

# **SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT**

## **WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION**

**FOR**

### **Butte Central Catholic High School**

9 S Idaho Street  
Butte, Montana 59701

*February 12-15, 2012*

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*The Visiting Committee would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the entire Butte Central Catholic High School community for their hospitality and genuine warmth shown to us during the visit. The energy, faith, and devotion you bring to your mission focused work is inspiring and greatly appreciated. You should be very proud of the work you have done during your first WCEA accreditation process. May God continue to bless BCCHS!*

## **Chapter I: Student/Community Profile**

Butte Central Catholic High School (BCCHS) celebrated its 100th anniversary as a Catholic high school in the community of Butte Montana in 2009. The community of Butte is located in the southwest of Montana on the backbone of the Rocky Mountains. The 2010 census lists the total city population at 33,892. Although its historical roots are embedded in the rough and tumble history of mining, Butte has seen a transformation of diversity in its many areas yet remains a warm and welcoming community. BCCHS is a true reflection of the Butte community. Familiar family names consistently dot the rolls as well as new generations of families lured by the quality of education provided.

Since 1986 the faculty make-up has seen a decrease religious order and an increase in lay ministry. Currently the entire faculty and staff are lay ministers. BCCHS and Butte Central Catholic elementary have become a consolidated K-12 system operating with the structure of the Diocese of Helena and the guidance of the diocesan superintendent. Reformation of Butte Central Catholic schools has increased the efficiency of governance between the two schools. All business, financial, and human resources issues are managed by the centralized staff, which creates a level of difficulty separating the business end from the K-12 system. The majority of the students reside in the community of Butte with exception of those student enrolled through the international student program.

BCCHS is a 9-12 co-educational high school governed by the Diocese of Helena, Montana and the most revered Bishop George Leo Thomas. The school is accredited by the Northwest Association of Accredited schools (NAAS), the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and through this process, the WCEA. BCCHS meets or exceeds the instructional and support programs required by the state of Montana and OPI.

The 2011-2012 enrollment is 133 students. On average, 57% of students are male and 43% female. The number of students that are Catholic ranges from 75%-80%. Recruiting efforts are focused on leveling the gender imbalance. Enrollment at BCCHS has been an issue and tracked since the co-educational merger back in 1969. A downward trend in student population continued until the enrollment stabilized over the last 5-10 years. This has been challenging considering the decrease in total population over the past four decades in Butte.

BCCHS continues to provide a solid academic program and success in athletics and other support programs/activities. The school recognizes a need for a more aggressive marketing and recruiting program in order to increase the population and enrolment at the school.

The student population of 90-95% white reflects the area in which the school is located. The conversion of the fourth floor convent to house international students adds a positive impact on enrollment. While the current dorm houses only male students, efforts are underway to find dorm style residents for female students.

Students are offered broad range of Montana High Schools Association activities, with 91% of the students participating and over 70% involved in two or more activities. 95 % of graduating

students attend college. Although the school has some data to track student success post graduation, they recognize the need for a more formalized process.

BCCHS continues to develop a strong academic program and uses multiple assessments. The school replaced their norm-referenced assessments with criterion referenced testing through the Montana Office of Public Instruction beginning in 2009.

BCCHS staff includes one administrator, 16 certified teachers and four additional classified staff. The faculty meets the requirements for certification indicated by the Montana Office of Public Instruction. The school contracts with an outside firm for technology support. There has been an increase in professional development opportunities provided to the staff over the past three years.

BCCHS provides for the spiritual development of its students and considers Catholic identity to be the most significant aspect of the partnership they share with the Diocese of Helena. Students take four years of religious education participate in monthly masses at parishes located throughout their community and attend annual retreats. The schools' ministry program has gained in strength working directly within the local parishes. The schools chapel is used to provide opportunity for class instruction and individual worship.

The three main sources of income for BCCHS to support their programs come from tuition, parish subsidies and the Butte Central Catholic Educational Foundation. The tuition model used at the school is unique, with a 10-tier system based upon family income. The cost for education is \$8,445. The school acknowledges the critical need for increasing student population, and strengthening the financial resources to support student learning.

## Chapter II: Progress Report

This is the first year that BCCHS will be accredited through the WCEA.

## Chapter III: Self-Study Process

The Self-Study of Butte Central Catholic High School (BCCHS), originated with the Diocese of Helena joining the Western Catholic Education Association (WCEA) under the direction of the Diocesan Superintendent. The state of Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools accredit BCCHS.

The *Focus on Learning* process was introduced in 2005 when WCEA Executive Director, Brother William Carrier, provided a workshop for Catholic school educators in the Diocese of Helena. The information from this workshop lead into the 18-month process of self-study at BCCHS beginning in the spring of 2010 with orientation of our school community provided by the Diocesan Superintendent. Leadership teams were formed, Focus Group leaders appointed and the principal provided guidance. The leadership team participated in numerous meetings to further define the accreditation process and also provide direction for development of the schools Expected School-Wide Learning Results (ESLR). Once derived, the ESLR's were presented to faculty, staff, and school community for commendation. The ESLR's were displayed in the classroom and explained by the homeroom teachers. The faculty recognizes that the ESLR's are living documents and that they will need to provide further opportunities for revisions and clarifications once more fully grasped.

