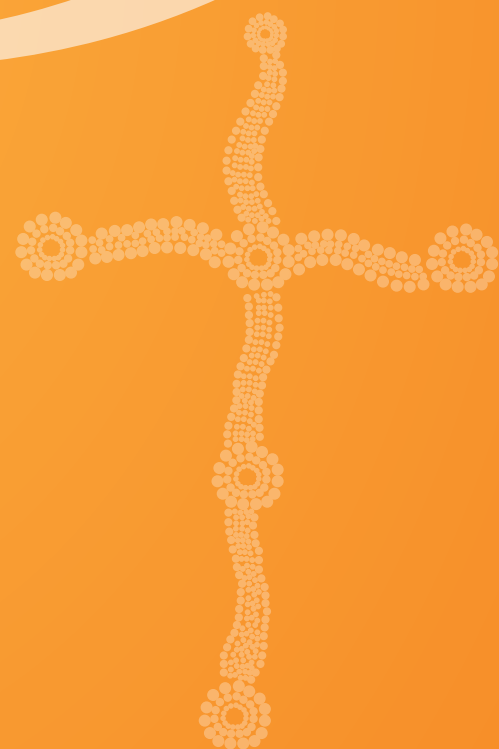


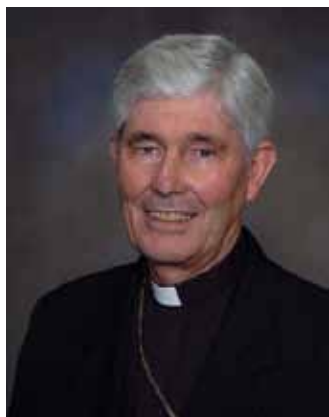


SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & RENEWAL FRAMEWORK



FOREWORD

Dear Friends in Christ,



Catholic schools in the Northern Territory have had a long tradition of involvement in the Church's mission of education since the establishment of our first school by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Darwin in 1908. Catholic schools today seek to continue this tradition in partnership with students, parents, staff, priests and parishioners. They seek to provide learning opportunities that both inspire and challenge, extend the person and encourage them to question that are both relevant and stimulating. All of this is done within the context of participating in the broader Vision and Mission of the church - a vision and Mission grounded in God's love for all people. School communities work together in supporting the Diocesan Vision, always united in our belief in Jesus Christ and His values, and working together in many different and important ways.

The Catholic Education Northern Territory School Improvement Framework incorporates the Vision, priorities, intentions and expectations of all our schools. It supports schools as they continually strive to improve their practice and serve students and their families by providing holistic, high quality education in the Catholic tradition. It engages us in the continual pursuit of excellence and nurtures and sustains staff at both personal and professional levels.

I thank all staff, priests, parishioners, and parents who are so generously committed to the ministry of Catholic Education across the Territory. It is both a challenge and a privilege to be involved in this important work for the common good of our young people and for the support of the Church's Mission in building the Kingdom of God.

I commend the Catholic Education Northern Territory School Improvement and Renewal Framework to you and trust that it will support you in your ministry as you strive towards ensuring that our schools are places of great faith, learning and love.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eugene Hurley".

Bishop Eugene Hurley
Bishop of the Diocese of Darwin



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Catholic Education in the Northern Territory has a unique history. For more than a century we have seen extraordinary men and women commit and contribute to making a difference. The bulk of this history is with the Religious Orders and their members who dedicated their lives to this pursuit. This work has become increasingly the work of dedicated and committed lay staff.

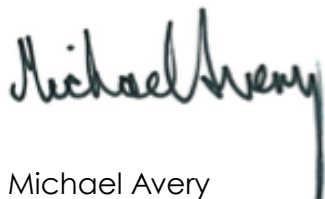
In 2008 we published the first School Improvement and Renewal Framework. This was the work of deputy principals who accepted the challenge of improving the effectiveness of our schools.

This work has enriched our schools. It has provided a common language and culture of education. It has improved expectations and understandings. The value of the first SIRF was that it was written by our own staff in our own schools.

It is then very exciting to be able to publish an updated version of the School Improvement and Renewal Framework. Again it has been written by our own staff. It's primary focus is improving school effectiveness in a Catholic context.

I recommend this document to you as a tool for improved effectiveness, it is not about compliance but the quality of our work. School leadership groups will continue work on and understand the processes and philosophies embedded in the SIRF.

Our call is to provide our students with the best opportunities to experience and grow in quality Catholic Education. I commend this document for your use.



Michael Avery
Director of Catholic Education
Diocese of Darwin

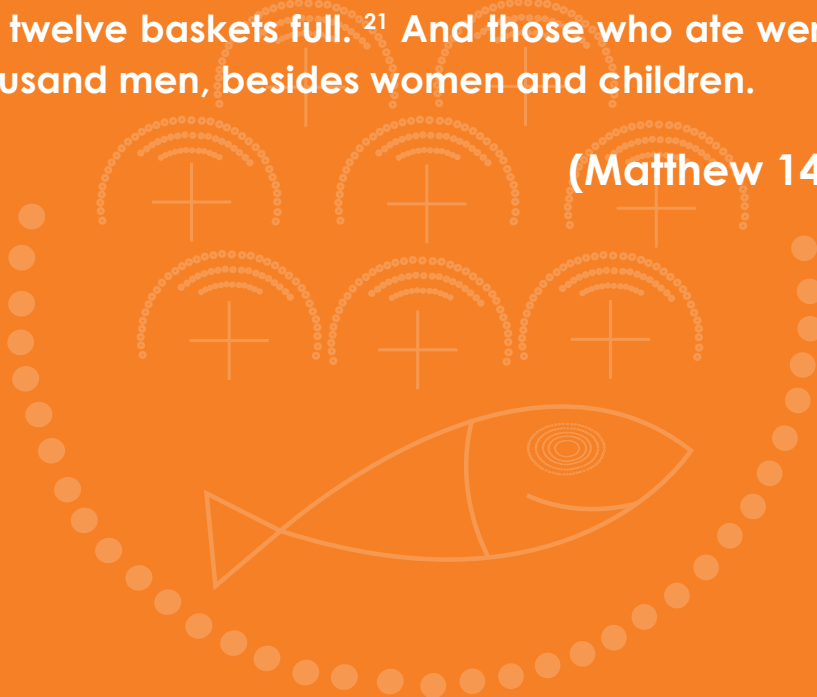


Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand



¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶ Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸ And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(Matthew 14:13-21)



What does this have to do with school improvement?



When we deeply understand and appreciate what we have and can do - rather than what we don't have and cannot yet do - we are blessed beyond measure.

Inviting God into our daily work often results in exceptional outcomes. Faith and Grace are powerful allies in any worthwhile endeavour.

Sharing generously is a pathway to abundance. Sometimes the sharing involves breaking free of old ways of thinking and acting.

Insightful leadership may be the difference between chaos and new ways of living and learning.

Sometimes a problem is an opportunity in disguise.

Everyone has a role in improvement - master teachers, team players and ordinary people who are willing to participate actively in faith and with goodwill.

A unique feature of teaching is that we rarely know the difference we make in the lives of young people. The way a teacher or other significant adult in the school treats a young person can have a profound long-term effect on the adult that student becomes.

The impact we have on young people's lives is not easily measurable or discernible as they leave our schools. Teachers and Principals need to have faith in their role.

Sometimes there are problems that can't be solved, because their origin seems to be beyond our locus of power, just as feeding the masses that day appeared to the disciples. Nevertheless, that doesn't mean we do nothing. We should confront problems in our own context, and chip away at them with faith and goodwill. Others, perhaps generations later, will build on our efforts and at last the problem will be solved, justifying our faith all those years ago.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Catholic Education Office acknowledges the contributions of the following people who supported the review of school improvement and revision of the School Improvement and Renewal Framework.

WORKING GROUP

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OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

A large number of other people contributed generously to this work - principals, other school leaders, leaders and education officers from other dioceses and other school sectors, teachers, staff who were heavily involved in developing and implementing the original SIRC, other school staff and staff from the Catholic Education Office, Berrimah. Thank you for your time, wisdom and vision.

PHOTO CREDIT:

Michelle Mitchell and Laura Avery.

ARTWORK CREDIT:

Michelle Mitchell

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**Guides, tools and resources are described in these sections and located in the School Improvement pages of the Learning Platform*

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Diocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Schools in the Northern Territory places Jesus Christ and his teachings at the centre of the Catholic school. It articulates unambiguously the basic convictions, related commitments, values and beliefs which define the overall context within which Northern Territory Catholic schools operate.

DIOCESAN VISION STATEMENT

Catholic Education in the Northern Territory is committed to developing authentic Catholic schools that:

- are founded on the person of Jesus Christ and enlivened by the Gospel
- are communities that link faith, life and contemporary culture
- sustain their strength and vitality through partnership with parents/carers and the community of believers and
- are committed to the development of the whole person.

In committing to our Vision and as partners in Catholic Education, we commit ourselves to our students by:

CELEBRATING BEING CATHOLIC IN AUSTRALIA BY

- recognising that Jesus Christ is central to our lives
- imparting Catholic beliefs, values, practices and traditions within a faith-filled community
- being inclusive of all, especially those who experience disadvantage
- rejoicing in our cultural diversity.

ENSURING QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING BY

- providing a stimulating and challenging curriculum which links faith and culture
- promoting our schools as places of learning and excellence where children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential
- embracing the privilege and the challenge of teaching in Catholic schools
- making creative use of available resources.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR WORLD BY

- fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of each person
- collaborating with others for the good of all
- inspiring hope and a positive vision for the future
- promoting reconciliation
- continuing to grow the rich tradition of Catholic education in the Territory.

Our shared Vision empowers us to realise our Mission and challenges us to reflect critically on the quality of the education we provide. We are called to strive collectively for excellence and are committed to improving our schools. Strengthened by our Catholic tradition, our Catholic schools must always strive to provide rich, relevant and meaningful environments that promote and sustain a culture of life-long learning for all.

Collaborative commitment and participation in continuous improvement unite our school communities in a privileged ministry of educating the young. These qualities bind us in a climate of mutual accountability and support. Through engagement in sustainable school improvement, Northern Territory Catholic schools maximise student achievement and faith development.



1.2 OVERVIEW

The Catholic Education Northern Territory (CENT) School Improvement and Renewal Framework (SIRF) provides direction for our school communities. It supports each school to respond to its call of Mission to community, to its Vision, to current practices in education and to new policy directions. It is a framework of linked processes of planning, implementation and review, designed to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Catholic schools in the Northern Territory.

Effective Catholic schools have a strong learning orientation, including laying a foundation for successful lifelong learning. They are learning-centred and constantly striving for excellence in learning and achievement.

Effective schools:

- promote progress for all students
- ensure that each student achieves the highest standards possible
- enhance all aspects of student achievement and development, and
- continue to improve from year to year (Stoll, 1997)

The School Improvement and Renewal Framework is the mechanism by which schools can monitor their effectiveness and focus on improving. This is achieved through the collection and analysis of relevant and reliable information to monitor school performance, track student progress and respond proactively to changing needs and aspirations.

Implementation of the School Improvement and Renewal Framework will:

- allow a school to **develop** its own educational plans and priorities, incorporating Northern Territory Catholic



Education Council, Diocesan and Government policies and programs,

- provide a framework for continuous **monitoring** of achievement against key goal and improvement targets,
- **analyse** a school's effectiveness measured against its goals and targets,
- provide a framework for **reporting** on effectiveness to a school's community and systemic and government authorities and
- strengthen each school's Catholic identity, leadership, teaching and learning, pastoral care and wellbeing, community and culture and finance, facilities and resources.

