

# **WASC SELF-STUDY**

**SACRED HEART PARISH  
SCHOOL  
HOLLISTER, CA**

**SPRING 2006**

**Sacred Heart Parish School  
670 College Street  
Hollister, CA 95023**



**WASC Self-Study  
Spring 2006**

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**[www.sacredheartschool.org](http://www.sacredheartschool.org)**

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **HOW THE SELF-STUDY WAS CONDUCTED**

The Sacred Heart Parish School self-study was comprehensive, open-ended and inclusive. All teachers, staff members, parents, the pastor and PK–8 students were invited to participate in the completion of various sections of the report as appropriate.

The process began in the spring of 2004 when then Superintendent Sister Mary Catherine Evans attended a faculty meeting to walk teachers through the process of developing Student Learning Expectations. Teachers worked in small groups to share insights and ended the day with a general consensus of what was important to them. Later that spring, the principal reviewed the process with junior high students, the PASS board and the Stewardship Advisory Council inviting their input as well. All sheets were collected and turned over to the Philosophy/Mission/ SLE committee.

In the fall of 2004, the self-study process began in earnest when the principal reviewed with the teaching staff the accreditation process, tasks and timelines. At the October 4 faculty meeting, teachers also reviewed and discussed the recommendations from the last visiting committee to get a sense of what the Progress Report needed to include and why.

From October 2004 through February 2005, the teachers reviewed, discussed and amended the statements of Philosophy and Mission. They did so in light of the Catholic Identity questionnaires which had been previously distributed, completed and tallied. During this time, they also began the study of the SHPS language arts curriculum, emphasizing first the areas of reading in grades K-5 and language arts in Grades 6-8.

In January 2005, the principal did a 'walk-through' of the various WASC committees and gave teachers a chance to list their preferences. At that same meeting, the language arts teachers met with their 'partners' to review the California Language Arts Standards and if / how the various grade levels were meeting them.

In February 2005, the principal reviewed with staff members the responsibilities of committee chairs, shared sample self-study reports from several other schools and discussed the importance of collecting 'evidence'. The first four committees (Philosophy/Mission/SLE's, General Curriculum, Organization for Student Learning, and Community Profile) then began their work. At this time also, questionnaires were sent to all parents and distributed on-site to all students. In addition, each of the WASC committees was previewed in the weekly *Pulse* so that parents would be familiarized with the work of the self-study process. From February through May, committees met according to their own timelines to discuss and write. Once the first drafts were written, they were circulated to all teachers for review and input. At the May faculty meeting, teachers divided into small groups for input and discussion of each group's work. Committee heads then prepared the final draft of their reports. During this same time frame, the principal also reviewed and updated the Strategic Plan of 1997 – 1998 with the Stewardship Advisory Council and elicited their input regarding the contents of the WASC Progress Report.

In September 2005, co-chairs of the four remaining committees (Religion Curriculum, Language Arts Curriculum, Resource Management and Development, and Support for Student Learning) met to assign tasks and discuss timelines for their groups. They also helped plan the September 30 workday which included:

- small group critique and discussion on the semifinal draft of the Community Profile, General Curriculum and Progress Reports;
- committee work on Language Arts, Religion, Support for Student Learning, and Resource Management and Development;
- presentation by Dr. Nina Russo on how to develop an Action Plan.

From September through November 2005, committees worked on their four reports, eliciting input and receiving feedback along the way. The principal also addressed the Student Learning Expectations at morning assembly and the school office staff prepared copies to be posted in each classroom and office. At the November 28 workday, committee 'semifinal' drafts were reviewed and discussed in small groups, and written comments and suggestions were returned to the various committee heads. This workday also included:

- review and discussion of the Areas of Strength and Areas for Improvement from the various sections of the report;
- selection of the areas we wanted to include in our Action Plan;
- establishment of committees for development of the Action Plan;
- committee work on developing an Action Plan.

In December 2005 and January 2006, the Stewardship Advisory Council gave input to the Resource Management Committee, the principal up-dated PASS about self-study findings, and the committee's finalized work on the Action Plan.

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **STUDENT / COMMUNITY PROFILE AND SUPPORTING DATA**

## **School History**

Sacred Heart Parish School (SHPS), one of the first schools in the Monterey Diocese, opened its doors in 1890. The original building, located farther west of College Street than the present school, had been given to the Daughters of Charity with the condition that they conduct a school for Catholic children. The earthquake of 1906 did considerable damage to the building necessitating extensive repairs before the building was again declared safe for students and staff. Since the first school was both a day and a boarding school, class sizes were quite limited.

In June 1930, the Daughters of Charity were recalled from Hollister and the Sisters of St. Mary came from Texas to take over the school in August 1930.

Despite the Depression, in 1937 a new school building was erected. There were six classrooms. Almost immediately this building proved to be too small for the number of students who desired a Catholic education. In the forties, two additional classrooms were built. Then in 1953, a library, three more classrooms and another unit of restrooms were added.

The academic year 1962-1963 brought the construction of the O'Reilly Youth Center, consisting of a full-size gym, a stage with adjoining rooms, a meeting room, a large fully equipped kitchen, and another set of restrooms. In 1967, the construction of an additional wing provided a faculty room and three more classrooms.

In August 1985, Sacred Heart Parish School opened under the direction of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian. After the Dominican Sisters withdrew from the school in 1992, the first lay principal of the school was appointed, Mrs. Monica Fagan. She was succeeded by Dr. Mary White in 1994, Raymond Burnell in 1999, and Sister Margaret Ann Reardon in 2001. The current Principal, Kathy O'Donnell, has been at Sacred Heart Parish School since 2002.

Over the last decade significant growth in student population has occurred as the school moved to double classes per grade level. As the demands of working parents increased, Extended Care services were established in 1992. A new technology learning center was created in 1994. School facilities were once again expanded with the construction of the Early Childhood Center, which was completed in August of 1999. In October 1999 a preschool was opened to serve children three and four years old.

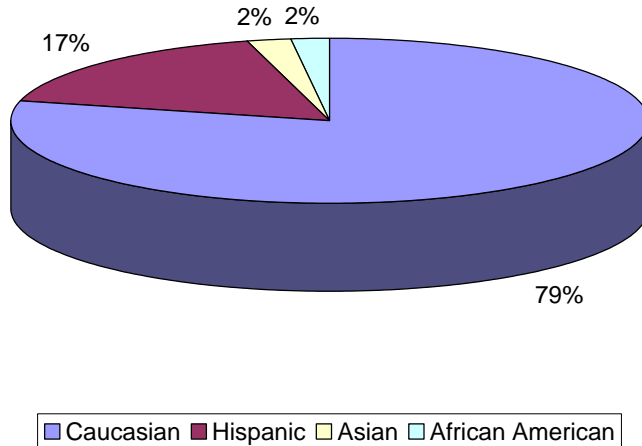
When Sacred Heart began, Hollister was a farming community of 2000. Today the school enjoys a mix of locals and 'transplants' from Silicon Valley seeking affordable housing. For the most part, Sacred Heart Parish School parents are middle class and college educated. Although there has been much intermarriage of Caucasians and Hispanics over the years, 90% of our students are native English speakers.

## **Student Information**

Sacred Heart Parish School (Preschool to 8) has a current enrollment of 458 students, consisting of 241 boys and 217 girls. There are 291 families. Fifty-seven percent of the families have one child at Sacred Heart Parish School, thirty-four percent have two children, and the remaining nine percent consist of families with 3, 4, or 5 children. For the most part, SHPS students come from intact families and enjoy parents and grandparents, who support at home what they are learning at school.

Seventy-eight percent of our student body is Caucasian. The remaining students are Hispanic (17%), Asian (2%), Multi-racial (2%), and African American (1%). Ninety-one percent of our students are Catholic. Most of the students and their families attend Sacred Heart / St. Benedict church in Hollister. The rest are parishioners at Immaculate Conception in Tres Pinos or Mission San Juan Bautista.

## Student Information



The largest class at Sacred Heart Parish School has 25 students and the smallest class has 18 students. Therefore, the average class size for grades Kindergarten to eight is 22 students per class. Teachers and students in PS3 to third grade have extra support from a teacher's aid.

Each spring when fall homeroom groupings are established, partner teacher's works together to mix students yet balance various needs. When determining classroom placement, the following factors are considered:

- ❖ academic ability
- ❖ effort
- ❖ level of class participation
- ❖ personality issues
- ❖ special learning needs
- ❖ homework
- ❖ classroom conduct

In terms of special needs, SHPS has developed amicable, supportive relationship with both Hollister Unified and the County Office of Education. Two of our students receive assistance from the County for hearing / vision impairment. Our faculty has been trained in the SST process by which we can set up interventions and make accommodations locally prior to referring a student for testing in the public system. SHPS also enjoyed the services of an on-site Title I reading specialist from 2002-2005. Approximately 25 students per year from Grades 1-4 received services during that time.

Attendance patterns at Sacred Heart are positive as students and parents take school seriously and know that "being there is the basis of a solid education. For students in Grades 5-8 regular attendance is a criterion for the trimester Honor Roll.

## **Student Surveys and Interview**

Students' surveys were administered during the spring of 2005. The majority of students in the younger grades agree/strongly agree that they enjoy school and that school is a place where they are respected, cared for, and able to learn.

### Grades Pre-Kindergarten to Three

Teachers and instructional aides interviewed students in PK-1 while students in grades 2 and 3 completed the surveys on their own. 85% or more of the students agreed or strongly agreed to the following categories:

- ❖ I am safe.
- ❖ I have fun learning.
- ❖ I like this school.
- ❖ I have time to pray.
- ❖ I learn about being Catholic.
- ❖ My teacher treats me with respect.
- ❖ My teacher cares about me.
- ❖ My teacher gives me extra help.
- ❖ My principal cares about me.
- ❖ I am recognized for good work.
- ❖ I am a good student.

### Grades Four to Eight

Sixty percent of the students responding agreed or strongly agreed to the five different areas of the survey. Almost all the students had written comments about what they like about their school and ways to improve it. Themes appeared throughout the comment section. There was a broad spectrum of comments from the students that can be found in the survey or on the tally summary sheet.

Things the students liked about their school included:

- ❖ teachers are helpful and nice
- ❖ after school sports and P.E.
- ❖ God and religion
- ❖ small class size
- ❖ having friends/ getting to know people

Things students disliked about their school included:

- ❖ uniforms
- ❖ strict yard duty rules
- ❖ mean people/ cliques

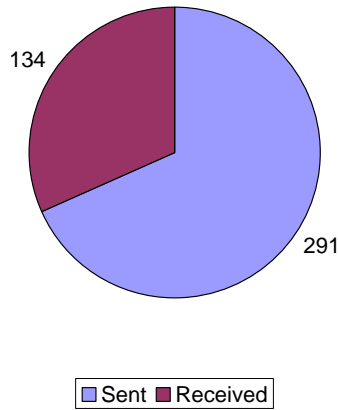
To improve the school students suggested the following:

- ❖ redefine the dress code or eliminate it altogether
- ❖ make recess longer or add an afternoon recess
- ❖ yard duty staff to be more consistent
- ❖ vending machines
- ❖ more field trips
- ❖ more free dress
- ❖ more dances
- ❖ some kids to be nicer
- ❖ better hot lunch
- ❖ less homework

**Parent Survey**

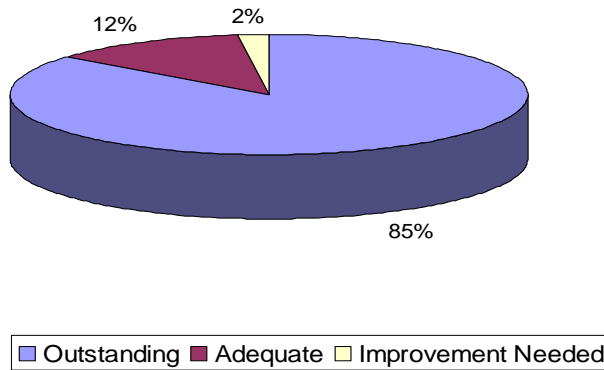
Parents were asked to complete a survey in March of 2005. WASC. Of the 291 surveys sent out, 134 surveys were returned.