After Focus Groups were formed, meetings began on a bi-monthly or monthly basis to identify answers to formulated questions presented in the self-study outline. The goal was to provide evidence related to each individual Focus Group. The focus groups finalized their work in the fall of 2011 and submitted the gathered information to the leadership team. During November and December of 2011, the Self-Study was compiled into a final document. The *Focus on Learning* report was reviewed and revised before being approved by the leadership team in early January of 2012. The report was then sent to all faculty, staff, and school council for review and approval.

The complete review of the comprehensive educational process at BCCHS outlined in the design and methodology; intends to show areas of excellence as well as areas of growth. The *Focus on Learning* process has provided a comprehensive outline of evaluating and updating the tasks necessary for an accreditation review. The following tasks and issues have been and will continue to be addressed:

- Further define and articulate the ESLR's to all stakeholders
- Further analyze student work, teaching, learning, and demonstrate evidence of each
- Revise the school philosophy and mission statement
- Further incorporation of technology as a tool for teaching and learning
- Revision of daily classes and curriculum to enhance student learning

- Ensure a collaborative process where by all stakeholders devote attention to improving student learning.

### **Expected School-Wide Learning Results**

#### **Christ Centered Active Christian – BCCHS graduate expectations:**

- Develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and use the knowledge of the Gospels, prayer, liturgy, service, and retreats as a formation for life with the Roman Catholic Church
- Uses the core teachings of the Catholic Church to make moral decisions, discern moral issues, and form moral values
- Develop their faith journey supported by the faith community in which they participate
- Uses Christian values and Catholic social teachings as a basis for providing service, justice, and charity to others
- Develops a personal conscience by living the Gospel message in their daily interaction

#### **Self-Directed Lifelong Learners-BCCHS graduate expectations:**

- Possesses the appropriate skills to analyze critically and think logically in an abstract manner
- Uses appropriate techniques to articulate viewpoints in written and oral expressions
- Develops independent thinking skills and applies them throughout all academic learning opportunities
- Acknowledges and is respectful of all cultures through the association of their customs, language, and history
- Develops organizational and study skills as a priority to their pursuit of goals and personal progress
- Develops the skills to recognize and utilize information from all available sources for analysis and problem solving to meet required needs
- Apply the knowledge gained through technology and adapt their skills to make connections with global issues in the changing world

#### **Collaborative Societal Citizens-BCCHS graduate expectations:**

- Uses a Christ-centered basis for participation in civic life
- Demonstrates mutual respect for people and the global environment
- Develops a sense of personal responsibility for meaningful contributions in their everyday lives
- Possesses the awareness and knowledge of the global challenges faced along their life journey

### **Mission Statement**

The primary purpose of Butte Central Catholic Schools is to develop intellectual excellence within a safe community environment that seeks to further holistic development and a sense of responsibility for lives in the spirit of Jesus. Butte Central Catholic Schools welcome all students to be part of their traditions and teachings that are based on the belief that each student is a unique, growing individual who, as a member of the human, global community, shares in the responsibility for that community. As a Roman Catholic community, Butte Central Catholic

Schools proclaim their mission in a spirit of faith, peace, and justice.

**Philosophy**

The course study at Butte Central Catholic High School is designed to provide an education that is both Christian and humanistic in its scope. Because most of our young people choose to continue their education at the college level, we place emphasis, not just the subject matter, but critical thinking skills, collaborative learning, and the “how to” of successful scholarship. We know that teaching, like learning, is accomplished in a variety of ways, therefore, we concentrate on keeping our students at the center of instruction and on promoting excellence. In the tradition of Catholic education, we build on faith and commit ourselves to excellence. Through this environment, we integrate academics with athletics, with art and music, with writing as well as critical thinking, with public speaking, and we resolve to develop young learners who understand social justice and responsible action. Parents and students, we suggest that you take the courses that best suit your needs, your abilities, and your plans for the future. Talk to teachers, school counselor or administrator for guidance in selecting your course of study. Finally, testing at the high school level is important for entering colleges and universities. All students will test throughout their four years of high school and are encouraged to take it seriously. The SAT and ACT are currently used by most colleges and universities for entry.

## Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

### CATEGORY A. ORGANIZATION FOR STUDENT LEARNING

**A1.** *To what extent has the school established a clear statement of philosophy that reflect the beliefs and philosophies of the institution, a commitment to Catholic identity, thoroughness of instruction, focus on the needs of the whole person, and recognizes the dignity of all members of the school community?*

*To what extent does the philosophy and mission reflect parents as primary educators and teachers as facilitators of learning?*

*To what extent is the mission defined further by adopted expected school wide learning results that form the basis of the educational program for every student?*

BCCHS has developed very thorough mission and philosophy statements that encompass all aspects of the students' education at the school. Though not directly stated, the Focus Groups recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children and see themselves as support for the parents. The school has dedicated itself to further review, editing, and developing their mission and vision statement to align with their ESLR's, which are in their infancy phase, and recognizes that this is an ongoing process of the school.

The ESLR's were developed in the previous spring of the school year and are recognized by the various Focus Groups as needing further and ongoing review. The school recognizes that the ESLR's have set an academic and spiritual development program into action, which integrates spirituality into all classes and curriculum propagating the mission of the school and its community.

Teachers will be expected to further incorporate and develop their curriculum alignment to the ESLR's throughout each class, content area, and curriculum. Through the education program and strategic planning efforts, BCCHS is in a strong position to advance the education program through a collaborative long-term effort.

