

Kenora Catholic School System

Principals Session - Friday, October 21

Developing a Catholic School Culture

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For over two decades the Christian Brothers schools of the San Francisco New Orleans District in the United States have conducted a process to help their schools assess how well the Lasallian Catholic spirit and mission permeates all aspects of the school and creates a distinctive culture now and in the future. The vision, built around 5 core principles and 19 characteristics of a Lasallian Catholic education, and the assessment process have had a significant impact in helping schools strengthen their Catholic identity and build a school culture that promotes the spiritual and religious growth of students and adults in the schools. This presentation will look at the what and how of nurturing a Catholic culture in schools and offer the Lasallian approach as one way to proceed. It will also address the challenge of developing a Catholic culture with a spiritually and religiously diverse student (and adult) population.

1. Reflections on School Culture

Dr. Ebony Bridwell-Mitchell, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University
(<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/18/07/what-makes-good-school-culture>)

Culture Is Connections

A culture will be strong or weak depending on the interactions between the people in the organization, she said. **In a strong culture, there are many, overlapping, and cohesive interactions among all members of the organization.** As a result, knowledge about the organization's distinctive character — and what it takes to thrive in it — is widely spread and reinforced. In a weak culture, sparse interactions make it difficult for people to learn the organization's culture, so its character is barely noticeable and the commitment to it is scarce or sporadic.

- Beliefs, values, and actions will spread the farthest and be tightly reinforced when everyone is communicating with everyone else. In a strong school culture, leaders communicate directly with teachers, administrators, counselors, and families, who also all communicate directly with each other.
- A culture is weaker when communications are limited and there are fewer connections. For example, if certain teachers never hear directly from their principal, an administrator is continually excluded from communications, or any groups of staff members are operating in isolation from others, it will be difficult for messages about shared beliefs and commitments to spread.

Culture Is Core Beliefs and Behaviors

Within that weak or strong structure, what exactly people believe and how they act depends on the messages — both direct and indirect — that the leaders and others in the organization send. A good culture arises from messages that promote traits like collaboration, honesty, and hard work.

Culture is shaped by five interwoven elements, each of which principals have the power to influence:

1. **Fundamental beliefs and assumptions**, or the things that people at your school consider to be true. For example: “All students have the potential to succeed,” or “Teaching is a team sport.”
2. **Shared values**, or the judgments people at your school make about those belief and assumptions — whether they are right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust. For example: “It’s wrong that some of our kindergarteners may not receive the same opportunity to graduate from a four-year college,” or “The right thing is for our teachers to be collaborating with colleagues every step of the way.”
3. **Norms**, or how members believe they should act and behave, or what they think is expected of them. For example: “We should talk often and early to parents of young students about what it will take for their children to attend college.” “We all should be present and engaged at our weekly grade-level meetings.”
4. **Patterns and behaviors**, or the way people actually act and behave in your school. For example: There are regularly-scheduled parent engagement nights around college; there is active participation at weekly team curriculum meetings. (But in a weak culture, these patterns and behaviors can be different than the norms.)
5. **Tangible evidence**, or the physical, visual, auditory, or other sensory signs that demonstrate the behaviors of the people in your school. For example: Prominently displayed posters showcasing the district’s college enrollment, or a full parking lot an hour before school begins on the mornings when curriculum teams meet.

Each of these components influences and drives the others, forming a circle of reinforcing beliefs and actions, Bridwell-Mitchell says; strong connections among every member of the school community reinforce the circle at every point.

Six Steps to Shaping a School’s Culture

1. Look in the mirror. The leader is the main role model for an organization. Everything a leader does — her statements and philosophy, reactions to key events, energy and interaction style — influences culture in a powerful way. If you want a collaborative staff, ask colleagues for advice early and often. If you want teachers to hold students to high expectations, reaffirm your own belief not only in young people but also in your staff.
2. Select staff wisely. The teachers and administrators you hire will enter your school with their own beliefs about education and expectations about what it will be like to work at your school. When hiring and mentoring, ask questions that help reveal whether those beliefs and expectations align with the ones you want your school community to hold. Those beliefs and norms will only grow stronger in a tight-knit community.
3. Teach what you’d like to see. Create formal trainings and space for honest conversation about the attitudes, norms, and practices that are core to being a member of your school community. Use those trainings and other professional development to model the beliefs and behaviors you desire. Offer rewards (praise, written notes, community celebrations) for students and staff when they demonstrate those behaviors.
4. Broadcast your vision. Every formal communication you have with your community should reflect and reinforce the culture. In every memo to staff, letter to parents, or address to students, make sure to:
 - highlight the future and what your school has the potential to achieve;
 - use data and facts to reduce ambiguity about your vision;
 - appeal to people’s emotions, values, and the deeper needs that motivate them;

