

# **Renewing the Vision**

The Report of an Evaluation of

**The School of Saint Elizabeth  
30 Seney Drive  
Bernardsville, NJ**

By

A Visiting Team of Evaluators appointed by the  
Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools

October 19-22, 2010

The contents of this report represent the judgments of the members of the visiting team as interpreted and written by the chairperson. They do not necessarily represent opinions of the Middle States Association or the Commission on Elementary Schools.

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## **Introduction**

The School of St. Elizabeth, a suburban school located in Bernardsville, New Jersey, educates 172 students from Pre-K3 to grade 8. It is a parish school of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Parish which is the only Catholic parish in Bernardsville, New Jersey. The school serves not only students from that parish but also students from the surrounding area.

The School of St. Elizabeth operates under the capable leadership of the pastor, Father John Fell, and the principal, Mr. William Venezia.

During the summer of 2008, the school began a self study as part of a program initiated by the Diocese of Metuchen. As a result of this strategic planning, the School of Saint Elizabeth chose *Renewing the Vision* as a protocol for re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools.

The members of the visiting team would like to express our sincere gratitude to the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, parents and students of the School of St. Elizabeth and OLPH parish for the warm welcome we have received. The school is an example of what can be accomplished when a cooperative effort is made to provide a quality Catholic education. It is clearly indicative of a competent, dedicated, and professional faculty and staff.

We congratulate all involved in this self-study in order to gain re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools. The protocol provides an opportunity to focus on all areas of school life. The document shows a realistic, in-depth, look at the school, its strengths and needed areas of growth. The goals are developed and give a reasonable and realistic path to follow in the future. The team appreciates the time, effort, and energy put into your self-study.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- The family atmosphere that pervades the interaction throughout the school community; students are cheerful and friendly and appear to love the school
- The leadership of the pastor and principal that empowers the faculty and staff in fostering a loving and caring Catholic school that is proud of its Catholicity and educational opportunities
- The high-level of parental involvement and support of the School of Saint Elizabeth and Catholic education
- The administration for placing high priority on academic excellence by striving to maintain or increasing standardized test scores
- The administration and staff of the School of Saint Elizabeth for living their mission statement through implementing the “Just Do Something” program, the “Caring Majority” program and the school wide “Buddy” program
- The priority that the School of Saint Elizabeth places on integrating technology throughout the curriculum

- The strong presence of Catholic Identity that greets visitors as they enter the school and is reflected throughout the classrooms; students, faculty and parents celebrate in pray and traditional Catholic devotions
- The recognition of the employment of the technology coordinator and the recruitment and public relations person
- The administration's encouragement for the faculty continuing professional development

**The visiting team recommends:**

- The school to further develop Professional Learning Communities for the benefit of teacher development to improve student learning as well as pursue the exploration of professional development for staff to implement a peer leadership program for the middle school students
- The establishment of a data base of alumni to form an alumni association as well as possibly an alumni fund
- The continued emphasis on the long-term planning to provide for the future financial needs of the school
- The continued ongoing examination of methods to retain students and to enroll new students
- The administration to continue to move in the direction of departmentalization in grades 5 to 8 in order to place each teacher in his/her area of expertise to enhance student learning
- The evaluation and revision of all handbooks on a yearly basis
- The increased inclusion of parents, students and parishioners in future surveys throughout self-studies and strategic planning
- The continued increase of nursing hours if feasible as enrollment grows

**Context of the School**

The School of Saint Elizabeth opened in November of 1916 thanks to the vision of Monsignor William I. McKean, the pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the time, and the generosity of James Cox Brady, and his wife, Victoria Mary Perry Brady. James Cox Brady paid the expense for building the school and the convent. The school was named after the patron saint of his first wife, Elizabeth Jane Hamilton Brady. Brady also established an endowment in 1916 which continues to offset the expenses of running the school today. The current school principal, William T. Venezia, works under the direction of the current pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Father John Fell.