1.3 PRINCIPLES, IN OUR CATHOLIC CONTEXT

The following principles underpin this framework:

Catholic ... the direction, processes and outcomes of our work are shaped explicitly by a perspective of lived faith and a shared understanding of the vision and purpose of Catholic Education.

Student centred and nurturing ... a shared commitment to focus on each student achieving to their full potential.

Collaboration and partnership ... the process of improvement is collaborative, with involvement from the school and its community, the Catholic Education Office and other partners.

Alignment ... there is clarity about how legislative and policy requirements, community expectations, community cultures, professional standards, curriculum directives, national programs, system and school plans and other agendas are aligned to reduce the administrative load on schools and enhance teaching effectiveness.

Subsidiarity ... decisions about schools and schooling are best handled as close as possible to the people on whom the decision will have most impact.

Accountability and shared responsibility ... there are clear expectations of all stakeholders – principals and other school staff, students, parents/carers and the Catholic Education Office.

Rigour with flexibility ... core understandings and processes provide rigour and certainty while strategies are flexible enough to accommodate individual school and community contexts.

Improvement-focused inquiry ... schools work through important questions about school performance and examine evidence about student achievement. They evaluate the quality and effectiveness of interventions and strategies explicitly attending to areas for improvement. They value, appreciate and learn from things that are working well, and plan forward, consolidating and building on strengths, dreaming about new futures.

See also:

[R01: A Vision for Improvement](#)

[R02: Characteristics of an effective school link to Learning Platform](#)



1.4 KEY AREAS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL

School Improvement and Renewal processes give attention to six key areas of school life:



Catholic Identity



Teaching and Learning



Leadership



Pastoral Care and Wellbeing



Community and Culture



Finance, Facilities and Resources

As a result of school improvement processes, each school community will have:

- a clear sense of the Vision and Mission for their school,
- a culture of improvement, reflection and ongoing renewal,
- a realistic assessment of school strengths ('what we do well and can build on'),
- a realistic picture of challenges and the interventions required to address them,
- a five-year School Strategic Plan that articulates the school's goals, targets and key improvement strategies,
- an Annual School Improvement Plan that details how the school will achieve goals and targets each year,
- an approach to community engagement that builds partnerships in education specifically including parents/carers,
- a commitment to achieve its mission, strategic priorities and goals,
- a capacity to deal effectively with emerging issues in a changing environment.

1.5 ACCOUNTABILITY

The main focus of the School Improvement and Renewal Framework (SIRF) is on improvement rather than accountability. However implementation of the SIRF supports schools in meeting their accountability and compliance obligations in a timely fashion.

Detailed advice regarding accountability requirements is provided to schools through circulars and other communication channels. An outline of key areas of accountability is included below.

Catechetical Accountability

Schools across the Diocese are accountable to the Bishop for the Catholic Identity of schools and specifically, Religious Education Curriculum within schools. The Catholic Education Northern Territory School Improvement and Renewal Framework provides school communities with a guide for discerning how well they are performing and identifying future priorities and areas for growth. The framework supports schools in ensuring that:

- the Catholic ethos of the school is manifest in the daily life of the school, its relationships, practices and across the curriculum,
- Catholic Identity is proclaimed through witness, signs, symbols and liturgical practices,
- prayer, liturgy and sacramental programs are integral to school life,
- Religious Education is central to the purpose of each school,
- pastoral care practices reflect our Christian beliefs,
- schools work in partnership with parents/ carers and families,
- school programs are aligned with key Diocesan documents and statements,
- schools are striving for excellence

through engagement in ongoing improvement and renewal processes,

- relationships between parish, school and wider community are nurtured.

Financial Accountability

Schools within the Northern Territory Catholic Education system are accountable to the government through the Catholic Education Office. One of the roles of the CEO is to collate both financial and non-financial information, to prepare Annual Financial Statements for each school and to ensure that financial records are audited each year.

Implementation of the Catholic Education Northern Territory School Improvement and Renewal Framework enables schools to provide accountability in the areas of finance, facilities and resources to School Boards, the local communities, Diocesan authorities and Government agencies.

Government Accountability

Implementation of the Catholic Education Northern Territory School Improvement and Renewal Framework supports schools to meet Australian Government (AG) and Northern Territory Government (NTG) accountability requirements.



1.6 SIRF AND OTHER INFORMATION SYSTEMS

He also said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

(Matt 13:31-32)

The mustard seeds need to be nurtured to grow into such a beautiful and useful plant. School leaders need to be mindful that they care for and develop the resources within their school community in order for them to grow to their potential.

In planning for school improvement Principals and school leaders should be mindful of other frameworks, policies and information systems that impact on the operation of their school. The following list is a guide; it is not an exhaustive list:

- Management systems and plans for finance, facilities and resources (including IT); these are outlined in section 3.2 (at the end of the FFR description),
- Legislation, regulations and policy – Australian Government, NT Government, Catholic Church, NT Board of Studies (NTBOS), SACE Board of South Australia (SACE Board) and other authorities,
- Human resources systems, e.g. recruitment, induction, work conditions, awards and recognition,
- Workforce development systems, e.g. *Formation Review*, professional development,
- National standards that exist in many areas of school operations including workplace health and safety; health and wellbeing; and professional practice.

SECTION 2: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL PROCESSES

2.1 QUALITY TEACHING: POWERFUL LEARNING



Evidence from the research of Hattie (2003), Rowe (2003), Marzano (2008) and Robinson (2007) indicates that it is the teacher who makes the biggest single difference to student learning in schools. The essence of this research is represented in figure 1:

- The characteristics, environments and backgrounds of student (over which schools have little control) account for 50% of the variance in student performance;
- **Teachers can make a significant difference in student achievement – accounting for 30-40% of the variance;**

- The quality of relationships between home, peers and school account for 15% variance;
- The leadership provided by the school principal accounts for approximately 5 per cent of the variance.

PERCENTAGE OF ACHIEVEMENT VARIANCE

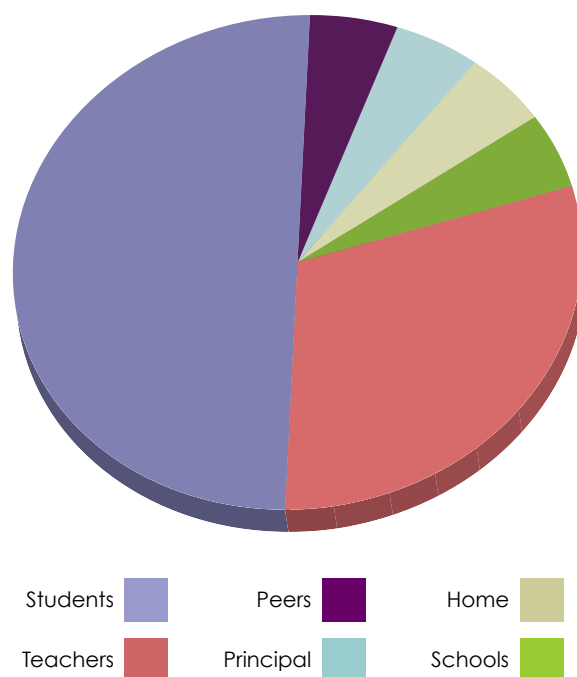
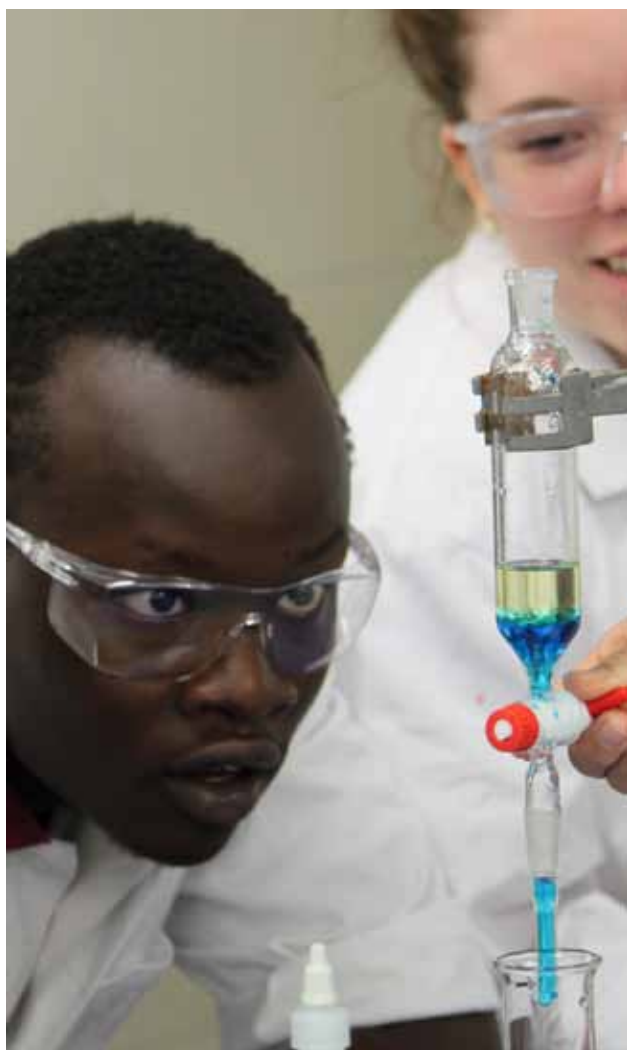


Figure 1: Accounting for variance in student achievement (based on Hattie's work (2003))

A key focus of school improvement is on improving learning outcomes for students and it follows that acknowledging and building teacher capacity is an important component of this work. Several sections of this Framework have been specifically written for classroom teachers. For example, the Key Area Rating Tools describe evidence 'at the classroom' as well as across the whole school (SI06-SI12). SI23 describes how the core questions (Section 2.2) can be applied by teaching teams as they discuss their teaching and students' learning.

The work of Claxton¹ draws attention to the learning side of the teaching and learning equation and the concept of 'learning power'.



'Building learning power is about helping young people to become better learners, both in school and out.'

It is about creating a culture in classrooms - and in the school more widely - that systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable young people to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively.

Students who are more confident of their own learning ability learn faster and learn better. They concentrate more, think harder and find learning more enjoyable. They do better in their tests and external examinations. And they are easier and more satisfying to teach'.

Improvements in student learning outcomes are the cornerstone of whole-school improvement; and improvements in learning outcomes depend on quality teaching and powerful learning.

2.2 QUALITY INFORMATION

Quality information underpins decision-making about school improvement and renewal and can include demographic data, records of student achievement, records from school self-assessments, survey results, community profile data and information about curriculum, finance and many other aspects of school operations. Figure 2 illustrates a way that school data can be classified and Table 1 lists examples.

