

# ***REPORT OF FINDINGS***

E741 ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

165 WEST EATON AVE.

TRACY, CA 95376

DIOCESE OF STOCKTON



**& WESTERN ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

**IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING 2012**

**A SELF STUDY PROCESS**

**FOR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

**FEBRUARY 22-24, 2023**

# ***REPORT OF FINDINGS***

for

**E741 ST. BERNARD'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

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Andrea Harville

Chairperson

Archdiocese of San Francisco

Immaculate Heart of Mary School

1000 Alameda de las Pulgas

Belmont, CA 94002

(650) 593-4265

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Susan Dillon

Team Member/WASC Rep

Central Catholic High School, Modesto

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Nathaniel Juarez

Team Member

Central Catholic High School, Modesto

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Naomi Garrett

Team Member

St. Stanislaus Catholic School, Modesto

## PREFACE

We, the Visiting Committee, wish to commend you, the pastor, 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, principal, 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's Catholic School was effective in completing the self study. An initial meeting was held in March 2021 to introduce the staff to the self study process through a slide presentation which included the characteristics of a quality self study. Teachers were grouped in grade-level clusters (K-2, 3-5, and 6-8) to start the conversation about the quality of the school program and where the school was in relation to WASC/WCEA criteria.

The school distributed surveys to all stakeholders, and although parents did not serve on the committees which drafted the self study, they did participate in the evidence collection via survey responses and invitations to review the draft at two scheduled meetings on site.

The leadership team, which consists of four classroom teachers, two office staff, and the principal, met five times over the course of the self study process to check on progress, update self study procedures, review drafts, and formulate the action plans. Each member of the leadership team facilitated a self study committee. Staff was polled to determine areas of interest based on the criteria then grouped in the following areas: Catholic identity, school purpose, organization for student learning, data analysis, curriculum, and instructional methodology, and support for student growth. These committees were given a section of Chapter 3 to discuss, answer questions, and write the preliminary draft based on their conversations and evidence collection, including surveys which were distributed to all stakeholders. From February to May 2022, the committee met on Wednesdays after dismissal to work on sections A, B, C, D, and G. In fall 2022, the committees worked on sections E and F and the principal wrote H with feedback from the School Advisory Committee (SAC), which consists of a teacher representative, the pastor, the principal, an alumnus, and six parents. All drafts were shared with committee members at staff meetings for review and feedback. The drafts were also shared with the Catholic Schools Office for review. Chapter 3, completed in Nov 2022, was shared with all stakeholders for final review and feedback.

Although the school did face some challenges in completing the self study due to staff shortages and the subsequent changes in teaching schedules which impacted some of the committees, the staff was committed, determined, and dedicated to the self study process thus ensuring a timely submission. St. Bernard's Catholic School staff is to be commended for their efforts in this process.

## 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 St. Bernard's Catholic School is **effective** in involving all stakeholders 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 pastor, staff, parents, and students were involved in discussions and surveys. The principal and teachers analyzed assessment data to improve student learning following each testing period done three times a year. The teachers confirmed in the staff meeting that the mission, philosophy, and SLEs were reviewed and stayed the same for this accreditation period. All three items are reviewed in morning assemblies, morning meetings, and during class time as noted by the Visiting Committee. The school community was updated on the self study process through the newsletter and at SAC, Finance Council, Pastoral Council meetings, and a Town Hall meeting open to all stakeholders. The SAC reviewed enrollment data and the Finance Council focused on fiscal and budgetary data to ensure sustainability of the school program.

Each committee identified significant accomplishments and created goals for improvement of student learning. The Leadership Team selected critical goals through unanimous selections in a staff meeting and created the action plan, which was reviewed by all stakeholders.

During the next six years, the stakeholders will be involved in analysis of the effectiveness of the action plan through surveys, meetings, and ongoing communication.

