

SELF-STUDY VISITING COMMITTEE REPORT
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES &
WESTERN CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
FOR

Mater Dei Catholic High School

1615 Mater Dei Drive

Chula Vista, CA, 91913

Diocese of San Diego

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Thanks to All Who Made This A Growth-Filled Exercise

The Visiting Committee thanks the entire Mater Dei Catholic High School community for their hospitality, and for the warm welcome we received this week. We are especially grateful for the care and professionalism exhibited by the Leadership Team that directed this process.

In particular we would like to thank:

- Bishop Robert Brom and the Diocese of San Diego and Mr. Stevan Laaperi the Office for Schools for their vision and support for quality Catholic education to the young men and women of the South San Diego area.
- The President, Tom Beecher, Fr. Peter McGuine Chairman of the Board of Directors, and the Board of Directors who were willing to take on the difficult task of leading the transformation of Marian to Mater Dei Catholic High School beginning in 2007.
- The administration, especially George Milke, principal, and his staff, who along with the Leadership Team made this Focus On Learning process a smooth and effective vehicle of growth for the Mater Dei Catholic High School community.
- Mr. Frank Stingo, Self-Study Coordinator, who handled all the requests of our committee and made our visit enjoyable.
- Brad Bookser, who responded to all of our technological needs and always assisted us with skill and professionalism.
- The faculty and staff for their dedicated commitment to the assignments and meetings that made this process so successful.
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- The students who continually demonstrated their dedication to the student outcomes expressed in the Self-Study to us through their friendliness, openness, competence, love of their school, and it's values.
- The parents, for the love they give to their children, demonstrated through the supportive and generous partnership they have formed with the Mater Dei Catholic High School community.
- The benefactors of the Mater Dei Catholic High School community, whose generosity, goodness, and vision have provided the resources needed to provide the quality education and beautiful facilities we experienced during our visit.

Chapter I: Student/Community Profile

Mater Dei Catholic High School, a four-year co-educational high school in the Diocese of San Diego, opened in 2007 as a 50-acre custom-built facility in the Otay Ranch area of Chula Vista, California. In 2007, Mater Dei Catholic High School subsumed Marian Catholic High School, continuing Marian's legacy and tradition on a state of the art campus in a new location. Marian Catholic was located on 20 acres of land in Imperial Beach, part of the South Bay area of San Diego. That land is in the process of being sold and the revenue will be used to finance Mater Dei Catholic.

The new campus was designed for up to 2000 students and currently enrolls 694. It has 72 classrooms, including three computer labs, multiple biology, chemistry, physics and multiple-use labs, a ceramics studio, a music room, a yearbook/media arts room and two art studios. The campus provides a gymnasium, weight room, adaptive room, football stadium, soccer, baseball and softball fields, tennis and basketball courts, a library with another computer lab and multiple study rooms, a lecture hall, a theater, an adult learning center, a chapel, and has an aquatics center under construction.

Mater Dei is led by a lay administration and is currently staffed mostly by laymen and women. A few religious priests are part of the faculty and, along with diocesan priests, preside at weekly Masses and other liturgical celebrations. Its Board of Directors, a Board of Limited Jurisdiction, is comprised of laymen and women and priests from the Diocese of San Diego, which owns the school.

MDCHS is located in a quiet and safe middle class new residential neighborhood, which has been hit hard by the foreclosure crisis. The school is located four miles north of the U.S.–Mexico International Border and is readily accessible by freeway. Visiting procedures, a full-time security company, locked gates and staff assignments ensure that the campus is safe and secure.

MDCHS primarily serves the South Bay and East County areas of San Diego and Chula Vista as well as other parts of the metropolitan San Diego area from Escondido to Jamul, spanning about a 50-mile radius. Many students commute daily from Tijuana and other places in Baja California, Mexico, and there are about twenty exchange students from South Korea, Brazil, Thailand, Germany and France. Recently, exchange students from Japan, Spain, the Czech Republic, China, Poland, and Indonesia have attended Marian/Mater Dei Catholic.

Thanks to generous grants from the ALSAM Foundation and Joan Kroc's estate, the school was constructed from 2005-2007 to accommodate the need for Catholic secondary education in the rapidly growing South Bay area. The economic downturn beginning in 2007, the rising cost of tuition, and the fact that most of the public schools in the area have excellent facilities, have prevented the school from achieving an enrollment greater than 794. A portion of the school is currently rented to a charter school.

Student Achievement

Student scores on the SAT, ACT, and PSAT have grown slightly since 2006. The class of 2010 and those in the previous four years performed about 125 points below state and national mean of 1517 on SAT tests, and also below the mean in PSAT tests. Students in the Class of 2011 scored similarly. AP scores, with the exception of excellent Spanish language scores, have also been below the national and state mean AP passing rates. The high number of students (28%) making the two-three hour commute across the border undoubtedly influences both student achievement and the unusually high tardy rate. The fact that 54% of students report that English is their second language, may also influence test scores.

For all current classes, student scores as 8th graders taking the High School Placement Test (HSPT) have been below the mean, thus predicting PSAT and SAT scores below the mean. The mean weighted grade point averages for students is 3.17 for girls and 2.95 for boys.

There is evidence that Mater Dei Catholic High School is fulfilling its mission to provide a quality Catholic college preparatory education for young men and women. 98% the class of 2010 and 2011 are presently attending or plan to attend college. The faculty is qualified. The school's well developed religious-studies curriculum and Campus Ministry program serves its student population through a variety of prayer opportunities in the school day, as well as regular prayer services, school-wide liturgies, and a strong four-year retreat program. The Mater Dei Catholic community participates in the life of the Catholic Church in San Diego and the nearby communities. The school provides attractive co-curricular programs designed to address the emotional, social, and physical needs of its students.

The number of full-time faculty, which initially expanded by ten as enrollment at the new campus grew, has declined by two teachers. Currently the school has 58 full-time lay staff including two priests. Most teachers have a major, minor, or Master's in the subject taught.

The school chose four areas for growth in its WASC/Strategic Planning process. These areas are what a new and developing school needs in order to provide guidance and structure to the program and facility utilization currently underway. The school did not address the need to develop instructional and business models that contain and lower cost while supporting significant improvements in student academic outcomes.

In the last five years, Mater Dei has gone from 694 up to 794 and back to 694 students, moved to a new campus and geographical area, greatly increased its number of Mexican and other international students, and developed and initiated a Strategic Plan and capital campaign. The energy and vision for the future of Mater Dei Catholic Education in the South San Diego area have generated community support. The Board, Parents' Organization, students, and the Diocese of San Diego provide a strong foundation of support and expertise for Mater Dei Catholic as a new school as it plans for the second half of its first decade of existence.

Chapter II: Progress

Progress in Fulfilling the Recommendations for the 2006 Visit Visiting Committee Report

The Mater Dei Catholic High School community's response to the recommendations from the 2006 WASC Visiting Committee Report has significantly improved the capacity of the school to support students in achieving the ESLRs. Evidence of growth and improvement in the school is clear.

Summary highlights of these significant changes include:

1. A focused program to improve student academic achievement in multiple areas.
2. The allocation of additional resources to improve faculty pay, increase faculty retention, and provide a much higher level of professional development.
3. The planning and development of new technology infrastructure, additional professional development, and increased teacher and student use of technology to improve student learning.
4. Improved communication from the school leadership with parents, faculty, and the public in a variety of areas.