The original school building was expanded in 1958 to add 10 new classrooms, a kindergarten, music room, teacher's lounge, larger cafeteria, and nurse and administrative offices. This expansion was funded by parishioners. A second school expansion completed in 2001 added a new library, science and computer lab, locker rooms and gymnasium. In 2007 the school was endowed with twenty five PC's, created a computer lab and hired a technology teacher with computer classes offered to all students.

The School of Saint Elizabeth consists of educational programming for 172 students in grades Pre-K 3 through 8. They currently house one of each grade level. Projections for future growth are positive. Enrollment has shown a small increase in recent years. Love and discipline are integrated to produce happiness and an atmosphere where learning prevails. Catholic identity is evident in classroom and hallway displays, as well as interaction between administration, staff, and students. The School of Saint Elizabeth follows the curriculum guidelines for the Diocese of Metuchen. Assessment procedures are varied and age appropriate. Teachers are given ample opportunity for professional development.

**The visiting team commends:**

- the pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help for his interest and support in Catholic education.
- the principal for his vision, dedication, and guidance in his educational leadership of the school.
- the faculty and staff of the School of Saint Elizabeth for their dedication, example, and professionalism in establishing a welcoming and family friendly educational facility.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth for their progressive vision shown over the course of their history in both the growth of their facility as well as in the nature of instruction which is evident in their use of technology and current teaching practices.
- the administration of the School of Saint Elizabeth for encouraging and providing ample opportunities in the area of professional development for the teaching staff.

**The visiting team recommends:**

- the school faculty continues to evaluate the Terra Nova scores to guide curriculum improvements.
- the administration continues to provide opportunities for professional development within the teaching staff by encouraging active participation in PLC's. (Professional Learning Communities)
- the administration continues to seek varied avenues to maintain or increase student enrollment.

**Planning Process**

The planning team consisted of the chairperson, Mrs. D'Orio, and the principal, Mr. Venezia. Surveys were distributed to administration, faculty, staff and selected School Advisory Council members. Each committee extracted data from completed surveys. Together the faculty meet two or three times a month during the school year 2009-2010 to discuss the degree of implementation of the Middle States Association indicators. Together the faculty determined strengths and needs for each standard. The various committees met after school. Writings were emailed to the chairperson. The chair collated and published the findings. Drafts were revised and submitted for review. A number of parents were given copies of the School of Saint Elizabeth's Middle States Standards.

**The visiting team commends:**

- The faculty and staff for availing themselves to work as a whole entity in after school sessions
- The foresight for planning for the future of the School of Saint Elizabeth

**The visiting team recommends:**

- That a larger number of stakeholders, such as parents, parishioners and the local community be surveyed in future studies

**Mission and Beliefs**

The mission of the School of Saint Elizabeth is to impact the world positively by nurturing children with Christian values in a Catholic academic tradition of excellence. This mission statement is posted prominently in the school entrance, on the school website and handbook/calendar as well as on all school letterhead correspondence. Living the mission statement is evident in the implementation of programs such as “Caring Majority” and “Just Do Something” and the daily recitation of a “Promise of Respect.” Each grade level plans and completes a service project.

**The visiting team commends:**

- the administration and staff of the School of Saint Elizabeth for living their mission statement through implementing programs that teach empathy and benefit those less fortunate in the community.
- the administration and staff of the School of Saint Elizabeth for living their mission statement through their proactive role in addressing the issue of bullying in today’s society.

**The visiting team recommends:**

- the administration and staff develop a belief statement that aligns with the school philosophy and mission statement.
- the administration involve parents and parishioners in the development stage of a belief statement

## Results of Internal and External Scanning Processes

The external and internal scanning process began with a series of questionnaires distributed to an internal audience, faculty and staff, and an external audience, a selected group of parents.

All faculty and staff were involved in the internal scan process. Upon completion of the survey, the data was then tabulated and an average for each standard indicator was calculated by members of the staff.

