

Long Form of the Catholic Identity Self Assessment Process

Office of the Superintendent ~ Catholic School Support Services

Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn

# Catholic Identity Self Assessment Cover Sheet

Name of school/academy
Address
Telephone
Date Submitted
Committee Members
Members/Pastor
Principal



# The Instrument for Catholic Identity Assessment

**Characteristic One:** The Catholic School/Academy is inspired by a supernatural Vision.

*The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB*

Standards	Indicators	Students/Alumni <small>Indicate S or A before comment</small>	Faculty	Parents	Administrators	Rating
1 The Pastor (The Members), Directors, and Principal act ethically, consistently and fairly in dealings with parents, staff, students, and other community members.  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.7</b>	School's discipline policy reflects the Catholic Identity of the school					
	School policy and procedures deal with parent concerns in a way consistent with the school's Catholic Identity					
	School procedures for dealing with faculty/staff concerns are seen as being consistent with the Catholic Identity of the school					
2 Its Catholic Identity is a specific attribute, a distinctive characteristic that influences every educational activity, and all policies, structures, procedures and relationships.  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.1</b>	The administrative team promotes school's Catholic Identity in a cohesive way					
	Formal and informal interaction with families takes place on a regular basis					
3 (School programs) include a wide variety of instructional strategies which are relevant to students' learning styles, language needs,	Lesson plans reflect the school/ academy's Catholic Identity in concrete ways					



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	and abilities including remediation and enrichment  <b>Academic Excellence, A</b>	Local staff professional development helps faculty and staff to develop a strong sense of Catholic Identity					
		AIS Program Enrichment Programs Aquinas Program					
		The school program is varied enough to meet the needs of all students and, in all cases, addresses the Catholic Identity of the school/academy					
4	(The Principal) consciously endeavors to build a multicultural school community by working toward a climate of cultural harmony.  <b>Excellent Leadership, p.2</b>	School wide celebrations such as Our Lady of Guadeloupe, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, etc.					
		Staffing patterns demonstrate a concern for a multi-cultural school/academy community					
5	The principal encourages faculty, staff, and students to practice the principles of social justice by working toward a just and peaceful world  <b>Excellent Leadership, p.2</b>	School projects in response to specific world events					
		Support of the Propagation of the Faith					
6	The principal, while remaining respectful of the beliefs of non-Catholic students, reinforces and models their responsibility to	Non-Catholic parents invited to participate in school prayer experiences					



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the school's religious mission  <b>Excellent Leadership, p.2</b>	The school/academy is faithful to the tenents of the Catholic Faith					
	Class Masses and Seasonal Devotions are open to all					



**Characteristic Two:** The Catholic School/Academy recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children.  
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	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Students/Alumni</b> <small>Indicate S or A before comment</small>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.	Parents are involved and support the education of the children	Existence of a Home and School Association or similar group					
	<b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.6</b>	Distribution of Parent Satisfaction Surveys or other means of sharing comments					
2.	Administration, staff, students and parents are conversant regarding the school's/academy's operational and long term plans	Parents receive an annual report from the school principal or Middle States Association Steering Committee					
	<b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.11</b>	The long term plans are presented in such a way that the Catholic Identity of the school/academy is evident					
3.	(Parents) are involved in extended learning opportunities offered by school to foster their participation in their child's learning	Parent workshops are offered on NYS Standards and/or Testing					
	<b>Indicators of Academic Excellence, Section E</b>	Annual test interpretation parent meetings are held					
4.	(Parents) work with teachers to emphasize the importance of academic learning	Parent/Teacher conferences are held regularly and demonstrate a caring, concerned attitude supporting the school's/ academy's Catholic Identity					
	<b>Indicators of Academic Excellence, Section E</b>						



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		Parents are supported in their efforts to be the child's first teacher					
5.	The principal offers support and spiritual substance to parents by inviting their participation in faith development opportunities  Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p.2	Parents are urged to join in the planning and implementation of prayer services, retreats, and other spiritual growth opportunities					
		Parents are urged to participate in Sacramental preparation programs and activities					
		Students are urged to communicate with their parents as their faith life develops					
6.	The principal models effective use of technology  Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p.3	Power Point presentations are offered at Home and School Association meetings					
		Communication takes place using updated technology that is "user friendly"					