Mater Dei Catholic has experienced significant success and solidified its future as a result of its extensive plan to strengthen this school. Each of these planning areas can be summarized in the following ways:

1. *Both the 2006 and the current Self-Study emphasize areas for growth designed to improve student achievement in all academic areas. These include how teachers assess student work, the quality and content of academic standards, teacher access and utilization of professional development and technology, and placement of students in appropriate course levels designed to increase achievement.*

These recommendations and areas for growth have been addressed at administrative council meetings, faculty and department meetings, and Board of Directors meetings over the last five years. In response, the school has significantly increased professional development, expanded the Advanced Placement Program, established specific programs such as the Language Academy and Science Academy, and made focused use of available standardized tests such as the HSPT, Explore Test and PSAT.

Test score evidence suggests modest progress in improving student achievement in most areas. The fact that the school continues to focus on student achievement in the 2011-12 Self-Study is an indication of this modest progress and of its resolve to effectively address this issue in the next six years.

2. *The 2006 Self-Study called for the allocation of additional resources to improve faculty pay, increase faculty retention, and provide a much higher level of professional development.*

A new faculty pay scale that rose from 81% of the compensation given to teachers in the San Diego Unified School District to 90% is clear evidence that the school has succeeded this area. Likewise, the significant increase in professional development funding and access for faculty is commendable. In addition, the school has maintained a class size of 25 and allocated additional time for teachers and departments to study and work together to improve student achievement.

What is not clear is the degree to which increased pay and professional development have influenced the quality of teaching and student achievement. There is need to present evidence of with increased student achievement correlated with specific professional development.

3. *The 2006 Self-Study called for improved teacher integration of technology into teaching methods and for that technology to be available to students.*

The school is to be commended for expanding on this area for growth by investing in laptops for all teachers and by placing LCD projectors in every classroom. This along with the purchase of three computer labs, increased professional development for faculty, and progress towards a paperless classroom has met the 2006 goal.

In order to meet the long-term academic and technology goals in the school's new Strategic Plan, it will need to invest considerable study and resources into expanded student use of technology to improve student learning. It will need to assess the degree to which technology has improved student learning.

4. *The 2006 Self-Study called for improved communication from the school leadership with parents, faculty, and the public in a variety of areas and called for pre and post evaluations of retreat effectiveness.*

The school has achieved this area for growth by investing in a new and improved website, a parent newsletter, and improved marketing which has improved internal and external communications.

The Campus Ministry team now gathers data pre and post about the effectiveness of student retreats and has expanded community service outreach events.

5. *The 2006 Self-Study called for increased resources, improved communication from the school leadership with parents, faculty, and the public in a variety of areas.*

The school has achieved this area for growth by investing in a new and improved website, a parent newsletter, and improved marketing which has improved internal and external communications.

Chapter III: Self-Study Process

Mater Dei Catholic High School has accomplished parameters one, two, four, and five. Parameter three (*The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning in relations with the criteria and the ESLRs*) is beginning to be addressed through professional development and the use of standardized tests. Mater Dei Catholic reexamined its mission, philosophy and ESLRs in 2009-10 and finalized the ESLRs in the spring of 2011. The Action Plan has sufficient accountability processes and language to ensure that the Board of Directors and the Administrative Team will monitor the accomplishment of the Action Plan.

This process actually began with Board and school leadership developing a separate Strategic Plan in 2009, followed by the Self-Study in 2010-11. The visiting team fully supports MDCHS' Strategic Plan goal to integrate the two plans.

- 1. Involvement and collaboration of all stakeholders in the Self-Study.**
- 2. The clarification of the school's purpose and the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results.**

In the summer of 2009, MDCHS formed the Strategic Planning Committee comprised of school board members, administrators and teachers. The committee started by examining the Mission and Philosophy of the school, and through a series of exercises and revisions, drafted a simplified new Mission and Vision, which incorporated the spirit of the old statements with Mater Dei's goals for the future.

Those drafts were presented to all stakeholders through a series of meetings throughout the 2009-2010 school year with faculty and staff, parents, students, the Parent Association, the School Board, and finally back to the Strategic Planning Committee. After incorporating all input, Mater Dei adopted new Mission and Vision statements along with the entire Strategic Plan in the spring of 2010.

In September, 2010, home groups were given the new Mission and Vision along with the ESLRs and asked to discuss their alignment. Home groups provided feedback about the ESLRs being overly complex, long and slightly redundant. Those suggestions were taken by the Leadership Team and used to guide a new draft of the ESLRs that is more succinct yet still conveys the original message and ideals. The first draft of the new ESLRs was taken to the Parent Association along with the Mission and Vision in December, 2010, for discussion on alignment and revision. Their suggestions were incorporated into the subsequent draft, which was submitted to Focus Groups in February, 2011. The final draft was resubmitted to the Focus Groups for their approval in March, 2011. The Leadership Committee discussed the changes and approved a final draft, which was presented to the School Board in April, 2011. At this time, portions of the Strategic Plan were integrated with the WASC/WCEA Self-Study, resulting in a four-goal Action Plan. The school has a ten-goal Strategic Plan.

3. The assessment of the actual student program and its impact on student learning in relations with the criteria and the ESLRs.

The current ESLRs reflect the richness of Catholic tradition and the blending of Marian Catholic and Mater Dei Catholic culture that is now the culture of this new school. The ESLRs have been publicized and are available to parents, students, and faculty and staff through the website, the *Student Family Handbook*, student planners, and posters displayed throughout the campus. What remains to be done in future years is to gather data about the degree to which the ESLRs are actually present among students. The school may also want to write aspects of the ESLRs into course descriptions and department handbooks and to have them reviewed by the school leadership.

4. The development of a Schoolwide Action Plan that integrates subject areas and support programs and that supports plans to address identified growth needs.

The Schoolwide Action Plan was developed in 2010-11 from the growth needs identified in the previous year's Strategic Planning process and focus group reports. The Visiting Committee believes that the two plans could be strengthened considerably if the Leadership Team follows its plan to reorganize them into one plan with the four categories of the Self-Study as outlined in Chapter 5.

5. The development and implementation of an accountability system for monitoring the accomplishment of the plan.

The Leadership Team has developed an accountability system for the Action Plan developed from both the Strategic Planning process and the growth areas identified by the focus groups. The accountability systems in the four-goal Action Plan are specific. There are no specific accountability systems in the Strategic Plan. The Action Plan fully meets the WASC/WCEA criteria by including specific data regarding the action steps, persons responsible, timelines, and assessment. The success of this administration in establishing current programs at Mater Dei Catholic High School and the fact that the Strategic Plan has a specific goal to untie the two plans gives us confidence that the school will achieve the steps in the Action Plan.

Part B: Schoolwide Strengths and Critical Areas for Followup

General Comments

The Visiting Committee commends Mater Dei Catholic High School for all that it has done to successfully reestablish a solid base to achieve its mission by moving to their new site from Marian Catholic. Evidence points to the involvement of the entire school community in the process of school improvement. The process leading up to this WASC/WCEA visit and the 2010-11 Self-Study and the Strategic Planning process in 2009 is part of the evidence and reinforces the pattern of honest self-evaluation and growth. The Self-Study Report and the Strategic Planning process, as well as on-campus interviews with representatives from every sector of the school community, support our findings that the school leadership and staff has a clear understanding of its mission, Catholic identity, goals, purpose, and effect on the lives of students and the greater San Diego community.

