of HR within BCS relates to access to diocesan level HR applications that require more intensive training or access rights for BCS personnel so we are better able to serve BCS employees without the need for diocesan support.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop, regularly review, and update policies.
- Routinely train personnel.
- Ensure certification of HR personnel staff according to industry standard.
- Conduct annual employee satisfaction surveys and share results.
- Request more training and access permission for diocesan level HR applications to better support employees within BCS when challenges arise.

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

Rating: 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Implement and improve the rigor and commitment of all stakeholders to the performance appraisal process.
- Expand awareness of organizational commitment to excellence and growth for all staff and the necessary ongoing professional development.
 - Publish yearly professional and spiritual development “theme” and align all PD options to the goal for the year.
 - Clearly publish the PD budget and amount available per teacher.
 - Design and implement a system of repayment in exchange for years worked to help pursue advanced degrees for staff.

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

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Compensation policies are developed and salary scales are benchmarked to known selected competitors. There is an annual review of the salary scale 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Establish the role of the administrators and leaders in creating a culture of excellence supported by ongoing professional development.
 - Publish yearly professional and spiritual development “theme” and align all PD options to the goal for the year.
 - Clearly publish the PD budget and amount available per teacher.
 - Design and implement a system of repayment in exchange for years worked to help pursue advanced degrees for staff.
- Provide opportunities for health and wellness and financial planning education for all employees.

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

Rating: 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Share professional development options with all staff.
- Share information with all employees, highlighting the full cost of staff compensation packages and the total percentage of the school’s cost associated with packages.

Benchmark 12

Benchmark 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.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The school has a plan, but it is partial or incomplete. The plan relates only to one or two of the three areas: facilities.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Create plans that follow the facilities plan for equipment and technology.
- Align the three plans to better support the delivery of the school’s educational mission and ensure good stewardship of funds.
- Continuously evaluate and update the plan as needed to ensure it operates as intended.
- Spending needs to be tied to the plan and the plan revised in the event spending deviates from the plan.
- Ensure that the objectives of the plan are tied to the mission of the schools.

Benchmark 12.2: The school’s budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology management with specific funds for capital improvements, depreciation, and replacement.

Rating: 2 – Partially Meets Benchmark

“The existing budget supports facilities, equipment, and technology in a loosely tied manner. The budget includes something for unexpected costs, but it is not aligned to specific capital improvements or related costs.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Develop and include plans to avoid unnecessary and sudden costs.
- Develop a replacement schedule for technology and a curriculum renewal schedule to anticipate equipment and supplies necessary.
- Ensure the budget reflects a commitment to planning for the unexpected.

Benchmark 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 environmental stewardship.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“The physical and technological improvements are planned and consistent with the mission of the school. Stewardship of the physical environment 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.”

Commentary: While the facilities plan details a phased, 5-year approach, both technology and equipment plans are still lacking. Improvements to facilities and equipment purchases are made as needed and as a result can create challenges with carrying out the goals of the facilities plan and equity across buildings. As plans are put in place across all three sectors, monitoring spending and revision of plans based on unexpected expenditures will need to happen more frequently.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Design school improvements and purchasing to be part of a larger and integrated system.
- Complete audits of purchases each year with an independent review of specific technology and plant/operations accounts take place at least every two years.
- Determine a plan for improvements to the Colton property within 3 years.

Benchmark 13

Benchmark 13.1: The communications/marketing plan requires school leader/leadership team and staff person(s) to ensure the implementation of contemporary, multiple information technologies to reach targeted audiences, and to establish reliable and secure databases and accountability to stakeholders.

Rating: 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 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Designate leadership responsibility to a team or person to create a plan with all facets clearly delineated, including cost, time, target, etc.
- 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 training as required.
- 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.

Benchmark 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.

Rating: 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 work is focused on both enrollment and retention, and includes demonstrated use of pattern and prediction analysis. 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 decision regarding tuition, tuition assistance, development/marketing strategies and community outreach and involvement are informed intentionally by this data.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- 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.
- Adhere to your measurement rules. Do not change the measures without careful consideration of how that will affect the data and long-term analysis.
- 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.

