

NativityMiguel Network of Schools

Standards and Benchmarks for an 8th Grade Graduate (Adapted 2006)

In the Summer 2005, ten principals from member schools of the NativityMiguel Network of Schools gathered at Loyola University in Chicago, IL for a facilitated, three-day Institute to draft a set of 8th grade standards and benchmarks for our schools. Drawing from several state and diocesan standards and sets of national standards such as National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Council of Teachers of English, and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, this group has carefully drafted this document throughout the school year and is pleased to present a final version. We believe the enclosed standards and benchmarks will provide consistent language, identity, and expectations in the core academic subject areas of math, science, reading and writing for member schools. Additionally, we believe the documents create a profile of an 8th grade graduate well prepared for the critical transition into freshman year of high school and for academic success throughout high school.

While this is a set of 8th grade standards and benchmarks, it is thought that these expectations mark the culmination of the students' education at our schools and that aspects will be attended to in earlier grades leading to the completion of the 8th grade. Also, we recognize that our schools welcome students from a range of levels and that instruction for a student or group of students may be adapted in a particular subject area to reflect a specific level of competency. For some students, curricular resources may need to be enhanced to provide more in-depth coverage of a topic. For others, instruction may need to focus on mastery of more basic concepts before more complex concepts can be introduced. Regardless of how instruction may be adapted and how growth may be measured for a particular student or group of students, all students will be educated toward a proficiency aligned with the set of standards and benchmarks.

The group worked from following definitions: a *standard* describes in general terms what a student should know, and a *benchmark* breaks down the standard into learning targets that are more focused to understand more precisely what students are required to know and be able to do. It was the hope of this group to offer a descriptive level of specificity and at the same time to remain general enough to allow schools a level of elasticity to respond to local needs and resources.

It is the intention of the NativityMiguel Network for member schools to align with one of the following: 1.) national standards/benchmarks, 2.) state standards/benchmarks, 3.) diocesan standards/benchmarks, 4.) an adapted version of state, diocesan, or national standards/benchmarks, 5.) their own standards/benchmarks created with available expertise, or 6.) the standards/benchmarks of the NativityMiguel Network. The school, with support and assistance of the NativityMiguel Network, will decide how to map dynamic curriculum and provide effective instruction in order to align with and implement these standards and benchmarks. It is also our hope that whatever set a school adapts, the standards and benchmarks of the NativityMiguel Network will be clearly identified and referenced.

Finally, we believe that on-going training and valuable tools will strengthen and support the capacity of the schools to more effectively serve the students in their care. It is the commitment of the NativityMiguel Network of Schools to continue to provide training and tools for assisting schools to 1) make sense of the standards and benchmarks adapted by schools and those written by the network, 2) align with and implement a set of standards and benchmarks, 3) map curriculum from the set of standards and benchmarks, 4) instruct students from a range of levels in such a way toward a proficiency aligned with the standards and benchmarks, 5) assess and document the growth and competency of students, and 6) engage in a cycle of inquiry, evaluation, revision and adaptation to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

This past spring, the two networks (Nativity Network and Lasallian Association of Miguel Schools) and the partnering foundation (Foundation for Nativity and Miguel Schools) reorganized as one entity, the NativityMiguel Network of Schools, with its mission to enhance the viability and vitality and of our member schools to strengthen their capacity to deliver a uniquely effective, faith-based education to the middle school students in their care. The ten principals who assembled in Chicago have been asked to continue their work is guiding the educational direction of our schools and assisting the network in supporting the educational needs of our schools, and have been officially named the Education Council of the NativityMiguel Network of Schools.