Evidence that supports both the Schoolwide areas of strength and the critical areas for follow-up includes the school's Self-Study, the Strategic Planning process, meetings with the Leadership Team, Schoolwide focus groups, home groups, students, the school administrators, and individual stakeholders. In addition, the visiting team's observations of students and staff interacting and learning in classrooms and school areas including the computer lab, athletic facilities, counseling, admissions, administrative offices and eating areas support the school's choice of its Schoolwide areas of strength and the critical areas for follow-up. As the school community completes its first six years at its new site and in its new buildings, its ability to fulfill its mission, priorities, and plans for the future has been enhanced.

Schoolwide Areas of Strength

1. The commitment of the entire Mater Dei Catholic community to Catholic education and to its Catholic identity, mission, values, and opportunities for prayer and worship.
2. The competent, caring, involved, and generous students, faculty, staff, administrators, and benefactors who value their experience at Mater Dei Catholic High School.
3. The commitment of the entire Mater Dei Catholic community to the Strategic Plan and WCEA/WASC self- study that began in 2009.
4. A caring, hard-working, and generous faculty and staff who relate well with students and utilize professional development and collaboration to provide a cohesive college-preparatory curriculum and culminating senior project that facilitates student achievement of the ESLRs.
5. The presence of Miles Christi priests available on campus for spiritual direction and the sacraments, and the integration of prayer and faith experiences into students' academic, athletic, and general school lives; and the encouragement and enablement of students to lead their peers in worship, service, retreats, activities, and athletics.
6. Sound fiscal management, the successful maintenance of its beautiful new campus, the large revenue stream from renting its facilities, and the building of the new Aquatics center.

Schoolwide Critical Issues for Follow-up:

The Visiting Committee concurs with the school's identified growth areas outlined in the Strategic Plan and Schoolwide Action Plan. In order for Mater Dei Catholic to achieve its stated vision of being the premier provider of Catholic secondary education in the San Diego Diocese, the school will need to achieve the goals below:

1. That the school leadership and Board immediately develop and implement a comprehensive and collaborative plan to increase school enrollment by 10% annually. This goal may be

reached if the school achieves follow-up areas 2-4 below and the school can then market their improved programs and student academic success.

2. That the academic leadership develop an innovative, comprehensive, and collaborative plan to utilize professional development and best practices in curriculum and instruction to increase student achievement of academic outcomes and attract additional new students.
3. That the academic leadership reassign non-counseling duties from the counselors, increase the efficacy and range of student counseling services, and provide additional human and financial counseling resources.
4. That the school leadership and Board develop and implement an innovative professional development plan for the effective use of technology to enhance student learning and motivation and assure a more rapid integration of technology into curriculum and instruction.
5. That between January 1, 2012 and January 1, 2013, the school leadership and the Board of Directors merge the Strategic Plan and WCEA/WASC Action Plan into a unified
6. That the Board of Directors and the school leadership develop a professional comprehensive advancement program to fund programs and raise the endowment required to fund an exemplary Catholic college-preparatory high school.

Chapter IV: Quality of the School's Program

Category A. Organization for Student Learning

A1. School Philosophy and Mission Statement

Mater Dei Catholic High School has the vision to be the premier provider of Catholic education in the Diocese of San Diego; and it is clearly a school dedicated to the faith formation of each of its students.

After carefully reviewing its mission and philosophy statements, the school revised its mission and philosophy so that these documents would be embraced by all of their constituents. This process involved a series of meetings with all of their stakeholders so that their mission and philosophy would align with the Strategic Plan. The Visiting Committee concurs that this process involved all of the representatives of the entire school community and that they made certain that the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results formed the basis of their total school program.

It is clear that the Mater Dei Catholic community supports the parents as primary educators. The Visiting Committee fully supports the Self-Study's goal of joining the Action Plan with the Strategic Plan. A timeline needs to be established with a clear definition of responsibility for each area.

Based on interviews, survey results and discussions, the school recognizes that a major area for

growth is to establish assessments to ensure the connection between the mission and ESLRs for every student.

A2. Governance

The Office for Schools in the Diocese of San Diego and the Board of Directors, appointed by the Bishop, makes certain that policies that include matters of finance, advancement, mission effectiveness, facilities, admissions, public relations, and marketing coincide with the Mission, Vision, and most importantly, the Expected Schoolwide Learning Results. These chosen/appointed Board Members demonstrate a commitment in promoting the Catholic values of Mater Dei. The Board receives direction on how to guide the above listed responsibilities. This was apparent through interviews and meeting with Board members.

The Faculty Handbook and the Parent-Student Handbook also support the policies of the Diocese of San Diego and are reviewed on an annual basis. Since the administration reviews all school programs and activities, they are able to address those areas requiring attention and revision and do so in support of the Mission and Vision for the entire school.

The school will communicate the ESLRs to potential students so they and their parents are aware of these expectations.

A3. School Leadership

The school is proud of the strength of its Catholic Identity. This is a major reason for students to cross the U.S.-Mexico International Border to enroll at Mater Dei. Students, faculty and staff embrace the total spiritual community that permeates the school. Meetings confirmed this with students and faculty alike.

The campus ministry team provides numerous opportunities for students to practice their faith. Each class begins with prayer, every student is required to take a theology class every semester, and their students complete 100 hours of community service. These are the elements that strengthen their Catholic identity which the school feels is a testament to potential students to realize that their education also includes faith formation.

The Senior Portfolio project is directed toward student achievement of the ESLRs. Students are required to complete a portfolio in their senior year that is ESLR-based and is presented to a panel of teachers, students, and other community members.

Student Study Teams have been established for students who require additional assistance in the classroom, however an effective program for students in need of additional support needs to be established, with a designated person in charge. Beginning with the identification of students with special learning needs when they enter the school, this information needs to be disseminated to the teachers of those students. Follow up on student attendance at tutoring and tracking and assessment of progress should be part of this program. Parent/guardian involvement in this progress is critical. These observations come from interviews with faculty, discussions with administration, student and parent surveys.

There is great need for teacher and student use of technology to enhance student learning and motivation. This is evident through classroom observations, discussions with departments and student comments. Teachers need and want direction in this area. There is a critical need for focused professional development, which could be done with little or no expense by visiting other schools, appointing teachers in each department to be technology mentors, and teacher participation in webinars and workshops.

Much stronger and focused administrative leadership in the area of professional development, curriculum development, curricular innovation, disaggregation of test data, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and the vision for academic success and good teaching is essential. Teachers report that while they are encouraged in these areas, there is little or no direction from the academic administrators. These issues are evident from interviews with teachers, departments, observation and discussions with the leadership team.

A closer working relationship between the staff and administration would be beneficial to teaching staff in terms of vision and direction. It appears that both sides recognize the need for improved communication with respect to decisions about department input in the hiring process, according to the self-report. Teachers also report a desire for input in curriculum planning and mapping, and other academic areas that effect student learning and effective teaching. Positive gains in this area could lead to increased enrollment.

