

Standard 1. Vision and Purpose:

1. What is the process for establishing and building understanding of and commitment to the vision statement among the shareholders?

The purpose of a vision statement is to create a vivid, idealized explanation of an outcome which energizes the stakeholders to create a mental picture of the desired goal. In 2006, a strategic long-range plan was developed for Incarnate Word Academy that included a vision for 2016. But for all practical purposes, Incarnate Word Academy actualizes its vision in the Mission Statement which is widely publicized and the Statement of Philosophy. The Mission of Incarnate Word Academy is to challenge young women of faith to achieve their God-given potential as academically successful Women of the Word, following the example of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, by promoting human dignity, thereby empowering themselves and others to make a positive impact on our world. The Philosophy is rooted in the Mission of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. Our task is to make visible the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, by promoting human dignity. Further, the Mission challenges us to raise the consciousness of our school community, to respect cultural diversity, to respond to the needs of the poor, to work for peace and justice, and to be ecologically responsible. We have taken a fundamental approach to developing a firm understanding of the school's Philosophy and Mission by publishing it for the stakeholders. This has been done in four ways:

- a. Mission Statement placards are hung throughout the school. Daily, the placards remind the students, faculty, staff, Administration, and visitors to the campus why the school exists.
- b. The Student Handbook is published for the benefit of the students and parents. The Mission and Philosophy of the school are clearly stated on page five. The handbook is provided in a small binder format and in an e-format.
- c. The Employee Handbook is given to every faculty and staff member. On page six of the handbooks is the Statement of Identity, Mission Statement, and the Statement of Philosophy.
- d. The school's website reaches the greater community of stakeholders, including Alumnae, prospective students, Board members, and citizens of the surrounding community. The school's website contains the Mission and Philosophy in its About IWA page.

In all four cases, a vision is clearly understood within the school's Philosophy and Mission Statements.

More importantly, the vision is called to life via the numerous community service projects and expectations established for students, faculty, and staff. Through Student Council endeavors, club activities, and Campus Ministry undertakings, members of the immediate school community are called to help the extended community.

Recently, a “Mission Model” monthly award has been initiated. One faculty member as well as a student from each grade level is recognized for their manifestation of the Mission at Incarnate Word Academy. The greater community of stakeholders is the recipient of the school’s community service deeds. IWA students are expected to accumulate 120 hours of community service prior to graduation; faculty and staff are required to formulate annual goals reflecting the school’s vision; the Board of Trustees reviews the community service and vision commitment of the immediate school community, annually.

The Administration calls the faculty to be more aware and to live the Mission and purpose of the school through their contractual agreement and primary responsibilities defined in the Employee Handbook. Included with each employee contract is a letter that reminds employees of their agreement to support and implement the philosophy of Catholic Education, live out the Gospel values and participate in building faith community.

Our Mission Integration Coordinator meets with all new faculty and staff to discuss the Mission and to develop ways they may implement it in their classroom. In 2008, a Mission Liaison has been established on the Board. This Liaison has utilized the Mission binder to increase awareness by the Board on how the school’s Mission is lived by the stakeholders. The Mission binder contains artifacts from faculty prayer services, in-services, and retreats. Mission “words of the month” and specific themes are also a part of the Mission binder. In addition, the Board of Trustees receives the minutes from every Mission Committee meeting.

2. What is the school's process for developing a profile and systematically maintaining and using information that describes the school, its students, and their performance?

The school profile contains crucial elements that thoroughly and accurately portray the uniqueness of the school. It not only provides information for the colleges to assess Incarnate Word students within the college admission process, but also incorporates important data to communicate to parents, prospective families, and other stakeholders regarding the school's progress, priorities and performance. Various parties within the school collaborate in the collection of the data and formulation of the school profile.

Annually the following data is collected:

- demographic information by the Assistant Principal to be used by the Saint Louis Archdiocese and the local school district
- grades and academic achievement records by the Registrar and Administration
- standardized Testing results by the Guidance Department
- religious education assessment by the Theology Department via ACRE (Assessment Catechesis and Religious Education) survey

The general demographic profile is published on the school's web site regarding the student to teacher ratio, percentage of students attending college, honors curriculum, and community service requirements. This demographic profile is also disseminated to prospective students and families during high school recruitment nights and Open House. Its principle purpose is to inform stakeholders in the greater community.

On a regular basis, the Administration and Guidance Counselors utilize the academic and achievement profile generated by the Registrar to develop strategies for students experiencing academic difficulties. Once each cycle, the Administration meets with the Guidance Department to confer regarding students who are struggling. Intervention strategies are developed and subsequently measures implemented to assist students who are struggling academically.

For the past two years, the Assistant Principal has shared the results of ACT testing with the Department Chairs, who in turn have taken the data to department meetings to afford teachers the opportunity to enhance the curriculum and learning process in order to improve student ACT outcomes.

3. How does leadership ensure that vision, purpose, and goals guide the teaching and learning process?

The Philosophy of Incarnate Word Academy states, “The college preparatory curriculum develops the individual by encouraging academic achievement and personal growth.” Whether it is the curriculum, the classroom environment, or the educational endeavors of its graduates, the school’s leadership strives to maintain the elements of academic achievement. The leadership of the school related to curriculum is the Administration, the Department Chairpersons/Curriculum Committee, and the Ad hoc Curriculum Committee on the Board of Trustees.

In recent months, the Board of Trustees has requested that departments evaluate congruency of expectations in a course taught by multiple teachers. In addition, it has encouraged departments to explore the development of more Honor and AP courses to challenge the students.

The Administration has worked directly with Department Chairs in exploring these academic questions. Likewise, the Administration continues to assist teachers in meeting the needs of students experiencing academic challenges. The school’s leadership continues to fund the position of the Learning Consultant, who develops strategies and adjustments in the learning processes to promote academic success for each student.

The Administration has established a multi-pronged program to ensure that teachers foster a classroom climate, develop teacher/student relationships, and conduct effective instructional processes which promote the school’s vision and purpose. These are:

- conducting classroom observations for every teacher each semester
- requiring teachers to establish goals related to instruction
- utilizing a student evaluation in all classes
- providing funds for professional development and graduate courses.

Likewise, the Administration supports the incorporation of the Mission and purpose of the school into the learning environment by:

- allocating time for the Campus Minister and Mission Integration Coordinator to encourage reflection by the faculty and staff on how to bring the Mission Statement alive in our relationship with our students
- assigning time for a faculty retreat and further reflection by the faculty.

Complementing the efforts of the Administration, Department Chairs:

- conduct classroom observations to reinforce measures used effectively by teachers to enhance student learning and to provide points of reflection for improving instruction
- conduct regularly scheduled department meetings to discuss strategies for enhancing student achievement
- participate in the Curriculum Committee decision making process on course and curriculum development

- encourage department members to reflect on how they fulfill the Mission and purpose of the school and the goals of the department which are an extension of the school's vision.

Technology has rapidly changed the nature of education and the Administration has funded the technological improvement deemed necessary for students to succeed both short term and long term. As stated on the school's web site, "Our goal is to provide the best possible learning environment for our students and the best possible working environment for our faculty and staff. Incarnate Word Academy is providing every student with the hardware and software to foster the acquisition of foundational skills necessary for success in a future workplace or university." Through the hiring of an Educational Integration Technologist, the Administration has afforded its faculty direction and resources to enhance student learning and achievement.

Likewise, the Administration conducts a survey with its seniors and recent graduates regarding strengths and weaknesses in the school's curriculum. Periodically, the Administration discusses the results of these surveys with the Department Chairs to improve the overall instruction and curricula.

4. What process is used to ensure that vision and purpose of the school remain current and aligned with the school's expectations for student learning and school effectiveness?

Revisiting and revising the Mission Statement and Philosophy on a regular basis is important if both are to resonate within the changing demographics of stakeholders. Incarnate Word Academy does not have a formal or a regularly scheduled process for reviewing its Mission Statement and Philosophy. However, there are a number of informal processes that provide the school's leaders opportunities to determine how the stakeholders relate and support the current vision.

Each year, the Administration surveys a random sample of teachers and students to determine if the stakeholders have a clear grasp of the school's vision and purpose. Likewise, graduates are surveyed to discover how they envision the purpose of the school to determine if the perception is compatible with the actual statements.

Throughout the year, concerns related to the school's vision may be discussed by the Faculty Advisory Council, the Curriculum Committee, or the Board of Trustees. The Mission Integration Coordinator has revised the Mission Statement with input from other stakeholders.

Standard 1: Vision and Purpose Overall Assessment

Impact Statement

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it commits to a shared purpose and direction. The school establishes expectations for student learning aligned with the school's vision that is supported by school personnel and external stakeholders. These expectations serve as the focus for assessing student performance and school effectiveness. The school's vision guides allocations of time and human, material, and fiscal resources.

The committee evaluating the extent to which Incarnate Word Academy meets the standard of Vision and Purpose considers Incarnate Word Academy to be Operational.

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The vision and purpose of Incarnate Word Academy is rooted in the Mission. The Mission is communicated among all stakeholders through a variety of means including placards hung throughout the school, both the student and employee handbooks, and the school website. Understanding and support are continuously built through student service projects, parent activities, and faculty involvement. The Mission Integration Coordinator makes sure that the vision of the founder, Sr. Peter Nolasco, continues to be evident in the every day activities of Incarnate Word Academy. She, working with the Mission Committee (teachers, Administrators, staff, and students) has continued to assess the Mission of Incarnate Word Academy. The Mission is posted throughout the school building and is included in all publications as well as the website as a reminder of the school's primary focus. In addition, the Mission is brought to life through service. Students and faculty are involved in service related activities throughout the year.

Incarnate Word Academy systematically maintains a profile of its students and their performance as well as information that describes the school. Data is collected annually regarding demographic information, grades and academic achievement and standardized test scores. Demographic information is used for recruiting purposes as well as informing stakeholders. Academic achievement information is used in developing strategies for individual student success and overall curriculum enhancement. Incarnate Word Academy publishes an Annual Report to apprise its stakeholders of financial information with a summary of income, expenses, and fundraising.

Leadership ensures that the vision, purpose and goals guide the learning process through a plethora of means:

- Classroom observations by Administration and Department Chairpersons
- Goal setting by all faculty and staff in the areas of
 - Living the Mission

- Instructional process
- Interpersonal relationships
- Professional responsibilities and growth
- Departmental goal setting
- Providing time and funding for retreats and professional development
- Periodic review of student performance with subsequent interventions for struggling students
- Ensuring that technology holds a prominent place in the teaching and learning environment

Over the past several years Incarnate Word Academy has utilized a Mission Committee to ensure that the Mission of the school lives within its constituents. This Committee not only reviews the mission, but initiates activities within the community to bring the Mission to life. A recent activity involved recognizing community members who personify the vision every day at Incarnate Word Academy. These awardees were named “Mission Models”. The committee continues to broaden the scope of implementing the Mission of Jesus, the Incarnate Word.

Overall, Incarnate Word Academy is committed to a shared purpose and direction. Expectations for student learning are clearly defined and are aligned with the Mission. The Mission is supported by faculty, students, and the community. Assessment of student performance and school effectiveness are guided by the Mission of Incarnate Word Academy. In addition, the Mission guides allocation of resources. The rating of “Operational” reflects the fact that we do not have a statement of vision, but of Mission.

Standard 2. Governance and Leadership:

1. What is the process for establishing, communication and implementing policies and procedures for the effective operation of the school?

Establishing policies and procedures can be a multifaceted process. Some guidelines are based on Missouri requirements. For example, the curriculum standards follow the state of Missouri guidelines and our athletic programs abide by the Missouri Athletic Association High School rules. Our safety drills are in conjunction with guidelines from the Bel Nor Police Department. Board of Trustee By-Laws, Handbooks, FAC (Faculty Advisory Committee), and organizations' policies are documents that support the Mission of the school and are updated annually to meet the needs of the school. Suggestions for establishing policies can come from the top down, from the Board of Trustees, or bottom up, from students, committees (faculty and staff,) or parents . The avenues for suggestions to come to the Administration are from: FAC or the Curriculum Committee, which is a committee of the Department Chairs.

Communication with all entities comes through: newsletters, the website, e-mail blasts, the on-line community, conferences, department meetings, cycle meetings (we have a ten day rotation modular schedule,) weekly updates from the Principal, FAC, informal conversations, and by phone. Open door policies are established with the community, and there is a comfort level, especially with parents, that we want to assist them whenever possible.

Implementing policies and procedures can be brought to the Administration through any and all entities. The Administration is known for having an open door policy. Internal policies are found in employee, student, and athletic handbooks. Implementation occurs after one or more of the following: surveys, focus groups, general discussion, committee work, and research. All or some of these required before Administrative approval occurs. The Parents' Club, the Alumnae and Booster organizations have important roles in establishing and communicating ideas and suggestions. Through Human Resources and Payroll, there are many regulations and laws which we must follow. For example, turning in proper paperwork/taxes to the state and federal government on time or following laws such as the Family Medical Leave Act are essential in keeping in accordance with state and federal laws.

Several years ago, IWA was discerning the merits of implementing a one to one laptop program. Research occurred; faculty, staff, parents and students were surveyed. An internal and external committee discussed the pros and cons of this proposal. A presentation was made to the Board of Trustees. The final decision was that with four computer labs, and a lap top check out system in Silent Study (an area where the students can go to study without distractions) IWA would not go to a one to one lap top program. Several years ago, a student suggested that students should be able to wear tennis shoes every day except for dress up days. The proposal was presented with a petition from the students to FAC. The faculty and staff had input; parents were surveyed and the Administration approved the request.

