REPORT OF FINDINGS

E 274 ST. CHRISTOPHER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

1840 NORTH BRUCE STREET

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89030

DIOCESE OF LAS VEGAS

WCEA

Western Catholic Educational Association
Catholic Schools Accrediting Commission

A SELF STUDY PROCESS

FOR CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

MARCH 18-20, 2019
REPORT OF FINDINGS

Kathy Hicks, Chair
Diocese of Spokane
Office of Education
1023 W Riverside Ave
Spokane, WA 99210
509-358-7335

Karen Forsythe
St. Viator Catholic School, Las Vegas

Carrie Bertram
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Las Vegas

Adrian Taylor-Allen
St. Anne Catholic School, Las Vegas

Carol Wilson
St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, Las Vegas
PREFACE

We, the Visiting Committee, wish to commend you, the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and student body of St. Christopher Catholic School of 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. Christopher 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 Self Study for St. Christopher Catholic School has been a collaborative effort incorporating the input of the entire community. The Self Study process began with training for the leadership team in the fall of 2016. All staff members worked as the leadership team on Chapter 3 due to the small size of the staff. Parents, students, and members of the parish community were asked to participate in order to gain input on the various school programs. The timeline and checklist for a spring 2018 visit was originally established to allow sufficient time for the completion of the Self Study.

However, since the last accreditation visit the school has experienced multiple changes in administration, including three pastors and four principals. The current principal began the 2016-2017 school year focusing on immediate needs including budget, enrollment, staffing, and the curriculum process. This created a situation where the school needed more time to complete the Self Study. An extension for a school visit was granted through the spring of 2019.

Catholic Identity surveys were completed by the pastor, principal, staff, and Advisory Council. Staff, student, and parent surveys were distributed in the fall of 2016. Parent surveys were then updated in the spring of 2018. The results were reflected in the narrative of the Self Study. Committee meetings began in spring of 2017 and continued working through the 2017-2018 school year. Faculty and Advisory Council meetings were devoted to training, discussing, writing, and collecting and reviewing data. Staff members spent numerous hours obtaining input, revising the narrative, collecting and preparing evidence, and assessing and reporting student data. The Self Study was forwarded to the Superintendent for an additional review.

After Chapter Three was completed, lists of Significant Accomplishments and Goals were created. These lists were presented to the faculty, staff, and the School Advisory Council. Action plan goals, strategies, and timelines were then created to complete the Self Study. A final review took place in December of 2018 and was then presented to the pastor and school advisory council for approval. There were obstacles encountered in the writing of the Self Study due to significant changes in Administration. However, once essential initiatives were addressed, the accreditation process allowed the school to develop a Self Study focusing on improving student learning.
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.*

St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in involving all shareholders in completing the Self Study. The pastor, the School Advisory Council, administration, faculty, school staff, students, and parents all participated in discussions, review of data and writing the Self Study. Surveys were given to shareholders in order to gain their perspectives on their school programs. Parents, teachers, students, and shareholders were invited to complete the surveys. The results of the surveys were reviewed during faculty meetings. Several parents (who are educators) also were invited to serve on Self Study committees. Copies of the Self Study were distributed to all members of the faculty for a final review and editing. The finished product was presented to the School Advisory Council and pastor.

Over the years, the school’s Mission and Philosophy Statements have been updated to further reflect their Catholic identity as well as our Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The Mission and Philosophy Statements for St. Christopher Catholic School were recently revised in 2017. Parents and shareholders responding to surveys agreed that the Mission and Philosophy Statements were relevant to the school. Families and parishioners were made aware of all revisions through various forms of communication.

The principal and leadership team will monitor the Action Plan and provide all shareholders with regular updates. Shareholders will be involved through school communications that are utilized to keep the community informed of school activities, needs, and accomplishments. Announcements in the parish bulletins, the weekly newsletter, the Principal’s monthly newsletter and school website will communicate the accomplishments of students. The School Advisory Council, which is composed of school and parish members, will provide feedback regarding goals and accomplishments of the school. This system will also keep the pastor and parishioners informed of the various activities occurring at the school.
Chapter 2: Context of the School

A. School Profile

St. Christopher Catholic School first opened its doors in September of 1964 staffed by the Brothers of the Holy Rosary of Reno. The school opened with third through sixth grades. During the summer of 1965, a second building was added, allowing for the addition of seventh grade. Eighth grade was added in the fall of 1966. A third building was added in 1969 allowed for the addition of first and second grades. The first Kindergarten class was added in 1983. The 1983-1984 school year was the first year that Saint Christopher was a kindergarten through eighth grade school.