A4. Staff

It is noted that the staff are qualified in their respective fields, but that they would welcome continued professional development with a focus on technology-based learning. This was evident from department meetings and interviews with students and teachers. Through teacher evaluation and individual teacher goal-setting, follow-through on the part of administration should ensure that new ideas are being implemented effectively in the classroom.

The faculty approved the Mission, Vision, and ESLRs and regularly participates in the Senior Portfolio process. The faculty participates in retreats, Communion Service, and some professional development opportunities. The administration and staff are committed to Catholic education, the spiritual life of the school and demonstrate the Catholic values.

A5. School Environment

The Mission and Vision of Mater Dei Catholic reveals its commitment to its Catholic identity as evidenced by daily prayer, school-wide liturgies twice each month, and a chapel that is open during lunch time for students and staff. Each classroom has a crucifix as a reminder for students to realize that Christ is a major reason for their school.

Mater Dei has a variety of programs that promote religious community as well as a community for learning in which the environment is favorable to learning. It is evident from interviews, conversations, observations that this is being done effectively.

The school recognizes its rich diversity both from its variety of Hispanic cultures and the many other ethnicities represented in the student body. Though the school strives to create a caring and welcoming environment for all of its students, it sees the need to consistently enforce a policy in which Spanish is not spoken in the classroom (unless it is a Spanish language class), and its Catholic cultures accepts all.

There seems to be a pressing need and desire to provide additional support for students who learn differently to both fulfill its mission and to admit additional, highly capable students. Evidence for this comes from student and teacher conversations, and meetings with school leaders. Support for the consistent administration of an academic support program is needed.

A6. Reporting Student Progress

The ESLR-based portfolio project is the school's single best assessment of student progress in achieving the ESLRs. In the areas of student grades, parents/guardians can monitor the progress of their student utilizing Edline, and teachers contact those parents/guardians of struggling students to assist them in improving their learning. According to students, teachers and parents, consistent updating of grades and homework is important. Students and teachers also report that some of the teachers do not post assignments and resources on Edline. They report that this makes it more difficult for them to complete assignments and study.

In addition to the need for attention to lower achieving students, the school also recognizes and rewards the students on the honor roll, yet it was noted that the school might not be doing as much as they could for these students. Further recognition of student achievement could help to promote the school to prospective applicants.

A7. School Improvement Process

Mater Dei Catholic recognizes the need to focus on enrollment management, significantly increase funds raised through Advancement, improve leadership in curriculum and instruction, improve student academic achievement and support, and to skillfully utilize digital technology to improve student learning and motivation.

The Strategic Planning Committee, the Leadership/Curriculum Committee, the Academic Review Board, and the Discipline Review Board meet regularly not only to monitor the progress of their respective areas but also to make adjustments and address the areas that will improve the school community. The Strategic Plan and the action plan need to be combined with a timeline attached.

The areas for growth mentioned in this section require a significant commitment of the Mater Dei Catholic leadership to innovation and focused professional development. Maintaining the average class size of twenty-five is possible with a review of the curriculum and the offerings that open the doors to colleges and universities for the majority of the graduates.

Alumni participation and support are important for the life blood of the school, their involvement can be achieved with an alumni program that brings them back to the school to be a major part of established traditional events that foster camaraderie and their participation.

Better study and analysis of students who leave the school, in the form of exit interviews, is needed to possibly address issues that could lead to better retention. This was clear from interviews with administration and faculty.

Areas of Strength

- A strong faith community with teachers who support the students and have interest in their growth.
- A strong message to students that teachers and the curriculum are preparing them for college-level work.
- Senior portfolio program is effective in affirming and verifying for the students their personal achievement of the ESLRs.
- The commitment of the entire Mater Dei Catholic community to its Catholic identity, mission, values, and opportunities for prayer and worship.
- The commitment to Catholic education in San Diego through the establishment of Mater Dei Catholic by the administration, the Board of Directors, Diocese of San Diego, and benefactors.
- The competent, caring, involved, and generous students, faculty, staff, administrators, and benefactors who value their experience at Mater Dei Catholic High School.
- The commitment of school leaders and all stakeholders to the Strategic Plan and WCEA/WASC Self-Study that began in 2009.
- A caring, hard-working, and generous faculty and staff who relate well with students and utilize professional development and collaboration to provide the curriculum and instruction to support student achievement of the ESLRs.

Areas for Growth

- A better formal support system for students who struggle academically.
- Better training in test data disaggregation for use to improve academics, improve identification of individual student needs, and over-site by administration that test scores are being used for improved teaching. i.e. Explore, HSPT, PLAN, PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, ACT, SAT2, AP exams, ACRE, plus other internal assessments such as Sophomore Writing Proficiency Test, etc.
- Clear written plan for school development: enrollment, academic program, counseling program, technology, student support, communication between parents and teachers, teachers and administration, teacher and student.
- Identification of reasons for students leaving Mater Dei before graduation. Explore use of an independent agency to gather more accurate data.

Organization for Student Learning Evidence

- Interviews with Stakeholders
- Faculty Handbook
- Parent-Student Handbook

- Diocesan Handbook
- Curriculum Guide
- Mission and Vision Statements and ESLRs
- School Calendar
- Class Syllabi
- Board of Directors Report
- Class Schedules
- HR Files

Category B. Curriculum and Instruction

B1. What Students Learn

Evidence, interviews and observations show that there are two levels of programs: College Preparatory and AP/Honors. The curriculum meets the University of California standards. The students are placed in one of the two programs based on their placement exam and the recommendations made by their previous teachers.

Although a challenging curriculum is in place with the offering of Advanced Placement Courses, the Self-Study and observations show that students are not taking advantage of the opportunity of AP courses which results in certain AP courses not being offered in a given year. Interviews and observations suggest that students, parents, and some teachers are not as knowledgeable of the benefits of these classes. Education regarding this area, in addition to innovative teaching, would promote the academic excellence of the school in a positive manner.

The curriculum is relevant as many of the courses promote the use of critical and analytical thinking skills to prepare the students for a changing world. Basic technology and new wireless infrastructure is encouraged and available to students and faculty. The science courses provide students with hands on experiences. In addition, Mater Dei offers a Science Academy program that provides a small number of the highest scoring students on the placement exam a science-oriented curriculum in the freshman year. In evidence and interviews, it was noted that the majority of freshmen do not take a science class.

The Theology curriculum follows the Diocesan mandated directives and the teachers of Theology are required “to augment their skills through higher education programs, and enhance their spirituality through Catholic education programs.” Mater Dei Theology teachers have proof of their progress toward earning these credits. Because of their preparation, moral and ethical concerns are addressed from a Catholic point of view.

Mater Dei promotes its Catholic identity through school-wide prayer and liturgies for both students and faculty. Their Campus Ministry program provides a variety of opportunities for students in their spiritual development and responsibility in the world.

The ESLRs are clearly posted for everyone to see. The seniors are required to complete an ESLR based portfolio that is presented to a panel of students, teachers, and community members. The school does its best to include Catholic identity into everything it does. As mentioned in the

ESLRs, there are many opportunities for the students to become mature, well-rounded Christ-centered adults.

Evidence and interviews show that involvement in curricular design and decision-making is limited to the few people who form the Curriculum Leadership Team. Faculty, staff, and students express their desire to be informed, involved, and supportive of the academic planning process as part of the Schoolwide Action Plan going forward.