2. What process does the school's leadership use to evaluate school effectiveness and student performance?

There are many facets of leadership at IWA and all have some format of evaluation. At IWA, the process to evaluate effectiveness is a living and breathing component of daily operations. All individuals in the community have the ability to give feedback. With regards to academics, teachers are observed once a semester by the Assistant Principal or the Principal. All staff have an end of the year review and conference by an Administrator. Ed-Line (which is updated twice a week) provides students and parents the ability to obtain current grades, Learning Activity Packets, and class notes. In the past, only some teachers had their students fill out course evaluations. During the 2008-09 school year, all teachers were given standardized questions to give to their students for course evaluations. Parent-Teacher conferences are held once a semester. If students need extra assistance, the Learning Consultant assists students with organization, extra testing time and overall academic help. Also there are meetings once a cycle consisting of: Guidance Counselors, the Learning Consultant, the Dean of Students, the Assistant Principal and the Principal, to assist those students who have three subject areas in which they have a 70% or below. Recommendations are then made to support those students and strategies are implemented to help them. (This is referred to Guidance or D Day meetings) During exam week, we have Review Performance Day; any student who is on the D Day list or failing a class, must attend school that day, work on assignments, and prepare for exams. The Assistant Principal coordinates this gathering of these students. If a student is not using her time wisely on a daily basis she is structured, which means she is assigned to go to Open Labs with her teachers. With all the layers of accountability, the goal of the leadership of the school is to recognize an aspect of the Mission: to promote human dignity so each student's performance is actualized by her own potential.

Standardized Test Scores: Students are admitted to IWA based on their grade school standardized test scores and their grades. Upon acceptance, students take a placement test for English, Math, and Technology. Advance Placement tests are offered in for Math and Foreign Language. With the knowledge of these scores, students are placed in their courses freshman year. In October, freshmen take the Explore Test, Sophomores take the PLAN, and the juniors take the PSAT. This is practical test experience for the ACT and SAT and to identify possible National Merit candidates. This year we had one student as an honorable mention for National Merit.

Athletics: The Athletic Director oversees the coaches, which includes the budget process, rules and meetings (if necessary) with parents and coaches. Coaches have their athletes evaluate them. The Booster organization is involved with hiring the coaches. Interviews include: booster representatives, the Athletic Director, and Administration. If a student is on Academic Probation, she may not play a sport so she may concentrate on her academics. The Assistant Principal and Guidance Counselors communicate with the students and parents, assisting her to improve her GPA. Coaches are given the ability to see their players' grades on Ed-Line to help in motivating them. With the ownership of the athletic program spread to many in the community, the goal is that student performance is impacted in a positive manner.

Activities: Each activity-- retreats, in-service days, etc. have surveys so that the following year, activities can be improved through valued input. Students groups, such as the Peers and Student Council are trained through leadership workshops. Peers are trained through the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse. Student Council is trained in conjunction with DeSmet Jesuit High School's (an all male Catholic High School) Student Council during a leadership day each semester. All are given feedback at the end of the year as to the growth of their leadership. These two organizations utilize their members in leadership capacities for underclass school functions. During the 2008-2009 school year, a leadership night will host leaders of all clubs, teams, and other organizations so all leaders will have training. IWA prides itself on developing the leadership skills of its students. Eighty percent of our student body participates in some extra curricular activity. Leaders/officers of these organizations are directly responsible for planning activities for their clubs, thus taking ownership in their leadership. We believe that this is an integral aspect of the learning process and enhances student performance.

The Board of Trustees evaluates the Principal and completes an end of the year self evaluation of the entire Board. With the Mission in mind, the overall goal of the Board of Trustees and Administration is to provide students with the strongest educational background to have a plethora of college opportunities.

FAC (Faculty Advisory Committee): This is an elected group of faculty with standing members from: Guidance Department, Mission Effectiveness, the Dean of Students, the Assistant Principal and the Principal. Although an advisory group, the Administration— 99.9 % of the time, is in agreement with advice from the members. Approval of new clubs, suggestions for new policies and helping parents or students with issues can come before the committee. For example: When there were concerns over the consequences of student plagiarism, FAC set up a scale of infractions for plagiarism and this became policy.

Guidance and the Learning Consultant: Last year, 136 seniors received over 4.5 million dollars in scholarships. Annually, the Guidance Department meets with each senior and her parents to guide them in the selection process for colleges. Through the junior year guidance program, students are given the tools they need to select the best colleges for their needs. Ninety nine percent of our seniors attend college.

The Learning Consultant assists those who have been diagnosed or have been noted to have learning issues. Assistance ranges from organizational skills to using a planner to academic modifications for classroom work and taking tests. Currently, the Learning Consultant works with fifty students, highlighting the innate dignity and unique learning style of each one.

3. In what ways are stakeholders, including staff, given opportunities to provide leadership and to contribute to the decision making-process?

When the Sisters began IWA in 1932, a structure was set up and continued so that there were avenues for feedback on all levels. The Flow Chart (Employee Handbook) indicates that the flow of information is top down, from the Board of Trustees, but information can flow from the bottom-up, also. Several years ago, a student wanted to change the dress code, and she went through the proper channels and the change was made. FAC, the Faculty Advisory Committee, which began well over 30 years ago, is the vehicle for teachers, staff, students and parents who want to suggest changes in any non-academic or non athletic area of IWA.

All academic changes are made through the Curriculum Committee. (Each Department Chair and other significant staff- Learning Consultant, Guidance, etc., are represented on this committee. They meet once a cycle.) The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees oversees academics.

Parents' Club is an avenue for parents to suggest changes, too. There are By-Laws which indicate how each class level is represented and meetings are held 6 times a year. The Principal is the liaison for the parents and the school. Club executives are elected.

Booster Club: The Booster Club was implemented to supplement the athletic budget. The club began in the late 1980's and has grown to be able to assist the Athletic Department with some purchases of large equipment for the weight room. The Booster Executives are elected and the Boosters meet once a month under the tutelage of the Athletic Director.

Parent and Student Ambassadors: Both of these entities are integral in recruiting students. Each group meets with prospective students or parents to establish relationships so questions can be posed and answered with integrity. These two groups have a substantial influence on families who are interested in attending IWA.

Alumnae Board Meetings: These meetings occur 6 times a year. This group of Alumnae ranges from recent graduates to a graduate from the class of 1939. This group is active on and off campus. They participate as alum angels to the sophomore class; they host various fundraisers and get-togethers; they are visible at school events and athletics. They receive a Principal report and give input through the Alumnae Director.

Principal Meetings: Once every ten days, the Principal meets with the following: Campus Minister, Athletic Director, Advancement Director, the Dean of Students and the Assistant Principal, the Librarian, the Admissions and Marketing Director, the D-Day group, (Learning Consultant, Guidance, the Dean of Students, and the Assistant Principal), the Mission Effectiveness Coordinator, the Technology Department and the Finance Director. These cycle meetings provide an opportunity for these individual departments to share ideas and concepts and to make sure that each entity works within the Mission and Philosophy of the school.

Leadership Opportunities: There are a plethora of areas where faculty and staff can be leaders and role models for the community. They can be nominated and elected to FAC; they can be a retreat leader; class level moderators are available; Department Chairs rotate on a 3 year cycle; Campus Ministry offers varying leadership roles-Liturgical Minister, Mission Committee member, retreat supervisor, junior service evaluator; many faculty and staff coach; and supervision of clubs is all driven by faculty and staff.

The **AdvancED** process has really become a vehicle for making the entire faculty and staff aware of all that occurs at IWA. By taking ownership of the process, the community has come together to support one another; admire the successes of various areas and become even more dedicated to the Mission and Philosophy of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.

4. What policies and processes are in place to ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation?

IWA is challenged by the Academics Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees to add more AP courses, to determine the rate of college graduation of our Alumnae and to begin to investigate how on-line courses will impact high schools in the future.

For years, faculty and staff have been encouraged to use funds for professional development. IWA pays 75% of what the University of Missouri at St. Louis charges for courses. Faculty can go to any institution and be reimbursed. Also, departments are encouraged to attend seminars or workshops that pertain to their immediate subject areas. Each year, some form of technology training is required. Some summers, teachers and staff had to attend “in house” workshops. During the 2008-09 school year, faculty were required to work on an individual technology plan with the Educational Integration Technologist (whose position was created two years ago) and meet with this specialist, individually. There are four computer labs on campus and students can use laptops in the Multi-Purpose room during silent study. Every faculty member has a tablet and an LCD projector (which is similar to using a White Board.) We also have a variety of software available to students, such as UnitedStreaming, Google Earth, and Turning Point.

This past year, the Theology Department suggested a revision of the Theology curriculum. This went through the Curriculum Committee and was adopted for the 2008-09 school year.

Personal and Professional Goals are set each year. The Principal receives these goals and reminds each staff member per quarter if they have attempted to attain one of the goals in faith development, responsibilities of the staff’s position, communications/ interpersonal relationships and professional development.

Several positions have been added to the faculty and staff to assist the learning process. A Learning Consultant’s position was created 9 years ago and has been an asset in terms of assisting students in need. The Educational Integration Technologist has been able to move the faculty forward to implement technology in their courses.

Speakers are invited to address the student body and faculty on subjects that impact society on a daily basis. In the past few years, speakers have included: Facebook and the complications of having your information on the net; Zero Seconds-not leaving youngsters in cars by themselves; a drinking and driving presentation; the Pepsi multi screen presentation addressing teen difficulties and the paths students have taken to overcome situations and sexual harassment.

The modular schedule was implemented in the 1960’s. Every Alum that comes back has a testimonial of how this schedule has taught them time management and how they have been successful in college because they were taught to study between classes. The Learning Activity Packets (LAPS) used at IWA are hybrids of college syllabi.

The Testing Center was implemented when the modular schedule was introduced. The testing center allows teachers to spend more time on task in the classroom. The center also allows students to test during the day when they are most attentive.

Twice a year the Guidance Department hosts college and financial evenings for parents. Guidance also has in depth information in the Parent Newsletter for college scholarships, and ACT/SAT updates.

A Level and B Level Course are the two levels of courses at IWA. The higher ability students are in the B level courses. The A level courses meet more often than the B level courses. However, each course level maintains the same goals and objectives.

These policies and processes enhance all of the learning opportunities and encourage innovation. After all, education is a continuum; at IWA, we hope never to be stagnant or complacent. We are always open to new ideas.

Standard 2: Governance and Leadership Overall Assessment

Impact Statement

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has leaders who are advocates for the school's vision and improvement efforts. The leaders provide direction and allocate resources to implement curricular and co-curricular programs that enable students to achieve expectations for their learning. Leaders encourage collaboration and shared responsibility for school improvement among stakeholders. The school's policies, procedures, and organizational conditions ensure equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.

Governance and Leadership, revolves around the Mission that the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word created and the Academy mirrored as part of their Mission. All governing and leadership stems from the desire to “challenge young women of faith to achieve their God-given potential” and to “promote the human dignity of each individual, thus empowering students to make a positive impact on our world.”

Whether top down from the Board of Trustees, or bottom up, from a student driven request, all suggestions are processed by specific committees within the community. With input on various levels, decision making values contributions from all who are involved. We attribute our successful governance to constant communication from the entire community. Faculty, staff, parents, and students all have an open invitation to speak with Administration at any time. Incarnate Word Academy promotes a family setting and values input from all constituencies.

Incarnate Word Academy has a plethora of processes for evaluating every facet in the community. Individuals addressed in these areas are: Academic Departments, student activities, The Board of Trustees, support systems (Guidance and the Learning Consultant,) FAC-(Faculty Advisory Committee) and student athletes. We also pride ourselves on the ability to have these stakeholders, as well as the following, feel they are part of the decision making process: Parents' Club, Booster Club, Alumna, and the Parent Ambassadors.

All of the community understand and respect the need to abide by policies. Ultimately, the Board of Trustees, through the Administration, “ensures equity of learning opportunities and support for innovation.” The committees of the Board of Trustees, supporting the suggestions of the Strategic Plan and the Mission of the school, cohesively provide an environment that is impelled by our faith in Jesus Christ, promoting pride and excellence in the entire Incarnate Word Academy family.

The Overall Assessment for Governance and Leadership is Highly Functional.

Standard 3. Teaching and Learning:

1. How does the school ensure that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are aligned and articulated across grade levels in support of the expectations for student learning?

At Incarnate Word Academy, there are a variety of ways we ensure that curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are articulated and aligned across the grade levels. In order for teachers to create the best possible learning environment for students, it is essential to develop consistent curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment. Our evidence illustrates a commitment to developing curriculum and instructional strategies that help students grow academically and make connections between their coursework. Expectations for student learning are clearly defined at IWA, particularly in the modular schedule where students take an active role in the learning process.

In the past six years, the faculty at IWA has worked to create a comprehensive school curriculum for each department. As part of IWA's Academic Curriculum, each department has clearly articulated standards to ensure an alignment between department objectives and coursework. This correlation establishes clearly defined expectations for student learning in each course. The course curriculum in each content area is based on the National Standards or Missouri State Standards for each subject area. In addition, the Curriculum Guide shows that IWA offers courses to fit all learning levels. The faculty promotes student achievement by challenging students to excel in introductory courses, core classes, and honors courses, depending on student ability. In the Theology Department, these standards are based on the objectives and expectations of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis, Missouri. All courses are developed in accordance with the Academic Curriculum ensuring that students receive the best possible education.