Using goals previously identified as a result of the surveys and Terra Nova test scores, timelines were established. Terra Nova test scores were used as a baseline to measure progress in the reading and language arts goals.

Among the strengths listed as a result of the scan are:

- Dedicated faculty
- School pride
- A diversity of extracurricular activities
- Strong volunteer program
- Parent involvement
- Parish financial support
- Comprehensive webpage
- A foreign language program
- Implementation of the *Writing Roadmap* program by McGraw Hill

Among the weaknesses listed as a result of the scan are:

- Current uncertainty about the financial health of the school
- The desire to provide additional health care at school functions

# **Middle States Standards Review**

## **STANDARD 1: PHILOSOPHY/MISSION**

**The school has a clearly written and actively implemented statement of philosophy/mission that conveys the general and specific purposes of its educational program, expresses expectations for quality, and serves as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision making as well as long-range planning. Stakeholders give input into the development of the school's philosophy/mission and understand and accept it. This document is aligned with the community served and is reviewed periodically by stakeholder representatives.**

The Philosophy and Mission Statements are clearly stated in the documents, handbook and school website. These documents are guides and benchmarks for maintaining the values of this educational institution. The parents who are strong advocates for the school embrace the values of the School of Saint Elizabeth. It is evident that the statements are actively implemented and serve as the basis for daily operational and instructional decision-making as well as long-range planning.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- The involvement of the pastor, principal, faculty, and parents in supporting Catholic education and promoting Christian values
- The dedication of the pastor for his commitment to Catholic education is evidenced by his teaching and interaction with the eighth grade

### **The visiting team recommends:**

- The posting of the school's mission statement and beliefs around the school in all major entrances to greet visitors
- To have both parents and students sign an agreement to the handbook for the School of Saint Elizabeth as verification of acceptance of the school's philosophy and mission

**THE STANDARD IS MET**

## **STANDARD 2: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

**The school is chartered, licensed, or authorized by a state, nation, or authority that operates in the public interest. The governance and leadership ensure the integrity, effectiveness, and reputation of the school through the establishment of policy, provision of resources, and assurance of a quality educational program. The governance and leadership act ethically and consistently to assure an atmosphere of mutual respect and purposeful effort on behalf of students and their learning. School leaders foster a productive environment for teaching and learning, timely and open communication with stakeholders, and the vision necessary for day-to-day operations and long-term planning.**

The School of Saint Elizabeth operates under the guidance and supervision of the Office of Schools, Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey, and abides by the policies set forth by that Office and the state of New Jersey. The Diocese of Metuchen Office of Schools provides a close support system for Catholic schools throughout the diocese. The pastor, principal, administrative assistant, public relations officer, and business manager meet regularly and work collaboratively to make certain the mission of the school is advanced. Active research to evaluate the educational and spiritual program is an ongoing process. Input and feedback are routinely solicited from the school's wider community, including parents and the parishioners of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- The administration for promoting a high quality academic program supported by a large variety of extracurricular activities
- The principal for meeting regularly with subject and level coordinators
- The principal for his availability and openness in dealing with students, faculty, and parents
- The administration for making professional development a high priority among the faculty and procuring necessary educational resources
- The Pastor for his enthusiastic support of the school

### **The visiting team recommends:**

- The continued involvement of stakeholders in participation and dialogue with school leaders and administrators
- The increased representation of parishioners and the wider community in School Advisory Council

**THE STANDARD IS MET.**

### **STANDARD 3: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

**The school uses a collaborative process to develop and implement a written strategic or long-range plan to improve its educational program and services. Plans are aligned with the school's philosophy/mission and its operational plans, and are focused on continuous improvement of student performance, staff professional and organizational growth.**

Planning is evident at the School of St. Elizabeth through the Strategic Planning process begun two years ago and the subsequent decision to use *Renewing the Vision* as their reaccreditation protocol, utilizing community, parish, and school involvement in the process through Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges. The goals of the Action Plan look to the future for the educational and spiritual growth of its student population.