- stay positive, grateful, and idealistic, which is an important counterweight to any negative messages students or staff might receive;
 - use collective statements (“we are,” “we will”) to increase a feeling of belonging and collective identity.
5. Make your vision tangible. Mottos, symbolic objects, special traditions, and the design of physical space can all help reinforce your cultural vision, especially when the meaning of these tangible artifacts is consistently communicated. For example, regular celebrations of student and staff success is a reminder of what’s important. It also inspires continued commitment to shared values.
 6. Restructure social networks. Culture is spread through connections. So figure out which people or groups are isolated from the community and figure out how to encourage greater interaction with others who are committed to the school culture. This way, everyone – not only you – helps your positive message spread more quickly and clearly.

Everything a leader does — her statements and philosophy, reactions to key events, energy, and interaction style — influences culture in a powerful way.

2. Building a Catholic Culture Approach 1: Start with Vision of the School

The Lasallian Catholic School

Christian Brothers: Lasallian District of San Francisco New Orleans

Vision

Principle 1. Faith in the Presence of God

We believe in the living presence of God in our students, our community, and our world.

1. A Lasallian Catholic school promotes Catholic identity by presenting and embodying the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith, tradition, and teachings in everything it does.
2. A Lasallian Catholic school has a clear and visible affiliation with its Lasallian heritage and demonstrates a consistent practice of Lasallian principles.
3. Educators in Lasallian Catholic schools see their work as a vocation, animated by the Holy Spirit. They demonstrate a spirit of faith and zeal as they give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through their words and actions.
4. A Lasallian Catholic school fosters a culture of vocation by providing its students with opportunities to grow in holiness and discover how their gifts and talents can respond to the needs of the Church and world.
5. All Lasallian Catholic schools are united by a common mission and vision, rooted in the heritage of St. John Baptist de La Salle, that is accomplished by working together and by association. All members of the school community see themselves as part of the larger Lasallian Family.
6. A Lasallian Catholic school recognizes its responsibility to work with the (arch)diocese and local parishes to deepen the religious participation and commitment of those in the school.

Principle 2. Respect for All Persons

We honor and respect the dignity of all individuals.

7. A Lasallian Catholic school recognizes the presence of God in every student and treats every student with respect and dignity.
8. A Lasallian Catholic school fosters respect for the dignity of all people in the school regardless of economic background, culture and ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual identity, and religious faith.
9. A Lasallian Catholic school respects and recognizes the unique contributions and achievements of every person in the school community.

Principle 3. Quality Education

We engage in quality education together as students, staff, and faculty by thinking critically and examining our world in light of faith.

10. A Lasallian Catholic school provides a student-centered, college preparatory education that connects the academic disciplines with the total development of each student.
11. A Lasallian Catholic school is responsive to students in need – intellectually, culturally, socially, economically, and spiritually—through innovative educational programs.
12. Educators in Lasallian Catholic schools are lifelong learners who engage in professional development in order to keep current in their fields and to meet the needs and challenges of their students' learning.

Principle 4. Inclusive Community

We celebrate diversity and welcome all members of our community.

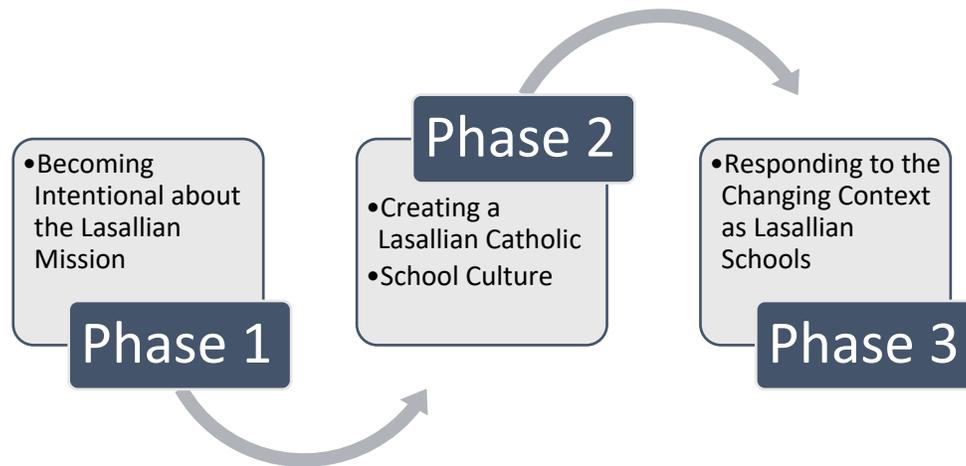
1. A Lasallian Catholic school teaches respect and hospitality, promotes an atmosphere of understanding, and intentionally creates opportunities for students to interact and build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds.
2. A Lasallian Catholic school creates a welcoming, safe, and caring environment for all members of the community.
3. A Lasallian Catholic school develops caring, trusting relationships among all members of the school community.
4. A Lasallian Catholic school nurtures a culture of responsibility for one another in the school community..