In addition to curriculum development, IWA is committed to outstanding instructional strategies and diverse assessments that provide students with a variety of opportunities for learning. The modular schedule lends itself to diverse learning experiences, as students are able to work individually, with groups, and one-on-one with the instructor in class and in Open Labs. Because of the modular schedule, students have the opportunity to receive both traditional instruction, such as lecture, as well as more personalized learning possibilities, such as small group discussions, debates, and lab work. Further, teachers utilize different instructional strategies in class to increase student involvement and learning. Assessment strategies also vary based on the expectations of each department. Teachers are able to assess student learning through a variety of methods, keeping in mind the diverse learning styles of individual students and the need to stress higher-order thinking skills. Thus, as the evidence shows, a debate might be one way to articulate knowledge of a novel whereas a persuasive essay might be another. In this way, students are able to articulate their knowledge and apply

their learning in a variety of ways. As a result, students are actively involved in the learning process.

In order for curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment to be effective, it must be aligned and articulated at all grade levels, ensuring connections between grade levels and disciplines. For instance, in honors courses, each syllabus is reviewed by outside committees, such as the Advanced Placement Board for AP courses and department liaisons from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and St. Louis University. This indicates alignment with national standards for honors classes, allowing students to be on the same level as peers across the nation. In addition, one course could be taught by several teachers allowing for collaboration within a department. Thus, when several teachers are teaching the same course, they will present the same content to the classes, even if the instructional strategies of the teachers vary. Also, IWA has implemented a sequential chart for teachers indicating the level of research skills expected at each particular grade level. This illustrates alignment across grade levels and the necessity of connections between courses to enhance student learning. Lastly, Department Chairs also are responsible for reviewing teachers' laps to ensure alignment with course standards and objectives. Overall, IWA has a strong commitment to connecting curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment to create the best learning environment for students and allowing for their academic achievement.

2. In what ways does the school ensure the implementation of research-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities that facilitate achievement for all students?

Incarinate Word Academy successfully implements researched-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities in a variety of ways. Teachers at IWA understand that individual student achievement is reached through careful implementation of numerous instructional strategies, through which teachers effectively meet student needs.

At IWA, our most distinctive instructional strategy is the use of Learning Activity Packets (LAPS). As the evidence shows, LAPS include the course objectives met during each unit, all homework and activities assigned for the unit, a calendar of due dates for the unit, and enrichment opportunities for students to further their learning. These LAPS are developed based on the curriculum and create an environment where students can personalize their learning through the academic choices they make. The goal of a structured activity in a LAP is to reinforce and supplement objectives of each unit. Teachers at IWA have used a plethora of different activities so that students obtain knowledge in multiple ways and so that student achievement increases. Moreover, at IWA, we include independent activities to further highlight our students' understanding of the specific learning activity packet objectives. Within the modular schedule, the LAP system is invaluable to enhancing student achievement.

In order to develop the best instructional strategies, IWA teachers rely on various research-based tools. For example, teachers utilize not only previous subject-specific assessments, but reflect upon standardized test results to measure student achievement. For instance, most students take the ACRE test and the ACT, the former measuring religious knowledge and beliefs and the latter measuring skills in English, Math, Reading, and Science. After receiving the results of these assessments, the evidence demonstrates that the faculty at IWA reflects on the data and then implements necessary strategies to enhance student learning. After reflecting on the data, teachers make instructional choices to create and design detailed and effective, subject-specific LAP activities to enhance student learning and to improve their instruction in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers regularly participate in professional development opportunities, which provide teachers with best teaching practices and which are grounded in research-based principles. Teachers are encouraged to attend annual subject specific conferences and implement acquired, research-based instructional strategies and activities. (The evidence shows that Administration keeps records of professional development opportunities attended by teachers for reporting to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.) These strategies are then utilized in the instructors' LAPS and lesson plans. Lastly, conferences and professional journals offer teachers instructional strategies and best-practice activities which teachers then utilize within the classroom. Overall, there are multitudes of ways for

teachers to utilize research to enhance student learning.

The instructors' at Incarnate Word Academy execute innovational strategies that directly facilitate achievement. Teachers and students have access to a number of innovations at IWA, such as up-to-date instructional technology and media services. Some of our most successful innovations at IWA include use of Edline and several department specific programs, such as Geometer Sketchpad and DINE Healthy 5. In addition, media services, such as numerous on-line data bases through the library website are readily available to students. Because of innovative teaching strategies and available resources, students can learn in ways that best suit their learning styles and individual learning needs.

Educators at IWA thoroughly utilize researched-based instructional strategies, innovations, and activities to ensure instructional excellence. By understanding that students need innovative and diverse methods to understand and synthesize information, teachers can constantly strive to obtain the best, research-based materials possible.

3. What processes are implemented to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and effectively implementing the curriculum?

Teachers at IWA are committed to providing a quality education for students, particularly exploring those instructional strategies that best implement curriculum and promote the best possible teaching practices. Consequently, Incarnate Word Academy employs a variety of processes to ensure that teachers are well-prepared and effectively implementing the curriculum.

Incarnate Word teachers undertake a process of preparation for classes that is quite different than the processes used at many other schools. Through the creation of a LAP, teachers must plan ahead in order to prepare assignments, effective instruction, and assessment long before it takes place in the classroom. Due to the modular schedule, teachers must design lesson plans set out for weeks at a time, as opposed to starting from scratch shortly before the classes meet. These plans correspond to the days in the LAP so that students know what to expect when the classes meet. This sort of preparedness aids in implementation of curriculum and in fostering student achievement.

In order to ensure that teachers are effectively implementing the curriculum, a process of formal and informal observations take place each semester. The frequency of observations by the Administrative team depends on the “tenure” of the teacher. In addition, teachers new to IWA also work with Mentor teachers who serve as guides for them in their first two years at IWA. New teachers are observed by their mentors in addition to the formal and informal observations by Administrators. Overall, these observations create a context of constructive feedback that allows teachers to better their teaching practices and implement curriculum more effectively.

Another way that teachers implement the curriculum effectively is by articulating the objectives for the course on the syllabus and for the unit on the Learning Activity Packets (LAPS). These objectives correlate with department standards and indicate that the teacher is following the curriculum for that course. Again, syllabi and LAPS are collected and reviewed by the Department Chairs to ensure that curriculum is followed. Lastly, department meeting discussions also help guarantee that teachers adhere to course objectives. All of these aid in the implementation of curriculum.

Teachers at IWA effectively implement the curriculum through thorough preparation for their courses. A successful teacher strives to make knowledge accessible to students. By preparing syllabi and LAPS for each course, teachers at IWA create a learning environment where students can take charge of their learning and understand the curriculum in diverse ways.

4. How does the school provide every student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services?

Because of the modular schedule, student access to comprehensive information, instructional technology, and media services is increased due to the flexibility of the students' schedules. Thus, a student has the opportunity in her daily schedule to access information easily.

Information is available to students in a variety of ways. Regarding overall student life, students can learn information about IWA from the Student Handbook, Edline, and the IWA website. Next, all freshmen are required to take Freshman Seminar, a course that introduces them to life at IWA and introduces them to school technologies and media services. In this course, a variety of topics are explored, such as Boolean searching, website evaluation, and accessing and utilizing Edline. This course is a primary example of providing students with the knowledge and the tools to access information on their own. Besides posting school calendars and news, as the evidence explains, Edline is a way in which students can access information about the school, their grades, and their coursework. For instance, students can find LAPS, turn in homework, take quizzes and surveys, and check their grades on Edline. Lastly, students also have access to information for their class work provided by a variety of media services, including the library collection of books, films, magazines, and online databases. These services can be accessed at school or at home through the Library Media Center webpage. Overall, information is readily available to students through a variety of media, allowing them access to comprehensive information about a specific subject and general information about student life at IWA.

As shown in the evidence, students have numerous opportunities to utilize a variety of instructional technology tools. Students have access to four computer labs across campus. Recently, IWA has added 30 laptops to the Silent Study area. Students can check out these computers to write papers, conduct research online, and complete assignments. There is also a variety of software available to students to aid them in their learning experiences. For instance, students might choose to give a classroom presentation using programs like PowerPoint, Photo Story, or Movie Maker. In addition, departments utilize various data gathering instruments, such as body fat analyzers in physical education classes, graphing calculators and Smart Boards in Math classes, and various sensors, probes, and monitors in Science classes. Instructional technology provides students with diverse options for both learning and assessment.

At IWA, providing students with access to important information is a priority. Through educational technology and other resources, students can access the information necessary for their academic growth. The modular schedule allows for students to be more independent and responsible for their learning, thus IWA strives to provide them with easy access to needed materials to support the curriculum.

Standard 3: Teaching & Learning Overall Assessment

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning that provides opportunities for all students to acquire requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes. Teachers use proven instructional practices that actively engage students in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills to real world situations. Teachers give students feedback to improve their performance.

At Incarnate Word Academy, an abundance of evidence is available which reflects our commitment to teaching and learning, illustrating this standard as highly functional. Through the modular schedule, diverse course offerings, clear standards and objectives for student learning, and technology, Incarnate Word shows its dedication to providing an outstanding learning experience for students. This evidence also demonstrates that the curriculum is based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning, opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and skills, instructional methods that engage students, and the authentic assessment of knowledge.

The modular schedule at Incarnate Word has established a system of class time and Open Labs, whereby students have a variety of opportunities to obtain knowledge, apply skills, and assess their understanding of course materials. Because of the modular schedule, students play an active role in their learning through small group discussions, conducting research, and conferencing one-on-one with teachers. The modular schedule also protects instructional time, as Open Labs are additional opportunities for educational instruction. Thus, faculty members not only teach in scheduled classes, but through a variety of means during open labs, ensuring students receive all the state required instructional time. The modular schedule provides a unique learning atmosphere that engages students in the learning process and maximizes opportunities for the application of skills and the demonstration of knowledge.

In addition, Incarnate Word offers a variety of courses both across disciplines and within disciplines. Thus, the curriculum provides diverse opportunities for students to obtain knowledge, skills, and attitudes across a wide range of disciplines. The curriculum offers an array of courses based on ability level, so that students are able to learn in the best circumstances for them. For this reason, there are different levels of Math courses and English courses. In many disciplines, a student may also have the opportunity to register for the honors section of a course. Additionally, students receive breadth of education by taking courses in Business, English, Fine Arts, Foreign Language, Guidance, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, Social Studies, and Theology. This curriculum offers students the opportunity to engage in the learning process in a variety of disciplines and to achieve success in a variety of subjects.

Because of the modular system and the use of Learning Activity Packets (LAPS), students, parents, and teachers are always aware of the clear and measurable expectations for student learning. Each department at Incarnate Word Academy follows academic standards which guide teachers in making decisions about how and what to teach within any given class. These standards outline the expectations of federal and state agencies,

and (as necessary in a Catholic school) the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis, Missouri. Every syllabus and LAP describes the measurable objectives for student learning based on the standards set out for each discipline in the curriculum. Thus, all courses provide detailed descriptions of the purpose of the course itself as well as individual lessons. Students are able to see these clear expectations for learning and incorporate them into their study of a particular subject. These clear and measurable expectations for student learning provide for a curriculum that has been successfully implemented and continues to provide students with the best education possible.

In order to provide instructional practices that engage students, Incarnate Word teachers utilize the best proven instructional practices to create a learning environment that engages students. The modular schedule and the Open Lab system provide teachers with diverse ways to meet student needs and expectations. Further, teachers employ a variety of technologies in the classroom to help students apply their knowledge in a modern, technological culture. The instructors' at Incarnate Word Academy execute innovational strategies that directly facilitate achievement. Some of our most successful innovations at IWA include use of the TurningPoint program, SMART Boards, and other department specific programs. Because of innovative teaching strategies, students can learn in ways that best suit their learning styles. Through the Mentor Program, professional development opportunities, and observations by the Administrative team and Department Chairs, teachers strive to always better their teaching practices using the most up-to-date information in their fields.

Finally, Incarnate Word Academy is highly functional in the standard of teaching and learning because teachers use a variety of methods to assess student learning as well as develop a variety of ways to help students apply their knowledge to real-life situations. For instance, students do not simply read a piece of literature or learn the characteristics and beliefs of a world religion, but are able to apply this knowledge in a debate with classmates. Debates, persuasive essays, and small groups are just a few of the ways teachers not only determine if students have integrated knowledge, but also how students are applying their learning to contemporary issues. Furthermore, Incarnate Word developed a sequence chart regarding writing skills of students from ninth to twelfth grade. This chart provides guidelines for where students should be at each step of their academic career in terms of writing and research skills. Tools such as this help with assessment expectations across disciplines and grade levels. Because of the modular schedule and the opportunity for a variety of learning experiences, assessment and application is evident at a highly functional level at Incarnate Word Academy.

As the depth and breadth of our evidence indicates, Incarnate Word Academy is highly functional in the standard of teaching and learning. Because of its strong curriculum based on clear and measurable expectations for student learning as well as strong instructional practices and a variety of opportunities for assessment and student application of knowledge, Incarnate Word places the highest priority on teaching and learning.

Standard 4. Documenting and Using Results:

1. How is the assessment system currently used in your school to guide analysis of changes in student performance?

Before students enter IWA, they are required to take incoming freshman placement tests in English, Mathematics, and Computer skills. In addition, an Advanced Placement Test is offered to incoming freshman in French, Spanish, and Mathematics. The Administrative team and the Department Chairs from the English, Mathematics, Business, and Foreign Language Departments use the results from these tests to place incoming freshman in the appropriate classes.

In 2002, the Learning Consultant and the Administration reviewed and analyzed the results of the incoming freshman placement tests. The results showed that a number of incoming students scored relatively low in their Language, Reading and Mathematics skills. A summer school enrichment program was developed and implemented for incoming students who had weak Language, Reading, and Mathematics skills based on the IWA Placement tests and their elementary school standardized testing and grades. The summer school enrichment program continues today.