## Chapter 2: Context of the School

### A. School Profile

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School has compiled and analyzed demographic, financial, personnel, and academic data while identifying major changes or trends. Since St. Bernard's Catholic School's last self study, their enrollment has increased by an average of 15 students per year. 70% of students enrolled in kindergarten come from the St. Bernard's Pre-K program. The average class size for St. Bernard's Catholic School is 20 students per class. St. Bernard's Catholic School communicated that tuition is raised by at least 5% to compensate for the predicted increase in expenses. The school relies on financial support through parishioners through donations and parent fundraising to meet its financial obligations. St. Bernard's Catholic School shares STAR data which revealed that there is a need to develop inclusive programs to support students who consistently score below the benchmark in preparation for high school.

Parent surveys revealed high levels of satisfaction with the school. This included positive student morale, working relationships with parents and teachers, faith formation, strong curriculum and instruction. Student surveys from grades 4th through 8th revealed that they feel respected by their principal, teachers, and peers. Kindergarten through 3rd grade surveys showed 100% belief that their teachers care about them.

### 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 St. Bernard's Catholic School is **highly effective** in their use of 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 first goal was to deepen the students' understanding of becoming faith-filled Catholics and strengthen the practice of their Catholic faith through outreach projects, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and student prayers and reflections. The student council was able to confirm the intentional opportunities the school plans to help students grow in their practice of faith.

The second goal was for students to deepen their understanding of the Student Learning Expectations (SLEs) and connect them to their academic endeavors through classroom based projects, daily recitation of the SLE pledge, and connections to lessons in the classroom. The Visiting Committee confirmed the postings of the SLEs and the observed consistent usage of language and actions of students from arrival to dismissal. The student council interactions and arrival time also shed light into SLEs being followed even when teachers are not present.

The third goal was to implement the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (CCSS) schoolwide through professional development to familiarize teachers with the new standards and update curriculum maps.

In 2019, a new goal of improving academic achievement in science through alignment of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and piloting lessons in 2nd, 4th, 5th, and middle school was implemented. With the resignation of one of the team members, the administration is exploring new ways to strengthen the STEM program at St. Bernard's and make this an ongoing goal. This is a goal for the next accreditation process acknowledged by the school. The Visiting Committee observed teachers were able to easily access, describe, and use the curriculum map.

In 2020, a new goal was implemented for students and parents to become proficient in the use of technology through Google Classroom and other Google applications in order to experience academic success during remote learning. Teachers were able to confirm that parents were fluent in technology as parents and students were successful before, during, and after the pandemic.

## 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 school is **highly effective** in providing regular opportunities for students to experience prayer and grow in their love of the Eucharist. Through observation, the Visiting Committee witnessed multiple opportunities for students to experience prayer in the classroom as well as a prayer service and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

St. Bernard's Catholic School uses Sadlier textbooks, Benziger Family Life, Theology of the Body, and Circle of Grace curriculum daily in their teaching. Parents are recognized as primary educators of their children, especially in their faith development. Based on a parent survey 100% of respondents agree that the school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concerns is the spiritual and academic education of their children. Parents are given tools to help their children grow spiritually through the parish's faith formation meetings and retreats. These are mandatory for parents before their child receives the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. 97% of parents who responded to a survey believed that the school provides prayer opportunities and creates an atmosphere in which Catholic values and attitudes are emphasized and practiced. 92% of students in grade 4-8 acknowledge that their religion class helps them to learn about their faith.

The faculty and staff recognize that regular opportunities for Adoration will help develop a greater love for Jesus in the Eucharist. They expressed how a program of ongoing catechetical training for faculty and staff would strengthen the identity of the school. St. Bernard's Catholic School hopes to establish a more tangible and authentic love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as evidenced by one of their five critical goals and a supporting Action Plan. They also hope to build awareness and interest in vocations throughout their school.