**Parent Survey**



Cumulative results are reported in terms of percentages of response in the following categories: Outstanding/ Good = OG; Adequate = A; Improvement Needed = IN. (See Chart for survey response totals)

**School Philosophy and Mission**

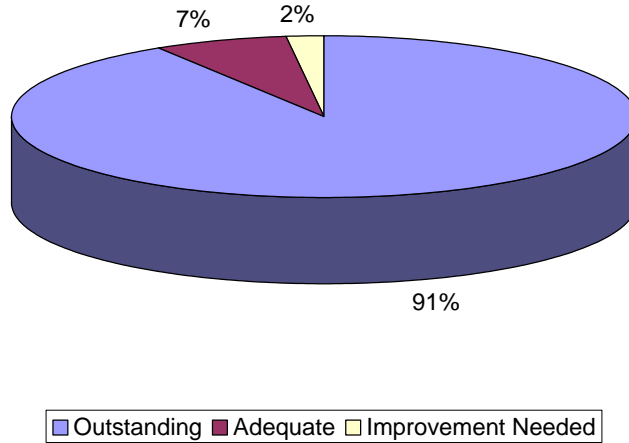


**Part A: Organization for Student Learning**

	<b>OG</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>IN</b>
1. School Philosophy and Mission	85%	12%	2%
2. Governance	82%	14%	4%
3. School Leadership	91%	7%	2%
4. The Staff	87%	9%	3%
5. School Environment	82%	13%	3%

6. Reporting Student Progress	82%	13%	8%
7. School Improvement Process	76%	13%	4%

### School Leadership

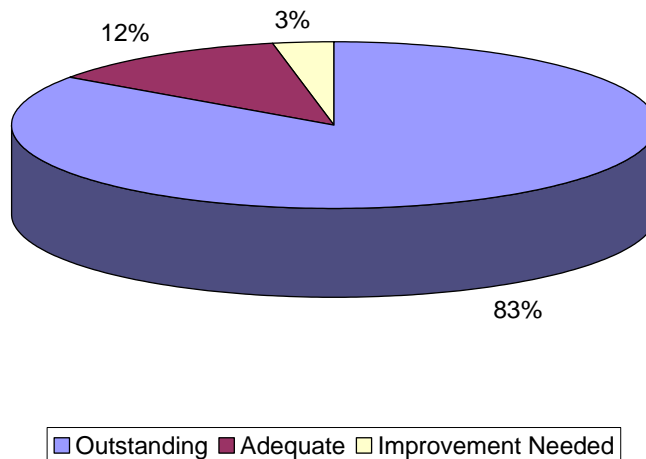


Cumulative results are reported in terms of percentages of response in the following categories: Outstanding/ Good = OG; Adequate = A; Improvement Needed = IN. (See Chart for survey response totals)

### Part B: Curriculum and Instruction

8. What Students Learn	83%	12%	3%
9. How Students Learn	78%	16%	3%
10. How Assessment is Used	75%	12%	3%

### What Students Learn

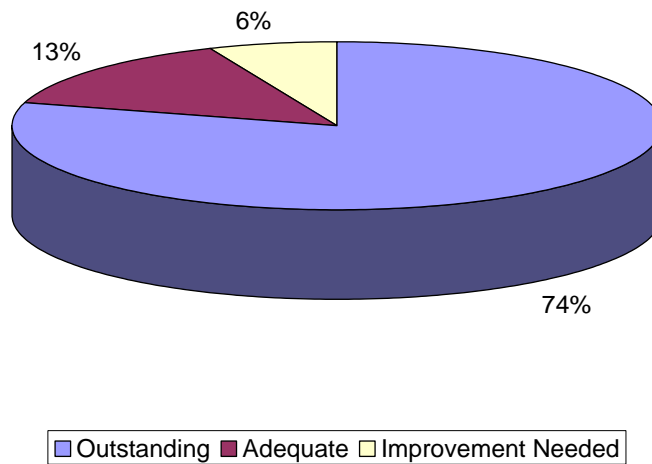


Cumulative results are reported in terms of percentages of response in the following categories: Outstanding/ Good = OG; Adequate = A; Improvement Needed = IN. (See Chart for survey response totals)

**Part C: Support for Personal, Spiritual, and Academic Growth**

11. Student Connectedness	61%	19%	5%
12. Parent/Community Involvement	74%	13%	6%

**Parent and Community Involvement**



**Part D: Resource Management**

13. Resources	72%	18%	6%
14. Resources Planning	64%	16%	7%

Parents listed the following comments as strengths of the school:

- ❖ Teacher/staff (qualified, dedicated, caring)
- ❖ Catholic Values/Religion
- ❖ Small class size
- ❖ Parent involvement/ Parents are valued
- ❖ Safe and loving environment
- ❖ Sense of community
- ❖ Disciplined environment
- ❖ Strong academics/ challenging curriculum

Parents made the following suggestions for areas of improvement:

- ❖ More frequent communication with parents about how their child is doing
- ❖ Workshop for parents on how to help with homework
- ❖ Consistent enforcement of discipline/ dress code policies
- ❖ New parent orientation could be on-going
- ❖ Band program
- ❖ After-school classes
- ❖ More challenge for brighter students
- ❖ Up-grade marketing so tuition doesn't keep going up
- ❖ Better technological communication
- ❖ More information given on the school web site
- ❖ Better e-mail correspondence from teachers

## **Pastor Survey**

The clergy survey was answered by Reverend Rudy Ruiz: Sacred Heart / St. Benedict, pastor for the past three years.

*Describe the role of the school in the parish community life?*

The school serves as a sign that this parish does offer the opportunity to all parents to have their children educated in a Christian Catholic environment.

*Describe your role in helping to maintain and deepen the Catholic character and atmosphere of the school.*

To be present at most, if not all, significant moments in the life of the school, especially liturgically and socially.

*Do you have any suggestions for improvements the teaching of religion at Sacred Heart Parish School?*

Each day a significant amount of time is given to offer children not only the doctrinal but also the faith formation is emphasized.

*Describe the pastor's role in the hiring and termination of staff.*

It has always been brought to my attention whenever there is a change in employment or any problems that required termination.

*Describe the frequency and effectiveness of your communication with the principal and the school staff.*

There have never been any problems in my communication with the principal and staff. There truly is a mutual respect and confidence, especially at all our monthly board meetings at which I am always given an opportunity to speak.

*Describe the role and function of the school board or educational committee. Evaluate its effectiveness.*

We have an excellent school board that has been very effective in advising the principal and myself. They work very well as a team and carry out these tasks effectively.

*Describe the degree of parental involvement in the school. Evaluate its effectiveness.*

All parents are asked to give a certain amount of service hours. And the offer of their time and talent has been most helpful and very much needed.

*Describe the role of the pastor in the administration of the school.*

To empower the principal and support her in her role as well as assist her with my authority as Pastor and obtain what might be needed in terms of the spiritual and materials.

*Describe how the pastor participates in the annual budget process.*

I work as an advisor when asked by those responsible for making the budget. On a monthly basis, I am informed on the status of the school's finances.

*Describe the effectiveness of the school's long-range plan especially in the area of finance.*

Those responsible with the finances, the principal, accountant, and board are very good at looking at the past and the present reality of the economy and prudently to do what is needed to secure the future.

*List the school's greatest strengths.*

- ❖ Its rich history in the community.
- ❖ The school's principal and staff truly love and appreciate the school.
- ❖ The school's strong faith formation program and its proven academic program.

*List the school's greatest areas for improvement.*

- ❖ Promotion of the school to more areas of community life so that more people will be aware of what a great school we have.

## Staff Survey

Surveys were distributed to all faculty and staff in the spring of 2005. Of the 44 surveys that were sent out 34 were returned - 80% or more of the respondents noted the following as 'outstanding' or 'good':

- ❖ Christian community among faculty, parents, and students.
- ❖ Catholic faith a priority among administration and staff.
- ❖ Prayers said throughout the school day.
- ❖ Traditions of Catholic faith taught in every grade.
- ❖ Understanding of philosophy and mission of the school.
- ❖ Duties are made clear to staff.
- ❖ Parents participate in fundraising activities.
- ❖ Disaster drills held regularly.
- ❖ Understanding of responsibility for student safety in and out of classroom.
- ❖ A pleasant environment to work.
- ❖ Positive environment enables teachers to be role models for students.
- ❖ Appropriate equipment/materials to do job effectively.

Areas for improvement, in order of priority, included:

- ❖ Satisfaction with schools disciplinary polices and practices
- ❖ Religion certification and renewal is essential to every teacher
- ❖ The communication among administration, faculty, and parents is good

Twenty-three staff members (68%) made no suggestions for improvement needed. Ideas mentioned by the remaining eleven included:

- ❖ Yard duty communication (1)
- ❖ Discipline/ lack of respect (6)
- ❖ Dress code enforcement (1)
- ❖ Teacher's budget (1)
- ❖ Wire all classrooms for Internet (1)
- ❖ Keep tuition low (1)

## Student Performance/ Results

Besides classroom assessments, students in Grades 2 - 8 take the ITBS each September and Grade 5 takes the ACRE test in January.

In fall 2005, the assistant superintendent Dr. Nina Russo introduced teachers to the new WASC format noting its emphasis on data. Current reading, language, and math scores are therefore listed here according to the charts below:

### Reading Achievement Data

What is the current range of student achievement in this subject area?

	Number of Students in Fall 05					
Reading Total	3	4	5	6	7	8
75 <sup>th</sup> -99 <sup>th</sup> percentile	17	24	15	9	15	17
50 <sup>th</sup> -74 <sup>th</sup> percentile	16	10	15	16	12	10
25 <sup>th</sup> -49 <sup>th</sup> percentile	6	6	10	8	8	6
1 <sup>st</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup> percentile	3	1	4	5	1	2

### Language Achievement Data

What is the current range of student achievement in this subject area?

	Number of Students in Fall 05					
Language Total	3	4	5	6	7	8
75 <sup>th</sup> - 99 <sup>th</sup> percentile	17	25	15	19	10	12
50 <sup>th</sup> - 74 <sup>th</sup> percentile	16	11	15	10	15	13
25 <sup>th</sup> - 49 <sup>th</sup> percentile	7	4	11	7	8	8
1 <sup>st</sup> - 24 <sup>th</sup> percentile	3	1	2	3	3	2

### Mathematics Achievement Data

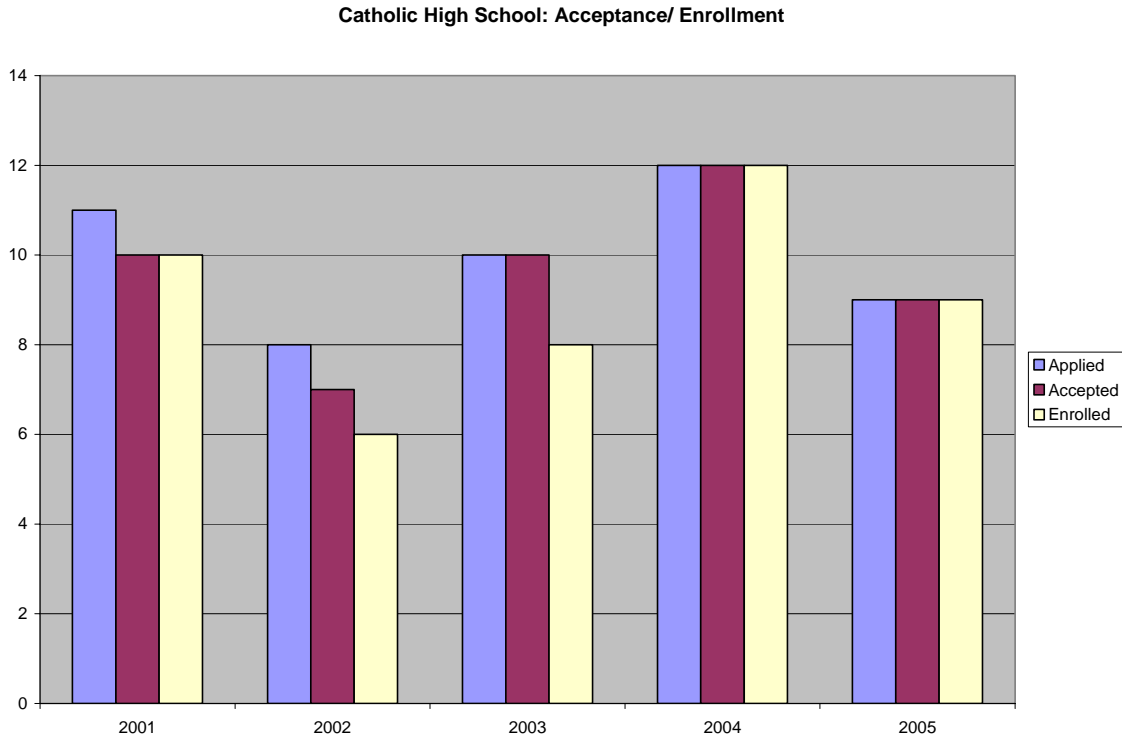
What is the current range of student achievement in this subject area?

	Number of Students in Fall 05					
Math Total	3	4	5	6	7	8
75 <sup>th</sup> - 99 <sup>th</sup> percentile	13	15	4	12	13	12
50 <sup>th</sup> - 74 <sup>th</sup> percentile	13	16	13	17	10	6
25 <sup>th</sup> - 49 <sup>th</sup> percentile	11	9	18	7	10	10
1 <sup>st</sup> -24 <sup>th</sup> percentile	4	2	7	3	2	5

Other relevant information regarding standardized testing from 2002-2005 can be found in the ITBS binder and other evidence on display.

**Post Graduation Data**

The majority of SHPS graduates enter San Benito High School due to the fact that our nearest Catholic High Schools are out of the area. In the last five years, about 20% of our graduates have enrolled in a Catholic high school such as Palma and Notre Dame (Salinas) or St. Francis and Monte Vista Christian (Watsonville).



Data from San Benito High School

Students who enter San Benito High School (SBHS) perform very well academically. Statistics from the Nov. 2005 high school feedback survey are as follows:

	<u>SBHS students</u>	<u>SHPS students</u>
Number enrolled	6528	95
Cum. GPA	2.274	2.955
Nov. 105 GPA	2.237	3.000
% passed CAHSEE	71%	97%
Total % in AP classes	5%	23%

Students who enter Catholic high schools also perform well academically according to parent and student feedback. The only high school providing statistics, however, was Notre Dame. (See display)

**Staff Information**

The current faculty and staff are composed 46 lay employees. The Sacred Heart Parish School staff family consists of 4 males and 42 females. The staff’s ethnic background is largely

made up of Caucasian individuals. Other staff heritages include American Indian, Hispanic, Multiracial, and other. We have 3 employees who been here for more than 21 years, 6 employees in the 11 to 20 year range, and the remaining staff have been employed for less then 10 years.

Information about professional development opportunities is posted in the lunchroom, announced at teacher meetings and distributed to staff mailboxes. Either the principal or the teacher may initiate a request regarding participation in a specific workshop. Meetings, workshops and training sessions directly related to the individuals teaching assignment are usually funded by the school budget, whereas overnight accommodations and meals are the responsibility of the attendee. The school also provides a sub if the workshop is on a school day. All full-time teachers are required to do a minimum of ten hours of professional development and another ten hours of religion up dating annually. Part-time teachers and classroom aides have pro-rated responsibility based upon the number of hours worked per week.