As the freshman year progresses, the Administration and teachers re-evaluate student placement and discuss if any adjustments need to be made. One way this is accomplished is through curriculum-based testing given by the teacher in his/her various classes. By analyzing the results of these tests, teachers can track the performance of students as compared to how the student has done previously in that class. The teacher can also compare a student to her peers to help analyze how the student is progressing. In addition to the testing, teachers use other assessment tools such as projects, labs, homework assignments, writing assignments, and performances.

Another assessment of student performance is standardized testing. All freshman students take the Explore test. Our Guidance Counselors analyze those test scores and identify the students who score at the 95% or above. Freshman students scoring at the 95% or above level will take the PSAT instead of the PLAN standardized test during their sophomore year. Since the PSAT has a strong relationship to the ACT, taking this test during their sophomore year will provide these students with good experience and it will also assist them in preparing for and taking the ACT in their junior year. The remainder of the freshman class will take the PLAN during their sophomore year. At the beginning of junior year, every student will meet with her Guidance Counselor and discuss her scores on the PLAN or PSAT as a predictor for the ACT and use that information in determining college choices. After the student takes the ACT, she again will meet with her Guidance Counselor to discuss her scores and how these ACT scores will impact her choice of colleges. Lastly, standardized test results (ACT, ACRE, and AP results,) are discussed at Curriculum Committee meetings. The Department Chairs then take this information back to their departments. During their department meeting times, each department will determine the results that impact their classes and students and devise ways to improve

student performance. One example is the procedure the Mathematics Department is enacting for the 2009-2010 school year. Currently, each teacher in the Mathematics Department was given 1 of 5 conceptual areas (Arithmetic Operations, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, and Trigonometry). At the end of the year, each teacher will have written 100 questions (50 questions for the Trigonometry section) with the answers in a multiple choice (5) format. This will become known as the test bank. Next year, the test bank will be on the department's shared department drive. Then during the first semester of next year, each sophomore, junior and senior Math class will be given a 2 question quiz two times per cycle. The teacher will choose whichever questions he/she wants from the test bank. Upon completion of the quiz, each student will be given points for the correct answers in addition to 2 points for taking the quiz. Also, one time per month, each sophomore, junior, and senior Math class will be given a 10 minute quiz (timed) consisting of 10 questions from the test bank. This quiz will be for a grade. During the second semester, the only change will be that the freshmen will be included in the program. This program is a direct result of utilizing assessment data to help guide classroom content.

At IWA the term "assessment" refers to more than just the giving of tests. For example, IWA has a full-time Learning Consultant, who has access to information on students who have learning challenges and students who have an educational learning diagnosis. She provides teachers with tips for working with students who are academically challenged. The Learning Consultant tracks how each student achieves in her classes and what teaching methods work and do not work for this student. Another aspect of assessment is the Guidance Meeting (sometimes also referred to as the D and F meeting). The Registrar compiles a list of students who are receiving a D or F in any class at that time and sends the list to the Administrators, the Guidance Counselors, and the Learning Consultant. This group meets once a cycle to review the list. The team discusses various students who appear to be struggling with their academics, and strategies are devised to help these students. For instance, one member of the team will set up a meeting with the student to try to put a plan together to help the student improve her grades. If the situation is deemed serious enough, a parent will be called to make sure that they are aware of the circumstances. If the team feels it is necessary, a meeting may be called with the parents, students, Assistant Principal, and Guidance Counselors to try to rectify the situation. A list of struggling students is sent to the faculty so teachers can give these students additional assistance if needed.

An additional component of assessment is determining a student's ability to be successful in the classes she takes. There are department prerequisites set to make sure the students enroll in the courses that match a student's potential. In addition, teachers make course recommendations for all the students he/she has taught in the current year in order for each student to attain maximum achievement in her future classes. Teachers also provide their students with course information, requirements, and placement recommendations before student registration.

Review Performance Day was incorporated into IWA's academic schedule to assist students at the end of the semester and help them improve their performance on their

exams. Review Performance Day is scheduled the day before final exams for both first and second semester. One purpose of this day is to give the teachers an opportunity to review the course material before the semester final exam. This allows the teacher to use vital class time at the end of the semester for the teaching of concepts. Review Performance Day provides students with an opportunity to ask questions or to seek individual assistance from their teachers. Students are able to get specific help in areas needed. This day allows the students to have a day set aside for them to review and study. For those students failing a class, Review Performance Day attendance is mandatory. The Assistant Principal, the Learning Consultant, and the Guidance Counselors comprise a list of students who are failing a class. The students and their parents receive a letter from the Assistant Principal approximately 3 weeks before Review Performance Day. The letter explains the Review Performance Day process and informs the parents and the student that she is in jeopardy of failing a class. The letter further explains that the student has 3 weeks to bring her grade to passing. The letter includes a grade verification form which the student must take to the teacher of the class in question. The grade verification form is due to the Assistant Principal the day before Review Performance Day. The student must take the grade verification form to the teacher of the class in question. The teacher records the current grade and signs the form. If the grade is not brought to passing by Review Performance Day, the student is required to stay on campus for Review Performance Day from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. This allows the at risk students time to attend the review sessions, finish any assignments that are still due, and to study for exams. The students are monitored throughout the day and are required to sign out at the end of the day.

2. What are you doing to ensure that assessment results are timely, relevant, and communicated in a way that can be used by teachers, parents, and external stakeholders to aid the performance of individual students?

All student assessments are returned to the student for them to analyze their performance and to find ways to improve. Teachers will discuss with students any concerns they have about the student's performance. Teachers will call or email parents when needed.

Each teacher enters assessment scores into his or her electronic grade book, The Intergrade Pro Grading System. All teachers are required to update their grade books every Tuesday and Friday morning. The Registrar then puts the students' current grades on Edline. Edline is a web-based program used to report grades, assignments, and a variety of other information to students, parents, Guidance Counselors, and Administrators. Each student and parent has his or her own account and can view all the information for each class in which the student is enrolled.

In addition to updating their grade book twice a week, teachers must also export their grades to the school's Registrar once a cycle on B days. (A cycle in our schedule consists of a ten day period, and the days in the cycle are labeled A through K, skipping the letter I.) The Registrar then compiles a list of students who are receiving a D or F in any class at that time and sends the list to the Administrators, the Guidance Counselors, and the Learning Consultant. This group meets once a cycle to review the list. This meeting is officially referred to as the Guidance Meeting, but sometimes also referred to as the D and F meeting. At this meeting, this team discusses various students who appear to be struggling with their academics. Strategies are discussed and devised for each student who is discussed. In certain instances, one member of the team will set up a meeting with the student in order to enact a plan of action to help the student improve her grades. If the situation is deemed serious enough, a parent will be called to make sure that they are aware of the circumstance. If the team feels it is necessary, a meeting may be called with the parents, student, Assistant Principal, and the Guidance Counselors all attending to attempt to rectify the situation. Another outcome of the Guidance meeting is the Academic Concerns List which is a list of students who are struggling academically. Students on this list have two D's and or F's. This list is then sent out to the faculty and staff with the purpose being to inform the faculty which students may need extra help or attention.

Report cards are sent out four times a year: at the end of the first quarter, at the end of the first semester, at the end of the third quarter, and at the end of the second semester. In addition to grades, the report card includes comments from the teachers and parent teacher conferences are held twice a year.

Standardized test results (ACT, ACRE, and AP results,) are discussed at Curriculum Committee meetings, which take place once a cycle. The Department Chairs then take this information back to their departments. During their department meeting times, each department looks at the test results that impact their classes and students and devises ways to improve their students' performance.

Student results are communicated to other stakeholders in a variety of ways. The students are made aware of student achievement twice a year at The Honor Roll Assembly. At this time, all students who have received first or second honors are recognized. In addition, students who have improved their GPA by .25 or above are also recognized. A list of all students who have received first or second honors is included with all semester report cards that are mailed home. In addition the entire school is made aware of student achievement at the Awards Assembly. This assembly takes place near the end of the school year. At this assembly the following types of awards are given out:

- Service awards
- Literary awards for students who work on the school newspaper and yearbook
- Department awards
- Club awards
- Athletic awards
- Community awards

The Alum News publishes information about awards given out to all students at the end of the school year, and it contains information about scholarships received by the graduating seniors, along with information regarding where each student will be attending college.

When the faculty voiced their concerns about losing class time due to the number of special schedules within a typical school year, the Administration surveyed various faculty members. The Administration listened to the faculty's concerns and recommendation. The outcome was when there were special programs and classes were shortened on a school day, the letter day was repeated the next day so class time was not missed by the previous day's shortened schedule.

3. How are data used to understand and improve overall school effectiveness?

The data gathered during the school year is used to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. The most immediate way that this can be done involves teachers and his or her students. If a teacher sees that a student is performing below expectations, the teacher has several options. One option is for the teacher to spend time in Open Labs working with the student on a one-to-one basis. If that is not sufficient, then the teacher can structure the student into his or her Open Labs. Structuring means that the student is required to come to the teacher's Open Lab on regular basis. The teacher can structure the student as often as needed. An additional intervention may be to seek advice from the Learning Consultant to see if there are any classroom modifications that may need to be made. Another possible intervention would be to ask a National Honor Society Student to assist in tutoring the student for a period of time.

An additional way to advance the overall effectiveness of the school is assisting teachers to improve their teaching skills. The first feedback the teacher gets consists of his or her students' performances. Based on how the students perform on individual tests and final exams, teachers will adjust their LAPS or their tests to accommodate weaknesses they see. Another valuable source of information for the teachers is the course evaluations that their students fill out at the end of each semester. Based on these, the teachers must assess how the semester went and make the appropriate adjustments. One of the most valuable forms of information that teachers will receive comes after they are observed. A member of the Administration observes every teacher at least twice a year. One of these observations is a formal observation, where the teacher is given a pre-observation form to fill out asking what he or she will be teaching and asking if there is an area where the teacher would like some assistance. After the observation, the teacher is given a reflection sheet to fill out detailing the strengths or the weaknesses of the lesson. Finally, there is a post-observation conference between the teacher and the Administrator, where both are able to reflect upon the lesson and discuss any issues or strategies that might be helpful in the future. The other observation is an informal observation. After the informal observation, the Administrator gives the teacher a checklist of items that were observed and offers constructive feedback on the lesson and teaching strategies. No conference is required after the informal observation unless there is an area of concern. First and second year teachers have two formal observations and two informal observations each school year. In addition to these, each teacher is observed by his or her Department Chair twice during the academic year for new teachers and once a year for veteran teachers. Then written report of the observation is given to the teacher as well as the Assistant Principal. First and second year teachers also have the advantage of being observed by their mentors twice a year. There is a conference after each of these observations. These observation and reflections allow teachers to reflect on how to develop the best teaching practices possible and make adjustments when necessary.

Some standardized test results (ACT, ACRE, and AP results,) are discussed at Curriculum Committee meetings, which take place once a cycle. The Department Chairs then take this information back to their departments. During their department meeting times, each department will look at the results that impact their classes and students and devise ways to improve the results.

In 2007, the Theology Department proposed a change in their course offering for seniors. After analyzing the results of the ACRE test, talking with students, and investigating various options, the Theology Department decided to alter their curriculum to be able to provide more elective options for the senior class. The teachers of the Theology Department felt this change would not only increase the students' overall motivation and interest levels but also increase the productivity in the classroom. The following courses were implemented in 2008: *Spiritual Anthropology*, *World Religious Studies*, *Contemporary Culture, and Religion, and Marriage, Family, and Commitment*. These courses were developed as a direct result of using assessment data to improve effectiveness within the Theology Department and ultimately the school.

4. How are teachers trained to understand data in the classroom?

Our teachers receive many forms of training to help them understand and use data in the classroom. This training begins with first year teachers. The Assistant Principal conducts meetings with first year teachers once a month. Each meeting covers various topics such as classroom discipline, how to motivate students to learn, instructional teaching strategies, successful strategies for parent teacher conferences, and how to conduct Open Labs. In addition to the topic of the month, the Assistant Principal discusses the schedule for the following month, noting important items and events. This is also a time when the Assistant Principal is available to answer any questions the new teachers may have. Periodically throughout the year, veteran teachers are invited to the meetings so that they can share their insights and experience with the new teachers.

Classroom observations provide valuable opportunities for teachers to explore their strengths and weaknesses and to use that data to promote best practices. A member of the Administration observes every teacher at least twice a year. Observations take a variety of forms depending on the tenure of the teacher. One of these observations is a formal observation, where the teacher is given a pre-observation form to fill out asking what he or she will be teaching and if there is an area where the teacher would like assistance. After the observation, the teacher is given a reflection sheet to fill out detailing the strengths and areas of improvement of the lesson. Finally, there is a post-observation conference between the teacher and the Administrator where the teacher reflects upon the lesson that was taught. The other observation is an informal observation which means the teacher may or may not know when it will be. After the informal observation, the Administrator gives the teacher a checklist of items that were observed and offers constructive feedback on the lesson and teaching strategies. No conference is required after the informal observation unless there is an area of concern. First and second year teachers have two formal observations and two informal observations each school year. In addition to these, each teacher is observed by his or her Department Chair twice a school year for new teachers and once a year for veteran teachers. A written report of the observation is given to the teacher as well as the Assistant Principal. First and second year teachers also have the advantage of being observed by their Mentors twice a year. There is a conference after each of these observations. The information the teachers receive through these observations provide valuable insights and recommendations if a teacher needs adjustments in their teaching.

Additionally, teachers are given computer training each year. Each teacher has to have a technology goal for the year which he/she establishes with our Education Integration Technologist. Also, each teacher is responsible for acquiring five hours of training during the school year. This training is with the Education Integration Technologist or, with approval, from a source outside of the school. Finally, the Education Integration Technologist is available to work with departments to provide them any technical training they desire in addition to being a resource for teachers in incorporating technology into their teaching.