Principle 5. Service with the Poor

We are in solidarity with the poor and advocate for those suffering from injustices.

1. A Lasallian Catholic school intentionally seeks out young people who are economically poor or marginalized, invites them to become students, and provides an accessible and welcoming environment to students and families.
2. A Lasallian Catholic school engages students and adults in cross-cultural and cross-economic experiences with the poor and marginalized in the wider community and world.
3. A Lasallian Catholic school is accessible and responsive to the needs of the wider community, especially the poor and marginalized—providing educational programming and resources.

Growth of School Culture over 20 Years



Critical Factors

- Formation programs for faculty, staff, and administration
- Hiring for mission
- Assessment process and creation of a multi-year plan for growing Lasallian Catholic culture
- Creating new programming to build Lasallian Catholic identity; enhancing existing programming

Components of the Assessment Process

The **Lasallian Catholic Assessment Process** addresses the question: *How does the Lasallian Catholic spirit and mission permeate all aspects of the school and create a distinctive identity **now** and into the **future**.* The process seeks to:

1. provide for a self-assessment of the school, as well as an external assessment of how the school is currently living the five core Lasallian Catholic principles of education as demonstrated through sixteen specific characteristics and their practices.
2. provide for a review of the religion program and the spiritual life of the school based on the LEC Religious Studies policy and the USCCB high school curriculum guidelines, and an exploration into the religious faith and practices of students and parents.
3. recognize and reinforce the strengths of the school as demonstrated through the five core Lasallian Catholic principles and their characteristics and practices.
4. envision how the school will be living the five core Lasallian Catholic principles in the future by creating a shared vision and practical plans for growth.

Process

1. Survey Assessments:
 - Faculty, Staff, and Administration
 - Student Faith and Spiritual Life
 - Parent Survey
2. Onsite Visit Day 1:
 - Preparation Meeting with School Leadership Team
 - Religious and Spiritual Life Review Meeting (Religious Studies Program, Spiritual Life, and Campus Ministry)

3. Onsite Visit Day 2:
 - Listening Sessions (Students and Faculty-Staff-Administration)
4. Onsite Visit Day 3:
 - School Leadership Workshop
 - Review meetings with School Leadership Team
5. Survey with Faculty: Ideas to Implement the Recommendations
6. Report with Results, Recommendations, and Strategies

Building a Catholic Culture Option 2. Start with a Vision of the Graduate

A Vision of the Learner Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

1. A Discerning Believer. . . .

formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through Word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection, and moral living.

2. An Effective Communicator. . . .

who speaks, writes, and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of Gospel values.

3. A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker. . . .

who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.

4. A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner. . . .

who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.

5. A Collaborative Contributor. . . .

who finds meaning, dignity, and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.

6. A Care Family Member. . . .

who attends to family, school, parish, and wider community.

7. A Responsible Citizen. . . .

who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice, and the sacredness of human life.

Adapted Elementary Version of Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

I am a Believer

- I believe that God is an awesome God
- I believe and have faith in God
- I believe that God is with us always
- I believe that we can talk to God anytime and anywhere, through prayer I believe in the stories of the Bible
- I believe in the stories of Jesus' life, death and resurrection
- I believe in the Church community, celebrating Mass, and the seven Sacraments I believe in forgiveness
- Because I am a believer, I will live my life like Jesus.

I have a Voice

- I speak, write and listen as Jesus would want me to I care about others and speak up for them
- I am honest
- I think carefully before I react or speak
- I respect all people and their languages
- I listen to the Word of God
- Because I have a voice, I will use it lovingly, and I will live my life like Jesus.

I have Ideas

- I have thoughts and opinions that matter
- I make good choices
- I have hope for the future
- I solve problems with knowledge, understanding and prayer I know we are all equal and special
- Because I have ideas, I have a purpose, and I will live my life like Jesus.

I am a Learning for Life

- I use my gifts and talents given to me by God I always do my best
- I build on my strengths and weaknesses
- I set goals
- I accept change
- I am proud of the good things I do

- I am thankful for the gifts of others
- Because I am a learner for life, I can reach for my dreams, by living my life like Jesus.