The Counseling Department strives to present a variety of opportunities to the students. For a variety of reasons, the counselors are currently performing many duties regularly assigned to administration and leadership. The fact that there are only two counselors and that they are doing jobs in addition to those required of their department does not allow them sufficient time to fully meet student needs. Interviews with students, faculty and leadership have confirmed the need for additional counseling personnel and a reassignment of current duties to other personnel.

B2. How Students Learn

The Self-Study report indicates that teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the professional opportunities available to them in order to meet the needs of the students they teach and to stay current in their field, and that the school provides special opportunities for teachers to accommodate and address the needs of students from all ability levels.

The Self-Study, observations, department meetings, student and parent interviews show that teachers have command of their subject matter. Focus group interviews suggest that teachers are allowed to request participation in seminars and workshops to enhance their teaching skills as per department budgets. AP teachers attend seminars to learn teaching strategies and improve test scores. Teachers are aware of current research and latest educational trends, but they express a need for more direction as to school expectations and the effective use and implementation of educational technologies and teaching methodologies in order to present the curriculum more effectively.

The visiting team observed evidence of a variety of teaching modalities geared to meet the needs of all students. Mater Dei teachers utilize varied teaching methods to address all learning styles and they offer tutoring, mentoring, and English language classes for those who need additional assistance. Department chairs serve as a valuable resource in their particular content area. Evidence and interviews show that departments meet on a monthly basis for articulation and to share new ideas and information learned at workshops or conferences; however, there is a need for systematic collaborative articulation among departments.

Generally speaking, students express they are satisfied with the academic program of MDCHS. Most teachers have a positive, friendly classroom environment. Surveys show that parental level of satisfaction is lower as the high school years of their children progress, and interviews point to the desire for a more challenging curriculum.

The Strategic Plan includes Academics as a specific area for growth. Personnel to oversee and take the responsibility and to establish timelines for improvement of the curriculum must be

identified. Interviews and observations suggest that implementation of innovative teaching methodologies will strengthen the academic program thus increasing student enrollment, interest and retention.

Teachers are encouraged and directed to participate in professional growth opportunities and funds are made available for this to take place.

B3. How is Assessment Used

The Self-Study reports student assessment is frequent and an integral part of both instruction and the learning process at Mater Dei Catholic High School. Various types of standardized tests such as the HSPT, EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, PSAT, SAT, AP Test Results and the ACRE, are administered to students; however, evidence and interviews demonstrate the need to utilize the assessment data to shape the teaching/learning process at Mater Dei Catholic. In addition to standardized testing, teachers occasionally employ a variety of assessment methods designed to be compatible with the department learning objectives as well as the different learning styles of students, and report student progress through performance according to pre-established rubrics.

Mater Dei Catholic High School requires each graduating senior to provide an ESLR Culminating Project to be presented in front of a panel. Evidence binders show a compilation of data throughout the four years of high school for each one of the ESLRs. Some teachers, therefore, create lessons and their corresponding assessment specifically keeping in mind the student profile upon graduation, the progress of the ESLRs, and the mission and vision of the school.

While Mater Dei Catholic has added new courses to the curriculum in order to provide students with additional curricular choices as well as to offer a more challenging curriculum, the mission and vision statements describe Mater Dei Catholic to be a Roman Catholic College Preparatory School dedicated to faith formation and the pursuit of excellence; and one of its areas for growth in this section is “to investigate the possibility of a high school graduation program for students who are not college bound.” With that said, Mater Dei Catholic may need to examine carefully the students they serve and determine if they in fact are College Prep or a general college prep. This is also evident in the number of AP courses they offer, as they state, “academic excellence should be prioritized and published.”

Furthermore, consideration must be given to expanding the utilization of standardized assessment as well as technology for curricular growth. The disaggregation of standardized test scores should also be addressed as a means not only to assist in driving the curriculum, but also in addressing the needs of the students who choose Mater Dei for their high school education.

Areas of Strengths

- The evident commitment to Catholic values
- The use of Edline internet access for parent and student awareness of academic progress
- The faculty utilizing a variety of instructional methods and assessment tools
- The opportunities for the students to become mature, well-rounded Christ-centered adults
- The collaboration within departments

- A cohesive college-preparatory curriculum and culminating senior project that facilitates student achievement of the ESLRs.

Areas of Growth

- To develop a system to involve and inform the faculty, staff, and students of the curricular and academic planning process
- To explore the possibility of offering a science class in the freshman year
- To expand the number of students enrolled in the Academy of Science and explore ways to get more members of the MDCHS community involved in its work
- To improve leadership in Curriculum and Instructional development and implementation
- To provide direction to faculty regarding academic expectations of students
- To skillfully utilize digital technology to improve student learning and motivation
- To strengthen the counseling department by examining the need for additional personnel and reviewing and reassigning some of the current duties.
- To inform students, parents and the community at large of the academic opportunities and benefits of the AP and Honors courses
- To provide systematic opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration among departments
- To disaggregate standardized test scores as a means to assist in driving the curriculum and address the needs of all students
- To prioritize and publicize academic excellence, in addition to the Catholicity of the school for the purpose of promoting the school to prospective students and families

Curriculum and Instruction Evidence

- Interviews with stakeholders
- Survey responses
- Classroom observations
- Self-Study report
- Conversations with students, faculty, staff and administrators
- Student work
- Evidence room materials
- Meeting agendas and minutes

C. Support for Student Spiritual, Personal and Academic Growth

C.1 Campus Ministry/Community Based Service Learning

It is clear from the Self-Study that the Catholic faith is at the heart of the daily life of the Mater Dei Catholic High School campus. This is evidenced by the meaningful opportunities to participate in prayer, the sacraments, liturgies, retreats, religious-themed assemblies, and service projects, all leading toward their growth as people of faith. The MDCHS faith program is a way to articulate the faith clearly to the students and thus guide them to meet the first ESLR as Christ centered persons. The parent survey related to faith and religious education clearly shows that this is a priority and strength of the school. An overwhelming majority of parents find that their children are receiving a solid religious education. The faculty and students echo this sentiment

and affirms that there is a tangible religious environment provided for the personal growth of the students.

There is clear collaboration among the administration, faculty, staff, and in particular the Campus Ministry team, Theology Department and priests to encourage spiritual growth by prayer and reflection as evidenced in daily prayer, liturgies and retreats. There is a rich liturgical experience offered at Mater Dei Catholic High School. A class of 60 and an active Campus Ministry Club facilitate these liturgies. The student body gathers bimonthly for mass, particularly for Holy Days of Obligation. Students help serve to enhance the Mass by serving as members of the choir and taking an active role in the liturgy. Faculty masses and retreats have been added into the school year, as well as a service project for faculty. In addition, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the rosary and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are made available to students. Campus Ministry provides retreats and liturgies to gather small and large groups of students into deeper communal prayer and reflection. The Campus Ministry team hosts a Freshman Orientation and the Freshman Class retreats to introduce students into the faith community. They plan to expand the freshman retreat program to enhance belonging. Guiding this retreat program is a cadre of adult ministry leaders from Campus Ministry working with student leaders in a specially designed class that teaches campus ministry leadership skills along with the required school curriculum. The presence of the Miles Christi priests has provided students the opportunity for deeper spiritual growth through spiritual direction.