Where possible, teachers are encouraged to attend workshops together so that the impact on the program can be maximized. Examples of "group workshops" taken recently include:

- ❖ Fred Jones (discipline)
- ❖ Stack the Deck (writing)
- ❖ Houghton-Mifflin in-service (reading)
- ❖ Richard Morris (classroom management)
- ❖ Ann Anzalone (learning styles/ tools)
- ❖ Brother Steve Johnson (ethics)

Specific (individual) professional development data and/or degrees and certification are on display.

In terms of professional organizations, SHPS administration / staff are members of the following:

- ❖ National Catholic Educational Association (all)
- ❖ Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development(1)
- ❖ CA Interscholastic Federation(1)
- ❖ CRE (2)
- ❖ American Civil Liberties Union(1)
- ❖ Veterans of Foreign Wars(1)
- ❖ San Benito Reading Council (3)
- ❖ Common Cause (1)
- ❖ CA Kindergarten Association (3)
- ❖ CAPHRED(1)
- ❖ Sisters of the Holy Family Associates(1)
- ❖ Chamber of Commerce (1)

## **Discipline**

The discipline system at Sacred Heart Parish School is designed to facilitate Christian moral development. The goal of all education is self-reliance; therefore, the discipline program at Sacred Heart aims to help students become informed self-disciplinarians through the use of published behavioral expectations (see Family Handbook pp. 12 -17). The program defines the ideals of Christian discipleship in school, classroom and playground settings. These standards are conducive to learning and to the building of Christian community. We endeavor to make Sacred Heart Parish School a place where students, parents, and staff members treat one another with respect and dignity as independent self-disciplined followers of Christ.

The most important goal of school discipline is the fostering of personal responsibility and independence within each student. If individuals understand what the acceptable limits of their behavior are, and if the consequences for over-stepping these limits are clearly stated, students learn that they must take responsibility for their own actions. Behavior clearly becomes a matter of choice, as students come to understand that respect for others benefits the individual as well as the community.

## **Facility**

The capacity of Sacred Heart Parish School is 568 students. The current enrollment is 458 students. The Principal and the Business Manager are charged with overseeing long term and day to day maintenance of the facility. The maintenance man makes minor repairs and upgrades, as necessary. At the current time, there is no formal written plan for deferred maintenance or capital improvements. In accordance with the diocesan regulations, the Safety Coordinator conducts monthly safety inspections and drills.

Sacred Heart Parish School has 18 classrooms dedicated for the primary use by one of the Preschool -8 classes. These rooms are also used after school for religious education classes. The reception area for the school is located at the main entrance / office. Sign-in sheets for visitors and sign out sheets for students are located at the office. The principal's office is located within the main office. The business office is located at the opposite end of the main building.

The teachers' lounge has a refrigerator, two microwaves, tables and chairs, and a bookcase with resource materials for the teachers to use. The teachers' workroom is equipped with two copy machines, a large size laminator, paper cutter and other helpful tools. This room also provides office space for the Food Service Director and the Athletic Director.

The library houses a selection of approximately 1500 books and resource books for all grades. Grades 1-5 have scheduled weekly access to the library. In 2002 a new Technology Center was opened for classes K - 8. The lab has 28 iMac computers.

O'Reilly Youth Center is a building which houses a gymnasium with restrooms, a large meeting room, a small office and a full kitchen. The gym is used regularly for P.E., student body assemblies and programs, Student Council activities, after school sports, and graduation activities.

Keenan Hall is a freestanding building adjacent to the Kindergarten playground. It has a small kitchen and restrooms. Keenan Hall is used for Pre-Kindergarten class in the mornings. The Extended Care program utilizes the building in the afternoon for after- school care.

The play ground for grades one through eight is located on the south side of the campus. It consists of basketball courts, tanbark/ play equipment area, tether balls, four square, and hopscotch. Kindergarten has use of an enclosed play area, containing an open wooden eating structure, a low incline wooden pyramid structure, grass area, sand box and a play equipment structure.

Sacred Heart Parish School has improved the school with several capital improvement projects since the last WASC visit. . These include a new Technology Center, new playground equipment for students and a junior high science lab in 2003. In 2004 the playground was re-surfaced. The latest improvements were 12 new classroom heaters and a scoreboard in the gym.

### Technology Capabilities

Administration Offices	5 Computers Fax machine Electric typewriter	3 printers Copy machine
Technology Center	30 Apple iMac computers, 2 printers Computer Server Presentation Projector	
Music Room	14 electric keyboards, 1 piano, 1 CD player Record player                      overhead projector 2 tape recorders                      computer and printer	
Religion Education	Copy machine	
Extended Care	6 computers Television with VCR and DVD	
Most Classrooms	Overhead projector Television VCR and/or DVD	
Teachers	Most teachers use their own personal computers/ printers	

### Utilization of Space

- Most classrooms are used five days a week by the parish religion education program
- Fields are used by Little League
- Campus used during the summer by YMCA and San Benito Stage Company
- Meeting room, kitchen, and gym used by various community organizations:
  - Bingo
  - Italian Catholic Federation
  - Spanish Youth Group
  - Y.L.I
  - Spanish Prayer Group
  - Knights of Columbus
  - Cub Scouts
  - YMCA
  - Girl Scouts
  - Wedding Receptions

## Parent Involvement

At Sacred Heart Parish School, parent representation and involvement is both formal and informal. The formal consists of Stewardship Advisory Council (SAC), the Parent Association (PASS), and the Room Parent Program. The informal consists of the classroom volunteers, campus beautification, field trip drivers, yard duty assistants, lunch, and library helpers, etc. in addition to any and all supporters of Sacred Heart Parish School that dedicate themselves to the betterment of the students.

### Formal Representation

**SAC:** While there is no school board per se, the Stewardship Advisory Council serves as the primary advisory body to the pastor and the principal in matters regarding the fiscal operation of the school and the maintenance and improvement of school properties. These men and women share their expertise in matters related to finance, long-range planning, public relations and development. SAC does not regulate either curricular programs or personnel matters. Membership is by appointment of the Principal for a term of three years.

**PASS:** All parents/guardians are members of PASS. The PASS Board, elected annually by the parents, is a working group, whose main function is to organize meetings, plan fund-raising activities, promote parent- involvement, and coordinate room-parents. They help facilitate a working relationship among the students, teachers, and parents.

The Pastor and Principal may request assistance and direction from the Stewardship Advisory Council and / or PASS Board for the decision-making processes regarding school operations. These advisory groups may also make recommendations to the Principal. Neither SAC nor PASS is a policy-making group, however, all final decisions rest with the Pastor, Principal and/ or Diocesan Superintendent.

### Informal Representation

All the parents and supporters of Sacred Heart Parish School have a vital role in helping the school attain its goal of being a strong academic institution permeated by the belief of the Catholic Church. Parents offer their time and talent to assist teachers, students and staff. Their efforts range from lunch help to athletic coaches and from Scrip sales to Book Fair volunteers.

## External Factors

- Sacred Heart Foundation is a group (primarily alumni) dedicated to raising funds for a school endowment program. Currently the majority of these funds are incorporated into the San Benito Foundation. The Foundation also publishes a newsletter twice annually.
- The principal belongs to the Chamber of Commerce and marketing is done through their annual bulletin. Local businesses are also promoted through the SCRIP program.
- Projections- There is currently a moratorium on housing in Hollister which is driving up the price of homes. Down sizing in the Silicon Valley is also causing financial hardships for some families forcing them to re-locate and / or relinquish Catholic School tuition as a family budget item. These facts have adversely affected the SHPS enrollment over the past 3-4 years. When the moratorium is lifted in 2007, the hope is that enrollment will increase.

## **Summary**

Sacred Heart Parish School serves 458 children, grades Preschool to Eighth grade. It also provides space and services to a wide variety of people in the parish and its surrounding community. The school has not only a long and proud tradition, but is academically competitive, values-based, and family-oriented. Many students are proud to attend the school, from which various generations of their families have graduated,

Sacred Heart Parish School depends on the help and support of the students' parents. Parents are visible everyday at school whether helping with serving lunch or reading with a small group of children. The staff at Sacred Heart Parish School knows that parents are vital to the children's educational development.

Sacred Heart Parish School, in partnership with parents, has successfully established an environment where students grow in their understanding and appreciation of God, self, others, and all of creation.

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 2: PROGRESS REPORT**

## THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS":

- 1. The Principal and Teaching Team develop written grade level standards for each subject area within the curriculum in conjunction with the textbook adoption cycle, in order to ensure the continuity of instruction and achievement by students of the academic goals and objectives of the school.**

2000-01 Following the new WASC/WCEA protocol, Sacred Heart Parish School began assembling a Curriculum Framework for each subject area through an annual in-depth study utilizing the Diocesan timeline for curriculum evaluation. This systematic, ongoing review of the curriculum began with a 2000-2001 in-depth study of **mathematics**. At the conclusion of this study, the school re-adopted the Saxon Program. In order to provide a continuum of learning, the decision was also made to extend the Saxon Math program into the Pre Kindergarten curriculum.

2001 - 2003 The Teaching Team thoroughly discussed and considered the CA state standards and the Diocese of Monterey guidelines as they worked through the curriculum articulation process. In 2001-2002, the area of **religion** was covered. During 2002-2003 the content area was **social studies**. New textbook series for both religion and social studies were ordered for use in the fall of 2003.

2003 - 2004: The Teaching Team chose **science** as the focus for this year. Teachers discussed and collaborated regarding CA state standards and Diocesan guidelines. They articulated across the grades regarding gaps and overlaps. The end result was the adoption of new science textbooks for grades 4-8 as well as new science 'kits' for use in the primary grades, most notably grade three.

2004 - 2006: Language arts were the focus for these two years. At the conclusion of the curriculum study in 2004, teachers voted to adopt the Houghton Mifflin reading program for Grades K-5. We are currently looking at the English / writing aspects of our program.

All of the written work completed as part of this evaluation process can be found in the WASC 'evidence' binder.

- 2. The Principal and Teaching Team develop a systematic process for evaluation of the curriculum in order to ensure that it remains viable, is clearly articulated, reflects the school's philosophy, and enhances student mastery of grade level learning standards.**

Please note actions described above in section one.

- 3. The Pastor, Parish, Administration, Stewardship Advisory Council, Parents Association, and Teaching Team strategically manage resources to restore a responsible balance as a hedge against any unexpected revenue shortfall, and establish reliable net income in order to ensure fiscal stability and continued quality Catholic education for the youth of the parish community.**

In the fall of 1999 the school embraced a six point Strategic Management Plan to restore fiscal fitness. As a result of this strategic management approach, the accumulated fund balance grew in two years from a deficit of \$88,335 to a projected emergency reserve of approximately \$130,000. Furthermore, thanks to a generous gift from a sizable estate, combined with the Family Fundraising successes, the school was able to pay off the quarter-of-a-million dollar debt from building the Early Childhood Education classrooms. This full debt reduction, achieved eight years early, removed significant pressure from the school finances.

Although SHPS has achieved some success in this area, the current budgeting process does not lend itself to fulfillment of this recommendation. Because the operating income includes fund-raising monies (inexact science), and because whether or not families get the 'parish rate' or 'standard rate' is not known until long after the budget is completed, the income line remains

consistently shaky. For 2003-2004, the 'parish rate' decisions meant a \$95,000 loss in the income column while expenses remained the same. As enrollment gradually declines and expenses regularly increase, it might become necessary to use some of the 'contingency funds' to balance the operating budget during these times of transition.

#### **THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Philosophy, Goals and Objectives**

**1. The Principal ensure that the philosophy, including goals and objectives of Sacred Heart Parish School, are published annually in the Faculty Handbook in order to make them a primary focus for the Teaching Team.**

Since the year 2000, Sacred Heart Parish School's Philosophy and Mission Statements have been published annually in both the Teacher Handbook and the Family Handbook. The statement of philosophy is also printed each week in the *Pulse*.

#### **THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Student Support Services**

**1. The Administration consider establishing an emergency storage facility for necessary supplies and annual train personnel in First Aid and CPR in order to be prepared for a major emergency.**

An adequate supply of bottled water is available in the kitchen storage area and an assortment of snack foods is also available. The entire staff, including teachers, kitchen helpers, extended care personnel, teacher aides and office workers are trained in CPR every year and first aid every other year. The Sacred Heart gym has been designated by San Benito County as an emergency evacuation area so the Red Cross would bring in food, water, medicine etc. in the event of a serious or sustained emergency.

**2. The Principal and Teaching Team expand their collaboration and communication with the Diocese, local public school district, and governmental agencies in order to broaden their efforts to diagnose, address, and service students with specialized learning needs.**

2002-2003 The principal met with the Hollister Superintendent and Title I coordinator to discuss the services available. She also met with representatives from the San Benito County Office of Education to see what support systems they had in place. Nineteen of our students in grades 2, 3 and 4 received Title I reading assistance / support from Hollister Unified three days a week (on site) during the school day. Four of our students received support for vision and / or hearing disabilities through San Benito County. This included both IEP's and the use of specialized equipment. Two students received speech services through Hollister Unified. Eight students were given individual service plans and / or tested by their various public schools. While they were ineligible for services, due to the local SELPA ruling, the teachers / principal of SHPS attended the SST meetings and SHPS teachers made use of the interventions and accommodations suggested. Seven of our students were referred to private outside agencies for specialized testing and remediation. SHPS teachers also worked in conjunction with the recommendations made from this testing.

2003 - 2004 Hollister Unified cut Title I funding, but SHPS still received services two days a week. Once again, the focus was on poor readers in grades 2 and 3. By the end of the school year, 75% of the students had improved to the point that they tested out of the program! Teachers in many grades again helped families do the paperwork to have their children tested through both public schools and private agencies. The principal again met with the County office to discuss the 'proportionate share' of SELPA funds and where / how they could best be utilized.