I am a Team Player

- I co-operate with others in all that I do I value everyone's work
- I respect and listen to others
- I think of others before myself
- I follow rules of fair play
- I work hard in school so that I can build my community and make it a better place
- Because I am a team player, I know that 'Together is Better', and we will live our lives like Jesus.

I Care

- I love God, myself and my family
- I care about and respect my 'family' at school, at Church, in the community, and the world I care about and respect God's creation and everything in it
- Because I care, I pray for all my families, and I will live my life like Jesus.

I have Responsibilities

- I am a peace-maker
- I am fair
- I am forgiving
- I follow rules and do my share
- I help the poor and care for people in need I stand up for what is right
- I know that all life is precious
- I respect and protect the world and all that is in it
- Because I accept my responsibilities, I can make a difference, and will live my life like Jesus.

Lasallian Catholic Assessment Process

Principles, Characteristics. and Practices

Lasallian District of San Francisco New Orleans

Article 3 of the *Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* states: *‘The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it.’*ⁱ The mission of Lasallian Catholic schools in the District of San Francisco New Orleans is informed and animated by five “core principles” that serve to describe the culture of these schools. These core principles reflect the inspiration and wisdom of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, a Catholic priest in 17th century France whose response to his vocational call led him to form a group of educators (the Brothers of the Christian Schools) and found Catholic schools that served the human and Christian needs of children of the poor and working classes. Not surprisingly, these core principles are reflective of deeply held Catholic beliefs and values. This particular constellation of principles, combined with the founding charism of De La Salle, provide a Lasallian Catholic perspective on education—a perspective that guides the schools throughout our District.



Principle 1. Faith in the Presence of God: *We believe in the living presence of God in our students, our community, and our world.*

Our Lasallian Heritage: Lasallian spirituality finds God in the midst of everyday life, especially in our encounters with students in great need. This Lasallian core principle is embodied in the invocation *“Let us remember that we are in the Holy presence of God.”* Since the time of St. John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers, this has served as an invitation to see all things with the eyes of faith, putting Jesus Christ at the center of our ministry. “All things” includes what we teach, how we teach, how we interact with each other and with our students, the environment we create in our schools, and the ways we attend to the religious and spiritual lives of our colleagues and students.

Informed by Our Catholic Faith Tradition: This core principle is rooted in a deeply-held Catholic Christian belief in sacramentality: *“The sacramental principle means that God is present to humankind and we respond to God’s grace through the ordinary and every day of life in the world.”*ⁱⁱ This invites us – requires us – to

“provide the opportunity to open students’ hearts and minds to the mystery and wonder of the world and nature, to self-consciousness and awareness, to responsibility towards creation, to the Creator’s immensity.”ⁱⁱⁱ

1. A Lasallian Catholic school promotes Catholic identity by presenting and embodying the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith, tradition, and teachings in everything it does.

- a) The school has a clear mission which embodies the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Lasallian Catholic tradition.
- b) The school helps all students develop an understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith and tradition through the academic curriculum and the daily life of the school.
- c) The Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed compassionately and mercifully with respect for the cultural and religious diversity of the school community.
- d) The school provides a religious education program that incorporates the foundations of Catholicism—creed, sacraments, morality, and prayer—in an environment for the students to inquire, experience, develop, and practice their faith.
- e) Students are motivated through the religious studies curriculum, academic classes, and school activities to participate in the school’s faith-related activities, such as service, retreats, prayer, and liturgical celebrations.
- f) The school creates an environment that encourages prayer and reflection where prayer is incorporated into the daily life of the school.
- g) The school provides a variety of liturgical and sacramental celebrations throughout the year, including the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- h) There is a retreat program across all grade levels for students with increasing depth and spiritual experience.

2. A Lasallian Catholic school has a clear and visible affiliation with its Lasallian heritage and demonstrates a consistent practice of Lasallian principles.

- a) There are ongoing formation experiences in the Lasallian heritage for students, faculty, and staff.
- b) The academic program incorporates the life, legacy, and spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle.
- c) There are visible signs, artwork, symbols, and practices of the Lasallian Catholic heritage on campus.
- d) Policies and procedures are in place for hiring teachers and staff “for mission.”
- e) The school develops Lasallian Catholic leadership among all faculty, staff, and administration through ongoing formation in Lasallian mission and heritage, especially orientation and mentoring for new teachers and staff.
- f) There is ongoing education and formation for educators, especially religion teachers, in Lasallian approaches to catechetics (using resources such as the Lasallian Education Corporation/Louisiana Lasallian Education Corporation Guidelines for Religious Studies).

3. Educators in Lasallian Catholic schools see their work as a vocation, animated by the Holy Spirit. They demonstrate a spirit of faith and zeal as they give witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through their words and actions.

