

# ***REPORT OF FINDINGS***

E741 ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
165 W. EATON AVE.  
TRACY, CA 95376  
(ARCH)DIOCESE OF STOCKTON



**AND**

**WASC**

**IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING 2012**

**A SELF STUDY PROCESS  
FOR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

**MARCH 2-4, 2016**

# ***REPORT OF FINDINGS***

for  
[E741 St. Bernard's Catholic School]

Tim Hooke  
Chairperson  
Oakland Diocese  
Holy Rosary School  
25 East 15<sup>th</sup> Street  
Antioch, CA, 94509  
925-757-1270

---

Rachel Lemos  
Team Member  
St. Luke C.E.S., Stockton

---

Peggy Perez  
Team Member  
Sacred Heart Catholic School, Patterson

---

Jennifer Burkland  
Team Member  
St. Anthony of Padua, Manteca

---

## **PREFACE**

We, the Visiting Committee, wish to commend you, the pastor, priests, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and student body of St. Bernard's Catholic School for working together to make the school a loving, caring, and learning environment. We pray that the good work that you have done and the plans that you have made for the future will help you become an even better school.

The team found our three days at St. Bernard's Catholic School professionally rich and personally rewarding. We experienced a community where everyone is striving to provide a Catholic environment where quality education is a priority.

We wish to thank all of you, pastor, priests, administration, faculty, staff, parents and students for your warm and gracious hospitality.

May the Christ we serve bless you with every success as you journey into your future.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **A. How the Self Study was conducted**

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard Catholic School's Self-Study told the story of the steps taken in completing the Self-Study. In November 2014, parents were informed of the process and a leadership team was selected. In addition, in order to accurately assess the Catholic Identity of the school, surveys were designed and given to faculty and staff, parents, students and clergy. The Self-Study indicates that the results were reviewed and tabulated in January 2015.

Committees were formed to discuss each section of Chapter 3. Faculty meetings were restructured into committee meetings to disaggregate, analyze, and discuss data. Several parents and students were actively engaged in the meetings and discussion about support for student spiritual, personal, and academic growth. Initial drafts for each section were written and shared with committee members and drafts were revised and edited as needed.

In October 2015 the Leadership Team and faculty discussed the significant accomplishments identified in Chapter 3 and decided which critical goals to improve student learning needed to be addressed in the Action Plan. In November the pastor, staff, School Advisory Committee, Finance Council, and Parish Council received a copy of Chapter 3 and were asked to provide feedback. Parents were also given a chance to read and give feedback of the Self Study. In December the Leadership Team discussed and wrote the Action Plan. The principal completed Chapter 1 and the Self Study was printed in January 2016.

One obstacle that was overcome in August 2015 was the need to restructure the Leadership Team due to staff turnover. The principal and vice-principal remained, and three staff members joined the team.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School was highly effective in completing the Self Study. We applaud St. Bernard's Catholic School for persevering through the obstacles that presented themselves due to change in administration and staff.

## **B. Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study**

**Accreditation Factor #1:** *The school involves all shareholders in data review, analysis and dialogue about perceived accomplishments in the area of student learning, and in developing, implementing and monitoring goals for improvements in student learning.*

The Visiting Committee observed that the Self-Study indicates that all shareholders were invited to participate and collaborate in the Self Study process. Parents, students, staff, and clergy completed surveys. Instructional staff, support staff, parents, and students were committee members. Shareholders were encouraged to participate in the revision of the school's mission, philosophy, and student learning expectations. Students, teachers, staff, School Advisory Committee (SAC), Parent Teacher Club (PTC), Finance Council, and Parish Council were updated on the process and asked for their input and feedback on the document draft. The office staff and principal were involved in the completion of the school profile (Appendix A).

The staff participated in weekly meetings, discussed, reviewed, and analyzed data with a focus on improving student learning and faculty reviewed curriculum standards and instructional methodology to determine if they support high achievement for all students. The instructional staff reviewed and analyzed assessment data. Goals were created, based on the assessment data, strategies were implemented, and assessment results were tracked and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the instructional strategies. The pastor, staff, parents, SAC, Finance Council, and Parish Council were involved in the review of the Self Study draft. Significant accomplishments were identified and goals were created based on the data reviewed. Instructional staff fine-tuned the goals and brainstormed strategies to implement as part of the Action Plan.