St. Christopher Catholic School is located in north Las Vegas, Nevada, an older section of town. Saint Christopher Parish and school are predominantly Hispanic. Students from across the valley attend St. Christopher, but the majority come from the North Las Vegas area. Students do come from a variety of other parishes with the majority of them coming from Saint Christopher parish.

The school’s leadership updates the school profile and data analysis annually. This information is presented to the faculty, and School Advisory Council for review and discussion. Reviewing these documents assists in determining trends and planning for the future. In the writing of the Self Study, a five year analysis was completed focusing on enrollment, finances, assessment data, trends, and professional development.

St. Christopher Catholic School currently serves a student body of 213 students from 150 families. The student population is represented by the following ethnicities: 74% Hispanic, 8% White, 4% Asian, 9% Multi-racial, and 6% Black. This ethnicity breakdown reflects the population/growth of the parish as well as the northwest area of Las Vegas. Of the 213 students, 96% are Catholic and attend various parishes.

The socio-economic status of the neighborhood directly surrounding St. Christopher has changed very little over the past seven years. The school is located in a low-to-middle income area of the city. While devout, many parishioners cannot afford tuition and participate in the Parish Religious Education programs. The passage of Assembly Bill 165 (Nevada Opportunity Scholarship Program) now provides Nevada parents with options, allowing them use these funds for education-related expenses as well as tuition at our Catholic schools. Currently, there are 108 students receiving $386,620 in tuition funds from the Nevada Opportunity Scholarship Program.

In addition, school families also benefit from the Diocesan Tuition Assistance Fund ($113,660. over the last five years) as well as the JMJ Tuition Assistance Committee and the Franciscan Sisters (which provides an average of $135,000 in tuition assistance annually).

Parent surveys express a great appreciation for Catholic values, use of discipline policies, effective curriculum and instruction, friendly staff, smaller class sizes, involvement in the life of the school, the principal, and the small campus. Parents would like to see stronger security for
the school and building renovations. They also expressed a desire for a science lab, foreign language program, art instruction, summer school, tutoring and a hot lunch program.

The data from our teacher surveys indicates a need for improvement in differentiated instruction as well as the use of engagement strategies. Teachers also expressed the need for additional catechist certification offerings. Teachers recognize that discipline policies need to be consistent across all grade levels.

Student surveys show that students enjoy learning, like their teachers and friends. Students recognize that faith is in the front and center of all that they do at school. They like the ability to celebrate Mass, participate in service projects as well as co-curricular activities including art, music, sports, and the improved technology. Students are challenged in their education and teachers provide support to help them experience success. Students appreciate the family atmosphere of the school and feel respected by their classmates and teachers. Students would like to have more updated facilities and more after school activities.

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.

St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in the use of prior accreditation findings to support the achievement of all students. At the last accreditation visit, the school identified five critical goals. During the visit, the Visiting Committee modified and combined two goals and then added an additional goal to drive school improvement. All findings, identified by the school and those identified by the Visiting Committee, have been addressed.

The prior accreditation findings have been incorporated into the school’s long-range plan. The plans will drive school improvement and ensure the high achievement of all students. Curriculum decisions have been based on the use of the prior accreditation findings and the assessments of student achievement. The progress in the accomplishment of the Action Plan has been reviewed at the school’s Advisory Council meetings and faculty meetings, and documented through the completion of annual reports. The school and parish community have been kept well informed of Action Plan accomplishments as well as other school initiatives and needs. Announcements in the parish bulletins, school newsletters, and school website communicate the accomplishments of the students.

1) To create a long-range plan for the sustainability of the school’s programs addressing school finances, capital improvements, formation of a formal parent organization, and school advisory board. (modified goal as a combination of the Critical Goal one and two identified by the school)

Since the school’s last accreditation, a formal PTO and Advisory Council have been established. Despite numerous changes in the administration, the school has created a long-range plan. The
current principal and pastor have just completed their second year and have developed a plan for moving forward.

2) **To establish a formal schoolwide, academic intervention process utilizing various assessment data.** (modified Critical Goal four identified by the school)

A school counselor was added to the staff during the 2017-2018 school year. With this position in place, the school has now established a formal schoolwide, academic intervention process. Various assessment data is used to measure student progress and ensure that accommodations result in student achievement. Students are provided additional assistance through Title I tutoring program as well. The Diversified Education Learning Support Handbook provides the framework necessary to guide and support the learning needs of all students.