**Characteristic Three:** The Catholic School is deeply rooted in Christian culture.  
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	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Students/Alumni</b> <small>Indicate S or A before comment</small>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Administrators</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.	School/Academy administration, faculty, and students identify and integrate core Catholic beliefs and values in developing the school's mission statement  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.1</b>	Committee membership includes all major school/academy constituent groups					
		Internal surveys or small group conversations are held during the development of the school's mission statement					
2.	Instruction provides for evangelization, which incorporates the values and teachings of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.1</b>	The Religion curriculum follows Diocesan Policy and National Norms					
		The local leadership provides for a multi-faceted faith formation program for faculty, staff, parents and students					
		The Religion textbooks are chosen from the USCCB approved textbook list					
3.	Religious symbols are present in the school/academy building  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.2</b>	A crucifix of appropriate size and stature is present in a place of prominence in each room					
		Religious statues, icons, and other artwork is display appropriately throughout the school/academy building					



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4.	Printed and oral communication from the school/academy highlights the school's Catholic Identity and academic nature	All school communications demonstrate clearly the Catholic Identity of the school/academy					
	<b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, 2</b>	The school/academy has some particular logo or artwork that identifies itself as a Catholic school/academy					
5.	(School/Academy programs/ instruction) promotes students' understanding of our global society	Propagation of the Faith programs are supported and encouraged					
	<b>Indicators of Academic Excellence, #8</b>	The school/academy community responds to specific world events such as tsunamis, hurricanes, famine, etc.					
6.	The school/academy builds a faith community through routine and ceremonial religious rituals	Morning prayer, prayer before and after lunch and prayer at the end of the day is seen as a regular part of the school/academy day					
	<b>Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership</b>	Certain rituals are historically associated with special days, liturgical seasons, and special school events/occasions					



**Characteristic Four: Community and Communion animate a Catholic School/Academy.**

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	Standards	Indicators	Students/Alumni <small>Indicate S or A before comment</small>	Faculty	Parents	Administrators	Rating
1.	Parish priests are visible in the school/academy  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.2</b>	The priest regularly celebrates the school/academy Masses					
		The priest visits the classroom regularly and greets the students and teachers					
		The priest is a active and involved member of the school/academy community					
2.	There is evidence of parish involvement in the school/academy  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.6</b>	Parishioners volunteer in the school/academy					
		Parishioners are seen as valued members of the school community and are treated with respect					
3.	The Pastor (The Members) fosters (foster) participation of the school community in appropriate parish, multi-parish projects and celebrations  <b>Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p.2</b>	School/Academy business and news is published in the parish weekly bulletin and announcements made at Mass					
		When the opportunity presents itself, the Pastor (Member) promotes active involvement in school/academy programs and activities to support the school/academy					



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4.	Governance serves the people of God by helping them maintain order by promoting and protecting the rights and obligations needed to carry out the mission Jesus gave to His church...  <b>Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p. 4</b>	Lay involvement in governance is seen as a priority					
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**Characteristic Five:** The Catholic School/Academy is sustained by the Gospel witness of its teachers and administrators.  
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	Standards	Indicators	Students/Alumni <small>Indicate S or A before comment</small>	Faculty	Parents	Administrators	Rating
1.	Leadership, faculty, and students are socialized, formed, and evaluated in terms of their contributions to the school's/academy's identity and mission  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p. 2</b>	The School/Academy updated Mission Statement is printed in all handbooks and other appropriate places					
		The Mission Statement is displayed prominently in the school's/academy's entry					
2.	Ongoing professional development, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and collegial relationships among staff and administration are evident and conducive to cooperative action  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p. 6</b>	Faculty and administrators take part in professional development opportunities that further one's faith formation and spiritual growth					
		Growing in one's faith is seen as a priority					
		Students benefit from the professional and faith formation growth of the faculty and administrators					
3.	The principal selects qualified staff members who promote a Catholic school climate. Interview questions support the teacher's potential to provide Gospel witness  <b>Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p.1</b>	The school/academy Mission Statement and Philosophy is clearly stated for applicants					
		The Interview Questions reflect the particular Catholic Identity of the school/academy and seek to probe the applicant's understanding of the Catholic Faith.					