After meeting with the parent community, the Visiting Committee is confident the parents will continue to be strong supporters of the school and its endeavors. In addition the Shareholders of St. Bernard's Catholic School will be involved in systematic analysis of the school's effectiveness through future surveys, SAC and PTC meetings, and ongoing communication such as the weekly newsletter email.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in the Involvement and Collaboration of Shareholders in Completing the Self Study. The Visiting Committee enjoyed our conversation with the parent community; however, we wish we had the opportunity to meet more parents in person, which was not possible due to time constraints. The parent community's voice is heard through the large amount of surveys collected by St. Bernard's Catholic School.

## Chapter 2: Context of the School

### A. School Profile

The Visiting Committee observed that the school profile is updated annually and is used to identify trends, discuss possible causes for changes in enrollment, and make predictions about the impact of these trends in student achievement and the future of the school. The rate of graduates attending Catholic high schools has remained stable since 2012. Two thirds of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class attends local public high schools and the remaining students attend either St. Mary's High School in Stockton or Central Catholic High School in Modesto. Based on the information found in the school profile the School Advisory Committee (SAC) and Finance Council discuss concerns about decreased enrollment and recruitment efforts focused on those attending the new preschool and parish families.

From 2008 to 2013 enrollment remained stable. However, in the past two years Kindergarten enrollment has decreased by 21%. With the opening of the preschool, Kindergarten enrollment in 2015 increased by 10% due to the fact that 15 of the 23 Kindergarteners attended St. Bernard's preschool. If this trend continues, a 2% increase in enrollment is predicted each year. The enrollment in 1<sup>st</sup> grade decreased by 28% in 2014 due to staff turnover, lack of enrichment opportunities for high achievers, and families' financial difficulties. It is predicted that higher enrollment in Kindergarten and staff stability may increase the number of students in the lower grades in the next two years. Recruitment efforts for all grade levels include student participation at School Family Masses, parent and student testimonials at Mass, Open House, school information brochures given to parishioners and local advertisements as well as the school website, parish bulletin, and Twitter.

According to survey data over 97% of students feel that the school supports them in their faith development and over 90% believe that the school provides them with Catholic service opportunities. Ninety-eight percent of 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders report that their teachers have high expectations of them, and 94% believe that teachers set high academic standards. Eighty-nine percent of those students also agree that teachers give extra help when needed. Ninety-three percent of Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade report that they like school, and 94% report that teachers give extra help.

According to parent survey results over 97% agree that religion instruction is either effective or highly effective, 74% agree that mathematics instruction is effective or highly effective, 86% agree that reading instruction is effective or highly effective, and 80% agree that English language arts instruction is effective or highly effective. The lowest percentage of parent approval was in the area of math instruction. The staff interpreted the 74% as a direct result of the transition to Common Core State Standards. Ninety-seven percent of parents surveyed stated that St. Bernard's Catholic School is safe, and 95% agreed that the school provides an atmosphere in which Christian values and attitudes are emphasized and practiced. Parents wish to see improvements in fine arts, providing music, art, and Spanish at all grade levels, and additional physical education.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in compiling and analyzing data annually and identifying major changes or trends. St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in the use of parent/student/staff surveys.

## **B. Use of Prior Accreditation Findings to Support High Achievement of All Students**

**Accreditation Factor #2:** *The school has used the prior accreditation findings, both those discovered by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, and other pertinent data to ensure high achievement of all students and to drive school improvement.*

The Visiting Committee observed that since the last accreditation in the spring of 2010 the school has addressed the Action Plan goals, implemented strategies, monitored progress, and assessed the impact on student academic achievement and spiritual growth.