3) **To increase the scores of the majority of students from currently scoring 3 (marginally acceptable) to a score of 4 (acceptable) on the Diocesan Writing Assessment by the Spring of 2014.** (identified by the school)

Since the last accreditation, the writing assessment has been revised to incorporate the Common Core State Standards. New prompts were designed in 2015 and the Diocese opted not to administer testing in 2016. The results of this independent assessment over the last two years indicated marked improvement. With an emphasis on writing across the curriculum and the implementation of the Jane Schaffer writing model, scores have increased to an acceptable score (4 or above) at most grade levels. The school will continue to focus on writing for further improvement. Additional professional development, focused on writing, has been planned for the current school year.

4) **To establish an ongoing, formal professional development plan for teachers, based on formal academic data analysis, to improve student achievement.** (identified by the Visiting Team) Due to the fact that the Visiting Team combined two previous Critical Goals, the team recommends the new goal.

Professional development remains ongoing. Major focuses over the last seven years include differentiated instruction, student intervention, writing process, technology, common core math and language arts standards, faith formation, implementation of new reading, math, social studies, and science textbook series. Differentiation, catechist certification, reading, math, and writing will continue to be major focuses to ensure the high achievement of all students.
5) To expand the use of differentiated instruction throughout all grade levels to meet the needs of all students as determined by formative and summative assessments (identified by the school)

The school’s most recent in depth studies indicated that the consistent use of differentiated instruction, based upon formative and summative assessments is limited. Kindergarten through third grade implemented ability grouping for Reading and Mathematics. The school recognizes the need for a consistent/intentional approach and employ a variety of teaching strategies and techniques that incorporate technology whenever possible. Teachers continue to attend professional development workshops and conferences specific to reading and differentiation. In August of 2018, all teachers participated in a Kagan strategies workshop.
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 St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in their support of evangelization through the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith. The school utilizes an approved curriculum developed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (adapted for the Diocese of Las Vegas). St. Christopher Catholic School has made sure that their religion textbooks are aligned with the curriculum and show a consistency with their Mission Statement, Philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. They noted the need to enhance their religion curriculum through the use of a family life program in an effort to provide their students with a wholesome understanding of human sexuality based upon the moral principles of the Catholic church, which led to the implementation of the Family Life program in August of 2017. Catholic Identity is displayed in the school’s involvement in daily prayer opportunities, before school, during school, in the individual classrooms, and at the end of the day, as well as being involved in the Sacraments throughout the school year. They are consistent with insuring that not only their students are involved with spiritual formation, but the faculty and staff as well.

St. Christopher Catholic School provides opportunities for their faculty, administration, and staff to participate in continuing faith formation throughout the school year in order for them to increase or gain their Catechist Certification. They have done this by attending reflective retreats provided by the Diocese, attending the annual Diocesan Conference, reading relevant periodicals, and purchasing the *Echoes of Faith* online program. The administration and faculty acknowledge the importance of Catechist certification, as required by the Diocese of Las Vegas, and achieving advanced levels of certification are a priority. This is a Critical Goal of the school’s Self Study.

St. Christopher’s school community, being a family in Christ, dedicates their service to those in the community by donating to several charities and participating physically in service project opportunities which helps nurture the Catholic Identity in the school. One of the primary missions of St. Christopher Catholic School is to nurture the faith and foster Catholic identity in every student. The curriculum that is in place, the reminders of Christ’s presence throughout the campus, and the dedication of the faculty and staff, reflects the school as a genuine Catholic community.

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.
St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in defining the school’s purpose through its mission, philosophy, and SLEs. The school provides its students, in collaboration with parents as the primary educators, an education that fosters the development of the whole child. The principal and pastor share the responsibility of pastoral leadership for the school, with a strong academic program in accordance with the Graded Course of Study from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, adapted by the Diocese of Las Vegas. The school has adopted the charism “Travel With God” which serves to remind everyone that as St. Christopher crossed the river with the Christ child on his shoulders, God is with parents, teachers, and students wherever they travel.