Teachers are expected to continue their professional development while at IWA. In addition, department meetings, held once each cycle, help to ensure that teachers are continually dialoguing about curriculum and assessment with the members of their department.

Standard 4: Documenting & Using Results Overall Assessment

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it uses a comprehensive assessment system based on clearly defined performance measures. The system is used to assess student performance on expectations and determine interventions to improve student performance. The assessment system yields timely and accurate information that is meaningful and useful to school leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders in understanding student performance, school effectiveness, and the results of improvement efforts.

Standard 4 deals with the school's ability to establish a comprehensive assessment system that tracks performance and uses the data to improve student results and the overall effectiveness of the faculty. The Overall Assessment for Standard 4 is Operational,

One aspect that the school focuses on is making sure students are in the appropriate type of classes so they can achieve to the best of their ability. This is accomplished on the freshmen level with the incoming placement tests that are given prior to the beginning of their freshman year. In addition, an Advanced Placement Test is offered to incoming freshmen in French, Spanish, and Mathematics. The Administrative team and Department Chairs then use this information to make sure the students are placed properly. At registration time, teachers ensure that the girls have met the department prerequisites before they sign up for classes for the next year. In addition, each teacher makes course recommendations for his/her students in order for each student to attain maximum achievement in her future classes.

The most basic way that we try to improve student performance is through curriculum-based testing that is done by the faculty in their various classes. By looking at the results of these tests, teachers can track the performance of a student compared to how the student has done previously in that class. The teacher can also compare a student to her peers to help analyze how the student is progressing. If a teacher sees that a student is not meeting the appropriate guidelines or expectations, the teacher can meet with student in open lab to engage in one-on-one tutoring to try to help the student improve. Additionally, a teacher can "structure" a student, which requires the student to attend a teacher's open lab at specific times, during the cycle, which allows the student more time with the teacher and improves student achievement.

While it is important that the school is working with the student to enhance progress, it is also essential to keep the parents abreast of the situation. The best means of keeping the parents informed of a student's progress is through Edline. Edline is a web-based program used to report grades, assignments, and a variety of other information to students, parents, Guidance Counselors, Faculty, and Administrators. The Registrar updates all grades on Edline for the students and parents every Tuesday and Friday morning. Edline is the most efficient means of enabling students and parents to keep track of how the students are achieving.

The faculty, staff, and Administration work diligently to enhance the school's overall effectiveness. One of the ways this is accomplished is through Guidance Meetings once a cycle. The Administrators, the Learning Consultant, and the Guidance Counselors all attend this meeting and evaluate students who appear to be struggling with their academics. Strategies are devised for each student discussed, and often one member of the team will set up a meeting with the student to try to put a plan together to help the student improve her grades. If the situation is deemed serious enough, a parent will be called to make sure that he/she is aware of the problem. Another way the school's overall effectiveness is enhanced is through the substantial amount of feedback that teachers receive. This feedback, whether it is from students, Mentors, Department Chairs, or Administrators, is valuable to the teachers in the attempt to improve student performance. Students provide feedback through their performance in the class and evaluations they give at the end of the semester. Also, Mentors, who guide the first and second year teachers, Department Chairs, and Administrators all, provide recommendations based on the observations they perform.

Lastly, some standardized test results (ACT, ACRE, and AP results,) are brought to the curriculum meetings by the Assistant Principal and the Guidance Department. The Department Chairs take this information back to their departments. During their department meeting times, each department will look at the results that impact their classes and students and devise ways to improve the results. An example of this is the change that took place in the Theology Department's curriculum based on the results of the ACRE test. The department decided to offer additional course choices for the seniors to increase their motivation, interest, and productivity.

IWA's ultimate goal is to see our students reach their full potential. We feel that our assessment system gives feedback to our students and assists our faculty in becoming more effective teachers and, thus, helps our students to get the most out of their education.

Standard 5. Resource and Support Systems:

1. What is the process for recruitment, induction, placement, development, evaluation, and retention of qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff?

When recruiting new employees, IWA uses a variety of resources in order to reach the most qualified candidate. These efforts include but are not limited to ads in the city's newspaper and local Catholic newspaper, attendance at various Job Fairs, recommendations from current employees and staff, and contact with the Archdiocesan Office of Education. Once a pool of potential candidates is selected, each is offered an opportunity to interview with Administration and members of the applicable department. The interview is a "Round Robin" format, where each member of the interviewing team is allowed to ask a question to the candidate. For certain departments, candidates are also required to present a lesson plan and teach a class. After all interviews, the team members meet to discuss the best candidate for the position. Once that selection is made, the candidate is contacted. If the candidate accepts the offer, the school initiates a background check. The candidate is also required to complete the Archdiocesan "Protecting God's Children" seminar. If possible, the new hire is encouraged to meet with the faculty or staff member he or she is replacing.

In the first year, new employees are required to attend a new teacher orientation in June and monthly "New Teachers" meetings for ongoing orientation throughout the school year. There is also a Mentoring program that assigns experienced teachers with new teachers to provide support for two years. IWA also provides Tuition Assistance / Reimbursement via a Professional Development Fund. Teachers are urged to join professional organizations and IWA covers the cost of membership and conferences. Each department is given a budget and encouraged to use some of the monies to subscribe to professional journals. Faculty and staff are also required to attend technology training, up to five hours per year. The Principal posts weekly updates, faculty meetings are held monthly, and the Employee Handbook is annually updated.

In terms of evaluation, IWA uses a number of strategies in order to both encourage and challenge faculty and staff. There are informal observations made by the Assistant Principal and Department Chair for each teacher each semester. Formal observations are made by the Assistant Principal and the Principal with the number of observations depending on a teacher's years of experience. Students are also surveyed about the performance of faculty through course evaluations and student surveys.

A professional and collegial atmosphere is supported at IWA. Memberships in professional organizations are encouraged and professional development funding is available to help faculty in their pursuit of furthering their own education. The Campus Ministry Department and Mission Integration Coordinator support the faculty and staff in their daily pursuit of emotional and spiritual wellness. Competitive salaries and the Mentoring program add value to the IWA experience. Extra curricular activities, ranging from sports to theater to social and academic clubs allow faculty and staff ample opportunity to further connect with the school.

2. How does the leadership ensure that the allocation of financial resources is supportive of the school's vision, educational programs, and its plan for school improvement?

The leadership at Incarnate Word Academy determines the allocation of school funds through a variety of tools and strategies, which, combined with well-thought out and defined processes, helps ensure that the school's divergent goals and Mission are fully supported and implemented.

To ensure that the school's vision is maintained, The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word are represented with three members out of sixteen on the Board. In addition, IWA maintains a school Mission Statement, helping to focus teachers, staff, and all who see it as the ultimate reason for the school's existence. IWA is also fortunate to have a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word on campus who serves as the Missions Integration Coordinator. She works with the Principal and Campus Minister to ensure that every member of the school community is aware of the Mission and consciously supports it in words, actions, and attitude.

IWA's educational programs are financially supported through departmental budgeting. Each Department Chair meets with his/her own department to determine their financial needs. Also in some circumstances, additional funds may be requested through alternative sources, such as the Booster Club, Alumnae Association, and the Parents Club, which maintain their own checking accounts separate from the school.

IWA also sees the need to direct financial resources towards its future. To this end, IWA implemented a Strategic Plan in 2006 in order to focus its resources on maintaining its status quo as well as planning for a future of growth. The Advancement Office has recently added staff. An endowment fund exists, and 10% of all major fundraising is allocated here. A variety of scholarships are offered, including a scholarship in the amount of \$2000.00 per year for all 2009 incoming freshmen who test above the 85th percentile (core) in 7th and 8th grades and if the student maintains a 3.0 or above. Additionally, students must have exemplary conduct and A's and B's in core subjects in order to receive this scholarship. IWA is at this time beginning an Advancement Assessment, under the supervision of Dan Eddingfield from Field Group Consultants, to determine how IWA may best utilize its current available resources, as well as decide on how best to increase funding and raise additional capital to meet the future needs of Incarnate Word Academy.

3. How does the leadership ensure a safe and orderly environment for students and staff?

The individuals in position of leadership cooperatively ensure a safe and orderly environment for the Administrators, faculty, staff and students at Incarnate Word Academy (IWA). IWA possesses a thorough written emergency plan. Once hired, all employees of IWA are provided with an Employee Handbook. These stakeholders are then oriented to the security and emergency plans that are outlined in the handbook and implemented at the institution. The training includes a review of IWA's crisis management plan and the emergency response procedures and policies. Employees' and students' roles in the event of a disaster are also analyzed and put into practice throughout the year in the form of drills.

The protocol for conducting drills is evaluated for effectiveness on a routine basis. For example, the entire staff and student body undergo one tornado, earthquake and intruder-in-the-building drill and two fire drills throughout the academic year. These drills enable everyone to simulate the emergency event and know how to respond. After a practice drill, an email is sent out from the Assistant Principal to the faculty and staff providing feedback on the drill and asking for suggestions for improvements. The Administration and faculty are acutely aware of their role in emergency drills; they are aware of all evacuation routes and emergency instructions and promote an atmosphere of calmness during all drills.

The Administrators at IWA also make the campus safe and orderly by making sure that the proper maintenance is done when it is needed. Required inspections are done throughout the campus. This allows the school to have the paperwork to prove that it is up to code and safe. Several Administrators carry a phone/walkie-talkie which enables them to be contacted at all times. IWA has implemented a teacher buddy system in case of emergencies and a call list for any emergencies that take place after school hours. Security/video cameras are installed throughout the campus to provide surveillance and ensure a safe environment for our faculty, staff, and students.

4. What process is used to ensure and monitor that each student has access to guidance and resource services that meet the needs of the students?

Incarnate Word Academy strives to make each student's high school experience one that is positive and engaging. IWA provides two certified Guidance Counselors to meet the many challenges of college preparation and assist with any personal needs of the students. Incarnate Word Academy also employs a full time Learning Consultant to ensure that students with learning concerns and accommodations have their needs addressed to reach their full success in a high school environment.

Guidance Counselors implement numerous programs to ensure that each student has access to guidance services. Guidance Counselors provide academic counseling services through the use of tools such as Edline, structuring, and organizational strategies. Personal counseling is provided to the students on an as needed basis. Along with guest speakers, Incarnate Word Academy facilitates other programs that include Big Sister/Little Sister, Peer Groups, and small discussion groups. Another important responsibility of the Guidance Department is college counseling. The Guidance Counselors provide the bridge between high school and college. Guidance curriculum, parent/student meetings, College Corner on the Edline website are some of the tools to aid students in their college search. Guidance Counselors also provide opportunities for students to meet college representatives, attend college fairs, and take standardized test. Guidance Counselors further aid the students by assisting students with the applications, scholarships, and financial aid process. For example, the college process would include completing letters of recommendations and sending transcripts and standardized test scores.

Students can be referred to the Learning Consultant through parents, teachers and Guidance Counselors. At the time of registration, parents complete the Educational Needs Form to notify Incarnate Word Academy of any diagnosed learning concerns they have for their daughter. The Learning Consultant then creates a Learning Plan listing diagnoses and accommodations for a particular student. This plan is visible for teachers to view on the IWA server. A list is also posted of any student who would be using the Academic Support Center for extended time during tests. Teachers and Guidance Counselors may contact the Learning Consultant with their concerns for a particular student. The Learning Consultant may then schedule a meeting with the student to identify needs, contact parents to gain further knowledge of their daughter's academic history, and/or assist the student with organizational, study, and testing skills. A common intervention would be to structure the student's schedule to give the maximum time with each of her teachers. The Learning Consultant also assists students when applying for extended time for standardized testing and communicates with other educators, Physicians, and the Special School District of St. Louis concerning Incarnate Word Academy students.

The Guidance Counselors and Learning Consultant monitor students with the use of Edline which can be view daily with updated grades twice a week. The Administrators, Guidance Counselors, and Learning Consultant attend a "D-Day Meeting" where they

discuss students of concern and the appropriate interventions. Students are placed on Academic Probation if their semester GPA falls below 2.0 and their cumulative GPA falls below 2.2. The Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselors, and the Learning Consultant meet with each of the students on Academic Probation to set goals for success, and the students are also monitored throughout the semester. Emails are commonly used by the Guidance Counselors and Learning Consultant to communicate with faculty to update student's progress. In addition, Guidance works in tandem with teachers reminding teachers that classroom instructors can "structure" students and/or call parent meetings if necessary.

Standard 5: Resources and Support System Overall Assessment

Impact Statement

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has sufficient human, material, and fiscal resources to implement a curriculum that enables students to achieve expectations for student learning, to meet special needs, and to comply with applicable regulations. The school employs and allocates staff who are well qualified for their assignments. The school provides ongoing learning opportunities for all staff to improve their effectiveness. The school ensures compliance with applicable local, state and federal regulations.

Incarnate Word Academy is highly functional in implementing resources and support systems. Incarnate Word Academy employs over 70 faculty and support staff members who enable students to meet expectations for learning (11 to 1 Student/Faculty ratio). IWA's educational programs are supported through departmental budgets, which are monitored through the auditing processes of the Finance Department. IWA's 2006 Strategic Plan suggested strengthening the Advancement Office to expand fiscal resource options; therefore, new advancement personnel have been added, and an endowment to fund scholarships for the class of 2013 has been established. IWA employs a full time Learning Consultant who works closely with the Guidance Counseling staff to help meet the special needs of students. The Learning Consultant communicates often with teachers, Administrators, students, and parents to monitor progress and provide accommodations to special needs students. The Maintenance Department maintains the site, facilities, services and equipment in an efficient manner to create a safe and orderly environment that complies with applicable regulations. Comprehensive security and crisis management plans are in place. All IWA faculty members have degrees in the areas in which they teach and/or are certified in those areas or working towards state certification. Faculty members have access to budgeted department funds and Title II money to attend conferences and seminars to improve teaching effectiveness. IWA has a well-developed teacher mentoring program and a comprehensive new teacher orientation/support program as well as ongoing on-campus technology workshops. Incarnate Word Academy allocates adequate financial resources to: maintain a support system that provides optimum student learning, maintain a safe and pleasant campus environment, provide training and support for teachers, offer full-time academic support services for students, and meet applicable federal, state, and local regulations.