The first goal was to promote spiritual growth in students. This was accomplished through school-wide prayer services planned and prepared by students since 2010. The school community has participated in a variety of service projects to benefit the local community, children, and military personnel abroad. Discussion and reflection about the Sunday Gospel is a practiced from 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is part of the school's Lenten practice. Throughout the year students participate in spiritual activities with buddies, in addition to attending Mass together. Learning Masses have been implemented and are well liked by staff, parents and students.

The second goal was to improve writing in all areas of the curriculum. Step Up To Writing (SUTW) was implemented at all grade levels. Students become familiar with the structure and tools of the program in the lower grades and use similar tools in the middle grades and junior high. Samples of student writing using SUTW tools have been collected and analyzed from grade to grade and have shown overall improvement. In the spring of 2012 teachers worked by grade levels (K-2, 3-5, 6-8) to create writing rubrics to address the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

The last goal was to implement more frequent formal and informal teacher observations. A schedule was developed to conduct formal observations in the fall and in the spring. The formal observation form was modified to include the percentage of students on task. This resulted in teachers paying close attention to students who were off task and finding ways to engage them in meaningful learning. Informal observations became more frequent throughout the year, using the Data Walk form.

The school was involved in a continuous process of school improvement during the years since the last accreditation. Goals were discussed at faculty and staff meetings. Dates for implementation were established, followed by discussion and feedback, resulting in the adoption of practices that improve student learning.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in the use of Prior Accreditation Findings to support high achievement of all students.

## Chapter 3: Quality of the School Program

### A. Assessment of the School's Catholic Identity

**Accreditation Factor #3:** *The school is Catholic, approved by the Local Ordinary (Canon 803), providing opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.*

The Visiting Committee observed that the teachers participate in faith formation activities for catechetical and instructional competency following the guidelines of the Diocese of Stockton. The initial certification is achieved through the completion of the program Echoes of Faith and is maintained and renewed by staff participation in faith formation activities.

St. Bernard's Catholic School has modified its mission and philosophy statements throughout the years to better reflect its identity as a school and Catholic community. St. Bernard's Catholic School provides daily religious instruction utilizing Sadlier textbooks, Benzinger family life series, and Diocesan Religion Enduring Standards. Students write gospel reflections to help them understand the readings from the Sunday Liturgy of the Word. Teachers also provide a classroom environment that is rich with visual reminders of signs, sacramentals, traditions, and rituals of the Catholic faith. Each classroom contains a prayer space, a liturgical calendar, crucifix, and a statue of Mary.

The priests and staff recognize the need for more opportunities for spontaneous prayer in the classrooms, importance of developing a greater love for the Eucharist, and would like to provide more opportunities for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the year. Staff survey results revealed the need for more opportunities during the school year for faculty and staff to engage in activities focused on their spiritual growth. In addition there is a need to provide additional opportunities for parent faith formation as part of the school program.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in the assessment of the school's Catholic Identity and in identifying the areas in need of improvement.

### B. Defining the School's Purpose

**Accreditation Factor #4:** *The school's purpose is defined through the school's mission statement, philosophy, measurable Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's mission, philosophy, and school-wide student learning expectations (SLEs) define the school's purpose to shape and form faith-filled Catholics with strong academic skills and moral values. The mission and philosophy statement were revised to identify the school as a ministry of the parish and highlight the quality of Catholic education that the school offers. St. Bernard's Catholic School realizes that they are a ministry of the parish and that by fostering high academic skills and instilling moral values the students will make positive contributions to the parish, Church, and community at large.

Shareholders determined the need to combine and eliminate repetitive ideas contained within some of the SLEs. The SLE rubrics that were developed in 2008 and implemented in 2009 are currently used to help assess students' knowledge and application of each SLE. The assessment data and work samples are passed with the students from grade to grade. Each teacher creates a plan for the year as to how progress towards achievement of the SLEs will be measured. However, in general, students are not given the tools or opportunities to assess their own achievement of the SLEs, so creating ways for students to assess their own progress would be beneficial. Due to the recent revision of the SLEs, new activities to help students learn and understand the SLEs need to be implemented school wide.