According to the Action Plan, progress in this area is an ongoing process. All school improvement is focused on enhancing student wellness, achievement, and performance.

#### **The visiting team commends:**

- The work of the Strategic Planning Committee
- The use of parent and parish resources in arriving at the goals
- The availability of the school action plan on the school website

#### **The visiting team recommends:**

- The continued implementation of Professional Learning Communities
- The continuing efforts at communication between parish and school
- The sharing of the Middle States goals with parish and community

**THE STANDARD IS MET.**

### **STANDARD 4: FINANCES**

**Financial resources are sufficient to provide the educational opportunities defined in the school's philosophy/mission. The business practices of the school are ethical. These practices promote confidence in the school's ability to manage fiscal and material resources**

**in a responsible manner and follow prescribed budgeting and accounting principles. The majority of resources raised for school purposes are dedicated to the school's operations.**

The finances of the School of St. Elizabeth are directed by the OLPH Finance Council in conjunction with the Parish Business manager. Various committees and councils are involved with providing assistance to the school. The OLPH Finance Council is the primary group assisting the pastor and principal in their goal of providing quality Catholic education for the OLPH parish community and surrounding communities. The council will advise the pastor on the tuition and fees necessary to maintain financial stability. Major sources of income include tuition, parish subsidies, endowments, and fundraising. Tuition provides approximately 50% of the budget. The pastor welcomes all families who seek a Catholic education for their child/children. Tuition assistance awards are available from 3 sources: Student Aid (Diocesan), Parish Aid, and the Tuition Angels program.

The school uses the FACTS Program in collection of tuition if parents choose to use a monthly payment plan.

The School wishes to seek other available government and business grants with grant proposals and has recently recruited a person to help with this process. The school recognizes the need to investigate alternate sources of funding.

**The visiting team commends:**

- The pastor's commitment to Catholic education for all students
- The use of the FACTS program for collection of tuition
- The effort to obtain alternate sources of financing
- The employment and resourceful use of a school development director

**The visiting team recommends:**

- The development of a data base that can be utilized for designing and implementing an Annual Fund
- The continued emphasis on long term planning to provide for the future financial needs of the school
- The pursuit of additional means of fundraising methods as indicated in their document
- The continuation of the ongoing efforts to reduce debt incurred from the 2001 school expansion project

**THE STANDARD IS MET**

## **STANDARD 5: FACILITIES**

**School facilities are safe, clean, and well maintained. The physical environment supports delivery of the educational program/services as well as optimal student development and achievement. Facilities are appropriate and adequate to implement the philosophy/mission of the school. They are regularly inspected for effective operation and meet all applicable laws including health and safety code requirements.**

The School of Saint Elizabeth's facilities, consisting of the school building and equipment, provide a safe, well-maintained physical environment that supports optimal student development and achievement. The school facilities are appropriate to implement the stated philosophy and mission of the school.

The school building is visually appealing. Classrooms are spacious and bright. Hallways display student achievement as well as strong Catholic identity.

There is every indication that the safety and welfare of the school community is optimal.

The maintenance person is competent and reliable. The building and grounds appear to be very well maintained. The building is clean and well organized, and welcoming. The classrooms are neat and orderly, conducive to teaching and learning.

The cafeteria and auditorium are extremely functional and well used. There is a lunch program, which is very well organized.

The recent addition includes a full-sized gymnasium, library and up-to-date computer lab, science lab and middle school classrooms and lockers.

The play area is more than adequate and includes a playground and an athletic field. .

The entire school including the 1916 original wing is air-conditioned.