St. Christopher Catholic School has established a strong, positive relationship with the parish that is collaborative and mutually supportive, reflecting the school’s mission and philosophy. Students participate in celebrations of faith throughout the year including: weekly School Masses, Holy Days of Obligation, morning assembly prayers, Stations of the Cross, and Crowning the Blessed Mother. The students also take an active role in honoring St. Christopher with a special annual pilgrimage. Students serve at parish liturgies including funerals, weddings, and Sunday Masses.

The SLEs are embedded in the curriculum through lesson planning, teacher instruction, and are clearly visible throughout the school. St. Christopher Catholic School is aligned with the Diocesan faith and academic standards. The standards and SLEs serve as the basis for all lessons taught at the school, from Kindergarten through Grade 8. During morning assembly, the principal focuses on weekly SLE reflections. Throughout the school year, teachers and students review the SLEs and their indicators. Students are recognized for their achievements in relation to the SLEs during each Trimester.

The faculty, staff, and parents at St. Christopher Catholic School, believe that the students are living out the SLEs to the best of their ability. Tracking the SLEs through student longitudinal charts and class progress are completed on a trimester basis. The school recognizes the need to create a process to review student achievement of the SLEs over time. This is identified as a Critical Goal in the school’s Self Study.

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.

St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in its organizational structures that support the high achievement of all students. The Visiting Committee observed that through consistent communication, support, and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders that there is a focus on promoting Catholic identity and high achievement for all students. The Pastor provides a sound Catholic education by taking an active role and interest in all aspects of the student learning. He presides over weekly school Masses incorporating values and traditions of the Catholic faith. The principal is involved daily with students and teachers. He reviews lesson plans, class assignments, and classroom observations.
During the 2016-2017 school year, a new School Advisory Council was formed. The primary goal of the Advisory Council is the spiritual, intellectual, and emotional development of the students. In keeping with this goal, the council has the responsibility of defining, recommending, and reviewing policies that govern the operation of the school. The council also assists, implements, and promotes the development of policies that are in accordance with the canons, usages and customs of the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Las Vegas.

The Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) has been instrumental in gathering volunteers for major school events that aid in community building. The PTO President creates the weekly newsletter, the monthly school calendar, coordinates teacher appreciation week, and the annual school Christmas Bazaar. They take part in planning Catholic Schools Week, coordinating parent volunteers to help in classrooms, and assisting all parish ministries in planning the Annual Parish Bazaar.

The teachers keep families updated on grades, assignments, and announcements by maintaining a class page on the Rediker site. Trimester report cards, progress reports, conferences, phone calls and emails are opportunities to communicate with the families on student progress. There are many opportunities to communicate student achievement. The students are acknowledged with classroom awards, SLE Awards, Trimester Awards and Honor Roll.

The teachers are supported by the administration with morning meetings, a weekly meeting, and a monthly meeting. Teachers are given ample time to discuss curriculum, teaching methodology, and student progress to ensure high student achievement. Saint Christopher Catholic School plans to have more professional development for teachers that focus on student achievement and use of assessment.

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.

St. Christopher Catholic School is effective in using and analyzing educationally sound assessment processes for instructional and curricular improvement. The Visiting Committee observed that in order to continue strengthening their faith formation, teachers utilize formative and summative assessments to report each student’s progress in achievement of Schoolwide Learning Expectations. Their progress is determined through the use of the SLE rubric. Students receive an SLE progress report each trimester. Teachers integrate the SLEs into their daily lessons and students are recognized for their achievement or improvement in each SLE category. A wide-range of formative and summative assessments are used to collect, disaggregate, and analyze student performance data. Such assessment methods include, quizzes, tests, observations, chapter tests, worksheets, class participation, homework, essays, oral reports/presentations, and projects. In addition to the teachers analyzing the data, the principal reviews all tests and conducts dialogues, or “data chats” with teachers regarding the performance of the students. Conversations are also conducted with parents regarding the students’ performance throughout the school year. Students’ participation in Diocesan-wide competitions which include the All Catholic Schools’ Science Fair, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee, and Forensics, also assesses their knowledge and mastery of curriculum areas.
Students are also assessed through the annual *Terra Nova* and *ECRA Writing Assessments*. The utilization of the data from the Terra Nova assessment has allowed the principal and teachers to evaluate and track student performance levels over the years. Data has shown that students in grades 2 through 8 are experiencing limited success when compared with students across the Diocese in the areas of Reading, Language, and Math. In the last five years, data has shown strong gains and significant growth by grade 8.

In the past two years, the annual *ECRA* writing assessment has indicated marked improvement and scores increasing to an acceptable score of 4 or above at most grade levels. This is attributed to the emphasis on writing across the curriculum and the implementation of the Jane Schaffer writing model.