¹Building Learning Power, What it is, accessed 14 August 2013 http://www.buildinglearningpower.co.uk/what_it_is.html

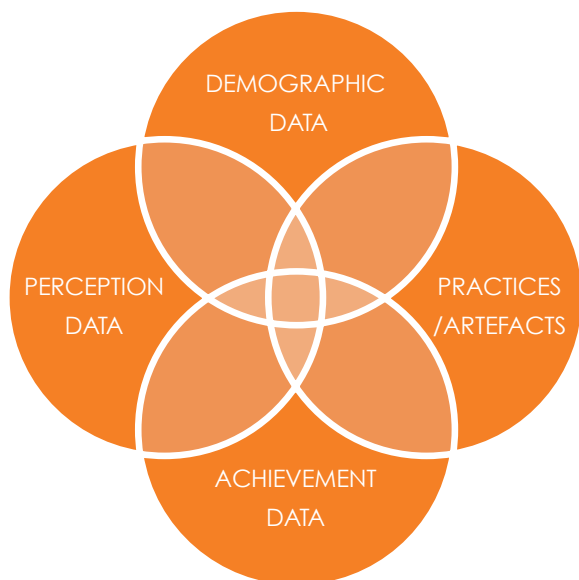


Figure 2: Classification of information for school improvement

Table 1: Examples of school information

Classification	Examples
Demographic data	Enrolment information, health records, school and community profile data
Perception data	Information from surveys, interviews and other forms of feedback
Achievement data	Student test scores and other teacher-records, portfolios, scores from the National Assessment Program; reports to parents/carers
Practices / artefacts	Emergency procedures, policy, student models and artworks

See also:
[R03: Working Strategically](#)

2.3 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL CYCLE

The School Improvement and Renewal Framework provides schools with a system of tools and processes to monitor, assess, plan, implement, evaluate and report the extent to which they are achieving the standards to which they aspire.

School improvement and renewal is a cycle which occurs continuously over five years and is underpinned by high-quality information arising from careful monitoring and rigorous inquiry.

The cycle consists of the following components:

- 1. School Strategic Plan: 5 Years (SSP)**
- 2. Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP)**
- 3. School self-assessment and other monitoring**
- 4. School Annual Report (SAR)**
- 5. External Validation**

Each component within the cycle provides a process for schools to improve school effectiveness by aligning action to strategic intent and promoting a culture of improvement and renewal. See Section 2.5 for a more detailed discussion of the components.

Figure 3 outlines the five-year school improvement cycle and a more detailed view of annual activities within each of the five years.

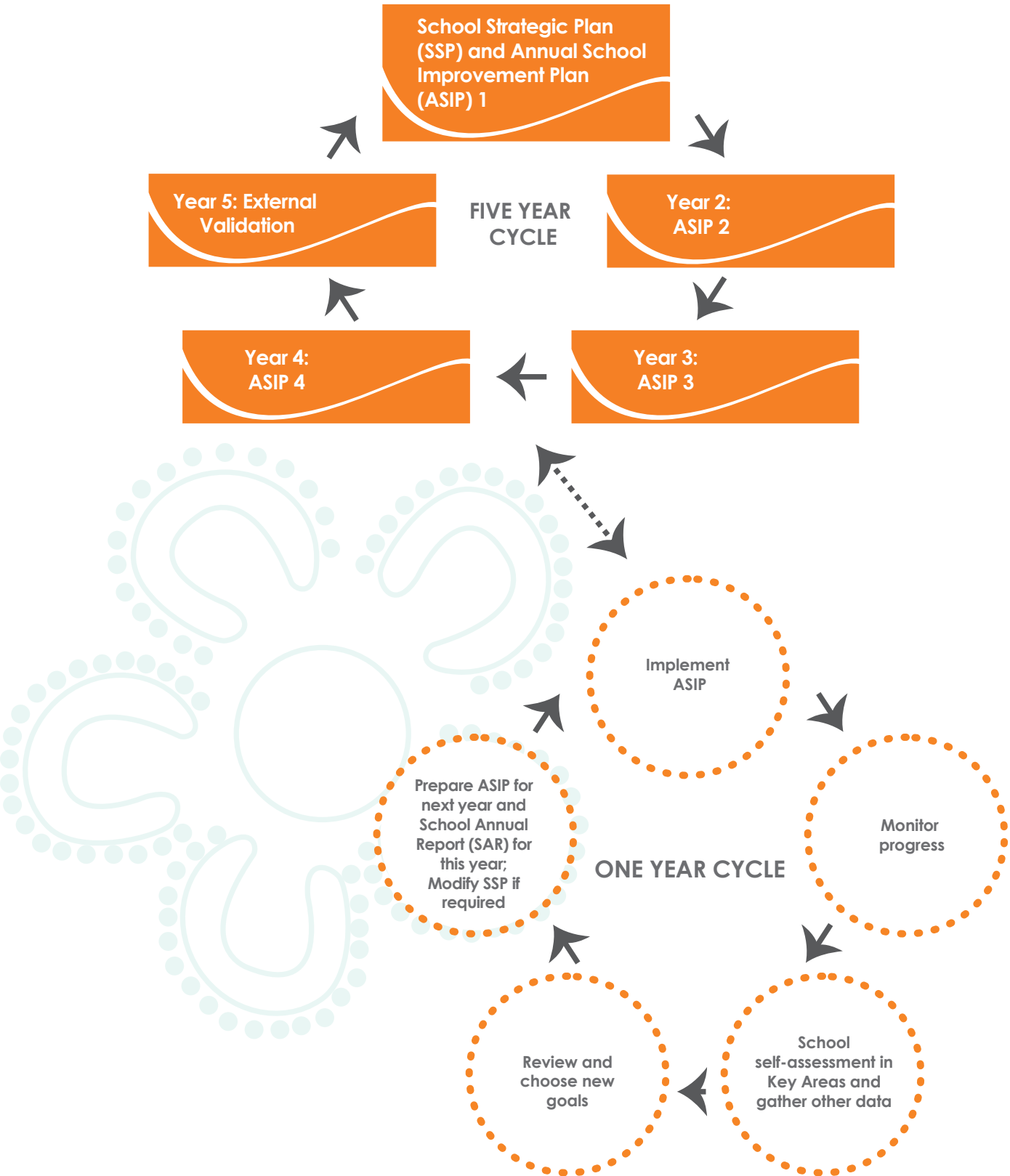
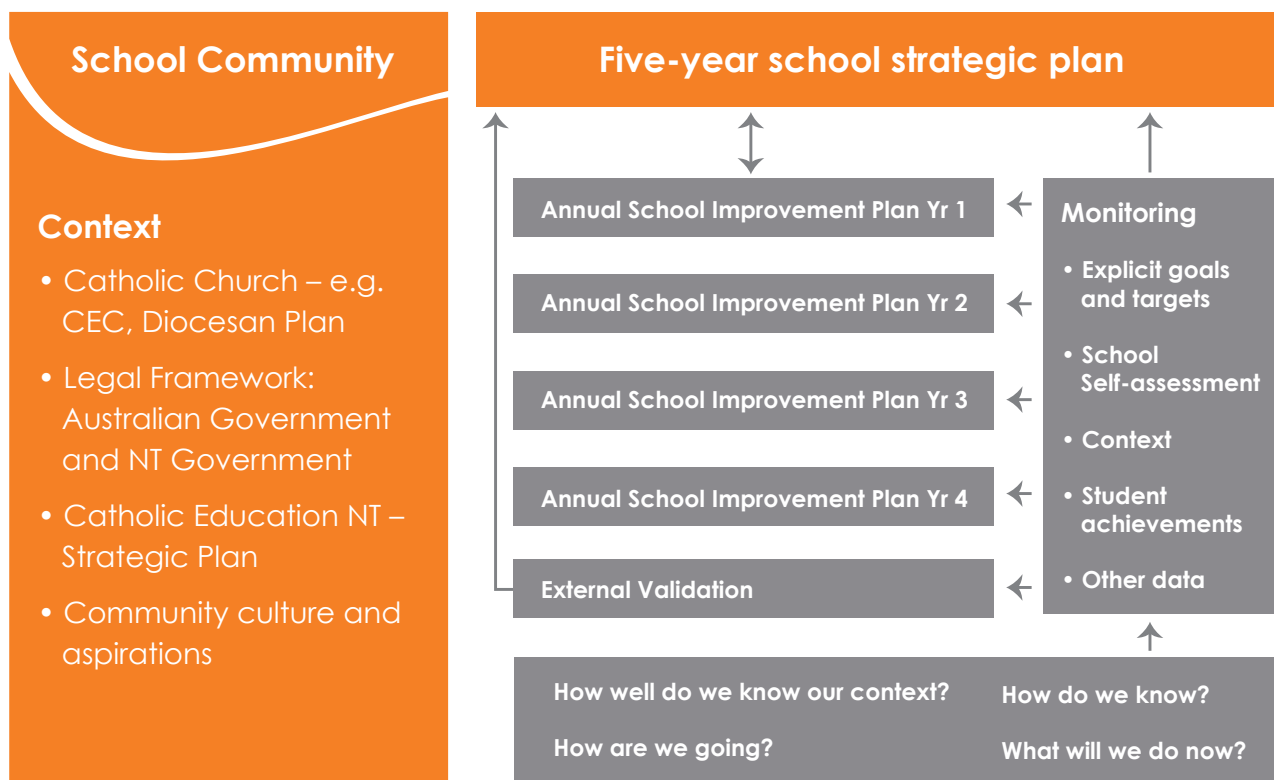


Fig. 3: The Five-year school improvement cycle and an example of annual activity.

2.4 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND CORE QUESTIONS



The school improvement and renewal process is 'brought to life' through collaborative questioning and inquiry:

1. How well do we know our community, our students and our Catholic mission?
 - How strong is our Catholic identity and culture?
 - Will we adjust our vision and mission in response to changing circumstances?
2. How are we going?
 - What standards are our students achieving?
 - What is the level of school performance in other Key Areas?
 - Are these standards high enough?
3. How do we know?
 - What evidence do we have about our school identity and performance?
 - What are the quality indicators that assist us in making judgments about our school identity and performance?
4. What are we going to do now?
 - What are our strengths; how will these be celebrated and built on?
 - What should we prioritize in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual School Improvement Plan?

2.5 PLANNING, MONITORING AND REPORTING



2.5.1 SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLAN (SSP)

Strategic planning is a process of clarifying vision and mission, conducting research - e.g. into changing context and previous performance - defining goals, choosing strategies and organizing resources in order to achieve the school's vision and mission. Strategic planning answers the question: What are the key decisions and strategies that the whole school must get right in order to thrive?

The School Strategic Plan (SSP) records the outcomes of the strategic planning process and lists key elements such as vision

and mission, goals and targets. Optional information includes key strategies but detailed strategies will be included in the Annual School Improvement Plan. The SSP also describes how the plan will be evaluated at key junctures in the five-year cycle. See SI01: How to develop and implement a School Strategic Plan

The School Strategic Plan (SSP) informs the Annual School Implementation Plan (ASIP) which sets out how the school will go about implementing the key strategic goals **this year**.

It is recommended that the School Strategic Plan include 4-6 goals and their associated targets and key strategies. The SSP must show evidence that the plan covers all of the six Key Areas. Some goals will 'overlap' two or more of the Key Areas as shown in the exemplar SI01a: SSP Exemplar

A recommended format for the School Strategic Plan can be found in [SI02: How to Develop and Implement the Annual School Improvement Plan](#).

For a graphic representation of the link between the School Strategic Plan, the Annual School Improvement Plan and other elements see of school planning see R04: School Planning Overview

The School Strategic Plan should be submitted to the Director, Catholic Education NT before implementation.

See also:

[R03: Working Strategically](#)

[SI01: How to develop and implement a School Strategic Plan](#)



2.5.2 ANNUAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (ASIP)

The Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP) describes the specific actions that will be taken each year as the school works towards goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan. The ASIP answers the question: What will we do **this year** (what will be our priorities) as progress towards attainment of goals and targets?

SI02: How to develop and implement the Annual School Improvement Plan, includes a term-by-term outline of the steps in developing and implementing the ASIP, and a template for the ASIP.

The Annual School Improvement Plan should be submitted to the Director, Catholic Education by **15 December**, in the year prior to the year of implementation.

The ASIP is reviewed each year by the school leadership team, school staff and the School Board. Identified successes and areas for further improvement that arise from this evaluation may be used to:

- shape the ASIP for the following year,
- show achievement of long term strategic goals (expressed in the School Strategic Plan),
- inform the School Annual Report.