**A2.** *To what extent does the governing authority committed to sharing the Catholic vision adopt policies, which are consistent with the school's philosophy and mission and support the achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results for the school?*

*To what extent does the governing authority delegate implementation of these policies to the professional staff?*

*To what extent does the governing authority monitor results?*

The school, through the Diocese of Helena (DOH) Chancery staff, Superintendent, Advisory Council and Butte Central Catholic High School administration work through many levels of governance and authority to achieve the ESLR's for the school. The building principal, in

consultation with the Butte Central K-12 council, advisory groups, and other leadership groups and bodies of influence directly govern the school. On the local level, the building principal works in cooperation with the grade school principal to align curriculum, recruit students to the schools, and complete financial needs of the system. In addition, a Dean of Students, a school counselor, a finance officer, and an HR/admissions officer, all of which perform several additional duties throughout the school day, augment the school's administration team.

The local Advisory Council makes recommendations and evaluates changes to policy and procedure with the building principals. The council meets bi-monthly and in special session as needed. The BCCHS building principal articulates policy and implementation of such policy to the professional staff on a continual basis. Through weekly staff meetings, daily prayer and daily communication on an individual level, the building principal communicates changes, adherence concerns, and governance issues to the staff. The governance is supplemented with further guidance from the Diocesan Superintendent.

Several tools are utilized to monitor results of the education program at BCCHS. The school uses parent, student and staff surveys, discussion committees, open meetings, and individual appointment based meetings to gather information in an effort to monitor results. Further monitoring is completed through advisory council meetings, direct feedback from parents and athletes, the Activities Director, content area meetings, and consultation with multiple entities and stakeholders. This completes the formal and informal feedback mechanism for monitoring results of the school program at BCCHS.

**A3.** *To what extent does the school leadership encourage the cultivation of Catholic values and the spiritual formation of the school community?*

*To what extent does the school leadership make decisions to facilitate actions that focus the energies of the school on student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?*

*To what extent does the school leadership empower the staff?*

*To what extent does the school leadership ensure shared accountability for student learning?*

BCCHS states that Catholic values are encouraged and reinforced in the classroom, in extra and co-curricular activities and in areas of the Butte community. Surveys determined that the faculty and staff feel freedom to engage in faith discussions at any time and that all members of BCCHS are encouraged and expected to treat each other with Christian respect and behaviors. Through Focus Groups, discussions with stakeholders of the school, faculty, and students, the spiritual formation of the school community is evident in the school day, extra and co-curricular activities, and in the retreat program of the school.

Indications from the self-study conclude that the administration and staff members are fully informed of the ESLR's and help ensure they are met. Surveys show that a more formal process for developing an understanding of the ESLR's for the students is necessary. Faculty and staff are continuing to articulate and further develop ways to illustrate the connection between

curriculum and the ESLR's to facilitate the focus on student learning and fulfillment of the mission of BCCHS.

The leadership of the school has developed a strong staff that feels empowered by the support and encouragement from the leadership office. Rules are generally consistent and enforced. Students are expected to show high levels of respect and admiration of each other and the school's educational team. With the minimal discipline and small school environment, it was evident that empowerment of the faculty was in place and that the students recognized and felt a mutual respect for each other, administration, and teachers. There is clearly an intimate sense of understanding each student, his or her individual needs, and shared accountability of the success of each child.

Student learning is evidenced in the data available in the school's self-study document that is the responsibility of all those in the building. However, surveys indicate that teachers are concerned with areas of budget constraints leading to a lack of professional development and continuing education. The school leadership identifies this need and is currently working on a component of strategically planning for professional development.

**A4.** *To what extent are the school administration and staff qualified for their assigned responsibilities?*

*To what extent are the school administration and staff committed to the school's philosophy and mission?*

*To what extent does the school administration and staff engage in ongoing spiritual and professional development that promotes student learning?*

*To what extent do the administration and staff lead by example and work to create a community of faith?*

All faculty and staff are qualified for their particular role at BCCHS. All teachers but one are certified by the Montana Office of Public Instruction or are currently enrolled in an internship program authorized by the State of Montana and University internship program. Each teacher educates students in their area of expertise. The staff is designated as highly qualified with multiple years of experience. 60% of the staff currently possesses over 15 years of experience each. All employees of BCCHS are required to complete the Protecting God's Children (provided through VIRTUS) and fulfill their monthly continuing education for fulfillment of the program. In the spirit of a small school environment, teachers fulfill multiple duties in the school and provide oversight and governance within the school's classrooms and hallways.

The school leadership has the appropriate certifications and degrees authorized and recognized by the Office of Public Instruction for the state of Montana. The faculty consists of 16 faculty that hold 12 bachelor/associate degrees, 2 masters degrees, and 1 doctorate. The gender balance of staffing includes 10 male to 6 female teachers.

The leadership and staff bring a wide range of skills, expertise, experiences, and variety of instructional styles. The diversity of the group is noted in the self-study document and confirmed through observations of multiple classrooms and instructional day observation.

Faculty surveys also indicated that this wide array of experience leads to many spirited discussions on topics such as curriculum and discipline.

It is stated that the school is small enough that the school's mission and philosophy are not only fundamentally seen throughout the instructional day, but also during outside school events in the community and public environment. The staff and leadership are involved in activities, service, and athletic arenas around the Butte community.

The BCCHS faculty and staff report that the professional development while effective is sporadic in nature. In the past three years, the professional development has been a partial responsibility of the Diocesan Superintendent in setting Catholic professional development day(s) in October for the Montana Catholic Schools, which has included BCCHS for the past three academic years. The instruction and professional development is reported to be effective for some, but others report that they take it upon themselves to attend professional development opportunities offered through other entities.