Standard 6: Stakeholder Communications and Relationships:

1. How does the school's leadership ensure that the school is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction?

Incarnate Word Academy's leadership has developed a variety of communication tools and deployed them strategically throughout all levels of the school community. These tools comprise diverse media to provide stakeholders with choices between traditional (print) and electronic media. These tools not only ensure that the school is responsive to community expectations and stakeholder satisfaction, they also facilitate interaction and collaboration among various stakeholders.

IWA has defined its various stakeholders according to defined parameters. They include students, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, Board members, Alumna, friends/VIPs, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and community organizations/representatives. Because each of these stakeholder groups has both *common* and *unique* communications requirements and expectations, IWA designed its communication vehicles – particularly its website – to accommodate both general and specific information requirements.

In addition, because IWA's stakeholders run the gamut of technological proficiency, so also does its communication tools. From a professionally designed and continually updated online website, to a student handbook printed and distributed at the beginning of each year, to various online and printed mailing pieces that reach specific audiences on a regular and *ad hoc* basis, Incarnate Word communicates with its audiences in a timely, consistent, and responsive manner. Last, but not least, phone communications are encouraged and used to address issues/concerns in a personal and timely fashion.

2. How does the school's leadership foster a learning community?

The school fosters a learning community by soliciting the knowledge, skills, and participation of its stakeholders through a variety of channels, some of which are identified below.

Board of Trustees: The Board consists of Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, Alumnae, Parents of Alumnae and Community leaders. This dedicated group of individuals meets five times throughout the year. Board members are required to sit on a sub-committee of the Board (i.e., Finance, Advancement, etc).

Parent Service: As a privately-funded school, IWA requires many dedicated volunteers to ensure its success. Each family, therefore, is asked to volunteer for a minimum of two service opportunities per school year.

Parent Committees: In addition to the service opportunities to which they commit, parents also advance the Mission and purpose of the school through memberships in a variety of other organizations including the Parent Booster Club, Auction Committee, Parents' Club, etc.

IWA Alumnae Association: This group of dedicated women work together to advance the Mission of IWA. They provide advice, help facilitate and organize volunteers, and help build relationships through "friendraising" events.

Advancement Committee: This committee meets five times throughout the year and consists of staff members, Board members, Alumnae, and parents of Alumnae. This committee oversees the Advancement Calendar and gives suggestions and feedback to the Advancement Team. The Advancement Committee oversees the Hall of Fame event.

Finance Committee: This committee oversees the financials for the school, specifically managing and overseeing the budget. This committee consists of Board members, IWA staff, and community leaders and meets monthly.

Website: Incarnate Word Academy's website (www.iwacademy.org) provides information about the school, contains specific links for parents, students, and Alumnae, and highlights special events through Events, Community Calendar, and Red Knight Athletics links. Because this information is promulgated on the Internet, it is immediately available to any of the school's stakeholders who have access to the Web. Among other things, Incarnate Word Academy's website provides information about the school's history, Mission, curriculum, admissions procedures, course descriptions, credit requirements, college credit options, campus ministry, and school life.

The following links on IWA's home page foster the collaboration with stakeholders referred to in Standard 6.1: Academics, Contact Us, Student Life, Giving at IWA, Special Events, Campus Ministry and Parents.

Academics

- Departments are listed, with information about each instructor in the department, including his/her contact information.
- The Academics link provides access to the Library Media Center, which provides students with access to databases, search engines, formatting information, and copyright information to aid students in research.

Contact Us

- Faculty and staff contact information is identified by department and alphabetically by last name. Phone extensions and email addresses are provided.

Student Life

- Students can access their email using the Student Life link. Each student is given an email account for use in school-related correspondence. Addresses of student and faculty are provided in the address book.
- Student activities provides students with multiple options for student involvement.

Giving at IWA

- Lists ways to financially support IWA's student learning
- Includes organizations to which donations can be made, including scholarships
- Provides contact information for members of IWA's Advancement team

Special Events

- Provides information on opportunities for participating in IWA special events which include the New Parent Dinner, Homecoming, Grandparents' Day, Mother/Daughter, Father/Daughter banquet, Auction

Campus

- Lists opportunities for students to work and grow through service projects
- Reports to community on student service activities
- Provides information on spiritual growth opportunities including the Bridges Program, Liturgies, Reconciliation, Retreats, Prayer Services, and Spiritual Counseling

Parents

- Provides parents with access to Edline and the Student Handbook
- Indicates opportunities for parents' service
- Contains the "Parent Word" newsletter which keeps parents updated on events, finance information, service opportunities, class reminders, information from the Theology and Guidance departments, Campus Ministry, Mission Committee, etc.

Edline: This communication tool is accessed through the **Academics**, *Student Life*, and *Parents* links on the IWA website. It is available to faculty, staff, students, and parents and allows these various stakeholders to contact each other via email, as well as to update curriculum and grade information. This communication tool is accessed through Academics, Student Life, and Parents links on the IWA website (www.iwacademy.org).

It is available to faculty, staff, students, and parents and allows these various stakeholders to contact each other through email. Email addresses of students, parents, and faculty are included in the Command Center, and this information is broken down into class sections. Email can be sent to parents and students, students only, or parents. Grades are posted twice weekly for students and parents to view and each faculty member can individualize Edline to include what he/she determines is important for students in each section. This individualization may include a class syllabus, LAPs, assignments, notes, schedules, homework drop box, website links, etc. Help in using Edline is available for parents, students, faculty and staff by accessing the “Help” menu in Edline.

3. What avenues are used to communicate information to stakeholders about students, their performance, and school effectiveness

Following is a sampling of some of the avenues used by IWA to communicate information to stakeholders about students, their performance, and school effectiveness:

Website: Incarnate Word Academy's website (www.iwacademy.org) provides information about the school's history, Mission, curriculum, admissions procedures, course descriptions, credit requirements, college credit options, campus ministry, and school life. It contains specific links for parents and Alumnae, and highlights special events through Events, Community Calendar, and Red Knight Athletics links. Because this information is promulgated on the Internet, it is immediately available to any of the school's stakeholders who have access to the Web.

Edline: This communication tool is accessed through the *Academics*, *Student Life*, and *Parents* links on the IWA website. It is available to faculty, staff, students, and parents and allows these various stakeholders to contact each other via email, as well as to update curriculum and grade information. It has the following capabilities:

- Email addresses of students, parents, and faculty are included in the Command Center, and this information is broken down into class sections
- Email can be sent to parents and students, students only, or parents only
- Grades are posted twice weekly for students and parents to view
- Each faculty member can individualize Edline to include what he/she determines is important for students in each section. This individualization may include a class syllabus, LAPs, assignments, notes, schedules, website links, etc.
- All school personnel can access email to all students and parents to communicate as needed with stakeholders
- Help in using Edline is available for parents, students, faculty and staff by accessing the "Help" menu in Edline

Student Handbook: This compact, notebook-style handbook provides students and parents with an overview of the school calendar, academic/behavior expectations, and curriculum information. It is distributed to all students at the beginning of the academic year in hard copy and students and parents are asked to sign a slip, indicating that they have read it. It is also available online through the school's website.

School Profile: A brief summary of information about the school including accreditation status, description of the modular schedule, grading system, graduation requirements, ACT averages, Honors and AP courses, etc.

IWA Curriculum Guide: This printed document is available at the beginning of each academic year. It provides overviews of all classes offered, the number of credits

each class is worth, what level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) each class is primarily geared toward, the duration of the class (one or two semesters), etc. The Guide also lists graduation requirements for all students.

Syllabi: Each teacher provides students in a particular class a printed syllabus at the beginning of each semester. The syllabus contains an overview of the course, course description, materials needed, description of structured class periods, explanation of Open Labs, explanation of the grading process, and the late policy.

Parent Newsletter: A monthly parent newsletter is available online and by mail (if requested) to parents, students, faculty/staff, Board members, Alumni, and the community at large. The newsletter contains information from the Principal and contributing departments about scheduling, curriculum, and events.

Standard 6: Stakeholder Communication & Relationships Overall Assessment

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment, and support of stakeholders. School personnel seek opportunities for collaboration and shared leadership among stakeholders to help students learn and advance improvement efforts.

Incarnate Word Academy's success in meeting this standard is evidenced by the communication channels it has developed and put in place throughout all levels of the school community.

IWA has defined its various stakeholders according to defined parameters. They include students, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, Board members, Alumna, friends/VIPs, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and community organizations/representatives. Because each of these stakeholder groups has both *common* and *unique* communications requirements and expectations, IWA designed its communication vehicles – particularly its website – to accommodate both general and specific information requirements.

IWA utilizes several different resources to communicate with their stakeholders to ensure proficiency. In the summer of 2008, under the direction of Amanda Steelman, IWA revamped its website to provide a more “user-friendly” navigation for IWA stakeholders. Incarnate Word Academy's website provides information about the school's history, Mission, curriculum, admissions procedures, course descriptions, credit requirements, college credit options, Campus Ministry, and school life. It contains specific links for parents and Alumnae, and highlights special events through Events, Community Calendar, and Red Knight Athletics links. Because this information is promulgated on the Internet, it is immediately available to any of the school's stakeholders who have access to the Web. The website also is an excellent tool to communicate with Alumnae. Currently, the alumnae site can communicate with registered/non-registered members of upcoming events, of happenings around the campus, and other important information regarding the IWA community. The website has the capability to accept on-line donations. Because of revamping the IWA website, IWA on-line donations have increased over 100%. Stakeholders can also register for events, i.e., the 2009 Hall of Fame event.

Edline is another form of communication that is accessed through *Academics*, *Student Life*, and *Parents* links on the IWA website. It is available to faculty, staff, students, and parents and allows these various stakeholders to contact each other via email, as well as to update curriculum and grade information. Email addresses of students, parents, faculty, staff and Administration are included and emails can be sent to individual classes, students only or parents only. Faculty, parents and students find email to be an efficient way to correspond or address issues/concerns one may have. Parents and students can expect to review updated grades twice a week. Edline also permits each faculty member to individualize what she/he determines important for students in each section. This individualization may include a class syllabus, LAPs, assignments, notes, schedules, website links, etc.

Printed material is another avenue of communication with stakeholders. An Alumnae newsletter is mailed three times a year and is also posted on the website. Parent newsletter is accessed through the website. Hard copies are mailed to those parents who request one at the beginning of the year. An example of listening to our stakeholders, last year, in a meeting with Dr. Randy a freshman dad offered a few suggestions regarding the parent newsletter. He “complained” it was very difficult to read and download. Upon listening to his recommendations, Dr. Randy assured that a more readable version of the newsletter would be designed. After implementing the new design several parents commented on the positive change.

In addition to Parent and Alumnae newsletter, a student handbook, curriculum guide and syllabi information can be included in the area of communication. The student handbook is a compact notebook-style handbook provides students and parents with an overview of the school calendar, academic/behavior expectations, and curriculum information. It is distributed to all students at the beginning of the academic year in hard copy and students and parents are asked to sign a slip, indicating that they have read it. It is also available online through the school’s website.

The curriculum guide is a printed document available at the beginning of each academic year. It provides overviews of all classes offered, the number of credits each class is worth, what level (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) each class is primarily geared toward, the duration of the class (one or two semesters), etc. The Guide also lists graduation requirements for all students.

Finally, each teacher provides students in a particular class a printed syllabus at the beginning of each semester. The syllabus contains an overview of the course, course description, materials needed, description of structured class periods, explanation of open labs, explanation of the grading process, and late policy.

Beginning with the Board of Trustees, IWA has several avenues of communicating with stakeholders and includes many facets of leadership. The Board of Trustees is a dedicated group of individuals that meets five times throughout the year. Board members are required to sit on sub-committees of the board (i.e., Finance, Advancement, etc). This form of leadership ensures that all areas are kept in constant communication with the board. For example, the Advancement committee consists of two Board members. One of the Board members has an expertise in Advancement and serves as the chair of this committee. Besides the two board members, the Advancement Staff, Dr. Randy, Alumnae, parents of Alumnae and current parents are involved. This committee focuses on areas that will advance the financial aspects of the school including annual giving, scholarships, endowment, and *friendraising* opportunities. A *friendraising* event soul purpose is to invite stakeholders back to campus to ignite the connection and commitment he/she feels towards IWA.

The event this committee feels most proud of is the Hall of Fame induction ceremony that it oversees. This being our second year, IWA will welcome over 300 guests to help celebrate and honor the 2009 inductee class. Last year, 150 guests participated.

The Alumnae Board is another avenue for Alumnae to stay connected with IWA. The Alumnae Board focuses their efforts on communicating with alumnae and students. At each Alumnae board meeting a “principal’s report” is given which reports on many different areas (i.e., the happenings around school, finances, student news, etc.) Several events are hosted throughout the year to welcome back Alumnae of all ages. The Alumnae Board continuously looks for other avenues to welcome back Alumnae as well as opportunities to reach out to alumnae.

Parents at IWA have many ways to become involved as well as offer their input. The Parents’ Club, Parent committees, the Booster Club (Athletics), and parent service opportunities provides opportunities for parents to help advance the mission and purpose of the school. Although the parent service opportunities (2 volunteer tasks per year) is a mandatory entity for our parents, each year parents are grateful for the ability to be involved with their daughter’s education. Over hundreds of hours are “donated” by our parents for the different events hosted throughout the year and without their support these events would not be possible.