Lessons are aligned to the teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Stockton's Religion Enduring Standards. California State Standards and Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are addressed in lessons, establishing high academic standards for all students. Up-to-date textbooks and accredited Catholic resources are used to support the curriculum.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in defining the School's purpose and expectations. St. Bernard's Catholic School's mission and philosophy statement identify the school as ministry of the parish and highlight the quality of Catholic education that the school offers.

### **C. Organization for Student Learning to Support High Achievement of All Students**

**Accreditation Factor #5:** *The organizational structures of the school focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.*

The Visiting Committee observed The Visiting Committee observed that the organizational structure of St. Bernard's Catholic School is based on the Diocese of Stockton policy and procedures and the organizational policies play key roles in maintaining a structure that fosters high student achievement and Catholic values. Participants are the pastor, the principal, faculty, staff, and parents. The priests invite staff, students, and families to participate in worship and in parish ministries. The presence of the priests at school assemblies, activities, and liturgies fosters a strong relationship with the students and their families.

The principal is responsible to the pastor and is the spiritual, educational, and organizational leader of the school. The principal works closely with the pastor, the vice-principal, staff, and SAC to ensure open and effective communication. The principal guides the school in accordance with diocesan policies, and attends SAC, Parish Council, Finance Council and Parent Teacher Club (PTC) meetings. The principal serves as executive officer of developing, administering, and monitoring policies. The principal, with the assistance of the vice-principal, leads the instructional staff in professional growth and curriculum development, oversees resource management and is responsible for the overall operation of the school.

St. Bernard's Catholic School has a supportive, involved, and dedicated SAC. The SAC acts as an advisory body to the pastor and principal, and meets once a month to discuss school safety, finances, technology, curriculum enhancement, marketing, and public relations.

All leadership groups, school and parish staff, SAC, and PTC are genuinely committed to the achievement of the school's mission and philosophy through the expression of their Catholic identity. The staff focuses on the needs of the whole person in the formation of the students, knowing that their job entails supporting the parents, who are the primary educators of their children.

The teachers of St. Bernard's Catholic School are committed to help each student achieve his or her academic potential. The teachers provide a strong curriculum to students in a Catholic environment that nurtures collaboration and creativity. Student expectations are communicated to parents at Back-to-School Night, in the Parent-Student Handbook, and on the school website. Teachers communicate expectations to their students in class and to parents through emails, phone calls, newsletters, weekly folders, Cornerstone parent portal, and teacher websites. The staff models Christian behavior in all types of communication.

The administration places high priority on staff development with the goal of supporting achievement for all students. Weekly faculty staff meetings provide opportunities to discuss and evaluate programs, share best practices, and analyze student progress. Teachers continually improve instruction with strategies gained through participation in professional development activities, research, and implementation of technology to promote 21st century skills and support high achievement of all students. Title II funds and additional money designated in the school budget are set aside for professional development, allowing staff to seek out and participate in training and growth opportunities to enhance teaching and learning. The faculty also participates at professional development in-service days offered by the Diocese of Stockton.

St. Bernard's Catholic School families, SAC, PTC, students, teachers, administration, and the pastor collaborate closely to provide a positive, nurturing environment committed to supporting student learning. It is evident that commitment and support of all groups is needed to achieve the school's goals and to meet the educational needs of all students. Involvement of the SAC in a strategic planning process that supports faith formation and student learning must be a priority. Support for low achieving students needs to continue in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and the school will explore the possibility of expanding resource teacher assistance to other grades.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is effective in the Organization for student learning to support high achievement of all students. St. Bernard's Catholic School has done an exceptional job at providing remediation and support for struggling students. The Visiting Committee heard first hand from Parents, Students, administration, and Teachers the need for academic challenge for students who achieve above grade level. This is noted in Goal #2 of the Action Plan.

#### **D. Data Analysis and Action to Support High Achievement of All Students**

**Accreditation Factor #6:** *The school uses educationally sound assessment processes to collect data. The school disaggregates and analyzes student performance data and uses the analysis as a basis for instructional/curricular improvement.*

The Visiting Committee observed the use of data analysis to support high achievement of all students. A Religion test provided by the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of

Stockton was administered for the first time at each grade level in the spring of 2015. Teachers analyzed the results to plan instructional change for the following year. Next year the religion test will be given in the fall as a pretest. The results of the tests will be used to plan instruction and ensure that students are meeting the Religion Diocesan Enduring Standards. A posttest in the spring will help to measure student growth and assess the effectiveness of the religion curriculum and instructional program.

