Our Way of Proceeding:

Standards & Benchmarks for Jesuit Schools in the 21st Century

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"Our Way of Proceeding"

Certain attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior join together to become what has been called the Jesuit way of proceeding. The characteristics of "our way of proceeding" were born in the life of St. Ignatius and shared by his first companions. The following characteristics are included in our way of proceeding:

- *Deep personal love for Jesus Christ*
- *Contemplative in action*
- *An apostolic body in the Church*
- *In solidarity with those most in need*
- *Partnership with others*
- *Called to learned ministry*
- *Ever searching for the magis*

….The magis is not simply one among others in a list of Jesuit characteristics. It permeates them all. The entire life of Ignatius was a pilgrim search for the magis, the ever greater glory of God, the ever fuller service of our neighbor, the more universal good, the more effective apostolic means. "Mediocrity has no place in Ignatius's worldview."

As partners in mission, Jesuits and our colleagues are never content with the status quo, the known, the tried, the already existing. We are constantly driven to discover, redefine, and reach out for the magis. For us, frontiers and boundaries are not obstacles or ends, but new challenges to be faced, new opportunities to be welcomed. Indeed, ours is a holy boldness, "a certain apostolic aggressivity," typical of our way of proceeding. Our way of proceeding is a way of challenge…

General Congregation 34, Decree 26

The preceding excerpts from General Congregation 34 provide a context within which all Jesuit apostolates are challenged to self-reflection and self-evaluation. It is in this spirit that the following standards and benchmarks are offered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Domain 1: Jesuit and Catholic Mission and Identity 7

Domain 2: Governance and Leadership 11

Domain 3: Spiritual Formation 15

Domain 4: Educational Excellence 18

Domain 5: Faith That Does Justice 22

Acknowledgements 26

Permission to Use & Suggested Citation 26

List of Acronyms Referenced 26

INTRODUCTION

"The mission of the Society of Jesus… is a mission rooted in the belief that a new world of justice, love and peace needs educated persons of competence, conscience and compassion, men and women who are ready to embrace and promote all that is fully human, who are committed to working for the freedom and dignity of all peoples, and who are willing to do so in cooperation with others equally dedicated to the reform of society and its structures."

Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach

In 1548, ten members of the then recently founded Society of Jesus opened the first Jesuit school in Messina, Sicily. That event would have immense repercussions on the character of the Society of Jesus, but it was also a crucial event in the history of schooling within the Church and in western civilization.

Jesuit education was founded on the Renaissance and humanist traditions, to which Ignatius and his companions brought a depth of spirit drawn from their experience of the *Spiritual Exercises:* the firm conviction that all creation is good; all learning is good; and everything in the world can help us find and serve God and one another.

After nearly five centuries of experience, the Jesuit and Ignatian charism can readily be recognized today in each of our schools in:

- A spirituality that encourages our students to see the hand of God in all things, an expression of the Catholic sacramental vision that appreciates the radical goodness of everything in creation and leads to a comfort with questioning and exploring within an expansive worldview;
- A spirituality that fosters a relationship with Christ as a model for adult living;
- A special commitment to the goodness and uniqueness of every individual, every person;
- A pedagogy that engages the world through a careful analysis of context, in dialogue with experience, always open to evaluation through reflection, for the sake of action;
- A faith that seeks to do justice in an ever increasingly global context;
- A restlessness to discern and do the *magis,* the more, the better, to go deeper, that leads to a constant pursuit of excellence and leadership;
- A commitment to partnership with companions who share our vision.

This vision informs and challenges the kind of teaching and learning pursued, the kind of caring relationships experienced in and out of the classroom, and the kind of values that permeate our schools. Jesuit education remains committed to excellence and to the fullest

development of the human potential of our students called forth by God's love.

In Jesuit schools, teaching cannot be merely about disseminating information and imparting career skills. In the vision of Ignatius, teaching is a vocation, a mission, and a labor of love. In the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, Ignatius instructs teachers to "make their special aim, both in their lectures when occasion is offered and outside of them too, to inspire one's students to the love and service of God our Lord, and to a love of the virtues by which they will please him." This love is born of a deep respect for each person and lived out in everyday life.