Community service is woven into the school life through the Christian Service requirements and through a variety of school organizations and classes, which foster a commitment to serve others and live a life of stewardship. All students complete a mandatory Christian Service requirement of 100 hours of service over four years. Upon completion of the hours, the students write a reflection of their service, helping them to realize its relation to the Mission, Vision and ESLRs of MDCHS. Students who are members of the Ambassador for Christ Corps provide direct service to the school by supporting marketing, admission and community events. Many students also participate in clubs that are service-directed in their function. The reality is a clear vision of the importance of service in the MDCHS educational experience and clear teaching of how service ties into their faith as a Catholic community.

While there is a strong evidence of the vitality of the faith life at MDCHS, the school recognizes a desire to encourage more student participation in Mass and a wish to see more faculty members active in the community service program and in the overall spiritual mission of the school. Campus Ministry and the Theology department with administrative support will lead this effort.

C.2 Student Connectedness

The school provides students with a number of support systems. These include the Counseling Department, SST, student activities programs, such as Associated Student Body, a wide range of boys' and girls' sports, clubs, Christian Service and Campus Ministry. Each program on its own helps the MDCHS community to achieve its ESLRs. The interviews with the students and faculty reveal a desire for a better structure of support for those who require academic help. The Counseling Department helps students receive the personal and academic counseling to complete high school and to be prepared for college. Counselors are available through formal

planned meetings with parents and students as well as by appointment. Specifically, they help integrate the freshman students and parents into the community. They meet with seniors and their parents to help with the college application and financial aid process. They provide instructional workshops, oversee standardized testing, and lead programs to help students navigate high school and the preparation for college. To ensure that the students are up to date with the admission process for schools, they direct students to visit schools or invite college recruiters to the campus. The counselors also assist with more serious issues as part of a crisis intervention team and partner with the faculty, staff and chaplains as a resource to assist students with academic, personal or spiritual needs. The crisis intervention team has demonstrated its effectiveness through response to serious community tragedies over the last few years. Interviews with leadership, staff and students reveal a need for a more detailed job description for counselors and consideration for the need of an additional counselor.

The SST supports students with academic difficulties by viewing grades and providing mentors for support. The mentoring of a small group of students by one administrator or faculty member helps to provide personal attention to support and retain students. From interviews with the administration, faculty and students, it needs to be determined who oversees the program and formalizes the process for students and evaluates its effectiveness.

The school offers a wide range of extracurricular opportunities that include student government, clubs, athletics and performing arts. The student government consists of the elected members of ASB who plan and coordinate events for the student body. The Athletic Department fields teams for twenty sports with some teams including junior varsity and freshman teams. Nearly thirty clubs provide opportunities for students to participate in the greater school community. Both athletics and the club programs have grown significantly in the last few years. The drama program includes two major productions each year. The Ambassador for Christ Corps and the Campus Ministry program are two student leadership programs that allow students to develop as leaders while serving the schools' development and faith needs.

The faith community is of great support to the student body. The Christian Service program has onsite projects to help students complete service hours on campus. The Christian Service Coordinator helps students to connect to programs outside of the school. Campus Ministry, often in coordination with clubs, will help with fundraising and food drive.

The Visiting Team recognizes the school community's desire to help meet certain goals which include supporting students to develop as leaders through workshops and a specific leadership class, as well as improving school spirit, and helping seniors with their college applications. The Long Term Goals and Short Term Objectives for Building School Community specify key leaders such as the Athletic Director, ASB Directors, coaches and moderators who will help build community.

C.3 Parent/Community Involvement

MDCHS sees the parents as the primary educators of the students and ensures that a partnership is created among parents, faculty, staff, coaches and administration to meet the ESLRs. The extensive parent survey is clear evidence of including their opinions and concerns with this Self-

Study. It is evident that MDCHS uses a variety of ways to encourage family and community involvement. All families complete service to support the school, which financially supports the needs of the school while allowing parents close involvement with the day-to-day life of the campus. In order to keep them informed and aware of policies, mission and other pertinent information, they receive a Parent-Student Handbook. For detailed and current information, parents may go to the school website, which includes access to grades on Edline, course syllabi and calendar events.

The Visiting Committee recognizes in the actions plans that the school is responding to parent input and reinforcing what parents like and addressing concerns. The community sees a clear need to increase parent involvement in the college application process and learning about the financial aid application process. Outreach to the alumni community and better use of the website are also important goals to improve parent and community connection.

Areas of Strength

- The integration of prayer and faith experiences into students' academic, athletic, and general school lives and the encouragement and enablement of students to lead their peers in worship, service, retreats, activities, and athletics.
- The Campus Ministry program develops student leaders to help support and encourage participation in the faith life of the community.
- All students and teachers are active with the Christian Service program building a sense of commitment to Catholic social justice.
- The Miles Christi priests provide support for the regular celebration of the sacraments and for the students to participate in spiritual direction.
- The administration strongly supports the development of the faith life at MDCHS by supporting the activities of Campus Ministry, the Theology Department and the priests.
- MDCHS has a caring and supporting cadre of adult professionals to support students academically, spiritually and personally.
- There are many co-curricular activities that provide students with opportunities to be active participants in school life based on their personal preferences.
- Parents are supported in their role as primary educators of their children by the use of technology for communication of grades, school activities and other information relevant to families.

Areas of Growth

- Expand the service program to include cooperative efforts between faculty and students.
- Continue to provide more opportunities for faith formation for faculty and staff to help become active members of the Catholic faith community.
- Ensure clear coordination on the dissemination and review of test scores to help with placement, academic planning and college readiness for students.
- There needs to be a defined role from leadership regarding the expectations and the role of Counseling Department.
- Organize a process to alert teachers of students in their class with special needs and the plan to accommodate their specific learning needs.
- Establish and organize the leadership of the support system for students who struggle with academics and form a system to uniformly evaluate the extent of their progress.

- Increase opportunities for students to experience leadership opportunities.
- Encourage more parent involvement with fundraising for advancement and to support co-curricular programs such as athletics, clubs and visual and performing arts.
- Engage the alumni community's support by sharing specific needs of the school and how they can assist in supporting the school to meet those needs.
- Develop a well-run community-supported athletic program that is focused on student participation and the fostering of Catholic values.

Support for Student Spiritual, Personal and Academic Growth

- Interviews with Stakeholders
- Faculty Handbook
- Class Observations
- Daily Announcements, Weekly Bulletin and Newsletter
- School Calendar
- Retreat Agendas, Notes and Evaluations
- Campus Ministry Notes and Course Outlines
- Christian Service Logs and Files
- Counseling Schedule, Calendars and Files
- Tutoring Schedules
- ASB Calendar and Minutes
- Team Rosters and Schedules
- Parent-Student Handbook
- Drama Calendar and Production Programs

Category D. Resource Management and Development

D1. Resources

Mater Dei Catholic High School manages its resources in accordance with Diocesan and its own internal policies related to the mission and vision of the school. The school responsibly manages its resources in several ways. The president, the CFO, and the appropriate staff oversee the daily financial operations of the school as well as organize and develop resources according to the Strategic Plan. Various school stakeholders, including department chairs and directors collaborate with the CFO to develop preliminary budgets based off of projections of future needs. Salary and benefits are determined in conjunction with deciding the appropriate tuition to charge families the next school year. All budgets are finalized in September. Throughout the year, periodic reviews are made of the school's finances and items such as books are rented to the families to control costs.