Benchmark 13.3: The development plan requires 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.

Rating: 3 – Fully Meets Benchmark

“Key strategies are in place to develop a 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.”

Suggestions for Improvement:

- Continuously evolve the plan so that it becomes fully integrated with communications and enrollment planning.
- Ensure that all plans across the Foundation and Schools are synchronized and share message, marketing materials, and strategies for bringing more people into the community.
- Pursue innovative partnerships in areas such as higher education, other Catholic schools, and other schools within the community.
- Continuously assess all results to allow for critical refinement of plans.

Appendix A – Implementation Plan

Mission & Catholic Identity

In our role as disciples, provide meaningful opportunities for all to encounter the transformative message of Christ to strengthen our partnership with parents in the education of their children, ensure teachers are prepared to evangelize through their teaching ministry, and unite in service to the wider Billings community.

Year 1 (2023-24 SY)			
Strategy	Benchmarks	Responsible Party	Anticipated Completion
Institute ongoing formation for teachers on the responsibilities of an educator within the Catholic schools and help all teachers develop an understanding of the faith & the mission/vision of BCS	1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.4, 4.1, 7.10	Mission & Catholic Identity Subcommittee/ BCS Leadership Team	Introduce during PIR week in August; Retreat in October; Follow up during March PIR
BCS Leadership team designs community and student survey to assess knowledge and operationalization of the school's mission for various stakeholder groups	1.3, 1.5	BCS Leadership Team	Survey sent in May 2024
In addition to current retreat offerings, offer an opportunity for one additional grade to participate (Freshman, 5 th grade)	3.1, 3.2	Building level staff/ Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	1x during year
Assess service hour requirement for student and suggest any revisions – are we asking for too many hours, should we classify service on a per opportunity basis?	3.3	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee/ BCS Leadership Team	Review completed Spring 2024
Begin a speaker series for parents addressing topics important to them in the raising of children in today's world	4.2	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee/ BCS Leadership Team	3x opportunities throughout the year
Establish a PTO/HSA as a channel for parents to partner in the community life of the school and increase volunteer opportunities for parents	9.1	President/SFC Principals	
Year 2 (2024-25 SY)			

Utilize Catechetical Certification program for all new hires to BCS & extend it to function as small, cohort group mentoring program	1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.4, 7.10	Mission & Catholic Identity Subcommittee/ BCS Leadership Team	Small group session at least 4x throughout year; Build from here each year
More fully develop Catholic Social Teaching reflective tool for use with students during service opportunities to reflect on the faith aspects of service to others	2.7	BCS Leadership Team/ Education Director/ Mission & Catholic Identity committee	Framework developed Spring 2025
Expand retreat offering to an additional grade level (Freshman/5 th Grade) to broaden opportunity to engage in spiritual formation for more students	3.1, 3.2	Building level staff/ Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	1x during year
Introduce a service fair for middle and high school students to consider different opportunities for their service hours (Partner with parishes and local community organizations)	3.3	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	Fall 2024
Annual Faith retreat for staff and faculty	4.1, 7.10	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	October PIR day
Expand speaker series for parents addressing topics important to them in the raising of children in today's world; target at least two events at local parishes	4.2, 4.3, 9.1	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee/ BCS Leadership Team	5x opportunities throughout the year
Year 3 (2025-26 SY)			
Retreats offered for all grades 9-12 – Partner with parishes to offer retreats in different spaces and in different ways	3.1, 3.2	Building level staff/ Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	1x during year
Introduce a Day of Service where all in BCS community are provided a variety of opportunities to serve the Billings community through partnerships with various organizations and community service opportunities	3.3, 4.4, 9.1	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	Spring 2026
Expand speaker series for parents addressing topics important to them in the raising of children in today's world; target at least 3 events at local parishes and/or with outside speakers brought in	4.2, 4.3	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee/ BCS Leadership Team	5x opportunities throughout the year