It is clear that the students take pride in their school and partake in maintaining its order and cleanliness.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- the school on its modernization and efficient utilization of space
- the cheerfulness and cleanliness of the environment for the students
- the time, energy and finances to upgrade the school's facilities to promote a healthy, safe learning environment
- the foresight to expand to meet the changing needs for the students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

### **The visiting team recommends:**

- that routine maintenance of the entire school facilities be ongoing

**THE STANDARD IS MET**

## **STANDARD 6: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ORGANIZATION**

**The school's organizational structure and climate facilitate achievement of its core values as expressed in the philosophy/mission. The school culture supports successful implementation of age- and developmentally appropriate educational programs and services. Roles, responsibilities, expectations, and reporting relationships are clearly defined. Administrative, instructional, and support staff are qualified, competent, and sufficient in number to effectively provide quality educational experiences. The school regularly conducts staff performance appraisals and offers professional development opportunities informed by its philosophy/mission. Relationships among the staff and leadership are collegial and collaborative.**

The School of Saint Elizabeth, which is the parish school of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, follows the guidelines of policies and procedures as dictated by the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey. The bishop appoints the pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The pastor in consultation with the Catholic Schools Office hires the principal. The school's newly initiated School Advisory Council works with the pastor and the principal to sustain and enhance the viability of the School of Saint Elizabeth. The faculty members are all state certified teachers. Half of the faculty has master degrees. The principal regularly evaluates faculty performance.

All members of the school community have been integrally involved in updating the Middle States Accreditation. The faculty members have realized the need for a formalized written job description of non-teaching duties. The faculty and staff of the School of Saint Elizabeth are a dedicated community and reflect the mission of the school. The longevity of the staff is a testament to their commitment to Catholic education. By all indications the faculty and staff are treated fairly. Professional development is an integral part of staff growth.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- The strong partnership and support between the pastor and principal. There is an obvious mutual respect and admiration in their shared vision to continue and enhance the quality spiritual and academic programs at the School of Saint Elizabeth
- The excellent leadership of Mr. Venezia, who generates a positive, communal working environment
- The principal and governance members consistently who look for ways to assist families, secure additional funds and resources for the school

### **The visiting team recommends:**

- The continued dedication and excellent leadership as evident during this visit.
- To continue to update the faculty and staff handbook making sure that the responsibilities of the faculty and staff are clearly communicated
- The continued support and guidance from the Metuchen Diocesan Office

**THE STANDARD IS MET**

## **STANDARD 7: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**A safe, orderly, and healthy environment for teaching and learning is provided. The school adheres to local, state, and federal government health and safety requirements. Health, safety, preventive/emergency procedures, and crisis management policies are clearly written, well documented, implemented, and updated regularly.**

The visiting team finds professionalism of the school visiting nurses meets the appropriate standards. Two nurses are provided, five days a week for a period of 1.5 hours by the Somerset County Educational Services Commission. Since both nurses are also school parents, they often extend beyond those hours. School administrative personnel provide basic services at the other times. Two defibrillators are available in the school; EpiPens are also available. Teachers and staff are trained in their use, as well as CPR procedures. Health records are secured within the nurse's office. Each member of the faculty and staff has viewed the required video on blood borne pathogens. First Aid kits and health information cards are available to teachers and coaches for field trips and sporting events.

A fire drill was held at the request of the team; the students and faculty performed with competence and promptness. Fire drills are conducted and documented twice a month throughout the school year, including blocked exit drills. Teachers and staff are provided with handheld radios for communication during these drills.

The Bernardsville Police Department routinely performs safety audits on the building and grounds. The faculty and staff are required to familiarize themselves with the Crisis Management Handbook. Other safety needs are also addressed, such as access to the school building with a buzzer system and monitor, and evacuation drill procedure for fire and other emergencies.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- The school's commitment to the continued improvement in areas of safety
- The use of handheld radios by faculty and staff to be used in emergency situations
- The involvement of the Bernardsville Police Department in safety audits

### **The visiting team recommends:**

- The continued effort to increase nursing hours if feasible
- The formulation and enforcement of a policy on immunization
- The review of all health care policy especially relating to co-curricular and extracurricular activities
- The planned implementation of School Reach Instant Alert System