- a) Faculty, staff, and administrators are faith-filled people who model their faith and vocation to one another and to the students.
- b) Faculty, staff, and administrators are involved in the religious and spiritual life of the school—campus ministry, retreats, liturgies, service, and vocation programs.
- c) There is a variety of formation opportunities to support faculty, staff, and administrators in their role of witnessing to the presence of God and sharing their faith.
- d) There are regular spiritual life and retreat experiences for faculty, staff, and administration that provide opportunities to developing their faith and spiritual life.
- e) The school provides faculty, staff, and administration with regular opportunities for faith sharing, socializing, and other forms of community-building.

4. A Lasallian Catholic school fosters a culture of vocation by providing its students with opportunities to grow in holiness and discover how their gifts and talents can respond to the needs of the Church and world.

- a) Vocation programs and leadership formation in the school and the District guide students in discerning their God-given vocation in life.
- b) Retreats, prayer experiences, service and immersion programs, career programs, and other experiences—provide students with the opportunity to discover their gifts and talents and how they can be used to respond to the needs of the Church and world.
- c) Students have the opportunity to hear and reflect on individual vocation stories, especially from faculty, staff, administrators, and the De La Salle Christian Brothers.
- d) Collaboration with the District’s Office of Vocation Ministry provides mutual support in vocation promotion and accompaniment.

5. All Lasallian Catholic schools are united by a common mission and vision, rooted in the heritage of St. John Baptist de La Salle, that is accomplished by working together and by association. All members of the school community see themselves as part of the larger Lasallian Family.

- a) The school is committed to the development of Lasallian leadership among all educators through formation programs.
- b) Educators participate in Lasallian District formation programs, such as workshops, chief administrators’ gatherings, retreats, Vandhu Paaru, etc.
- c) Educators participate in Lasallian Regional formation programs, such the Brother John Johnston Institute, the Buttimer Institute, the Huether Lasallian Workshop, etc.
- d) The school demonstrates an intentional connection to its “outside” Lasallian family, such as twinning programs and opportunities to intentionally connect with other local Lasallian schools and ministries.

6. A Lasallian Catholic school recognizes its responsibility to work with the (arch)diocese and local parishes to deepen the religious participation and commitment of those in the school.

- a) The school encourages the involvement of students in programs and activities sponsored by the (arch) diocese and parishes.
- b) The school creates an environment that encourages and supports the faith formation of Catholic students, especially the sacrament of Confirmation.
- c) Educators participate in diocesan formation opportunities—courses, retreats, and conferences.
- d) There are opportunities for collaboration with the (arch) diocese and local parishes.

Principle 2. Respect for All Persons: *We honor and respect the dignity of all individuals.*

Our Lasallian Heritage: In his 96th Meditation, St. John Baptist de La Salle exhorts his Brothers [and, by extension, all Lasallian educators] to “recognize Jesus beneath the poor rags of the children whom you have to instruct. Adore him in them.”^{iv} This statement captures the core Lasallian value of *respect for all persons*. Lasallians affirm that human beings share a common nature – that of being created in God’s image. All educational endeavors are designed and implemented with this core value in mind. All people are born with unique gifts and talents and deserve an education and formation that gives them the tools and the confidence to realize these talents to the full. More than that, as other Lasallian core values affirm, it is the task of all members of the educational community, young and old, to build an environment where all feel respected, valued, and welcome.

Informed by Our Catholic Faith Tradition: This core principle is rooted in a deeply-held Catholic Christian belief that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. This belief “witnesses not only to the

essential goodness of persons, but also the equal dignity of all human beings. . . . As reflections of God, all have an essential dignity that gives them the ‘birthright’ to be treated with reverence and with the dignity befitting a daughter or son of God.” This inherent dignity affirms not only the right of each person to have access to opportunities to achieve their fullest potential, but also the responsibility of each person to “maintain the rights of others.”^v

7. A Lasallian Catholic school recognizes the presence of God in every student and treats every student with respect and dignity.

- a) The school employs policies and procedures that treat all students with respect and dignity.
- b) The school’s curriculum, instructional practices, and co-curricular programs provide for learning experiences that demonstrate respect and dignity for all students.
- c) The school provides for and emphasizes recognition of student achievement in all aspects of school life—curricular and co-curricular—and the wider community.
- d) The school provides students with the opportunity for voice and representation in the life and design of school life.

8. A Lasallian Catholic school fosters respect for the dignity of all people in the school regardless of economic background, culture and ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual identity, and religious faith.