2004 - 2005 Preschool, Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers met with other early childhood personnel from both city and county schools to review the transition from preschools to kindergarten. The Title I program was again provided on-site two days a week. Sixth grade teachers met with the family and staff of Chartwell School to facilitate the transfer of a Chartwell student into the SHPS program. The County SST training team came to a teacher meeting to familiarize all SHPS teachers with the SST process. SHPS are now able to begin this process in our own school and try various modifications prior to referring the student to the public system.

2005 - 2006: The Title I program continues to be offered. Preschool / Kindergarten collaboration is on-going as well. Teachers again are helping parents with the paperwork necessary for student evaluation by the public school system, with the SST process being utilized as needed. Teachers also continue to discuss and implement the accommodations recommended by both public and private testing agencies.

In addition to the above up-dates, SHPS teachers have also participated each year in meetings of the San Benito County Reading Council and attended annual Diocesan workshops on such topics as Character Education, Liturgy Preparation, and Classroom Management. Religion teachers have also attended classes in the Echoes of Faith series en route to catechist certification.

**3. The Administration considers the inclusion of counseling services in order to more fully serve the emerging needs of a growing student and parent population.**

In 2001 - 2002 a counselor worked one day a week on site. From 2003 - 2005 the same person served as a consultant to the school and serviced individuals and families upon request. An experienced counselor was hired part-time for the current school year rather than replacing the two vice principals who retired over the past three years. Budget constraints may continue to impact this recommendation.

**THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Curriculum Religion**

**1. The Principal and Teaching Team implement a developmentally appropriate Religion curriculum for the Preschool and Pre Kindergarten in order to assist parents in their role as primary educators and begin the faith formation in students.**

The Sadlier Religion curriculum was implemented in 2000-2001 for both the Preschool Program and the Pre Kindergarten. The curriculum is an early childhood religion program developed for children ages three, four, and five. Parent 'take home' pages draw the family into the theme of every lesson.

**THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Curriculum Science**

**1. The Principal and Teaching Team develop a comprehensive K-8 curriculum guide for science based on the California Department of Education's Science Grade Level Standards and provide teachers with in-service on hands-on science activities so that all students are appropriately challenged and experience in science.**

Sacred Heart Parish School's science program in the primary grades follows a hands-on, content - based science program known as the Full Option Science System (FOSS) curriculum. In 2002 - 2003 additional (up-dated) FOSS units were purchased for use in grades one, two and three. In 2003 - 2004 science was the curriculum focus and new science texts for Grades 4-8, based on the CA standards, were purchased for use in 2004-2005. In addition, junior high students (Gr. 6-8) benefited from use of the new science lab and equipment.

**2. The Pastor, Administration, Teaching Team, and Stewardship Advisory Council consider the establishment of a science laboratory in order to complement a comprehensive science curriculum.**

In 2002-2003 the pastor, principal junior high science teacher, SAC, and a committee of parents created, considered and moved forward with a plan to re-configure the science classroom room into a science lab. Specific plans were drawn up and the necessary \$15,000 was raised by means of various donations. The lab has been in use by Grades 6-8 since the fall of 2003

**THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Curriculum Computer Technology**

**1. The Administration and Teaching Team give increased attention to expanding the Technology Learning Center and developing and updating the grade level scope and sequence for technology learning to ensure computer proficiency for all students.**

In 2000-01, Sacred Heart Parish School undertook an expansion and upgrade of the Technology Learning Center. The old computer lab was relocated into a classroom across from the school office which was more than twice its previous size. The school also purchased 30 iMac workstations, plus updated educational software. Each Macintosh is networked and equipped with CD-ROM capabilities, making multimedia learning experiences possible for all students. The Center is wired with internet access utilizing DSL technology.

In 2002 - 2003, the technology coordinator reviewed the technology plans of several other schools and put together a sample curriculum for the teachers to review, discuss and evaluate. The technology coordinator also worked with the San Benito County Office of Education consultant on putting together a proposal / plan which would link all classrooms to the server and make the internet available outside of the lab.

Up-grading the Technology Center is again an imminent need as is the development and articulation of curriculum. The new Technology Coordinator has many ideas in both of these areas and is currently working to facilitate the development of both of the above projects.

**THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Extra-curricular/Co-curricular activities**

There are no recommendations.

**THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Staff**

**The Principal and Teaching Team give increased attention to the Diocesan expectations for completion of catechist certification requirements in order to ensure the quality of religious education and the faculty's commitment to the philosophy and mission of Sacred Heart Parish School.**

The religion coordinators have presented the Echoes of Faith series annually and it has been well attended. Of the sixteen teachers of religion, eleven are fully certified and four are well along in the certification process.

**2. The Principal consider staffing additional administrative and operations positions in order to meet the demands of the growing school population.**

In 2000-2001 cluster coordinators were given responsibilities to help ease the workload of Sacred Heart Parish School's Administrative Team (principal, assistant principals).

In 2001 - 2002, an additional part-time office assistant was hired to perform attendance.

In 2002 - 2003, one of the two vice principals retired at the end of this year and was not replaced due to budgetary constraints.

In 2003-2004, the principal hired a cleaning company to do necessary custodial work five days a week. The school also hired a maintenance man for 20 hours a week to ensure school safety and attend to deferred maintenance. These personnel are overseen by the bookkeeper.

In 2004 - 2005 the second vice principal retired. Rather than replace her, the principal decided to hire a counselor.

This recommendation merits further study in light of administrative demands but must also be filtered through budget priorities.

### **THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": School Plant and Physical Facilities**

#### **1. The Pastor, Administration, and Stewardship Advisory Council budget for deferred maintenance and capital improvements in order to ensure the long-term safe and comfortable use of all school facilities.**

In the fall of 1999, Sacred Heart Parish School's budget, and corresponding chart of accounts, was reformatted to allow for more effective management of its finances. As part of this process, specific budget lines were created for school specific capital improvements and property depreciation. At the end of each Fiscal Year these monies are now expensed into a separate "Capital Fund" established with the Diocese of Monterey at a high yield of interest. At the same time outside donations are solicited to build this account for planned property depreciation expenses. From 1999 - 2001, the Capital Fund helped finance perimeter security fencing, improved playground equipment, funded the expansion/upgrade of the Technology Learning Center, purchased new library chairs, and helped to up-grade defective gas lines.

In the summer of 2002, the Diocese re-routed the parish subsidy (and other budgeted monies) which left the operating budget with an unexpected deficit of \$40,000. No maintenance personnel were available throughout the 2002-2003 school year for either the parish or the school which meant buildings and grounds were not regularly up-graded and maintained. In addition, funds were taken from the Capital Fund to make up for the projected deficit in the operating budget.

From 2002 - 2005, some reserve funds have been used for textbook up-grades and replacement. Because the budget has been balanced for two years, the reserves are mostly intact and continue to be available as a cushion against future needs,

### **THE VISITING COMMITTEE "RECOMMENDS": Public Relations**

#### **1. The Parish, Administration, Stewardship Advisory Council, and Foundation create new ways to market the school which will highlight its affordability and attract a culturally diverse student body in order to serve as a Christian outreach for the local community.**

2000-2001: The technology teacher/coordinator helped advance Sacred Heart Parish School's public affairs efforts by assisting with school publications and up-grading and maintaining the Web site.

2002-2003: The Foundation Newsletter is published twice a year and mailed to alumni, grandparents and friends of the school. Information about the school is made available weekly in the parish bulletin. The school gives financial aid and also processes forms for the Msgr. Morgan

scholarship fund which supports Hispanic students. The school is well represented in the two local newspapers as well as the Diocesan "Observer." In the summer of 2003, the school shared its physical plant with the YMCA and the San Benito Stage Co. These two programs brought a large number of outside community people onto our campus.

2003 - 2004 The above methods were continued. In addition, the Registrar created a marketing flier which was placed by parents in local preschools and real estate offices. The school also put 750 fliers in the July Chamber of Commerce bulletin which is distributed to various businesses in the community. Lastly, SAC established a parent 'recruitment committee' which began its work in the fall.

2004 - 2006: The PASS board adopted the job of putting weekly information about the school in the parish bulletin. The pastor had a showcase put up in St. Benedict's entry way to house artifacts regarding the school. The principal and registrar initiated monthly 'admissions tours' for prospective parents. Parents were asked to dispel the myth of the 'wait list' and advertise the school to their friends, neighbors and associates.

While Sacred Heart did attract 43 new families for the current year, approximately the same number moved or left the school. Because of lay offs / lack of jobs in the area, and the continued increase in the price of homes, many families are leaving San Benito County to seek alternative employment and / or housing that is more affordable.

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **SCHOOLWIDE LEARNING EXPECTATIONS**

## **Mission Statement**

As a loving and dedicated Catholic community, Sacred Heart Parish School focuses on each student's spiritual, personal and intellectual development, nurturing a foundation of Catholic Christian values and life skills which will empower them to become responsible and informed citizens both locally and globally.

## **Philosophy**

Sacred Heart Parish School, with the support of parents, dedicates itself to teach the Gospel message, to build a faith community, and to serve through prayer and social action. SHPS provides an environment where students can develop into well-rounded, educated Christian citizens.

## **School wide Learning Expectations**

### **Sacred Heart Parish School graduates are:**

- 1) Active Catholic Christian citizens who are able to:  
Exhibit an understanding of the beliefs and traditions of the Catholic Church;  
Understand the value of having God in their life and being able to share his love with others;  
Recognize underlying Christian principles when studying social, historical and political issues;  
Respect and appreciate that other people, cultures and nature are a part of God's creation.
- 2) Life-long learners who are able to:  
Understand and apply basic educational fundamentals to the best of their individual learning ability;  
Set realistic goals for themselves, reflect on them, and revise them as they proceed through life;  
Develop and utilize strong study habits and skills;  
Use their skills to analyze and evaluate resources and information, including technology.
- 3) Responsible citizens who are able to:  
Value themselves and others as an important part of an evolving community;  
Be involved in their school, community and world, with a sense of global awareness;  
Display respect for self, others and the environment;  
Appreciate cultural diversity.

## **Process used to determine Student Learning Expectations**

In April of 2004, the teaching team did preliminary work on the Student Learning Expectations under the direction of then Superintendent Sister Mary Catherine Evans. First each teacher completed a form independently. They then combined and discussed their ideas in groups of four. Lastly, groups of eight came to consensus on what was important to include. Results of these discussions were then turned over to the WASC committee for review and placed in the 'evidence' binder.

In the fall of 2004, the principal met with junior high students and explained the WASC process to them. They followed basically the same process the teachers had: completing the questionnaire as individuals and then combining their ideas into a group consensus. These papers were also turned over to the committee on Mission, Philosophy and Student Learning Expectations for review.

In November of 2004, the principal reviewed the process with parents on the PASS board and members of the Stewardship Advisory Council (which includes the pastor). They were invited to write, discuss and submit their input.

In the spring of 2005, the Mission/Philosophy/Student Learning Expectation committee met several times to review, discuss and synthesize the ideas and comments of the above-mentioned stakeholders. They also obtained copies of SLE's from several other schools for committee information and discussion. They then put together a preliminary draft of SHPS Learning Expectations and distributed it for individual review and comment.

In June 2005, the Student Learning Expectations were formally and unanimously approved at the final Teaching Team meeting. Over the summer, they were written into the Family Handbook which was distributed at Back-to-School Night.

In the fall of 2005, the principal reviewed the existence and importance of the Student Learning Expectations with K-8 students at a morning assembly. The office staff then prepared a set to be posted in each classroom and office.

Because the Student Learning Expectations are relatively new to the school, teachers and parents are just beginning to familiarize themselves and the students with their specific content as well as ways to bring them alive in the classroom, the curriculum, and the activities program.

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **CATEGORY A: ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

## **School Philosophy and Mission**

**The school has established a clear statement of philosophy and mission that reflects a commitment to Catholic identity, thoroughness of instruction, a focus on the needs of the whole person, parents as primary educators, teachers as facilitators of learning, and recognition of the dignity of all members of the school community.**

Through a collaborative process among members of the faculty, staff, administration, and members of the school community, Sacred Heart Parish School (SHPS) has established a clear statement of philosophy and mission. This statement reflects a commitment to Catholic identity, drives our school-wide student learning expectations, acknowledges parents as the primary educators of their children, and recognizes the dignity of all members of the school community.

The focus of the philosophy and mission statements is a commitment to teaching the whole child. As a result, teachers acknowledge their responsibility as facilitators of learning who provide a stimulating and safe learning environment. Utilizing a variety of teaching methods that addresses the learning needs of students, teachers inspire students to become life-long learners who think critically, communicate effectively, and become active, responsible citizens who value their Catholic education and identity.

## **Governance**

**The school administration (pastor and principal) seeks input/participation from members of the school community, adopts policies which are consistent with the school philosophy and mission, delegates implementation to the professional staff, monitors results, and is committed to sharing the Catholic vision.**

The philosophy and mission statements of Sacred Heart Parish School were developed following input from faculty, parents, and students. The philosophy and mission statements also appear weekly in the *Pulse* (the school bulletin) and the Sacred Heart -- Saint Benedict Catholic Community bulletin.

When adopting new policies, the administration is committed to ensuring that they are consistent with the school's philosophy and mission and in direct response to needs expressed by teachers, students or parents. An example of this is the junior high anti-bullying program which embraces the Catholic vision by encouraging students to treat everyone with kindness and respect, to celebrate individual differences, and to solve conflicts in a peaceful way. Teachers are guided by a school-wide discipline policy which is outlined in the Family Handbook. This policy presents a Christian approach to discipline and puts emphasis on being proactive rather than punitive. The handbook is reviewed annually by the principal and staff.