### 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 Saint Bernard's is **highly effective** in defining the school's purpose 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 St. Bernard's faculty, staff, stakeholders, and parents believe wholeheartedly in the Mission and Philosophy Statements and feel that they represent the school and parish community. Stakeholders determined that the SLEs were accomplishing their intended purpose. The Mission speaks to providing holistic, value-based education to produce well rounded Catholic citizens. The SLEs relate to the school's Mission and Philosophy and are all displayed throughout the school. Teachers include the SLEs in their lesson plans and are displayed alongside their lesson objectives. All students recite the SLEs pledge as part of their morning routine.

Teachers and staff can recognize students who are displaying the SLEs and virtues by giving out Super Saint Awards. Teachers use rubrics to assess the students' progress towards achievement of the SLEs. This data is passed on from grade to grade. St. Bernard's has made many other significant accomplishments in regards to SLEs. These include creating SLE screensavers for each chromebook, SLE classroom presentations at Monday morning assembly, and Middle school reflection on SLE evidence.

The faculty and staff recognize an ongoing need to create new, engaging activities and experiences to help students assess their own progress towards the achievement of the SLEs.

### **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 that St. Bernard's Catholic School is **effective** in providing organizational structures that focus on high achievement of all students, and communicate student progress to all shareholders.

St. Bernard's Catholic School clearly prioritizes each subject matter including effective religion classes within each grade level. The pastor, principal, School Advisory Committee (SAC), parochial vicar, and teachers collaborate in matters of faith formation, curriculum, instruction, professional development, and resources to support and ensure high achievement of all students. SLEs are clearly observed, encouraged, practiced and enforced throughout the lessons as evident from the walkthroughs in each classroom. Engagement is consistently high through whole group instruction, pair-shares, gestures, high quality relatable student questions. The daily objective of lessons include a posted SLE that is seen and referred to. The student council had a prayer leader designated and consistently referred to how grateful they were for opportunities to help others through good works. There is a buddy system for attending Mass and Church services, which was observed and noted by the staff and student council.

The school's environment is supported on a macrolevel by a strong, involved, and dedicated SAC. The SAC partners with the pastor and principal, and meets every other month to discuss short and long term objectives in areas of school safety, finances, technology, curriculum enhancement, and marketing. The microlevel is supported with weekly faculty meetings

allowing time to collaborate about learning activities, differentiation, evaluate curriculum, and analyze data. Teachers organically practice the SLEs themselves, as observed in the faculty and staff meeting. Teachers implement strategies gained through participation in college courses and professional development activities funded by Title II and properly budgeted PD funds. Finally, the principal has structures in place to frequently communicate through morning assemblies, classroom visits, student arrival and dismissal, and the school newsletter. The staff and student council were able to use similar language of how they value and love each other as families and strong communities do. Students were able to talk about how transfer students are on-boarded through a classroom buddy system.

Communication around high achievement is given to all students in class and to parents through progress reports, report cards, AR Program, and STAR testing results. Direct communication is given through parent-teacher conferences, award assemblies, and announcements posted on the school website and parish weekly email and church bulletin. Survey responses show that 85% of parents agree that the teachers provide frequent feedback to students and parents concerning their academic progress and 91% of students in grades 4-8 believe that their teachers set high standards for achievement in their classes. Teachers have an optional opportunity to talk to parents at pick-up and drop off as parents will park or teachers will assist students with pick-up directly into parent cars.

St. Bernard's shareholders recognize the need to develop and implement a systematic, strategic planning process that focuses on increasing enrollment, ensuring sustainability, and supporting high achievement for all students.

#### **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 that St. Bernard's Catholic School is **effective** in using educationally sound assessment processes to collect, disaggregate, and analyze data for the purpose of instructional improvement.