As partners in the mission of Jesuit education, we seek to build bridges across nations and around the globe, through on-going communication and collaboration, and to develop stronger Ignatian communities in better service of a faith that seeks justice. In this spirit, Jesuit schools engage in a Sponsorship Review Process to hold themselves accountable for determining how well each school is fulfilling its mission as a Jesuit school.

Our Way of Proceeding: Standards and Benchmarks for Jesuit Schools in the 21st Century was born from a need expressed by the schools for an instrument better suited to the Sponsorship Review Process. The goal was to draft a new, user-friendly instrument that would articulate what should be present in an excellent Jesuit school, using language and descriptors that would make it easier for schools and reviewers to know what to look for. The new instrument would draw on and reflect current documents used in the Sponsorship Review Process while adding clarity and reducing overlap.

In June of 2014 a group of Ignatian educators that included teachers, administrators and provincial assistants gathered in Chicago under the guidance of Lorraine A. Ozar, Ph.D., Andrew M. Greeley Endowed Chair in Catholic Education in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. Dr. Ozar has a long history working with and in Jesuit schools, and led the initiative to develop national school effectiveness standards and benchmarks for Catholic elementary and secondary schools.

The first step in the process of articulating these *Standards and Benchmarks for Jesuit Schools (SBJS)* was to comb through all the salient documents on Jesuit education available to us. These included: *What Makes a Jesuit School Jesuit?, Go Forth and Teach: The Characteristics of Jesuit Education, the Profile of a Graduate of a Jesuit School at*

Graduation, Some Characteristics of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, the Ignatian School Identity Survey, "Reflections on Jesuit Identity from the 70th Congregation of Procurators" (Daniel Huang, S.J.), "Apostolic Institutions at the Service of Mission" (Adolofo Nicolás, S.J.), "A Reflective Audit" (based on the SIPEI Vision Statement), "Ten Dimensions of a Jesuit School and Ignatian Leadership," as well as "Education Leadership Standards" (ISLLC), and *The National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools*. Working from these documents and from their experiences in Sponsorship Review, the team engaged in a year-long process of drafting, editing, re-drafting, vetting, and refining to develop the *Standards and Benchmarks* that follow.

As Jesuit schools we continue "to sustain our Ignatian vision and Jesuit mission of educational excellence in the formation of young men and women of competence, conscience, compassion, and commitment." (JSEA Mission Statement). The following *Standards and Benchmarks* reflect particular ways in which this vision and mission are made manifest. As such, they are comprehensive in addressing five domains: Jesuit and Catholic Mission and Identity, Governance and Leadership, Spiritual Formation, Educational Excellence, and Faith That Does Justice.

The Standards offer descriptors of programs, policies, structures, and processes that one would expect to be in place in excellent Jesuit schools acting in accord with the core values of Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy. The Benchmarks provide observable, measurable descriptors for each Standard. *Our Way of Proceeding: Standards and Benchmarks for Jesuit Schools in the 21st Century*, while not an accreditation system in itself, can be used as a tool in tandem with regional accreditation processes. In addition, it may serve as the basis for developing rubrics and other assessment-related instruments should the need and interest arise.

These standards and benchmarks are offered as an instrument designed to help schools and review teams focus their efforts to document the Jesuit and Catholic identity and excellence of the schools. They are both aspirational and prescriptive in the way the core values of Jesuit schools have always been. Jesuit schools and Provinces are encouraged to commit to these performance benchmarks and to work toward implementing the principles and practices outlined here within the context of their own culture and community.

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DOMAIN 1:
JESUIT AND CATHOLIC MISSION AND IDENTITY

We need to think today in terms of a wider Ignatian apostolic community, composed of Jesuits, other religious, lay people, people of other faiths, all sharing a depth of commitment to mission. This apostolic community would be a group that sees the school primarily as an apostolic instrument and would protect and promote this apostolic dimension.