On a monthly basis, the principal meets with the Pastor, Stewardship Advisory Council (SAC), and the Parent and Student Support group (PASS) to elicit input on financial and other school-related issues. Teachers and staff members are invited to evaluate events and activities by writing comments/suggestions on clipboards that are passed around at the monthly faculty meetings. These comments are reviewed before planning activities for the following year, and many recommended changes are incorporated. The principal also invites input from parents regarding the operation of the school and its programs.

The principal delegates responsibility for implementation of some activities to the professional staff, such as: review and selection of textbooks; planning school masses and Para liturgies; school picnic; and organizing the Christmas program. The school administration and staff are committed to sharing our Catholic vision by being positive role models. This includes planning special masses and Para liturgies, facilitating retreats, providing opportunities to receive the sacrament of Reconciliation, sharing the gospel at assemblies, collecting money and food for various charities, and participating in the Adopt-a-Family program at Christmas.

## School Leadership

**The school leadership encourages the cultivation of Catholic values and the spiritual formation of the school community, focuses the energies of the school on achievement of school-wide learning expectations, empowers the staff, and ensures shared accountability for student learning.**

It is evident throughout the year that the school leadership at Sacred Heart Parish School places high priority on the cultivation of Catholic values and the spiritual formation of the school community. This is apparent at our weekly assemblies, where the Sunday gospel is shared with the entire student body. Quite frequently, the principal takes this opportunity to interpret the gospel and suggest ways students can apply its message to their everyday lives. When necessary, the principal also makes use of the weekly assemblies to discuss current and ongoing issues that affect our students and the school community. Focusing on Catholic values and ethics, the principal addresses these issues and offers fair and just solutions.

Each week, teachers, staff, and students submit special prayer petitions for those who are in need of prayer. These petitions are prayed for in classrooms and at weekly assemblies. Other areas that show evidence of Catholic values are the monthly faculty meetings and weekly student council meetings (which begin with prayer), a yearly staff retreat, and school-sponsored workshops. Pre-kindergarten through first grade hold Para liturgies which coincide with the liturgical feasts celebrated by the other grades in the school. Grades two through eight attend weekly mass on a rotation basis and all-school masses are held to celebrate major feast days and important events throughout the school year. The sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated once a year for students in grades three through eight, and students in second grade make their First Reconciliation in preparation for First Holy Communion. Traditional Catholic devotions such as Stations of the Cross, May Crowning, and Advent Wreath are celebrated in age-appropriate ways.

To assure achievement of the student learning expectations, the principal frequently schedules time for teachers to meet in clusters as part of the monthly faculty meetings. At these meetings, teachers review curriculum to determine if it is acceptably challenging and to ensure that it is in alignment with the California standards. Student learning expectations are further enhanced by drama, art, music, and sports programs, as well as a Technology Center with internet access. Through the use of clipboards, and at grade level meetings, the principal solicits input from the staff on various matters. Selection of new textbooks and learning materials is shared responsibility of the principal and teachers. The principal regularly makes formal and informal classroom observations.

The leadership empowers teachers by providing them with opportunities to attend school-funded workshops, conferences, and conventions, where they learn innovative ways to enhance learning. Creative lessons are always encouraged and supported and standardized test scores reviewed and shared. Teachers also are guided by specific student discipline procedures that appear in the Family Handbook. During the summer, student council provides a portion of funds for several of its members to attend leadership camp. Teachers invite parents with special talents or expertise for classroom visits. Students are encouraged to share the Catholic vision by participating in and raising money for various charitable organizations such as Fishes and Loaves, Operation Rice Bowl, Catholic Relief Services, Adopt-a-Family, local charities, and many other fundraising events.

## Staff

**The school administration and staff are professionally qualified, dedicated to the school's philosophy and mission, and committed to ongoing spiritual and professional development that will promote student learning. In addition, administration and staff are prepared to lead by example and work collaboratively to create a community of faith.**

The school administration and staff at Sacred Heart Parish School are professionally qualified for the positions they hold. Diocesan guidelines are adhered to in the hiring of the principal, teachers, and support staff. Throughout the year, the principal attends Principals' Meetings where programs and procedures are discussed and evaluated. Most teachers hold earned CA teaching credentials, or are in the process of obtaining one. All members of our staff show their dedication to the school's mission and philosophy by recognizing parents as the primary educators of their children. This recognition is manifest through primary grade parent/teacher newsletters, daily assignment books, parent conferences, discipline referrals, telephone calls, parent questionnaires, progress reports, First Holy Communion family gatherings, and the weekly *Pulse*. The entire staff works to provide an environment that is conducive to learning.

In order to improve student learning, the administration and staff at Sacred Heart Parish School are committed to ongoing spiritual and professional development. Each year, all full-time teachers are required to complete ten hours each of academic and religious growth. For part-time teachers, this requirement is prorated according to the number of hours worked. Sacred Heart Parish School has allocated funds for teachers to use for professional growth. Many teachers exceed the required number of hours by attending additional workshops, conferences, conventions, and retreats. Religion teachers are Diocesan Certified Catechists, or are in the process of becoming certified. Several are Master Catechists.

The school administration and staff work together to create a community of faith by cultivating a spirit of charity and respect for the teachings and principles of the Roman Catholic Church. Religion teachers are active Catholics who attend mass regularly at their respective parishes. Some are involved as facilitators in the Religious Education program, or participate in the parish as Eucharistic ministers, liturgical ministers, or choir members.

## School Environment

**The Catholic school is responsible for creating and nurturing a safe and healthy learning environment which fosters community and the achievement of religious and educational goals. This environment is characterized by trust, professionalism, realistic expectations for each student, and a respect for diversity.**

Sacred Heart Parish School is dedicated to creating and nurturing a healthy and safe environment. Regular earthquake, fire, and intruder drills help ensure the physical safety of our students. Development of the whole person--body, mind, and spirit--is our goal. SHPS offers a variety of opportunities and experiences, within a Catholic context, that positively impact student growth in faith, knowledge, and community consciousness.

Each class begins the school day with prayer, and prayers are also said prior to lunch and prior to dismissal. Most classrooms have a prayer corner or prayer table, a crucifix is in every room, Epiphany blessing strips are displayed above every door in the school, and religious statues are placed prominently in the hallways. In addition, there are frequent all school liturgies and Para liturgies celebrating various feasts throughout the liturgical year. Individual classes attend Friday Parish masses on a rotating basis. Weekly school assemblies also begin with prayer.

Community consciousness is fostered in a number of ways. Students, staff, and parents are extremely generous in regular collections for Fishes and Loaves and Second Harvest food drives. At Christmas the school takes part in the Adopt-a-Family program and during Lent contributions are made to Operation Rice bowl. An annual penny challenge, spell-a-thon, and aluminum can drive raises thousands of dollars for charities selected by the student council.

The SHPS Family Handbook contains specific expectations and guidelines for student behavior and academic performance. Students and parents must, at the start of each school year, sign a statement affirming that they have read and understand the guidelines and that they will adhere to them. The SHPS web site also includes the Family Handbook. In addition sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students are involved in an anti-bullying program. Serious discipline issues are relatively non-existent at SHPS with conduct and discipline referrals given mostly for classroom disruption, violation of the uniform code, or lack of respect on the playground.

Every staff member at SHPS in some way contributes to our religious climate. Religion teachers evaluate and select textbooks, and grade three through eight teachers plan liturgies or Para liturgies with their homerooms. Teachers also are involved in planning the Christmas program, and the eighth grade teachers plan two religious retreats (one at the beginning of the year and one toward the end) as well as the Graduation Mass. The entire school staff also attends a religious retreat just before the start of the school year. All faculty meetings begin with prayer. There are, in addition, ample opportunities for prayer and meditation throughout the school year.

Relationships among the staff and administration are at a high level of professionalism. In addition to monthly faculty meetings, there are cluster meetings, junior high meetings, and grade level meetings, both to articulate the academic program and to monitor individual student progress. The staff celebrates birthdays, baby showers, and other important dates. There is a staff TGIF party at the end of each trimester, as well as an employee Christmas party and end of the year luncheon.

Innovative approaches to enhance student learning are encouraged and supported at SHPS. There is a Technology Center, science lab, and music room. To encourage professional growth, teachers are regularly directed to various workshops offered by the Diocese, the County Office of Education, and the Reading Council. Some instructors also attend the annual Los Angeles Religious Education Congress. Students with special needs are evaluated with an on-site SST. Those who need further evaluation may be referred to the Hollister Unified School District, private educational testing, or special tutoring. Curriculum is adapted, where possible, for those students with special learning needs.

Individual teachers foster self-esteem in their classrooms in various ways, such as: Student of the Day/Week; Homework Hall of Fame; achievement acknowledgment certificates; and praise and encouragement. There are Honor Roll and Achievement assemblies held each trimester. At weekly assemblies, and in *The Pulse*, student accomplishments outside of school are recognized (such as County Fair ribbons, Community Theater, essay contests, and the County spelling bee). Participants in school athletic teams are recognized at weekly assemblies, as are student council members and class representatives.

## **Reporting Student Progress**

**The administration and staff regularly review and report to the school community progress toward accomplishing the school wide learning expectations.**

Student learning expectations were just formulated this year as a part of our WASC process, so 'regular' review' will of necessity be a future activity... Methods of reporting student progress, however, are in use at all grade levels. For preschool through kindergarten, student progress is reported to parents twice a year. For grades one through eight there are mid-

trimester progress reports in addition to the traditional end of term report cards. Parent/Teacher conferences are held during the first trimester, and as needed throughout the year. Students in grades two to eight take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and students in fourth and seventh grades also take the Otis Lennon School Ability Index. Students in fifth grade also take the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) test each January.

Many teachers require that parents sign tests and assignment books. Weekly progress reports are also kept on students at risk academically. Some teachers post homework assignments on the school web site. Homework is graded and returned to students in a timely manner. Phone calls to parents are made when necessary. Progress toward accomplishing student learning expectations is also communicated to the school community through regular publication of the Honor Roll (and other student academic awards) in the *Pulse*.

### **School Improvement Process**

**The school administration facilitates school improvement, a process which is driven by a plan of action that embodies faith formation and quality instruction for all students; has school community commitment and involvement; effectively guides the work of the school. The administration and instructional staff in cooperation with the school community demonstrate accountability through the monitoring of the implementation of the School Improvement Action Plan.**

SHPS is an interactive community which encourages and integrates the ideas and suggestions of parents, teachers and students to improve school life. Ideas may be suggested by the PASS Board, Foundation Board, SAC, student council, teacher meeting agenda, phone calls, notes or e-mail. Examples of responses to suggestions made recently include the Anti-Bully program, the Graduation Committee, The Food Committee and the Chess Club.

SHPS have just established an Action Plan as part of our self-study. Administration, instructional staff, and parents have been dedicated to improving the school based on the Spring 2000 Visiting Committee recommendations.

Improvements have included, but are not limited to:

- establishing maximum class sizes
- establishing written admissions policies
- hiring teacher's aides for pre-school through third grade
- securing a Title I reading resource teacher
- opening and maintaining dialogue with Hollister Unified School District and the San Benito County Office of Education
- increasing professional development funding
- building a family data base for office and Foundation use
- up-dating textbooks
- developing pre-school and pre-kindergarten
- establishing a competitive sports program
- establishing a departmentalized junior high program
- introducing a fine arts program for seventh and eighth grades
- up-grading the school web site
- offering tuition assistance
- SAC--new by-laws and terms, with SAC meetings held monthly
- ECE loan paid off
- science lab created
- playground "re-marked"
- New Family Orientation
- Parish Outreach addressed
- a new family handbook
- heating system upgraded

- recruitment tours
- school budget distributed to families every year

### **Areas of Strength**

- strong commitment to living the Mission Statement and School Philosophy
- tangible sense of Catholic identity and a faith family that permeates the school community
- on-going support from our families and Sacred Heart-St. Benedicts community
- high level of faculty involvement, focusing on successful student learning
- professional development and qualifications of faculty and staff
- religion teachers have a strong commitment and are knowledgeable about Church teachings
- all teachers show consistent effort to be inclusive of all students in the teaching and assessment process
- a variety of methods are used for parent-teacher communication

### **Areas for Growth**

- need to up-grade the Technology Center and to expand technology education for the staff
- budget annually for deferred maintenance
- consider adding a foreign language to the curriculum
- establish a formal system of follow-up on SHPS alumni
- continue to update existing curriculum guidelines
- improve the nutritional value of lunch and snack program

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **CATEGORY B: CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION**

## What Students Learn

**The school provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose, strengthens Catholic identity and results in student achievement of the grade level subject area expectations.**

Sacred Heart Parish School (SHPS) is dedicated to teaching students to communicate effectively. Instructors at all levels use various techniques to insure this aspect of education is being met. Students in the lower grades learn to discuss concepts by taking turns, listening to and repeating their classmates' comments and giving examples. Older students communicate by working in small groups, giving oral presentations and completing written exercises.

Critical thinking is encouraged for the students at SHPS through discussion, shared readings, and various forms of logical challenges. Students are asked to make predictions and inferences, compare and contrast works or compositions, and answer a number of critical, interpretive questions. The skills necessary to perform these tasks are taught through modeling, discussions, and practice related to problem solving.

SHPS encourages students to apply their academic skills in everyday situations. Students are given reminders to review concepts, and receive praise when they apply classroom learning to playground situations. Students learn about making change for purchases, telling time, and other lessons that can be used at home. The times when students learn skills that carry their academic learning into everyday situations help teachers to assess this type of student progress. Other methods of assessment include standardized tests, discussions, group work, formal tests generated either by the teacher or the text, classroom observations, and one-on-one interactions with students. Students in the upper grades are also encouraged to peer-edit and self-assess their work in order to revise an assignment.