**THE STANDARD IS MET**

## **STANDARD 8: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**The educational program consists of a carefully planned and well-executed curriculum that includes appropriate academic standards, solid pedagogy, and assessment, all based on research and best practices. The educational program is aligned with the school's mission, approved by the governance, sufficiently financed, and periodically reviewed by stakeholders. It is developed to address the needs of all students and is designed to foster and challenge student learners at all levels. Effective policies and procedures are in place, along with instructional materials, technology, and equipment that are appropriate, functional, and well maintained. Written curriculum guides are current, functional, available, and in use. They define scope and sequence of the educational program as well as program objectives and reflect sound approaches to teaching and learning.**

The educational program of the School of Saint Elizabeth follows the Diocese of Metuchen guidelines. These guidelines are aligned with the New Jersey Common Core State Standards and the Common Core State Standards Initiatives for English Language Arts and Mathematics of 2010 for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The program and components are clearly defined and approved by the school's governance and are consistent with the philosophy and mission of the school. The Diocese of Metuchen curriculum guidelines were updated for Science (2010), Visual Arts (2008), Physical Education, Health and Wellness (2007), and Social Studies (2008). Instructional materials are up-to-date and sufficient for the number of students in the classes.

The Early Childhood Program (pre-k to Grade 2) which follows the diocesan Early Childhood Curriculum demonstrates use of a variety of education experiences in early literacy, communication, problem solving, and number skills. There is evidence of the development of positive skills in their educational posters and student work displayed in the rooms and hallways.

The Elementary Program (Grades 3-5) provides the appropriate instruction in all academic areas. The program shows evidence of continuity in instruction and learning from the younger grades. Children with special needs are given appropriate support from assigned personnel.

The Middle School Program (Grades 6-8) provides departmental instruction in all areas of the curriculum. The students are afforded many opportunities to take ownership of their school through various activities.

Spanish, a world language, is taught to students from Kindergarten through eighth grade. Middle school students receive instruction twice a week. Music, Physical Education, Library, Art and Computer classes are taught to all grades once a week. Instrumental music is available to students by an outside provider.

**The visiting team commends:**

- The School of Saint Elizabeth on their academic excellence evidenced by the Terra Nova results
- The utilization of up-to-date technology
- Incorporation of the “Caring Majority” program as an educational tool to reinforce respect and Christian values

**The visiting recommends:**

- Continuing planning and incorporation of Common Core State Standards Initiative of 2010

**THE STANDARD IS MET.**

## **STANDARD 9: ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE OF STUDENT LEARNING**

**The school systematically collects and rigorously analyzes quantifiable and observable evidence of individual learning and growth from multiple valid and reliable sources. Evidence of student learning is used to evaluate and improve curriculum effectiveness, instructional practices, professional development, and support services. Progress in student learning and performance is expected and is accurately, clearly, and systematically reported to the school community.**

The School of St. Elizabeth utilizes a variety of assessments to promote individual student learning. Their small class size and established relationship between teachers fosters vertical articulation among grade level staff to ensure implementation of Diocese of Metuchen Curriculum and NJ Core Content Standards. Integrating technology into lesson planning, daily instruction, and assessments addresses the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner and allows students to monitor their own learning. Standardized tests results are analyzed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of whole class and individual students. Students gain support from special services provided by the Somerset County Educational Services Commission as well as an enrichment program during the school day and after school programming. Communication to parents regarding student achievement is done electronically (i.e. Power School) as well as through conferences and report cards.

**The visiting team commends:**

- the School of Saint Elizabeth for the priority they place on integrating technology into daily planning and instruction.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth for enriching student learning through the use of an up to date computer lab and library.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth for incorporating an enrichment program into the curriculum.

**The visiting team recommends:**

- the School of Saint Elizabeth continues to expand the use of technology to enrich student learning.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth pursues professional development for staff to strengthen teacher ability to provide differentiated instruction.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth continues to further develop PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) for the benefit of teacher development and student learning.