(Huang, Boston, 2013)

STANDARD 1

A Jesuit school's primary and operative self-understanding is that it is an apostolic instrument at the service of the mission of the Society of Jesus and of the Church.

1.1 The school has a mission statement that reflects the mission of the Society of Jesus and publicly declares its Catholic identity.

1.2 The appropriate governing body approves and disseminates the mission statement throughout the broader school community, and collaborates with administrators to ensure implementation, regular review, and evaluation.

1.3 The mission statement is visible in public places and is contained in official documents and publications of the school.

1.4 The governing board and leadership team use the mission statement as the foundation and normative reference for all planning.

1.5 Board members, administrators, and school personnel understand, support, and model the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the school.

1.6 Consistent with its mission, the school promotes active participation of students, faculty, and staff in the life of their local faith communities as part of the Jesuit mission to build and be bridges in the Church.

STANDARD 2

A Jesuit school provides a rigorous academic program for religious education and faith formation within a total academic program that integrates faith, culture, and life.

2.1 The school's religious education program is held to the same high standard of academic excellence as all other subjects.

2.2 Faculty who teach religious education are qualified to deliver effective curriculum and instruction.

2.3 Faculty draw upon an Ignatian worldview and the Catholic intellectual tradition in all subjects to help students think critically, ethically and compassionately about themselves and the world around them.

2.4 Throughout the school students learn about and are invited to experience faith as a gift from God that is compatible with human reason.

STANDARD 3

A Jesuit school acts out of an understanding that collaboration is at the heart of mission and all members of the school community are called to serve that mission as partners.

3.1 The school engages the unique role and expertise of the Jesuit community in fostering a practice of discernment, building of a common vision, creation of an apostolic community, and offering sacramental ministry to the school community.

3.2 Adults in the school community model for students a vision of Church in which laity, religious, and clergy collaborate as partners in the mission of Jesuit education.

3.3 As collaborators in mission, members of the school community avail themselves of opportunities and programs to deepen their understanding and appropriation of Ignatian spirituality and partnership formation.

3.4 As partners in mission, religious and laity share responsibility for the practice of faith within the school, which is guided by Ignatian spirituality and rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola.

3.5 The school, Jesuit community and Province work in collaboration to provide the resources necessary for strengthening and sustaining the school's Jesuit and Catholic mission.

DOMAIN 2:
GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

In a Jesuit school, there is a willingness on the part of both lay people and Jesuits to assume appropriate responsibilities: to work together in leadership and in service. Efforts are made to achieve a true union of minds and hearts, and to work together as a single apostolic body in the formation of students. There is, therefore, a sharing of vision, purpose and apostolic effort.

(ICAJE, Characteristics of Jesuit Education, n. 119)

STANDARD 4

A Jesuit school has a governing board which holds the Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity of the school in trust for the Society of Jesus by setting direction, establishing policies, and ensuring programs that build and manifest the school's Jesuit and Catholic mission and identity.

4.1 The governing board strives to represent the diversity of the community it serves, follows good governance practices, and adheres to its by-laws.

4.2 The selection of trustees is mission driven and their understanding of the mission is strengthened through ongoing formation in Jesuit education, Ignatian spirituality, and good governance practices.

4.3 The governing board, in collaboration with the leadership team, maintains a vibrant relationship with the Jesuit Provincial and his assistant for secondary and pre-secondary education as outlined in the sponsorship agreement.

4.4 The governing board, in collaboration with the leadership team, maintains a constructive relationship with the Bishop of the diocese and with the diocesan office of Catholic education.

4.5 The governing board engages in presidential succession planning in consultation with the Province Office, grounded in an understanding that the president is also missioned by the Provincial to serve as "Director of the Work" for the Society.

4.6 The governing board, in collaboration with the leadership team, participates actively in the Jesuit Schools Network on a local, Province, Conference, and global level.

4.7 The governing board, in collaboration with the leadership team, ensures that professional growth opportunities are available for school personnel to identify and train potential leaders for service within the Jesuit Schools Network.