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4.	The principal strives to become a visible member of the parish, multi-parish community  <b>Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p.2</b>	Faculty and staff attend sacramental celebrations in various parishes where students worship					
		Students see faculty members and/or principal attend Mass					
		Parents are encouraged by the principal to attend Mass and the sacraments					



**Characteristic Six:** Catholic morals and virtues permeate the entire Catholic School/Academy Curriculum.  
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	Standards	Indicators	Students/Alumni <small>Indicate S or A before comment</small>	Faculty	Parents	Administrators	Rating
1.	Religion classes are offered regularly and are given a priority in scheduling	Religion classes are scheduled according to Diocesan policy					
	<b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.2</b>	Religion classes are never deleted from the schedule due to other events or activities					
2.	Catholic values are infused in all subject areas  <b>Criteria of an Excellent Catholic School, p.2</b>	Staff participates in workshops presented by the Diocese of Brooklyn					
		Staff participates in the Catechist Formation program entitled Living and Leading By Faith					
		The students are provided with an appropriate bibliography of Catholic literature					
		Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines are always followed					
		Class schedules are reviewed and approved by the principal					
3.	The principal oversees the integration of Gospel values into the curriculum  <b>Criteria for Excellence in Catholic School Leadership, p.2</b>	The principal provides leadership by regular periods of classroom supervision					



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		The principal provides teachers with the ability to purchase supplemental religious materials					
		The school/academy celebrates its Catholic Identity in concrete ways throughout the year					
		Gospel values are promoted and encouraged through a variety of opportunities provided to students at all grade levels					
4.	The Teachers use student's talents and interests to help students master the curriculum and believe in themselves	Academic, Service, and Religious awards are given to students according to a fair and just policy					
	<b>Indicators of Academic Excellence, Section C</b>	The school/academy makes use of events such as Talent Shows to promote self worth					
		The students are encouraged to provide service to others in a variety of ways and means					



## **Catholic Identity Self Assessment**

Saint Joan of Arc School  
35-27 82<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Mission Statement  
History  
Strengths  
Weaknesses  
Goals  
Action Plans  
Catholic Identity Celebration

May 2, 2011

**Committee Members**

Rev. Msgr. Otto L. Garcia  
Pastor

Antoniette Balzano

Michael Donovan  
Assistant Principal

John Fruner  
Principal

Lauren Henderson

Adalberto Maya Navarrete

Paul Mazza

Patricia Radice

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

## **BELIEF STATEMENT**

## **SCHOOL MOTTO & PLEDGE**

The school community of St. Joan of Arc Catholic School has worked in collaboration to develop their mission statement. The faculty reflected on the needs of the students, their experiences, and the school's philosophy to identify the key points of what they do at St. Joan of Arc Catholic School. The school community encourages everyone to better understand their mission by including it in publications and reciting it daily. It is also posted throughout the school.

**The mission of St. Joan of Arc School is to teach, build community, and serve.**

Along with its mission statement, the school has a motto:

**Dare the impossible. Live the vision!**

The motto and mission is further developed by its belief statements, recited every day as part of school wide morning prayers, led by eighth graders on the school public address system:

**At St. Joan of Arc School,  
we see Jesus Christ as our unseen, every present teacher.  
Jesus is the model for our faculty and staff  
as well as the inspiration of our students.  
Jesus truly walks the halls of St. Joan of Arc School.**

The recent addition of its school pledge reinforces the mission, motto and belief statements.

**I believe that Jesus is present in each of my classmates and in all my teachers,  
therefore, all my actions will show respect for Jesus.**

The school's goal as a Catholic school is expressed in this statement:

At St. Joan of Arc School we dare the impossible and work to promote a community based on the precepts of the Roman Catholic Church, Christian morality, unity, opportunity empowerment of the individual and hope. We live this vision through

our commitment to spiritual, academic, and personal excellence. Through the cultivation of our God given gifts and talents each member of the St. Joan of Arc school community seeks to grow into “the mightiest of trees”. By developing our individual potentials, we hope to model our patroness, St. Joan of Arc, and like her to fully live and convey the love of others in our global community.

## HISTORY

St. Joan of Arc School was established in September 1921 by Fr. Ward Meehan to serve the families of the Jackson Heights area and for a time was the only secular or religious school in the region. Purchasing a house on the corner of 84<sup>th</sup> Street and Northern Boulevard, five Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart worked to provide an environment that addressed the spiritual and educational needs of the young families in their care. The following year, high school grades were added to the school. Outgrowing that original school house, the present school building was opened in 1924; it was a one story school that had six hundred students. Members of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart continue to serve in the school, with a break of only 9 years (2000-2009). St. Joan of Arc School is a parish school whose mission is enthusiastically supported by the pastor and the parish. As participants in *Preserving the Vision* process, Msgr. Garcia formed a Board that acts in an advisory and supportive capacity.