Year 4 (2026-27 SY)			
Student retreat opportunities intentionally tied to theme of the year	3.1, 3.2	BCS Leadership team identifies Theme; Building level staff/ Mission & Catholic Identity committee help to plan and offer experience	Throughout the year
Annual Staff Spiritual Retreat with outside speaker & integrated with Parent speaker series	4.2, 4.3, 9.1	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee/ BCS Leadership Team	Target October PIR Day
Expand Day of Service opportunities	3.3, 4.4, 9.1	Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	Spring 2026
Year 5 (2027-28 SY)			
Review and expand on the work completed above			

Academic Excellence

Foster a culture of collaboration focused on enriching both the spiritual and academic formation of the BCS community. Recognizing that teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement among school-related factors,⁴ promoting professional development, collaboration, and spiritual growth among staff will directly translate to increased student growth and achievement.

Year 1 (2023-24 SY) – Culture Year			
Strategy	Benchmarks	Responsible Party	Anticipated Completion
Form a system wide leadership team composed on all building principals, administration, and select teachers (min. 2 from each building) to address leadership concerns and foster collaboration between schools	Leadership team referenced throughout Benchmarks – this extends the opportunity to teachers along with	President/ Administrative staff/ Selected leadership from schools	Summer 2023

⁴ <https://www.rand.org/education-and-labor/projects/measuring-teacher-effectiveness/teachers-matter.html>

	current system leadership		
Design and implement a mentorship program – for the first year, focus on small teams of teacher to prepare all to carry out the mission of the schools through a focus on BCS mission and Catechetical certification/spiritual preparation	1.5 (Also see Goal 3 for Catechetical Certificate Program)	BCS Leadership Team/ Mission & Catholic Identity Committee	Kick off meeting during work week; meeting 2 during October PIR; 2 additional small group meeting Nov-Feb; Retreat follow-up at March PIR
Introduce updated religious curriculum for at least 9-10 grades; curriculum selected by religion faculty at BCCHS	2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.7	BCCHS Theology Faculty/ BCCHS Principal/ Education Director	Training Summer 2023; Resource roll out Fall 2023
Adopt new Science standards & begin curriculum review committee focused on History/Social Studies & Technology/Media System-Wide line with curriculum renewal schedule	2.4, 2.5, 7.1, 7.2	All Faculty/ Education Director/ Science Curriculum Renewal Team/ History & Media renewal teams	Training/Discussion PIR Week 2023; New standards completed summer 2024, shared with community July 2024
Introduce and begin building a culture of PIR through voluntary PLC offerings for all staff system wide	6.3, 6.4, 7.7	Education Director/ Teaching faculty	Ongoing
Regular staff meetings with a focus on 1.) Prayer, 2.) Updates, 3.) 10 minute practical in-service applicable to on-ground reality	6.3, 6.4, 7.7	Building administrators/ Principals/ Education Director	Monthly meeting Sept-May
Intentional focus on incorporating SLE's at K-8 grades; BCS leadership team to assess how best to proceed	7.5,	Education Director/ BCS Leadership Team/ SFC Principals/ SFC faculty	June 2024
BCS Leadership teams designs & formalizes an annual goal setting and review process for all staff (SMART goals)	7.9, 8.5, 11.2	BCS Leadership Team/ Principals/ President/ Admin Staff/ All faculty	Design completed by May 2024
System-wide goal setting – BCS Leadership team; school board; interested faculty (review strategic plan, outline goals, gather additional information from stakeholders if needed, tailor system-wide academic goals to current reality based on data)	7.9, 8.1, 8.5	BCS Leadership team/ school board/ administrative staff	May 2024
Year 2 (2024-25 SY) – Data Year			