Parent surveys show that 97% of parents agree that their child is receiving effective education in Religion, 96% of students in grades K-3 strongly agree or agree that they learn about being Catholic, and 92% of students in grades 4-8 strongly agree or agree that their Religion class helps them to learn about their faith. A Religion test is administered in the fall to grades 3-8 and results are analyzed to adjust the instructional plan before the spring assessment is given to show growth and again amend plans based on the new data. Walkthroughs revealed that daily objectives are being met through written and oral information shared by students.

Data from STAR testing, classroom observations, and other assessments showed that students in 1st and 2nd grade were the most affected by the change in instructional models due to COVID-19. Several students entered Kindergarten and 1st grade in 2021 below grade level in literacy skills, having experienced little or no in-person instruction in their former preschools or

public schools. Teachers began to implement a variety of teaching strategies to help improve student learning such as LeLoLi, IXL, Think Central, Savvas, and ESGI. The school began implementing a social-emotional learning program for K-2, Kimochis, which helps students identify strong feelings and how to cope with strong emotions.

The STAR Reading and Math, STAR Early Literacy assessments, and ESGI are mediums of data sources. The faculty analyzes and creates a plan of action based on testing results throughout the year to effectively identify students who scored at or above the diocesan benchmark, those who are on watch, in need of intervention, and urgent intervention both in reading and math. Evidence is found in each grade's STAR Data Binder and in Google Drive.

The Visiting Committee observed that teachers include differentiated instruction, scaffolded groups for math and reading instruction, school librarian checks of appropriate reading level, AR, IXL online practice complete with weekly assessments, and summer math programs. Teachers administer a variety of digital and printed formative and summative assessments in all subject areas in the form of observations, homework, quizzes and exams, projects, research, class participation, artwork, reports and oral presentations. Teachers use grade-level writing rubrics and collect writing in student portfolios. Results help teachers determine the need to adjust their pacing and instruction to improve student learning. Work is posted in the classrooms and in the hallway to showcase evidence of items that will be included in the writing portfolios. An advanced math class allows enrichment and quicker pace into the algebra curriculum while allowing additional time to give more examples, explanations, and direct instruction in the standard math classroom.

Assessment results are used in administration in order to make curricular decisions as evident through the development of professional development opportunities for teachers such as number talks, purchasing of a variety of math resources, and receiving training on the new math curriculum.

The Visiting Team did not observe systemic and vertically aligned processes of data collection and use of data to make on-going formative assessments of student achievement to drive instruction. The Visiting Committee observed the collection of a variety of student achievement data in all grades, but did not observe a high degree of documentation, disaggregation, and discussion of data on a regular, on-going basis to truly drive programmatic change to improve student learning school-wide.

## **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 the school is **highly effective** in ensuring that all students are making acceptable and measurable progress toward clearly defined Schoolwide Learning Expectations and challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum standards.

St. Bernard's Catholic School consistently incorporates Catholic values into the curriculum. Catholic identity is evident in daily prayer in all classes. All grade levels learn new prayers throughout the year. Teachers display student work that indicates the integration of Catholic values in a wide variety of subjects. The school has taken first place in the Diocesan Religious Decathlon for the last two years, which demonstrates the ability of the students to express a deep understanding of the Catholic faith.

It is evident that the school is effective in ensuring that the curriculum standards are challenging, comprehensive, and relevant for all students. All curriculum standards are aligned with the California Curriculum Standards for reading and math, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science, and the California History-Social Science Content Standards for social studies. The standards are included in teachers' lesson plans and communicated to the students on a daily basis, as seen on the white boards and on a variety of student work.

The school assesses student progress in the SLEs in a variety of ways, for example, participation in liturgies and class discussions, student writing, group work, and use of technology. Formal recognition of student achievement in the SLEs are done through a range of programs: Super Saint, Student of the Month, and SLE presentations at Monday morning assemblies. Students work on a culminating SLE project presented in their eighth grade year throughout their time at the school. Students work on evidence collection and reflection each year, and the work is given to their next grade level teacher. Before graduation, the eighth graders construct their project to self-assess and demonstrate their level of mastery of each SLE. St. Bernard students know their SLEs very well. Students recite a daily SLE pledge each morning. In addition and as observed by the Visiting Committee when meeting with the student council, students communicate using SLE language. SLEs are firmly and authentically embedded in the school's culture.