An Action Plan is an elaboration of a target or goal in the ASIP. Action plans provide more detail about strategies, resources, personnel, monitoring, professional learning, external support and other matters. Action plans are generally written and used by teams that have accepted responsibility for implementing the initiative. For example, the ASIP signals the school's intention to enhance the use of information technologies (IT) in teaching and learning; the action plan spells out the detail about who, what, where, when, and how much? Action plans are not required for all goals and strategies in the ASIP. As a 'rule of thumb': If the initiative requires a significant amount of planning to ensure success, prepare an action plan, otherwise the outline in the ASIP will suffice. Planning for significant change may involve using the Project Management Framework (PMF)- refer to Section 2.5.3

“A goal without a plan is a dream”



The prudent stewardship of resources and the educational accountability for improvement in student outcomes have presented a challenge to historic ways of receiving funding and school autonomy.

This has been compounded by the targeted funding of low socio economic schools. These are generally the schools with the highest changeover of personnel and those whose management capacity is always working at its maximum spread. At the time of writing, there are significant structural changes in funding that will influence future processes.

There is a strong systemic responsibility to maintain a long term strategic approach and to be cognizant (records) of what activity has taken place previously.

The Project Management Framework (PMF) was introduced for this reason and has required some rethinking for many of us. The introduction of change is always

viewed differently with hindsight and we have endeavoured to learn from this.

What is certain is that the PMF has been applied for new initiatives not part of our usual core business. This will always be at the discretion of the Director. It will also be used for issues of SIGNIFICANT change or SIGNIFICANT resourcing.

Michael Avery, Director

All projects that apply to the PMF are to be incorporated within the school's/office's Annual Implementation Plan. This ensures that all activity aligns with the strategic direction of the school/office.

The PMF and associated documents are found in the document library on the CENT intranet site (SharePoint) <https://portal.nt.catholic.edu.au/default.aspx>

Please contact the Manager of Projects for other information.

2.5.4 SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT AND OTHER MONITORING PROCESSES

Schools collect a range of data to monitor their progress and examples are listed below. Tools and guidelines for conducting school self-assessments and other forms of monitoring can be found in Section 4 of this Framework.

3a. Explicit performance measures are an integral part of planning in priority areas and should be included as targets in the School Strategic Plan. Performance measures should also be outlined in each Annual School Improvement Plan (See GT4). These measures help to determine the extent to which goals and targets in priority areas have been achieved.

A large variety of tools and measures is available for school use. Schools should check professional associations, government departments, commercial publishers, other schools and CEO Consultants for ideas. Some examples are included in the weblinks page (Section 5.5) of this Framework.

3b. School self-assessments. School reflection, discussion, data gathering and assessment of school performance across one or more of the six Key Areas provides an overall assessment of school performance in the area (or areas) under consideration. School self-assessments are a valuable way of involving stakeholders in discussions about school plans, strategies and achievements. See Section 3 of this Framework for further detail.

3c. Perception data is gathered from surveys, interviews and other tools that encourage stakeholders (including parents/carers, staff and students) to comment on a broad range of topics. Three satisfaction surveys can be found on the Learning Platform:

[SI14 Parent satisfaction survey](#)

[SI15 Staff satisfaction survey](#)

[SI16 Student satisfaction survey](#)

Other methods for gathering feedback from parents/carers, staff and students are outlined at [SI17: Parent views](#).

Perception data should be gathered every year, usually in Third Term. Schools can use the surveys outlined above in whole or in parts, depending on the context and the specific purpose of the survey. Parent, staff and student opinions (perceptions) are required elements of the School Annual Report

3d. Performance monitoring is always a requirement of projects that are funded from special grants and partnership arrangements. Data from these sources can help inform whole-school planning. If a monitoring process is not specified as part of the project design schools are encouraged to ask for assistance from CEO consultants.

3e. Student achievement data provide a rich source of information to help the school measure and monitor overall performance. See [SI18: Student achievement data](#)

It is recommended that schedules for whole-school monitoring and assessment be collaboratively developed and written into the school calendar (in the same way that national testing and senior school assessment schedules are made explicit). This helps ensure that there is shared understanding about purposes and processes and that data sets are complete, valid and reliable.

One of the key stages in any planning process is assembling and analysing relevant data to generate an 'overall picture' or 'whole school report card' on school performance. In most schools these processes occur in Term Three. SI02 illustrates the stages in data collection and analysis with respect to annual school improvement planning.

2.5.5 SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT (SAR)

The purpose of the School Annual Report is to provide the school community and system authorities with fair, reliable and objective information about school performance and developments during the year.

Audiences for the report include:

- current (and potential) parents/carers and supporters of the school,
- the Director, Catholic Education NT,
- government officials – Australian and Territory Governments.

The School Annual Report contains a mix of required elements (to meet accountability-to-government obligations) and other information for parents/carers, supporters and families who may be searching for a school for their children.

During Term Four each year, the Catholic Education Office will provide schools with an annual update regarding mandatory content, a recommended format and other matters relating to the School Annual Report. The advice will also be posted to the SIRF web page on the Learning Platform, [SI19: SAR Guide](#)

School Annual Reports are endorsed by the School Board and submitted to the Director, Catholic Education Office before the end of Term One in the year following the reported year. The report must be **published to the Internet before the end of Term Two in the same year.**

2.5.6 EXTERNAL VALIDATION

External validation is an opportunity for the school to describe and provide evidence of its school improvement journey to a group of education professionals – the Validation Team. This team is comprised of educators who are external to the school and (perhaps) to Catholic Education NT.

In preparation for the External Validation process, the leadership team gathers evidence to illustrate the school's 'improvement journey' for the period under review. Evidence may include:

- student achievement data,
- reflection, discernment and identification of the significant achievements and outcomes within each Key Area,
- identified areas for improvement, supported by evidence in successive Annual School Improvement Plans and School Annual Reports,
- other information.

The Validation Team will look at the school's improvement goals and targets, the extent to which they have been achieved, and processes that were involved in the journey. The main purpose of External Validation is for the external team to provide recommendations and other commentary that can support the school in achieving its vision, mission and goals in the next planning cycle.

Scheduling of External Validation is flexible. It may be scheduled:

- early in the last year of the strategic planning cycle (and will thus help to inform the new School Strategic Plan), or
- at another time that is negotiated between the Director, Catholic Education and the principal.

External Validation is best conducted in the first half of the year, generally March - June. The format for the External Validation process and the membership of the Validation Team will reflect the requirements of each school and may be different from school to school.

Further detail about External Validation can be found in [SI03: External Validation](#)

2.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improvement in any area of schooling requires clear goals and a sustained team effort. This section outlines the expectations of key players **with respect to school improvement**. It is recommended that detailed expectations be discussed and agreed upon as part of the preparation for school improvement planning. The expectations listed below act as a guide; specific expectations may vary according to school context and agreed school-CENT priorities.

What is expected of Principals and school leadership teams?

That they:

- share the Catholic faith and enrich the lives of students, staff and other members of the school community.
- provide educational opportunities to encounter the Catholic faith,
- collaboratively develop a shared school Vision and Mission,
- develop school leadership practices which ensure accountability, collaboration and initiative,
- be accountable for the learning outcomes and wellbeing of students and staff,
- implement the School Improvement and Renewal Framework including development and implementation of the School Strategic Plan and Annual School Improvement Plans,
- lead and manage whole-school monitoring and data gathering, including school self-assessment,
- lead strategic change through engaging with the school community – teachers, parents/carers, students and the School Board – Catholic Education Office staff, Government agencies and other key stakeholders,
- build a culture of improvement that includes inquiry and critical reflection;
- supervise, monitor and support teaching and support staff in planning and acting for improvement,
- provide staff with time and

- opportunities to participate in the development and implementation of school improvement and renewal plans and targeted interventions,
- ensure that all school staff meet expected standards of service provision as outlined in *'Sharers of the Vision' (schools version)*,
- ensure the school complies with relevant legislation, regulations and organisational standards including the management of finances, facilities, assets and other resources,
- actively monitor student achievements at the classroom and whole-school level and whole-school performance in staff deployment and supervision, Formation Review, efficient use of resources, governance, community partnerships, workplace health, safety and security and other operational matters,
- invite student input into school planning processes when appropriate.

The 'deliverables' (e.g. plans and reports) and due dates, with respect to School Improvement and Renewal processes are outlined in Section 2.6 of this Framework

It is recommended that schools consider appointing a School Planning Team to support the Principal in the school improvement activities outlined in this Framework. See SI22 for a suggested composition and role description for this group.





What is expected of teaching staff?*

That they:

- contribute to the school as a faith centred community;
- accept, support and foster the teachings of the Catholic Church and help students to integrate faith into their lives in light of the example of Jesus;
- present learning and development in faith as a life-long and life-giving process;
- maintain professional standards of teaching based on the Catholic Education Office, 'Sharers of the Vision' and other professional standards;
- plan, deliver and evaluate learning programs in their area of responsibility;
- engage in critical reflective practices and contributing positively to a culture of continuous improvement;
- actively and positively engage with the school leadership team and other staff in monitoring student achievement and school performance, and work together on agreed improvement targets;
- plan and execute explicit interventions that support students at risk of not achieving age-appropriate outcomes, and fully extend all students; be accountable for the learning outcomes and wellbeing of students;
- collaborate in the on-going work of action teams, professional learning

communities and other teams that are striving to meet agreed performance targets, and

- use Formation Review as a key process for reflection and self-improvement and seek support and professional learning as needed.

What is expected of support staff?*

That they:

- be models of faith and the life giving presence of God;
- actively monitor performance in their area of influence, help plan and execute activities that are designed to improve student achievement and school performance;
- collaborate in the on-going work of action teams, professional learning communities and other teams that are striving to meet agreed performance targets;
- use Formation Review as a key process for reflection and self-improvement;
- participate in school decision-making processes where appropriate;
- have concern for the pastoral care and wellbeing of students, staff and members of the school community.

**Many classroom-based staff work in teams that might include teachers, teacher assistants, Indigenous Education Workers, tutors, volunteers and others; expectations may need to be adjusted accordingly*

What is expected of the School Board?

- contribute to the development of the School Strategic Plan, Annual School Improvement Plan and School Annual Report,
- participate in the school self assessment and other monitoring processes,
- monitor and review school performance against identified goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual School Improvement Plan.

What is expected of parents?

- take full responsibility for their role as 'primary educator' of children; actively engage with classroom teachers in efforts to enhance the learning opportunities for their children,
- collaborate with teachers and the school leadership team in activities that seek to improve the school,
- participate in school decision-making processes where appropriate.
- avail themselves of opportunities to be involved in school review and planning processes when possible.



What is expected of students?

- take responsibility for their own learning and act to enhance the learning environment for all students,
- set personal goals and actively work to achieve them,
- collaborate with teachers, support staff and other students in ways that enhance the learning environment for all,
- participate in school decision-making processes where appropriate.

What is expected of the Director and Deputy Directors, Catholic Education?

- actively promote the vision and mission for Catholic Education,
- actively lead school improvement across the Diocese through modelling, supervision and promotion of an improvement culture,
- facilitate research and policy development that furthers the aims of Catholic Education NT,
- advocate for Catholic Education in a range of forums.

What is expected of other Catholic Education Office staff?

- actively promote the vision and mission for Catholic Education,
- provide schools with training and expert advice with respect to school improvement,
- collaborate with school leaders to ensure that schools meet legal and policy obligations with respect to school management, planning and reporting,
- monitor system-wide and individual school performance and make recommendations accordingly,
- provide timely, well coordinated support services that help schools achieve their goals and performance targets.