Adopt new History/Social Studies Standards & Tech/Media standards; Begin curriculum review of ELA & Music Standards	2.4, 2.5, 7.1, 7.2	Education Director/ Music Faculty/ ELA Faculty nominated to team	Teacher training & Intro to new history/tech standards during PIR week in August; ELA & Music standards completed summer 2025, distributed to teachers and community July 2025
Design and implement reflective process across assignments for students to reflect on their learning and deepen understanding of the Catholic virtues (SLE's) that were an intended focus during the learning/unit	3.3, 6.3	BCS Leadership Team – design process; All faculty for implementation	Designed Fall 2024; implemented Spring 2025
Continue to develop a culture of PIR; expand PLC offerings for all staff system wide & rely on teacher leaders to facilitate – at least one offered on use of data to inform instruction	6.3, 6.4, 7.7, 8.1,	Education Director/ Teaching faculty	Ongoing
K-4 (at-least) staff training on standards-based instruction – either via PLC or intentional PIR day focus	7.1, 7.2	Education Director/ SFC Principals	Based on calendar – suggest focus in Fall and follow-up in Spring or PLC with ongoing meetings
BCS Leadership team to assess differentiation across system – how are we meeting the needs of all students	7.6	BCS Leadership Team	May 2024
All system supervisors implement annual goal setting and review process for all staff designed by BCS Leadership team during prior year	7.9, 8.5	BCS Leadership Team/ Principals/ President/ Admin Staff/ All faculty	Goals completed by all staff Fall 2024; Evaluations completed Spring 2026
Clearly outlined PD budget published to all staff; submission/request form for all in system to apply for use of PD funds assessed by BCS leadership team – priority given to system goals or year's theme	11.2		
Year 3 (2025-26 SY) – Differentiation Year			

System-Wide renewal of religious standards and teaching practices in line with curriculum renewal schedule; Introduce advanced course offerings at BCCHS for 12 th grade students	2.1; 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.7, 3.3, 7.1, 7.2	Theology faculty from across system/ Education Director	Ongoing throughout the year; anticipated completion Summer 2026; Distribution to all staff and parents July 2026
Integrating technology & 21 st C. learning via project-based learning (have some excellent teachers in system to help facilitate training)	7.3, 7.4	Education Director/ Technology Integrationist/ All teaching faculty	PIR Focus throughout the year
Based on outcomes of prior year review of differentiation – what strategies training is needed to effectively meet the needs of all learners – assess need for specialized personnel	7.5, 7.6	BCS Leadership Team/ Education Director/ All teaching faculty/ Business office	Dependent on outcomes of prior year assessment
Continue to develop a culture of PIR; expand PLC offerings for all staff system wide & rely on teacher leaders to facilitate – build on data discussions and begin creating common assessments – Intentional focus on differentiation & PBL	6.3, 6.4, 7.7, 8.1, 8.3	Education Director/ Teaching faculty	Ongoing
Year 4 (2026-27 SY) – Project Based Learning Year			
Training for all teachers on new theology standards	2.1,2.2, 2.4, 7.1	Theology Faculty/ Education Director	August PIR Day
Curriculum renewal committee focused on Math and Art standards	2.4, 2.5, 7.1, 7.1	Math & Arts Faculty	Completed summer 2027; shared with community July 2027
Each grade level demonstrates PBL for at least a single learning target	7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6	All teaching faculty/ Education Director/ Technology Integrationist	Completed April 2027
Initiate grade level/department data teams to review student academic data, develop common assessments, utilize data to inform instruction	6.3, 6.4, 7.7, 8.1, 8.3	Education Director/ principals/ teaching faculty	ongoing
Year 5 (2027-2028) – Expanding Our Community			
Building on our work from previous years, BCS hosts symposium for BCS, Billings, and school communities on teaching practice, spiritual	Benchmarks 7-9	Invite surrounding schools, parents, educators, etc. – Select presenters from BCS faculty	Target March 2028

development, and curriculum renewal			
Implement a system of repayment in exchange for years worked for staff to pursue advanced degrees in the educational field using “Teacher’s Excellence Fund”	11.2 (all 7-8 Benchmarks)	Business Office/ Finance Committee of School Board	Roll out Fall 2027

Operational Sustainability:

Align organizational operations, policies, and procedures with the mission of Billings Catholic Schools recognizing our unique role as stewards of a school system in the service of the Church to increase transparency and ownership, clarify expectations, and prepare for the future.