**THE STANDARD IS MET.**

**STANDARD 10: STUDENT SERVICES**

**The school implements written policies and procedures, in partnership with families and the community, that provide all students with, or refer them to, services that are age- and developmentally appropriate to optimize opportunities for life-long success. Student services are systematic and integral to the educational program. They are provided by qualified personnel, sufficiently financed, periodically evaluated, and philosophy/mission appropriate.**

Administrators, teachers, and staff members of the School of Saint Elizabeth share the responsibility for providing guidance and support to students. It is evident that staff is sensitive to the critical importance of the non-academic needs of students. Students' emotional and social needs have been taken into consideration in developing and maintaining student services. Small school size promotes meeting the needs of individual students. Students' relationships and dynamics are addressed and enhanced through Caring Majority conflict resolution and an inter grade buddy program. Families are provided with information about child development, education, and related topics through personal communications, the school handbook, HSA newsletters, referrals to their web site, and Power School (web based grading tool). Food services are provided in a functional and hygienic environment that meets the health requirements of all appropriate authorities. Priority has been placed on including healthier food choices on the menu. The School of Saint Elizabeth implements written policies and procedures to identify and address the needs of students with special needs. The school provides or refers families to appropriate related services. Applicants for enrollment and their families are clearly informed of the philosophy, mission, policies, nature of the educational program services, tuition fees as well as expectations for student performance. Students of the School of Saint Elizabeth are not provided with busing service. Parents transport students to and from school daily.

**The visiting team commends:**

- the School of Saint Elizabeth for implementing the Caring Majority conflict resolution program and an inter grade buddy program.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth for introducing healthy food choices such as salad, baked snacks and yogurt to the lunch menu.

- the School of Saint Elizabeth for recognizing the need for strong home/school communications through the use of the school website, the parent/student handbook and Power School.

**The visiting team recommends:**

- the administration of the School of Saint Elizabeth pursues the exploration of professional development for staff to implement a peer leadership program for the middle school students.
- exploring the possibility of adding a guidance counselor to the staff.

**THE STANDARD IS MET.**

**STANDARD 11: STUDENT LIFE AND STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

**The school provides access to non-discriminatory student activities that are age- and developmentally appropriate to supplement the educational program. A balance of academic, social, co- or extra-curricular and service activities is maintained. Student activities are selected to foster intellectual, cultural, and social growth as well as physical health and wellness. Student activities provide opportunities for student leadership and social interaction and encourage development of student interests. These activities are adequately financed, periodically reviewed by stakeholders, managed by school governance and leadership, and appropriate to the school’s philosophy/mission.**

The School of Saint Elizabeth offers opportunities for students to gain growth in cooperation with peers, and build skills in handling responsibility and taking initiative. Relationships among faculty, staff, volunteers, and students demonstrate respect, fairness, and understanding. The school holds events that include staff, families, and students. These events play a vital part of student life. Social activities include student council, pep rallies, safety patrol, scouts, yearbook committee, dances, and a peace making program. The “Just Do Something” program encourages good deeds, and kind, helpful, generous behaviors at both school and at home. Academic life is enriched by participation in the National Geographic Geography Bee, the National Spelling Bee and a Math Contest. The athletic programs include fall, winter and spring sports.

**The visiting team commends:**

- the administration and staff for encouraging good citizenship through the “Just Do Something” program.
- the administration and staff for planning class outings which enable students to show their Catholic identity by offering Christian service to others.
- the administration and staff for promoting good mental and physical health by providing a wide variety of social, academic and sporting activities to develop athletic, social and leadership skills.

**The visiting team recommends:**

- the administration and staff continue to develop opportunities to build empathy in students by exploring service projects that will aid students in becoming aware of those in need and in finding ways they can help.
- the administration and staff make an effort to explore the interest level, and research ideas for possible expansion of the forensics and visual and performing arts after school programs.