As a Catholic school committed to teaching and upholding the values of the Catholic Church, Sacred Heart Parish School integrates all academic subjects with that of religious studies. Students learn that God gave humans five senses that we use to appreciate His creation. Many language arts stories center on moral lessons and stories of sharing the faith. Students are consistently reminded to uphold the Golden Rule as well as biblical teachings about forgiveness. In the middle school grades, teachers align their curriculum with the lessons being taught in religious studies. For example, sixth grade teachings about the Old Testament are taught in conjunction with the social studies lessons about the same ancient times, while the content of junior high literature classes also ties in with its parallel historical period.

Curriculum decisions are made by faculty members with input and approval from the principal. Teachers are asked to articulate with colleagues who teach the students one year below and one year above their own grade level. They create an annual plan to illustrate the skills and subjects to be covered throughout the school year. Teachers are asked to review the ITBS test scores of their incoming class so that they may be aware of various levels of achievement. This allows instructors to plan curriculum at a pace that will be comfortable yet demanding for their students. Test scores can also give a well-rounded assessment of where the areas of strength and weakness lie. Thus, teachers have the opportunity to pull from what the students already know and tie it in with what they need to be learning.

As students learn in a variety of ways, teachers organize their lessons to be equally varied. Classrooms are filled with activities that relate to all kinds of learning needs. Visual students are stimulated by learning aids such as illustrations, graphic organizers and outlines used to enhance learning. Auditory learners are assisted through discussions, the reading aloud of texts, and teacher input. Tactile learners are encouraged through projects such as math manipulatives, science experiments, building missions, making geographic maps of Native American Tribes, building Egyptian pyramids, and other similar models intended to augment understanding of important concepts.

For the older students (grades 6-8), articulation is focused on the progression from Sacred Heart Parish School to a high school. California State Standards as well as information gathered from local high schools provide the bulk of the resources for this process. Teachers take into account the standards which will need to be met by the end of the academic year in order to prepare the students for the rigors of the next grade. Grade Eight is especially aware of academic standards as SHPS prides itself on graduating students who are well educated and more than prepared for high school. On-going communication with local public and private high schools and SHPS assures readiness and indicates strong success.

Graduates of SHPS are followed both formally and informally. Because of the small population of our community, it is relatively easy to discover how SHPS alums are progressing. Teachers at San Benito High School often comment on the level of preparation that our students have compared to students from other local schools. This past year, many of our former students were recognized for their outstanding dominance of the Honor Roll at Notre Dame High School. Also, a 2004 graduate maintained the highest grade point average in the freshmen class of 800 at San Benito High School Besides academics, our students have excelled in many student activities. Three of our recent alums were elected to class office at SBHS while others earned appointed positions. These honors show that our students have developed a strong sense of both academic success and social relationships.

### **How Students Learn**

**The professional staff uses research-based knowledge about teaching and learning, and designs and implements a variety of learning and formational experiences which actively engage students and are consistent with the school's mission, philosophy, and student learning expectations.**

Sacred Heart Parish School is committed to offering its students a variety of learning and formational experiences that will prepare them to be well-rounded, responsible Christian citizens. These learning experiences are planned in such a way as to nurture a foundation of Catholic Christian values and life skills.

The SHPS staff development plan has broadened the scope of instructional strategies by offering and sometimes requiring teachers to attend a wide variety of instructional development opportunities geared to helping students realize their intellectual and spiritual potential.

Sacred Heart Parish School has offered, and at time times required, teachers to attend workshops, in-services and classes which support the staff development plan. The school has also teamed with local city and county school districts to enable SHPS teachers to participate in their offering of classes and programs. The type of instruction has covered areas from the process of creating student study teams to improving classroom management practices.

Multiple strategies are used by the teaching staff to better facilitate student learning and offer students a model for living the Catholic Christian identity. These strategies seek to educate the whole child and employ methods based on individual learning styles and multiple intelligences. Some of these strategies include direct instruction, integration of disciplines in thematic units, peer teaching and learner-centered strategies, cooperative learning, developmentally appropriate, and individualized instruction and technology-enhanced plans of instruction.

Students are given the opportunity to be engaged in the learning process through the use of manipulatives, role-playing, music, art, and drawing throughout the disciplines. Other examples include experimentation in science, writing (in both expository and creative forms), as well as in the running of their school and their own individual classrooms.

Students are involved in the learning process as they choose their own books to read, rewrite and edit their own work, evaluate their own and each others' work, give spelling tests, act as classroom and school officers, give reports and read stories aloud and plan plays, and parties. Older students buddy with younger students to share each others' gifts and assist younger students with their work.

Teachers collaborate with their students in the learning process as they plan and develop masses, liturgies, and Para liturgies. Other areas of teacher-student collaboration include the development of classroom rules, governments, and constitutions. Teachers and students work together on a daily basis in order to clarify what is expected of students and how assignments should best be carried out. Student council members and representatives collaborate with their teacher moderators to create skits and meet regularly with their faculty advisors to plan upcoming school events. Student representatives and council members also work in partnership with the administration to generate ways to improve the school.

Parents aid in the process of student learning by working with students in the classroom, assisting on field trips, serving as members of the parent advisory committee and participating actively in special learning events such as the Book Fair and Open House. Many parents share their talents as guest speakers or work alongside students to develop special projects, such as the annual collaborative classroom project for Casino Night.

Students use critical thinking skills in a variety of ways. Younger children are asked to respond to open-ended questions after a shared reading. They may be asked to act a situation out or predict what might happen next. Older children are challenged to think critically with questions that begin with "why or why not" or "what do you think?" Logical thinking skills are required in mathematics, and expecting students to support their ideas logically in all subject areas is required. Even in Physical Education, students are often stopped during an activity and asked to analyze their behavior. Through discussion, problem solving, comparing and contrasting, students are challenged to think critically.

Problem solving is often very hands-on at the primary level. Students use modeling, play-acting, exploring concepts with movement, and also with open-ended discussions and activities. The very act of socializing and playing with other children presents everyday problem solving opportunities for all students. Social problem solving may involve reviewing Christian stories and teachings of how Jesus taught us to treat others. Cooperative learning with emphasis on reviewing steps to solving problems (especially in science and math) helps students use problem-solving strategies. Asking older students questions which require higher level thinking skills, and having them share how to reconstruct a problem so that it can be solved in a different manner, are also ways that older students problem solve. Some problems are solved by putting students in groups or with partners to encourage collaboration, role-modeling and discussion.

Technological skills are introduced as early as kindergarten. The youngest children are given opportunities that encourage a high level of interest and enjoyment in the classroom and in the Technology Center. Early grades learn basic uses of the computer, simple commands, introductory keyboard, and programs that enhance basic skills. These are lessons which engender a positive feeling toward technology. By the time a student reaches the eighth grade, s/he has become proficient at keyboarding (usually by the end of grade three), has used a spreadsheet program, done a hyper studio project, and researched using the internet. Special speakers, outdoor education, retreats, and many field trip experiences provide community and academic resources.

The use of daily schedules, course outlines, chapter goals and objectives, subject study guides for chapter units and culmination activities all describe how students derive understanding of what, when and how they are to meet grade level subject area expectations.

## **How Assessment is Used**

### **Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process.**

Sacred Heart Parish School is committed to offering its students a variety of learning and formal experiences coupled with a variety of assessment that is frequent and integrated into the daily teaching and learning process of our institution.

Teachers have a responsibility to understand the purposes and value provided by using alternative assessments and, when necessary, advocating for appropriate assessment to improve an individual child's educational learning experience. This responsibility includes understanding and acquiring from specific tests information which will be shared with students, parents, and outside community resources. Assessment practices and methods are consistent with the school curriculum and the learning goals of our diocese to ensure continual improvement and support student learning.

Assessment and evaluation are works in progress, and teachers participate in ongoing professional development to improve their capabilities in the assessment process. They depend on other teachers and educators while encouraging communication with parents, students and experts in evaluating the assessments. In doing so, teachers ensure that their assessments and evaluation of information gathered is accurate, that reasonable conclusions can be made, and how students of equivalent ability will achieve similar scores when compared demographically. Teachers collect information from a variety of assessment methods. This data evaluation process brings order and greater meaning while striving to achieve our school-wide learning expectations.

Assessment and the evaluation of that assessment serve multiple purposes to the staff. Teachers can determine students' prior knowledge through teaching or by specially designed testing. Standardized testing can identify students' strengths and weaknesses in specific areas. Determining a student's prior knowledge can also provide valuable information in curriculum planning. In the process of continuing improvement in the curriculum, the evaluation of assessment data can provide ongoing information. This data then allows teachers to make daily revisions to the curriculum and shows them the effectiveness of the program. Students can then receive feedback from their teachers that will assist and motivate their learning. Results of formal testing and in-classroom assessment are communicated to parents through parent-teacher conferences, progress reports and report cards. The success of our assessment program greatly depends on communication with parents. Parents are encouraged to participate in classroom work, field trips, projects and parent advisory committees.

The collection of data can be summarized by the following: observation, interviews, anecdotal record-keeping, retellings, reading and writing, oral presentations, learning centers, and video/audio recordings. Students are asked to produce writing samples, perform in plays and recite poems. Projects include individual and group research reports, graphs, charts and illustrations. Teachers keep checklists of teacher-conducted tests, dictation testing, writing samples, informal reading, formal standardized achievement testing, criterion-referenced, and diagnostic readiness testing.

Students are challenged on a daily basis to demonstrate their knowledge and competency by developing products and creating answers to constructed response questions, essays, demonstrations, and experiments. Students are also given opportunities to be assessed in real life circumstances across the disciplines. Examples include essays, debate of current social issues, performance in the arts, investigation, reporting, and formal application of technology.

**Areas of Strength:**

- a successful system for developing curriculum throughout the grade levels
- awareness of the value of integrating religious studies into other academic areas
- curriculum and instruction is geared to include and challenge all students
- social studies and literature curricula are integrated in junior high
- in-depth study of one curriculum area done each year
- students are given many opportunities to collaborate with students and teachers
- students use problem solving strategies in a variety of ways
- students are proficient in basic technology
- teachers use a variety of strategies to help students become efficient problem- solvers
- Sacred Heart Parish School assessment is an ongoing, problem solving process
- Teachers meet formally and informally to discuss both curriculum and individual student progress
- grade level assessments are aligned with core curriculum and instruction

**Areas for Growth:**

- recognize students who may require additional remediation and assist in offering them alternate learning opportunities
- share with students more specifically what is required of them to meet grade level standards and expectations
- encourage and evaluate critical thinking strategies
- develop more varied assessments for Technology Center work
- library resources and Technology Center are constantly in need of upgrading and updating
- further develop and utilize the SST process for students at risk

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION:**

#### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

## What Students Learn

**The school provides a challenging, coherent and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's purpose, strengthens Catholic identity and results in student achievement of the grade level subject area expectations.**

Sacred Heart Parish School (SHPS) seeks to provide a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum for each student. In the area of Language Arts the goal is to give students the tools to succeed in oral comprehension and communication. Also, the instructors have chosen to follow state standards as guidelines. For grades K-5, SHPS uses a new Language Arts series published by Houghton-Mifflin that is based specifically on California state standards.

Through explicit, systematic instruction and a variety of teaching techniques and resources, teachers enable students to communicate effectively. Students in lower grades learn to speak and write in complete sentences, with specific instruction in grammar, usage, and mechanics. Students in middle grades build upon these lessons in speaking and writing through reports, narratives, journals, and responses to literature presented at their level. Junior high students continue to refine their skills in grammar, composition, and vocabulary building. All grade levels take part in a speech tournament that increases skills in communication and public speaking. Students actively participate in social conversations with peers and adults by asking and answering questions and working through difficulties. Junior high students also participate in a variety of writing contests such as the VFW essay on topics related to patriotism.

Students are taught to think conceptually through discussion of sequencing of events, cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, categorizing and classifying, noting details, using mind maps, journal writing, and summarizing. Higher order thinking skills are taught to help students learn to make inferences and predictions. Junior high students are prepared for a more advanced echelon when writing essays with emphasis on thesis, topic sentences, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Problem solving is addressed when students create new endings to stories and edit their own work. Encouraging the use of dictionaries, glossaries, and other resources also allows them to develop autonomy while completing work at home. Students are encouraged to apply all skills learned in the classroom to realistic situations. Through summarizing, evaluating, dramatizing, assessing, and drawing conclusions, students demonstrate skills learned.

Grade level subject area expectations align with Catholic identity through the use of many different techniques. In reading and literature classes, the students are asked to draw thematic parallels between textbook stories and Biblical content. Religious aphorisms are used as examples for sentence diagramming. Children in younger grades are asked to create psalms and use moral themes in compositions.

Students are challenged when they are asked to think and write critically in language arts. Rather than answering basic recall questions, students are assigned to infer, question, evaluate, and interpret the things that they read. Instructors apply scaffolding and help students to draw from prior knowledge. Outside material is sometimes supplemented.

Language arts naturally lends itself to integration with other disciplines. All students will use the skills attained in language arts to complete work in other courses. Writing, oral presentations and basic vocabulary are necessary for essays in classes such as social studies, science, and religious studies. The proficiency that students gain in developing vocabulary skills can also be applied to other courses.

It is important that all types of learners are considered when planning the instruction process. This is especially true in language arts. It is easy to include visual and auditory learners through overheads, graphic organizers, and lecture. Kinesthetic and tactile learners are also included through elements of role-play, writing, and sequencing events. Students with special

needs are addressed through repetition of directions, large print books and handouts, and extra tutoring. Instructors will often adapt curriculum to meet the needs of challenged or more advanced learners.

SHPS uses an articulation process that includes all teachers. Instructors complete a scope and sequence to examine which concepts should be introduced at each grade level. Then, gaps and overlaps are examined and discussed.