- a) Students feel safe, welcomed, and valued at the school.
- b) Faculty, staff, and administrators model respectful behavior towards all people at all times.
- c) The school provides programs and activities aimed at enhancing the cultural competence of all members of the school community.
- d) The school’s academic curriculum, while embracing a commitment to Catholic teachings, provides for the exploration of topics and issues of social diversity and human dignity.
- e) The school respects and provides for multi-cultural and multi-religious dialogue and experiences.
- f) The school environment encourages students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to practice, celebrate, and share their traditions.
- g) The school’s counseling program provides services that address issues surrounding diversity and respect.
- h) Faculty and staff professional development programs provide knowledge and skills for addressing diversity in all its forms and respecting the dignity of all students.

9. A Lasallian Catholic school respects and recognizes the unique contributions and achievements of every person in the school community.

- a) The school offers a wide range of co-curricular activities that draw upon the interests, talents, and needs of the students.
- b) The school makes an intentional effort to engage every student in activities that match with his or her interests and talents.
- c) School publications, award ceremonies, assemblies, and other activities recognize a wide array of student achievement and talent.

Principle 3. Quality Education: *We engage in quality education together as students, staff, and faculty by thinking critically and examining our world in light of faith.*

Our Lasallian Heritage: A high-quality education has been the means to the end of the salvation of youth in the Lasallian mission. In the beginning, De La Salle and the Brothers devoted their lives to creating and fine-tuning an innovative system of education that opened the doors to the fullness of life (John 10:10) to the students entrusted to their care. Today, educators in Lasallian Catholic schools continue this effort through their concern for a quality education adapted to the needs of all students and manifesting itself at multiple levels,

including curriculum (both human and Christian), pedagogical methods, professional development and formation of educators, school environment, policy, and attention to the whole person.

Informed by Our Catholic Faith Tradition: This core principle is rooted in a deeply-held Catholic Christian commitment to education as “part of the saving mission of the Church. . .”^{vi} In a Catholic school, “Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise.”^{vii} “At the root of Catholic education is our Christian spiritual heritage, which is part of a constant dialogue with the cultural heritage and the conquests of science; Catholic schools and universities are educational communities where learning thrives on the integration between research, thinking and life experience.”^{viii}

“[T]here are a number of quality hallmarks that Catholic schools and universities must be able to ensure:

- respect for individual dignity and uniqueness . . . ;
- a wealth of opportunities that are offered to young people for them to grow and develop their abilities and talents;
- a balanced focus on cognitive, affective, social, professional, ethical and spiritual aspects;
- encouragement for every pupil to develop their talents, in a climate of cooperation and solidarity;
- the promotion of research as a rigorous commitment towards truth, being aware that human knowledge has its limits, but also with a great openness of mind and heart;
- respect of ideas, openness to dialogue, the ability to interact and work together in a spirit of freedom and care.”^{ix}

10. A Lasallian Catholic school provides a student-centered, college preparatory education that connects the academic disciplines with the total development of each student.

- a) The school provides a college preparatory curriculum that addresses a broad spectrum of students from those taking remedial courses to those taking Advanced Placement level courses.
- b) Counseling programs help students make curricular choices.
- c) The school curriculum develops knowledge and skills for 21st century learning, including creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and lifelong learning.
- d) The curriculum incorporates the use of 21st century digital learning tools and media to promote student engagement in learning.
- e) The school curriculum and coursework is applicable to the students’ lives, both now and into the future.
- f) Coursework and teaching styles are adaptable to the students’ learning needs and styles.
- g) The school engages in observation and evaluation of teachers to assess the effectiveness of their teaching style and ability to address the needs and challenges of their students’ learning.
- h) The school provides training for teachers on the use of digital technology, digital learning tools, and digital media.

11. A Lasallian Catholic school is responsive to students in need – intellectually, culturally, socially, economically, and spiritually—through innovative educational programs.

- a) The school has policies and procedures that identify students in need.
- b) The school provides specialized programs for those in need, such as tutoring and counseling programs.
- c) Students with special needs and study skill deficits are identified and accommodations are available as the school can provide.
- d) The school uses assessment tools to monitor and improve student learning outcomes.
- e) The teachers and staff understand the diversity of student needs and demonstrate the ability to provide special attention and services.
- f) There is a high retention rate of students most in need.
- g) Teachers and staff are professionally prepared to provide innovative programs.

12. Educators in Lasallian Catholic schools are lifelong learners who engage in professional development in order to keep current in their fields and to meet the needs and challenges of their students' learning.

- a) Educators have degrees and/or credentials appropriate to their work in the school.
- b) The school provides direction and opportunities for professional development—at the school, in the District, in the wider educational community, and online.
- c) Educators develop learning plans and engage in continuing professional development.