In conclusion, IWA is continually seeking out avenues to communicate information to stakeholders about students, their performance, and school effectiveness. There are several examples that have show-cased our students and our IWA community to our stakeholders. From athletics, to service, to fundraisers, to promoting the school, IWA has been featured in print, on television and on the radio. Each year, grade school students are invited to attend the IWA student play and musical. Last year, for Annie, over 600 students were present for the show and this year for The Sound of Music we anticipate another sold-out crowd. This enables IWA to showcase our student performers and the campus of IWA. During the fall and the spring, the IWA Performing Arts department organizes a concert and art show. Student artists are “judged” and are awarded ribbons for their work. Camps are another way for IWA to promote our students expertise. During the summer, IWA coaches sponsor athletic camps and this past year; IWA’s art teacher sponsored an art camp. IWA continues to strategize and implement opportunities to utilize the website and to remain “in front” or “in-line” with current technology trends. The website continues to open doors to communicate with the IWA community at large.

Based on the way in which these channels are used interactively and collaboratively by the school’s various stakeholders, the committee finds IWA to be Highly Functional in regard to this standard.

Standard 7. Commitment to Continuous Improvement:

1. What is the process for continuous improvement used by the school and what are the results that this process is delivering for student performance and school effectiveness?

Incarnate Word Academy has been accredited and working in partnership with the North Central Association school improvement process since 1935. During this period of time, Incarnate Word has always striven for continuous improvement in its curriculum and its school programs.

Since the North Central Team Visit in March, 2006, IWA has worked diligently towards implementing the recommendations from the Visiting Team. As a result of that visit, IWA continued to work toward improvement in the areas of Technology, Critical Thinking, and Personal Excellence.

Technology: Based on the results of the pre and post testing of our students, it is clear that students' performance has improved in the area of basic computer skills, internet information skills, and computer ethics. Faculty members have also dedicated hours of professional development to improve their technology skill and to learn how to incorporate technology into their teaching. Every teacher has a tablet computer and LCD projectors and screens have been installed into the classrooms. The hiring of an Educational Integration Technologist ensures that IWA is incorporating technology into its classroom instruction with the goal of improving student performance.

Critical Thinking: In the area of Critical Thinking, even though results were not as impressive as hoped, the faculty is still committed in helping our students acquire higher order thinking skills so that they can compete in today's world. Slight gains were made by our students despite the amount of time and energy focusing on the professional development of the faculty and the strategies that were implemented. An Essential Research Skills has been implemented within the school. This document outlines the research skills necessary and expected by every grade level.

Personal Excellence: Based on the results of the Personal Excellence report, the findings indicate that a positive change has been seen in establishing a rapport with freshmen parents through the Freshman Parent Meeting. Through the implementation of help cards, grade level retreats, motivational speakers, and peer leaders, the message for the necessity of good decision making has been reinforced and taken to heart by our students. In the area of destructive behaviors, IWA has seen some decrease in the area of drugs and alcohol, but there are still some areas of concern which we will always need to focused on and address in a teenage environment.

In the area of Mission, IWA has a Mission Integration Coordinator that assures that the school is rooted in our Mission. In addition, the Mission Committee, comprised of faculty and students, ensures that the Mission is lived and acted upon within the school community on a daily basis

In the area of Curriculum Development, the Curriculum Committee, which is comprised of the Department Chairs from each department, is responsible for making sure that the curriculum is updated, revised and meets the needs of today's learners. Each department holds a department meeting within each school cycle so that student information, best practices, and peer mentoring can take place. Department goals are submitted to the Academic Principal at the beginning of each school year so that continuous improvement is not a process but a way of life at IWA.

In the area of student performance, IWA is constantly assessing the performance of its students through qualitative and quantitative means. Testing results (English and Math Freshman Placement Tests, Foreign Language and Math Advance Freshman Placement Tests) are used to help determine placement for incoming freshman so each student will be placed in a cohesive learning group. Standardized testing results (ACRE, PLAN, EXPLORE, SAT, ACT,) are used to assist the faculty on improving direct instruction and the curriculum. Students are also given a voice in the process of improvement. At the end of the semester, the student body has the opportunity to offer suggestions to the teachers on improving the method of instruction through course evaluations. The Guidance Department, working directly with the Administration meets every cycle to discuss and assist students who are at risk of failing a course.

The Board of Trustees oversees and directs the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is the long term plan for the school. It clearly states goals and objectives in the areas of Mission, Philosophy, and Catholic Identity, Enrollment, Education, Staffing, Facilities, Institutional Advancement, Finance, and Governance. The Strategic Plan ensures that IWA continually strives for improvement and provides the best education possible to its students.

Stakeholders are an important and valued component of IWA. Information is sent both electronically and in paper form. Stakeholders have access to information on the IWA website and parents and students can access grading and course information on Edline. Other sources of information are: student and employee handbooks, IWA's Academic Curriculum, the curriculum course guide, syllabi, LAPS, Parent and Alumnae newsletters, newspaper and TV coverage, report cards, weekly updates and letters from the Principal. Another channel of information for our stakeholders is through various student and parent clubs and organizations. In addition, there are school sponsored student events and social events for both parents and/or students.

2. What are steps taken to ensure that the improvement goals reflect student learning needs that are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school?

I. Governance and Leadership

The school has a highly functioning Board of Trustees comprised of stakeholders within the IWA community. These may include community leaders, neighborhood citizens, Alumnae, Administrative staff, faculty, parents, etc; all of which bring varying degrees of knowledge and experience to IWA, but share a common goal of striving to improve the overall school program and support the Mission of Incarnate Word Academy. The Board sets goals in the areas of Mission integration, academia, finances, marketing, student recruitment, and property maintenance. The Board votes in the best interest of the school for the continued success and improvement in all of these areas.

The Strategic Plan is a plan being implemented by the Board to ensure the Mission and the Academic Program of Incarnate Word Academy continue to develop, grow, and improve. The plan was based on results of surveys from its constituents and an assessment of the current and future needs of the school. The Strategic Plan is a comprehensive effort focusing in the areas of Mission, enrollment, staffing, development, marketing, facilities, and finances. Each Board member has been assigned to a Strategic Plan Committee with the goal of implementing and advancing the goals and objectives assigned to that Committee.

The Board of Trustees has recently implemented several decisions regarding improvement projects around the school's campus. Some of the most evident upgrades are new ceilings in the Administration and Chapel buildings, the purchase of four new microwaves placed in the cafeteria for students to utilize during lunch, and new floor covering in the school's Performing Arts Theater.

In addition to the Board of Trustees, IWA has other governing committees that meet regularly to establish goals and see that they are reached. These committees, which serve many areas of Incarnate Word Academy include: the Alumnae Board, the Advancement Committee, the Parents Club, the Technology Committee and the Athletic Booster Club.

II. Teaching and Learning

The faculty at IWA meets monthly for the purpose of participating in a time for prayer, sharing important information on scheduling, current and upcoming events, and updates on the athletic program. The main focus of the faculty meetings is to meet and discuss areas which are relevant and important to the improved functioning of the school in the area of academics such as standardized testing, student registration, the school improvement plan, Review Performance Day, Exam Days, and grade level sharing.

Department meetings are held by each department on a regular basis (1 meeting within a 10 day cycle). These meetings set, implement, and monitor department goals and are an avenue to discuss curriculum. This meeting time lends itself to the discussion of learning objectives for students, the results of standardized testing, professional development opportunities, and the exchange of information on current and upcoming events. The Department Chair is able to coordinate classroom observations in addition to discussing proposed curriculum changes and the reviewing of textbooks for the next school year.

Incarnate Word Academy also has a Curriculum Committee that has regular, cyclical meetings. This committee, made up of Department Chair persons, meets to discuss, monitor, and improve the comprehensive curriculum offered to the students and ensure its cohesion.

IWA has a strong teacher evaluation system which strives to assist its teacher in reflecting upon and improving their teaching skills. Teachers are observed on a regular basis according to their level of years teaching experience. Each teacher is observed by an Administrator, the Department Chair, and his/her Mentor (for teachers with 2 years or less teaching experience). The teacher is given a document summarizing the results of the evaluation. These results are used by the teacher to improve and/or maintain his/ her classroom etiquette and teaching style for the betterment of student learning. The teacher has the opportunity to reflect upon the evaluation and then meet for a conference. Teachers are encouraged to observe their peers and to share best practices among one another.

The Faculty Advisory Committee, FAC, is a committee made up of elected faculty members and the entire Administrative team. This committee, which also meets once every 10 days, discusses current issues and makes decisions concerning students, teacher affairs and any other matters of concern that are brought to the table.

The modular schedule, Open Labs and LAPS used at IWA are college preparatory tools to assist our students in becoming more responsible in their decision making process, in completing assignments and in the meeting of requirements and deadlines. A LAP is an outline of an academic unit that includes topics to be covered in class and assignments to be completed within a 10 day cycle. IWA has surveyed its graduates with the purpose being program improvement. Results from this survey show that students feel they benefit in college from the LAP system and modular schedule. Our students who graduated continually report that they have a better understanding in the area of time management and responsibility.

III. Religious Mission

IWA's Mission Committee is a group of faculty, staff and students of all grade levels who are

dedicated to preserving and implementing the original Mission of the school. The Committee meets monthly to plan ways to promote the Mission in daily life at IWA. Volunteering is an integral part of the Mission Committee. Student members of the Mission Committee have volunteered to help lead the new “Bridges” program for students. This program will be a channel for girls to share their own faith traditions and also to learn more about the Catholic practices at IWA. Most recently some members of the Mission Committee volunteered on a Saturday to help at WORTH Industries, Inc. They interacted with the adults with developmental disabilities who attend this sheltered workshop. Committee members also participated in the Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll Drive to assist persons with developmental disabilities, collected toothpaste and toothbrushes for St. Vincent’s Parish Social Ministries, brought blankets for Missouri Energy Care and eye glasses for a foreign mission program, and helped sponsor IWA’s Mission Carnival for the benefit of Visitation House, a transitional housing program in San Antonio.

Other ways of making the Mission more visible have been to research the archives for photographs and facts for the History Wall, which was installed in 2006; gathering artifacts and information to display in the Memorabilia Exhibit, which was installed in 2007; planning an all school assembly for the planting of IWA’s international Peace Pole in 2008.

The Mission Committee has implemented a new reward program called Mission Models. This program highlights and honors IWA community members that personify the Mission of IWA in their everyday actions. These Mission Models, one faculty member and one student from each class, are given certificates and awarded a medal. Their picture is taken and posted on the cafeteria for all to see and be encouraged to follow their lead and live the Mission of IWA.

Mission integration is an ongoing process at IWA and all are invited to be a part of it.

The community service program at Incarnate Word Academy was established to provide students the opportunity to serve people in their neighborhood, family, parish and church as well as the greater metro area. The goal of the program is to inspire Women of the Word to become advocates for peace and justice while working among marginalized people in numerous settings. Students can utilize their service experiences as they pursue college scholarships, career choices, and life commitments.

Our school-wide community service program requires 120 hours of service during a student’s four years at IWA. The hours are spread over the four years and give a release time at the end of the junior year. The nine days of service for juniors allows a more in-depth experience and immersion into the programs of the chosen agency or organization. The community service component is mandatory for graduation.

Class Level	Hrs	Completed by	For Graduation
Freshman (2011)	20 hrs	April 25, 2009	120 hrs
Sophomores (2010)	20 hrs	April 18, 2009	120 hrs
Juniors (2009)	9 days (60+ hrs)	May 23, 2009	120 hrs
Seniors (2008)	20 hrs	March 14, 2009	120 hrs

Parents of Incarnate Word Academy students are also encouraged to become a part of the school's Mission of service. Parents are asked to volunteer for two advancement tasks each year. These tasks, like helping run the Homecoming event, staffing the annual IWA Auction Knight or answering calls at the Phone-a-thon fundraiser, ensure that the parents are committed to their part in advancing the mission of the school.

With the many governing bodies, stakeholder relations and Mission integration opportunities that Incarnate Word Academy has, it is clear there are proper avenues in place to ensure that the improvement goals of IWA reflect student learning needs that are aligned with the vision and purpose of the school.

3. What process is used to ensure that the school personnel are provided with professional development and technical assistance to implement interventions and achievement improvement goals?

Incarinate Word Academy is committed to the ongoing professional development of its faculty and staff and therefore includes in the yearly operating budget monies to be used for that purpose. Faculty and staff members are encouraged by the Administration to take advantage of the monies available. Time off is granted for any faculty or staff member who wishes to pursue a professional development opportunity.

Faculty members who teach courses at IWA for the Advance Credit Program for either St. Louis University or the University of Missouri-St. Louis are considered adjunct faculty members at both of those universities and are awarded professional development scholarships at the graduate level from those universities. The amount of the scholarship varies from university to university. If the IWA adjunct teachers do not wish to take advantage of those scholarships, then they are transferable to other faculty members.

The University of Missouri awards IWA three additional graduate level scholarships that can be used by faculty members who wish to become qualified to teach ACC courses at IWA. If there are no faculty members who wish to become qualified in a given year, then those scholarships may be awarded to other teachers, Guidance Counselors, or Administrators. Over the years, several faculty members have used these scholarships to further their professional development.

Since the summer of 2006, IWA has offered technology training to all of the teachers to help them utilize technology in the classroom. In addition, an Education Integration Technologist was hired in 2006 to assist the faculty in incorporating technology into their teaching to enhance student learning. The Education Integration Technologist provided training on software, assistance in technology integration ideas, locating technology resources for teachers, and providing in classroom assistance when requested. This year each faculty member is required to set technology goals individually or by department to enhance student learning. The Education Integration Technologist is available to provide this training and monitor the hours devoted to this purpose.