The school regularly and consistently uses assessment data to drive instruction. STAR results are reviewed during faculty meetings. The school uses the data to develop instructional plans and create goals to help students who score below and at or above the set benchmark progress at an acceptable rate. Students needing intervention are given as much individual attention as possible from their teachers in the classroom. Resources such as IXL, Epic!, and leveled readers are used to differentiate instruction. These resources also provide immediate data that helps customize student achievement goals. Students in need of urgent intervention may be referred to a Student Study Team (SST) which consists of the principal, parents, teacher or teacher team to discuss what modifications and plans should be put in place for student improvement. The agreed upon plan will help with understanding, practice, and mastery of skills. Teachers realize that there is a need for additional resources or staffing to assist students in need of intervention or enrichment in the classroom, and this need is reflected in the school's action plan goal two.

The school seamlessly integrates technology into the learning process. The school has a full-time technology teacher who teaches a wide variety of computer skills to all grade levels. Curriculum includes lessons from subscription-based learning.com, keyboarding, and coding. The school has an updated computer lab with 18 personal computers and every classroom has 1:1 Chromebooks on a cart. A variety of technology programs are used by students, like Gimkit, Kahoots, Canva, and Quizziz, which increase student engagement in all subjects. Teachers and students use the Savvas online resources linked to the math and science curriculums and Think Central for ELA.

Google apps are frequently used for assignments and presentations and Google Classroom is used by teachers for communication to students and parents. All classes are equipped with Promethean or Smart boards and document cameras.

The faculty assesses their programs with data and ongoing communication at their weekly staff meetings. They communicate with parents on a weekly basis, sending tests and other information home in weekly folders. Parents shared with the Visiting Committee that the school regularly and clearly communicates with families in a variety of ways, and they know they are welcome to communicate with staff at any time.

## 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 staff is **effective** in applying 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 faculty and staff at St. Bernard consistently and intentionally models Catholic values. Students enter classrooms that have a wide variety of religious signs and symbols, many of them the teacher's personal property, extending the lived faith life to their students. Many teachers shared how it gives them joy to see their students and their families at Mass, and how those families enjoy seeing them too.

The school is effective in implementing research-based instructional methodology to enhance student learning. The staff regularly participates in professional development activities, both formal and informal. Formal opportunities include webinars, and scheduled PLC sessions, all which lead to strengthened instruction. In addition, the diocesan Catholic Schools Office offers two professional development days per year to the elementary schools. Recent offerings have included mathematics, differentiated instruction, and structured lesson planning. A math lead teacher position was established to provide articulation for all grades levels. The new K-8 math program is another mode of support as it provides supplementary professional development and instructional tools.

In 2019, a STEM initiative was established at the school. It was developed by three teachers who participated in the STEM Trustey Fellows Program at the University of Notre Dame. In addition to sharing instructional strategies for the curriculum, the teachers provided professional development. However, the STEM program has been suspended due to the resignation of one of the teachers, which caused the suspension of labs. Students and parents expressed interest in seeing the STEM program reestablished.

The school regularly assesses students to make sure all are learning at an acceptable pace. This was observed throughout classroom visitations as teachers moved about the classroom checking

on students' understanding of the material, and stopping to assist when needed. Teachers use formative and summative assessments to determine their students' progress toward meeting SLE's and curriculum standards. Types of assessments include pre-tests, quizzes, observations, writing assignments, discussions, and project-based learning. Evidence of all these assessments were seen in the classrooms. The results of these assessments are communicated to parents through weekly test folders. Parents also have access to grades through FACTS SIS.