Principle 4. Inclusive Community: *We celebrate diversity and welcome all members of our community.*

Our Lasallian Heritage: A strong, dedicated, inclusive community, both among the educators, and among educators, students and families, has been a core value of Lasallian education since its inception. In 1686, the first teachers chose to call themselves “Brothers” for two reasons: to indicate the depth of their commitment to each other (brothers to one another), and to describe their relationship with their students (as older brothers). The Brothers’ vow of Association reflects this communal commitment. With the growing number of lay men and women (Partners) participating in Lasallian mission, we now speak of being “brothers and sisters to one another,” and “older brothers and sisters” to those God has entrusted to our care. In the 21st century, association is experienced in powerful ways among Brothers and Partners in Lasallian schools and extends beyond the local school community to the District, Region, and international networks of Lasallian schools. Lasallians at all levels of the Lasallian mission participate in professional development and formation programs aimed at strengthening Lasallian Association for Mission.

This core principle also describes the type of relationships that are to be built among all members of the school community, including students: welcoming, inclusive, supportive; like brothers and sisters to one another. This belief is ingrained in the school’s operation, whereby students are given responsibility for their own learning as well as the learning of their peers as they support and accompany one another in multiple ways. Lasallian schools value and welcome diversity, recognizing that all people are created in the image and likeness of God. Contemporary educational research supports the founding intuition that the success of Lasallian education depends on the quality and depth of relationships among the many and varied members of the school community.

Informed by Our Catholic Faith Tradition: This core principle is rooted in a deeply-held Catholic Christian belief that humans are social beings, and that faith is practiced and experienced most authentically in community. The Catholic Bishops of the United States put it this way: “Community is at the heart of Christian education, not simply as a concept to be taught, but as a reality to be lived. Through education, [people] must be moved to build community in all areas of life; they can do this best if they have learned the meaning of community by experiencing it.”^x “Teaching and learning are the two terms in a relationship that does not only involve the subject to be studied and the learning mind, but also persons: this relationship cannot be based exclusively on technical and professional relations, but must be nourished by mutual esteem, trust, respect and friendliness”^{xi} “Teachers are called upon to rise up to a major educational challenge, which is the recognition, respect and enhancement of diversity. Psychological, social, cultural and religious diversity should not be denied, but rather considered as an opportunity and a gift. By the same token, diversities related to the presence of particular situations of frailness, affecting cognitive abilities or physical autonomy, should always be recognized and embraced, to prevent them from turning into penalizing inequalities.”^{xii}

13. A Lasallian Catholic school teaches respect and hospitality, promotes an atmosphere of understanding, and intentionally creates opportunities for students to interact and build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds.

- a) The school promotes an atmosphere of respect for and understanding of people from diverse backgrounds.
- b) The school provides activities and programs that enhance the relationships among members of the school community.
- c) The school sponsors activities that celebrate the diversity of members of the school community.
- d) The school provides programs and activities that enhance the cultural competence of all members of the school community.
- e) Admissions policies and practices promote a diverse student population.
- f) There are hiring practices in place to create a faculty and staff reflective of the diversity of the student body.

14. A Lasallian Catholic school creates a welcoming, safe, and caring environment for all members of the community.

- a) The students demonstrate respect, civility, politeness, and hospitality on campus.
- b) The campus environment is safe, secure, and clean.
- c) There are programs which reinforce social-emotional learning, such as learning compassion, self-awareness, communication skills, responsible decision-making, conflict resolution, and anti-bullying.
- d) Students feel respected and supported by adults in the school.
- e) Students experiencing difficulties feel they can approach and trust adults in the school for assistance.

15. A Lasallian Catholic school develops caring, trusting relationships among all members of the school community.

- a) Faculty, staff, and administrators have relationships with students which are characterized by bonds of mutual respect, cooperation, generosity, patience, humor, and gentleness.
- b) Faculty, staff, and administrators are both attentive and responsive to the needs of students throughout the school day, before and after school, and at school activities.
- c) The school provides faculty, staff, and administrators with regular formation in developing and maintaining safe and appropriate relationships with students.
- d) The school provides programs and activities to enhance relationship-building among members of the school's adult community.
- e) Faculty, staff, and administrators feel respected by other members of the adult community.
- f) Parents and families feel welcomed and engaged in the life of the school.

16. A Lasallian Catholic school nurtures a culture of responsibility for one another in the school community.

- a) The school's leadership models collegiality, collaboration, and teamwork and expects and facilitates these behaviors within and among individuals, offices, departments, and programs.
- b) The school responds immediately and effectively to events or issues that threaten the safety or well-being of persons in the school.
- c) The school administration invites faculty and staff input on critical school issues and consults with them when appropriate.
- d) Students and adults support one another in times of personal or institutional crisis.