Year 1 (2023-24 SY)			
Strategy	Benchmarks	Responsible Party	Anticipated Completion
Hiring Toolkit created by BCS Leadership Team – Potentially include sample questions, makeup of hiring committee, Catechetical training resources/certification training, Catholic teaching expectations and profile of a desired candidate, expectations of teaching in a Catholic school clearly defined and explained	3.4,4.5	BCS Leadership Team/ Principals & Hiring Committees	Hiring Season 2024
Revise School Board bylaws & form a standing Nominations/Governance committee to help recruit, train, and align school board members with the mission of BCS; 1 joint event with Foundation board focused on building collaborative connections across both organizations	5.1	School Board & BCS President/ Foundation Board & President/ Board committee	April 2023 ad-hoc committee formed & board member recruitment process designed; Orientation will be planned and scheduled for new members in August 2023; Bylaws revised Fall 2023
Expand teacher recruiting network and explore partnerships with nearby universities (Carrol, UMary) to recruit	6.3	President, Education Director, CEC	Year Long

and attract qualified teaching candidates to open positions			
BCS Leadership Team reviews calendar proposals and overview of proposed professional development/annual goals to craft a system calendar prioritizing student learning and staff professional growth	6.3, 6.4,6.5,7.2, 8.1,	Leadership Team/ President/ Education Director/ School Board	Calendar proposal to school board in December 2023
Begin financial planning in 2-year cycles; identify all funding sources and anticipated levels of support along with enrollment projections, tuition increases, and financial aid; review best practices from other schools;	10.1, 10.2, 10.3	President/Business Manager/School Board Finance Committee	2-year budget expected completion by May 2024; process ongoing
Commit to data driven decision making, provide all leaders with timely reports to inform decisions, and provide training as needed	10.4	All administrators, President, Business Manager	Budget provided in May/June, reports provided in Oct., Jan, March, May – additionally as needed Ongoing
Financial assistance opportunities identified and clearly communicated to all families	10.7	President/ Business Manager/ Accounts Receivable/ Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC)/Admissions Personnel	One-pager with all information distributed system wide January 2024; at least one workshop offered for families in March 2024.
Develop & disseminate employee handbook with all policies included and review with employees annually	11.1	Administration Office	August 2023 – reviewed at August PIR
Present total compensation for full-time employees via contract coversheet	11.4	Administration Office	April 2024
Create a technology management and replacement plan	12.1	Technology Committee & Technology Integrationist	April 2024
Verify an enrollment management plan exists and work with all	13.2	CEC	

stakeholders and leadership to familiarize them with the plan			
Year 2 (2024-25 SY)			
Continue to develop Hiring Toolkit created by BCS Leadership Team – Potentially include sample questions, makeup of hiring committee, Catechetical training resources/certification training, Catholic teaching expectations and profile of a desired candidate, expectations of teaching in a Catholic school clearly defined and explained	3.4,4.5	BCS Leadership Team/ Principals & Hiring Committees	Hiring Season 2025
Nominations/Governance Committee plans summer retreat and revises new board orientation; Develops a self-reflection instrument allowing board members to assess their actions and the work of the board	5.6	School Board/ President/ Nominations/Gov ernance Committee	Summer retreat – August 2024; Self-Reflection – February 2025 and/or May 2025
Strengthen partnerships with nearby universities (Carrol, UMary) to recruit and attract qualified teaching candidates to open positions; explore student teaching opportunities for local students	6.3	President/ Business Office/ Education director	Yearlong
BCS Leadership Team reviews calendar from prior year to determine need to adjust due to success/challenges of the previous year and in light of annual goals for students and staff development	6.3, 6.4,6.5,7.2, 8.1,	Leadership Team/ President/ Education Director/ School Board	Calendar proposal to school board in December 2024
Assess accuracy of prior year’s work and extend financial plans to 3-5 years as outline above;	10.1, 10.2, 10.3	Business Office/ Finance Committee	May 2025
Seek out and develop relationships with new funding sources such as ACE additional funding opportunities, other community foundations	10.3	Business Office/ President	Ongoing
Host financial aid information events in at least two local parishes in addition to events at all schools; Assess which opportunities worked well previous year and continue	10.7	President/ Business Manager/ Accounts Receivable/ Community Engagement Coordinator/	Events hosted Jan- April