Teachers use technology effectively to implement effective instructional strategies to support high achievement of all students. Tools such as Prometheans, Starboards, and Smartboards, as well as Chromebooks, are used to enhance teaching and learning. Students and teachers showed familiarity and ease with all classroom technology. Chromebooks are 1:1 allowing teachers to differentiate instruction using educational applications. Remediation and support lessons can be designed and delivered through these applications to help students achieve mastery of the standards. The use of Chromebooks in grades K-2 allows students to practice a particular skill while the teacher focuses on small group instruction during center time. Observations showed that students in K-2 were continually engaged while working on particular skills.

All students have a weekly technology class which is instructed using the Easy Tech digital literacy curriculum. A wide variety of skills are introduced and supported by the teachers. Students reported that they enjoyed their work in the tech lab and appreciated the different skills introduced to them. Evidence of skill mastery was displayed in the tech lab.

Data from STAR testing indicated to the school that additional instructional support for learners who fall into the urgent intervention and intervention categories is necessary for those students to meet the standards in the areas of reading and math. Action plan goal two provides the steps necessary to provide additional instructional support for those identified students.

## **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 **effective** in providing students with opportunities to participate in support services and activities to assist them in accessing the curricular and co-curricular standards to achieve the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, diocesan curriculum standards and other governing authority expectations. Students have opportunities to practice their Catholic values in various curricular and co-curricular activities such as Mass on Fridays and on Holy Days of Obligation. Additionally, upper grade students are paired up with lower grade students as "buddies" to help guide the younger students during Mass. Students also participate in other faith-based celebrations such as Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the Living Rosary, Christmas Program, Passion Play, a Reenactment of the Last Supper, Ash Wednesday Service, Stations of the Cross, Crowning of Mary, Reconciliation, and First Holy Communion as well as the Diocesan Religion Decathlon.

St. Bernard's Catholic School offers students co-curricular activities such as the DARE program in 5th grade, Reconciliation preparation in 2nd grade, First Holy Communion preparation in 3rd grade, Confirmation preparation in 6th and 7th grade, Theology of the Body in 8th grade, performing arts with the San Francisco Opera Guild, California Junior Scholarship Federation (CJSF), Student Council, and the parish Youth Group as well as a social-emotional learning program for K-5 called Kimochis. In addition, St. Bernard's Catholic School partners with the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) sports program each year for sports/extracurricular activities. However, through a recent survey, parents reported a desire for the school to offer Music and Spanish at all grade levels, as well as through clubs and other after-school activities. Developing a robust enrichment program that includes Spanish, Music, and Resource support to help all students achieve high levels in both curricular and non-curricular areas is one of the five critical areas for improved student learning reported by the school. The school reported that supporting the learning needs of all students through resources and staffing would allow for more inclusive, equitable classrooms. In addition, the school reported that strengthening the STEM program would support students in their ability to problem solve, think critically, and collaborate with others. This goal is one of the five critical areas for improved student learning reported by the school as well.

Students use technology in their classrooms and receive weekly technology instruction. Technology lessons follow a curriculum that includes basic computing concepts and support and/or enhance classroom lessons. Students also use technology in their class and homework assignments. All classrooms have interactive white boards and document cameras, which are used to enhance student learning and ensure effective instruction. Students in Grades K-8 each have a Chromebook. Teachers guide the students through websites and use pre-installed apps to engage them in meaningful learning experiences. Apps contain multiple skill levels to allow for differentiated learning.

St. Bernard's Catholic School has effectively planned for emergencies and disasters. The school emergency plans are comprehensive, clear, and prominently displayed in all classrooms, hallways, and other rooms throughout the school. Plans are reviewed every year to ensure that the staff is prepared in advance to handle potential emergency situations. The office staff grants access to visitors and cameras allow office personnel to monitor activities both inside and outside the school building. Fire, earthquake and intruder drills are conducted to help students and staff practice emergency procedures. The staff also undergoes bi-annual first aid and CPR training.

