

# St. Mary's Catholic School, Belen

## Executive Summary of the Findings of the Visiting Committee

*This page documents the many strengths of the school and the school's critical areas of growth affirmed by the Visiting Committee. This summary is designed to be shared with the broader school community.*

### Schoolwide Areas of Strength as Identified by the Visiting Committee

#### Domain 1: Mission and Catholic Identity

- The mission statement contains language that unmistakably identifies the school as Catholic.
- Students and parents spoke very passionately about their service projects.
- Students shared their appreciation for both the Advent and Lenten retreats.

#### Domain 2: Governance and Leadership

- Restructuring year of council and governing body
- Collaboration among school leader/leadership team, Bishop, and Council
- Improvement of by-laws
- Mission and Vision statements
- Creating a foundation for continuous improvement

#### Domain 3: Academic Excellence

- Staff meet license requirements.
- Curriculum Resources are evident at each grade level.
- Staff is committed to teaching, the school, and the students.
- Student-led conferences with a data focus.
- Family engagement involved in extracurricular activities.

#### Domain 4: Operational Vitality

- Works collaboratively with their pastor, consultative council, and finance council
- Maintains a consistent number of enrolled students.
- Has many legacy families which continue to build the family feel within the school community.

- Due to the flood, part of the facility is brand new.
- This school has shown its resilience during the difficult time of being displaced as the flood damage was fixed.
- Students seem to genuinely like their school and are proud of their contribution to society through service.

### **Critical Growth Areas as Identified by the School Self-Study**

- **Domain 1:**

St. Mary's Catholic School students will be able to understand the intentional connection between the action in service of social justice with planned instruction of Gospel and Catholic faith teachings.

- **Domain 2:**

The St. Mary's Catholic School Consultative Council will engage in collaboration with the school leader to ensure the faithful execution of their respective responsibilities to ensure the operational vitality of the school.

- **Domain 3:**

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will meet regularly to collaborate with clear objectives to improve the curriculum and instruction and to discuss specific assessment data to result in high levels of student achievement.

- **Domain 4:**

St. Mary's Catholic School will implement the enrollment management plan, found within the Operational Plan for school years 2023-2028, to continuously measure and analyze both enrollment and retention patterns for all student groups.

### **Additional Critical Growth Areas Identified by the Visiting Committee**

- NA
- 
- 

### **Final Comments by the Visiting Committee**

Opening the front door to St. Mary's Catholic School in Belén is like opening the doors to home. "Abre la puerta" is a perfect theme for this accreditation and the school. Located in historic Belén, the school is nestled in the northern part of this tight-knit community. From the moment we walked in, we felt at home... comfortable, warm, and safe and it was obvious so do the students. A leadership team greeted us eager to show us their school and all their

accomplishments. The greetings continued when we had the opportunity to do morning drop off duty with the principal as students said their good mornings. It warmed our hearts when we stood with the students and staff to do morning prayers, pledge of allegiance, and the school's mission statement. With every door we walked through during our class observations, we felt welcomed, and students were eager to showcase their learning and talents. Classrooms are a wonderful blend of academics and the feeling of home. They were bright, colorful, organized, filled with the Holy Spirit, and provided the students with a safe place to learn. We feel blessed to be a part of St. Mary's journey and our prayers are with you as you continue this important ministry.