Programs are in place that creates a community of faith at BCCHS. Retreats, religion classes, daily prayer, classroom, and activity programs of the school allow the administration and staff to lead and work in developing and promoting a community of faith.

**A5.** *To what extent does the school have a safe, healthy, nurturing environment that reflects the school's philosophy and mission?*

*To what extent does the school environment foster community and the achievement of religion and educational goals?*

*To what extent is the school environment characterized by a respect for differences, trust, caring, professionalism, support, and high expectations for each student?*

The self-study, observations, focus group discussion, and interviews confirm that the environment of BCCHS is a safe and healthy environment that facilitates a nurturing learning environment and reflects the school's philosophy and mission. Strong numbers in the survey results show that the entire community feels that the school is a strong moral, academic, and spiritual environment. Parents and faculty articulated that the environment of the school is family oriented and that a special component of the school is its small size; students are not allowed to "slip through the cracks." When students provided feedback, they stressed that the staff of BCCHS shows numerous positive qualities that motivate, facilitate, and assist students in their learning. The students also articulated that the staff are professional and have the best interests of the students at heart.

Students expressed that there is a positive feel and respectful nature throughout the entire school environment. It was observed and articulated that there remains a great respect for student differences, trust, professionalism and support for high expectations that the school places on each student.

The school utilizes clear and understandable policies and procedures that are enforced through the classroom teacher and supported by the school leadership.

**A6.** *To what extent does the school administration and staff regularly assess student progress toward accomplishing the school's expected schoolwide learning results?*

*To what extent does the school administration and staff report student progress to the rest of the school community?*

BCCHS regularly assesses student progress through a variety of institutional, local, regional, state, and national assessments. Midterm, quarter, and semester grades monitor a student's continual progress in the academic areas so that they are not "slipping through the cracks" before semester ends. Further, in 2010-11, the school adopted a new eligibility grade check that occurs every two weeks. High expectations for student achievement are evidenced through MyStudentsProgress.com (parent/teacher/student web-based grade book), parent/student conferences, phone calls and emails, and continuity through the school leadership in home communication.

The progress and student achievement are reported internally through online grade reporting system MyStudentsProgress to parents, faculty, and administration. The school utilizes a system of informal internal reflection on the progress of the school via student interviews of the counselor, faculty, and administration. This information is communicated to the school governing body and is factored into school review. The school recognizes the need for a formalization of assessing the progress of its graduates and formally assessing the readiness of students as they enter colleges and universities across the nation.

Externally, the school utilizes a variety of media, fundraising, community awards, and marketing materials to communicate the variety successes of the students, employees, families, and the school as a whole.

**A7.** *To what extent does the school leadership facilitate school improvement, which is driven by plans of action that embody faith formation and enhance quality learning for all students?*

*To what extent does the school leadership have school community support and involvement?*

*To what extent does the school leadership effectively guide the work of the school?*

*To what extent does the school leadership provide for accountability through monitoring of the schoolwide action plan?*

BCCHS leadership and staff facilitate school improvement on a year-to-year basis. The self-study document reports that this process is well received by the school with administration seeking feedback from staff and students throughout the year. Action is then taken each year,

based on discussion and suggestions from staff and students, through both formal and informal feedback systems. An example of this annual school improvement is evidenced in the self-study document with research, surveys, and community feedback for transitioning to a four-day school week for the 2012-2013 school year. The school recognizes the ongoing need for a thorough and consistent evaluation of its strategic plan to improve areas of focus. This, along with many other components that influence student learning will fall under the school-wide strategic planning process. The evaluation of its academic programs, faith formation programs, and financial support of improving student learning are the primary components of the schools needs in the area of school improvement.

The Advisory Council is the primary community input point for community support and involvement at the school. Further, there are many points of input outside the school with the Foundation entity, marketing events, school open houses, and further marketing strategies to seek input from the community.

Many large policy and school decisions have been completed in this manner including the late-work policies, extra-curricular eligibility requirements, and disciplinary code updates.

### **Key Areas of Strength for Organization for Student Learning**

- Developed organized Expected Schoolwide Learning Expectations
- Administrative Leadership
- Several staff members are alumni of the school
- Open door policy for teachers and staff
- Dedicated teachers and staff

### **Key Issues for Growth Organization for Student Learning**

- Current and concrete school improvement plan
- Consistent or relevant professional development
- Consistent participation by advisory council members
- Application and evaluation of the effectiveness of the mission statement, philosophy statement, and ESLR's
- Collaboration between the school advisory council, Foundation, administration and staff

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- FOL Self-Study Document
- Focus Groups
- Student Interviews
- School Leadership Surveys
- Observations

- School Website
- Parent/Student and Faculty Handbooks
- Curriculum binders
- My Students Progress Program
- Activities Handbook
- Student Environment Surveys
- OPI Reports
- Annual Report
- Advisory Council Agendas
- Individual staff interviews

## **CATEGORY B. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

### **B1. What Students Learn**

*To what extent does the school provide a challenging, comprehensive and relevant curriculum for each student that fulfills the school's philosophy and mission, strengthens Catholic identity and results in student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results through successful completion of any course of study offered?*

BCCHS evidences a challenging, comprehensive, and relevant curriculum that provides each student in its diverse student body the means to fulfill the school's mission and achieve the ESLR's. BCCHS has course offerings in the areas of Religion, English, History, PE, Health, Science, Foreign Language, Mathematics, the Arts and Business that are individually documented in the self-study. This program of offerings provides for a range of abilities and interests demonstrate the school's attention to designing and articulating a multi-faceted curriculum that includes strategic Mathematic Literacy courses, two AP courses, two dual credit courses, college preparatory/honors English, Reading, Writing, and multiple offerings in the performing arts and digital media. Each course group detailed what the learning goals are, how the students experience those objectives, had a compiled listing of resources used in each of the courses, a summary of significant projects, and/or assessments that each level utilizes. The school follows a curriculum that is at or above state standards and guidelines within all subject areas with the purpose of aligning student learning with the school's philosophy and mission.