## **How Students Learn**

### **The professional staff designs and implements a variety of learning and formational experiences which actively engage students and are consistent with the school's philosophy and goals.**

Sacred Heart Parish School offers staff development opportunities through outside workshops and seminars. Members of the staff have attended writing workshops (Stack the Deck), classroom management seminars (Tools for Teaching by Fred Jones), and various grade-level specific meetings (i.e. Kindergarten Conference).

It is a learning expectation at SHPS that students are given instruction in how to become models of the Catholic faith. At weekly assemblies, students use language arts skills in reading and writing special petitions for prayers. At school liturgies, students are asked to do the readings and the petitions for the parish members in attendance. Also, students use song sheets for the hymns chosen for that day.

Students become involved in the learning process through a variety of teaching strategies and methods. Many teachers use group work and peer editing as ways to allow students to become facilitators in their learning. Students are called to lead class discussions about answers to daily oral language lessons and to create and complete graphic organizers relating to literature. At our annual speech tournament, the students in junior high play the role of the judges for their fellow classmates. They use score sheets to decide which students advance to the semifinals of the competition.

At SHPS, teachers believe that parents are the primary educators. Thus, collaboration with them becomes very important. Students in grades 2-8 are furnished with an assignment book each school year. This book then serves as a place where parents can check to see that their child is doing all of his/her homework. Teachers will often use this book in order to send notes and notify parents of student progress. Elementary level teachers assign reading time that parents must complete with students. Teachers in the lower grades also distribute weekly packets of information as well as monthly newsletters to remind parents about upcoming events. In the upper grades, this information is passed through the students and the weekly *Pulse*.

Students collaborate with their classmates using many of the methods mentioned above. They participate in peer editing, literature circles, study partners, and group work. These activities encourage students to maintain a certain degree of independence as they begin to move toward high school. Also, helping a student who is struggling is a proven way to improve one's own skills.

Teachers cooperate with students every moment of the school day. In language arts specifically, however, this cooperation comes audibly through lectures and verbal directions, dictation, and oral spelling tests. Visually, teachers are constantly observing student progress and monitoring their writing or reading.

Students see and work with the administration many times during principal walk-throughs. The principal often visits the classroom to see how students are doing. The students are asked to show what they are working on and to explain parts of the lesson. This enables our

principal to know what each class is working on and which students may be in need of special services.

In the current generation of technologically advanced students, the skills needed to be successful in the world are taught throughout the lower, middle, and upper grades. Starting in first grade, students compose and illustrate complete sentences using word processing programs like Kid Pix. Students use the Technology Center to type their spelling words. Middle grades often write poems for special occasions (i.e. Mother's Day, Christmas). Grades K-5 has the added advantage of using Houghton-Mifflin's website in order to access the stories that they are reading in class. This is especially helpful for parents who are assisting their children with homework assignments. The students in the upper grades are expected to type all major projects and to use the internet for research purposes. All students in grades 1-8 are given a scheduled allotment of time each week in the Technology Center.

Students know what is required of them through both written and oral directions. Lower grades are encouraged to understand what the expectations are for the next grade so that they begin to understand which skills to work on. In the middle grades, teachers use modeling to show examples of what students should or should not be doing. In junior high, all classes distribute a syllabus at the beginning of the year to show students exactly what is expected of them in order to be successful. These handouts also contain the Diocesan grading scale and important dates for tests and major writing assignments.

### **How Assessment is Used**

#### **Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process.**

Assessment is an important part of the education process. Teacher assessment begins with understanding students' prior knowledge. Teachers can discover the amount of prior knowledge that students have in any given area through different instructional methods. Questions asked orally in class can be used to determine where students are in relation to their classmates in specific areas. Writing exercises are usually assigned early in the school year in order to help the teachers determine which students need more attention and greater assistance. Also, listening to each student's speech patterns enables instructors to recognize students who need assistance in poor grammar or sentence structure.

A more formalized form of assessing prior knowledge is through standardized tests. At SHPS, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills is given each fall. Results are used to identify areas that need to be strengthened. Teachers then use this information throughout the year and modify teaching strategies accordingly.

Many types of assessment are used by teachers of language arts; both teacher-created and program-created exams and worksheets are completed by the students. These tests are set up using standard objective and/or traditional subjective testing methods such as multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank, essay questions, etc. As mentioned above, writing samples are also used as a form of assessment and evaluation. Less formal types of assessment are simple observation and student-led exercises, discussions, and projects. Some teachers use competitions, debates, and quiz games to quickly note which students are having trouble understanding material presented in class.

Student self-assessment plays an integral role in sharing authority and experiencing politics in the respect that the students become makers of educational decisions and judgments. Self-assessment requires reflection, justification, and commitment. Students revise and edit a piece of writing until it works for the reader. This makes them active learners of knowledge, rather than passive receivers. It also builds their cognitive development. Students who are able to participate in the assessment process react with intelligence, responsibility, and determination.

Students are encouraged not to compare their work with that of other students. Instead, they are to focus on improving the quality of their own work and constantly becoming better readers and writers.

Learners with special differences are given modifications when testing. These changes may include additional time or individual attention from teacher's aides. Student Support Teams may be formed to increase the teachers' awareness of special needs and possible accommodations. For middle and upper grades, students who are performing below grade level, but giving a maximum amount of effort to succeed, may be given grades based on a modified grading scale.

Assessment is used by instructors to evaluate student progress, improve instructional strategies, and allocate resources. Students are evaluated based on the California state standards and their program-based test scores. These scores help the teachers to find different ways to teach concepts so that all students will profit from instruction. In order to learn new methods, resources are distributed for things like workshops and study guides. A great example of resources at work is the new Houghton-Mifflin Language Arts series that is now being used by the elementary grades. This system will certainly aid teachers in improving assessment and student comprehension in the area of language arts.

#### **Areas of Strength:**

- Instructors use a variety of methods to help students become effective communicators.
- Students use skills attained in language arts to be successful in other courses.
- SHPS present a language arts curriculum that is challenging and inclusive of all learners.
- Students work cooperatively with other students, teachers, and parents in order to become well-rounded educated citizens.
- Students are given the chance to lead discussions and lessons that help them to establish themselves as confident leaders and public speakers.
- Students use language arts skills at mass and assembly to encourage their spiritual and religious development.
- Teachers use a variety of authentic assessment strategies in order to document and observe student performance.
- Student self-assessment is used throughout the grade levels to make students active learners.
- Test scores are regularly analyzed and discussed to discover ways to improve school performance gaps.

#### **Areas for Growth:**

- Students should apply what they learn to real life situations.
- More frequent use of the articulation process between grade levels would assist in correcting gaps and overlaps.
- Current educational research could be better integrated into this curriculum area.
- Increase accommodations for the learning needs of students with diverse backgrounds and abilities.
- Improve the degree to which learning styles and needs are addressed through various instructional approaches.
- Seek, attend, and provide a wider variety of staff development opportunities in the area of language arts.
- Monitor student progress over an extended period of time, not just from the beginning of each school year.
- Instruct students with the tools and information they need to submit additional technological evidence (i.e. student videos, digital camera images, multimedia presentations).

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: RELIGION**

## **What Students Learn**

**The school provides a challenging, coherent, and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's philosophy and mission, strengthens Catholic identity and results in student achievement of the Religion Curriculum Expectations.**

Sacred Heart Parish School provides a challenging, coherent, and relevant religion curriculum whose purpose is to provide students with a basic knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith. It reflects the school philosophy and mission statement. It is designed to address the needs of all students and to promote the development of responsible and impassioned members of our Christian community. Grade level religion curriculum expectations are in alignment with Catholic identity through our use of diocesan approved religion textbooks, which in turn are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The faculty evaluated current texts as part of our textbook adoption cycle, and selected the current editions based on our Catholic identity and the Sacred Heart Parish School philosophy and mission statement.

Sacred Heart Parish School's religion curriculum develops students' ability to think conceptually and communicate effectively. On a daily basis, students are challenged to apply practical knowledge of their faith in realistic situations, and solve conflicts using a Christian approach that fosters forgiveness and acceptance of all God's children. Religious truths and values are integrated across the curriculum and are observable in the classroom as well as on the playground. Our program is inclusive of all learners, and teachers use a variety of teaching techniques and assessment strategies to ensure success. All students are encouraged to participate in parish life by attending Sunday mass and participating in school and community service projects. Eighth grade students go on spiritual retreats. Students also attend school liturgies and Para liturgies throughout the school year. Teacher's visibility in community activities and church ministries demonstrates their dedication and commitment to their faith. They place high priority on teaching religion and feel they can strengthen what students learn by attending workshops and participating in the Diocesan religious certification program.

## **How Students Learn**

**The professional staff designs and implements a variety of learning and formational experiences which actively engage students and are consistent with the school's philosophy and mission.**

The staff development plan at Sacred Heart Parish School ensures continual growth in spirituality and faith formation in multiple ways. The school year begins with a faculty retreat. Staff member is required to participate in a minimum of ten hours per year of religion updating. In addition all faculty members teaching religion are required to be certified or working towards certification as a catechist in the Diocese of Monterey. Teachers participate in the L.A. Religious Education Congress, school and diocesan sponsored seminars, and parish ministry.

Employing the techniques acquired through their religious training, teachers use a variety of strategies to facilitate students learning. Large and small group discussions are used constantly in the classroom. Students experience hands-on activities, art projects, drama, bible study, and role-play. Daily prayer, service projects, Para liturgies, and liturgies allow students to become actively involved in the learning process. The eighth grade retreat allows the class to pray, share, and interact in a different environment. In these activities teachers use a wide variety of outside resources including Bibles, the internet, videos, and additional resource books to extend students' knowledge.

As an extension of the religion curriculum, students share religion assignments and discussion topics with their parents. Many parents attend liturgies and Para liturgies with their children. Class projects, peer tutoring, and preparation of liturgies and Para liturgies allow

students to collaborate with each other and the teacher. The Sunday Gospel is read at weekly assemblies where the principal addresses the student body providing guidance and relevance to Jesus' Words.

At Sacred Heart Parish School students incorporate religious knowledge into their daily lives in a variety of ways. These include the development of critical thinking and moral decision making skills, the study and implementation of social justice through Christian service, and the resolution of conflict in and outside the classroom. The Penny Challenge, food drives, collections for local charities, Adopt-a-Family at Christmas, and student-mentoring program are just a few examples.

Sacred Heart Parish School students are aware of what they are required to know through teacher discussions and goals stated in the religion text. The junior high students receive a syllabus, which states major topics to be covered during the year. With the revisiting of seasonal celebrations, reenactment, and liturgies, students gain a clear understanding of the core of their Catholic faith.

### **How Assessment Is Used**

**Teacher and student use of assessment is frequent and integrated into the teaching and learning process. Assessment data is the basis for:**

- Measurement of each student's progress toward the grade level subject area expectations.
- Regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction
- Allocation of resources

Sacred Heart Parish School's assessment plan correlates with the schools mission and philosophy through the use of various, age appropriate assessment techniques that address the particular needs and learning styles of students. Prior knowledge is assessed through a variety of methods including pretests, informal discussion, and oral and written reflections. Teachers believe that testing for prior knowledge is an invaluable part of the assessment process in that it provides insight into the faith development of each student and allows teachers to determine a course of study that will ensure continuity and growth.

Assessment methods encompass a wide variety of strategies. Through the use of ACRE test (fifth grade), written and oral assessments, direct and informal observation, journals, art, drama, and homework, teachers evaluate student knowledge and understanding. When necessary teachers modify their strategy and re-teach a lesson to ensure mastery and achieve grade level curriculum expectations. Modifications, which include more time to complete a test, adjustment of workload, or alternative opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, are made for students with special learning needs. Teachers involve students in the assessment of their own learning through class discussions, conflict resolution, reflective writing, and by encouraging them to apply what they have learned to all aspects of their lives.

### **Faith Experience**

**The school community places high priority on frequent prayer and liturgical expression that are developmentally and liturgically appropriate and meaningful. Spiritual formation and support of the religious mission of the school are a priority.**

Sacred Heart Parish School offers a variety of prayer experiences. Students participate in and often lead prayers in the morning, at lunch time and at dismissal. At the weekly all-school assembly, prayer is led by student council members and includes the use of Sacred Scripture. All

classes contribute to the “Prayer of the Faithful” included at the assembly. Students also experience prayer through music, at special assemblies and weekly instruction.

On a rotational basis, students at different grade levels participate in weekly Friday parish masses and monthly all-school liturgies. Students also attend other parish and school liturgical and Para liturgical celebrations such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. This is in addition to the Family Christmas program, All Saints Day, Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Epiphany, the Blessing of the School, May Crowning, and eighth grade Baccalaureate Mass. Students in grades three through eight celebrate the sacraments by receiving the Eucharist on a regular basis and through yearly Reconciliation. Teachers follow a religion curriculum that provides for the teaching and review of these sacraments.

Students are involved in the broader parish life in several ways. Some students act as altar servers and, upon request, serve at funerals. Choir members sing at the Children’s Mass on the second Sunday of the month and at the Hospice Tree Lighting Celebration during Advent. Students collect food for our parish food bank, Fishes and Loaves, as another part of our outreach programs. Revenues from activities such as the Penny Challenge and Aluminum Can Drive are given to local, national, and international charities.

The liturgical year receives much emphasis and attention with Para liturgical activities, especially during the season of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter. Teachers also follow suggested activities found in the religion series. As a school community we also send home suggested Advent and Lenten family activities and weekly family bulletins. The liturgical seasons are creatively reflected in the classroom through the use of bulletin boards, prayer areas, and prayer tables

Prayer forms used at liturgical services are geared to accommodate the group being served. Student gatherings where this is evident include Advent and Lenten Para liturgies, the Christmas family program, Holy Thursday’s reenactment of the Last Supper and Stations of the Cross, Easter Sunday, and reconciliation services. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are taught using the “Our Father” hand motions. Liturgical dance and movement is also integrated into prayer on special occasions. The Advisory committee meetings always begin with prayer led by the principal, Religious Education Coordinator, parents or a member of the clergy.