Principle 5. Service with the Poor: *We are in solidarity with the poor and advocate for those suffering from injustices.*

Our Lasallian Heritage: As noted in the introduction to this document, Article 3 of the *Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* states: "The purpose of this Institute is to provide a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, according to the ministry which the Church has entrusted to it."^{xiii} Lasallian Catholic schools were founded to provide a transformative education, informed by Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the

teachings of the Church, for young people from poor and working class families. This education not only provides a religious education aimed at the salvation of all students in the next world, but also an education aimed at opening up future possibilities for employment and a full life for all students in this world. From their founding in seventeenth century France, Lasallian schools have educated their students to their Christian responsibility of care and concern for others in need. Today, this commitment motivates Lasallian Catholic schools to strengthen their efforts to enroll more students of poor and working class families and to provide outstanding programs in justice education and service-learning, as well as to be alert and responsive to newly-emerging forms of poverty and marginalization.

Informed by Our Catholic Faith Tradition: This core principle is rooted in a deeply-held Catholic Christian commitment to social justice and a concern for those in need that leads to concrete action on their behalf. As the Congregation for Catholic Education notes, “In particular, schools would not be a complete learning environment if, what pupils learnt, did not also become an occasion to serve the local community.”^{xiv} “It would be advisable for teachers to provide their students with opportunities to realize the social impact of what they are studying, thus favoring the discovery of the link between school and life, as well as the development of a sense of responsibility and active citizenship.”^{xv} “Those who find themselves in greater difficulties, who are poorer, more fragile or needy, should not be seen as a burden or obstacle, but as the most important students, who should be at the center of schools’ attention and concerns.”^{xvi} “Education is not just knowledge, but also experience: it links together knowledge and action; it works to achieve unity amongst different forms of knowledge and pursues consistency. It encompasses the affective and emotional domains, and is also endowed with an ethical dimension: knowing how to do things and what we want to do, daring to change society and the world, and serving the community.”^{xvii}

17. A Lasallian Catholic school intentionally seeks out young people who are economically poor or marginalized, invites them to become students, and provides an accessible and welcoming environment to students and families.

- a) Admissions and recruitment programs intentionally seek out students who are economically poor or marginalized.
- b) Tuition assistance programs allow students who are economically poor or marginalized to attend the school, obtain learning materials, and participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- c) The school environment welcomes and involves students and families who are economically poor or marginalized.

18. A Lasallian Catholic school engages students and adults in cross-cultural and cross-economic experiences with the poor and marginalized in the wider community and world.

- a) There is a comprehensive service-learning program across all grade levels for students which includes direct service to the poor and immersion programs.
- b) The school makes educating for justice and Catholic Social Teaching, and promoting social responsibility, integral to the school's curriculum.
- c) The school is seen as a place of dialogue where there are opportunities for meaningful interactions among and with the poor.
- d) The school sponsors and/or participates in local, District, and/or Regional service immersion experiences for students, faculty and staff, such as El Otro Lado, Lasallian Social Justice Institute, etc.

19. A Lasallian Catholic school is accessible and responsive to the needs of the wider community, especially the poor and marginalized—providing educational programming and resources.

- a) The school is attentive to the Institute’s call to go *beyond borders*, especially to serve the needs of migrant and refugee families.
- b) The school seeks to develop innovative programs and resources that respond to the educational and spiritual needs of the wider community.

- c) The school sponsors and/or participates in events and activities that engage its students and adults in community development partnerships with poor and marginalized members and areas of the wider community.

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- ⁱ Brothers of the Christian Schools. (2015). *The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. Rome, Italy: Brothers of the Christian Schools.
- ⁱⁱ Groome, T.H. (2002). *What makes us Catholic: Eight gifts for life*, p. 84. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{iv} Loes, A. & Huether, F. (Eds.). (1994). *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*. (R. Arnandez & A. Loes, Trans.), p. 179. Landover, MD: Christian Brothers Conference.
- ^v Groome, T.H. (1997). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent*, p. 77. Allen, TX: Thomas More Publishing.
- ^{vi} Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*, No. 9. Rome, Italy: CCE.
- ^{vii} Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic school*, No. 34. Rome, Italy: CCE.
- ^{viii} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{ix} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^x National Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1972). *To teach as Jesus did*, No. 23. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.
- ^{xi} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{xii} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{xiii} Brothers of the Christian Schools. (2015). *The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, article 3. Rome, Italy: Brothers of the Christian Schools.
- ^{xiv} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{xv} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{xvi} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.
- ^{xvii} Congregation for Catholic Education. (2014) *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion*. Vatican City: CCE.