Moreover, faculty and staff have worked for the past three years each in their own subject area to write curriculum guides. According to independent reports, first the state and national teaching standards were compiled and then each instructor aligned their course offerings, syllabi and instructional materials to those standards and made a specific implementation plan. Each of the staff then presented their work to a small administrative panel that evaluated the curriculum and helped the educators to establish consistent learning activities that help all students achieve their curricular objectives. Course objectives and specific assignment/project guidelines are published on the school homework website, on the course syllabus, assignment/project rubrics, instructional calendars, and communicated orally and/or in writing during classroom instruction. In addition, parental and alumni responses were expressed regarding the overall satisfaction with the curricular experience and the quality of preparation for college/university and real-world

applications. The high degree of agreement in those areas assured the lower student grade point averages resulted from student lack of long-term initiative or individual rigor, but upon further evaluation, the curriculum did prepare the students for post secondary education at or above the rigor expected for the college/university level.

## **B2. HOW STUDENTS LEARN**

*To what extent does the professional staff use research-based knowledge about teaching and learning?*

*To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students at a high level of learning consistent with the school's philosophy and mission and expected schoolwide learning results?*

Analysis of student and non-student work demonstrates that teachers in various disciplines integrate theories of learning strategies and research on best practices to create engaging and rigorous learning experiences for students. Evidence is also offered in the course syllabus and class policies that all departments have common weighted categories to ensure fair and consistent grading policies, as well as, defined expectations for classroom behavior and student preparedness for learning. Teachers provide a full range of assignment examples and portfolios that had been demonstrative of specific research based knowledge and practices.

There is evidence that BCCHS educational practices are above OPI's minimum requirements and national standards with increased credit requirements toward graduation. Learning experiences and student learning activities develop thinking characteristics and skills necessary to maximize student achievement of the curriculum objectives and to become lifelong learners.

Programs such as Forest for Every Classroom, History of the Corps of Discovery, and The Clark Fork Watershed Project, show that educators utilize a wide variety of learning experiences. These opportunities are integrated into many of the classes to facilitate and foster how students are engaged in the classroom. Based on direct observation in the classrooms, the various disciplines use high interest student relevant materials to engage learning: classroom laptops, interactive, internet activities, media materials for student projects and research, use of music clips for lectures and Power Points.

The teachers of BCCHS are using information from differentiated instruction professional development based on current research and best practices for teaching and learning. BCCHS has developed a wide variety of strategies and methodologies to include in learning and instruction. These address the learning needs of all students across multiple ability levels and learning styles—all of which align with the school mission and curricular objectives. Some assignments might be differentiated as to process and/or student product, allowing for academic individualization or assessment according to student needs, thus allowing for the teacher to personalize as appropriate. Differentiated instruction is also for students who are more capable and desirous of the rigor and challenge.

**B3. HOW ASSESSMENT IS USED**

*To what extent is teacher and student use of assessment frequent and integrated into the teaching/learning process?*

*To what extent are the assessment results the basis for measurement of each student's progress toward the expected schoolwide learning results?*

*To what extent are the assessment results the basis for regular evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction?*

*To what extent is the assessment results the basis for the allocation of resources?*

BCCHS teachers regularly use assessment data to measure student achievement of curriculum standards and to modify learning experiences or create interventions when necessary. Surveys indicate unanimous and high agreement between all stakeholders that a variety of learning and assessment practices are used routinely at BCCHS to promote student achievement consistent with the mission, ESLR's and curriculum standards. The MyStudentsProgress Grade book provides immediate and constant feedback to students and parents regarding student performance. A variety of assessment practices measure student progress over time include standardized testing, formative, summative and informal assessments designed by individual teachers, classroom observations of student participation and discussion. The educators at BCCHS have selected learning activities that help students achieve proficiency in these standards as measured by standardized testing (ACT, SAT, CRT, etc.) even though testing in recent years has fallen below other schools in the state in the areas of English, Math and Reading. The faculty recognizes the need to look at assessment as a means to strengthen curriculum and plan to take on that challenge in the future.

Staff interviews reveal that the school philosophy is not to take specific class time to teach to the tests, but that the strength of the everyday curriculum prepares the students to perform. This is evidenced in the fact that BCCHS was ranked 19<sup>th</sup> out of 131 Montana schools on the CRT in the year 2011. The CRT's are then used critically to measure how they achieve compared to the public schools in the area. It would be fortuitous if the assessment information were available at the 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels so that individual student progress or critical gaps in instruction could be identified to further benefit the students' whole picture of learning. Formative assessments are used during the learning cycle to refine learning activities and intervene to enhance or deepen student learning as indicated. It was mentioned that unit plans, collaborative lesson plans and projects address articulated standards and ESLRs to enhance student achievement of mission, philosophy, and curricular objectives. Together, these practices result in ongoing evaluation and improvement of curriculum and instruction as well as help to make decisions regarding optimizing student learning.