The Religious Education Coordinator heads the sacrament program at Sacred Heart Parish School. Family gatherings are used to assist parents in preparing their children for the reception of sacraments such as Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist. In this way we encourage and enable parents to be the primary educators of their children in the reception of the sacraments.

Our pastor presides at the Advent wreath Para liturgy and gives blessings at some assemblies and parent gatherings. At the weekly, school-wide assembly, the principal discusses the Sunday gospel and encourages student participation. The Religious Education Coordinator helps with prayer services, liturgies, and retreats. Parents are encouraged to attend Friday masses and all Para liturgies.

Sacred Heart Parish School exemplifies a “Community of Faith.” Gospel values are reflected throughout the school. During the school day, students are asked to consider their actions in light of the “Law of Love,” the “Golden Rule”, or “What Would Jesus Do.” They are encouraged to take on the responsibility to care for others at all levels (in school, community, and beyond.) Our principal, Religious Education Coordinator, teachers, and staff strive to be Christian role models for our students. In this way, students are shown the integration of Gospel values with daily life.

**Areas of Strength:**

1. Commonly held Christian values by faculty, administration, and staff help to create a family feeling of unity, loyalty, and support throughout the school community.
2. Daily prayers, religion, and religious music are an integral part of the school day and week.
3. Liturgies and Para liturgies planned and celebrated by students and staff creates a community of faith in which the whole school can participate.
4. Religion is alive through discussion and value clarification throughout the curriculum.
5. Teachers strive to be positive role models of Gospel values for all students.
6. The pastor is a strong support and presence at many student events and activities.
7. Of the sixteen teachers of religious studies, eleven have completed the diocesan certification process and three are currently involved in courses leading to certification.

**Areas for Growth:**

1. Sacred Heart Parish School, with the support of the Diocese, will continue to provide in-service and workshops for training.
2. Sacred Heart Parish School will continue to encourage parent involvement in Sunday Mass, parish and community activities, and in the students' faith development.
3. Teachers need to know what religious resources are available to them and how they can include them it into the religion curriculum
4. Increased religious instruction dialogue between all grade levels.

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **CATEGORY C: SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL SPIRITUAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

## **Student Connectedness**

**Within the school's community of faith, students are connected to a system of support services, activities, and opportunities to assist them in meeting the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the school wide learning expectations.**

Sacred Heart Parish School is committed to the education of its students and supports student growth and achievement academically, personally, physically, and spiritually. The student learning expectations are met through a variety of enrichment activities and support systems.

The students are connected to systems of support services which include: Title I, an on-site counselor, tutoring, Student Support Team (SST) and Individual Education Program (IEP) through the Hollister School District, progress reports by teachers, parent and teacher conferences, Extended Care mandatory homework time, computer lab, and library services. Students are offered annual vision, hearing, dental, and scoliosis screening.

Sacred Heart Parish School's students are connected to a variety of activities, which promote personal, spiritual, and academic growth. Students volunteer their gifts and talents individually and collaboratively when they participate in curricular/co-curricular programs. Students grow personally, spiritually, and academically through the following programs:

- Spelling Bee
- Chess Club
- Book Club
- Student Newspaper
- School Band
- Athletics
- Extended Care Arts
- Talent Show
- Science Camp
- Choir
- Altar Servers
- Parish Religious Education Class Volunteers
- RCIC (Religious Education/Sacramental Programs)
- Student Government
- Speech Tournament
- Eighth Grade Community Service
- Leadership Camp

Students are encouraged to develop a sense of personal accomplishment and service as they participate in retreats, student council, student newspaper, and community service projects. Students develop spiritually and morally through school liturgies, Para liturgies, reconciliation, Christmas Adopt-a-Family, mission fundraising (Operation Rice Bowl) Fishes and Loaves, and visits to local convalescent homes.

Leadership potential is recognized and developed through student council, leadership camp, Thursday morning assembly, and classroom management. Graduation offers additional opportunities to recognize cumulative leadership achievement through various awards and grants.

Students are assisted in meeting the challenges of the curricular learning expectations through teachers who provide tutoring, parent/teacher/student communication, and referrals to local support services. Sacred Heart Parish School recognizes the need for additional support for

co-curricular activities and employs specialized staff members for choir, athletics, religious education, and extended care.

**Parent/Community Involvement:**

**The school administration employs a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement is integral to the school's support system of students.**

**Recognizing parents as the first educators of their children, Sacred Heart Parish School has implemented a variety of strategies that involve parents and community in the support of the students' academic, moral, and spiritual development. Parents are required to volunteer 30 hours of their time and talent. There are various ways in which the school has utilized parent involvement, including the following:**

- First Eucharist Program-Parents
- Work in Library with Librarian
- Aid in classroom instruction programs
- Help with Book Fair
- Guest Speakers/Presentations
- Chaperone activities
- Perform campus beautification
- Coach various sports teams
- Moderate the yearbook
- Provide transportation for field trips
- Serve on PASS board
- Help with the Christmas Program
- Room Parents
- Assist with fund-raising projects

Parents are kept informed of school-wide matters through the *Pulse*, a weekly school bulletin which includes announcements, the following week's schedule, the school philosophy, and the principal's address. Additional communications are made through the Sacred Heart Parish School website, online calendar, principal's and teachers' e-mails, announcements at Thursday morning assembly, and parish bulletins. Communication is facilitated in a variety of ways, which include classroom newsletters, homework assignment books/folders, parent/teacher conferences, progress reports, notes, and phone calls. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate with their children in school and church events while sharing their own faith, heritage, and traditions.

Sacred Heart Parish School uses community and church resources to support student development. Guest speakers are invited to share their knowledge and experience with students. The guest speakers have included:

- Seminarian visiting and teaching in classrooms
- Clergy visiting classrooms
- Monterey Symphony musicians
- Fire Department
- San Benito County Sheriff's Department
- Hollister Police Department
- CA Highway Patrol
- Pinnacles National Monument Park Ranger
- Community Musicians
- Gold Prospector
- Military Services
- Civil War Re-enactment Soldier
- Dairy Council

- Mortician
- Astronomer
- Medical Doctor
- NASA
- Sign Language Interpreter

Field trips are planned and utilized also to enrich the students' experiences. Some field trips include:

- Hollister Airport
- San Benito County Library
- Marich Candy Factory
- Swank Farms
- Gizdich Ranch
- Rosicrucian Museum
- Roaring Camp
- San Juan Bautista Mission
- Monterey Bay Aquarium
- Steinbeck Museum
- San Jose Tech Museum
- San Jose History Park
- DeAnza College Planetarium
- St. Francis in Aptos for retreats
- Sacramento Capitol, Railroad Museum, Sutter's Fort
- Monterey Historical Park
- Bolado Park Farm Day

**Areas of Strength:**

- activities that collaborate with parents in the academic, moral, and spiritual formation of students
- level of parent and community member involvement in the life of the school
- procedures for keeping parents/community informed
- degree to which the curricular and co-curricular activities are linked to and promote spiritual growth, Christian leadership, and service
- methods utilized for ensuring that leadership potential is recognized and developed

**Areas for Growth:**

- more student use of available support services
- level of participation in government-funded programs (available grants)

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **CATEGORY D: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

## Resources

**The resources available to the school are sufficient to sustain the School program, reflect sound financial practices and responsible stewardship, and are effectively used to carry out the school mission, philosophy, and school wide learning expectations.**

Sacred Heart Parish School operates with a budget of approximately two million dollars annually. The three major expenses, in order, are salaries and benefits, development of curriculum and materials and maintenance and repair of the school's infrastructure. Since Sacred Heart Parish has a debt of \$2 million on St. Benedict Church, the Diocese has withdrawn its former annual subsidy to the school. The pastor designates Bingo monies for unanticipated maintenance and repairs as needed.

The Diocese of Monterey provides overall financial management support for the school through meetings, phone calls, and written financial procedures. Payroll and benefits are also processed through the Diocese

The school bookkeeper creates a proposed budget annually which includes the following areas: salaries, insurance and benefits, instructional supplies, textbooks, anticipated repairs, utilities, anticipated enrollment, tuition, fundraising, and interest income. The current school year's budget, (six month report) also influences the preparation of the budget for the following year. The principal and bookkeeper review the proposed budget and then present it to the Stewardship Advisory Council in February for discussion and revision. The approved budget is then sent to the Diocesan Financial office.

The Stewardship Advisory Council (SAC) provides management support, shared decision making, prioritized long and short term goal planning, marketing implementation and a budget process that reflects sound financial practices and responsible stewardship. The Pastor of Sacred Heart/St. Benedict Parish, Father Rudy Ruiz, serves on the Stewardship Advisory Council. There is a CPA (certified public accountant) on the advisory council as well.

Budget allocations are provided to maintain and acquire qualified staff. Resources are budgeted to include staff development in-services and workshops. School campus facilities and playgrounds are adequately maintained and provide a safe environment to fit the needs of our student body and staff. Parent volunteers provide additional support to maintain school facilities through campus beautification days.

In addition to budgetary and reserve funds, Sacred Heart Parish School has also set up an Endowment Fund to receive contributions from individuals and/or entities (estates). The Foundation was formed in 1990 and is run by a seven-member board, most of whom are Alumni. Foundation funding for the past fifteen years has been used for the Early Childhood Education Center, math and science manipulatives, new playground equipment, field trips, and scholarships.

In March 2005, the majority of Foundation funds (\$40,234.71) were transferred to the Community Foundation of San Benito County where they will remain long-term. Approximately \$12,000 was left in the Foundation checking account, monies from which can be used to assist the school with special needs or projects.

## **Resource Planning**

**The school administration executes responsible resource planning for the future.**

The administration, in conjunction with the financial management support of the Diocese, Stewardship Advisory Council, and Parent Association, provides the necessary human, fiscal, and physical services required to provide our families and youth with quality Catholic education.

Resource planning is a priority at Sacred Heart Parish School. Responsible planning has provided current operation of a balanced budget. Fundraising efforts have contributed to a buildup of additional resources to allocate to various needs. Marketing efforts have helped deter increases in tuition costs and keep enrollment basically stable.

### **Major projects for the past three years have included:**

- update of science lab
- installation of ten new heaters
- new roof on Keenan Hall
- new social studies textbooks: Grades 1-8 (2003/04)
- new science textbooks: Grades 4-8 (2004/05)
- new reading / language arts program for grades K-5 (2005/06)

### **Plans for the future include:**

- Maintaining balanced operating budget and build-up of reserves
- Increasing enrollment through increased marketing efforts
- Upgrading the Technology Center and curriculum
- Increasing alumni involvement / participation in the school

**Areas of Strength:**

- Responsible short-term financial planning
- Recommended reserve funds available
- Regular facility improvements implemented
- Regular updating of curriculum and textbooks
- Retired ECE building debt within five years
- Development of a marketing committee to increase enrollment and maintain affordable tuition
- Parent involvement/dedication to fundraising
- Significant increase in use of SCRIP

**Areas for Growth:**

- Formalize long range financial planning for the school, including both capital improvements and deferred maintenance
- Upgrade / Expand Technology Lab and curriculum
- Expand marketing committee efforts to include alumni and use of the school website

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **SYNTHESIZED STUDY OF SELF- STUDY FINDINGS**

## Prioritized List of Strengths and Weaknesses

Thirteen AREAS FOR STRENGTH were reviewed and discussed during the WASC work day in November. (Several of these were a compilation or combination of areas of strength noted in the body of the self-study.) A vote was then taken on which ones to include in the report. The following eight received a vote of 13 or more (simple majority) and are thus included as major strengths. The others remain in the WASC booklet under their individual sections and are equally valued.

- (20) Mission / Philosophy / Catholic Identity strong / religion integrated throughout the curriculum
- (20) Community of faith evident / religion alive through prayer, liturgy and common values
- (17) Student leadership encouraged
- (16) Support / collaboration / involvement of parents / community in the life of the school, especially through public relations and fund-raising.
- (15) Focus on student learning: collaboration / critical thinking / problem-solving
- (14) System in place for general curriculum development / annual in-depth study / discussion / articulation across the grades
- (13) Curricular program inclusive of all students. Teachers use varied approaches / variety of assessment tools
- (13) Teachers are qualified, dedicated, involved in professional development

## Prioritized List of School's Areas for Growth

Nine AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT were reviewed and discussed during the WASC work day in November. (Several of these were a compilation or combination of areas of growth noted in the body of the self-study.) A vote was then taken on which ones to include in the report. The first four received a vote of 13 or more (simple majority) and are thus included as critical areas for improvement. The next five were deemed areas for growth, but not critical ones. Other areas for improvement remain in the WASC booklet under their individual sections and are equally valued

- (25) Financial planning: deferred maintenance / capital improvements / affordable tuition / grant writing
- (24) Expand study / articulation of overall curriculum: make use of CA standards /
- (23) Up-grade Technology Center / develop computer curriculum to include current technology tools / up-grade technological development of staff
- (23) Review and discuss the school-wide discipline policy / implementation / consistency
  - Continue to support all types of learners (by use of SST / staff development/ alternative assessment/ critical thinking / use of local resources).
  - Review the food service program in terms of budget and nutrition
  - More / different ways to encourage / include parents in the faith development of children and in parish liturgy and activities
  - Continued efforts at marketing of the school through web-site, fliers, tours, involvement of alumni
  - Inventory / List religion resources available in various classes and from religious education program.

# **PROCESS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **School Improvement Action Plan**