Classroom teachers using school created rubrics assess progress towards the achievement of the SLEs. SLE evidence gathered, based on the rubrics, differs from grade to grade. Teachers collect work samples from students and assess them using the rubrics. The rubrics and work samples move from grade to grade with the students.

Every year, upon reception of standardized testing results, the administration and staff gathers to disaggregate and analyze data in order to improve curriculum and instruction. Faculty meeting time is devoted to the analysis of standardized testing results for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Based on scores, the administration and teachers use results to develop a specific instructional plan for students performing in the bottom quartile in Reading, Math, and Language Arts. In several grades students who score in the highest quartile are given enrichment activities. However, the faculty realizes that there is a need to develop a school-wide enrichment program to address the educational needs of high achievers.

With the implementation of the CCSS, the administration and faculty realizes that disaggregation and analysis of data is essential to improve student learning. Currently data analysis helps to develop plans for remediation of low achieving students. However, there is a need to develop a school-wide enrichment program to address the educational needs of high achievers. In addition, results of the 21st Century Skills Assessment administered in 4th through 8th grades need to be further analyzed and communicated to all shareholders. Teachers attend professional development conferences during the year, such as, workshops, conferences, and diocesan in-service days to drive curricular change. Teachers have implemented instructional strategies and technology resources that they have learned. Student engagement has increased since the implementation of technology in the classroom as evidenced by feedback from students and parents.

The Visiting Committee was impressed by St. Bernard's Catholic School's use of data analysis to identify trends in achievement of all students. The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is effective in their action to support high achievement of all students. St. Bernard's Catholic School has used the data to identify the need for challenging curriculum for advanced students. Goal #2 of the Action Plan addresses this concern.

## **E. High Achievement By All Students Toward Clearly Defined SLEs and Curriculum Standards**

**Accreditation Factor #7:** *All students make acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.*

The Visiting Committee observed that Catholic identity is woven into all aspects of school life. Prayer takes place in the classrooms, at staff and parent meetings, and unites all members of the school community. Faith formation is integrated into lessons by making connections to Catholic teachings across the curriculum.

Through the process of data analysis, St. Bernard's Catholic School has found that its curriculum is challenging, assessment results are measurable, and student progress is acceptable. Students scoring in the top quartile in standardized testing are challenged through enrichment activities and an advanced math class. Teachers offer students before and after school tutoring in addition to one-on-one assistance in the classroom to students falling in the lower quartile. Students belonging to CJSF also assist with tutoring.

The staff uses assessment data to ensure that each student is making acceptable progress toward achievement of curriculum standards. ITBS and CogAT test results and a math benchmark assessment are used, as well as other assessments such as projects, oral reports, PowerPoint presentations to develop and implement instructional plans to help students achieve academic progress. Writing portfolios and SLE files are maintained for each student, showing progress and growth. Curriculum mapping is updated every year.

Decisions to purchase and use technology are based on curriculum standards, SLEs, and analysis of student achievement data. Chromebooks are used in 5th through 8th grade to engage the students in meaningful learning in all subject areas. Kindergarten through 4th grade use tablets to enrich math and reading instruction and to facilitate research projects. The Summer Math Program, using SumDog and ALEKs online programs, has been revised and updated annually based on student achievement data.

The Visiting Committee observed a clearly defined set of SLEs by St. Bernard's Catholic School. St. Bernard's Catholic School is effective in their use of the SLEs to promote high achievement by all students. Suggested by Goal 1 and 2 of the Action Plan, Students will be asked to further incorporate the SLEs into their academic and daily lives. The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is effective in their use of Curriculum Standards to drive high achievement of all students. The Curriculum Standards were evident in the classroom environment and lesson plans. However, the Visiting Committee did not have an opportunity to witness the conversations between the teacher and the students tying the lesson to the standard.