**Areas of Strength for Curriculum and Instruction**

- Put into practice service learning projects through science and history departments
- Dedicated Faculty and Staff towards improving student learning

- Great encouragement of administration for new improvement and ideas
- Continuing refinement of the portfolio system
- Apprentice community class
- Team teaching projects

**Key Issues of Growth for Curriculum and Instruction**

- Implement expanded reading and writing in the content areas (ex: journalism, creative writing)
- Offer more electives
- Increase student exposure to field trips and quality workshops
- Invest in curriculum, activity and media materials
- Development of a curriculum committee

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## **CATEGORY C. SUPPORT FOR STUDENT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC GROWTH**

- C1.** *Are students connected to a system of support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the community to meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected school wide learning results?*

At BCCHS students grow as persons of faith. A senior student leads the school in prayer at the beginning and end of each day. All school attendees say Grace before lunch. Athletic teams attend the daily Mass at St. Patrick's once per week during their scheduled season and play-offs. Football, Girl's Basketball, and Speech and Debate teams pray before a game or match. The football team players pray after each game with parents and fans.

Through their Theology courses each year, all students attend a faith retreat. Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior classes attend one-day retreats on campus. The Senior class attends a three-day retreat held outside of town.

BCCHS students celebrate Mass once per month at one of the Butte community's six Catholic Churches on a rotating basis. The Liturgy Team (made up of practicing Catholic students from grades 10, 11, and 12) plans and ministers these Masses. BCCHS students celebrate Mass with the entire Butte Central Catholic School System four times each year. Students from the Elementary and Junior High schools participate with the Liturgy Team to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and Catholic Schools Week Masses.

BCCHS houses a Chapel used for class instruction and individual worship. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered once during the year.

Each Friday, students have the opportunity to make a donation to the local food bank. Students have other opportunities for special projects such as adopting a family at Christmas, raising money for the Diocesan Guatemalan Mission and various Religious Orders. BCCHS requires that all students participate in the Annual Thanksgiving Dinner for the Elderly and Shut-Ins of Butte organized by the Theology classes. Also, all students participate in a service project each year in conjunction with Catholic Schools Week, the Helping Hands Clothing Drive, Toys for Tots, and the Butte Food Bank.

- C2.** *To what extent are students connected to a system of support services, activities, and opportunities at the school and within the school's community of faith that meet the challenges of the curricular/co-curricular program in order to achieve the expected schoolwide learning results?*

Students have access to a support system that includes the Principal, staff, and Clergy in the Butte community. The school's guidance counselor has an "open door" policy allowing students to meet with her at their convenience. The guidance counselor is responsible for scheduling appropriate standardized tests allowing student preparation for acceptance to higher education, service or careers after high school. The guidance counselor schedules college visits to campus and maintains an informative resource section on the school's website.

All BCCHS teachers offer student help during their preparatory periods. Many teachers offer help before school and after the regular school day. The school has a library and two computer labs for any student to use as needed.

The school provides its students dynamic learning opportunities in activities such as Student Council, Key Club, the Youth Legislative Program, and Boy and Girl's State competitions.

BCCHS is a member of MHSAA and provides many sanctioned activities throughout the school year. A large number of students participate in extra-curricular activities such as Football, Volleyball, Golf, Speech and Debate, Cheerleading, Basketball (boys' and girls'), Wrestling, Softball and Track and Field. BCCHS is a Class A school with an enrollment of approximately 133 students per year. As the smallest Class A school in the state, BCCHS athletic teams continually make the playoffs each year. All student athletes are required to maintain a 2.5 GPA and now failing grades in all classes. The majority of student athletes have a 3.0 or better GPA. MHSAA has recognized BCCHS for Academic Excellence.

*C.3 Does the school leadership employ a wide range of strategies to ensure that parental community involvement is integral to the school's established support system for students?*

BCCHS employs strategies to ensure that parental and community involvement are integral to the school's established support system for students. The school maintains a website accessible to parents for information regarding the school, activities, and classes. "My Student's Progress" is an on-line service for parents to view grades as they are posted. Teachers use the program to post assignments and other subject matter. General text messaging through the on-line service is available to teachers. BCCHS' Athletic Department uses Facebook in addition to the school's website to transmit information.

Parents of BCCHS students are an invaluable asset. A core team of parents is an integral resource as Booster Club, committees, Advisory council, and Foundation members raising funds for the school and athletic programs. Parents also volunteer in the school's community activities.

The parents of BCCHS students are expected to actively participate in their student's future planning. At the beginning of August, the school calendar and Mass schedule are mailed to parents with additional information about orientation. Families receive the school and athletic handbooks, which they are required to sign in acknowledgement of receipt of the materials.

Each spring, BCCHS sponsors an open house for prospective families. This open house is

set up similar to a college fair where parents can visit with teachers, coaches, and other parents about the school.

Parents and teachers come together twice per year for individual conferencing about student progress. The Booster Club encourages new prospects for parental participation.