Parent participation is encouraged through volunteer hours that can be earned in a variety of ways such as the annual Fall Festival, various fundraisers, and other activities like helping in the classroom or on field trips. Nonetheless, the pastor, administration, faculty, and staff would like to see more parent involvement at Mass and in all aspects of student growth. Thus, building awareness to improve parent participation in all aspects of student growth is one of the five critical areas for improved student learning reported by the school. The Visiting Committee believes that the completion of all five critical goals within the next six years are necessary to move St. Bernard's into the future.

## 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 that St. Bernard's Catholic School is **effective** at developing, implementing, and monitoring resources and plans to ensure and support high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations.

St. Bernard's Catholic School utilizes its resources to create and sustain a learning environment that supports Catholic identity. Financial and human resources are carefully allocated to support spiritual and academic growth. Priority is given to resources for faith formation. Each student has a Religion textbook and a Family Life workbook in K-7; 8th grade uses a Theology of the Body workbook. In addition, 3rd grade uses Reconciliation and Eucharist workbooks, and 6th and 7th graders use a Confirmation workbook for their two-year preparation before they receive the sacrament. Resources are also utilized to help teachers and staff grow in their faith. Every year the staff attends a retreat, and Advent and Lent daily reflection books are purchased for all staff.

St. Bernard's Catholic School uses proper bookkeeping procedures and acceptable accounting practices in alignment with the policies of the Diocese of Stockton. In February of each year, the principal begins to develop the projected budget for the upcoming school year, and in April presents it to the parish 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 resources are managed by the principal, who reports to the pastor and the Finance Council at monthly meetings. The Finance Council is under the pastor's leadership and is composed of the principal, parish administrator, parish bookkeeper, and seven parishioners with expertise in business and finance. The principal also prepares a State of the School financial report each year that is presented to stakeholders at Back-to-School Night.

The school budget supports student learning. In order to provide Catholic education with high academic standards for all students, the school hires qualified teachers and makes every effort to offer them equitable compensations. St. Bernard's Catholic School aims to keep tuition at an affordable rate by supplementing the actual per pupil cost with fundraising activities led by the Parent Teacher Club (PTC) and parish support from the Annual Fall Festival, second collections at Masses and online giving.

The administration and the School Advisory Committee (SAC) had previously developed a five-year plan with goals and action items to ensure the sustainability of the school program and support high achievement of all students. The plan was reviewed at SAC meetings, but the challenges of the pandemic set aside monitoring and implementation of the plan for a couple of years. Thus, the Visiting Committee recommends that the school re-develop and implement a



systematic, strategic plan with a focus on high achievement for all students as communicated by the school as one of the five critical areas for improved student learning. The school reported in their Self-Study that the updated Strategic Plan should address each of the following areas: 1) Increasing enrollment, 2) Hiring a Resource Teacher and a Music Teacher, as well as 3) Expanding the Spanish program and/or Hiring a Spanish Teacher. In addition, the updated Strategic Plan should address the school's plan for the long-term viability of the school.

Decisions about resource allocations are made in alignment with the school's purpose and are based on assessment results to support high achievement of all students. Staff is hired based on students' learning needs. Financial resources are used to hire qualified personnel, provide professional development, and enhance the students' learning experiences through field trips and school assemblies. The school has Title I and Title II funds allocated through Tracy Unified School District. The principal requested the use of Title I funds to purchase ESGI, an online progress monitoring program for Kindergarten through second grade and struggling readers. Title II funds have been used to pay for teacher participation at professional development conferences, such as CUE. The school also collects an annual student technology fee which is used to pay for the upkeep of the school website, the local server, and the network cybersecurity, as well as maintenance and replacement of equipment. The principal and technology instructor meet regularly to discuss improvements that benefit student learning.