2.7 SUPPORTS FOR PRINCIPALS



The Director, Deputy Directors and other senior staff from the Catholic Education Office visit schools from time to time to discuss school planning and performance. These visits provide schools with the opportunity to share and celebrate successes and outline strategic issues that are best tackled through collaborative effort and problem solving. Visit details, including specific agendas, vary from school to school and will be negotiated during preparations for the visit.

Senior Education Officers and School Improvement Consultants and other staff collaborate with Principals and school

leadership teams in school planning processes including data analysis, goal setting, review of previous performance and problem solving.

School improvement is included in discussions at Principals' meetings, other network meetings and training session.

Guides, tools and other resources are available to principals. The content and purpose of many of these materials are outlined in Section 3 of this Framework. All guides, tools and resources are available on the 'School Improvement' pages of the Learning Platform

2.8 KEY ‘DELIVERABLES’ AND DUE DATES



Principals are expected to undertake the following processes and develop the plans and reports listed here.

Element	Requirement
School Strategic Plan – it may be a newly developed SSP or one that has been modified significantly	Submit to Director, Catholic Education by 15 December; i.e., prior to the beginning of the target year and post to the school website.
Annual School Improvement Plan	Submit to Director, Catholic Education by 15 December; i.e., prior to the beginning of the target year.
School self-assessment	Schools select two of the six Key Areas for self-assessment each year with the following two exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All six Key Areas should be assessed in the Validation Year. • No self-assessment is required in the year that the School Strategic Plan is being re-developed – usually the fifth year of the cycle.
School Annual Report (Version 1)	Submitted to the Director, by 15 March in the year following the year being reported, i.e. the 2014 SAR must be submitted by 15 Mar 2015.
School Annual Report (Final version) - with audited finance data	Posted to the school web page before the end of Term Two.
External Validation	Generally occurs once in the five-year strategic planning cycle; the date is negotiated between the Principal and the Director, Catholic Education.

SECTION 3: KEY AREAS

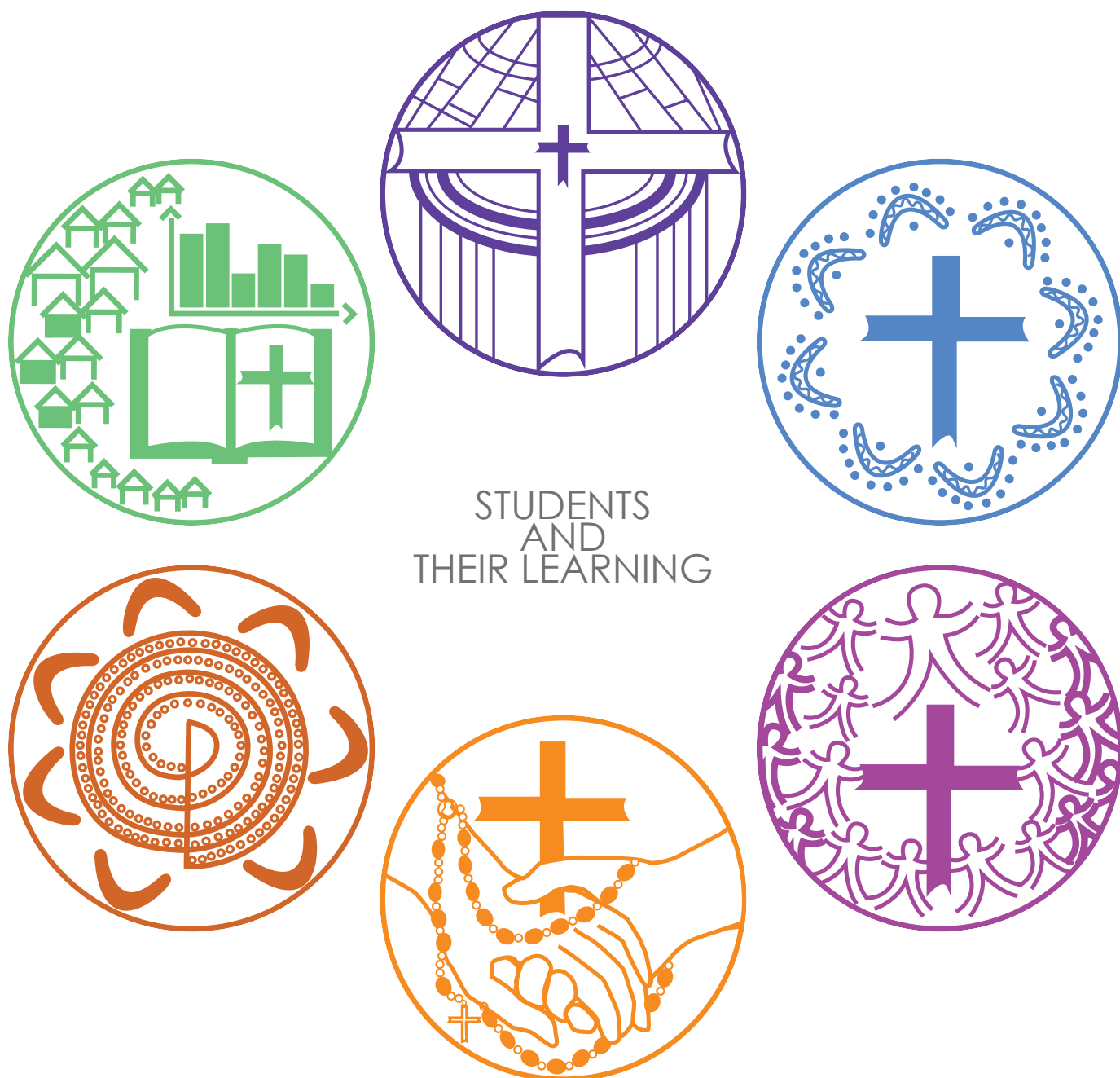


Figure 5: The six Key Areas of Catholic schooling in the Northern Territory



3.1 INTRODUCTION

The School Improvement and Renewal Framework employs six Key Areas to describe the dimensions of schooling:

1. Catholic Identity,
2. Teaching and Learning,
3. Leadership,
4. Pastoral Care and Wellbeing,
5. Culture and Community, and
6. Finance, Facilities and Resources.

The six Key Areas remind school leaders, teachers and stakeholders of the scope of schooling and help ensure that school planning pays balanced attention to all areas.

Figure 5 shows the interdependent and interconnected nature of these six Key Areas.

A brief description of the six Key Areas follows. Tools and other materials relating to the six Key Areas are outlined in Section 4.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY



3.2 KEY AREA DESCRIPTORS

The distinctive 'Catholic Identity' of a school is intrinsically based upon the life and teachings of Jesus Christ which permeate the spirit and climate of the Catholic learning community. Students are invited into a living encounter with Jesus Christ, supported by the beliefs, values, symbols, rituals, faith and community of the Catholic Church.

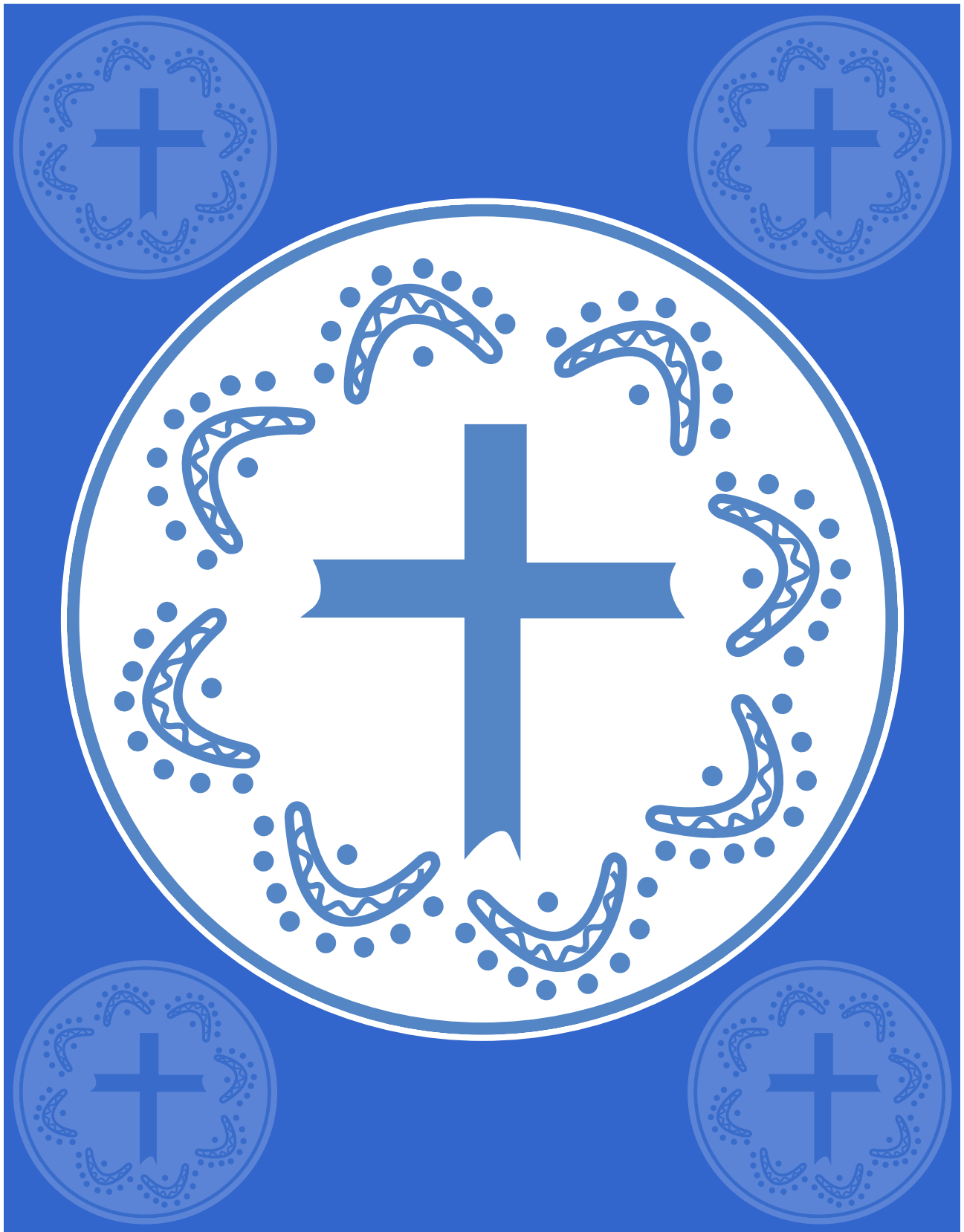
Catholic schools are a vital part of both the parish faith community and the wider civic community. They are characterized by a commitment to the development of the 'whole person' – socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually - inspired and nurtured by Gospel values.

The Catholic identity of schools is expressed through daily prayer, school liturgy, sacraments, celebrations, the integration of Catholic morals and values, curriculum, and witness and service to others. In partnership with parish and the wider community, students, staff, families, the parish and the wider community share in the Catholic faith journey that enriches their relationship with God, others and creation.

Prime responsibility for creating a unique Christian school climate rests with staff in Catholic schools. Through personal example, virtues, loving relationships, respect and acts of love and justice, staff give witness to the presence and activity of God. Their witness is critical in the formation of authentic Catholic schools.