## **F. Instructional Methodology to Support High Achievement of All Students**

**Accreditation Factor #8:** *The staff applies research-based knowledge about teaching and learning in the instructional process. Assessment is frequent and varied, integrated into the teaching/learning process, and informs curriculum planning.*

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is effective in modeling Catholic values in all aspects of the school. Catholic identity is an essential part of the school environment, students, and faculty and staff.

The instructional staff applies effective teaching strategies and techniques to support high achievement of all students. Teachers are self-motivated, and are constantly researching, designing lessons, and implementing new instructional methodologies and technology.

Teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessment tools to determine student progress toward meeting SLEs and curriculum standards. The results of formative and summative assessments are communicated to parents through weekly test folders and The Cornerstone online grading parent portal. Teachers stay current on assessment trends through professional readings, workshops and professional conversations with colleagues.

The staff of St. Bernard's Catholic School strives to make improvements to support high achievement of all students. Tablets, Smart Boards and Chromebooks are used throughout the school to enhance teaching and learning. The computer lab is also available to students before school hours to practice math skills using online learning games or to work on projects and assignments using Google docs.

Staff participation in professional development activities impacts the process of teaching and learning, curriculum review, and implementation of best practices. Staff development may take the form of professional conversations during faculty meetings and participation in educational conferences and workshops. Supplementary professional development is provided with the adoption of new curriculum and instructional tools. The administration provides teachers with instructional support through Data Walks, two formal observations per year, post-observation conferences, and weekly mentoring meetings with teachers new to the profession or new to the school.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in the instructional methodology to support high achievement of all students. The faculty and staff have identified a need to apply research-based instructional methodology to challenge the high achievers at all grade levels, which will aid in the success of Goal #2 of the action plan.

## **G. Support for Student Spiritual, Personal, and Academic Growth**

**Accreditation Factor #9:** *Within the school's community of faith, students have opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular programs to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is a community rich in faith, expressed through participation in spiritual activities. These activities include, but not limited to, daily prayer in the classroom, first Friday Mass, Learning Masses and prayer at Monday morning assemblies led by one of the priests. The students practice social justice through a variety of service projects. The CYO sports program allows students to learn how to play as Catholics in a competitive and Christian manner as well as praying before games. The Student Council prays before meetings and school rallies, and members work together to create a welcoming Catholic environment for their fellow students. At School Family Masses St. Bernard's students participate as altar servers, lectors, gift bearers, and collection helpers. Students are encouraged to wear their school uniforms to witness the presence and power of Catholic education in the parish.

Co-curricular activities are available to students throughout the school year. Students have the opportunity to participate in many activities that keep the students engaged and challenged, and allow for enrichment opportunities outside of traditional classroom format.

The involvement of the parents is vital to the success of the school programs. St. Bernard's Catholic School requires 30 hours of volunteer work from each family. Ten of these hours are worked at the parish's annual Fall Festival. The remaining hours may be worked at various fundraisers and events during the school year, including field trips and help in the classrooms.

St. Bernard's Catholic School provides a safe environment for students, parents, and staff. The school creates and maintains this environment with the help of a parent-led safety committee that works with the school administration to implement and maintain a school emergency plan. Fire drills, as well as earthquakes and lockdown drills, are conducted to help students and staff practice emergency procedures. The staff also undergoes bi-annual first aid and CPR training to prepare them for medical emergencies that may occur during school hours. The school safety plan drives improvements throughout the school.

Students who do not perform at grade level in the areas of math and reading receive assistance through tutoring by CJSF members, a resource teacher, and homeroom teachers. A resource teacher works with low achieving 1st graders three times a week, and the vice-principal works with 2nd graders once a week on phonics and reading skills. Homeroom teachers conduct small group sessions before school hours. When students do not show acceptable progress from grade to grade, a Student Study Team (SST) is put in place and administration, parents and teachers request further evaluation from the local public school district.