		Admissions Personnel	
Individually package aid awards to clearly identify all aid sources that contribute to funding each student's education	10.7	Business Office, Admissions personnel	May 2025
Determine total capacity levels at all buildings and for all grade levels to set attainable and realistic targets for enrollment.	13.2	Building Principals/ President/ CEC	November 2024
BCS Leadership Team reviews and updates Leadership Selection Manual	5.2	BCS Leadership Team	Ready by January 2025
BCS System-wide policies aligned to mission of the school and comply with diocese of Great Falls-Billings policies; Policy audit, creation, review	5.2	Principals/ Business Office/ HR/ School Board	May 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Office Handbook • Faculty/ Staff Handbook • School Handbook (reviewed)
Integrate all plans (marketing, enrollment, technology, facilities, curriculum, financial) into planning process and System-wide Organization plan	12.1,11.3,11.2, 10.8,10.7,10.4, 10.2,10.1	School Board & Board Committees	Organizational Plan Presented to parents Spring of 2025
Year 3 (2025-26 SY)			
Nominations & Governance Committee research, design, and implement 2 board training/development opportunities over the course of the year	5.1, 5.6	School Board Nominations/ Governance Committee	Ongoing
BCS Leadership Team reviews calendar from prior year to determine need to adjust due to success/challenges of the previous year and considering annual goals for students and staff development	6.3, 6.4,6.5,7.2, 8.1,	Leadership Team/ President/ Education Director/ School Board	Calendar proposal to school board in December 2025
Colton Property Development initiative – Partner with an outside consulting firm to conduct a needs assessment system and city wide to recommend future development of Colton Property	12.1,12.2,12.3, 13.3	School Board/ BCS Leadership Team/ Administration	Partner determined and work begun Fall 2025
Continue to utilize, revise, and update operations plan, adhering to	12.2	Business Office/	Ongoing

the numbers and data contained within, even if some do not like what they summarize		Board Committees/ School Board/ Administration	
Expand aid offerings and opportunities for families to engage with the aid process based on what worked in previous years.	10.7	Business Office	Fall 2025
Financial plans should now be extended to a 3–5-year range and incorporate all aspect of the organizational plan.	10.1,10.2,10.3	Business Office/ Board Committees/ School Board/ Administration	May 2026
Year 4 (2026-27 SY)			
Colton Property Development – form a committee to analyze the recommendations of the outside agency; partner with the BCS Foundation in exploring a capital campaign to fund suggested system improvement or building projects	12.1,12.2,12.3, 13.3		Ongoing with decision expected on development Spring 2027
BCS Leadership Team reviews calendar from prior year to determine need to adjust due to success/challenges of the previous year and considering annual goals for students and staff development	6.3, 6.4,6.5,7.2, 8.1,	Leadership Team/ President/ Education Director/ School Board	Calendar proposal to school board in December 2026
Review 3–5-year financial plan and make updates, adjustments as needed ensuring all aspects of the organizational plan are included, funded, and accounted for.	10.1,10.2,10.3	Business Office/ Board Committees/ School Board/ Administration	May 2027
Continue to develop relationships with new funding sources such as ACE additional funding opportunities, other community foundations	10.3	Business Office/ President	Ongoing

Communications

Recognizing the power of invitation and the beauty of what we offer to Billings area families, we must tell our story so that anyone that encounters Billings Catholic Schools knows what we are about.