4.8 The governing board engages in self-evaluation and ensures appropriate evaluation of the leadership team to ensure faithful execution of their respective responsibilities.

STANDARD 5

In a Jesuit school leadership is shared among several people with distinct roles who are empowered by the governing board to realize and implement the school's mission and vision.

5.1 As the "Director of the Work," the school president leads others to ensure the Jesuit and Catholic character and Ignatian vision of the school.

5.2 The members of the leadership team are qualified to serve as the religious, pastoral, administrative, and academic leaders of the school.

5.3 The leadership team engages the entire school community in fostering a school culture that embodies the mission and vision.

5.4 The leadership team provides adequate personnel and resources to ensure the development, implementation, and oversight of Jesuit mission and identity formation programs.

5.5 The leadership team demonstrates commitment to their own ongoing spiritual and professional formation.

5.6 The leadership team takes responsibility for the development and oversight of school personnel, including recruitment, hiring for mission, professional growth, and formal assessment of faculty and staff.

5.7 The leadership team facilitates the development, articulation, and implementation of a student-centered vision of education that enhances instructional capacity and student learning.

5.8 The leadership team works in collaboration with the governing board to create a culture of continuous improvement aimed at sustaining excellence and growth in all areas of school life: curriculum and instruction, faith formation, extra-curricular and athletic programs.

5.9 The leadership team fosters a school-wide culture of collaboration through active participation in programs, conferences, and gatherings of the Jesuit Schools Network on local, Province, Conference, and global levels.

5.10 The leadership team takes responsibility for communicating regularly with all constituents regarding school programs and new initiatives.

STANDARD 6

In a Jesuit school the leadership team works in collaboration with the governing board to ensure the operational vitality of the school including human resources, finances, marketing/communications, advancement, enrollment management, facilities and technology.

6.1 The governing board and the leadership team operate in accord with published human resource/personnel policies that are consistent with school mission, applicable law, and best practices for business.

6.2 Published human resource policies include position descriptions for all personnel specifying position responsibilities and qualifications, hiring procedures, and performance review procedures.

6.3 The governing board and leadership team develop policies and procedures that ensure the school is a place of work and study that is free of sexual and unlawful harassment.

6.4 The governing board and leadership team develop budgets with an understanding that they are mission documents that need to ensure adequate resources, staffing, and programming for the formation of all the school's constituents.

6.5 The governing board and leadership team develop financial plans and budgets in accord with best practices for business to ensure the sustainability, affordability, and accessibility of the school.

6.6 The governing board in collaboration with the leadership team engages in strategic thinking and planning as evidenced in board meetings that are strategy-driven and outcomes-oriented, and in plans that provide a cohesive and comprehensive vision for the future.

6.7 The governing board and leadership team develop and maintain a facilities, equipment, and technology management plan designed to support implementation of the school's mission.

6.8 The governing board and leadership team enacts a comprehensive plan for institutional advancement through communication, marketing, enrollment management and development.

DOMAIN 3:
SPIRITUAL FORMATION

God is especially revealed in the mystery of the human person, "created in the image and likeness of God"; Jesuit education, therefore, probes the meaning of human life and is concerned with the total formation of each student as an individual personally loved by God. The objective of Jesuit education is to assist in the fullest possible development of all of the God-given talents of each individual person as a member of the human community.

(ICAJE, Characteristics of Jesuit Education, n. 25)

STANDARD 7

A Jesuit school provides developmentally appropriate opportunities for student faith formation including personal prayer, participation in liturgical and communal prayer, and action in service of social justice.

7.1 The framework for student formation is Ignatian spirituality, the Jesuit Way of Proceeding, and personal identification with and active participation in one's local parish church or faith community.

7.2 Campus ministry staff actively involves students and all school personnel in planning and leading liturgies, prayer services, and worship experiences that are engaging and attuned to the liturgical rhythms of the Church.

7.3 The school provides for appropriate sacred space.

7.4 The school delivers programs for student spiritual formation that are aligned with the goals articulated in the Profile of the Graduate at Graduation and that develop values in students which run counter to the secularism of modern life.