The Mentoring program at IWA is a strong component of the professional development for the new teachers at IWA. Each new teacher is given a Mentor for a period of two years to guide and assist through the first years of teaching at IWA. The new teachers are observed by the Administration, the Department Chair, and their Mentor. There are scheduled meetings that follow these observations to help the new teachers reflect upon their teaching and to implement any suggestions to improve their teaching practice. There is a monthly meeting for the new teachers providing them with an opportunity to discuss any problems they are having, dialog with experienced teachers, and ask questions about upcoming school events such as parent-teacher conferences, Review Performance Day, final exams, etc. All faculty members are observed by Administration throughout the school year to monitor the continuous improvement of the faculty.

IWA receives Title II monies through the Normandy School District allocated for the professional development of the faculty. Each Department submits to the Assistant Principal their professional development requests for the school year. These monies provide additional professional development opportunities for the faculty.

At the beginning of each school year, every faculty and staff member is required to submit to the Principal his/her individual professional growth goals for the school year. The Principal confers with each individual throughout the school year on the progress of the goals.

The Spiritual development of the faculty and staff is in keeping with the Mission of IWA. The faculty and staff attend a Day of Prayer each school year. In addition, the faculty and staff participate in Spiritual Stretching discussions at faculty meeting throughout the school year.

Incarnate Word Academy is committed to utilizing the above processes to provide all faculty and staff with the best professional development opportunities and technical assistance to implement interventions and achieve improvement goals.

4. How does the leadership ensure that the improvement plan is implemented, monitored, achieved, and communicated to stakeholders?

Any school that considers itself to be vibrant and progressive needs to have an improvement plan in place to direct its every program. The leadership at IWA can include virtually every activity that they perform as an example of work in that direction. These activities include a wide variety of efforts. As the leadership, they are totally immersed in implementing, monitoring, and communicating every facet of improvement. Goals and achievements are noted as they are accomplished.

IWA as a whole has a basic belief that improvement on the part of any individual results in improvement for the entire school. This means that informal interaction between and among all segments of the school population aimed at improvement is constant and ongoing. Documentation of these activities is virtually impossible because of its constant nature but the structure of the daily schedule with its Open Labs is a prominent example of how IWA promotes this interaction.

Some of the ways that the leadership monitors and communicates improvement efforts are the Alumnae News, the Annual Report, the monthly newsletter, the school website, the honor roll, the Board meetings/reports, and Title Report to Normandy school district. The Alumnae News is a magazine format that contains information about IWA and its individual Alums. It is used to keep them informed about changes and needs of the school. The Annual Report is also in magazine form and focuses on the financial contributions, fundraising events, and expenses experienced at IWA. The honor roll is the list of students who achieve first and second honors and also those who have achieved significant improvement. Students on the honor roll from the previous semester are recognized at an assembly early each semester and the honor roll list is sent home with report cards.

Some of the ways that improvement is evaluated are through ACT test results, Acre test results, Curriculum Committee meeting/minutes, department meetings/minutes, end of year course surveys, and of course, the self evaluation processes such as AdvancEd. The Acre test is given by the Theology department specifically to monitor student understanding of the concepts presented. These tests results are used to consider the need for changes in curriculum and course content. All standardized tests are monitored by the Guidance Department and specific results passed on to departments for their consideration. Course self evaluations are used by individual teachers to consider what they include or what they need to emphasize within their particular course.

Standard 7: Commitment to Continuous Improvement Overall Assessment

Impact Statement

A school is successful in meeting this standard when it implements a collaborative and ongoing process for improvement that aligns the functions of the school with the expectations for student learning. Improvement efforts are sustained and the school demonstrates progress in improving student performance and school effectiveness. New improvement efforts are informed by the results of earlier efforts through reflection and assessment of the improvement process.

IWA has numerous policies and procedures in place to promote, develop, and sustain improvement efforts and progress pertaining to the improvement of student performance and school effectiveness.

Our Mission is our passion and IWA's goal is to live the Mission in our everyday lives. IWA has a Mission Committee that hosts Mission activities to help the faculty, staff, and students experience what living the Mission means. Our students and parents participate in a service project each year to give of themselves and to help others. IWA fosters a sense of service and community within its school culture.

IWA is committed to the improvement of student performance by its membership and association with North Central/AdvancED. Critical Thinking Skills, Technology, and Personal Excellence were chosen as target areas of improvement. An Educational Integration Technologist was added to the faculty for the purpose of offering technological training to all of the teachers. Teachers have utilized their skills and knowledge of technology to enhance student learning. IWA has documented improvement and increased effective use of technology by both faculty and students.

The Board of Trustees implements the Strategic Plan, a comprehensive effort, to ensure that the Mission, academic program, and the overall functioning of the school continues to improve and plan for the future.

The Academic Program strives to ensure a continuous process of improvement is in place. The orientation of new faculty members, the Mentoring Program, monthly faculty meetings, Department meetings, the Curriculum Committee, individual professional growth goals and the teacher supervision/evaluation program ensure an exchange of information on academics and student performance and a focus on improving teacher practice.

Professional development of the faculty is encouraged and supported through professional development funds from the IWA operating budget in addition to monies received through Title II funds and the Normandy School District. Academic scholarships are available to faculty members through the University of Missouri-St. Louis and St. Louis University for those IWA faculty members teaching in the Advance Credit Program for both of those universities. The professional development of the

faculty helps to ensure continuous professional growth of those entrusted with the academic development of IWA students.

IWA has a unique modular system with Open Labs and LAPS which helps its students in becoming more responsible in their decision making process, advance planning and time management skills, in the completions of assignments, and being academically prepared for college. The Administration, the Guidance Department, and the Learning Consultant meet once each cycle to monitor and provide support to the students who might be in jeopardy of failing a class. Information on student progress is available to students and parents through Edline, report cards, teacher parent conferences, and the results of various standardized testing. Student assemblies are held to celebrate the academic and extracurricular accomplishments of IWA students.

IWA continually updates its website so that all stakeholders have access to a wealth of information about the following: IWA's Mission and Philosophy, Mission Integration, school profile, letter from the Principal, course descriptions, college information, student activities, special events, Parent and Alumni newsletters, and athletics events.

In addition to its website, IWA strives to notify its stakeholders about various improvements through other types of communication such as: Board of Trustee Meetings, the Annual Report, Advancement Committee Meetings, Parents' Club Meetings, Booster Club Meetings, Technology Meetings, Faculty Meetings, Curriculum Committee Meetings, Faculty Advisory Committee Meetings, and student grade level meetings. IWA welcomes the input from its stakeholders for the purpose of improving student performance, school effectiveness and the daily operation of the school.

IWA lives its Mission in challenging young women of the faith to achieve their God-given potential as academically successful Women of the Word, following the example of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, by promoting human dignity, thereby empowering themselves and others to make a positive impact on our world.

Conclusion

1. As you review your responses to the standards, what major trends, themes, or areas of focus emerge that cut across the seven standards?

At Incarnate Word Academy, there are several trends and themes that cut across the seven standards. These themes frequently emerge throughout our evidence and are at the heart of education at Incarnate Word Academy. These areas of focus include:

- Throughout the evidence it is clear that the mission of IWA is central to everything we do. This commitment to and daily implementation of the Mission highlights our vision for the school, grounds our leadership, and drives our teaching and learning. The Mission at IWA is a consistent and constant area of focus across the seven standards.
- At IWA, there is strong communication to and between our stakeholders. The Administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, Alumnae, and friends all communicate regularly through a variety of media. Further, the Administration promotes an open door policy, where stakeholders are able to address comments or concerns. When issues arise, whether among students, faculty, or other stakeholders, there is a genuine willingness to address these concerns. This open and honest communication is evident in all areas at IWA.
- A commitment to the advancement of technology is evident in every aspect of IWA. We are constantly striving to upgrade our programs, computers, and software. We are dedicated to professional development in technology so that we can provide our students with the most advanced and applicable technology available.
- IWA is committed to continuous improvement and constant growth. Whether it is constant professional development opportunities for faculty and staff or the Mentor Program for new teachers, IWA's Administration, faculty, and staff are eager to adapt to the needs of students' and to create the best learning environment possible. Across the standards, it is clear the IWA is always willing to improve and develop in an effort to provide students with the best possible education.
- Student success is the source and summit of our work at IWA. Helping students succeed academically, emotionally, and spiritually is at the center of how we educate. We are first and foremost a student-centered school, and throughout the standards, this theme emerged as an essential area of focus.

The aforementioned themes cut across the seven standards and indicate IWA's commitment to developing a positive atmosphere for student learning. Through commitment to the Mission, strong communication among stakeholders, the advancement of technology, the constant improvement of the school, and dedication to student success, IWA maintains several areas of focus that have allowed us to be successful in educating young women for generations. These trends emerge across the standards because they are at the center of our educational philosophy and practices.

2. Based on your review of these cross-cutting themes/trends and each of the seven standards; what would you consider your school's greatest strengths?

After reviewing the themes and trends that have emerged in the seven standards, it is evident that IWA's greatest strengths lie in several areas, all which create a positive community of learning.

- IWA's commitment to its Mission is evident in the striving to "challenge young women of faith to achieve their God-given potential as academically successful Women of the Word, following the example of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, by promoting human dignity, thereby empowering themselves and others to make a positive impact on our world." This Mission impels the academic, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of our school and grounds us in a vision that carries us forward.
- Because of its commitment to the Mission, another strength we possess is our student-centered approach to learning. We hold high expectations for our students and also provide a safe atmosphere where students feel comfortable asking teachers for assistance. By putting students first, we recommit ourselves daily to education grounded in what is best for the student and their academic, spiritual, social, and emotional success.
- The academic system at IWA, including the curriculum, modular schedule, Learning Activity Packets (LAPS), and Open Labs are another major strength. This unique learning environment coupled with college preparatory courses, honors courses, and ACC courses allow for students to develop time management skills and grow as independent thinkers. Additionally, students have various resources to support them and help them as they undertake this more independent form of study. In this way, the academic system at IWA inherently promotes academic rigor, independence, and support.
- Technological advancement is a major strength at IWA, particularly in the continuous professional development by the faculty to improve technology use in the classroom for the purpose of enhancing student learning.
- Support services are another one of IWA's greatest strengths. The Learning Consultant and Guidance department meetings with Administration to assist at risk students are just two of the many resources available to help students achieve to their highest potential. Further, faculty and staff benefit from the support of Administration and their departments. Through the Mentor Program new teachers gain support and guidance their first two years. Overall, support services and resources are evident across the board at IWA and are a major strength for our community.
- Leadership and governance at IWA is a major strength, particularly insofar as the Administration is always open to the ideas and concerns of all shareholders. This open door policy creates an attitude of collegiality and professionalism within the school.
- The commitment to change and constant improvement is an important strength at IWA. Faculty and staff are willing to undertake the challenge of improvement

and change in order to continually make the school environment conducive to learning and academic achievement.

- Diversity is another major strength at IWA. Diversity in the student population, various extra-curricular opportunities, and a diverse curriculum are all evident at IWA.

All of the above strengths indicate IWA's commitment to excellence in education and highlight those things that set us apart from others schools. By capitalizing on these strengths and constantly drawing from them, we continue to provide young women with an education that shapes them intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Further, these strengths can guide us as we undertake the various challenges that present themselves in the coming years.

3. What would you consider your school's greatest challenges?

Like any school, IWA faces both internal and external challenges that impel us to make changes and adapt to new circumstances. Some of our greatest challenges include:

- We would like to implement a formal process to reflect upon our Mission Statement. Further, we would like to continue that process in developing a comprehensive Vision Statement.
- We need to update our Strategic and Technology Plans so that they are conducive to our goals and vision.
- We would like to stay abreast of current trends in education and be willing to make the appropriate and necessary changes within our school.
- We would like to improve in the documentation and the utilization of the results of standardized testing and other important data.
- We want to improve teacher retention and continue to hire the best, most qualified teachers.
- Because of the modular schedule and various “special schedules”, we are often challenged by our lack of instructional time. It is a constant challenge for us to protect instructional time and make sure students are receiving the information they need in their classes.
- We want to continue to attract and maintain school enrollment in difficult economic times.
- We are challenged to constantly find sources of funding for student scholarships to offset the costs of education for parents and students.
- We want to continually update and improve our facilities, always creating a safe, comfortable, and professional environment for student learning.

IWA faces many challenges in a twenty-first century world. Whether economic, academic, or social challenges, we are committed to addressing them with integrity and honesty. We believe that our challenges can help us grow as an institution and can make us better educators in the long run. These challenges, while a reality in Catholic education, are not insurmountable and rather propel us forward to dynamic change and growth.

4. How will you use the insights gained from this self-assessment to inform and enhance your quality assurance and continuous improvement efforts?

From this self-assessment process, we hope to use the insights gained to challenge ourselves to grow and change in ways that will help our students achieve the best education possible. Some ways we hope to utilize the insights and recommendations we receive include:

- We will review and implement the recommendations by the QAR team.
- We will share the results of the QAR team with all of our stakeholders.
- We will write and implement a new school improvement plan, making sure we use solid and verifiable data that is good for comparisons and making sure we have definable, measurable goals.
- We will write a vision statement that expresses our Mission and reflects our commitment to student-centered education.

Through our self-assessment and the recommendations and insights from the QAR team, we hope to continue to improve our school in a variety of areas. By drawing on our strengths and acknowledging areas for growth, we believe we can continue to educate young women in a tradition of excellence, allowing them to grow as independent, critical thinkers who live with compassion, strength, and hope.