Year 1 (2023-24 SY)			
Strategy	Benchmarks	Responsible Party	Anticipated Completion
Create a Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC) position to lead marketing, enrollment, and admissions efforts. Job description created.	13.1	President	July 2023
Design a communications and marketing plan with all facets clearly delineated including cost, time, target audience, etc.	13.1	CEC	May 2024
Conduct a review of communication templates to ensure Mission/Vision are present (stationary, postcards, mailings, newsletters, etc.).	1.2	Marketing & Strategic Enrollment Committee	Ongoing
Post Mission/Vision in admin building and particularly in the conference room to ensure it can be referenced during board meetings. Keep mission top of mind during decision making process.	1.2	Admin office staff/School Board	8/23 & Ongoing
Intentionally use social media to highlight the Catholic aspects of BCS for wider community – 2x posts per month (prayer, celebration of Mass, religious observance, etc.)	4.2	CEC	2x/month August-June
Annual State of the School implemented as either an in-person presentation or published Annual Report.	10.1	CEC, Ed. Director, President, Principals	Published May 2024
Publish a parent info sheet for all retreats that occur across BCS highlighting the reason for the retreat, what was done, and expected outcomes/follow-up questions or topics for discussion.	4.1	Retreat leads	Prior to/following retreat experience
Year 2 (2024-25 SY)			
Digital student prayer repository as part of website or an additional	3.1	Tech integrationist,	Launched March 2024

online option. Have student's prayers and explanations for certain parts of the Faith for reference. Build the space up as an online repository of prayers and FAQ about the Catholic faith.		religion teaching staff, CEC	
Work with parishes to collect parish bulletins and publish in newsletters each week. Begin promoting parish events in a more systematic way.	4.3	CEC, Newsletter authors	Bulletins included Fall 2024
Systematic communications about the variety of services/activities that are offered at BCS – social emotional services, extracurriculars, counseling, etc. Four communications throughout the year that highlight each area and what they do/provide for students.	9.2	CEC, President, Auxiliary service providers	September, December, February, April
Ongoing training for CEC and marketing/communication personnel and assess technology needs for most effective means of communicating with various constituencies.	13.1	CEC, President, Tech Integrationist. Marketing and Enrollment Committee	ongoing
Using the overall operations plan, educate all parties about needed enrollment and retention rates for continued success. Determine total capacity of current buildings within the system.	13.2	CEC	ongoing
Year 3 (2025-26 SY)			
Assess community understanding of mission and vision as guiding pillars for BCS. Develop a survey/feedback mechanism to assess how community sees BCS living the mission and vision.	6.2	CEC, President, School Board	Assessment completed by November 2025
Alumni Spotlight publication 2x/year highlighting their path after BCS.	13.3	CEC, Foundation President	October, March
Design and implement measurement rules/targets for enrollment/retention and commit to the numbers once accepted.	13.2	CEC, Principals, School Board	Completed January 2026
Year 4 (2026-27 SY)			
Work to establish databases for communication purposes to	13.1	CEC	ongoing

streamline communications with various constituencies.			
Continue to stress analysis followed by decision making for enrollment	13.2	All parties involved in decision making process	ongoing
Utilize community perceptions of the Mission & Vision to inform planning for communications throughout the year. Feedback incorporated into communications plan to intentionally address Mission & Vision	6.2	CEC, School Board, President	Completed September 2027
Year 5 (2027-28 SY)			
Continue to evaluate, revise, and implement work from prior years	All previously covered	CEC, President, Principals, Marketing & Strategic Enrollment Committee	Ongoing

Appendix B – Curriculum Review Schedule

	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28
Math					Update	Adopt
Science	Update	Adopt				
Religion				Update	Adopt	
Social Studies/History		Update	Adopt			
ELA			Update	Adopt		
Art					Update	Adopt
Music			Update	Adopt		
World Languages						
Technology/Media Literacy		Update	Adopt			
Health/Physical Education				Update	Adopt	