7.5 Programs for student spiritual development and formation, including an articulated sequence of retreat experiences, progressively reflect the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises inviting students more deeply into the Mystery of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

7.6 Students are introduced to Ignatian discernment as a tool to assist them to discover their life vocation.

7.7 The school promotes vocations to the priesthood and religious life, particularly life as a Jesuit, as an important way of living out a shared baptismal call to service and life in God.

7.8 The school provides students the opportunity to understand world religions and the value and importance of inter-religious dialogue.

STANDARD 8

A Jesuit school provides opportunities for adult faith formation and action in service of social justice.

8.1 The school develops and implements a plan for the continuing education and Ignatian formation of board members and all school personnel.

8.2 Board members and all school personnel have access to and are expected to participate in programs aimed at deepening their personal spiritual lives, such as annual retreats, spiritual direction, and opportunities for adult faith formation.

8.3 School personnel are hired who are supportive of the Jesuit and Catholic mission of the school and engage in ongoing formation with regard to Ignatian spirituality and Jesuit education.

8.4 School personnel model service, communal prayer, Ignatian discernment, and the fundamental importance of the Eucharist.

8.5 The school clearly communicates the objectives of student faith formation to parents enabling them to partner with the school in directing the faith formation of their child.

DOMAIN 4:
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

In Jesuit education, the criterion of excellence is applied to all areas of school life: the aim is the fullest possible development of every dimension of the person, linked to the development of a sense of values and a commitment to the service of others which gives priority to the needs of the poor and is willing to sacrifice self-interest for the promotion of justice. The pursuit of academic excellence is appropriate in a Jesuit school, but only within the larger context of human excellence.

(ICAJE, Characteristics of Jesuit Education, n. 107)

STANDARD 9

A Jesuit school has a clearly articulated rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards and the Profile of the Graduate at Graduation delivered through effective instruction.

9.1 Faculty and professional staff hold the appropriate academic credentials to ensure their capacity to provide effective curriculum and instruction.

9.2 The curriculum adheres to appropriate, delineated standards and is vertically aligned to ensure that every student completes, at a considerable level of proficiency, a coherent sequence of academic courses based on the standards and rooted in Ignatian and Gospel values.

9.3 The religious and ethical dimensions of learning are integrated across all subject areas of the curriculum.

9.4 Curriculum and instruction prepare students to be critical and creative thinkers, providing them with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to become socially responsible global citizens.

9.5 Curriculum and instruction are delivered in a learning environment characterized by mutual respect and appreciation of gifts and talents as given by God for service to others.

9.6 Curriculum and instruction equip students to become proficient and socially responsible users of technology.

9.7 Classroom instruction is intentionally designed to address the affective dimensions of learning — emotional, social, aesthetic, moral, spiritual, and motivational.

9.8 The curriculum includes education for global competency across all subjects providing international experiences to students, faculty and staff through the global network of Jesuit schools and ministries using a variety of live and virtual formats.

STANDARD 10

A Jesuit school is marked by a pedagogy that engages the world through a careful analysis of context in dialogue with experience, always open to evaluation through reflection for the sake of action.

10.1 The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm is incorporated across the curriculum.

10.2 Faculty actively participate in learning teams where best practices are collaboratively shared to develop curriculum and instruction to increase learning and improve teaching.

10.3 As Ignatian educators the faculty of the school see teaching as a vocation that calls for ongoing professional and spiritual development.

10.4 The school articulates a robust vision for how digital technologies will enhance student learning and provides faculty with appropriate professional learning opportunities to implement this vision.

10.5 The school helps students develop tools for their own personal growth by introducing them to such practices as Ignatian discernment, time management models, personal learning plans, reflective journaling, assessment portfolios, self-assessment and evaluation pieces.

STANDARD 11

A Jesuit school commits itself to ongoing school-wide assessment and data collection to appraise overall program and mission effectiveness, and to inform continuous review of curriculum and the improvement of instructional practices.