The school community is proud of its diverse population that reflects the ever changing residents of Jackson Heights. Beginning as an agricultural community Jackson Heights grew into a residential district where immigrants found a home. These families now include thirty nationalities from Eastern Europe, India, and Latin America speaking twelve different languages. They sacrifice to seek a quality Catholic education for their children so they can live the American Dream.

St. Joan of Arc School received their first Middle States Accreditation in 1989 and Recognition as a Blue Ribbon School in 1996/1997. At the end of the 2007-2008 school year members of the faculty met to form a new Strategic Planning Committee to begin the Middle States reaccreditation protocol. It was awarded reaccreditation in May of 2010.

Catholic identity is the chief motivating factor at St. Joan of Arc School. Students strive to model the message that is voiced in the school pledge. This is lived by studying the message of the Gospels, in daily interactions with others, and through outreach to the community in service projects. The whole school community believes that they are members of the world community but should reflect the qualities of respect, dignity, and compassion as they pursue opportunities to be contributing responsible members of society. Religion is not just an academic subject at St. Joan of Arc School.

## **STRENGTHS**

All standards under characteristic one, three, five, and six indicate strengths.

## **WEAKNESSES**

Under characteristic two, standard three, concerning parent workshops on NYS standards, testing, and test interpretation parent meetings, is an indicated weakness.

At present, test results are distributed to parents during the December report card conferences. Scheduling a meeting after their distribution could provide an overall explanation of test results (Terra Nova) related to NYS standards as well as what is required on the NYS tests.

Under characteristic four, standard four, lay involvement in governance was seen as an accurate description, however, since the formation of a Board and Advisory Parent Groups are new to the school, more education is needed for an understanding of lay involvement in the governance of the school.

## **GOALS**

### **ACTION PLANS**

**Goal # 1:**           **Create opportunities for more focused pastoral involvement in the school.**

**Plan of Action:**

1. Review new religion curriculum as a faculty.
2. Identify and then develop topics that deacon, priests, and pastoral minister can present to school children.
3. Use classroom visitations to discuss vocations, sharing their vocation stories.
4. Coordinate grade level church tours led by deacon, priests, and pastoral minister.
5. Classes will send invitations to deacon, priests, and pastoral minister with topics or discussion ideas.
6. School wide assembly celebrating our deacon, priests, and pastoral minister.

**Evaluation:**

1. Students will write about their visits.
2. Students will send thank you letters after visits.

**Goal # 2:                   Revise, update, and publicize school’s mission statement.  
Create belief statements.**

**Plan of Action:**

1. Review current philosophy, mission statement, belief statements, and motto.
2. Invite Dr. Lorraine Pasadino, Ed.D from Fordham University to guide faculty, parents, and students in writing a new mission statement.
3. After consultation with Dr. Pasadino, invite faculty to reflect on current mission statement. Use worksheet she provided Cabrini Leaders to work in groups in order to create a new mission statement.
4. Schedule a brain storming meeting to elicit alumni, parents, administration, faculty, and student input.
5. Draft a working model.
6. Invite Dr. Pasadino to spend a day working with students on mission statement.
7. Schedule a second meeting to accept a draft model.
8. Obtain input on draft.
9. Create a writing committee under the direction of Dr. Pasadino.
10. Present final draft for community approval.
11. Work on belief statements.

**Evaluation:**

1. Announcement new mission statement.  
Publicize new mission statement
2. Change handbook and website.
3. Display at entrance of the school.
4. Display in all classrooms, in cafeteria, in gym.

**Goal # 3:**           **In communion with the evangelization efforts of the church, bring parents into a more active faith role in leading the domestic church.**

**Plan of Action:**

1. Form a committee of faculty and parents.
  - a. Elicit input from staff.
  - b. Elicit input from parents
2. Communicate to the parents their primary role as religious educators.
  - a. Information on reconnecting to church.
    - Handouts on what our parish has to offer
    - Mass schedule
    - Pastoral Ministry offerings
3. Workshops for Parents
  - a. Topics that are pertinent to child growing in his or her faith.
  - b. Workshops in English and Spanish
  - c. Provide child care with religious education

**Evaluation:**

1. Obtain feed back from committee and those who have attended workshops.
2. Make handouts available via school website.

## **CATHOLIC IDENTITY CELEBRATION**

A Catholic Identity Fun Day is planned for Friday June 3, 2011. Students will spend the day in healthy competitive carnival type games.

This will provide the students with interaction that normally does not occur due to differing lunch periods and class schedules.

Older students will be able to interact with younger students and enjoy a car free school yard.