TEACHING AND LEARNING



Northern Territory Catholic schools are committed to providing the highest quality education for our students. Catholic schools are a key part of the Church's mission in Australia and a vital part of parish communities and wider communities across the Territory. They provide a holistic education, combining sound knowledge and skills with an overall personal development firmly embedded in Christian values. As faith communities, they provide Christ-centred environments in which students can achieve their full potential. All teaching and all learning is underpinned and informed by the Catholic way of living. Religious Education is a Key Learning Area in the curriculum.

Schools are inclusive and respectful of the unique knowledge that local communities can contribute to teaching and learning programs. Teaching teams provide rich, relevant learning environments where teachers engage students, cater for individual differences, continually monitor progress and share feedback about learning. Teaching teams often include a mix of formally qualified teachers, support staff, volunteers and visiting consultants. The expertise and experience that team members bring to the teaching-learning process is as highly valued as formal qualifications.

School curriculum is based on the Australian Curriculum and the Northern Territory curriculum frameworks and standards, tailored to suit the needs and aspirations of individual communities. Catholic schools

also respond to advice from the NT Board of Studies and other authorities. Schools set high expectations believing that all students can achieve (at least) minimum standards and that many are capable of exceptional achievements. Pedagogy, assessment and learning designs respond to the unique context of the school and the community that it serves.

Teachers are committed to their own professional and faith development. They use Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and other tools to guide their professional work and further learning. School staff collaborate with the Catholic Education Office, other schools and professional networks to enhance their professional development and personal wellbeing.



LEADERSHIP





Effective leadership is committed to living and promoting a shared vision and mission, setting and achieving goals, working ethically, managing change and sustaining beliefs and practices in an atmosphere that is distinctively Catholic. Leadership must be collaborative, multi-dimensional, supportive, nurturing, open-minded and open-hearted. Leadership in a Catholic school models the values that Jesus lived.

Effective schools foster leadership initiatives from all members of the school community – parents/carers, parish community, students and staff. Effective school leaders share responsibility (distributed leadership) recognizing that others have the vocation, expertise and motivation to lead in areas of interest. Shared leadership also builds capacity in the school, provides opportunities for growth, shares the workload and encourages succession planning.

The principal and leadership team are critical to school improvement. Australian Professional Standards for Principals identify five key practices for principals:

- Leading teaching and learning,
- Developing self and others,
- Leading improvement, innovation and change,
- Leading the management of the school,
- Engaging and working with the community.

Leaders at all levels are good managers, ensuring that the workplace is safe and secure, that resources are used efficiently and effectively, there is clarity about expectations, that legal obligations are met and that the school is well organized.

Teamwork and participation is part of the Leadership Key Area. Jesus recruited disciples (followers) and encouraged them to work in groups to spread his message and build faith-communities. This strategy is still a hallmark of the 'Catholic way'. There is truth and wisdom in the saying 'Together Everyone Achieves More' (T.E.A.M). Building and sustaining relationships, collaborating and sharing responsibility are hallmarks of good leadership and effective teams.

PASTORAL CARE AND WELLBEING



Central to the ethos and identity of Catholic schools in the Northern Territory is the pastoral care and wellbeing of all people in our communities. We acknowledge the Gospel truth that we are all called to “*have life and have it to the full*” (John 10:10), and our commitment to the development of the whole person - spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically. By affirming each person’s dignity and worth we confirm our fundamental Christian belief that we are all made in the image of God. “*So God created humankind in his image; in the image of God he created them*” (Genesis 1:27).

Pastoral Care very clearly places Christian ministry in the context of relationships: relationship with God, relationship with others and relationship with self. Each person is called to actively promote the wellbeing, belonging and security of all members of the school community. Consequently, Pastoral Care is the unifying focus for the spiritual, academic, social and emotional aspects of school life.

The design of the School Improvement and Renewal Framework draws on other reputable frameworks that inform school practice in pastoral care and wellbeing, for example the Health Promoting Schools Framework, *KidsMatter*, *MindMatters*, the National Safe Schools Framework and *Habits of Mind*.



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE



School culture is made up of the values, rituals and beliefs, shared and demonstrated by people within the school community. School culture influences everything that happens in a school. The rich social, cultural and linguistic diversity of people in the Northern Territory is one of Catholic education's greatest assets. The cultural heritage of the first peoples, the Indigenous community, in addition to the valuable traditions and perspectives of the most recent arrivals, provides each school with a rich cultural tapestry. Acknowledging, celebrating and drawing from such a wealth of backgrounds, values, skills, abilities and experiences builds individual and community capacity.

The role of Catholic schools is to assist the Church in its mission of spreading the Gospel of Christ, within the tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church. Within this context we are called to create inclusive learning communities where the diverse

talents, contributions, cultures, skills and backgrounds of staff, students, families and community members are valued.

Each student is defined by a personal history and a social and cultural context, each with their own set of values, talents, attitudes, skills and aspirations. Understanding this should underpin our curriculum and organisational planning for our diverse teaching and student populations.

Catholic schools acknowledge that parents/carers are the primary educators of their children. Maintaining strong links with parents/carers and encouraging a sense of belonging, mutual trust and respect within the school community is essential. Partnerships are built through collaborative relationships and engagement in activities which involve staff and families within each school and the wider community.



FINANCE, FACILITIES AND RESOURCES



The development and enhancement of educational opportunities for all students is of fundamental importance to Catholic schools in the Northern Territory. The provision of finance, facilities and resources appropriate to each school setting supports schools in achieving this aim and in bringing their school vision and mission to life. Effective management of finance, facilities and resources ensures that an optimal learning and teaching environment is provided for students, staff and parents/ carers in each school community.

Effective stewardship and sustainable use of all resources – physical, financial, human and virtual - is a shared responsibility and requires constant mindfulness on the part of all stakeholders. Respect and appreciation for all God's creation ought to be a primary consideration in decisions about all resource utilization, whether at the individual classroom or whole school level.

Efficient use of resources involves long term planning and specific action plans within areas such as building, information technology (IT) and finance.

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN FINANCE, FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Strategic Plans for Finance, Facilities and Resources consist of two distinct but not separate areas:

1. Master Plan for the management of Facilities and Resources; and
2. School Financial Management System.

1. **Master Plan for the Management of Facilities and Resources incorporates:**

- knowledge of the history and

- ethos of Catholic Education,
- current and future enrolment and population trends,
- audits on suitability of buildings for curriculum needs,
- audits of facilities for compliance with Workplace Health and Safety standards,
- maintenance schedules for existing facilities,
- 5 year building/refurbishment plan,
- short and long term forward planning for changing conditions,
- 3 year ICT management and maintenance plan including security of electronic data and recovery plans,
- effective use of existing expertise of staff and from within the wider school community,
- awareness of community expectations,
- examining possible links with associated schools,
- financial planning for grants and/or local funding of new building projects.



2. The School's Financial Management System includes:

Budgeting

The preparation of the annual school budget should reflect:

- processes which support established school priorities,
- an understanding of enrolment projections and trends,
- clearly articulated fee setting and collection procedures,
- examination of fee levels and collection rate,
- an understanding of the funding sources and levels available,
- projected needs for the next five years,
- cash flow budget,
- a clear understanding of budget demands,
- maintenance with Workplace Health and Safety and
- facility upgrades as required.

Recording & Reporting

All schools should have in place protocols and procedures to take account of:

- appropriate administrative and accounting systems and software support,
- recording the assets of the school in an Asset Register,
- clear and precise role specifications for Finance Officers,
- reporting to Government,
- reporting to Catholic Education Office,
- reporting to the School Board.

Auditing

For the purposes of accountability the school should have in place protocols and procedures which address:

- the process of preparing annual school financial statements,

- the response to recommendations in auditor's management letters,
- internal and external audit practices.

Accountability in these areas can be achieved through open and transparent practices to protect against misappropriation and fraud. The internal control relates to segregation of duties and ensuring that there is an appropriate system of authorisation and approval of transactions.

Professional Learning for Finance, Facilities and Resources

Principals, Deputy Principals, Heads of Campus, Business Managers and Bursars/ Finance Officers should undertake professional learning in the following areas:

- knowledge of budgeting processes (curriculum, recurrent and capital),
- understanding of the funding formula,
- ability to support staff in the area of program budgeting,
- fees analysis,
- financial management, skills and knowledge,
- accounting and audit processes,
- reading and understanding of MAZE,
- cash flow analysis,
- secure storage of electronic data.



SECTION 4: GUIDES AND TOOLS



4.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 2.2 introduced 'quality information' as a key element in school improvement. This section includes a range of tools and guides that schools can use to collect analyse and use quality information to inform decision-making.

The table on the following page outlines the sequence of school improvement and renewal activities in a typical school year; the sequence may vary according

to school context and other factors. The abbreviated name of guides and tools that are recommended to support this phase of the process are in (brackets); details are in Sections 4.2 – 4.7. Entries in *italics* are for context.

Guides and tools to support development of the School Strategic Plan and External Validation appear later in this section, at 4.7.

SEQUENCE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND RENEWAL ACTIVITIES

Time	Activities
Term 1	
Jan-Feb	Remind all staff of the priorities in the SSP and ASIP. Begin implementation of specific improvement priorities for this year; this includes regular monitoring. Appoint a School Planning Team (SI22) to oversee planning and other school improvement activities. Teaching teams develop their own class or cohort programs and plans that respond to goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual School Improvement Plan. (Some of this work may have been completed in Term 4 of the previous year)
Mar	Submit School Annual Report for the previous year to the Director (SI19)
Term 2	
May	National Testing Program – NAPLAN Review progress on the ASIP. This will generally involve a form of ‘reporting back’ to the School Planning Team by leaders of individual priority areas.
Jun	Finalize the School Annual Report and post it to the school web site. Use student achievement data to inform Semester One reports-to-parents. These data may also be used as a measure of success against targets in the SSP and ASIP.
Term 3	
Jul	School self-assessment in Key Areas (SI05 – SI12) Satisfaction surveys (SI14 - SI17 or other perceptions data) Assemble student achievement data from sources such as NAPLAN, whole school monitoring, senior school assessments (SI18)
Aug	In secondary schools, begin processes for subject selection, grid generation etc.
Sep	Begin in-depth analysis of all available evidence – e.g. school self-assessments, student achievement, feedback from parents/carers, staff and students, and other performance data to identify progress towards targets in the SSP and the ASIP and overall strengths and areas for improvement across the whole school.
Term 4	
Oct	Complete analysis of the evidence and begin (a) any necessary revisions to the SSP and (b) development of the ASIP for the following year (SI02).
Nov/Dec	Take the draft ASIP (and the SSP if necessary) to staff for consultation and refinement. Finalize the ASIP and present it to the School Board and the Director, Catholic Education for endorsement. (If substantial changes have been made to the SSP it too should be submitted to the Board and the Director, Catholic Education). Celebrate successes Prepare and submit the School Annual Report (SI19)

4.2 ASSESSMENT OF THE SIX KEY AREAS

Schools select two of the six Key Areas for self-assessment each year with the following two exceptions:

- All six Key Areas should be assessed in the Validation Year. It is recommended that the Key Areas Assessment Rubric be used for this self-assessment.
- No self-assessment is required in the year that the School Strategic Plan is being re-developed – usually the fifth year of the cycle.

The table below illustrates one way that self-assessments could be scheduled in to the five-year planning cycle. In this case External Validation is in Year Three, and the School Strategic Plan is re-developed in Year Five. Schools, in consultation with the Director, CENT, should choose a pattern of self-assessment that suits their circumstances.