**THE STANDARD IS MET.**

## **STANDARD 12: INFORMATION RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Information resources, materials, and technology are accessible and of adequate scope, quantity, and quality to facilitate the school's pursuit of its total educational program. These resources encourage all students and staff to broaden and extend their knowledge and skills. Access to appropriate information resources and technology is provided for students and staff. Appropriate instruction is offered to develop student and staff inquiry, research, and information literacy skills. Information technology equipment is functional and well maintained.**

The School of Saint Elizabeth has developed a state of the art technology center used by students, teachers, and staff. The computer lab was donated in the summer of 2007 by a school family. It contains 24 HP personal computers and a teacher computer. The lab has a fully functioning Smart Board, an overhead projector, a Scan jet scanner, two HP Color laser jet printers, and a 42 inch flat screen television. The school has a Computer On Wheels cart that stores 8 laptops that are portable and wireless ready. Two ELMOS (electronic readers) are available for teacher use. This state of the art facility is used to educate grades Pre K 4 to 8 in use of technology and is available for teachers to bring their classes to enhance and extend the classroom experience.

### **The visiting team commends:**

- the School of Saint Elizabeth for developing a well thought out state of the art technology center.
- the teaching staff of the School of Saint Elizabeth for using this technology facility to enhance and extend the classroom learning experience.
- the administration of the School of Saint Elizabeth for recognizing the need for and enlisting Mrs. Laura Capobianco as technology support staff.

### **The visiting team recommends:**

- the administration and staff put into effect a plan of action for keeping the technology center up to date.
- the administration and staff intensify efforts to acquire technology funding for purchase of additional Smart Boards for classroom use.

**THE STANDARD IS MET**

## **Strategic Goals**

### **Strategic Action Plans**

#### **GOAL 1**

The first goal of the School of Saint Elizabeth is to have eighty percent of all students in grades three through eight maintain or increase scores on the spring Terra Nova Assessment in the areas of Reading and Language Arts during the next four years compared annually from 2010 to 2014.

##### **The visiting team commends:**

- the administration for placing high priority on academic excellence by striving to maintain or increase standardized test scores.

##### **The visiting team recommends:**

- the administration further continues to move in the directions of departmentalization in grades 5-8 in order to place each teacher in his/her area of strength to enrich and enhance student learning.
- the administration and staff strive to maintain and increase standardized test scores in the areas of math and science.
- the School of Saint Elizabeth utilizes their new initiated PLC's (professional learning communities) in order to implement the above stated goal.

#### **GOAL 2**

The goal of the School of Saint Elizabeth will produce a Policy and Procedures Manual to clarify job descriptions for the non-teaching responsibilities of staff. Job descriptions will include an approximation as to time commitment required by each responsibility.

##### **The visiting team commends:**

- The review and revision of the Staff Handbook
- The collection of data from other Diocesan schools
- The foresight to react to an unsatisfactory indicator as evaluated by staff

##### **The visiting team recommends:**

- The review of current Teacher Handbook
- The formation of committees to revise needed areas
- The review of the preliminary document by staff
- The annual/biannual review of procedures and all handbooks

## **CONCLUSION**

The visiting team would again like to thank the pastor, administration, faculty, staff, students and parents of the School of St. Elizabeth for their warm hospitality. We congratulate all involved in your self study in order to gain re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools. The protocol you have chosen provided an opportunity to focus on all areas of school life. The document shows you have taken a realistic and honest evaluation of the School of St. Elizabeth, its strengths and needed areas of growth. The goals are well developed and give a reasonable and realistic path to follow in the future. The team appreciates the time, effort, and energy put into the self-study.

## **VISITING TEAM'S SCHEDULE**

### **October 19, 2010**

- **Arrival**
- **Welcome Dinner**
- **Tour of school**

### **October 20, 2010**

- **Classroom observations**
- **Team conferences and evaluation of standards**
- **Interviews with staff, development director, student council**

### **October 21, 2010**

- **Classroom observations**
- **Interviews with Pastor, Finance Director, Principal, and parents**
- **Team conferences and evaluation of goals**

### **October 22, 2010**

- **Review of process, evaluation of completed work**
- **Preparation of oral report**
- **Oral report presentation**
- **Departure**