St. Christopher Catholic School recognizes that they have seen sustainable growth as a result of obtaining many of the resources that are essential to ensure that learning is taking place across the grades and that all students are being challenged. They also attribute their growth to now having a school counselor and Title I instructors who work with the students providing testing and recommending accommodations for those students experiencing learning differences. Updated textbooks are aligned to the Graded Course of Study and classrooms are equipped with a Smart Board and a document camera.

Through the analysis of data and taking into account enrollment trends and finances, the administration has been able to allocate resources to meet the needs of students and impact student learning. Such resources include textbooks, technology, and professional development. The school counselor and principal work with students, parents, and teachers to review data and revise expectations to ensure student success.

St. Christopher Catholic School recognizes that additional steps must be taken to ensure student growth. They understand that they must be consistent in their use of authentic assessment, with timely “data chats” across grade levels and through individual meetings with the principal. This is a Critical Goal of the school’s Self Study.

**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 Visitors Committee observed that the school is effective in their use of the Schoolwide Learning Expectations and standard-based curriculum to support high achievement of all students. This ensures progress by all students in the way they incorporate Catholic values with standard-based curriculum.

St. Christopher Catholic School uses the Graded Course of Study, which builds and reinforces the foundations of knowledge from the previous year. This has been revised and aligned with Common Core Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. The teachers work to ensure a challenging curriculum using diverse teaching styles.
St. Christopher Catholic School has a set of clearly defined and measurable SLEs. The teachers document the SLEs in their lesson plans, and the SLEs are posted throughout the school. SLEs are assessed during each trimester progress report. The SLEs stimulate learning, promote growth and allows each child to reach his or her potential.

St. Christopher Catholic School utilizes multiple types of both summative and formative assessments. Terra Nova testing is given at the beginning of the school year and the data allows teachers and administration to identify students in the 1st quartile and recommend them for Title I services for additional instruction. Title I services are utilized to support students through tutoring with Catapult instructors.

Terra Nova data has also shown that students in grades 2 through 8 are experiencing limited success when compared with students across the Diocese in the areas of Reading, Language, and Math. In the last five years, data has shown strong gains and significant growth by grade 8. The school recognizes the need to incorporate differentiated instruction across all grade levels. They realize the need for additional professional development and consistent use of authentic assessment to track progress and student achievement.

Technology has helped to enhance the teaching and learning in the classroom. Each classroom has a Smart Board and document camera in order to make full use of the online resources. New computers were purchased to advance the technology classes and give students improved access for their current academic online programs. The students' use IXL to target specific skills in English Language Arts and Math that coincide with lessons. The students use My Access to guide and enhance student writing in grades 4 -8. Laptops and iPads are available for differentiated instruction.

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. Christopher Catholic School is effective in utilizing a variety of teaching methodologies focusing on faith formation and academic achievement. St. Christopher Catholic School integrates Catholic values throughout the entire curriculum. In addition, students are encouraged to demonstrate acts of kindness and charity to their community.

Formal and informal classroom observations of teacher methodologies and student interactions are conducted throughout the year. Teachers attend various in-services and conferences in accordance to their grade and subject area. Major focuses included differentiated instruction, student intervention, writing process, use of technology, faith formation, and the implementation of new textbook series. St. Christopher Catholic School recognizes that research based strategies are a integral part of student achievement.

Accommodation plans are in place for students with learning differences. The school counselor and principal work with students, parents, and teachers to review and revise expectations and ensure success.
St. Christopher Catholic School uses a variety of assessment tools to measure student achievement. Formal assessments include tests and quizzes. Informal assessment tools include teacher observation, projects, presentations, class work, class participation and homework. Teachers use online assessments such as Accelerated Reading and MyAccess for formative assessments to make instructional decisions. Technology is becoming as an integral part of assessment and analysis of testing outcomes is used to drive instructional decisions. Plus Portal, a web-based program, is used to post student grades and communicate information. In addition to classroom integration, students attend a technology class where they apply, evaluate, and synthesize their learning through a variety of projects.

St. Christopher Catholic School recognizes the need to develop a Professional Learning Community, which will foster collaborative learning among colleagues. Teachers recognize that research-based strategies are integral to student growth and quality instruction requires that all students are supported through the consistent use of differentiated instruction. This is a Critical Goal of the school’s Self Study.