Year One
Catholic Identity Pastoral Care and Wellbeing
Year Two
Teaching and Learning Leadership
Year Three (Validation)
All Key Areas (using the rubric)
Year Four
Finance, Facilities and Resources Community and Culture
Year Five (Re-develop SSP)
No self-assessments

Scheduling school self-assessment

It is recommended that school self-assessments be conducted in the Third Term each year, so that the outcomes of the process can be used to inform planning for the following year.

The table below illustrates the sequence of events leading to school self-assessment and follow-up activities is:

When	What	Who
Term 1	Select two Key Areas (A Key Areas scan is recommended to guide selection of the two areas – See GT6 for further advice and the scanning tool) Establish an Action Team (and a designated Leader) to coordinate the self-assessment	School Planning Team
Term 2	Make preparations: Alert the school community; choose an appropriate tool; prepare materials etc.	Action Team
Term 3	Conduct the self-assessment Analyze results and make recommendations	Action Team
Term 4	Outcomes from school self-assessment are combined with other data to evaluate school performance for the year and make decisions about priorities for the following year	School Planning Team

RECORDING AND USING THE RESULTS OF SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT

A brief report of the outcomes of each self-assessment should be prepared – usually by the Action Team Leader. Audiences for the report include the School Leadership Group, School Planning Team, the School Board and the External Validation Panel. The report should be brief – about 3 pages - and include the following:

- Brief overview of the school context,
- Outline of methodology – which tool was used, who was involved and other details that enable readers to ‘picture’ the process,
- Outcomes – summary of the information that was collected. This might include ‘Key Areas Recording Sheet’ (included in [SI05: Using self-assessment tools](#)),
- Commendations and recommendations arising from the self-assessment – including strengths and areas for improvement. The report should also draw attention to any changes in school performance within the Key Areas being self-assessed, in the period since the last self-assessment.

The report should be submitted to the Principal and shared with the School Board. A courtesy copy is provided to the Director, CENT. Self assessment reports should be safely filed as they form an important source of information for External Validation.

Information from school self-assessments is used to:

- draw attention to school strengths and areas for improvement,
- monitor the overall performance of the school,
- gauge progress against goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan and the Annual School Improvement Plan.



Summary of advice and tools relating to the six Key Areas.

[SI05 Using the self-assessment tools](#)

[SI06 Key Areas Overview/ scan](#)

[SI07 School self-assessment: Catholic Identity](#)

[SI08 School self-assessment: Teaching and Learning](#)

[SI09 School self-assessment: Leadership](#)

[SI10 School self-assessment: Pastoral Care and Wellbeing](#)

[SI11 School self-assessment: Community and Culture](#)

[SI12 School self-assessment: Finance, Facilities and Resources](#)

4.3 FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS, STAFF AND STUDENTS

Three satisfaction surveys – parents, staff and students – are available in the [School Improvement pages of the Learning Platform](#). The surveys are designed to cover all aspects of schooling. Reporting on parent, staff and student satisfaction is an accountability requirement of School Annual Reports (Ref: 2.5.5)

Schools may modify the surveys so they are most relevant to current school priorities. However the demographic questions – at the beginning of each survey – and the overall satisfaction questions – at the end of the survey – should always be included as they help provide longitudinal data and will also provide satisfaction data that is required in the School Annual Report. These 'compulsory' questions are marked with an asterisk* in each survey from parents/carers, staff and student. Interviews, workshops, feedback slips in newsletters and parent/carer meetings are just a few alternatives. See [SI17: Parent views](#) for further discussion and suggested activities and links to web pages for additional advice and resources.

Summary of advice and tools.
[SI14 Parent satisfaction survey](#)
[SI15 Staff satisfaction survey](#)
[SI16 Student satisfaction survey](#)
[SI17 Parent views](#)

Gathering information should be a both-ways process:

- Begin with a respectful appreciation that the local community contains a wealth of information and ideas about learning, child development, spirituality, local history and culture and their own definitions of constructs such as success, achievement, family, teaching and learning.
- Prior to formal schooling – a relatively recent concept – all societies used other ways of educating their children, and many of these ways may still be an integral part of the local culture; families are generally the first teachers of children.
- Avoid the tendency of approaching data-gathering with fixed views about what schools should look like, sound like and feel like.
- Let the main goal of information gathering be to build the best possible cultural match between the community and the school. This may require a significant re-think about the way schooling is conducted in this particular community.



4.4 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA

School leaders have access to a broad range of student achievement data that could and should be used to inform school improvement planning. In broad terms these data include the following:

Data from agencies external to the school, e.g. NAPLAN data, reports from partners in Vocational Education programs, senior secondary achievement data.

Classroom data include teachers' records and other records of student achievement. Typical data sets include:

- demographic and attendance data
- checklists
- teacher observations – words, symbols or other records
- student assessments – of self and peers
- records from tasks or tests, including self and peer assessment
- records from whole school assessment – raw scores or moderated results
- achievement ratings (standards) from previous classes, school terms or units of work
- records from psychometric testing and formal appraisals by specialists
- records from work experience, voluntary work and co-curricular or extra-curricular classes.

Student work samples - stored in a hard copy or digital portfolio, models, pictures, works-of-art, items of fashion or other forms of display. The work may include student self-assessment or feedback from the teacher or other assessor.

General advice about using student data in whole school planning is provided at [SI18 Student achievement](#). The advice includes links to system tools, such as the

Reporting and Analysing Achievement Data (RAAD) tool available from the NT Department of Education. More specific advice can be provided to school leaders through the Catholic Education Office.



4.5 DATA FROM PRIORITY AREAS

When selecting specific goals and targets (within priority areas) schools should also select explicit measures (and tools) to monitor progress in the area. For example, a school may choose to use a pre-test: post test of student knowledge and behaviour to monitor progress in a health and wellbeing priority. Suitable tools for this monitoring can often be found in curriculum packages or via a search of reputable web sites. Some of the websites listed in Section 5.5 of this Framework include these types of tools.

4.6 OTHER GUIDES AND TOOLS

Many of the management systems that schools use on a day-to-day basis include guides and tools to help monitor performance. For example a wide range of reports are available from the finance management system, the workplace health and safety system, the enrolment and attendance system and from collaborative work with external agencies. The information generated from these systems, guides and tools is an important source of data for planning, monitoring and reporting.

4.7 SCHOOL STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EXTERNAL VALIDATION

Two specific guides and tools to support School Strategic Planning over the five-year cycle can be found in the [School Improvement pages of the Learning Platform](#)

- SI01 SSP (How to develop and implement a School Strategic Plan)
- SI01a SSP Exemplar
- SI03 External validation



SECTION 5: RESOURCES



Many of the resources referred to in the text can be found on the Learning Platform; others are included in this section.

5.1 RESOURCES ON THE LEARNING PLATFORM

Name of the Resources

R01 A Vision for Improvement

R02 Characteristics of an effective school

R03 Working strategically

R04 School planning overview

R05 Appreciative inquiry

R06 Building a professional learning community

R07 Literacy and Numeracy capability tool

R08 Characteristics of a data informed classroom



5.2 NATIONAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TOOL

The *National School Improvement Tool* was developed by ACER for the Australian Government. The Tool assists schools to review and reflect on their efforts to improve the quality of classroom teaching and learning through school-wide conversations about aspects of current practice, areas for improvement and evidence of progress.

The *Tool* focuses school communities on student outcomes. It consists of nine inter-related 'domains', and a set of performance levels ('Low', 'Medium', 'High' and 'Outstanding'), which schools use to make judgments about where the school is on its improvement journey and to set and monitor goals.

The domains are:

1. An Explicit Improvement Agenda
2. Analysis and Discussion of Data
3. A Culture That Promotes Learning
4. Targeted Use of School Resources
5. An Expert Teaching Team
6. Systematic Curriculum Delivery
7. Differentiated Teaching and Learning
8. Effective Pedagogical Practices
9. School-Community Partnerships

The Foreword to the *Tool* acknowledges that the most effective use of the Tool is to make observations and gather evidence broadly about the school's practices before focusing on individual domains. The *Tool* therefore provides a useful lens(es) for schools wishing to focus on these particular domains.

The *National School Improvement Tool* is available at <http://deewr.gov.au/national-school-improvement-tool>

5.3 GLOSSARY

Terms that have a particular meaning in the context of SIRF, are explained below; a more detailed list can be found at [SI20: Glossary](#).

Accountability: The processes through which individuals and groups of teachers, and the whole school, demonstrate effective performance in accordance with standards and policy frameworks.

Action Plan: A plan which outlines the leading, resourcing and timeframe details for the implementation of school improvement strategy.

Annual School Improvement Plan (ASIP): Document that details the strategies in a given year that will progress action relevant to goals from the School Strategic Plan.

Assessment: The process of gathering, from a variety of sources, information that accurately reflects how well a student is achieving the curriculum expectations in a subject or course.

Bilingual education: The systematic use of two languages, one of which is English, for instruction and learning in all or part of the school curriculum. It is an academic program in which the two languages in both oral and written forms are used as mediums of instruction where appropriate.

Component: Core area of activity within a Key Area.

Curriculum: Everything that occurs in a school to improve learning outcomes for students.

Data, qualitative: Includes virtually any information that can be captured that is not numerical in nature (e.g. interviews, observation, documents).

Data, quantitative: Numerical data.

Evidence: Data or information that establishes the school's progress in relation to achievement of a component.

Evidence-based: Strategies or practices that are supported by empirical research and/or inquiry and experiences in classrooms, schools and school systems and have been validated over time.

External Validation Team/Panel: A group of reviewers who conduct an external validation process within a school.

Focus area: see 'priority'

Formation Review: The purpose of Formation Review is to promote improvement in organizational outcomes and to facilitate open communications between staff members and their supervising colleague.

Goals: What schools decide to do to achieve their vision and mission. Goals are established as part of the School Strategic Plan and Annual School Improvement plans to focus improvement activities.

Goal Areas: An identifier that summarises the goal, e.g. Literacy, Numeracy, Faith development. The terms 'priority', 'priority area' or 'focus area' can be used to mean the same thing.

Key Area: A sphere or field of function within a school's life and activity. The SIRF has six key areas.

Leadership: Promoting the vision and mission of the school and actively committing to the shared purpose and direction; can be exercised at multiple levels within the school.

Master Plan: An overall plan for the physical environment of the school, buildings and site which takes into account the educational program and business needs of a school. It may contain drawings and schedules showing proposed school development timelines.

Mission: Our purpose, why we exist [Latin: missio, a sending]. An expression of the actions a school community will adopt to achieve its Vision.

Pedagogy: The art or science of teaching.

Performance information: The data collected by schools to assist in planning and decision-making; the information should be recent, valid and reliable.

Priority: An area of school activity or operation that is given special attention. (See also Goals Areas and Focus Areas)

Project Management Framework (PMF): the PMF promotes successful project management by providing processes and tools that promote effective and efficient use of resources leading to improved outcomes for students.

Professional Learning Community (PLC): A group of people sharing and critically interrogating its practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way, and operating as a collective enterprise. An example of an exemplary inquiry process in a PLC is teacher moderation where teachers work together to design assessment tasks and assess student work. See also, [R06: Building a Professional Learning Community](#).

Rubric: A scale that uses brief statements based on the criteria provided in an achievement chart and expressed in language meaningful to readers to describe the levels of achievement of a process, product, or performance.

School Annual Report: The School Annual Report provides the school community and system authorities with fair, reliable and objective advice supported by evidence about school performance and developments during the year.

School self-assessment: A process in which learners or organisations assess their performance against particular standards or criteria.

School Strategic Plan (SSP): A long-term plan for sustainable school improvement that is responsive to new data, generated by ongoing evaluation and adapted to meet subsequent new needs and challenges.