11.1 Faculty and administration use a variety of school-wide and student data to monitor, review, and evaluate the curriculum and co-curricular programs, to plan for continued and sustained student growth, and to monitor and assess faculty performance.

11.2 Feedback elicited from all constituencies (students, faculty, staff, parents, and alumni/ae) contributes to the school's regular review and evaluation of curriculum and instructional program effectiveness.

11.3 Faculty use a variety of curriculum-based assessments (including formative, summative, authentic performance, and student self-assessment) aligned with learning outcomes and instructional practices to promote effective teaching and to assess student learning

11.4 Criteria used to evaluate student work and the reporting mechanisms are valid, consistent, transparent, and justly administered.

STANDARD 12

A Jesuit school provides programs and services aligned with the mission to enhance the educational program and exercise care for each individual (*cura personalis*) as a whole person (body, soul, and mind).

12.1 All adult members of the professional school community practice *cura personalis* and witness to it by continuously developing strong, caring, appropriate relationships with students.

12.2 Guidance services, Campus Ministry, wellness programs, Student Affairs programs and ancillary services address the developmental, social, academic, and spiritual needs of students.

12.3 A wide range of extracurricular, co-curricular, athletic and other mission supportive activities afford students the opportunity to develop their full potential to become enriched and well-rounded individuals.

12.4 Students can articulate their experience of being cared for as individuals by the school personnel.

12.5 Students can articulate their experience of caring for others as individuals.

12.6 The school demonstrates ongoing *cura personalis* for its parents, alumni/ae and other adult members of the school community by providing spiritual, social, intellectual and service oriented opportunities.

12.7 The school has in place policies and procedures for the protection of the students and the creation of a safe environment that are in compliance with applicable law and guidelines established by the local diocese.

DOMAIN 5:
FAITH THAT DOES JUSTICE

Today our prime educational objective must be to form men and women for others; men and women who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ—for the God-human who lived and died for all the world; men and women who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; men and women completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce.

(Arrupe, Valencia, Spain, 1973)

STANDARD 13

A Jesuit school draws upon Catholic Social Teaching and the official documents of the Society of Jesus to ground policies and procedures at all levels.

13.1 The school respects the dignity of its students, employees, parents, and members of the community.

13.2 The school maintains a socially responsible investment policy consistent with Catholic Social Teaching and guidelines from the Jesuit Conference.

13.3 Human resource policies ensure that competitive and just salaries, benefits, and professional growth opportunities are provided for all personnel.

13.4 The student code of conduct is clearly communicated, fairly administered, and contributes to holistic student formation.

13.5 The school is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse faculty, staff, administrators, and board members.

13.6 The school develops and maintains an inclusive and loving school environment in order to support the well-being of each student.

STANDARD 14:

A Jesuit school develops programs through which students experience what it means to labor with and for others in building a more just world.

14.1 All students are engaged in an articulated sequence of service and reflection opportunities that lead them to experience a sense of solidarity with the poor and marginalized.

14.2 The school provides programs to lead students through the development of habits of reflection and social analysis that enable them to become advocates of social change.

14.3 The school educates its students in issues of ecological stewardship and solidarity with creation, and models that stewardship and solidarity in its operations.

14.4 The school integrates faith and Catholic Social Teaching across the curriculum, immersion experiences and school-wide programs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS REFERENCED

GC General Congregation (worldwide gathering of the Society of Jesus)

ICAJE International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (an advisory council to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus)

ICJSE International Colloquium of Jesuit Secondary Education (first time international gathering of Jesuit secondary schools in 2012)

ISLLC Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (standards established by the Council of Chief State School Officers)

JSEA Jesuit Secondary Education Association (now known as the Jesuit Schools Network)

JSN Jesuit Schools Network (the network of Jesuit secondary and pre-secondary schools in the United States and Canada)

SBJS Standards and Benchmarks for Jesuit Schools

SIPEI *Seminario Internacional sobre Pedagogía y Espiritualidad Ignacianas* (International Seminar on Ignatian Pedagogy and Spirituality)

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