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.

St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in the support of student spiritual, personal, and academic growth. The visiting Committee observed that within St. Christopher Catholic School’s community of faith, students have many opportunities to participate in learning experiences that are rooted in Catholic beliefs and values. Students pray as a faith-filled community in the morning and at the end of the day. The entire school participates in the celebration of Mary’s birthday, the May Crowning, reciting the rosary during the month of October, and the Stations of the Cross during Lent. Mass is celebrated weekly and is led by the students. Catholic prayers and their meanings are taught progressively each year based on Diocesan Curriculum guide. In addition to praying before lunch and at the end of their lunch period, each classroom has a prayer corner and a space for class intentions to encourage personal growth. During the seasons of Advent and Lent students in grades 3-8 are given the opportunity to receive confession; and the seventh and eighth grade classes participate in the Bishop’s Mass during Catholic Schools Week.

Parents are afforded a myriad of ways to stay connected with the school’s expectations and their children’s progress to include: Parent/Student Handbook, Parent Notification Form, “PAWS”-itive Award, Orientation Days, Rediker/Plus-Portal, Classroom Newsletters, PAW PRINTS Weekly Newsletter, Parent Pride Newsletter, School Facebook page and School Website. Saint Christopher Catholic School has established an open door policy where upon request; parents can meet with their child’s teacher, guidance counselor, and/or administrator.

Students are expected to adhere to all school rules and policies set forth in the Parent/Student Handbook. Students are taught how to show respect and to always take responsibility and show...
accountability of their actions through the Student Learning Expectations. St. Christopher Catholic School’s goal is to teach students to, through their actions, demonstrate a strong sense of their Catholic Identity. Each classroom provides a behavioral plan for student’s needs, and consequences are in place.

Students are provided with opportunities throughout the school year to participate in service opportunities, co-curricular, and curricular activities. Student Council and National Junior Honor Society participate in several service projects throughout the year. Annual clothing and food drives and monthly service projects are organized to support local charities and provide students with real-life experiences to live out their Student Learning Expectations.

Students have multiple opportunities for both spiritual and academic growth within the school and Diocesan communities. Activities such as the Chess Tournament, Forensics, Geography Bee, Science Fair, and Spelling Bee give students a chance to challenge their academic and critical thinking skills. Through these activities students continue to develop spiritually and personally in achieving the Student Learning Expectations.

St. Christopher Catholic School is supported by a dedicated group of parents. Parents volunteer in the classrooms, school events and fundraising. Parents and teachers see themselves as partners in the education of their children.

A significant accomplishment is the acquisition of a school counselor through United Testing Services. This has proven to be a great support to the continued academic growth and success of all students. St. Christopher Catholic School maintains a safe environment for the students and staff. The campus has a new perimeter fence that encloses the school property. Safety cameras have been installed as well as magnetic locked door requiring electronic access. Classrooms doors remain locked at all times. All faculty have new radios as well as emergency classroom buttons to communicate with the office.

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.

St. Christopher Catholic School is effective in resource management and development to support high achievement of all students. The resources available to the school, along with a parish subsidy, are sufficient to sustain the school’s programs, reflect sound financial practices, responsible stewardship, and are effectively used to carry out the school mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations. The school has a set budgeting procedure that follows Diocesan and Parish directives. The principal, pastor, and bookkeeper develop the budget framework based upon historical data; faculty and staff requests/forecasts; anticipated tuition fees and revenues; projected cost increases; and anticipated/projected capital improvements.
Income is received from tuition, registration fees, grants, gifts to the school, parish subsidy (as needed), scholarship programs, and fund-raising. The school has recently created a Long Range Plan. This will help guide the school in the direction that is most beneficial to student achievement. Areas addressed in the plan include enrollment, staffing, curriculum, Catholic identity, plant and facility, and resource management. The Visiting Committee affirms the diocese in its efforts to support St. Christopher Catholic School in marketing and development.

The principal and administrative assistant work tirelessly to promote scholarship opportunities for the students. The majority of students attending St. Christopher Catholic School are recipients of the Nevada School Choice Scholarship Program. The program is offered through a state initiative based upon economic need (300 percent of the poverty line). While the Scholarship Program has the potential to award a maximum of $7,700 to each student, the school’s tuition rates are much lower (at $4,290 per student). Therefore, the school is returning a total of $3,410 per student to the State of Nevada. The school has already taken steps to reconstruct the tuition rates in order to narrow the gap and establish more reasonable rates. Currently the parish is subsidizing the school with any shortfall.