The School Advancement Office is organized to raise extra funds in accordance with Diocesan guidelines. To support the school in its financial operations, the school utilizes the services of outside companies to help collect tuition, provide landscaping and custodial services, as well as food services and security. The campus and overall facility is four years old and state-of-the-art in many areas. It is safe, aesthetically pleasing and properly maintained. Plans are in place for

future projects such as the Aquatic Center, already underway, and for keeping the school facilities in proper functioning order.

The Visiting Committee acknowledges the goals from the Strategic Plan to specifically increase fundraising by 10% through the one on one “ask” plan for the Annual Crusade. The goals also identify stakeholders such as grandparents, distinguished alumni and others who can be reached through events tailored to connect them to school events and to establish a long relationship of giving and support.

The administration sees three major priorities for the use of resources to sustain the school’s programs. The first priority is recruitment and retention of the teachers. Recruitment of teachers and offering competitive salaries have been the primary steps to provide good teachers for the students. The administration sees reduction of student attrition to be of primary importance. Students performing poorly are assigned a mentor as part of SST and the information from a student survey has been used to make decisions to help students participate and find connection within the school community. Finally, the addition and use of technology to enhance teaching and overall services has been made part of the long-term financial plans.

The MDCHS leadership identifies four resources used to sustain the effectiveness of the school’s programs. The resources are fiscal, personnel, technological, and plant and facilities. Fiscal resources include maintaining an appropriate monthly balance to meet their financial responsibilities, savings on deposit with the diocese, and an efficient tuition collection process. Evidence confirms the review of the school’s finances through an annual audit by an outside agency. The presence of quality staff members, teachers and administrators are a primary asset of the school. Access to technology in the classroom through a larger network allows students and teachers to perform more efficiently and collaboratively. The modern campus is an attractive resource for prospective students. The facilities are significant sources of income for the school as rentable spaces for outside organizations and schools.

The Visiting Committee agrees with the Self-Study and leadership that it is critical that the school continues to not only retain but add students in order to meet financial obligations and in order to do that the school must also find ways to increase available tuition assistance.

D. 2 Resource Planning

The governing authority of Mater Dei Catholic High School consist of a board of directors, approved by the Bishop of the Diocese of San Diego, led by a chairperson. The chairperson and the members, who lead various subcommittees, are involved with the Strategic Plan and oversee and approve the financial operations. The ALSAM Foundation funded the construction of the current campus. The sale of the former campus will fund a tuition endowment. The board and school leadership work to provide tuition assistant and various scholarships to improve the academic excellence of incoming students. Additional fundraising efforts are in place to help supplement the general budget. The Academy of Science provides opportunities for students to be immersed in areas of science, technology, mathematics and engineering and is a draw for prospective students. Although the school was built for 2000 students it has seen an average annual enrollment of 700 and has leased non-utilized space to provide additional revenue. The

governing authority concurs with the administration's goal to address student retention and provide competitive salaries to keep its quality faculty.

D. 3 School Finance Resources

There have been major changes in the school financial structure related to personnel and operations. The CFO handles the business operations under the President and Board of Directors. Conversion to FACTS Tuition Company for collection of tuition has made collection more efficient and consistent. The continued financial support and annual appeal, known as the Annual Crusade, have helped to provide funds to fulfill the school mission. The cohesive and collaborative nature of the financial operations shows a concerted effort to meet daily school needs while addressing future goals.

With a two-tiered system of checks and protocols the school finances are managed with integrity and with standards that are in accordance with appropriate practices in the world of finance. The use of an independent, third-party accounting agency to conduct the annual audit qualifies the financial practices of MDCHS as appropriate. The oversight of the business area of the school by the President and the CFO under the auspices of the Board of Directors, which regularly review financial reports, shows a transparent and honest study of school finances and practices. Mater Dei Catholic High School seeks students who desire both a Catholic education and a quality college preparatory education. The fact that the admissions policies evaluates candidates according to a number of criteria based on admissions tests, recommendations, transcripts and interviews, makes it clear that MDCHS follow procedure within the admissions process that matches their overall philosophy. The policies are clearly articulated in their admission's literature and presentations to make sure that applicants and their families understand the expectations of the school.

The retention of students and expanding enrollment are critical areas. The admission director seeks to find students well suited to the school's mission. Changes have been made recently to increase marketing and contact with prospective students. Visits are made to the feeder schools and there has been an increase in the number of students from different schools and areas within the county. 8th grade classes from the parochial feeder schools come to the school. More days are available for students to visit and tour the MDCHS campus. Prospective students may shadow a current MDCHS student during the school day to learn about daily life at the school. The Open House and Parent Information Nights are held to provide more information to parents discerning a high school for their children. New scholarships have been created to attract students who demonstrate strong academic potential.

The Visiting Committee sees clear evidence of the increased enrollment from a great variety of schools and from areas around the county. MDCHS is encouraged to continue to expand their draw from the feeder schools and increase the number of students from new schools. The Visiting Committee recognizes in the school's plan to "create a ...welcoming ...campus environment" along with "a new Open House program that gives more personal attention to each potential student" are new directions to meet enrollment targets. Coupled with matching teachers and student leaders with prospective students, the plan has the potential to improve enrollment and retention.

The school leadership is mindful of the role that tuition and enrollment play in supporting the budget and school programs. The administration sets clear goals on the number of students needed and the maximums for class sizes to maintain efficacy. The difficult but necessary balancing act of student to teacher ratios is analyzed and adjusted according to need. As school enrollment declined in the last few years, goals have been evaluated to ensure that everything is being done to maintain a quality, Catholic, academic environment.

The advancement plan for MDCHS is comprehensive. The goal is to raise funds to help provide resources for the academic programs and tuition assistance so that more students can receive a Catholic education. The activities of the Development Office include multiple fundraisers and business arrangements with the intent of meeting the financial aid requirements for 45% of the student body. The students, parents, alumni and community supporters all contribute to meeting the financial goals of the school. The Walk-a-thon allows students to take part in the fundraising and the Ambassadors for Christ Corps helps with events and public relations. The Golf Tournament, the Annual Parent Crusade and the BIG BASH online auction are the major revenue draws. In addition, the ability to rent school facilities, both academic and athletic, brings in needed revenue.

The Visiting Committee recognizes that the increased need for financial aid has grown significantly since the last accreditation. The increase in financial aid helps with enrollment but places a strain on resources and a greater demand on the development program. The budget, the Strategic Plan and the Long Term Goals and Short Term Goals of the School Advancement plan are clear evidence to the Visiting Committee of a development plan. Emphasis and attention is put into fundraising and solicitation of donors from inside and outside of the MDCHS family. The leadership is focused on increasing the endowment through increased support from donors and the timely receipt of profit from the sale of the parcels on the Marian property. In addition, there is recognition that a planned giving program needs to be established.