Students use technology in their classrooms and receive weekly technology instruction. Technologies lessons follow a curriculum that includes basic computing concepts and, as often

as possible, support and enhance classroom lessons. Students also use technology in their classrooms and for various homework assignments. All the classrooms have interactive whiteboards and document cameras, which are used to enhance student learning and ensure effective instruction. Students in Kindergarten through 4th grade share tablets, while students in 5th and 6th grade share Chromebooks; 7th and 8th grade have a set of Chromebooks for each class. Teachers guide the students through websites and use pre-installed apps to engage them in meaningful learning. Apps contain multiple skill levels to allow for differentiated learning.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School excels in many areas in the support for Student spiritual, personal, and academic growth. St. Bernard's Catholic School promotes a strong spiritual formation of the students. There are many opportunities for personal growth amongst the students in both curricular and non-curricular areas. The Visiting Committee observed an effective amount of support for academic growth in high achieving students as witnessed in St. Bernard's Catholic School's identification of this in goal #2 of the Action Plan.

## **H. Resource Management and Development to Support High Achievement of All Students**

**Accreditation Factor #10:** *The pastor, principal, and school board develop, implement, and monitor resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School utilizes its resources to create and sustain an environment that supports Catholic identity. The school uses its financial resources to hire Catholic teachers who are able to teach the Diocesan Religion Standards and support teachers in completing the required program, Echoes of Faith, to receive initial catechetical certification. Financial resources are used each year to provide a staff retreat, guided by one of the parish priests.

Resources are allocated for faith formation of students by acquiring liturgical calendars to display in each classroom, computer lab, science lab, and library. Each student has a Religion textbook and Family Life workbook. In addition, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders use a Religion Review and Resource Book in class and for homework. Third grade uses a Reconciliation and Eucharist book in school, and parents are given a family guide to support the religious instruction at home.

St. Bernard's Catholic School uses proper bookkeeping procedures and acceptable accounting practices in alignment with the policies of the Diocese of Stockton. In January the principal begins to develop the projected budget for the coming school year, and in April presents it to the Finance Council for review, feedback, and approval. The budget is monitored throughout the year by the principal and the Finance Council, and adjusted as necessary. The principal, who reports to the parish through monthly meetings with the Finance Council and the School Advisory Committee (SAC), manages the resources of St. Bernard's Catholic School. Both groups are under the pastor's leadership and are comprised of the principal, parish administrator, school parents, and parishioners with expertise in the field of finances.

The school's five-year plan was developed, implemented, and monitored by the principal and the SAC members to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement

of all students. In response to results from parent survey data, attempts have been made to enhance the physical education, music, art, and Spanish programs. Additional funds are needed to hire an art teacher and a Spanish instructor in order to implement these programs school-wide. In an effort to keep tuition affordable, new fundraisers were implemented, but it has become apparent that an annual giving campaign including alumni and parishioners' contributions may be a more effective way to increase revenue for the school. The annual giving campaign would provide donor data to eventually establish an endowment. A marketing plan is in place and goals are being addressed to increase and retain enrollment.

In 2014 the school established an annual technology fee of \$75 per child. These funds have been used to purchase 36 android tablets for use in Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and 32 additional Chromebooks and charging station for junior high students. Maintenance and repairs are also included in the technology budget.

Decisions about resource allocations are made in alignment with the school's purpose and achievement of the SLEs. Based on assessment results, resources are allocated to support high achievement of all students. Staff is hired based on students' learning needs.

The Visiting Committee observed St. Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in the resource management and development to support high achievement of all students. The administration of St. Bernard's Catholic School has a clear vision, as seen in the 5-year plan, for the future of St. Bernard's Catholic School. The collaboration of the Pastor, Principal, SAC, and PTC continue to work with the success of all students in mind.

## **Chapter 4: The Action Plan**

### **A. Design and Alignment of the Action Plan with the Self Study Findings**

*Accreditation Factor #11 (The Action Plan addresses the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other institutional and/or governing authority expectations.)*

### **Schoolwide Lists of Significant Accomplishments and Critical Goals**

Schoolwide Significant Accomplishments (the eight most significant determined by the VC)

1. Lessons connected to SLEs ensure students awareness of SLEs in daily learning.
2. A caring and nurturing learning environment supported by all faculty and staff.
3. A technology-rich environment is present for teaching and learning.
4. A safe environment for all students.
5. Support for struggling students through remediation and teacher and peer support before and after school.
6. Auxiliary staff provides classes and experiences to enrich student learning.
7. The building and establishment of a preschool to promote enrollment.