Strategic planning: The deliberate use of tactics, timing and carefully planned interventions to make changes in direction and outcomes.

Subsidiarity: 'The social teaching of the Church is based on the human person as the principle, subject and object of every social organization. Subsidiarity is one of the core principles of this teaching. This principle holds that human affairs are best handled at the lowest possible level, closest to the affected persons.'²

Support staff: Members of the school staff who are not registered teachers and are employed for roles such as classroom assistant, cleaner and school secretary. Many support staff are important members of teaching teams.

Target: An outcome that demonstrates success in achieving a goal.

Vision: Aspirations and intentions; a picture of a desirable future [Latin visio, sight]; A statement expressing the hopes and aspirations of the school community and the core beliefs and understandings as to why a school exists.

²What You Need to Know, Catholic Culture, Trinity Communications, 2013, accessed 15 August 2013, http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/what_you_need_to_know/index.cfm?id=84

5.4 ACRONYMS

Some of the acronyms listed below are not used in the text of the SIRF but may be used in general discussions about school planning and improvement and are thus included as a courtesy to users of the Framework.

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research	ISA	Inclusion Support Assistant
AGQTP	Australian Government Quality Teacher Program	ISDTN	Interstate Student Data Transfer Note
APRE	Assistant Principal - Religious Education	IT	Information Technology
ASIP	Annual School Improvement Plan	NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
AST1	Advanced Skilled Teacher Level 1	NAP	National Assessment Program
AST2	Advanced Skilled Teacher Level 2	NSIT	National School Improvement Tool
BIITE	Batchelor Indigenous Institute of Tertiary Education	NSSF	National Safe School Framework
CEC	Catholic Education Council	NT	Northern Territory
CEO	Catholic Education Office	NTBOS	Northern Territory Board of Studies
CENT	Catholic Education Northern Territory	NTCET	Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training
CDU	Charles Darwin University	NTCF	Northern Territory Curriculum Framework
DEEWR	Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations	P & F	Parents and Friends
DP	Deputy Principal	PD / PL	Professional Development / Professional learning
EALD	English as an additional language/Dialect	PMF	CENT's Project Management Framework
EAP	Education Adjustment Plan	RE	Religious Education
ESL	English as a Second Language	REC	Religious Education Coordinator
ICCS	Indigenous Catholic Community Schools	SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology	SAR	School Annual Report
IEP	Individual Education Plan (see EAP)	SIRF	School Improvement and Renewal Framework
IEW	Indigenous Education Worker	SSP	School strategic Plan
		TRB	Teacher Registration Board of Northern Territory
		VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools
		WHS	Workplace Health and Safety

5.5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section appears as a page on the [web](#) and may be expanded as issues emerge.

Q. Should my School Strategic Plan be aligned with the Catholic Diocese of Darwin Strategic Pastoral Plan or the CEO Strategic Plan: Towards 2017, or both?

A. All Catholic schools in the Northern Territory (and the Catholic Education Office) are part of the Diocese of Darwin and the Body of Christ. We share common goals and aspirations and one would expect to see alignment between goals of the 'branches' of the bigger 'vine' (John 15:5 below). This 'alignment' does not imply a one-to-one relationship between goals at various levels of planning within the Diocese. Schools and their community contexts vary considerably and it is appropriate that each school responds to 'higher order' goals in a way that best reflects the local context.

**I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
(John 15:5)**

Q. How does SIRC align with Formation Review?

A. Formation Review affords the opportunity for CENT staff to discuss their current work, developmental goals and other reflections with a supervising colleague. Essentially it is a conversation about 'how I am going now' and 'what I want to do next' and could thus be thought of as a conversation about personal 'improvement and renewal'. Formation Review helps clarify and align the goals and aspirations of individual staff members with the goals and targets of the school. Formation Review uses the six Key Areas of SIRC as a framework for personal reflection and goal setting.

[Link to Formation Review policy and tools](#)

Q. Many of the concepts and recommended school practices in 'Visible Learning' (John Hattie) sound a lot like concepts and processes in SIRC; How can schools integrate 'Visible Learning' into their SIRC activities?

A: 'Evidence-based practice' is at the heart of SIRC and Visible Learning. Many of the Visible Learning tools help teaching teams to gather evidence that can inform school self-assessment, goal and target setting and monitoring. Visible Learning strategies may be appropriate ways of pursuing strategic goals and targets. It is important to remember that The SIRC is a framework and will integrate very effectively with other frameworks and programs.

Q. How does the Principal work with staff in the Catholic Education Office to monitor and review the overall performance of the school and plan for development?

A. The school principal, senior staff in the Catholic Education Office and other stakeholders (e.g. church and community leaders) share responsibility for ensuring that Catholic schools do the best job possible in achieving the mission for Catholic Education in the NT. From time to time meetings will be negotiated between senior staff of the CEO and Principals (and other school representatives) with a view to discussing school improvement and renewal. The scope of meetings may vary in accordance with the school circumstances and other factors.

Q. How will the School Improvement and Renewal Framework (SIRF) help ensure that my school meets accountability and compliance obligations?

A. There is an accountability/compliance dimension to some aspects of the School Improvement and Renewal Framework – e.g. the School Annual Report – but the main focus of the framework is on improvement. Thoughtful planning helps ensure that accountability/compliance obligations can be met in a timely fashion and it is in this area that school improvement and accountability/compliance overlap.

Q. Is External Validation (part of SIRF) the same as School Registration?

A. The two processes involve reflection, general discussion and some data gathering about school planning,

monitoring and reporting but the underlying purposes of the two activities are quite different.

External validation is an opportunity for the school to describe and provide evidence of its school improvement journey to a group of education professionals external to the school – the Validation Team. The validation process is jointly arranged and conducted by the school and the Catholic Education Office. During the validation process the school is encouraged to highlight its successes and achievements. The key outcome of the validation exercise is the Validation Report that notes significant school achievements and may make recommendations to guide further improvement.

School Registration is a process required of all non-Government schools under the Northern Territory Education Act, which lists approximately fifteen 'registration requirements' which relate to governance, staffing, learning programs, facilities, planning, reporting and other matters. Non-Government schools are required to be re-registered every five years. Assessment for registration is carried out by a panel, appointed by the Minister for Education.

Q. How is school improvement relevant to classroom teachers?

A. School Improvement is everyone's business and the role of classroom teachers and teaching teams is critical. Improvement is about a firm focus on every child's learning, every day and this is each teacher's key responsibility.

Teachers should strive for the highest possible performance against the National Professional Standards for Teachers.

- Know students and how they learn,
- Know the content and how to teach it,

- Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning,
- Create and maintain a supportive and safe learning environment,
- Assess, provide feedback and report on students' learning,
- Engage in professional learning,
- Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

Teachers should deeply understand and actively contribute to the improvement goals, targets and strategies of their school. They should get involved, understand what the school is trying to achieve and make specific changes to their behaviour in order to help achieve agreed goals.

Q. My school offers bilingual education but this is not evident in SIRC. How can my school self-assess in this area?

A. SIRC is not designed to assess specific programs or approaches to schooling. The best way to assess your bilingual program is to (a) clarify the goals and targets that were set at the time the program was initiated (or last reviewed) and then (b) assess progress against these goals and targets. If there are no current goals and targets these ought to be developed as soon as possible; it is virtually impossible to assess any program that does not have a clear goal or purpose.

An additional way to assess your bilingual program is to ask the four key questions:

1. How well do we know our community, our students and our Catholic mission? How does the bilingual program fit with our mission and the community context?
2. How is our bilingual program going? What is the quality and standard of student achievement through this program? Is this standard high enough? Are support structures and functions operating as efficiently as possible?
3. How do we know? What evidence do we have about student achievement and school performance? What are the quality indicators that assist us in making judgments?
4. What will we do now? How can we build on identified strengths in the bilingual program and address areas for improvement? What explicit changes will we make in order to improve performance? Who will lead, participate, monitor, evaluate and report on these initiatives? What will we stop doing?

Further Reading: Bilingual Education in Indigenous Catholic Community Schools 2012, CENT Intranet: [Link to CENT policy](#)



5.6 WEB SITES

A list of recommended sites is maintained on the School Improvement pages of the Learning Platform – [SI21](#)

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

Australian Health Promoting Schools Association

<http://www.ahpsa.org.au>

Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

<http://www.teacherstandards.aitsl.edu.au/>

Catholic Education Office NT Annual Report 2012

<http://www.ceont.catholic.edu.au/files/f/3470/Catholic%20Education%20Office%20NT%20-%20Annual%20Report%202012.pdf>

Educational Services Australia National Professional Standards for Principals

http://www.aitsl.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Professional_Standards_for_Principals.pdf

Mind Matters

<http://mindmatters.edu.au/default.asp>

National Safe Schools Framework

<http://education.gov.au/national-safe-schools-framework-0>

NT Board of Studies

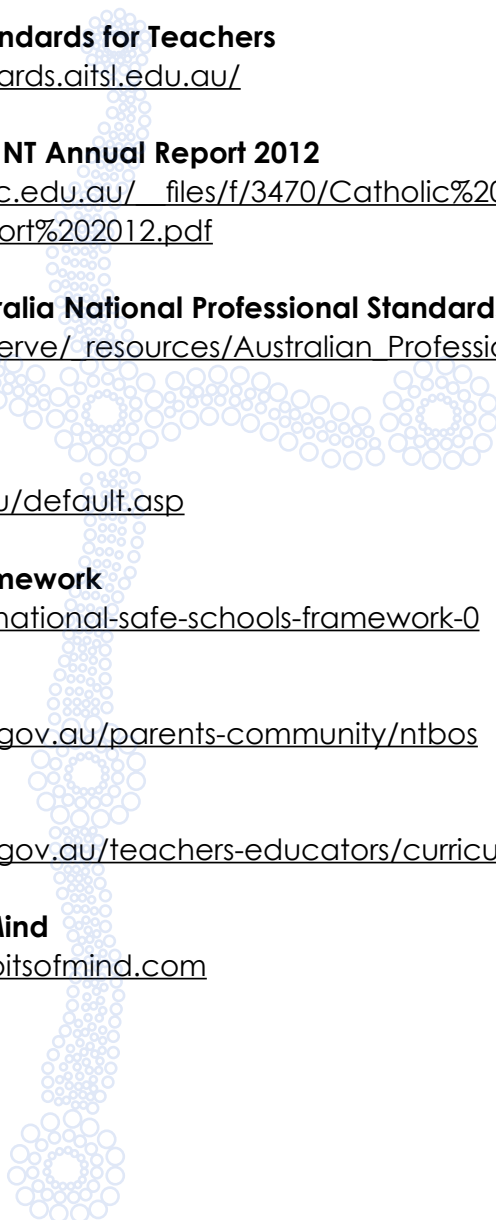
<http://www.education.nt.gov.au/parents-community/ntbos>

NT Curriculum Framework

<http://www.education.nt.gov.au/teachers-educators/curriculum-ntbos/ntcf>

The Institute for Habits of Mind

<http://www.instituteforhabitsofmind.com>



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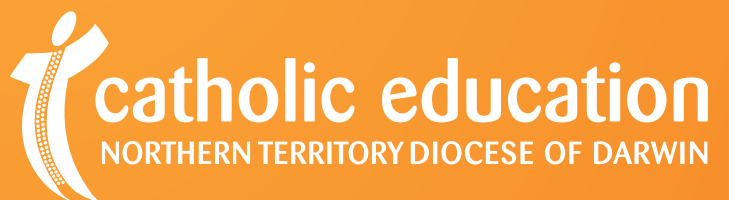
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