Areas of Strength

- The leadership of MDCHS manages its resources appropriately to meet its financial obligations.
- The existence of a plan for improved enrollment, tuition assistance and fundraising.
- The school's utilization of the existing facilities, including the soon to be completed Aquatic Center, to generate revenue from outside sources and attract more students.
- Financial aid has increased, as has salaries for teachers and teacher retention is better.
- The Board of Directors is supportive of the leadership and is aware of the school's needs.
- The Academy of Science provides a unique opportunity to attract students and to offer a superior academic opportunity for top students.
- The school is commended for finding adequate resources to fund programs to meet its overall mission.
- A plan is in place to maximize the financial potential of the sale of the Marian property through a percentage made off of future home sales on the site of the former campus.
- The financial operations are proper, accurate and in line with the standards of the outside agencies.

- Admission numbers for the freshman class have improved for the first time in a few years.
- Successful fundraisers are in place annual to support the school to meet its budget.
- Sound fiscal management, the successful maintenance of its beautiful new campus, the large revenue stream from renting its facilities, and the building of the new Aquatics center.
- The successful move from Marian Catholic site to the current location in 2007.
- The substantial increase in financial aid and faculty pay and the continuing improvements in marketing and fund raising.

Areas for Growth

- Develop a timeline for implementation of plan to improve enrollment, tuition assistance and fundraising and list leaders accountable for each part of the plan.
- Utilize talents of the Board of Directors more full to help with efforts in advancement, marketing, finance and admissions.
- Clarify the role of specific decision-makers regarding who oversees and executes decisions affecting recruiting and retention and develop a specific timeline for meeting goals and assessing progress.
- Implement a plan regarding future direction of Academy of Science, with intent of using it as a key attraction for potential students.
- Review admissions policies for placement to determine eligibility for programs such as the Academy of Science.
- Continue efforts to effectively market the school and make use of advancements in internet communications and website applications to help disseminate and share information about the school.
- Assess how much tuition assistance is needed to meet the needs of applicants with an understanding of the limits that can occur with faculty and staff reduction before program effectiveness is compromised.
- Clarify the accountability and leadership role of the members of the Planning and Accreditation Committee to expedite the process for creating a timeline for the Strategic Plan that is time sensitive and clear on the responsibility of members of leadership to address and meet goals.
- Increase in alumni and community support must occur to help meet goals for fundraising and tuition assistance.

Resource Management and Development Evidence

- Interviews with Stakeholders
- Diocesan Handbook for Schools
- Strategic Plan
- MDCHS Salary Schedule
- Annual Budget
- Annual Department Budgets
- Board of Directors' Agendas and Minutes
- Monthly Financial Reports
- Audit Report

- Facility Use Calendar
- End of the Year Financial Report
- Human Resource Files
- Facilities
- Aquatic Center Plans
- Marketing Materials
- Fundraising Reports
- Rental Contracts
- SST Notes and Rosters
- Faculty, Parent and Student Surveys
- Internal Controls Narrative
- Admission Applications and Policy
- Diocesan Report
- Director of Marketing's Notes
- Walk-a-thon Financial Statement

Chapter V: Ongoing School Improvement

The schoolwide Action Plan was developed from the growth needs identified in the focus group reports and the Strategic Planning process. It identified four goals: improvement of student achievement, the development of an enriched campus life for students and all adults in the Mater Dei Catholic community while maintaining a strong Catholic identity, the attraction and retention of more students from the greater San Diego area, and to increase non-tuition revenue. Each goal is followed by a series of objectives. There is a parallel Strategic Plan developed in 2009-10 that includes the same goals and adds a fifth goal to create a culture of faith in which everyone shares and gives witness Gospel and Catholic tradition.

Do the action plan sections address the critical areas for follow-up?

The Visiting Committee believes that the Self-Study does address most of the *critical areas for follow-up* identified in their Self-Study. The areas for growth of the Schoolwide Action Plan were chosen by the Leadership Team to address the growth areas identified in the focus group reports and the Strategic Planning Process. The plan in the areas of curriculum and instruction, would be strengthened by a greater emphasis on specific research based instructional methods and professional development and much greater support for the ESLRs through technology and improved counseling and student support. The Visiting Committee believes that this action plan will fully address the critical areas for follow-up when it is revised as outlined above.

Will the action plan steps enhance student learning?

The Visiting Committee believes that the action plan steps will enhance student learning in the identified areas of student achievement, the development of an enriched campus life, the attraction and retention of more students, the increase non-tuition revenue, and the maintenance of a culture of faith. The Visiting Committee notes that a stronger emphasis on research-based instruction and professional development, a vigorous emphasis on the regular use of technology

by students, and improved counseling and student support are foundational to the increase in student learning sought by this overall plan.

Is the action plan a "user friendly" schoolwide action plan that has integrated all major school initiatives?

The Visiting Committee believes that this plan will be more user-friendly after the Leadership Team combines the Action Plan and the Strategic Plan and provides greater emphasis to the three items the Mater Dei Community has already identified and the Visiting Committee has suggested have greater emphasis in the overall plan. The committee does believe that the Action plan is well within the resources of the MDCHS community to implement and fund.

Is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and system wide?

The school community recognized the Focus on Learning process and the long range Strategic Plan should be integrated into one action plan. Recent history suggests that the school leadership and community are committed to the WASC self-monitoring process of the Mater Dei Catholic Action Plan. The school's leadership team has expressed a high degree of commitment to its Action Plan as evidenced by the Visiting Committee's conversations with them. The Leadership Team recognizes that it needs to set in motion the specific steps outlined in the Action Plan as well as the Visiting Committee's recommendations for improvements in the plan.

Significant resources that support school improvement include:

- A strong sense of Catholic identity, mission, and philosophy
- An effective administrative team, faculty, and staff
- A Board and governance structure committed to the mission of Mater Dei Catholic
- Governance which is committed to school improvement

Impediments to school improvement that the school will need to overcome in order to accomplish any of the action plan sections:

The school will need to combine the Action Plan and Strategic Plan and ensure there are specific action steps, persons responsible, and timelines to accomplish them. The Visiting Committee believes that Mater Dei Catholic's Action Plan will be highly effective in accomplishing the critical areas of growth they have identified. We recommend the following modifications:

1. That the Action Plan be reorganized to include the four categories of the Self-Study. It may contain more than these four categories.
2. That the leadership team take special care to monitor and support the accountability sections of this plan and name persons responsible.
3. That in Category two, *Curriculum and Instruction*, the leadership provides greater support and accountability for programs that directly effect student learning. These may include areas such as research-based instruction, assessment, and the use of technology to improve motivation and learning.

4. That the school leadership prioritizes specific items that must be accomplished to provide the funds and human resources needed to achieve the entire plan.

Existing factors that support school improvement:

The Mater Dei Catholic has a history of effective accomplishment including the establishment of this school in 2007 and numerous improvements since that date. Both this Self-Study process and interviews with the Leadership Team indicate that the school will move vigorously and effectively to achieve its Action Plan. The integration of the *Focus on Learning* Action Plan with the Strategic Plan will provide strength and direction for the school's future growth as well as assuring careful monitoring of the process.

The Visiting Team agrees that the leadership and staff are committed to carrying out the Action Plan and supporting all areas of school improvement. The Leadership Team has committed to revising the Action plan as suggested in this document and to a greater emphasis on focused professional development for faculty and administration,

In summary, the entire Mater Dei Catholic High School community is committed to the collaborative processes needed to carry out this ambitious and comprehensive plan for ongoing improvement. The programs as outlined should certainly help each student develop his or her gifts and talents as outlined in the school's ESLRs.