**Key Areas of Strength for Support Services**

- Student Liturgy Team and Monthly Masses
- Community Service Projects
- MHSAA Sanctioned Sports Activities
- Many students actively participate in leadership programs
- Graduates accumulate scholarship and awards

**Key Issues for Growth in Support Services**

- Finding ways to increase and celebrate our Faith practices as a Catholic High School
- Added parental involvement in school activities including Mass
- Foster communication between school and parents

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Documented evidence provided by the school staff including curriculum data, examples of lessons, and examples of student work
- Focus Group interviews and discussions (Staff, Parent, Students)
- Classroom visits
- Individual staff interviews
- Individual student interviews

**CATEGORY D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

**D1.** *To what extent does the school demonstrate responsible stewardship?*

*To what extent are the resources available to the school sufficient to sustain the school program and effectively used to carry out the school's philosophy and mission and student achievement of the expected schoolwide learning results?*

The school demonstrates responsible stewardship in that their budget is “zero based” and incorporates expected student populations, annual tuition increases, along with anticipated support from Butte’s local parishes and the Butte Central Education Foundation. BCCHS tries to accomplish this while dealing with declining enrollment in Butte/Silver Bow County and the current recession. The school utilizes two different tuition scales, one for Catholic and the other for non-Catholic. Each scale has tiers based on the adjusted gross income of the family.

Financial resources provided by the sources mention in the paragraph above will help sustain the school program with added enrollment and other financial support. Student’s achievement of the ESLR’s will fall to the dedicated administration, staff and the community that supports BCCHS.

**D.2** *To what extent do the governing authority and the school executes responsible resource planning for the future?*

Currently the main focus of the resource plan is developing the annual budget. BCCHS has been in an annual operating mode over the past several years working hard to ensure ability to operate on an annual basis. Day-to-day focus on operational needs has superseded longer-term planning. It is recognized that a solid five and ten year plan needs to be developed incorporating new ways of creating long-term sustainability.

Because of stressful economic times and the servicing of the current debt owed by the Foundation, the ability to significantly increase fundraising has been difficult. Also, the lack of effective collaboration and coordination and strategic planning between BCCHS and the Foundation has resulted in financial challenges.

**D.3** *To what extent do the school's financial resources adequate to fulfill its mission and programs?*

*To what extent do the school's financial operations conducted with integrity and in accordance with acceptable accounting practices?*

BCCHS has fulfilled its mission and programs due to the continued financial support by the Foundation, Local Parishes, the Diocese of Helena and patrons of BCCHS.

The academic success of students is due to the BCCHS faculty and staff. There is a critical need to develop resources for improved compensation for teaching faculty and support staff.

BCCHS’s financial operations use a variety of accounting controls such as monthly accrual basis financial statements prepared by the Business Office and appropriate checks and balances to ensure security. Other monthly statements are provided for review and for assistance. Monthly

meetings are scheduled between the Administration and Superintendent. A third-party accounting firm handles payroll processing. The Principal must approve purchase orders and other expenditures in advance.

**D4.** *To what extent are the school's admission policies and procedures consistent with its philosophy?*

*To what extent are the school's marketing, recruitment, and public relations efforts effective in attracting qualified students?*

*To what extent is enrollment targeted to maintain effective and meaningful curricular and co-curricular programs that meet the philosophy and goal expectations of the school?*

The admission policies of BCCHS are consistent with the philosophy of the school in allowing access to all students in the community who wish to receive a Catholic education founded in faith, family spirit and academic excellence. The admissions policy contains a section that outlines provisional admission for students who do not meet the minimum requirements and for students with unique learning needs.

In an attempt to increase enrollment, the Advisory Council approved a Marketing and Recruiting Committee in 2010/2011 with the purpose of recruitment and retention of students. One of the directives of the committee will be the promotion of the Open House event held at the Maroon Activities Center and more public awareness of the school during Catholic Schools Week.

The student to teacher ratio of approximately 11 to 1 at BCCHS creates an environment of small classes. This coincides with high participation rates (91% of students involved in at least one activity or club) in the numerous co-curricular activities and clubs available to students. Small class sizes and high activity rates are the norm not an expectation at BCCHS.

**D5.** *To what extent has the school an effective development/fundraising program that is consonant with school philosophy?*

*To what extent is there evidence of development planning?*

BCCHS is supported by the Butte Central Education Foundation, whose mission is to foster the success of the Butte Central Catholic Schools through fundraising, alumni relations, building endowments, and the retirement of debt. There are specific events that provide scholarships for students throughout the school system. The Foundation has been able to provide financial assistance to BCCHS on a yearly basis.

A key goal in the schoolwide Action Plan is the collaboration of all entities working within the Butte Central Catholic Schools for a unified system of support for Catholic Education. BCCHS and the Foundation have recently formed a committee to consolidate the majority of fundraising events, as well as, the BC Futures Program with BCCHS. The BCCHS administration and key individuals from the Foundation believe that the consolidation of both fundraising operations and management of school activities will create better efficiencies utilizing the combined staffs of both entities. The goal of this consolidation is to generate additional revenue from fundraising activities while controlling administrative costs.

**Areas of Strength for Resource Management and Development**

- The dedicated faculty and staff at Butte Central Catholic High School
- A tiered tuition schedule
- School engages in regular financial reviews and reporting
- Generational Community Support
- International Student Program

**Key Issues for Growth Resource Management and Development**

- Improved communication and collaboration between BCCHS and Foundation Board
- Establish a Long Term Strategic Plan
- Increase enrollment
- Marketing Plan
- Improved alumni outreach

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self Study Document
- Tuition Schedule
- Enrollment Packet
- Budget
- Student Interview
- Focus Group Interviews
- Resource Management and Development evidence binder

## **CATEGORY E. Catholic Identity of The School**

*The school is Catholic, approved by the local ordinary (Cannon 803), providing authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for community worship and participation in the Sacraments, and promoting evangelization and service to the community.*

BCCHS specifically addressed each of the standards included in the Catholic Identity Factor during their self-study process. They took on this new process with great enthusiasm and commitment examining the Catholic identity of the school.