8. A strong collaboration among the principal, pastor, parish priests and staff.

Critical Goals (identified by school)

1. Strengthen students' practice of their Catholic Faith.
2. Students will deepen their understanding of the SLEs and connect them to their academic endeavors.
3. Implement the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS.)
4. Provide service opportunities year round.
5. Develop opportunities for students who score above grade level in standardized testing to be academically challenged.

The Visiting Committee observed that the Action Plan is highly effective in addressing the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the School-wide Learning Expectations, Diocesan curriculum standards, and Common Core State Standards.

St. Bernard's Catholic School has identified critical goals that focus on improving student learning. St. Bernard's Catholic School has chosen goals that support growth for all students and the strategies and activities are achievable. The principal and administration have a solid plan to acquire resources needed to accomplish all goals. The Action Plan includes specific assessments designed to monitor growth in student learning.

**OPTION A: *Modification of a critical goal:*** N/A

**OPTION B: *Critical Goal Identified by the Visiting Committee:*** N/A

**B. Capacity to Implement and Monitor the Action Plan**

**Accreditation Factor #12:** *The school demonstrates the capacity to implement and monitor an Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Arch/diocesan curriculum standards (local curriculum standards where Arch/diocesan standards don't exist), and other governing authority expectations.*

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School still recognizes the need to support spirituality through service learning. They recognize the need to deepen the students understanding of SLE 1 and strengthen the practice of their Catholic faith. Through the Action Plan, the students will deepen their understanding of the SLEs and connect them to their academic endeavors. A full transition to ELA Common Core State Standards will assist in continuing improvement in the area of writing.

The plans to monitor the Action Plan are critical to its success. Regular reviews and checkpoints have been built into the Action Plan, so that each step can be monitored and evaluated for progress. Quarterly reviews are included, so that the implementation of the Action Plan will be closely watched. Progress will be communicated to the shareholders during monthly SAC and

Parish Council meetings, as well as quarterly PTC meetings, school website, and weekly newsletters.

Through the monitoring and review process of the Action Plan, staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the school program according to the results seen in student achievement. Student and staff reflection after service projects, and increased data collection from assessments linked to SLEs, will result in a more complete analysis of the impact of service learning, academic enrichment opportunities, and full implementation of ELA CCSS on student achievement.

The activities for each strategy of the Action Plan will be used to collect, organize, and analyze data to improve student learning. With the exception of implementing new ELA curriculum to support the transition to CCSS, most steps of the plan and associated activities will not be expensive. The greatest challenge for achieving the goals set forth in the Action Plan will be time. Staff will have the ability to adapt instructional strategies and learning activities from other sources to keep the costs minimal. In addition, the staff will have to collect and analyze data in order to determine if additional materials and curriculum resources need to be acquired.

The Visiting Committee observed that Saint Bernard's Catholic School is highly effective in their ability to implement and monitor the Action Plan. The Visiting Committee acknowledges the challenges of obtaining effective and relevant professional development throughout the school year, however the Visiting Committee also sees the importance of consistent, quality, staff-wide professional development from outside sources to support the success of the Action Plan.

## **Visiting Committee Summary Thoughts:**

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is focused on improving student learning for all students. All shareholders have done a tremendous job assisting St. Bernard's Catholic School in creating the Self Study. The Visiting Committee has enjoyed our time at St. Bernard's Catholic School and has felt welcome by everyone we have encountered, especially the students, faculty, staff and administration. The Visiting Committee would like to thank the parent community for their support especially in their hospitality. The Visiting Committee has witnessed a loving, nurturing and Christ-Like school. We are confident St. Bernard's Catholic School has the resources and personnel to accomplish all of their goals in the Action Plan.