For the past six years the school has been able to maintain prudent reserves in a savings account. Some funds have been used to pay for a new roof over the staff room, computer lab, and office area, as well as an upgrade of the computer lab. For the past few years, a portion of the reserves has been included in the annual budget in order to balance it, since tuition and fundraising are not sufficient to cover the projected expenses. However, at the end of the fiscal year reserves have remained untouched, due to successful fundraising efforts.

## 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. Weekly Mass or Prayer Service
2. Daily posting of SLEs connection to lessons in classrooms and lesson plans
3. Chromebooks are on a 1:1 ratio for K-8 students
4. Technology integrated in the learning process: IXL, Think Central, Savvas
5. Social Emotional Learning curriculum
6. Nurturing learning environment supported by ongoing school-parent communication
7. Annual State of the School Financial Report
8. Prudent Reserves

Critical Goals (identified by school)

1. Establish a more tangible and authentic love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.
2. Support the learning needs of all students through resources and staffing to allow for more inclusive, equitable classrooms.
3. Strengthen the STEM program.
4. Develop and implement a systematic, strategic planning process.
5. Build awareness to improve parent participation in all aspects of student growth.

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is **highly effective** in addressing the school's critical goals to enhance student learning that supports high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, Archdiocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations. The school utilized STAR test results, survey data, and meetings with various stakeholders, including the faculty and School Advisory Committee, to identify their critical goals which focus on improving student learning.

St. Bernard's Catholic School Action Plan provides activities that are in clear alignment with the critical goals. There is a systematic process in place for implementing, monitoring, and assessing each goal that involves communication with various stakeholders.

**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 is **effective** in its capacity to implement and monitor the Action Plan that ensures high achievement of all students of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations, diocesan curriculum standards, and other governing authority expectations.

The Visiting Committee recognizes that St. Bernard's Catholic School was able to accomplish the goals of its previous Action Plan. As mentioned in their Self-Study, the students deepened their understanding of becoming faith-filled Catholics and strengthened the practice of their Catholic faith through participation in outreach projects and faith-based activities. Students became more aware of the importance of the SLEs and their connection to what they were learning in the classroom. The adoption of curriculum materials aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) improved the students' reading and writing skills, as well as their ability to think critically and work collaboratively especially in science. A goal was added to help students become aware of STEM and the implementation of STEM schoolwide remains an ongoing area of growth. The shareholders have been involved in a continuous process of improvement during the past six years, resulting in the adoption of practices and programs which have improved student learning.

The plans to implement, monitor, and assess the Action Plan are critical to its success. Regular reviews and checkpoints have been built into the Action Plan, so that each strategy and activity can be monitored and evaluated to determine their impact on the students' achievement and growth. Quarterly reviews are included, so that implementation of the Action Plan will be closely observed. Progress will be communicated to the stakeholders in the weekly newsletter, Back-to-School Night, parent-teacher conferences, and SAC and Pastoral Council meetings.

The greatest challenge for achieving the goals set forth in the Action Plan will be staff turnover. The school has already experienced such a challenge trying to maintain the STEM program without enough personnel. That is why strengthening the STEM program became a critical goal for St. Bernard's Catholic School. Funding will also be needed to acquire more resources to provide instructional support in the classrooms. As the first three critical goals are accomplished, plans to incorporate additional goals into the Action Plan will be in place.

## **Visiting Committee Summary Thoughts:**

The Visiting Committee observed that St. Bernard's Catholic School is a close-knit community where all stakeholders are respected, appreciated, and supported. It is clear to the Visiting Committee that St. Bernard's Catholic School is focused on improving student learning for all students. Committed faculty are in constant collaboration with each other to engage all students with various learning needs. All stakeholders have done a successful 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 very welcome by everyone we have encountered, especially the students, parents, faculty, staff and administration. The Visiting Committee would like to thank the St. Bernards' School community for their support and for their hospitality. The Visiting Committee is confident that St. Bernard's Catholic School will accomplish all of their goals in the Action Plan.