Through their review process, the school identified areas of strength and for growth and expressed the following in relationship to the eight key areas in the Factor. BCCHS strives to incorporate the Catholic faith and teachings into all aspects of everyday lives, classes, and extra-curricular activities of the school. The curriculum of the school is faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. All teachers understand their role to instill the values of the Gospel in their students, no matter their subject area, and to faithfully and accurately represent the teachings of the Church. Religion teachers take responsibility for their ongoing formation and are dedicated to improving their catechetical skills.

BCCHS maintains an on-going partnership with parents, supporting their role in educating their child in their spiritual formation. Service-orientated outreach opportunities are prioritized at the school. Teachers consistently teach and involve students to make healthy and positive life choices that are consistent with the values of our faith.

### **Key Areas of Strength for Catholic Identity**

- School service program
- Collaboration with the local and Diocesan youth ministry
- Sacraments offered on a regular basis
- Commitment of teachers and staff to helping students grows in faith, a strong retreat program

### **Key Issues for Growth in Catholic Identity**

- Develop a more formal program of community service and outreach
- Further develop and expand the student retreat program
- Further incorporate faith and knowledge of Catholicism into over-all curriculum

**Important evidence about student learning from the self-study and the visit that supports these strengths and key issues include the following:**

- Self-Study Document
- Focus Groups meetings
- Student Interviews

- School Leadership Surveys
- Classroom Observations
- School Website
- Parent/Student and Faculty Handbooks
- Curriculum binders
- Activities Handbook
- Student Environment Surveys

## **SCHOOLWIDE STRENGTHS AND CRITICAL AREAS FOR FOLLOW-UP**

### **General Comments**

The Administration, faculty and staff of Butte Central Catholic High School are to be commended for their efforts towards the *Focus on Learning* process for school improvement. All stakeholders assisted the Visiting Committee in the verification and clarification process as needed to address the school's current status and future planning.

### **Synthesize schoolwide areas of strengths**

- Developed Expected Schoolwide Learning Expectations
- Administrative leadership
- Faculty and staff dedicated to academic and faith formation of all students
- Student Liturgy Team and monthly Masses
- Generational community support
- Collaboration with the local and Diocesan youth ministry
- Team teaching projects
- Portfolio system
- Extra and co-curricular Activities
- International Student Program

### **Critical Areas for Growth Identified in their Action Plan**

1. Curriculum and Instruction Alignment
2. Development of a long-term strategic plan with emphasis on enrollment goal
3. Demonstrate progress towards solvency
4. Increased awareness of faith formation and Catholic identity among the community
5. All stakeholders (employees, council, foundation, parishes) work collaboratively to improve BCCHS.

## Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

Butte Central Catholic School participated in the WCEA *Focus on Learning* process for the very first time. This process engaged many stakeholders from the school community, including student and parent participation on the Focus Groups. Their self-study process included conducting focus group meetings, discussions, and surveys to generate the most effective schoolwide Action Plan to benefit student learning.

BCCHS identified five critical areas in its schoolwide Action Plan: Curriculum and instruction alignment, the creation of a long-term strategic plan with emphasis on enrollment, increased financial support for strategic needs, strengthening awareness of Catholic identity and faith formation within the greater community, and collaboration of all stakeholders towards a unified and goal driven system of support for student learning. The Visiting Committee recommends combining goals two and three as they are interrelated through the strategic plan. Goal number three will be a part of the long-term strategic plan created by accomplishing goal number two. All critical areas for growth are supported by rationale and assessment procedures that support the school's ESLR's. There are persons responsible within each goal area.

BCCHS is committed to a schoolwide improvement process, as identified in their self-study and culminating Action Plan. Further systemic and ongoing assessment procedures regarding the Action Plan's effectiveness toward improving student learning will be necessary to authentically measure student achievement of the ESLR's.

### **Adequacy of the schoolwide action plan in addressing the critical areas for follow-up**

The Visiting Committee has determined that the Action Plan represents the intended direction the school needs to take to continue with its plan for schoolwide improvement. Further refinement of the goal areas regarding strategic planning, to encompass specific strategies dedicated to enrollment and financial planning, will be necessary to ensure the focus on student learning when making strategic decisions. The Visiting Committee saw sufficient evidence to support all the areas in the Action Plan.

### **Existing factors that support school improvement**

It is evident to the Visiting Committee that BCCHS has at its core a strong desire to meet the needs of the young men and woman they serve. The school community spirit is apparent to all who spend time at the school. The faculty and staff are motivated, caring and compassionate people. The administration, Advisory Council and Foundation articulated a movement to address school improvement in a more collaborative and strategic manner.

### **Impediments to improvement that the school will need to overcome**

The school's Action Plan incorporates schoolwide concerns and relates well to the *Focus on Learning* criteria. Strong leadership, clear and consistent communication, united vision and the involvement of all stakeholders is essential to reaching the desired goals.

### **Soundness of follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishment of the schoolwide action plan.**

BCCHS has demonstrated a commitment to the process for school improvement and should be commended for the work done on their first WCEA *Focus on Learning* Accreditation. Although much of the follow-up process and monitoring will be led by the administration, the inclusion of all stakeholders, especially the combined and collaborative efforts of the Advisory Council and Foundation, will be of critical importance towards securing the long term success of BCCHS.