In addition to the state Scholarship Program, St. Christopher Catholic School students also benefit from the Diocesan Tuition Assistance Fund and the JMJ Tuition Assistance Fund. Each of the Scholarship Programs provide families with assistance and the ability to choose a Catholic education for their children.

Financial management of the school reflects sound practices and responsible stewardship of the school. The school recognizes the need for continued careful monitoring of financial resource allocations as well as tuition schedules to ensure their viability. The creation of the Long Range Plan will continue to address the needs of the school. Each of these factors will help the school financially while fulfilling the school’s mission, philosophy, and Schoolwide Learning Expectations, in order to support student achievement.

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)

- Creation of a caring and Christ-centered community where students and families are valued
• Collaboration among dedicated administration, faculty, staff, and parents that
  focus on the needs of all students in a faith-filled environment
• Providing enriching prayer and worship opportunities throughout the school day and
  Liturgical seasons to share the Catholic faith.
• Implementation of Schoolwide Learning Expectations that are embraced by the
  school community and lived out each day
• Providing students with opportunities to participate in Christian service
  throughout the community
• Addition of a school counselor who works with students, socially and
  academically including testing and needed accommodations
• Acquisition of Title I instructors who support students with learning differences
• Incorporation of a variety of technology to enhance student learning

Critical Goals (identified by the school)

1. All faculty and staff to obtain and maintain Basic through Advanced Levels of Catechist
   Certification
2. Consistent use of authentic assessment
3. Intentional incorporation of differentiated instruction across all grade levels
4. Create a formal Professional Learning Community
5. Create a process to review student achievement of the SLEs over time and reviewing and
   updating indicators as necessary

St. Christopher is highly effective in designing and aligning the Action Plan with their Self
Study. The school has identified critical goals to focus on during their next term of accreditation.
The school’s identification of using authentic assessment and intentional incorporation of
differentiated instruction across grade levels will have a direct impact on student learning.
Professional learning communities with support teachers in working towards consistent
instruction and an avenue to share and learn to apply effective research-based strategies. The
goal of all teachers achieving catechetical certification will provide them with knowledge and
faith development to better instruct students in their own spiritual formation.

The school has created an Action Plan that both aligns with and addresses the school’s critical
goals to support high achievement of all students. The goals that they have selected will have
great impact on the total school program. The Action Plan includes detailed strategies, along
with activities, costs, and timelines. There is a process for monitoring and communicating with
the community. The thoroughness of this plan, in addition to the way that the school has
addressed the critical areas of growth from their last Self Study, led the Visiting Committee to
believe that St. Christopher Catholic School will successfully address their new goals. St.
Christopher Catholic School understands that the Action Plan is fluid and will continue to
monitor student growth and success and adjust plans where necessary.
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.

St. Christopher Catholic School is highly effective in having the capacity to implement and monitor their new Action Plan. The school addressed all items from the previous Action Plan. A long-range plan was created as well as a formal parent organization and Advisory Council are now in place. A formal intervention process was also established to support students in the learning. The school recognizes a continued focus on consistent differentiation across grade levels. They also indicated the need to establish Professional Learning Communities for intentional planning and collaboration to support high achievement for all students. These areas have been identified in this current Self Study.

The goals, activities, and success of the Action Plan will be monitored in a variety of ways. Meeting agendas and minutes will document the discussions and actions taking place. Professional development, lesson plans, and assessment data will also be evidence of actions completed. Annual reports will be prepared for the Diocese. The success of students as a result of the implementation of the Action Plan will be presented to shareholders in many different forms including the school website, newsletters, and bulletins.

Saint Christopher Catholic School has the resources, stability and plans in place to effectively implement and monitor the new Action Plan. The administration in conjunction with the faculty, staff and Advisory Council have developed an Action Plan that will keep the school focused in addressing their critical goals.

**Visiting Committee Summary Thoughts:**

St. Christopher Catholic School is a collaborative community committed to student growth. The pastor, administration, faculty, staff, and parents clearly form a strong and unified community that supports the spiritual and academic achievements of students. The school has embraced the accreditation process as a means to improve student learning. The school sees itself as an integral part of the parish ministry, and the parish supports and affirms the school’s mission. Catholic identity permeates every classroom and across all curricular areas. The community is blessed to have a school in their midst that brings solid and long lasting traditions to its youth.